



Feedback as a Tool for Empowerment and Motivation

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Ever Had a "Bad Teacher"?

Ever Been a “Bad Teacher”?

Self-Reflective = Thoughtful consideration

Self-Reflexive = Action in Response to...

Objectives and Topics

- Define feedback and identify its categories, understand the importance of the feedback loop, and discuss best practices for feedback that empowers and motivates.
- Reinvigorate self-reflexivity within your teaching methods.
- Practice new and familiar models of feedback and offer relevant examples.
- Emphasize the importance of student-centered learning environments and instruction.
- Hold space for questions, reflection, curiosity, and sharing.

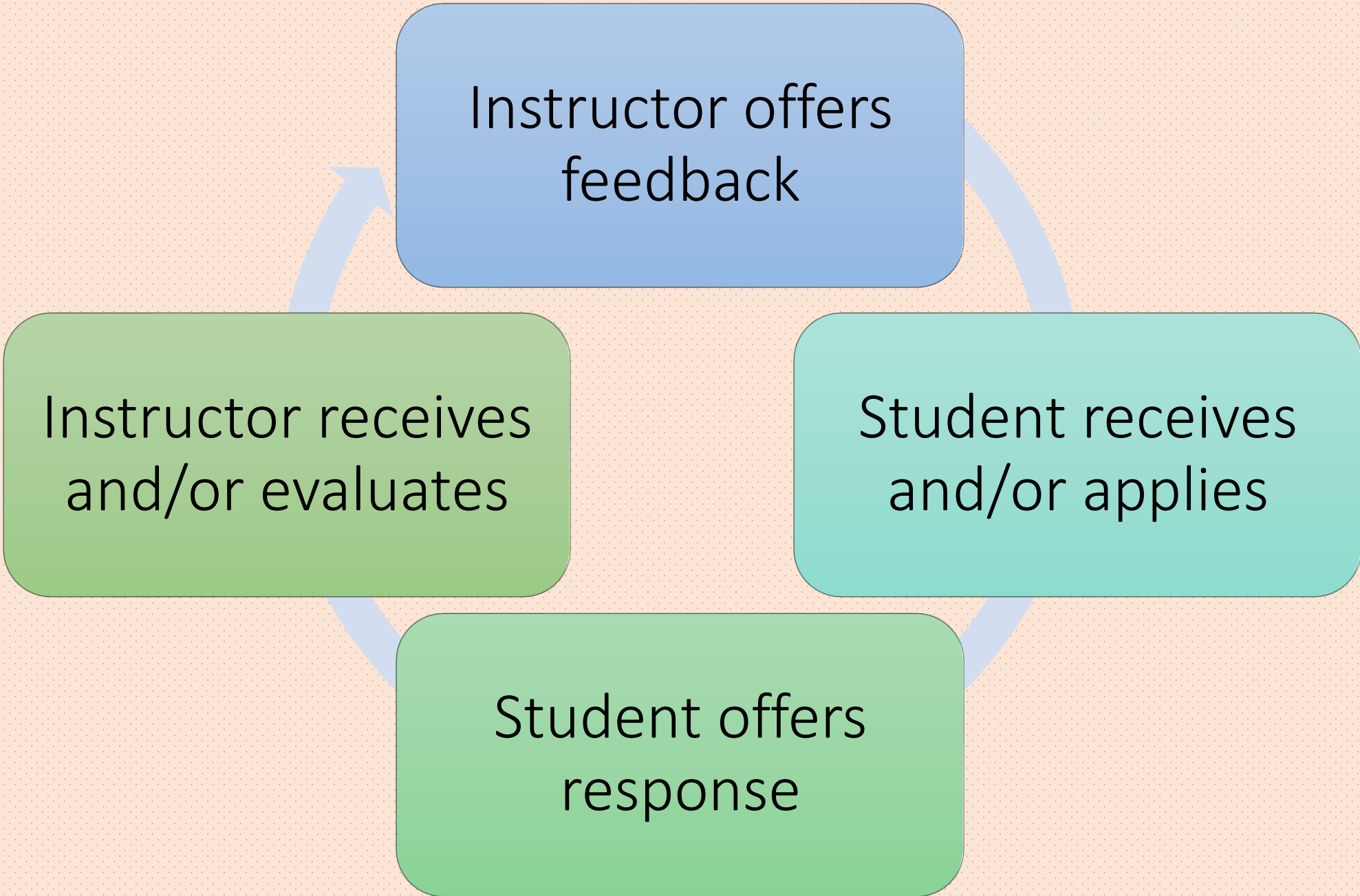
What is feedback? What does it do?

