

COBRAS: Characteristics of Effective Feedback

Feedback is integral to learning; when done well, feedback can reinforce existing strengths, keep goal-directed behaviour on course, clarify the effects of behaviour, and increase students' abilities to detect and remedy errors on their own.

Clear. Formulate your feedback in clear and concise language and limit them to the most important issues. It is important to consider the feedback's potential value to your students and their capacity to respond to it.

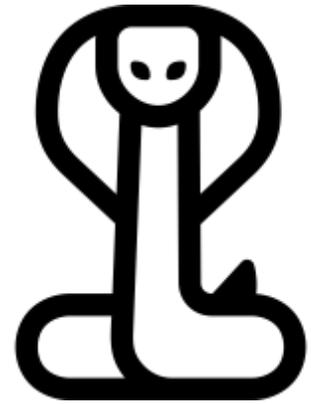
Owned. When offering evaluative comments, use the pronoun "I". This enables you to avoid sounding accusatory. Remember that feedback is merely your opinion.

Behaviour. Describe the behaviour that you observed before offering your feedback to provide on it. The focus on behaviour rather than the person helps the recipient to perceive your feedback as a learning opportunity.

Regular. Being timely is key to invite students to reflect and improve on their learning. Feedback loses its impact if delayed too long. Providing frequent feedback is also crucial to support the iterative process of learning. Remember, feedback does not need to come only from you - consider leveraging technology and/or peer feedback to support your students.

Actionable. Feedback should focus on what can be changed. It is useless and demotivating to receive feedback on something over which your students have no control. You may want to offer alternatives or suggestions for your students to consider, as this allows them to decide what to do with your feedback.

Specific. Avoid general comments that may be of limited use to your students. Try to include examples to illustrate your statement, as it provides actionable information directed toward achieving an objective or increasing performance.



Additional Resources:

- UBC Science Writing Resources for Learning (<http://scwrl.ubc.ca/educator-resources/>) offers specific resources for instructors on how to offer feedback on written assignments
- Giving Your Students Better Writing Feedback (<http://www.betterwritingfeedback.com/>) is a guide for instructors developed by Colin Monaghan.
- Make It Count: Providing Feedback as Formative Assessment by Troy Hicks (2014) <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/providing-feedback-as-formative-assessment-troy-hicks>

A list of TLEF and SoTL Seed projects focused on Feedback (2019-20)

Lead Name	Department	Title
Kerry Wilbur	Pharmaceutical Sciences	Multisource Feedback of Interprofessional Competencies: Comparing Assessment Across Disciplines
Agnes d'Entremont	Mechanical Engineering	Student Usage Patterns in WeBWorK in Second-Year Engineering
Jaclyn Stewart	Chemistry	Investigating Students' Responses to Feedback on Their Written Work
Dongwook Yoon	Computer Science	Improving Educational Feedback with a Speech- and Gesture-based Online Commenting System
Silvia Bartolic	Arts	Effective Personalized Feedback: Developing Resources, Practices and Capacity to Provide Personalized Feedback to Students at Scale, Across Disciplines
Elyse Yeager	Mathematics	Data-Enabled Pedagogies and Technology for Teaching and Learning Critical-Thinking and Decision Making Skills

Strength-Based Coach Approach

Inquire and Explore Strengths:

- What are you trying to accomplish?
- What is already working?
- What are your strengths in this area?

Expand on Strategies:

- How might you go about doing it?
- What is one thing that you can do to take you a step closer to your goal?
- What else can you do differently?

Accountability:

- How are you going to keep track of your progress?
- How will you know when things have changed for the better?
- Who will notice the change?
- What structure and support needs to be in place to help you sustain progress?