
Learning Outcomes which include Feedback

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Abstract

The focus is on a traditional assessment an essay. The problem of practice was the Feedback is too late to act on it. The feedback does not develop students work. The feedback is not part of learning feedback. An improvement for Learning Outcomes is to have the feedback included. This is to have a concerted approach to improve learner quality and performance. Inclusivity is demonstrated within equity with students better understanding the subject matter. Strategies like Scaffolding by Hammond and Gibbons (2005), Design Principles by Bearman et al (2014) Feedback literacy, to enable uptake of feedback by Carless & Boud (2018), and Universal Design learning (NSW Govt 2024) support developing feedback.

Keywords: Feedback, Problem of practice Design Principles, Feedback literacy, Universal Design learning, biases, heuristics co-create, co-design and co-produce, scaffold learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

The focus is on a traditional assessment essay. The selected assessment task is from Western Sydney University, Subject HUMN1063 Critical and Systems Thinking. This essay uses discourse analysis.

The problem of practice was the Feedback is too late to act on it. The feedback does not develop students' work. (Winstone & Boud, 2020, The feedback is not part of learning feedback (Biggs 1996). An improvement for Learning Outcomes is to have the feedback included. This is to have a concerted approach to improve learner quality and performance. Inclusivity is demonstrated within equity with students better understanding the subject matter.

Strategies like Scaffolding by Hammond and Gibbons (2005), Design Principles by Bearman et al (2014) Feedback literacy, to enable uptake of feedback by Carless & Boud (2018), and Universal Design learning (NSW Govt 2024) support developing feedback. This paper developed from an initial Draft Action Plan, this was improved by peer review feedback, and this is Final Action Plan prepared for implementation.

1.1. BACKGROUND PROBLEM OF PRACTICE

This is a critical reflection of assessment and feedback problem of practice, to develop an Action Plan. The background is to do with description of an assessment and feedback ‘problem of practice’. The selected assessment task is from Western Sydney University, Subject HUMN1063 Critical and Systems Thinking. The focus is on a traditional assessment essay. This essay uses discourse analysis. The problem of practice was the Feedback is too late to act on it. The feedback does not develop students’ work. (Winstone & Boud, 2020, The feedback is not part of learning feedback (Biggs 1996). The Subject Outline instructions (2024), of intended learning are not constructively aligned with the assessment using Electronic Rubric (Biggs, 1996) and (Cohen, 1987) The learning experiences following Subject Outline instructions (2024) it was not required to define the biases and heuristics definitions, while Electronic Rubric wanted these in-between the Introduction and Analysis. Subsequently the assessment Electronic Rubric deducted 30% for this omission (Penny et al., 2009). Technological disruption to the Subject Outline (2024) due to Electronic Rubric not constructively aligned with intended learning, assessment and instruction/learning experiences (Lambert, 2000) (GLO3). The Electronic Rubric was only discovered with Feedback. Making it non effective assessment (Winstone and Boud 2020). The differences in the Subject Outline (2024) instructions and the Electronic Rubric (2024) swayed the marker. Notwithstanding the main issue feedback timing and constructive misalignment with assessment. The feedback itself “Your manuscript should contain an introduction, main body (data, method, results, discussion, etc) and a conclusion”. Did not mirror Subject Outline instructions (2024), thus feedback is not effective assessment (Winstone and Boud 2020) and (Dawson 2017).

The current approach primary emphasis on grades, with accompanying late feedback is not effective assessment (Winstone and Boud 2020). This reflection shows an effective assessment needs to be authentic assessment, and assessment literacy is required (Little et al. 2024). The present essay should change to a new alternative assessment. The proposed change required is better alignment with Learning Outcomes and includes feedback as you go, not a one-off. This is to help students develop learning and use incremental feedback to improve (Williams 2016). Critical reflection for improvement is to include feedback. Examples Scaffold Assessments, using Universal Design Learning (UDL) and Bearman et al (2014) Design Principles and Carless & Boud, (2018). scaffold deliberate engagements with reviewing feedback. (Ajjawi, Boud, Tai, and de St Jorre, 2022)

