How Constructive Is Your Feedback?
The Power of Your Words

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Constructive Feedback - What is it?

- Descriptive rather than evaluative
- Formative rather than summative
- Instructional rather than punitive
- Specific rather than general
- Motivating rather than devastating
- Focus is on behavior rather than the person
- Objective, nonjudgmental
- Goal directed for learning, course, or program outcomes
Purpose of Student Feedback

- Identify level of competence
- Instruct to change, grow, or improve behavior
- Motivate student to perform well
Instructor Should:

• Avoid a climate of fear-start with “We are here to discuss your feedback…” “So how do you think the day, week, or procedure went?”

• If negative event occurred, ask “How would you handle it next time?”

• Always ask “What can you do to improve in this area?”

• Avoid these transition words: “however, but, although”
  – They negate the positives

• Remember the good student also needs constructive feedback and challenges to enhance their performance
Sandwich Method for Feedback

- +/-/+ 
- POP = Positive/Opportunity for Change/Positive 
- Compliment/Correct/Compliment 
- Stop/Keep/Start 
- Caution: Some students might not see the negative behavior that needs improvement if the instructor is overly positive
Constructive Feedback Acronym

- Choice
- Offered
- Non-judgmental
- Specific
- Truthful
- Relevant
- Usable
- Communication
- Timing
- In my opinion
- Value the opportunity
- Encourage learning
Acronyms for Feedback

DESC
• Describe facts
• Express feelings
• Say what you want to happen
• Consequences if no change

STOP
• Specific
• Timely
• Observed behaviors
• Plan for improvement
KSS Acronym for Feedback

- Keep doing what you are doing right (name it)
- Stop doing what you are doing incorrectly (name it)
- Start doing what you need to do to improve your performance (name it)
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<th>FAST</th>
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<td>Frequent</td>
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Students Need Direction

• There are always areas for improvement

• Students can identify these areas with self-evaluation
  – Instructor supports or adds suggestions
  – We can’t observe everything they do

• Even the A+ student wants feedback-“excellent job” is not enough
Format of Feedback

• Words you use
  – read or listen

• How you say it, tone of voice, or emphasis
  – verbal or text
  – netiquette-online etiquette

• Body language, facial expression, eyes, and posture
  – missing with text
  – most threatening and difficult to control

• Private versus public setting

• Some sources suggest praise in public-what do you think?
Instructor Feedback for Self-Evaluation

• How many of you use self-evaluation in your program?
• Students reflect on their performance and to what degree they have met specific behaviors
• Instructors read the self-evaluation and provide feedback
• Self-reflection provides insight into behavior and promotes learning
  – Self regulation and metacognition
How Well is Feedback Received? Depends on:

- Effectiveness of delivery
- Quality of feedback
- Credibility of provider
- Availability of provider
- Content or nature of feedback
- Willingness and ability to listen
- Location and atmosphere of trust and respect
Words Must Be Nonjudgmental

- “A better plan would be... versus “your plan was weak”
- Avoid starting with “you ...”
- Avoid “but, however, yet, although”
- Use “and” or “what if...” instead of “but”
- “How do you think that went?” instead of “how could you or why did you do that?”
Constructive Feedback Activity
Constructive Feedback Activity

Instructions

• This activity takes approximately 15 minutes
• Read the feedback statements and identify which type of reference, function, focus, and value they are
• Reword the statement to be more constructive
• Turn to your neighbor and compare your answers
• I will share potential options
The Power of Your Words Activity
Writing Activity Instructions: The Power of Your Words

• Take 5-10 minutes to describe in writing a situation you had as a nursing student that involved receiving destructive feedback from your worst instructor and constructive feedback from your best instructor

• How did it make you feel?

• How long have you remembered the situation?

• I will remind you when the time is up

• Turn to a neighbor and share your experiences for 5 minutes

• If you wish to participate in a qualitative research project, turn in your paper at the end of this session.
Examples of Destructive Feedback
Obtained from a Learning Activity with MSN Students

The Power of Your Words
“I was criticized for not reporting a 150 systolic BP to my CI in front of everyone at the nursing station. I had reported it to my resource RN.”

I felt humiliated and incompetent. I did learn to report even minor deviations from normal to my instructor and what I did about them. I learned the importance of sharing feedback in private.
“I don’t remember all the details, just the emotions. I received a failing grade on a written assignment and it was covered in red ink. The only comment the instructor made was: don’t reinvent the wheel.”

I felt frustrated and humiliated. I developed OCD when it came to checking over my work and reviewing the scoring rubric before turning anything in. It also made be aware of how important the instructions and detail in a scoring rubric are.
“My instructor spent an hour with me going over my concept map and then gave me an unsatisfactory for not getting some cares completed.”

I was totally devastated. It took about three years to get my confidence back. I worked with the counseling center to beef up my confidence and learned to ask more questions of my instructors. I also learned to be more encouraging when sharing necessary feedback.
“We had one instructor who sent students home without explanation when she thought they were not prepared for clinical. She told me that I was ‘not putting it together’, but did not let me talk through it.”

*I learned that instructors must have patience and take time to talk through things so students have a solid understanding. It has an enormous impact.*
“I don’t remember the details, but I remember the emotions. I was in my patient’s room when the doctor rounded. I answered several questions right away, but had to search in the chart for one answer. My instructor took the chart out of my hands and told the doctor that a student would not have a clue where to find that information.”

I wanted to hide from doctors when they were rounding after that experience. She could have said “look in section ___” to help me instead of humiliate me.
“I was reprimanded very rudely by my instructor in front of my patient for not looking at the room number when entering the room to give medications. The instructor said this was an important verifier and that I could make a big mistakes if I did not check the number.”

*She documented a safety error and that I appeared ‘aloof’ when discussing the event. I was afraid to ask questions or make a mistake and I became distant and aloof after this. I just wanted the semester to end. I left that school and found one that was a better match for me.*
Characteristics of Your Worst Clinical Instructor

Obtained from a Learning Activity with MSN Students
Worst Clinical Instructor

- Aggressive, intimidating, or lacks patience
- Poorly defined expectations or vague direction
- Unorganized, inconsistent behavior or processes
- Not available, hard to locate, or does not respond promptly
- Won’t answer student questions or ridicules ‘dumb’ questions
- Does not apply theory to clinical
Worst Clinical Instructor

- Focused on minute details and not the big picture
- Evaluations were very generic
- Criticized or reprimanded in front of other students
- Praised or overly positive in front of other students
- Not enough feedback on care maps or papers
- All positive comments, “I need something constructive to work on”
So How Constructive is Your Feedback?

- Feedback is designed to maintain or modify behavior
- Focus on things the student can change or control
- Individualized—easy with self evaluation, difficult with large groups of students
- Feedback should reassure, support, and motivate
- Make a plan for improvement and re-evaluate performance
- Consider adding student evaluation of the quality or usefulness of feedback to your course evaluation tools
- Remember the power of your words—they can be forgiven, but are not forgotten!
References

See addendum
Thank You!

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References


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