

**IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING USING STUDENT APPRAISALS:
A CASE STUDY OF A TERTIARY INSTITUTE**

Rigieta Lord

University of Fiji, Lautoka, Fiji

ABSTRACT

Feedback is being used in education to improve teaching and learning. Through feedback, students are able to gauge their performance and teachers are also able to retrieve information to be used to design assessment and make adjustments for improvement. There are various types of feedback that are being discussed in this project, these include descriptive, evaluative, motivational and effective. These forms of feedback have different purposes which can be summarized to make improvement in the teaching and learning process. Feedback is being used in the education system to achieve learning goals and to inform students if they are on the right track or not. There are various ways in which feedback may be done to ensure that it is effective, the following must be considered, timely, clear and specific, user friendly to name a few. This project argues that student appraisal may be used to improve teaching and learning in a tertiary institution. This project also focuses on the use of student feedback to provide feedback to the Teaching and Learning Development Unit to design student activities as well as professional development session solely to bring about quality assurance. Both students and teachers in the tertiary institution have been used as participants of this project.

Key Words: Teaching and learning, feedback, appraisal, quality assurance

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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

In various literatures feedback has been noted to facilitate the performance of the teacher and the process of learning. Feedback is able to be an influential tool for learning which on the other hand may also be an influential weapon that hinders learning. According to Latham (1984), whether the feedback is formative or summative it involves far more than the written comments that are recorded on pieces of assessable work. She adds on to say that 'Every mark or remark, every gesture, facial expression, every act and every omission that occurs in and beyond the learning spaces is a form of feedback'. Universities invest heavily in measuring students' performance and knowledge through written tests, assignments, projects, and presentations, provision of extensive feedback should also be evident. More time should be invested into filing, analyzing and conversing with the students and others about the nature and content of the feedback given to students.

At times, feedback makes students change the way they express ideas and the way they think. In the long run and the literary context, these feedbacks shape their lives. It also is capable of reinforcing or hindering their self as learners by asserting or commending their knowledge or their paucity. Overall, it is seen to foster learning and encourage students to unlearn in order to learn. The research will focus on improving teaching and learning using feedback at the Tertiary level.

At this university, an appraisal form (see Appendix) has been designed to evaluate courses which aim to provide formative information to the department heads of the performance of the academic staff. The questions target areas such as learning outcomes, assessment tasks, resources, students backgrounds and experiences, strategies, subject content and areas that need to be improved.

This is an introductory chapter which will discuss a brief overview of the study. A background of the study will be discusses including the statement of feedback, aim of the study and the research questions that guided the study. In addition, the significance of the study and the methods used will also be discussed. Limitations and delimitations of the

study will be included. The chapter will conclude with an outline of the remaining sections of the study

1.1 Background and context

Feedback describes all kinds of comments made after an assessment which may consist of praise, an advice or an evaluation and can be either written or oral. With feedback, students are able to gauge their performance and achieve the required outcomes set by the teacher before the course or class. Feedback is an important part of the learning cycle, whereby students and teachers often convey disappointment and frustration towards the conduct of the feedback process. At times, students raise an issue that feedback on their assessment was not helpful or was unclear, and sometimes it was even intimidating.

In addition, students say that have not been given any assistance on how to make use of the feedback given to improve their work. Delay in provision of feedback is another issue which according to students could not be used to improve. In this case, lecturers infer that students are not interested in the comments they give but only look at the marks. Teachers articulate disappointment at students who do not integrate advice into their succeeding work.

This study is set put to highlight how teaching and learning can be improved using feedback. There are various forms of feedback used by universities

The case study is a tertiary institute which was established in 2005 with courses in Accounting, Economics, Management, Computing Science, Information Technology, Mathematics and Language and Literature. In further expanded to include teacher education, i-Taukei language and postgraduate and Masters programme in IT, English, Economics, Masters in Business Administration, Governance, Teaching English as a Second Language.

The university has 5 Schools which places emphasis on provision of feedback and using feedback to improve teaching and learning. Feedback is one of the ways in which you build teaching relationship with your students as a cohort and individually. Developing rubrics based on desired learning outcomes and assessment criteria, and which clearly articulate a 'ladder of achievement' in terms that enable the students to see where and how they might develop skills, is highly effective.

In general terms, feedback is provided face to face in tutorials and lectures and during presentations while responding to the discussions and ideas generated. Written feedback is provided on assignments and this is sometimes clarified if the students intend to meet with the lecturer to discuss their submissions. Lecturers make a point to meet with the students and discuss progress throughout the semester or even afterwards. At times, feedback is extended into references (when students ask for these) in generalized terms that address the students' participation as a whole.

Some lecturers take on the role of overseeing and mentoring new staff in feedback – particularly written feedback. It's surprising how many teachers write inappropriately negative remarks that are likely to discourage students. Criticism can be offered in ways to move forward and of course, praise ought to be given when praise is due.

At the upper levels of study such as the postgraduate level, feedback is vital to the supervision process and is given in a number of ways throughout supervision like face-to-face; by email; and through written comments on the students work. Feedback is most effective when face to face as an adjunct to written detailed feedback that is meeting with students and discussing and demonstrating how they might develop their work once they have meaningful examples to work from, is the best way of assisting the student to develop the desired skills.

According to Wiggins (1998), reporting may be outcome based, candid yet fair, rich in background and customer pleasant. This form of feedback identifies the rationale of the evaluation, provides adequate framework and points of indication to make explanation logical, uses a range of descriptors and ciphers either a letter or percentage grades that have smart, agreed-upon, and constant meaning.

Written feedback can also take many forms as mentioned earlier, rubrics that are detailed or which give short general statements about the skills set acquired in relation to the task; individualized feedback; and broader statements to the cohort about issues that need to be attended to – always expressed in non-identifying ways and in ways that encourage rather than admonish, or which address the particular problem by revising the material that has been so consistently misunderstood.

The research was carried out by conducting interviews with participants and provision of questionnaires. In doing so, solutions will be included to address any gaps in this project.

1.2 Aim of the study

The main objective of this study is to examine how feedback can be used to facilitate teaching and learning performance, feedback strategies in students' motivation will be analyzed. Potential ways in which feedback can be utilized at the institution using the appraisal system will be examined.

1.3 Research questions

The key questions listed below will be used as a guide in this study:

- What is feedback? What are the tools of feedback?
- Why is feedback important in the teaching and learning process?
- What are some practical strategies to make feedback effective?
- What are the students views of feedback given to them (quality, duration, how effective)
- How has the appraisal forms filled by students provided quality feedback for the Teaching and Learning Development Unit?

1.4 Significance of the study

This study is significant because feedback is being used in the tertiary system and it has been recognized that feedback is a vital part of the learning process, both the learners and the teachers benefit from it and at times they also both display disappointment and frustration to the way feedback is being conducted. Learners often complain about the duration of receiving feedback and the type of feedback whilst teachers assume that students do not use feedback to improve. The findings of this project will be used by the Teaching and Learning Development Unit and Schools of the university.

Gaps which are discovered in this project will be addresses and solutions will be devised to improve the process of feedback. The study will add to the Literature which will provide some insight on the current process of feedback being used. Academic staff and students can use the results of the findings to improve the process of feedback.

The project is divided into three parts. The first part will look at the context and the content. It will focus on the definitions of feedback and the tools of feedback and its importance.

The second section will look at how feedback affects the learning process and the teaching performance. There will be two focus areas in this section, first the general effect of feedback on teaching and learning and the second part will be the effects of the appraisal system at the university.

The last section will draw on the significance of feedback and evaluation and the views of students on the feedback provided to them by their lecturers. It will also identify ways that the appraisal forms provide quality feedback to the Teaching and Learning Development Unit.

Giving feedback is not an easy task particularly when the feedback is negative and students often see this as condemnation instead of an educational tool to improve their studies. Therefore it is important to note that teachers must know how to provide valuable and efficient feedback. Before provision of feedback, teacher could reflect on their experience as students and how they felt when they were given a negative feedback which could not assist them in any way but humiliate them. Feedback should be used as a tool to assist students and not to discipline them.

1.5 Delimitations of the study

The following factors affected the progress of the project and the researcher had some degree of control over them, the sample size, geographic region and the time frame for the project as I was awaiting the approval from the Research Ethics Committee as I was going to use some university materials.

There were 25 participants used for this project, 5 from each school in the university. Questions were multiple choice and open ended questions used for face to face interviews with the students and the academic staff to allow them to express themselves. The study focused on one university with information retrieved from 5 schools and this could have been changed to a comparative study of two universities in the district whereby the results could vary or more likely is similar.

Students were provided with questionnaires which were not an easy task particularly because the semester was coming to an end and they were trying to complete pending work before the study break.

Limitations of the study

Feedback is a vital part of education because it aids learners to comprehend their status in the subjects they take and work towards achieving the intended objectives needed to grow

Teachers have a role to play in feedback in education which included skills such as monitoring and self regulation. Valuable feedback defies thoughts, introduces additional information, offers alternative interpretations, and creates conditions for self-reflection and review of thoughts. Provision of feedback in assessment as learning encourages students to focus on the task rather than just getting the answers correct. Students should be able to comprehend the feedback and adjust their work to make improvement in the future.

The local literatures were limited on Feedback in Tertiary Institutions in Fiji however, materials from other universities were used to supplement. Bureaucracy was followed before the compilation of this project and collection of data, approval was sort from the University's Research Ethics Committee.

The project used one university and time factor was a limitation as approval by the Committee was delayed and I had to use my breaks to get questionnaires filled.

1.6 Thesis outline

There are six chapters in this project. Chapter One which is the Introductory chapter contains background and context, the aim of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations and limitations of the study followed by the thesis outline. Chapter Two illustrates the literature review of the study. Chapter Three contains the research methodology used in the course of study and Chapter Four contains the main findings and the results. Chapter Five discusses the project findings and the concluding chapter, Chapter Six contains the recommendations, implications and the concluding remarks.

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The Literature Review section presents the literature used in this study on feedback being used to improve teaching and learning at university. The review is presented under the following headings:

- What is feedback? What are the tools of feedback?
- Why is feedback important in the teaching and learning process?
- What are some practical strategies to make feedback effective?
- What are the students views of feedback given to them (quality, duration, how effective)
- How has the appraisal forms filled by students provided quality feedback for the Teaching and Learning Development Unit?

2.1 What is feedback? What are the tools of feedback?

Feedback in education is an on-going process which has emerged to facilitate the process of learning and performance of teachers. Ende (1983) defines feedback as 'information describing students' performance in a given activity that is intended to guide their future performance in the same or in a related activity'. He adds on to say that feedback is a part of formative evaluation which is assessment as learning that guides students. With this form of evaluation, students are able to take ownership of their learning and monitor their progress. Students become meta cognitive, which is having knowledge of their own thought processes such as self analysis, self reflection, interpret and reorganize knowledge. Through feedback, students are aware of the manner in which they learn.