In reflection this is an example to critique an assessment task, thus demonstrate how to change and plan for a better effective assessment which includes developed feedback. The constraints and context to do so are:

- Active learning (Feedback)
- Inclusivity (Learning Outcomes include Feedback)
- Learning technologies (Rubric electronic)

The future practice needs learning outcomes to include feedback, this is termed Universal Design Learning (Ajjawi, Boud, Tai, and de St Jorre, 2022)

The Higher Education context, the term authentic assessment, is an approach which allows students to make evaluative judgements. This alternative assessment allows tasks which are more work related, better professional practice. The plan for authentic assessment is that what you learn at university, is replicated, in employment (Tai et al. 2018). Moreover, Assessment Literacy for students, assessment literacy involves the “student becoming a confident self-evaluator of their own work, based on feedback from earlier assessment tasks, a scaffolding approach (Little, et al. 2024).

2.0 PROPOSED CHANGE – REDESIGN

The proposed change is to redesign assessment to be more of an authentic assessment by generating feedback that will help students evaluate the effectiveness of learning and teaching as the project develops. The feedback required needs to be supportively formative feedback. This must be proactive, giving good feedback to improve students' learning. Educators must always start with Unit Learning Outcomes (Tai et al. 2018). An improvement to Unit Learning Outcomes is to have the feedback included within the Unit Learning Outcomes (ULO). This learning is scaffolded developing the student with teacher feedback constructive criticism before student starts the next task. scaffold deliberate engagements with reviewing feedback (Carless & Boud, 2018). The Feedback is focused on the Task. The incremental learning feedback for each task allows students to know what needs to improve and how to go about it (Williams 2016). A concerted approach to improve quality and performance. Inclusivity is demonstrated within equity with students better understanding the subject matter is a result (Ajjawi, Boud, Tai, and de St Jorre, 2022).

According to NSW Government Department of Education (2024) a strategy is termed Universal Design for Learning (UDL). This evolved from Architecture approach to remove barriers and make inclusive (i.e. Architecture studio teaching and learning). This is developing into a Human Centre Design approach to design (EWB 2024). The NSW Government Department of Education (2024) has as an example states “in everyday life include automatic doors, closed captions, and ramps. For example, ramps are used by people in wheelchairs to access buildings and are also used by parents with prams and elderly people with walkers”. This example shows what is necessary for some is useful to others. Therefore, inclusivity using evidence based practices for full spectrum of students. Universal Design for Learning framework for planning which impacts the design of all aspects of the learning environment. There are three principles in the Universal Design for Learning framework, 1. Engagement, 2. Representation, 3. Expression (CAST 2023). Educators make varied authentic assessments through varied teaching styles to allow students to show their understanding of subject matter.

Another strategy is Design Principle 1: Provide multiple feedback opportunities (Bearman et al. 2014). Moreover, is the concept of ‘feedback literacy’, described as the ‘understandings, capacities and dispositions needed to make sense of information and use it to enhance work or learning strategies’ (Carless & Boud, 2018, p. 1315). These strategies allow us to plan for students how to act on information from feedback. Learning experiences providing students with scaffold deliberate engagements. with reviewing feedback information, making sense of the information provided. The above strategies are alternatives to Western Sydney University Student Feedback Survey (SFS) and Student Feedback Teaching (SFT). These are at end of subject not during (Ajjawi, Boud, Tai, and de St Jorre, 2022). The bad response rates for SFS and SFT surveys university wide attests the need to change to strategies - Feedback literacy, Design Principles or UDL. These strategies allow to intertwine scaffold and develop the Learning outcome including teaching, goals, and materials with feedback (Ajjawi, Boud, Tai, and de St Jorre, 2022). The real time response is crucial to learning, the surveys at the end are too late, the damage is done (Beauman et al. 2014), (Carless & Boud 2018), (NSW Govt 2024) and (Ajjawi, Boud, Tai, and de St Jorre, 2022).

