

# Making Feedback Effective

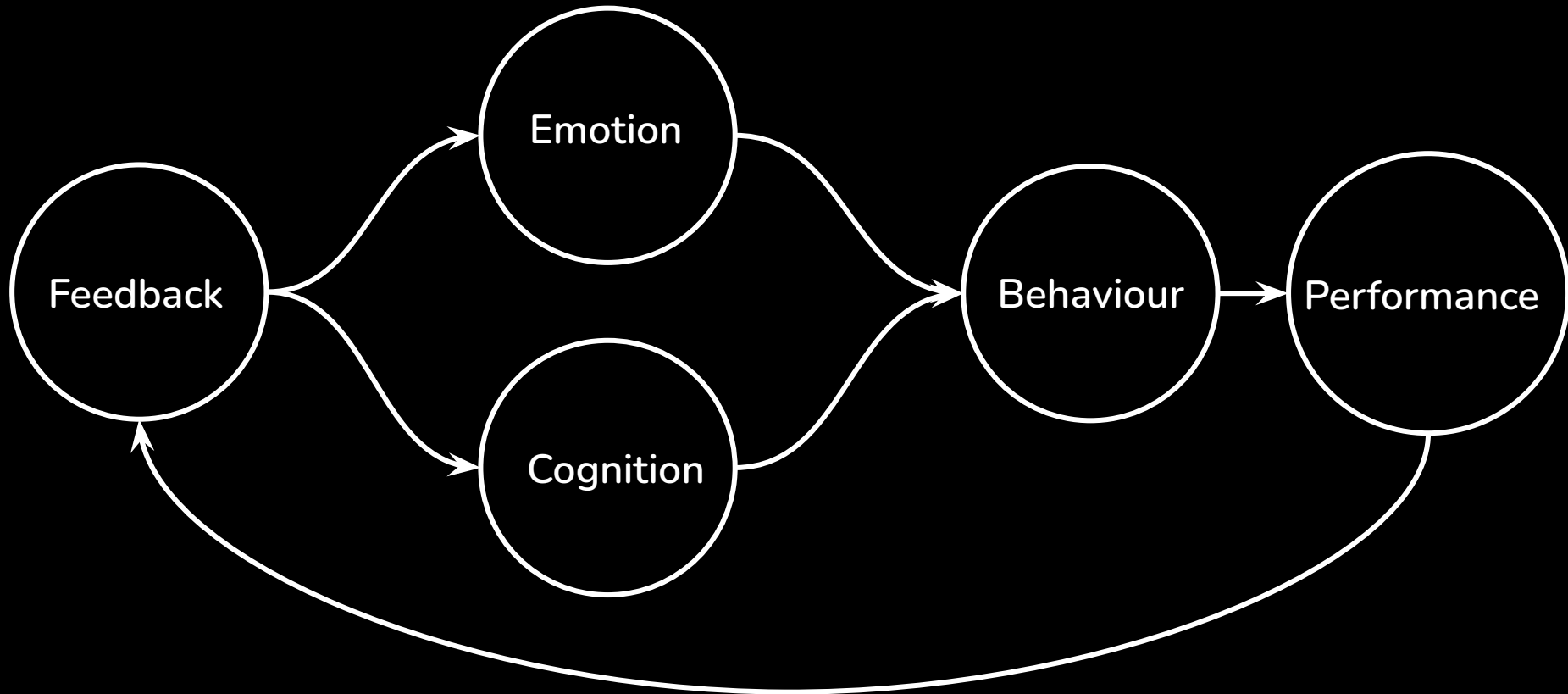


Dr. Peter Fossey  
Academic Development Centre  
[p.j.fossey@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:p.j.fossey@warwick.ac.uk)

## Plan:

1. Introduction
2. Feedback and feeling
3. Feedback and thinking
4. Conclusions

# Feedback and Learning



Q: What do you find difficult about learning from feedback?

# Feedback and Feeling

“[I] got the feedback from [tutor]. The whole draft has been corrected, full of red marks.