Hattie (2009) describes feedback as 'information provided by a teacher, peer, parent, book, one's experience, etc about aspects of one's performance or understanding'. Through feedback, the receiver gets to know and understand his academic status for that particular assignment, test or any other academic activity. When feedback is being provided, there is a line of communication between the sender and the receiver, thus the manner in which it is being relayed is very important. Feedback is also referred to as formative assessment whereby a teacher uses various techniques to do in-process evaluation of student comprehension, learning needs and academic progress during a

lesson, or a course. In this process, teachers are able to identify concepts that students have problems with understanding, acquiring or cannot achieve a certain level of instruction.

Definitions of feedback given by Winne and Butler (1995), is related to that given by Hattie (2009), which describes it as *information with which a learner can verify, add to, overwrite, adjust, or streamline information in reminiscence, whether that information is domain knowledge, meta-cognitive knowledge, idea about identity and tasks, or cognitive strategy*. On the other hand, Kulhavy (1977) implies and shows that feedback is not a supporter, because it can be conventional, customized, or discarded. Feedback by itself may not have the influence to instigate additional action; therefore, feedback is not only provided by teachers, students or peer groups but also required by students and peers and perceived by a student exclusive of it being purposely required. Wiggins (1998) describes feedback as all types of remarks made after the actuality, as well as suggestion, admire and appraisal.

Tower (1999) adds on in his definition of feedback as information being presented to a student after a performance which reflects the adequacy, quantity and quality of performance. Paacpaniccia (2002) and Topping et.al (2000) raises a similar definition as Sadler (1989) that feedback being information about the truth or falsehood of human behavior, as well as providing students with a means to improve their own performance and to correct their mistakes.

Formative assessment is feedback for both the teachers and to the students about their current status of knowledge and the skills to move forward (Sadler, 1989).

There are various tools of feedback however to be able to understand the purpose, the effects and the types of feedback, a teacher must think about the 'continuum' of training and feedback. There is a clear difference between provision of instruction and provision of feedback. Feedback needs to offer information particularly involving the task of process of learning that fills a gap between what is implicit and what is intended to be implicit (Sadler, 1989).

There are various tools of feedback which are being described by the Humanist, Carl Rogers; these include effective, descriptive, evaluative and motivational.

Hattie (2009) for feedback to be effective, it needs to be clear, purposeful, meaningful and compatible with students' prior knowledge and to provide logical connections.

Jackson (2009) contributes to effective feedback by saying that is it referring our current status in affiliation to the goals the necessary tools to achieve our proposed target. Through feedback the teacher is able to assist the students, perceive the coursework and assignments set to them as opportunities to gain knowledge of and develop rather than as assault on their self-concept. In addition, effective feedback allows teachers to beat into a influential way of not only helping students gain knowledge, but helping them get improved at education.

Tunstall and Gipps (1996) describes a type of feedback that records and classifies the feedback given by the teacher as evaluative and descriptive. Evaluative feedback involves a value judgment and descriptive describes what the student said or did and provides guidance for him/her to improve.

Motivational feedback makes the student feel good as the main aim is to encourage and support the learner. Formative feedback is defined by Irons (2008) as any information, procedure or action which hasten student knowledge based on remarks linking to either formative assessment or summative assessment activities.

2.2 Why is feedback important in the teaching and learning process?

Research by Hattie (2008) revealed that feedback was among the most powerful influences on achievement..... Feedback is an integral feature of effective and efficient teaching and learning and is used to enhance and strengthen student learning. Information received from feedback can be used by teachers to improve and enhance performance.

Through feedback from students, teachers are able to have an insight of their learning as supported by Rauch and Fillenworth (1995).

Race (2001) has stated that feedback is important in all contexts of learning. This is justified in his *ripple on a pond* model which illustrates the importance of feedback in learning. He adds on to say that feedback can improve a student's confidence, self awareness and enthusiasm for learning. The primary purpose of feedback is to keep students on course so that they arrive successfully at their predetermined destination

(Black & William, 2008). Jackson (2009) added to the purpose of feedback, “It is one thing to gather feedback about learners’ improvement, but if you just gather this feedback and in no way make use of it to amend your teaching, then you are collecting is useless. The data you receive from grading your assignments and assessments will give you feedback about the effectiveness of your own instruction.”

Feedback is one of the best ways to update learners regarding their academic progress and gives information that can be used by learners to make alteration in acquiring their ambition and attaining their highest potential. It also amplifies self-awareness and self-understanding, which will impede knowledge.

According to Bellon *et al* (1992) ‘academic feedback is more robustly and constantly associated to accomplishment than any other instruction conduct...this association is reliable in spite of position, socioeconomic category, race or school setting’.

Feedback works well in academic and non-academic situations as implied by John Hattie in his comments, the most influential distinct variation that augments accomplishment is feedback; the simplest recommendation for improving learning must be a lot of feedback. Black & William (1998) contribute to the importance of feedback in their research report stating that *‘conclusively formative assessment does improve learning, the gains in achievement appear to be quite considerable, and as noted earlier, amongst the largest ever reported for educational interventions. As an illustration of just how big these gain are, an effect size of 0.7, if it could be achieved on a nationwide scale, would be equivalent to raising the mathematics achievement score of an ‘average’ country like England, New Zealand or the United States into the ‘top five’ after the Pacific rim countries of Singapore, Korea, Japan and Hong Kong.’*

Race and Brown (2005) illustrates the advantages of giving feedback which promotes the advantages of giving verbal feedback to students. *Achievement gains are maximized in framework where educators raise the precision of classroom appraisal, offer learners with recurrent edifying feedback, and engage learners profoundly in the classroom evaluation, documentation charge, and contact process. In brief, these gains are maximized where teachers pertain the philosophy of evaluation for education* (Stiggins, 2005)

2.3 What are some practical strategies to make feedback effective?

In learning, there is a gap between current and desired understanding in response to feedback which may contribute to the ineffectiveness of learning. To make learning effective for students, teachers may assist students increase their effort, particularly when the effort leads to tackling more challenging tasks or appreciating higher quality experiences rather than just doing more. Efforts may be increased, if students are aware of the goal (Kluger & Denisi, 1996). Students may be able to detect errors when they are able to give self-feedback prior to reaching the goal. This is very powerful when students have some knowledge of the task. Teachers are therefore encouraged to use students' prior knowledge before introducing a new topic. Brainstorming enables students to think and contribute to discussion with their peers.

When providing learning objectives, teachers should ensure that they are specific and directed and focus on what the student should achieve (Locke & Latham, 1984). *Teachers may construct a knowledge setting in which students build up self-regulation and mistake uncovering skills* (Hattie, Biggs & Purdie, 1996).

Black and William (1998) elaborates the vital fundamentals of feedback in three points which are detection of the preferred objective, verification about current situation (current work) and some understanding of a method to seal the gap flanked by the two.

When providing feedback, it should be related to the learning objectives, this is described by Hattie and Timperly (2007) in their model (Appendix 1) which addresses three questions of *Where am I going? (What are the goals?)*, *How am I going? (What progress is being made towards the goal?)* *Where to next? (What activities need to be undertaken to make better progress)*

Feedback can be either written or verbal; Clarke (2001) reiterates that when feedback is given, teachers draw attention to two or three good points in the students work and one where some improvement is needed. He disagrees with provision of too many criterions when feedback is set and as well much information in the marking which often makes it difficult for students to understand.

Use of pedagogical knowledge is vital when the teacher transforms the content of a subject in his/ her teaching, in addition is the understanding of the process of learning, the

capability of the students and the necessary management skills and instructional goals (Loughran, 2007). Feedback assists students to make a connection with what they have learnt and apply in their assignments.

When feedback is given, the essence of it will depend on how the students choose to use or not to use the feedback given. Often teacher use language that is not understandable for the students and if this is done then transmission of feedback is one way, thus students will not improve. Duncan (2007) states the *command of a lecturer to a student to use a more academic style, comments that is understood and interpreted well by the student.*

Feedback is effective when it is given straight after the learning activity. Students improve when feed-forward comments are given and they are able to incorporate into their future assignments and improve.

Students perceptions of feedback and their understanding of written feedback given to them has been researched by Weaver (2006). He suggested that for feedback to be effective, the comments needed to:

- i. include both analysis and direction – precise, comprehensive remarks together with implications for upgrading plus broad suggestion for future assignments
- ii. constructively pass judgment on, even good quality presentation
- iii. balance optimistic and pessimistic remarks as there is a tendency to focus on the pessimistic
- iv. relate to evaluation criteria – comments associated openly to foundation for ruling, terminology to match the mark awarded.

He adds on to say that the teacher *needs to build in opportunities for returning marked work and providing encouragement for students to engage with the feedback given.* This provides an avenue to offer broad oral feedback so that students can put their own work into perspective and gain knowledge of the mistake of others.

2.4 What are the students views of feedback given to them (quality, duration, how effective)

According to Duncan (2007), students do not comprehend feedback remarks given by teachers. Part of the problem is that the teachers (and students) see feedback in seclusion from other characteristics of the teaching and learning process, and consider feedback to

be mainly teacher-owned venture (Taras, 2003). The process of feedback becomes effective when all those involved – in this case the students and the teacher are involved. Grade focused students are least bothered about the comments but check that they get good marks. As a teacher, one must be able to maximize student engagement in their teaching. Assessments should be designed in such a way to enable students to see the immediate benefits of taking heed of advice given through feedback.

Students can be taught to take ownership of their learning by commenting when they are provided with feedback. When students comprehend that information from both teacher feedback and their own self-assessment can help them progress, they will process instruction more intensely, persevere, and firmly attempt. They become more self-regulated learners (Brookhart, 2006). Black *et al* (2003) supports this idea with the notion that feedback that focuses on what desires to be completed. can persuade each and every one to consider that they can get better.

At times above-average students put in a lot of effort into their work, thus receiving feedback from their lecturers boosts their self-esteem, on the other hand, below-average students are disadvantaged because they are incapable to completing the task or asking for advice (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996).

When the feedback cues the students to direct attentions to self praise rather than to the quality of the task, a negative effect on learning is created. *Many studies speak to effective teachers praising less than average.* (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996).

Feedback only works if is able to address a fractional perception of the students work as well as if the student is incapable of understanding the comments provided, feedback is ineffective (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Students ignore comments when grades are given (Butler, 1998) however when lecturers replaced remarks with mark, students employ more efficiently in progressing their work. *A numerical grade does not show students how to improve their work, thus giving a mark to every work submitted by the student is misdirected* (Black, et al, 2002).

The students preferred comments written in the way that is understandable to them. Some students found it difficult to interpret phrases that had *deepen analysis of key issues*,

sharpen critique, identified and developed implications, link theory and practice (Duncan, 2007).

Nicol (2008) recommends that a separate class be created for decoding and discussing the feedback comments when the tasks are returned. She further suggests that this could be done in the tutorial classes, whereby the students are invited to share and discuss the comments given by the students.

Lunsford (1997), also puts forward that *feedback can be supportive to the learners when it is structured in terms of the impact of the inscription on the person who reads. This could also improve self-regulation skills because it allows the learners to slowly move away from monologue to conceptualise a reader and direct their writing to her or him. As people who work with student writing can demonstrate, enabling students to make their writing reader-centred can transform the quality of their written.*

Some students have supported the idea of praise however it should be distinguished from praise directed to the performance of the task which can benefit learning (Hattie and Timperly, 2007).

