Feedback Tip Sheet

Tip Sheet Content Guide:

Use the below content guide to quickly locate the individual sections within this tip sheet.

Online Class Feedback Considerations

When giving feedback, building rapport with learners is an important first step to ensuring that feedback can be effective and support learners in achieving their goals. One of the main concerns with online learning is how to create relationships with learners that are needed to retain and motivate them. Because of this, it is even more important to make sure that all feedback given to learners follows effective feedback guidelines. The following guidelines can support learners in their learning process and help them work towards their class objectives and personal goals while also addressing retention and motivation concerns.

1. **Avoid deficit thinking**. Feedback should focus on what learners are doing right. Instructors can do this by including information on what learners have successfully accomplished and the improvements they have made.

2. **Be specific**. When giving feedback, instructors should provide clear explanations and examples of their feedback. It is also effective to focus on one skill or specific piece of knowledge from a recent assignment or activity. This will provide learners with an area of focus for moving forward and will not overwhelm them.

3. **Be timely**. Instructors should provide feedback to learners within a reasonable amount of time after an assignment or activity has been completed. This allows learners to connect action to feedback and apply feedback to future learning.

4. **Be consistent**. Instructors should provide ongoing feedback throughout the duration of a course. It is important to be consistent with the method of delivery, content, duration, timing, etc. of feedback.

5. **Be transparent**. Instructors should clearly communicate the purpose of assignments, assessments, and/or activities as well as any accompanying feedback. Learners need to clearly understand how feedback will help them move forward with their own learning process.

6. **Be forward thinking**. Instructors should provide learners with feedback that clearly illustrates how they are working towards their goals and how they can continue that process moving forward. Learners need to understand how to apply feedback to their future learning, so instructors need to work with learners to establish clear action steps for moving forward.

7. **Involve learners**. Feedback should be a conversation between the instructor and the learner. It is important to allow learners the opportunity to assess themselves and to respond to and ask questions about instructor feedback. Other methods for involving learners in the feedback process are peer feedback opportunities and asking students to provide their own feedback on the course and their learning process.

8. **Provide scaffolds**.

   ● Model giving and receiving feedback.

   ● Pre-teach vocabulary, language, and phrases that can be used to engage with the feedback process.

   ● Use visual aids such as graphic organizers or rubrics to make the feedback process more transparent and tangible for learners.

Feedback in the Online Classroom

In adult education classes, it is not common for learners to participate in a significant amount of traditional assessments such as tests, quizzes, etc.; however, instructors still need to have strategies and opportunities for assessing a learner's progress and providing them with feedback. This way learners can continue to advance through the milestones of the course and achieve their own personal goals. Online classes offer a lot of strategies and opportunities for this type of feedback. We will look at these strategies and opportunities through the lens of whole group feedback, individualized feedback, and peer-to-peer feedback.

Whole Group Feedback

When taking an online class, learners can often feel detached from the course which can lead to disengagement or a lack of motivation; however, instructors can combat this by providing learners with ongoing feedback throughout the course. The most effective strategy for whole group feedback in the online course is using course announcements.

Tools for Delivering Course Announcements	Information to Include in Course Announcements
- LMS platform - Synchronous virtual class session via a web conferencing platform - Messaging application	- Progress as a whole course (i.e. goal or outcome update) - Key takeaways from learner contributions (i.e. sharing ideas from a discussion board post, providing successful examples of learner work, etc.) - Upcoming content, assignments, and or virtual class sessions

Individualized Feedback

In order to provide learners with an array of opportunities to track their own progress through an online course, it is also important to provide them with opportunities to receive individualized feedback from their instructor. This is especially important for adult learners as most adult learners have their own specific goal(s) in mind that they are working towards while also working towards achieving the course objectives/outcomes. Because self-directed learning is central to effective adult education, we are going to look at instructor feedback as well as self-assessment.

Instructor Feedback:

1. Rubrics: Instructors can provide learners with rubrics so that expectations for learner participation and/or completion of tasks is clearly communicated. Using rubrics serves the purpose of making sure that all learners are on the same page in regards to what effective and successful learning and participation in the course looks like. The following chart provides an overview of rubric benefits, information about rubrics that should be communicated to learners, and factors that instructors should consider when developing rubrics.