[I] do not want to read them through. Too discouraged ...'  
(M13, diary)”

(Tian and Lowe 2013, p.587)

“[I] got the feedback from [tutor]. The whole draft has been corrected, full of red marks.

There are eleven comments in total.

[I] do not want to read them through. Too discouraged ...'  
(M13, diary)”

(Tian and Lowe 2013, p.587)

“[I]ndividuals are broadly motivated to hold themselves in positive regard (Crocker & Park, 2004; Leary et al., 2009), making “decreases in self-esteem ... aversive for nearly everyone” (Baumeister et al., 1996, p. 8).

[I]ndividuals adopt various strategies to maintain self-esteem at desired levels while facing self-esteem threats, such as negative feedback.”

(Lyddy et al 2022, p. 1522)



# Responding to Criticism

Defensive responses to critical feedback:

- Negatively adjust personal commitment
- Undermine the validity of the criticism
- Downward social comparison
- Symbolic self-completion



# Responding to Criticism



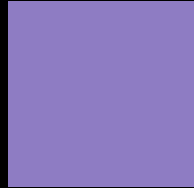
Constructive responses to critical feedback:

- Positively adjust personal commitment
- Help-seeking behaviours
- Upward social comparison
- Comparison to an objective, ideal standard

What would make it easier for you to deal with feedback, at an emotional level?

# Feedback and Thinking

# Opportunities and Threats



“Where feedback was not acted upon this was because assignments were topic-focused, and had moved on, or the feedback lacked relevance to future assignments.”

(Glover & Brown 2006, p. 3)

# Opportunities and Threats



	<b>Content/function</b>	<b>Negative example</b>	<b>Positive example</b>
<b>Category 1</b>	Points at feature	Wrong	Good
<b>Category 2</b>	...adds specificity	No - X, not Y	Good use of X
<b>Category 3</b>	...explains why	X not Y, because...	Good - your use of X helps to show...

Adapted from (Glover & Brown 2006, p.4)

# “Less description, more analysis”

Explain to the person next to you what this comment means in the context of your discipline, and what you would do as a result of receiving this piece of feedback.

# “Less description, more analysis”

“Of the 68% of History and Politics students who had received [this comment], 46% thought they had not understood it or that it needed more explanation.

Of the 56% in Cinema and Media Studies who had got the comment, 50% thought they had not understood it.

A substantial proportion (40%) of all students who got the comment felt puzzled...by it”.

(Chanock 2000, p. 100)



# Opportunities and Threats

Incremental vs entity theories of ability



# Opportunities and Threats



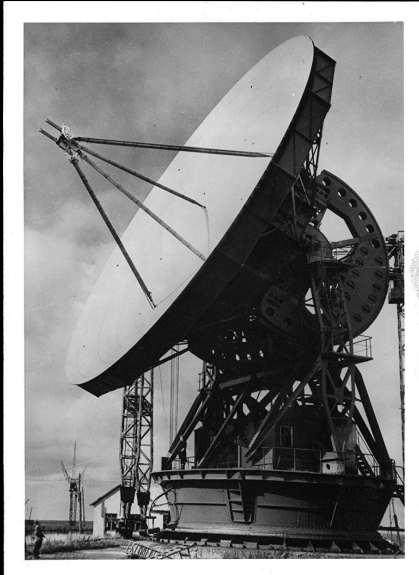
"When I think about kids watching a TV show like *American Idol* or *The Voice*, then they think, 'Oh, okay, that's how you become a musician, you stand in line for eight f\*\*\*\*\* hours with 800 people at a convention centre[...]' Can you imagine?

It's destroying the next generation of musicians! Musicians should go to a yard sale and buy an old f\*\*\*\*\* drum set and get in their garage and just suck. And get their friends to come in and they'll suck, too. [...] Because that's exactly what happened with Nirvana. Just a bunch of guys that had some s\*\*\*\*\* old instruments and they got together and started playing some noisy-a\*\* s\*\*\*, and they became the biggest band in the world. That can happen again!"