Conversation around learning can be improved and the control degree of difference between the appraiser and learners decreases when peer feedback is included into the process of evaluation (Nicol, 2008). Formative feedback can improve the students' manifestation on the assignment and persuade them to think more intensely about the quality of their work. On the other hand, students appreciated peer feedback as they were able to view other students' work which prompted them to work harder to avoid being left out.

Feed-forward was suggested by students as it encouraged them to focus on future tasks or assignments. Boud (2000) concluded that both the learner and the teacher had different levels of perception about the level of detail and the usefulness of the feedback given. The teachers felt that they were giving comprehensive remarks on their assignments which were very useful. From this study, they suggested that for feedback to be effective, a lot of skills and attributes are important. These include the skills and abilities of faculty staff in providing feedback, students' readiness to receive and act on feedback, and the environment itself. The timing of feedback can also have an impact on its effectiveness.

Feedback can be instant, postponed or resistant. Hattie and Timperly (2007) states that *feedback is more efficient when known as soon as possible after presentation and that it is more effectual when it is well thought-out as a procedure and not a onetime speedy repair communication.*

Assessment feedback as stated by some students can be transformative and encouraging; others can baffle and anguish due to the following reasons given by Huxman (2007):

- i. Ambiguity - Comments such as 'poor effort' and 'could do better' are illustrations of vague feedback that fall short to present anything substantive about where improvements could be made and learning enhanced. If feedback is unclear this can lead to students having no genuine perceptive of wherever they made the mistake and how they should go onward. This eventually leaves the evaluation worthless as the learner is not capable to relate their knowledge to their subsequent assignment.
- ii. Lateness - Students need time to replicate on remarks made in feedback for them to progress the standard of their work and expand their learning through the period of the course. Returning work late, in some cases after the assignment has been completed, greatly reduces the learning understanding. *A study in 2000 highlighted that this is a common occurrence with 59% of respondents feeling that their feedback was received 'too late to be useful* (Hartley & Chesworth, 2000)
- iii. Miscommunication - If feedback takes the outline of a one-way communication of outlook from the teacher to the learner, in a feedback page for example, it leaves slight scope to make sure the learner really knows what the teacher is trying to converse. One more common grievance is that handwritten feedback is unreadable, rendering it almost of no use.
- iv. Negativity - Excessively decisive remarks presenting no productive insight can have an enormously unenthusiastic impact on a student's development. Not only does this be unsuccessful to offer anything valuable in terms of development it can also, particularly when there is no option of resubmission, result in a harmful consequence to the learner's self esteem.

- v. Uncertainty - It is widely agreed that, “*students can only attain a learning objective if they understand that goal, assume some ownership of it, and can evaluate development*” (Nicol & Macfarlene-Dick, n.d). It is not rare for teachers and learners to accidentally have conflicting understanding of the objective and marking criteria of a project.

Regardless of the level of motivation to learn, students cannot convert feedback statements into actions for improvement without sufficient working knowledge of some fundamental concepts. Teachers evaluate students work regularly and they are able to quickly pick out faults, when these are identified, teachers must ‘nip it in the bud’ so that students do not repeat the same mistakes as mentioned earlier. Often teacher give feedback thinking that the students already understand what they are referring to (Sadler, 1989).

2.5 How has the appraisal forms filled by students provided quality feedback for the Teaching and Learning Development Unit?

Appraisal forms are being distributed to students at the end of the semester with the goal to provide valuable information through student feedback, which helps the University to identify teaching strengths and to make alterations that, enhances the teaching and learning experiences for current and future students.

The main purpose of this report (as stated in the Appraisal report) created from the appraisal forms is to analyse and understand what students’ feel about the courses and course coordinators of the University and what can be done to improve student learning.

For this reason the objectives of the forms are as follows:

- i. *Analyse Appraisal data effectively.*
- ii. *Provide feedback to Schools, Departments and course coordinators on their respective courses and teaching.*
- iii. *Provide advice to course coordinators on teaching enhancement.*
- iv. *Enhance student learning experiences through innovative pedagogical approach.*
- v. *Help develop professional development workshops for course coordinators.*
- vi. *Help develop awareness workshops for students around appraisal process.*

According to Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (2011), *teacher evaluation systems have not exactly calculated teacher eminence because they have failed to do a good job of discerning between effectual and unproductive teacher. In addition, teacher evaluation systems have not aided in creating a highly skilled teacher workforce.*

Students' feedback can give teachers an insight into the matter as it is often difficult task to motivate students (Rauch and Fillenworth, 1995). There are many ways in which instructional quality can be improved as reported by Ellis (1993) these include, *identification of teaching skills through discussion with skilled teachers, requirement of teaching principles, use of student feedback on teaching, presentation of eminent teaching awards, evaluation of teaching proficiency upon hiring, a faculty development course, and encouragement of self/peer evaluation.*

Teaching performance evaluation is a incessant procedure of knowledge, aim accomplishment, communication and evaluation, as well as a means of becoming a proficient student (Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

Feedback as a teaching performance evaluation has been recommended as a organized means for promoting knowledge and development. *Some studies have verified that feedback may, indeed, stimulate growth in learning to teach and may affect positive change in student teachers* (Lillis & Turner, 2001)

With the student feedback in appraisal forms, professional development may be conducted to address issues raised in the appraisals (Black., 2000)

Hendry *et al.* (2007) reiterates that the *feedback provided by students and assessments aid the teacher appraise their performance and the effectiveness of the teacher's effort.* There are two dimensions of student feedback that can be used for teacher improvement as suggested by Joshi (2002); these are quantitative dimension that is done through a questionnaire filled by the students and a qualitative dimension that can be determined through the interaction with the student. Joshi (2002) proposed that there are two dimensions of student feedback. There is a relationship between the teacher's approaches to teaching and responses to qualitative student feedback.... (Hendry *et al.*, 2007). Students' suggestions are being used by the teachers to make changes at times. *These responses also added positively to their classroom effectiveness*

CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The focus of this study is to examine how feedback can be used to improve teaching and learning whereby a case study of a tertiary institution will be used. The study also focuses on the effectiveness of the appraisal system in this institution. This chapter discusses the research methodology that was adopted in this study to collect information and analyze the data in order to address the central research questions that are stated above. The chapter presents justifications for the methods that were used particularly providing the rationale for the use of case study method.

3.1 Research Paradigm

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) state that determining which type of data to collect how to collect and how to use them is important before a research is conducted. A research can be classed either as a qualitative or quantitative whereby both approaches prove successful in researched in education. Fraenkel and Wallen (1993) states that in a quantitative research, the research questions must be clearly defined from the very beginning of the research. Collection of data is numerically measured as the study deals with numbers to assess the number of days a student was absent and the percentage.

A qualitative research is used to 'analyze the quality of relationships, activities, situations and materials'. In this type of research, the 'attention is on the quality of a particular activity rather than on how it occurs or alternative ways of evaluation' (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1993)

This research will use a qualitative approach to prove if feedback facilitates the learning process and teaching performance

A case study will be used so that view points of the participants are brought out.

There are various forms of case studies that can be used for instance, exploratory, explanatory and descriptive (Yin, 1993) and Stake (1995) adds another three, intrinsic, instrumental and collective.

Intrinsic is used when the researcher has keen curiosity in the case, Instrumental is when the case is used to understand more than what appear to be obvious to the observer and

collective is when a group of cases is studied (Stake, 1995). This research will use an instrumental case study as I need to understand more about feedback and its effectiveness being a part of the Teaching and Learning Unit.

3.1.1 Qualitative research

This research will aim to investigate how feedback facilitates the learning process and the teaching performance. The questionnaires will allow students to contribute their views on feedback.

According to Yin (1993) one of the conditions to choose a research design is on what the researcher wants to find out. It depends on the nature of the research questions whereby the 'what' and 'how' questions are best suited in this research design. The primary aim of this qualitative research was to provide a complete, detailed description of the research topic by collecting, analyzing and interpreting data through observing what the participants did and/or said. It is also used to uncover prevalent trends in thought and opinion

Using a qualitative research allows the investigator to deeply understand the issue that is being investigated and the results may be influenced by the researcher

3.1.2 Quantitative research

This type of research measured the incidence of various views and opinions in a chosen sample. The research generates numerical data or information that is converted into numbers. To test the hypothesis, I will look at cause and effect and make predictions. Previous appraisal reports will be used. All aspects of the study will be designed before any data is collected and questionnaires will be used to collect data. Data collected was in the form of numbers whereby the objectives looked for specific dimension.

3.1.3 Mixed methods

The research is mainly qualitative but the use of questionnaires with open and closed ended questions will make the research use mixed method. Mixed method research is given a priority in the research and integrated both the quantitative and qualitative data in a single research study. Mixed methods research allows for more divergent findings and included culture in the design by giving a voice to everyone involved in the behavior being examined.

Research findings will be communicated to the people who can use the information particularly the Teaching and Learning Development Unit.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODS/ TOOLS

3.2.1 The use of case studies

As mentioned earlier a case study will be used in this course of study for investigation. According to Yin (1993), a case study is an pragmatic analysis that examines a observable fact within its innate surroundings, when the issues under inquiry is difficult to extract from a large number of real life contexts, several sources are used to validate the data gathered. In this study, the university will be used as I work in the Teaching and Learning Development Unit. Students will be used to fill in questionnaires and also academic staff Heads of Departments/ Directors will be used as participants.

3.2.2 Interviews (Face to face Interviews)

Face to face interviews will be used to gather information. Listening, observing and forming a rapport with research informants were seen as important skills for undertaking a qualitative research (Williamson, 2000: 112). Information collected was given a sound reflection of the reality of issues. Semi structured interviews will be used to make the interviews more relevant and authentic. There is a limitation to using Interviews which is stated by Cohen and Manion (1994: 67)this method is prone to subjectivity and bias as the interview is conducted by the teachers and the interviewees may be the teachers. Some issues discussed may be sensitive therefore this tool may not be reliable.

3.2.3 Questionnaire

Questionnaires will be designed to gather information in this study and it will consist of closed and open ended questions. The questions will be based from the research questions stated in this course of study to gather subjective and objective information. In formulating questions, the following will be considered, content of the questions, wording of the questions, form of answers and the sequence of questions designed. A pilot test will be used. In doing so, issues such as whether the questions were set in well understood by the respondents, gauge whether the respondents were reluctant to answer the questions, time frame given to answer questionnaires were appropriate and the length

of the questionnaire was also considered which either discouraged them or not to fill in the questionnaire.

3.2.4 Document analysis

Readily available sources of data from the internet will be sourced to provide more insight to the study.

3.2.5 Field work

Field work will commence when the research proposal is accepted. A timeline has been drawn in advance so that there is a minimum amount of problems whilst carrying out the field work.

3.3 Justification of Methodology

3.4 Research Sample

The sample that was used for this purpose of study was a case study. The sample was not very large as it was time consuming although some researchers suggest that a sample should be as large as the researcher can obtain as much information that is needed in the course of study. In this case, a stratified purposeful sampling method was used.