- A reoccurring exchange of information between individuals used to guide improvement or progress.
- Can be tactile, physical, verbal, or written. Any of these modes can be either direct or indirect and often overlap each other in delivery.
- In healthy, effective systems of feedback, the student feels capable, valued, and has autonomy – regardless of whether the feedback is valued as positive or negative.

	Tactile	Physical	Verbal	Written
Direct				
Indirect				

The Feedback Loop

- A system under which feedback is exchanged reciprocally and cyclically.
- This can expedite the transfer of information between instructor and student and keep both parties in-the-loop about strategies, roadblocks, concerns, suggestions, etc.



Best Practices for Feedback That Empowers and Motivates

Clear Expectations and Objectives

- Macro and Micro
- Students know what to expect. They can anticipate the good and prepare for the bad.
- Accountability

Methods of Phrasing

- "Don't Do" vs. "Do". Strive for affirmative language.
 - Here's what we can improve rather than here's what you're doing wrong.
 - Makes you sound more uplifting, and the students aren't constantly weighed down with problems.
- Avoid restating the obvious and go straight for the helpful bits.
- Do you have any questions? --> What are your questions? --> Ask me three questions.

Volume/Tone

- Projecting your voice is a tool best used for speaking at a distance or for embracing moments charged with positive emotion, not for reprimanding, criticizing, or expressing negativity
- Yelling can teach students that the reason they shouldn't do something is because it makes the instructor angry, and not for the actual reason.
- Avoid shouting in general. Use a microphone whenever possible, for both the health of your communication and the health of your vocal folds.

Guilt and Shame

- Guilt and Shame are never an efficient route to empowerment or motivation. You will not trigger a student's sense of pride or responsibility by forcing them into a negative headspace.
- Instead of highlighting the offense, consider outlining "why".
- Question Shaming
- Don't punish the behavior you want to see.

Be Sincere With Questions

- Don't ask if you don't want the answer. Be willing to receive negatory responses.
- Be thoughtful with responses and give every question its due.
- Dismissiveness is the opposite of empowering. If you want students to always feel comfortable asking questions, make sure you actively facilitate that.

Consent and Autonomy

- Allows the student to be in control of their body and how others interact with it and provides an opportunity for them to voice their boundaries and level of comfort.
- Typically applies to tactile feedback.
- Consent should be considered a fluid agreement.

Practicing Consent

"In the UI Department of Dance, instructors follow best practices when they ask a student's consent to physical touch each and every time that they believe: *tactile contact is necessary or beneficial here to the learning process*. Without explanation or repercussion, every student has the right and responsibility to say **yes** or **no** in that particular moment; throughout a year, a semester, or a single class, students may, without explanation or repercussion, change their **yes** and **no** answers in response to internal feelings and external circumstances. In lieu of physical contact, instructors must, to the best of their ability, replace physical contact with other means of helpful instruction."

(University of Iowa Department of Dance)

Practicing Consent

- What if a student says no?
 - Accept the response and keep moving.
 - Physical, Verbal, Written options...
- Understand the impact of your authority – it never hurts to ask twice. Pay attention to facial and body language cues.
- Work with your staff to define what constitutes acceptable instructional touch in your program and what does not. Develop a Code of Conduct for staff to abide by.

Challenging the Sandwich

- Compliment/Critique/Compliment
- Over time, students can learn to expect that compliments are only ever used to bookend a critique, which makes them less valuable. Can also diminish the integrity of the criticism. (Findlay University)
- Give compliments their full moment and strive to use them as often as you offer criticism.

Global vs. Local

- Big picture vs. Fine details.
- Global might mean: Visual design, drill design, props, musical repertoire, etc.
- Local might mean: Hitting your dot, memorization, performance technique, execution of vocabulary/skills, etc.
- It is not the students' responsibility to fix global issues. Give feedback that directly relates to things within their control to avoid overwhelm.

Public vs. Private

- Handling disciplinary issues, holding a conversation about weaknesses and future strategies, and reaching out for a check-in are more productive in private.
- Keep a lookout for students who are giving cues that they may not be in a receptive headspace for critique.
- The dynamic of student/teacher comes with its own weight. Consider alternative methods or having a section leader pass along feedback if you sense it wouldn't be as productive coming from you.

Inclusion Tactics

- When physically demonstrating, make sure everyone can see. Consider demonstrating in multiple locations.
- Give students time to process. Don't assume that because a student didn't immediately apply a correction, that the correction wasn't heard.
- Always try to teach something correctly the first time. Think about what you want to say first.
- Use language the students can understand.

The Hidden Curriculum

- Especially concerns rookies.
- Be careful with assumptions about competence. Teach before judging.

Remember...

- Everything we do should always be in service to the students, or to help them be in service to themselves.
- Why should they do what you say? How will it benefit them?

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