[Dave Grohl, in \(Marsh, 2013\)](#)

What might you want to ask your tutor  
next time you receive feedback?

# Conclusions: Feedback as Dialogue



“[W]hen messages are transmitted from a sender to a receiver, the receiver’s role is as crucial as the sender’s, and involves decoding, interpreting, and responding to the message”

(Winstone et al 2017, p.2026)

# A different metaphor?



“The receipt of feedback comments from an external source is a complicated form of social interaction, in which factors such as such as power, discourse, identity and emotion may come into play”

(Ryan and Henderson 2018, p.881)



THANK YOU!

Your feedback is greatly appreciated.

Please take ~5mins to complete this form, which has five questions:

<https://forms.office.com/e/tvzkXHwfrr>





## Sources:

Ackerman, D., Commeyer, C. J., and Gross, B. (2017) “The Effects of Source, Revision Possibility, and Amount of Feedback on Marketing Students’ Impressions of Feedback on an Assignment” in *Journal of Marketing Education* vol.39, no.1, p.17-29.

Ackerman, D. and Gross, B. (2010) “Instructor feedback: how much do students really want?” in *Journal of Marketing Education*, vol.32, no.2, p.172-181

Chanock, K. (2000) “Comments on Essays: do students understand what tutors write?” in *Teaching in Higher Education*, vol.5, no.1, p.95-105

Glover, C. and Brown, E. (2006) “Written Feedback for Students: too much, too detailed or too incomprehensible to be effective?” in *Bioscience Education*, vol.7, no.1, p.1-16

Hochschild, A.R. (1978) “Emotion Work, Feeling Rules and Social Structure” in *American Journal of Sociology*, vol.85, no.3, p.551-575.

Lyddy, J., Good, D. J., Kriz, T. D., and Stephens, J. P. (2022) “Contemplating Critique: Mindfulness Attenuates Self-Esteem and Self-Regulatory Impacts of Negative Feedback” in *Mindfulness*, vol. 13, p. 1521–1531.

## Sources:

Marsh, S. (2013) "Rock'n'Roll Jedi: Interview with Dave Grohl" in *Delta Sky Magazine*. Retrieved 15:59, 01/05/2019. Available: <http://deltaskymag.com/Sky-Extras/Favorites/Rock--n--Roll-Jedi.aspx>

Nussbaum, A.D. and Dweck, C. (2008) "Defensiveness Versus Remediation: Self-Theories and Modes of Self-Esteem Maintenance" in *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, vol.34, no.5, p.599-612.

Ryan, T. and Henderson, M. (2018) "Feeling Feedback: Students' Emotional Responses to Educator Feedback" in *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, vol. 6, p. 880-892.

Tian, M., & Lowe, J. (2013). "The role of feedback in cross-cultural learning: A case study of Chinese taught postgraduate students in a UK university". *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, vol. 38, no.5, p.580-598

Winstone, N. E. (2016) "'It'd be useful, but I wouldn't use it': barriers to university students' feedback seeking and recipience" in *Studies in Higher Education*, vol.42, p.2026-2041.

## Summary:

What is required on the student side for feedback to be effective?

- Comprehensible

- Actionable

- Not perceived as a threat to self-image

- Endorses an incremental theory of ability

- Offers an opportunity to repair or improve

How can staff help to support or facilitate a good response from students?

- Selective vs comprehensive strategies

- Self-assessment skills development

- Cognitive dissonance education

- Formative assessment strategy

- Implicit and explicit endorsement of incremental theories

# How much feedback?

Selective or comprehensive?