3.4.1 Stratified Purposeful Sampling

The sample will be chosen from the students in all schools and centres.

3.4.2 Selection of Participants

The participants will vary from the 100- 300 level as well as Postgraduate and Masters students.

3.4.3 Research Participants

It is important to retain the confidentiality of information given by the participants. The interview sessions will be done after lecture session with the approval of the Research and Ethics Committee.

3.5 Data Analysis

Recording of data is very important as it will affect how the information is analyzed and interpreted. This is an on-going activity; for example, when I distribute questionnaires I will be conduct face-to- face interviews.

Tape recorders will be used to ensure that there is not fabrication of information and appropriate care will be considered. In getting information, the researcher will need to replay the recorder several of times to get the correct information. Transcripts will be designed and given to the participants to validate their answers.

The strategy that will be used will ensure that the analysis is of the highest quality.

3.5.1 Data Triangulation

In using a mixed method approach, the questionnaires used will gather as much information as possible related to the study. This will be done informally and also through discussions with staff of the Teaching and Learning Development Unit.

3.5.2 Questionnaire Survey

The questionnaires will have open ended and closed end questions and the responses will be analyzed using a different method. The questionnaires will be given individually to the participants so that there is confidentiality and it will allow the participant to clear any doubts and share personal information with the researcher. The information will be tabulated.

3.5.3 Semi Structured Interview

The data collected from the set interviews will be organized in a fully transcribed method. Where quotes will be used, these will be relevant quotes keeping in context the exact words of the participants. The information will be verified and answers will be put into the various research questions and sub-headings.

3.5.4 Document analysis

A Likert Scale will be used to consider the tools of feedback and its effectiveness. The value assigned to each Likert will be determined by the researcher conducting the research which bases the decision on the desired level of detail. Likert scales range from 2 to 10 with 5 or 7 being the most common.

A descriptive analysis will be used before the information from the different documents is synthesized and alignment made to the research questions. Suggestions given will be considered with reference to views of other researchers.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are certain ethical issues that will be considered in this course of study. Firstly, approval must be granted from the Research and Ethics Committee to conduct the research as it will be conducted in the university. The participants will be asked to give their prior consent before the research begins.

The purpose of the study will be clearly informed to the participants and they must be willing to participate.

The research must ensure that the confidentiality is taken into consideration and the questionnaires will bind ethical consideration which will be ensured at all times.

It must be ensured that there is no interference with the teaching and learning process. Trochim (2006: 13) states that 'ethical principles require that the researcher does not put participants in a position where they might be at risk of harm as a result of their participation'. He further adds that a *good research practice requires the use of no-treatment control group – a group of participants who do not get the program that is being studied. But when that treatment may have beneficial effects, persons assigned to the no-treatment control may feel their rights to equal access to services are being curtailed* (Trochim, 2006: 23).

Arksey and Knight (1999: 56) state that 'confidentiality is about not disclosing the identity of the participants and not attributing comments to individuals in ways that can permits the individuals with which they are associated to be recognized unless they have expressly consented to being identified.'

There may be some academic staff who will want to dictate the terms of the research especially since the researcher will be working with fellow colleagues who may interfere with what is to be included in the draft, with his considerable amount of patience must be on the side of the researcher and any suggestions made must be given with justifications.

The welfare of the participants must be taken into consideration as stated by Creswell (1994: 86), the researcher needs to take the welfare of the respondents into consideration.

CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH FINDINGS/RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research findings of this study based on the answers to each of the research questions. The five research questions addressed the main themes of the study namely; feedback and tools of feedback, importance of feedback, practical strategies to make feedback effective, students views of feedback given to them and effectiveness of appraisal forms for quality feedback

4.1 Research Question 1: What is feedback? What are the tools of feedback?

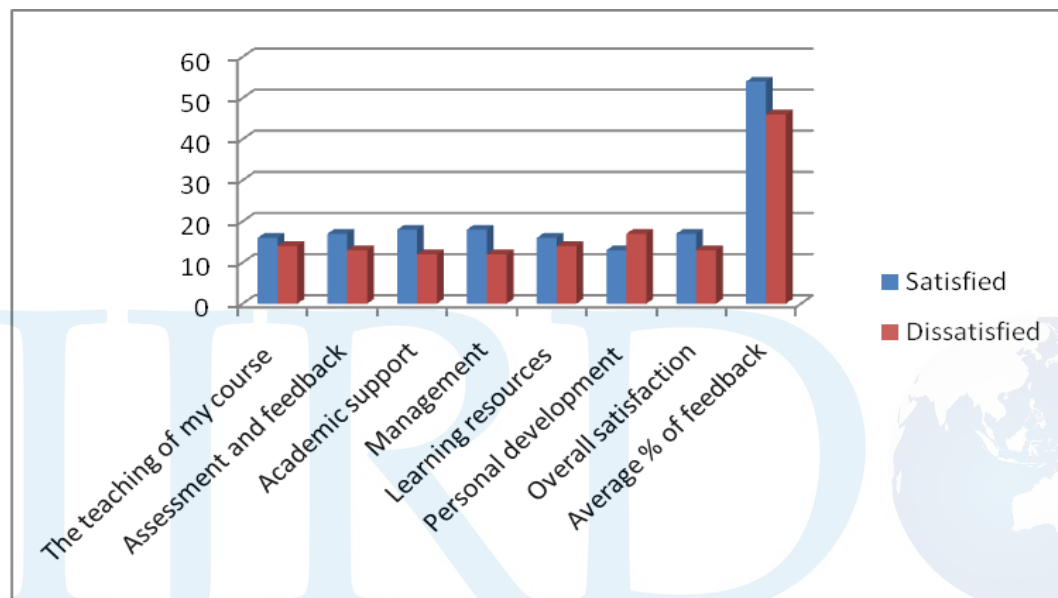
From the questionnaires given to the students, the common understanding of feedback is provision of comments provided to them by the teacher at the end of an assignment, a test or during tutorial discussions. The common forms of feedback that the students know of were written and verbal. For written, there are either an assignment sheet attached to their marked assignment or comments electronically attached on the soft copy of the assignment. Some comments were handwritten on the assignment with no clear criteria.

The definitions given by the students on feedback were that feedback basically giving your opinions to deal with a situation, another participant defined feedback as negative aspects of someone's opinion. Analyzing the findings, has identified that there are three levels of feedback task that describes how well the students has performed the assignment differentiating the right and wrong responses and obtaining exact information building on their prior knowledge, this form of feedback points out what the students needs to do to improve. Being given the remarks enabled the students to monitor and correct their mistakes and work on improving. When students did this, they took ownership of their learning by effectively dealing with the comments provided in the feedback.

According to the responses received from the students, Figure 1 indicated students' level of satisfaction of the certain items including feedback given to them; the students were requested to identify which areas on the feedback were they satisfied with. These included the teaching of the course, assessment and feedback, academic support, organization and feedback, learning resources, and personal development.

Students were also requested to comment on the manner in which they would like to receive feedback whereby majority of the students responded that the common tool of receiving feedback was written marks and grades as mentioned earlier, some received feedback through only written comments and some received verbal feedback.

Figure 1: STUDENTS SATISFACTION WITH FEEDBACK



The tools of feedback that the students were aware of included however the students were not aware of the forms of feedback as descriptive, evaluative, or motivational. They were unable to classify the type of feedback; however they mentioned that praise and comments, filling in the course evaluation form are a feedback, getting comments on marked assignments either verbal or written.

Students perceived feedback in a variety of ways and forms and prefer different tools of feedback. The feedback will become effective when the students are able to select the way in which he wants the feedback to be given to him or her. Some students work well then they receive feedback from their peers, others take it that feedback from their peers always criticizes their work and does not provide good suggestions to improve.

Some students emphasized that the environment in which they are given feedback is very important, at times, they are told in front of other students which can be very

embarrassing. Students raised that verbal comments away from other peers were more effective for them as they could talk personally with the lecturer and clarify their doubts. Moreover, when the environment whereby the feedback is given is a good one, there is a climate of trust, safety and confidentiality based on a supportive relationship. Students also noted that during tutorials, the class size is small so they are able to get a one-to-one mode with their teacher and receive first hand comments to improve. The lecturer is also able to make them know why their answers were incorrect and point out how it should be improved.

Students also valued self feedback which was done through reflective activities and formative assessments given in the semester. Feedback from teachers was more effective is done face-to-face.

4.2 Research Question 2: Why is feedback important in the teaching and learning process?

As a student, they have stated that feedback enables them to improve their skills, learn from their mistakes, express how they feel about something through the course evaluation form, and understand the requirements of the lecturers for a particular assignment or a concept.

When students realize that information from the feedback provided by the teacher and their self assessment can help them improve, than they will be able to process the material more deeply and try harder in future assignments.

As stated in the Literature Review, students also supported the idea that for feedback to be effective, they need to focus on the learning intention of the assignment or task. In doing so, students will be able to understand the course learning outcomes laid out to them.

Students also raised in this research, that when the feedback is clear, that is provided on a mark sheet, they are able to comprehend their mistakes and understand the areas that they need to improve. They regard feedback as valuable when it is given at the right time and also not done in such a way to attack them.

When feedback is incorporated into the learning and the teaching, there is improvement in student engagement. Students should be encouraged to monitor their academic

performance so that they can use the feedback to improve their learning. Often when students are just provided with the mark, and if they have passed, they are least bothered to find out which areas they lost marks in. However, when students get very low marks, they want to know what went wrong. Students take more ownership of their learning when grades are not given; they opt to get some feedback from their lecturers. Thus, this prompts to continue asking about their marks or how they did in the test or assignment, they take time to find the value of their work.

Feedback is more effective when comments are written and discussed with them. Students focus on the feedback and then identify the areas that need to be improved and work on that.

Feedback is important because it gives learners the opportunity to appraise their individual practice and allows even the significant points to be issue of conformity. Feedback allows the first learner observations to be built upon by the student. In addition it makes certain potency are given uniformity with weaknesses and it deals with details. Students must know how they are doing so that they can gauge their performance and act before it was too late. Some students who participated in this research pointed out, that when they got feedback from their lecturers and they did well they felt as if they had achieved something and they were motivated to want to learn more. Likewise, when they made a mistake, the teacher must be able to correct them instantly to avoid repeat of the mistake and learn from their corrections. Therefore, the participants raised that feedback was very important in their learning. Students also raised that feedback should be given when it is due, a particular student found that when feedback is given after the final exam, that was ineffective.

Descriptive feedback is the solution to successful assessment for learning. Students are able to learn from their assignments when the teacher gives a detailed feedback; this guides them to improve in the future. Feedback for education is a component of the teaching process; the branch that comes subsequent to the first teaching takes place, when information is given about the mode in which the learner has processed and understood the content.

Feedback is an important connection between the teacher's assessment of the students learning and the action following that assessment. Feedback makes connections between students' cognitive level and the learning that they must do to be successful, as it addresses the concepts not understood by the learner,

Feedback for learning gives proof that verifies or confronts a suggestion that a student holds. It gives credit for accomplishment and development, and it includes comprehensible instructions for improvement. It persuades students to think about, and respond to, the suggestions. And it focuses on both quality and learning. Effective feedback confronts ideas, initiates supplementary information, suggests substitute explanation, and generates circumstances for self-reflection and analysis of ideas.