3.0 TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of steps involved and timeline for Action Plan Redesign.

1. List Alternative assessments, which allows incremental learning, feedback to improve until you get to final task.
2. Environment, Location example Studios to Co-create, Co-design and co-produce.
3. Introduce Authentic Assessment allows students to make evaluative judgement.
4. Constructive align assessment instructions, learning outcomes and rubrics. Have Educator assess with all three in mind.
5. For Feedback purpose, design either Rubrics, Questionnaires, Surveys and Reflection writing 300 to 500 words or combinations, to get evaluative judgement to improve students' performance and quality after each task. Educator to produce, before 8. Pilot
6. Scaffold assessment allows projects to develop in front of the Educator. This is same effect as invigilating exam. Though allows for more content better quality answers which can be replicated in the workforce. During semester, when subject is sitting.
7. Enabling uptake of feedback by Carless, & Boud, (2018), Design Principles by Bearman, et al 2014 Design Principles and or Universal Design Learning (NSW Govt 2024) includes inclusivity as well as quality and performance. Assessments customised depending on individuals.
8. Feedback given in class real time, and at end of each task to improve the next task. Not left at end of the year like exam in three hours. During Semester
9. Pilot program – evidence-based approach to allow to continue. One semester

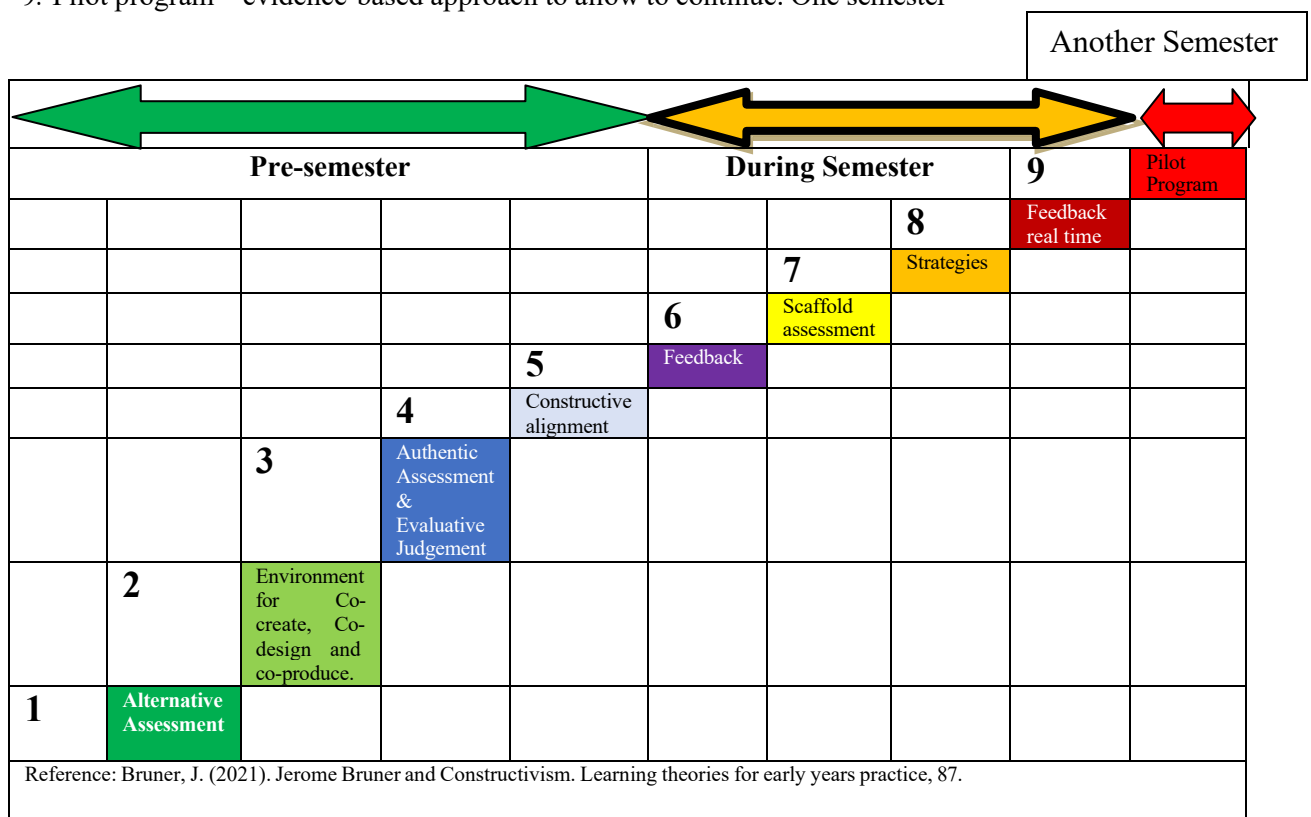


Figure 1: Implementation steps involved and timeline. Source Bruner (2021).

4.0 EVALUATION

The proposed changes effectiveness is shown in what is existing or is now replaced. The scaffolding in education, the guidance enables learning. The problem the existing Western Sydney University Student Feedback on Subject (SFS) and Student Feedback on Teaching (SFT) response rates overall and per school are low. The School of Engineering Design and Built Environment (EDBE) has extremely low participation rate responding to SFS and SFT surveys for Spring session in 2023, compared to other Schools in the University. The university has two surveys at the end of each semester definition of each follow.

SFT - Student Feedback on Teaching in schools, conceptualized as information on student perceptions of teaching, is described by many scholars as an effective instrument for the developmental use of teachers and teaching. This can lead to an enhancement of teachers' knowledge about their own teaching and to the initiation of improvement-oriented actions.

SFS – Student Feedback on Subject, Like the SFT, students receive emails with their survey links. The Student Feedback on Subjects (SFS) survey is run for every subject in every teaching session throughout the year. The SFS asks students to rate their subjects of study on the aspects related to Learning materials, Assessments, Opportunities for collaboration, Technology, Help and advice, Workload, Critical and analytical skills, and Work-related skills. Students are also asked to comment on the best aspects of the subject and areas in need of improvement. SFSs are issued for all subjects automatically. SFTs are issued for teachers whose names are against classes in the timetable.

