



What makes our feedback unsatisfactory? A safe place to discuss

Wednesday 19th April Newcastle University

Welcome:

Delegates were welcomed to Newcastle University and fuelled with breakfast and coffee. Introductions and an overview of the day were provided by the organising team; Dr Damian Parry, Dr Harley Stevenson-Cocks, Dr Lindsey Ferrie, Dr Vanessa Armstrong (School of Biomedical, Nutritional and Sport Sciences) and PhD student Rebekah Scanlon (student intern).

Icebreaker:

Each table of delegates was asked to select an image – these included a banana, car, a knee x-ray and animals – with each image accompanied by an ‘assessment brief’ (for example, ‘design a strong and supportive joint in the lower leg’). Delegates were asked to consider whether the student who produced the submission/image had done a good job and then tasked with providing constructive feedback. This exercise got the groups talking, proved very entertaining and made a great start to a session where feedback was the focus.

Individual reflection: After the icebreakers, everyone was asked to take a few minutes to identify what they felt was the biggest challenge/issue they had personally faced with feedback and then to pop this down on a post-it note with a view to revisit these at the end of the day.

Context café:

Key “feedback” themed topics were shared to stimulate conversation and to encourage delegates to share their experiences. Topics included;

- Consistency
- Engagement
- Accessibility
- Digital/technology
- Time constraints
- Types of assessment

Groups then presented back the key points from their discussions.

Sharing ideas/discussion

Groupwork – identifying and sharing best practice:

In the afternoon session, delegates were split into small groups and given scenarios reflecting common issues around feedback in higher education, with a brief to define, evaluate and suggest how to implement best practice relevant to the scenario, considering both staff and student perspectives. Each group utilised an online Padlet to collaborate and share ideas, with each group then presenting back to the other attendees to encourage discussion and sharing of best practice. Links to the Padlet pages were disseminated after the workshop for delegates to utilise in their own practice going forward.

A key theme across all scenarios was the need for suitable training (for staff and students) in order to maximise the effectiveness of any implementations, and to ensure they could be thoroughly evaluated to determine success.

Reflections:

To close the session, delegates were asked to reflect back on their initial early reflections and share how these may have evolved or adapted over the course of the day, including how they may act on these in their future work.

Overall the event was a success, with 10 attendees travelling to Newcastle from 4 institutions across the UK to discuss and share best practice in feedback. Stimulating discussions were ahead and many ideas shared which will hopefully lead to more successful engagement and satisfaction in delivery of feedback for those in attendance. Importantly themes were identified and common to all, irrespective of the discipline or institution.

Organising team: Vanessa Armstrong, Lindsey Ferrie, Damian Parry, Rebekah Scanlan, Harley Stevenson-Cocks