Participant A stated that feedback is one of the ways in which you build a teaching relationship with your students as a cohort and individually. She believed feedback did improve teaching and learning. Student learning has stages and developments that strictly require the honest and accurate feedbacks of lecturers and tutors in order to maintain and acquire standard and quality achievements. She was also of the opinion that assessments served as an ideal way of obtaining a reflection of their understanding hence giving feedbacks through assignments and presentation surely helped the student know his/her position and at the same time the lecturer knew where each student stood for improvement.

Participant B suggested that in case the facilitator found out that a particular concept had not been well grasped/understood by students then he or she may teach the concept again or take more tutorials on that concept, it also enables the facilitator to apply different teaching strategy in order to teach the concept.

Participant C stated that feedback is dependent on how it is written by the lecturer; some keep it short and simple by encouraging them first than comment on gaps identified and recommendations for future.

Participant D said that feedback is vital as it told the students where they stood and how much more they had to learn. It also helped them improve the errors they made in assignments and tests. Without feedback, the students cannot be expected to show improvements. It was important to inform the students about the (teachers) expectations.

Participant E commented that feedback is very important particularly when it enables the teacher to identify the students' weaknesses and rephrase questions for them to better understand. He adds on to say that positive feedback encourages students to perform better and does not let them deviate from the assigned tasks.

4.3 Research Question 3: What are some practical strategies to make feedback effective?

From questionnaires given to the staff, the participants suggested practical strategies that may be used and they have used which are effective.

Participant A raised that feedback can be provided in many ways; he provided feedback to students in reflecting the marks they achieve in their assignments, lab report, and short tests in explaining where they have lost their marks. Model answers were uploaded on Moodle for the short test that had been conducted so that students can reflect their performance. More effectively, students were requested to come and consult the lecturer in regards to any concept or any lab or tutorial question regardless of their consultation hours and through this consultation they quickly judged how much the student had grasped the concept being taught.

Participant B had feedback forms attached to marked assignments. Feedback was provided through assignments, where detailed comments are written and discussed with the students. Sometimes students consulted teachers personally and thus, this became another platform where feedback was given to them.

Participant C suggested the following:

- Marking their assignments and accordingly give them marks with comments for future references.
- Assessing them during presentation/moot assessments and asking questions to reflect their understanding of the topics covered. Comments would be given after assessments.
- Tutorial and lecture exercise and presentation for quick recap of the topic covered. Correcting or giving my opinions on the answers given and generating more discussions from students.

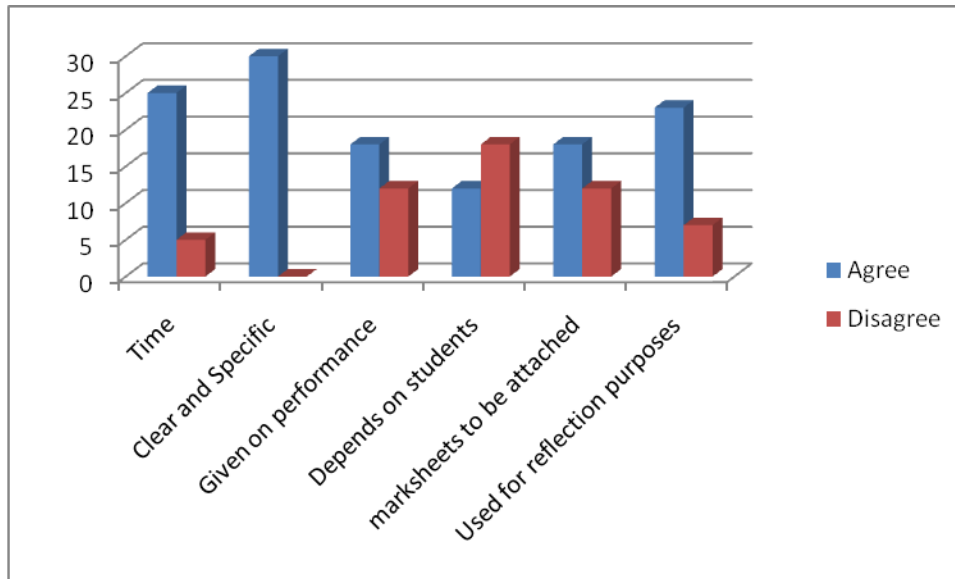
- The most effective feedback is through assignment and moot assessments and comments. Students tend to prioritize assessments and comments that have a mark allocation as opposed to just random class discussions.

Participant D stated that praising students genuinely and also correcting them sensitively was most effective. Praising genuinely or correcting sensitively meant that the lecturer was aware of when and how to praise or correct each student. For instance, some may need one on one correction, after class and not in the class. The lecturer also provided both verbal and written feedbacks to the students. Verbal feedbacks were provided in mostly tutorial sessions and lectures while written feedback were given on their assignments and tests.

Participant E stated that the effectiveness of the feedback depended entirely on the students, some took it seriously and excelled and maintained their performances.

Some students focus more on the grades given than the remarks; these students can still be used to maximize student engagement with the process. This can be done by devising the assessment to enable students to see the immediate advantages of considering advice given during feedback. Teachers may divide the assignments into parts and give feedback that is needed to allow the students to move to the second part. Students may also be encouraged to write down how they used the feedback advice to move to the next stage and not do the same mistake again. When this is done students become active participants in the feedback-learning cycle and teachers' workload can be compensated by the decline of time needed for provision of feedback.

Another strategy that could be used was to give a provisional grade, however, students needed to talk about their assignment to get a higher grade. By doing this, the lecturer can gauge whether or not the student really understood or just copied from a friend.

Figure 2: PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

4.4 Research Question 4: What are the students views of feedback given to them (quality, duration, how effective)?

Majority of the students who participated in this project agreed that feedback is important however there were some flaws found in the duration of receiving the feedback, the types of comments given to them could not give them a definite area that they needed to improve.

Students received feedback in two weeks turnarounds which may extend to three weeks in some cases. Some of the lecturers provided feedback to their assignments between 1 - 10 working days. At times for Masters students, if the review process was onerous, that is if the lecturer needs to read up to 30,000 words, the students are contacted and given an estimate time that they should be receiving feedback from the lecturer.

For science students, they received feedback just before their next lab and the lecturer immediately tracks the changes and returns the marked assignments. At times, when the class size is more than 30, then the feedback is usually received after a week.

Students whose class sizes are small are given feedback very quickly.

In addition, students are given the opportunity to meet the lecturer after receiving their marked assignments to clarify doubts.

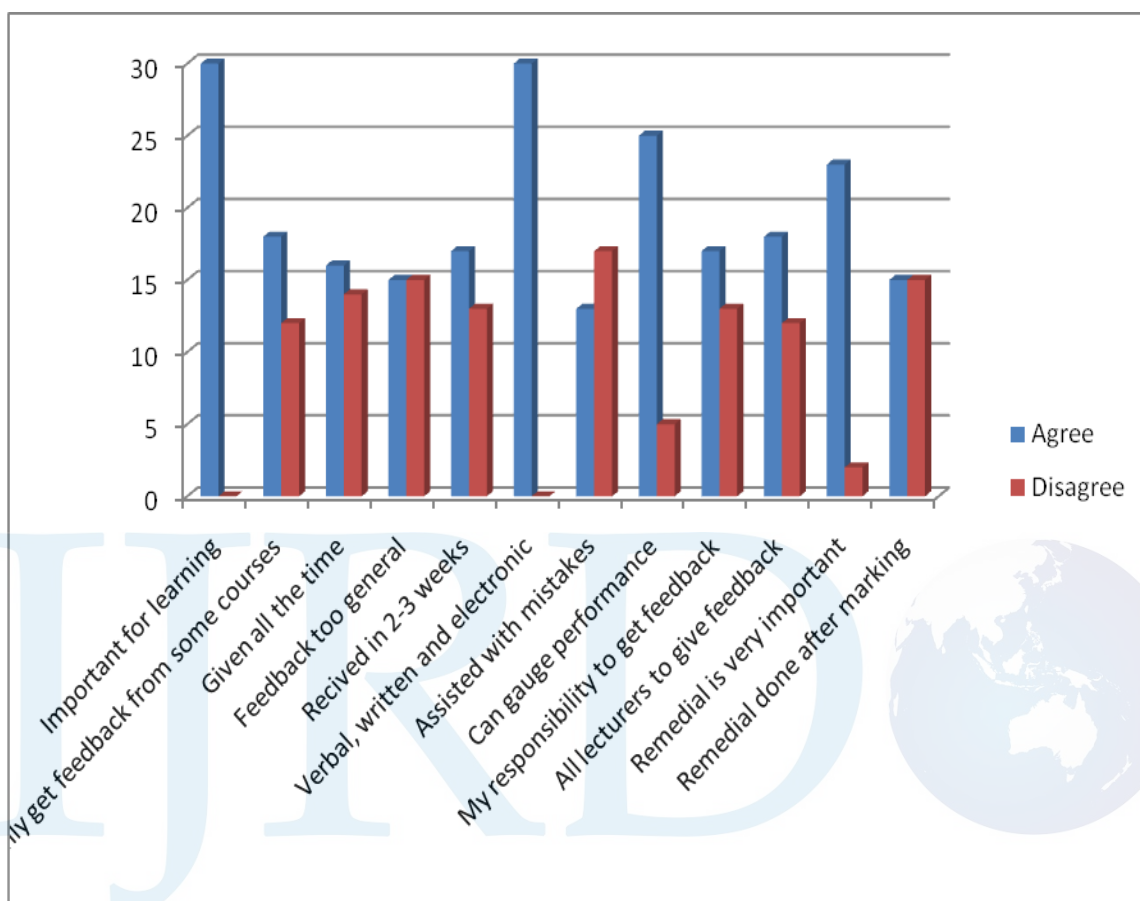
Tangible improvements are seen throughout the semester because the students are open to receive feedback and improved. It was good to know that some students, particularly those who repeat a course, ensure that they get as much feedback as possible to avoid another failure. For some of these students, they work so hard, they get the highest mark in that course.

A student said that some teachers often fail to identify their creativity and they are always picked on whereby even the best feedback may not work for all students. Some students have complicated, social, family and psychological factors affecting them which cannot fully be addressed in feedback. Student A also raised that when they receive too much praises, they are often de-motivated; she feels that having enough is important. The phrase, *you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink* is true in this case. Student B suggested that when the teacher instructs them well on the content of their assignment and provides a marking scheme, they know which areas need more time to complete.

Some students had to be reminded constantly to improve their assignments whilst some totally just did not consider the feedback at all. Student C highlighted that positive encouragement did improve performance.

Students also felt that when feedback is given it should be directed to learning and identifying the strengths and provide instructions to make improvement. Students need to have some prior knowledge of the concept and the teacher needs to work on that to assist him understand new concepts, it is learning from the known to the unknown.

