

An exploration of focus of feedback in one postgraduate medical education program using “levels of feedback focus” from Hattie and Timperley’s feedback model

Kelsey Compagna¹
Shelley Ross¹ and Ann Lee¹
¹ University of Alberta

Abstract

Background

Hattie and Timperley (2007) systematically investigated published research about feedback’s influence on learning. They found that the effectiveness of feedback to learning is determined by the type of feedback and the way that feedback is shared. Hattie and Timperley proposed a feedback model that included four major ‘levels’. Each level refers to the focus of feedback: Task, Process, Self-regulation, and Self. While many feedback researchers in health professions education (HPE) cite Hattie and Timperley, few authors have explored the actual levels of feedback in the HPE context. In this study, we used FieldNotes (brief documentation of feedback) to explore levels of feedback in our program.

Summary of work

Our family medicine postgraduate program uses formative workplace-based assessments called FieldNotes. Each FieldNote includes a brief summary of the feedback conversation between teacher and learner. We coded feedback levels in de-identified FieldNotes. Frequency counts and descriptives were calculated for the four feedback levels.

Results

Of the FieldNotes examined (N=2250), 422 (5%) were excluded (no feedback). For the remainder of the FieldNotes, 1105 (60%) included only one feedback level, 705 (38%) included two, 17 (1%) included three, and none included four. The majority of the feedback included Task (835; 46%), Process (248; 13%), or Process and Task (649; 35%).

Discussion

Our findings indicate that feedback shared with learners predominantly focused on either Hattie and Timperley’s levels of Task, Process, or both. Only 1% of the FieldNotes included three

levels of feedback. However, it is also possible that narrative summaries of feedback conversations do not capture all levels of feedback that occurred in the actual conversation.

Conclusions

Our findings enhance our understanding of feedback in our program, and offer potential directions for improving feedback effectiveness.

Take home message

Hattie and Timperley's feedback model offers a novel way to examine feedback effectiveness in HPE.

References (maximum three)

1. Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, 77(1), 81–112. <https://doi.org/10.3102/003465430298487>
2. Ross S, Lawrence K, Bethune C, van der Goes T, Pélissier-Simard L, Donoff M, Crichton T, Laughlin T, Dhillon K, Potter M, Schultz K. Development, implementation, and meta-evaluation of a national approach to programmatic assessment in family medicine residency training. *Academic Medicine* 2023; 98(2):188-198 DOI 10.1097/ACM.0000000000004750