

## Feedback to Learners

### An Open College Network West Midlands Guide to Getting it Right

**Feedback to learners** is important because it:

- Is integral to effective teaching and learning
- Shows the learners where/how they have been successful in meeting the assessment criteria and where they have not or may need to improve
- Can motivate, if given accurately, fairly and objectively.

#### Tips

- Make feedback systematic, frequent and regular.
- General feedback can be helpful ('well done!'), but linking the feedback to the task and/or assessment criteria is better ("you listed some examples of... (Assessment Criterion...) but didn't include the most important ones...").
- Feedback can be verbal or written. If it is verbal, keep a simple record of the feedback. Written feedback formalises the feedback and can be discussed later, in more detail if necessary.
- Front sheets/cover sheets/assignment sheets usually provide space for the assessor to give feedback – use it.
- Written feedback takes time - make sure it is time well spent. Develop a system and apply it consistently so that learners are clear what you are saying and how they should respond to it.
- Short, focussed feedback on the learners' work (for example in the margins) shows you've actually looked at the work.
- Feedback is most meaningful and useful when it has a *consequence* - tell the learner:
  - what you want them to continue to do
  - what you want them to do more of
  - what you want them to stop doing. Feedback that generalises, or gives judgemental comments without supporting them, is not helpful to the learner.
- Agree across assessment teams whether/how/when you will give individual feedback about aspects of the learner work *not* directly related to the assessment criteria, such as spelling, punctuation, grammar and presentation. Then be consistent.

**Remember:** If no record of feedback, whether written or oral, is present, the assumption may be that it isn't being given to the learner at all.

**Do you want to improve your assessment practice further? Please visit the Training section of our website for details of events.**

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