A Likert-scale was used to get students responses on feedback (See Figure 2)

Figure 3: STUDENTS RESPONSES TO FEEDBACK

4.5 Research Question 5: How has the appraisal forms filled by students provided quality feedback for the Teaching and Learning Development Unit (TLDU)?

Often feedback from appraisal forms leads to better performance as valuable information is retrieved from these evaluation forms. The appraisal forms and reports done by the Teaching and Learning Development Unit provides feedback to review and revise the course content and teaching strategies in the following year.

Appraisal forms assists with gauging the teaching styles used, the approachability of the lecturer and the effectiveness of his/her teaching whether or not it promoted learning or students were learning in fear.

For most cases, students tended to write nasty comments if they disliked the lecturer, on the other hand, if the lecturer picked on them all the time, they would write good comments to avoid being victimized.

A student participant suggested that the appraisal forms be facilitated by TLDU so that there is neutrality.

Feedback received from these appraisal forms is being used by some academic staff to reorganize things according to the needs of the students.

A particular in a Postgraduate course, stated that they never received appraisal forms because they hardly had classes whereas another student in the same class did fill an appraisal form as she attended the last class.

At times, the appraisal forms are not effective because the academic staff does not receive the reports or they are not being discussed with them.

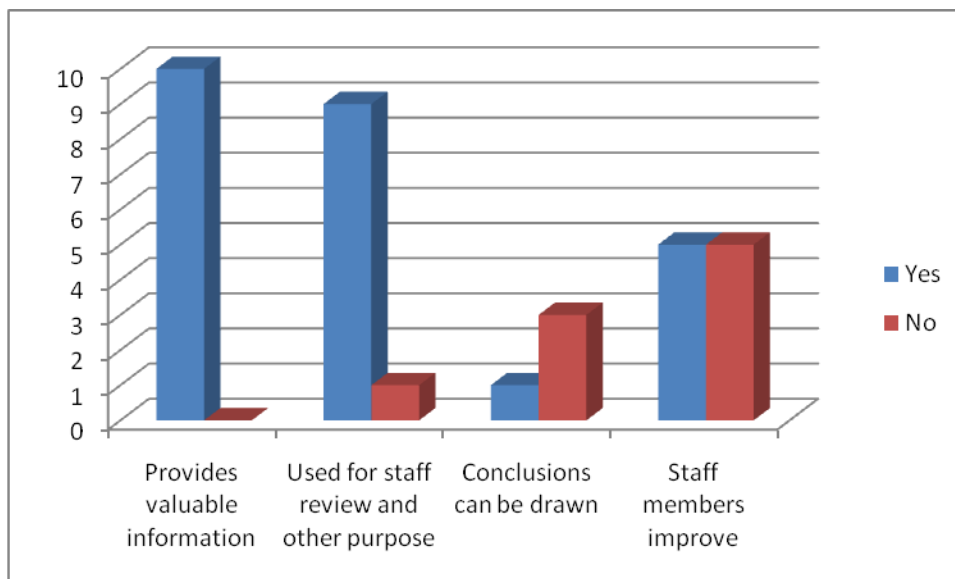
Apart from appraisal forms, teachers' performance can be gauged by other things like attendance to class, meeting deadlines, updating notes/ readings/ assignments on Moodle.

Appraisal forms are a useful tool to be used when we need to identify areas that need improvement, so that work is in progress. Some students raised issues against the lecturer's style of delivery which created boredom in the class. Some lecturers were well versed with the subject content but did not use appropriate strategies to deliver the content, resulting in negative comments in the evaluation.

Most students gave too much criticism which was deemed to create problems for the lecturer particularly when they were not asked to give their names they could write anything. It was important to closely monitor these kinds of feedback and keep a balance as the commitment of the academic staff and the comments may have different weights.

According to the Heads of Departments, feedback received from the appraisal has made some lecturers deviate from *old school* method of teaching and having a teacher centered class. However, some lectures are adamant to change their teaching style and continue to proceed with the same style they started with.

Figure 3 indicates the responses received from the Department Heads of the tertiary institution on the effectiveness of the appraisal system.

Figure 4: DEPARTMENT HEAD RESPONSES

Being teacher to 21st century students was different from teaching in the late 1900s as the types of students' level of thinking, standard of studying also changes. Teachers in the 21st century were taught differently during their time and we cannot expect our students to adapt to that same teaching style if used with them.

Appraisal forms provided opportunities for the TLDU to identify areas that need to have professional development sessions, it is through these appraisals that TLDU designs workshops such as Course Design, Course Learning Outcomes, Using feedback to improve the teaching and learning process.

4.6 SUMMARY

The present study focused on using feedback to improve teaching and learning using a case study of a tertiary institution. The focus point of the project was to get students views of the content and quality of feedback and also investigate the effectiveness of the appraisal system to improve teaching and learning. This chapter provided findings of the project gathered through a questionnaire survey, interview and a document analysis. The results of the project have been presented under suitable headings retrieved from the research questions used in this project. The subsequent chapter, Chapter Five discusses the research findings.

CHAPTER 5 RESEARCH DISCUSSION

5.0 Introduction

Chapter 5 discusses the findings of the project based in the answers to each of the research questions. The method used to collect information in this project used a Mixed Method approach with the use of a case study; questionnaires were designed for participants which included students and academic staff of the tertiary institution.

As for sampling, a stratified purposive sampling was used whereby only 5 students from each School was used and since it was the end of the semester, TLDU supervised the sessions in which students filled their appraisal forms. The research questions addressed the main themes of the project: feedback and the tools, importance of feedback to teaching and learning, strategies to make feedback effective and effectiveness of the appraisal forms in improving teaching and learning at the tertiary institution.

5.1 Research Question 1: What is feedback? What are the tools of feedback?

As stated in Chapter 4, the various definitions of feedback were all similar and had the same meaning but interpreted in different ways. Feedback was used to make improvement and there were various tools that were identified which included descriptive, evaluative and motivational feedback. The tools of feedback targeted the learners so that they could achieve the objective whereas descriptive informed the students of the areas that they did not do well in and guided the students to improve from their mistakes. This tool of feedback was used to measure students' academic achievement with a mark or a grade. However, this type of feedback *did not give guidance on how to improve the learner's reasoning*. Having said this, summative assessments can be used to test students learning process to move forward.

Motivational feedback is used to encourage and support the learner, effective feedback is used to improve learning, by motivating student reasoning to the next level and descriptive feedback informs the students of the steps to take to move their interpretation to the next level, it also shows students what they need to do.

Examples of evaluative feedback that can be used:

Approval - "That's a good essay." "You've done well." Disapproval - "That's not good enough."

An example of descriptive feedback -“That’s a good introduction because you have covered the main points we discussed at the beginning. Now ... which points do you think you should expand on?” Example of motivational feedback - “I like how you completed the assignment.”

The Pendleton’s rule of feedback constitute of the following important points:

1. *Make clear any points of information/detail*
2. *Inquire the student what s/he did well – make certain that they recognize the strong points of the performance and do not wander away into limitations.*
3. *Talk about what went well, adding together your own remarks (for group work, enquire with the group members of the strengths of the group.*
4. *Request the student to articulate what went less well and what they would do in a different way next instance.*
5. *Argue what went less well, adding your own remarks and suggestions.*

Engaging in feedback enables students to make improvements in their mistakes and continue to work well on your strengths. Feedback must be given with honesty, clearly and effectively. When feedback is given, the comments should be on the behavior and not the person, raising constructive ways of improving behavior.

Race (2001) illustrates the elements supporting knowledge in the ‘ripples on a pond’ model (See Appendix) through questioning students, colleagues, professionals, and teachers. Questions provided was based on how they learned things which concluded that feedback is vital. *Feedback is set by teachers in a proposal to allow students to learn. Feedback leap back in to the current of learning. If there were to be no feedback the current would tend to become paler and die out. The learning would disappear. Feedback is in general something which occurs as a result of some learning-oriented accomplishment. Feedback may be offered subsequent to the incident, or throughout the incident, or both. However, feedback can be provided even in the nonattendance of any education accomplishment, and may even cause an education incident to take place after that. In other words, strong ripples bouncing in towards the centre can in due course take the whole ripple system into being, and ideally cause learning-by-doing and even create some motivation.*

5.2 Research Question 2: Why is feedback important in the teaching and learning process?

Feedback is important because it has a strong influence on the teacher, student and the whole process of learning and teaching. Students should be aware about the progress of their learning so that as mentioned earlier in the project that they get a sense of achievement which motivates them to learn.

Feedback is conducted through both formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment refers to both formal and informal methods used by the teacher to gather evidence for the rationale of improving learning. In formative assessment, formal assessments are carried out through assignments, tests, quizzes, projects or through question-answer sessions and observation. The main factor that determines the performance is how the teacher and the students use information given. The teacher and the student get feedback about the knowledge of the subject and the methods used to bring about learning.

When information from a test or an assignment designed by a teacher is being used to make a decision about the students level of achievement; it is referred to as summative assessment. This form of assessment decides the quantity of subject content that the student has acquired at that point in time, and is shared with others.

Table 1 given below displays the Formative and Summative assessments of the various types of assessment found at the university, purpose, who uses and how it will be used for improvement.

TABLE 1: FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

TYPE OF ASSESSMENT	WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?	WHO WILL USE THE INFORMATION?	HOW WILL IT BE USED?	IS THE USE FORMATIVE OR SUMMATIVE?
TESTS	Measure level of achievement on state content standards	Teacher	Determine program effectiveness	Summative
	Identify percentage of students meeting performance standards on state content standards		Comparison of universities	Summative
			Develop programs/interventions for groups or individuals	Formative
BENCH-MARK, OR COMMON ASSESSMENT	Measure level of achievement toward state content standards	Teachers	Determine program effectiveness	Summative
	Identify students needing additional help		Identify program needs	Formative
			Plan interventions for groups or individuals	Formative
CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT	Measure level of achievement on learning targets taught	Teachers Students	Determine transcript grade	Summative
	Diagnose student strengths and areas needing re-teaching		Revise teaching plans for next year/semester	Formative
			Plan further instruction/differentiate instruction for these students	Formative
			Provide feedback to students	Formative
	Understand strengths and areas needing work		Self-assess, set goals for further study/work	Formative

Mistakes must be corrected on the spot to avoid repeat of the same mistake and the teacher has a huge responsibility to monitor students learning through provision of feedback. Feedback is efficient when students are involved in the monitoring process.

Therefore, when receiving feedback which may either is a criticism or praise, students should learn not to let their feelings get in the way. The receiver of feedback may listen actively without interrupting the giver of feedback, when compliments are given, they may be accepted assertively. When there is too much criticism while feedback is given, the receiver has the tendency to get angry and become defensive that should be avoided. If the giver of feedback is vague, the receiver may request specificity of the feedback.

Moreover, immediacy is the vital aspect of feedback, when assignments are received, they should be returned quickly so that the comments provided become effective. During a tutorial class discussions, when students incorrectly define, describe or explain a concept; the teacher needs to do the correction there and then. Gestures may be used to indicate intention that they students explanation is correct or partially correct. When an important point is being discussed, students must restate the concepts to reinforce the concept.

