



Obtain Effective Feedback on your Teaching

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Why receive feedback?

Feedback is central to the development of any form of education. The provision of medical education is highly reliant on clinician-teachers, often motivated individuals but with variable teaching experience. As teachers we need to ask of each teaching session whether both the educational content and the clinical educator 'measure up' to the task and educational aims. In order to develop our teaching skills, we have to accept we too are learners for whom feedback is central. Algiraigri provides suggestions on how the medical educator can receive feedback in an open and positive learning environment.

Identifying ourselves as learners and proactively engaging in formative, constructive feedback will allow us to benefit from this process. It is important to have awareness of the potential for demotivation for both the teacher and the learner which negative comments can cause. Careful questioning however can support reflection and identify areas for improvement. The type of feedback looked for will vary according to the professional role of the learner and the nature of the questions that are asked. It should address both specific and general areas of both teaching delivery and educational content. There are a variety of tools available and this article will describe some of the more novel approaches.

Once we accept the need to obtain feedback we must be clear about the aims of our feedback questions. Are we seeking information about ourselves as educators or about the information we provide and whether it meets the learner's educational needs? Of course these two aspects are inter-related. For example, given similar content a learner will take away different messages from different educators. Nevertheless thinking about the distinction between feedback for learner or educator will allow development of different feedback questions. The relationship between measurement / development of the educational content / educator is illustrated below.

Tips on effective use of feedback

Engage in self-assessment

Accept we benefit from feedback

Connect with learners

Be proactive

Take positive feedback wisely

Negative feedback is an opportunity

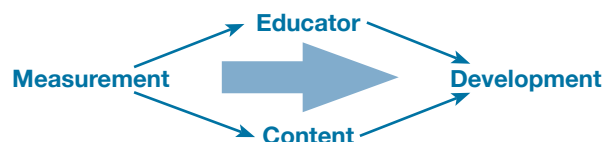
Make a plan based on feedback

Acknowledge different types of feedback

Distinguish between general and specific

Use variety of feedback tools

(Adapted from Algiraigri 2014)



More traditional approaches to the obtaining of feedback have been based on questionnaires, which have included a combination of structured questions, open-ended responses and satisfaction scales. These approaches provide significant detail but are less helpful to the busy clinician-teacher. In addition, these techniques have been over-utilised resulting in 'feedback fatigue', thereby compromising the value of the process.

In this section we propose some novel feedback tools to aid the clinician-teacher. These tools can be used quickly and cheaply and may reduce 'feedback fatigue' associated with more formal evaluation / feedback tools. Novel feedback approaches include Personal Response Systems, Twitter, Google forms, Minute papers, post it notes and many more. We will detail some of these followed by suggested questions you may find helpful to address both specific and general feedback requirements to assess the content and the educator.

Minute Paper:

First described by Wilson (1986) the Minute Paper is a versatile, easy to use, rapid tool for student feedback. Also known as the half sheet evaluation, a minute paper is classically short involving only two to three questions. Students are given one minute to answer each question reflecting their immediate thoughts. It can be used during or at the end of a teaching session. Pre-determined questions can be developed to query any aspect of the particular educational experience or the educator.

Google Forms:

Google forms are an online feedback form that can be designed to meet a variety of feedback needs. Utility of the online forms makes this tool accessible to teachers less familiar with web based approaches. The teacher determines the content of the form on standard online templates which is then emailed as a simple link to all students. The form is easily and anonymously completed by students. The responses are automatically collated into a single excel spreadsheet for the author to view and interpret. The results are automatically tabulated and power point excel tools can be used to analyse the data.

Post it Note Activity:

Post it notes are a simple, cheap and flexible way to obtain feedback. They can be used in numerous ways to obtain feedback about any element of a teaching session. Very little prior preparation is required, making this technique ideal for 'on the fly' teaching. Stop, Start, Continue describes a technique where each learner is given three post it notes, and asked to record one thing the teacher should stop doing, one thing they should start doing, and one thing they should continue doing with regards to their lesson. Alternatively a 'feedback wall' may be used, where learners are encouraged to record their thoughts about a lesson (what they enjoyed, and how the session could be improved) on post it notes and stick them on a designated area of the wall. Feedback obtained by use of post it notes tends to be brief, concise and focussed, enabling easy analysis by the educator.

While designing feedback proformas using any of these methods it is important that the right questions are asked regarding the content and facilitation for adding maximum value to the process. Having the feedback forms evaluated by peers and piloting them may also help to refine them so as to make feedback more useful.

Suggestions for feedback questions:-

General

Content	Educator
Did the session improve your understanding of this topic?	Do you think he/she is knowledgeable in answering question?
Did the session improve your confidence in topic?	Was the session enjoyable?
Was it pitched at a right level for you?	Was his/her pace appropriate for the topic?
Was the topic relevant to your practice?	

Specific

Content	Educator
List 3 key learning points for yourself	If this educator runs a different session, would you attend?
Is there anything that you would change in your practice after this session?	What specifically did you like or dislike about the way he/she led the session?
What question remains unanswered from this session for you?	Did this educator inspire you?
	Was the educator credible?

Impact of effective feedback

Most feedback on behalf of clinician-teachers is obtained to assess the usefulness of the educational content, in order to develop subsequent teaching. In this guide, we propose seeking feedback to distinguish educational content from educator skill. Specific feedback for the educator can have beneficial effects on their performance, self-efficacy, and ability to provide a stimulating, relevant learning environment. Engagement in reflective feedback allows development from both positive and negative comments.

Summary

Using constructive, timely and specific feedback can enhance both the learning and teaching of the educator, and provides the basis for engaging in reflective practice.

Further Information

Marzano, R. (2012) *The Two Purposes of Teacher Evaluation. Teacher Evaluation: What's Fair? What's Effective?* 70(3):14-9 at <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/nov12/vol70/num03/The-Two-Purposes-of-Teacher-Evaluation.aspx>

Algiraigri, A. (2014) *Ten tips for receiving feedback effectively in clinical practice.* Med Educ Online 19: 25141 at <http://dx.doi.org/10.3402/meo.v19.25141>

Wilson, R. (1986) *Improving faculty teaching: Effective use of student evaluations and consultants.* The Journal of Higher Education, pp. 196-211.

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