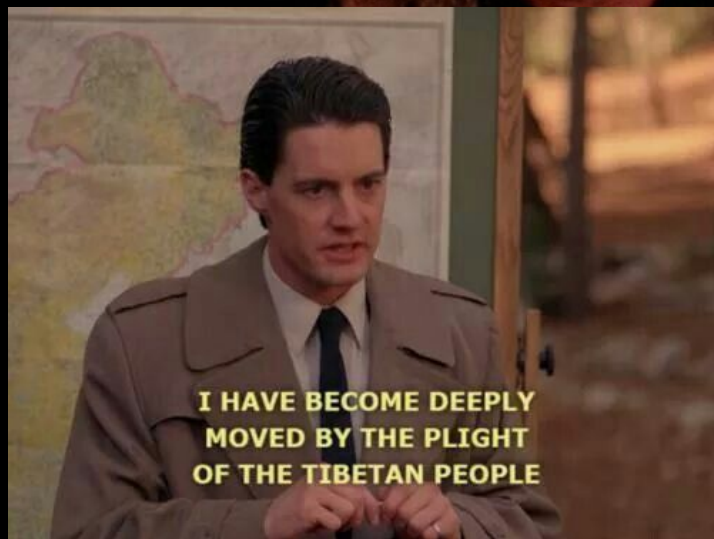
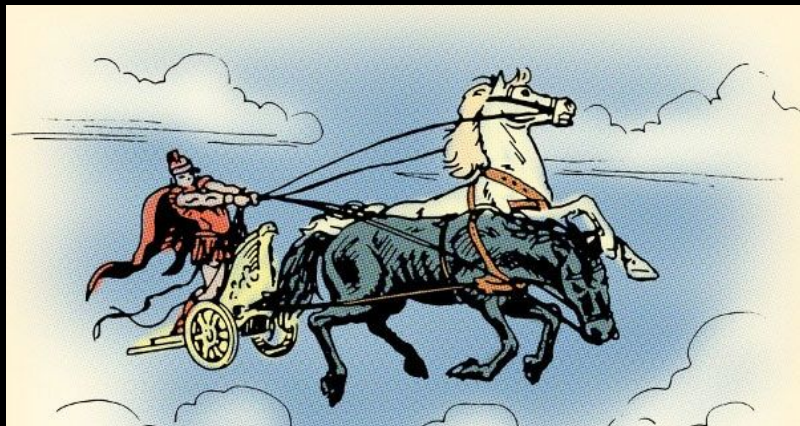
“[A]s the level of feedback went from “none” to “low” to “high”, students’ perceptions of the feedback became more negative.”

# How much feedback?

Selective or comprehensive?

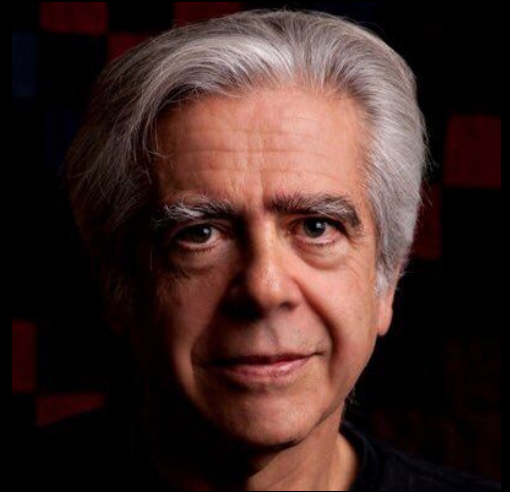
“That is, students perceived that the instructor’s impression of them was more negative [and] students made less attribution to personal/student effort.”

(Ackerman et al 2017, p.22)



“Emotions [solve] the problem of knowing what to ignore without wasting time examining every possible consequence of a decision... by controlling the salience of information, lines of inquiry, and live practical options. They narrow the focus of attention to ranges of factors that we have “learned”, on both the evolutionary and the individual scale, are the most likely to be relevant in any given situation.”

Ronald de Sousa; [interview for \*Emotion Researcher\*](#)



# Why emotion? What is emotion?

“Why is the emotional experience of adults in daily life as orderly as it is? Why, generally speaking, do people feel gay at parties, sad at funerals, happy at weddings?”  
(Hochschild 1978, p.552)