Students who respond well to questions must be given credit however; the teacher should allow the students' time to think before indicating the correct responses. When answers are incorrect, they may be correct in a tactful manner to avoid embarrassment.

Constructive and systematic feedback is a vital aspect of the decision making in teaching. Teaching and learning are not separate parts in education; they are the whole package which enables the outcomes to be achieved. For example, when a teaching wants to gauge a students' performance, she/he designs an assignment, a test or a project in the class. Learning should address content mastery and the skills for learning. In the process for learning, feedback involves potential, criterion, students' improvement, students' undertakings and potency, remedial for areas not done well, acknowledgment of students' efforts, implications about learning activities, and support.

Feedback helps *lessen the gap flanked by the student's existing intensity of understanding and/or performance and a preferred ambition. It is also an crucial method of looking for*

and interpreting support to be used by learners and teachers to come to a decision where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go, and how best to get there.

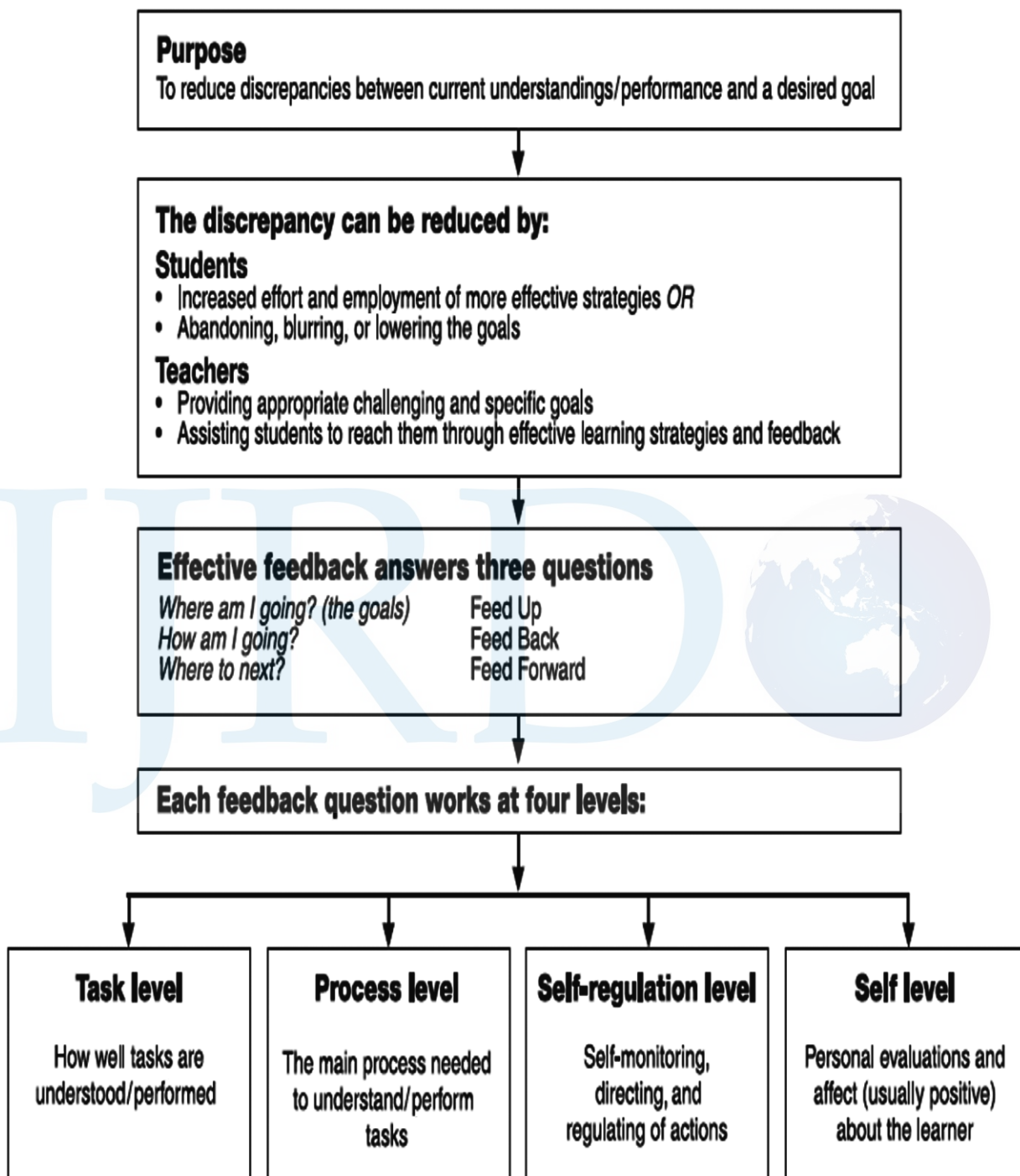
Feedback provides students with an opportunity to reflect and develop on their strengths and weaknesses and enables teachers to realign the content of their teaching and the methods to suit the needs of the students.

Feedback enables students to communicate with their teachers and take ownership of their studies. When they see the teacher to clarify their doubts, they become confident learners.

Hattie & Timperley's Feedback Model (Figure 1) illustrates how feedback can be considered. The main purpose of feedback as described in the model is to lessen inconsistencies between existing understandings and performance and a goal. Teachers and students are to use methods that are more or less effective in enhancing learning therefore it is important to understand the circumstances that result in the differential outcomes. Feedback must be addressed to three questions:

- Where am I going? (What are the goals?)
- How am I going? (What progress is being made towards the goal?)
- Where to next? (What activities need to be undertaken to make better progress?)

The questions keep up a correspondence to the ideas of feed up, feedback and feed forward. When the questions are able to be answered successfully, then the gap may be reduced but it will depend on the level at which the feedback is operated. The levels include task process, self-regulation and self feedback on the task in relation to the three questions which works better when the appropriate processes are explained well. The feedback will display ways of enhancing the performance of the assignment and give methods to encourage student responsibility to make improvement. In disparity, feedback "about the self as a person" at times has no effect on the learning, because it is not associated to the objectives of the undertaking for prospective learning administration or conduct.

Figure 5: HATTIE AND TIMPERLY'S MODEL OF FEEDBACK

(Source: <http://education.qld.gov.au/staff/development/performance/resources/readings/power-feedback.pdf>)

5.3 Research Question 3: What are some practical strategies to make feedback effective?

Sadler (1989) describes three conditions to undergo Assessment for Learning phrased in questions, “*Where am I going? Where am I now? and How can I close the gap?*” These questions are similar to Hattie & Timperly’s (2007) model of feedback stated above.

The strategies given below may be used to make feedback effective, they can be used intentionally, focusing on the student as the most influential decision maker in the classroom setting.

Table 2: ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

<p>WHERE AM I GOING?</p> <p>Strategy 1: Provide students with a clear and understandable vision of the learning target.</p> <p>Strategy 2: Use examples and models of strong and weak work.</p>
<p>WHERE AM I NOW?</p> <p>Strategy 3: Offer regular descriptive feedback.</p> <p>Strategy 4: Teach students to self-assess and set goals.</p>
<p>HOW CAN I CLOSE THE GAP?</p> <p>Strategy 5: Design lessons to focus on one learning target or aspect of quality at a time.</p> <p>Strategy 6: Teach students focused revision.</p> <p>Strategy 7: Engage students in self-reflection, and let them keep track of and share their learning</p>

WHERE AM I GOING?

Strategy 1: Give students an apparent and comprehensible image of the learning goal.

Inspiration and accomplishment both amplify when teaching is directed by evidently definite goals. Activities that assist students to answer the question, “What’s the knowledge?” create the platform for all additional formative assessment measures.

Strategy 2: Utilize examples and models of strong and weak work.

Cautiously selected models of the variety of eminence can make and filter students' perception of the learning target by guiding students answer to the questions, "What describes excellence?" and "What are a number of troubles to steer clear of?"

WHERE AM I NOW?***Strategy 3: Provide regular descriptive feedback.***

Efficient feedback shows students where they are on their path to attaining the intended learning. It answers for students the questions, "What are my strengths?"; "What do I need to work on?" and "Where did I go wrong and what can I do about it?"

Strategy 4: Instruct students to self-assess and set targets.

The information provided in effective feedback models the kind of evaluative thinking we want students to be able to do themselves. Strategy 4 instructs students to recognize their potency and limitation and to set targets for additional learning. *It helps them answer the questions, "What am I good at?"; "What do I need to work on?" and "What should I do next?"*

HOW CAN I CLOSE THE GAP?***Strategy 5: Devise lessons to center on one learning goal or feature of excellence at a time.***

When evaluation information recognizes a need, we can alter instruction to target that need. Scaffolding is used in this strategy, by lessening the focal point of a lesson to assist students to master a particular learning target or to concentrate on precise misunderstandings

Strategy 6: Teach students focused revision.

This is a cohort to Strategy 5—when a concept, skill, or competence is hard for students, we can let them trial it in groups, and give them feedback on just the features they are working on. This strategy permits students to modify their primary work with a focus on a convenient quantity of learning goals or features of eminence.

Strategy 7: Employ students in self-reflection, and let them monitor and contribute to their learning.

Long-term maintenance and inspiration amplify when students track, reflect on, and communicate about their learning. *Students look back on their journey, reflecting on their learning and sharing their achievement with others.*

The following factors are to be considered to make feedback effective:

i. Goal-Referenced

Effective feedback requires that a person has a goal, takes action to achieve the goal, and receives goal-related information about his or her actions. Using a joke in class—why? Students should be made to laugh and break the ice. When the goal is not clear, feedback will not be helpful. Teachers should remind students of their goals if they are not clear.

ii. Tangible and Transparent

There should be tangible results related to the goal. Assignment mark sheets should be attached to their marked assignments. Soft copies may be kept for future references. Mark-sheets may be put up on Moodle for transparency purposes.

iii. Actionable

Effective feedback must be concrete, specific and useful providing actionable information and accepted by the receiver. Decide areas of feedback based on those that relate to main learning targets and necessary essentials of the assignment. Ought to be hopeful and aid students to understand that endeavor on their part results in further learning.

iv. User Friendly

Feedback is specific and accurate which identifies the error or mistake and not attacks the student. Use specific language on what to make an improvement. Indicate where a student stands in relation to a specific learning target/goal

v. Timely

Feedback must be given on time while the students are still thinking of the tests and assignments. The more holdups that happens in giving feedback, the less improvement there is in achievement

vi. On-going and Verified

Feedback is not done at the end of a course; it is an on-going process which must be throughout the students' course of study. The student must be able to use opportunities given by the teacher to improve. The teacher should also be able to verify if the student understood the feedback.

vii. Consistent

Feedback must be consistent, stable and not done in such a way to embarrass or belittle the student. It should be basically to make the student identify their mistake and learn

5.4 Research Question 4: What are the students views of feedback given to them (quality, duration, how effective)?

Students are focused on their grades while some students just make sure that they get a pass in their courses and they also feel that feedback should be just enough to make them improve in future assignments and tests.

There are various forms of feedback that can be given to students which include verbal, written or electronic and these have both advantages and disadvantages.