The Student Perspective - The surveys were released through emails while they were still studying their subjects. The students would normally not complete the surveys until they are about to complete the semester. When students were ready to do the surveys at the end of the semester, they had difficulties finding the survey emails and even used SFT or SFS as key words to search their email inbox. Therefore, many of the students did not complete the survey. The survey instead arrived in an email - automation@app.smartsheet.com, with the subject heading, no student remembers this. Email is not working and is not searchable. It is preferred to have it on Blackboard VUWS sites as well as through emails.

The University should introduce Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Where the Learning Outcomes include Feedback. The UDL is an alternative to SFS and SFT. University wide implement in scaffold learning and feedback. The learning outcomes, goals, materials, and Teaching methods are intertwined with feedback. Guidance is the key. Evidence based feedback requires data for evidence. This evidence is collected 1. Pilot data on collection of reflection data and 2. The overall performance of students as an outcome.

5.0 FEEDBACK – PEER REVIEW

The Action Plan through Peer review and Pilot program will test if the strategies were put in practice. The following strategies for task focus feedback are used.

- Scaffolding (Hammond & Gibbons 2005).
- Feedback Literacy (Carless & Boud, 2018).
- Design Principles Bearman et al (2014).
- Universal Design Learning (UDL) (NSW Govt 2024).

The improvement is to include feedback into learning outcomes (LO). This is a modification to the assessment feedback process.

6.0 CONCLUSION

This Reflective Report on Western Sydney University is an example to critique an assessment task, thus demonstrates how to change and plan for a better effective assessment which includes developed feedback. The critique showed the problem of practice was the Feedback is too late to act on it. The redesign constraints and context to do so are:

- Active learning (Feedback)
- Inclusivity (Learning Outcomes include Feedback)
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An improvement for Learning Outcomes is to have the feedback included. Strategies like incremental learning feedback, Scaffolding by Hammond, & Gibbons, (2005). Pproviding multiple feedback opportunities, Design Principles by Bearman et al (2014) Feedback literacy, to enable uptake of feedback by Carless & Boud (2018), and Universal Design learning (NSW Govt 2024) support developing feedback. Action Plan shows how to implement feedback.

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