Benefits of Rubrics	- Sets a benchmark for the highest level of achievement in a course - Provides timely feedback

	● Establishes a baseline for thinking critically about learning and learner progress
Information to Communicate to Learners	● How the rubric should be used by learners ● How the instructor uses the rubric ● How the rubric will be used to discuss learner progress
Factors to Consider	● Level-appropriate language for the rubric (For low-literacy and/or English language learners, rubrics can include images.) ● Strategies for modelling the rubric and its uses for learners

2. Virtual office hours: Instructors can use virtual office hours as a way to meet with students face-to-face and provide more detailed feedback and/or guidance. Instructors can offer set, weekly virtual office hours and/or require them for low-performing learners or those with low engagement.

Learner Self-Assessment

Learners should be presented with opportunities to reflect on their own learning progress as well as the learning process throughout the duration of an online course. The tools that follow can be used for learner self-assessment.

Tools for Learner Self-Assessment	Strategies for Use in the Online Course
Rubrics	● Provide learners with rubrics to use for their own self-assessment of their learning progress. ● Have learners complete the same rubric that instructors use to provide feedback; allowing learners to compare their self-assessment to instructor feedback.
Goal Tracking Activities/Tools	● Options for goal-tracking include creating checklists or to-do lists, creating timelines, or using an online badging system.

Short Quizzes/Surveys	● Use for learner self-assessment within a lesson or over the duration of an online course.
	● Implement during a synchronous session, send to students to complete asynchronously, or complete within an LMS program.
	● Develop so that these short quizzes/surveys provide learners with feedback on their learning progress or so that learners are able to reflect on their learning progress.
	● Consider how learners will receive timely and specific feedback during or after completing the quiz/survey if applicable.
	For more information on tools and strategies for short quizzes in an online course, see the *Student Engagement Tip Sheet.*

Peer-to-Peer Feedback

Including opportunities for peer feedback provides several productive opportunities for instructors and learners in an online course.

Peer-to-peer feedback in the online classroom allows learners to:
- practice discussing the learning process which helps build self-directed learning skills,
- learn from each other's strengths by reviewing work that highlights strengths other than their own, and
- play a direct role in the assessment process.

Peer-to-peer feedback can be done during a synchronous session, most likely during breakout sessions, or asynchronously via collaborative working documents such as a Google Suite application, an LMS platform, or a discussion board platform like Threads or Backchannel Chat.

For more information on peer feedback in the online course, please take a look at the following resources.

- [Peer Assessment](): Resource from the Center for Teaching Innovation at Cornell University that outlines why instructors should use peer feedback and how to implement feedback in an online course.
- [Peer Assessment Training Workshop](): Canvas module developed by Virginia Commonwealth University that can be used to model and explain peer assessment in Canvas.

Feedback for the Instructor

As we mentioned in the considerations for giving feedback to online learners, it is a best practice to involve learners in the feedback process. One strategy for that is making sure that feedback is a two-way conversation and that learners are able to provide feedback on their learning process and the course.

Cyclical Feedback Process	
Beginning of a course	Gather the following information from learners: ● Course expectations ● Personal goals ● Barriers to course participation and/or reaching goals Use the information to adapt the course to fit the expectations, goals, and needs of learners.
During a course	● Gather learner feedback on the learning process and the course. ● Present opportunities for anonymous feedback. ● Use the information to evaluate how learners are progressing towards the course goals and their personal goals, to provide additional support and/or content, and/or to adapt future content based on current learner progress.
End of a course	● Ask learners to reflect on their learning progress, the course, and how they plan to apply the course skills and/or knowledge to their future goals. ● Use the information to guide learners to their next course or step in their education and to impact your planning process for future courses.

Methods for Collecting Learner Feedback	Tech Tool Options
Polls: Can be used during synchronous class sessions or asynchronously. Most polls also have the option for anonymous submission.	Poll Everywhere Mentimeter Google Forms
Surveys: Can be sent to learners via email, text messaging, or via an LMS. Most surveys have the option for anonymous submission.	Google Forms Survey Monkey
Student conferences: Can be held one-to-one or via small groups. This method allows instructors to get personalized feedback and ask follow up questions. This can also allow learners to engage in self-directed learning by discussing the course and their own learning process.	Web conferencing tools Discussion boards: Threads Backchannel Chat LMS platforms

More information on choosing tools for collecting learner feedback can be found on the *Student Engagement* & *Choosing Instructional Materials & Technologies* Tip Sheets.