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Developing students’ feedback literacy

David Carless
ASEM Forum: Assessment and Learning cultures
Bali, March 10th 2015
Aim of paper

To explore how teachers and students might work together to develop students’ feedback literacy
Overview

1. Feedback: importance and challenges
2. The nature of feedback literacy
3. Strategies for developing feedback literacy
SELECTED FEEDBACK ISSUES AND CHALLENGES
Four Levels of feedback

a) Task  b) Process  c) S-R  d) Person

+ High effect sizes, feedback on process, self-regulation (S-R)
- Low effect sizes, feedback on person (Hattie & Timperley, 2007)
Feedback purposes

Both students and staff have confusions over purposes of feedback and what it can achieve (Price et al., 2010)
Students’ perspectives

Need to understand students’ perspectives (Orsmond & Merry, 2011); particularly those of lower achieving students (Orsmond & Merry, 2013)
Guidance on using feedback

Need to guide and support students in using and acting on feedback (Burke, 2009)

“In general, do the right thing.”
The role of grades

The grade is the prism through which students read feedback (Sutton, 2012)
THE NATURE OF FEEDBACK LITERACY
Scoping feedback literacy

Epistemological dimension (acquiring academic knowledge)
Ontological dimension (investment of identity in academic work)
Practical dimension (reading, thinking about, using feedback)
(Sutton, 2012)
Aspects of feedback literacy

• Understanding standards and experience in making judgments
• Understanding feedback purposes and processes
• Capacity to generate and use feedback (Carless, 2015)
Handling critique

Self-management skills, maintaining emotional equilibrium

Keep CALM
It's Just feedback
Closing feedback loops

It’s only feedback if students take some action
STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING STUDENT FEEDBACK LITERACY
Assessment dialogues

Discussing assessment processes to help students understand the rules of the game (Carless, 2006)

The first rule of any game is to know you are in one.
Peer feedback

Often more plentiful and accessible

Students often gain more from providing than receiving peer feedback (Nicol et al., 2014)
Criteria & rubrics

• Generating criteria
• Engaging with criteria and standards
• Applying criteria
• Self-evaluation
Analyzing exemplars

Learning to apply criteria, make judgments about samples of student work and suggest how they can be improved (e.g. Hendry et al., 2011)
Final thoughts
Feedback is a social and relational act:
Care (Sutton, 2012)
Trust (Carless, 2009, 2013)
Key message

Teachers need to help students understand purposes & complexities of feedback and how they can use it
Policy implication

Need for further development in the assessment (for learning) literacy of university teachers (cf. Price et al., 2012)
THANK YOU