Summarized below are the advantages and disadvantages of the types of feedback given to students from a student's perspective (Adapted from Race & Brown, 2005)

VERBAL FEEDBACK

ADVANTAGES

- More information conveyed because the teacher is able to use tone of voice, facial expression and body language over and above the words used.
- Students remember positive remarks when they are feeling positive and they also recall the negative when they are apprehensive.
- The effects of the words can be judged when students need further explanations.

DISADVANTAGES

- Students may find it difficult to reflect on the verbal feedback as they may only remember some parts of it.

- When feedback is given in a group, students feel embarrassed and retaliate.
- Teachers are seen as figures of power and specialists in the courses they do. Often when they give feedback, they are given in a distorted way which may lead to usage of inappropriate words
- Frustration occurs when students are not able to find the teacher, thus when feedback is given, students should be aware of the consultation times they can be attended to.

WRITTEN FEEDBACK

ADVANTAGES

- Feedback can be private, individual, and openly associated to the work.
- Feedback may be seen as commanding and reliable.
- The feedback can be modified to validate an additional evaluation decision.
- Students can refer to the feedback repeatedly, and persist to learn from it.
- Such feedback gives helpful verification for outside analysis

DISADVANTAGES

- Handwritten feedback can be illegible
- When serious, handwritten feedback - because of its authority - can be intimidating.
- It is deliberate and time-consuming to write by yourself on (or about) students' work, and hard to make time for large classes.
- Cannot refer to the feedback given to different students unless photocopies of their work and the comments are kept.
- It turns out to be too persuasive to deteriorate into shorthand - ticks and crosses - rather than to express optimistic and significant remarks.

ELECTRONIC FEEDBACK

ADVANTAGES

- Students hand in their assignments online, can easily detect plagiarism
- Comments can be done electronically and marks entered into mark sheet
- Students may know their grades before seeing the actual marked tests or assignments.

DISADVANTAGES

- Printed feedback can still be intimidating to students when decisive.

- It may appear less private to students than handwritten feedback.
- It is not so easy to link each feedback point to the exact part of the work which caused the teacher to write the comment.
- It's not so easy to make emphasis in word-processed feedback, so that the most important messages stand out from those that are merely routine.

MODEL ANSWERS

ADVANTAGES

- Students can use model answers to re-examine their own work in self-assessment form, and can carry on using them as a structure of suggestion demonstrating the principles they are working towards.
- Saves a lot of time writing individual feedback or explaining to students.
- Can be issued to students who missed an assignment or for reference by students who may have been excused from it.
- They comprise of constructive verification of principles and expectations, both for students and teachers.

DISADVANTAGES

- Because model answers or solutions are fairly aloof, some students will not really work on comparing their work
- Students who do the assignment equally well overall, but in different ways, may feel that their individualism is not being appreciated or acknowledged.
- Assumptions can be made by students that the model answers represent all that they need to know about the topic on which the assignment was based.
- Students who missed out an important aspect in their own work may not notice the importance of this, and may still need further feedback about their own particular strengths and weaknesses.
- If the same assignment is used again within a year or two, there may be obvious confirmation that the model answers were circulated. Assignment return sheets are normally pre-prepared proformas, where you give comprehensive written word-processed or electronic feedback remarks to students on each of a number of evaluation criterion used.

5.5 Research Question 5: How has the appraisal forms filled by students provided quality feedback for the Teaching and Learning Development Unit?

Appraisals have a strong positive influence on the academic lecturers and their work. Some lecturers had raised that feedback from the appraisals increased their job satisfaction and secured their job.

The appraisal forms filled by the students are used by TLDU to design student activities as well as professional development sessions for the academic staff. The report aims to provide a good picture of student responses which can be utilised to improve student learning experiences and identify a coordinators strengths and weakness.

From the appraisal reports, students' activities are designed by the Student Support Learning Officer and the Teaching Professional Development Officer uses the recommendations to design professional development sessions for the academic staff.

There are two sections in the appraisal forms (See Appendix), Section 1 evaluates the Course and Section 2 evaluates the Lecturer. Section 1 focuses on the course learning outcomes, the link between the course learning outcomes and the assessment tasks, using the assessment task to identify the strengths and weaknesses, resources for the course, organization of the course, recognition of students different backgrounds and experiences.

Section 2 contains the following knowledge of subject content and the preparation done by the lecturer, clarity and audibility of communication, range of strategies used to help students, examples, ability to encourage student participation, provision of regular and constructive feedback to students in class and on assignments and enthusiasm and approachability of the lecturer.

Both sections also requires students to suggests the aspects of the course and the teaching that should be kept or removed and any other comments they would like to make.

As for the Appraisal report done at the end of the semester, there is both a qualitative analysis and a quantitative analysis done when the appraisal forms are received by TLDU.

The quantitative analysis looks at the 'Students Response Rate' which is the number of students who filled the appraisal forms. At times, the class size is large but the appraisal forms are less in number. This section also looks at the Course Ratings and the Coordinator Ratings.

The qualitative analysis contains aspects that need to be maintained and those that need to be changed on both the course and the coordinator. Other comments are also included in this section.

SOME EXAMPLES OF ASPECTS OF THE COURSE TO BE MAINTAINED INCLUDE

- Cases
- Explanations given
- Contact of the course
- Seminars
- Course outline
- Teaching strategies
- Succinct notes

SOME EXAMPLES OF ASPECTS OF THE COURSE TO BE CHANGED INCLUDE

- Notes to be uploaded on Moodle before the class
- Should have more explanations about how to read through the Acts and Sections
- Submission of tutorials
- Reduce amount of theory
- More examination to be given
- Timetables to be followed
- More lab works to be done
- Seminars should start earlier in the year and should be more organized
- Practical's should be included
- More assessment items
- More lab resources to be made available for better practical's

SOME EXAMPLES OF ASPECTS OF THE COORDINATOR BE MAINTAINED**INCLUDE**

- Clear
- Easy to understand
- Precise teaching methods
- Style of teaching
- Time schedule
- Explanations in class
- Explanations on the whiteboard
- Flexibility
- Giving hints for assessment items
- Receptive to student feedback
- Communication style
- Enthusiasm
- Examples used
- Planned approach towards teaching

SOME EXAMPLES OF ASPECTS OF THE COORDINATOR TO BE CHANGED**INCLUDE**

- Pronunciation of some words
- Use local examples for better understanding
- Do not cancel classes
- More case studies
- More tutorials to be conducted

Recommendations are also provided by TLDU to promote effective student learning, these include

1. Feedback:

- Course Coordinators may give feedback to students after each class. For example, in the form of feedback questions and answers.
- Feedbacks on assessments may be given in a timely manner. Ideally within 2 weeks.
- Assessments may be marked, graded and feedback may be given in writing to students within these 2 weeks.

- The feedback on assessments may contain an overview of the strong points and areas that need more work, so that students know the expectations of the Coordinator and understand which area they need to improve in studies.

2. Notes

- The notes that coordinators use for delivering lectures may be succinct
- Detailed notes can be given as an additional read for students. The detailed notes may build on the information that a Coordinator teaches in class.
- Reading detailed notes may be the obligation of the students.

3. Examples

- Examples support student learning.
- Examples that are related to student knowledge can allow for easy understanding of concepts. For example, some statistics or article from fbc news or The Fiji Times that could relate to the concept being taught in class.

4. Student Participation

- Students' found to have problems with participation in the class activities may be spotted.
- Course Coordinators may try to ask these students' questions in order to put them at ease and encourage them to participate.
- The Coordinators are free to implement strategies that they think can help the course of encouraging student participation.
- Difficult students' may be referred to student counsellor or TLDU.

5. Moodle

Moodle can compliment your teaching and support student learning in a range of ways:

- Notes can be uploaded
- Discussions and online forums provide a space for student participation and collaboration.
- There is a discrete section on Moodle for the management of student grades. Feedback on student assessment can also be placed here.

- Drop boxes can be created for the submission of assignments and can also facilitate the giving in of feedback.

6. **Power Point**

- The light in the projection area need to be switched off for visibility and clarity.
- Curtains should be drawn where possible to enhance the clarity of the slides.
- It is recommended that fonts should be 32pts or above.
- A white background on the whiteboard is not helpful for clarity. We suggest trying a black background with white font.

7. **Writings on White Board**

- Small writings are not helpful for visibility as students sitting in the back rows will have difficulty making out the words. We suggest writing big enough for students to see from the other end of the classroom. A good idea would be to write something on the whiteboard and try reading it from the other end of the room.

8. **Microphones**

- In large classrooms microphones can help audibility and clarity.

CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

In this final chapter, the findings of the project will be summarized and recommendations will be made based on actions that can be used in the future. Implications of the recommendations will also be included.

6.2 Recommendations

The tertiary institution has a good feedback system in place which is used both by the students and the teachers. However, there needs to be more student activities and professional development sessions on the Types of Feedback that can be used as well as the Strategies to make effective feedback to improve both teaching and learning.

The feedback appraisal system may be used to assume a development role which should be used more strictly for the improvement in performance of the staff member. Some academic staff did not get the opportunity to discuss their appraisal reports with their department heads. This should be improved if we want to be working on the same level and to achieve quality education.

Goal 2 of the Strategic Plan emphasizes that the University shall monitor educational performance and takes any necessary action to maintain and enhance academic performance to achieve this, the Teaching and Learning Development Unit can be used as the Quality Assurance Unit that reviews all programmed offered at the University using the Educational Performance Indicators (EPIs) – Successful Course Completion, Student Retention, Qualification Completion and Student Progression. The Teaching and Learning Development Unit needs to take a proactive role to improve both the quality of teaching and learning. Academic staff must work hand in hand with the unit to bring about improvement thus to also meet the requirements of the Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC).

Feedback should be considered with a vision to feed-forward, encouraging improvement through positive analysis. To do this the feedback should emphasize together what went well in the assessment and prioritise what needs to be improved to do better next time. Students should be encouraged to engage more with each other to develop mutual understanding and help collective progression.

Students need to be encouraged to take a greater role in shaping their own learning experience. The sample criteria of evaluation in the Appendix may be used by the Departments for internal evaluation of their academic staff.

6.2 Implications for future research

The project focused on improving teaching and learning through feedback. The analysis of the data has supported that feedback does improve teaching and it has been able to justify this with feedback from participants of this research as well as with available literature. Practical strategies have been included in this report to enable feedback to be effective. Academic staff may attend professional development sessions to know the content and context of feedback so that is worthwhile. Workshops may also be designed for students so that they are aware of how to use feedback to improve.

6.3 Conclusion

According to the findings of this project, feedback is a fundamental component of the teaching and learning process irrespective of being a primary, secondary or a tertiary institution. Feedback has many forms which includes verbal, written or electronic feedback which may be used. Electronic feedback is used at the tertiary level. The tools of feedback are descriptive, evaluative and motivational.

For feedback to be effective, both the students and the teachers must know the dynamics of feedback. Certain factors are to be considered when feedback is given like the timing, the quality, the consistency; the context of how it is given has a controlling factor on the student when they receive the feedback.

Academic staff of universities may look up ways to improve their feedback if they continue to get the same results year in year out.

The project was able to also discover that some students received feedback very late which hindered their improvement and this lowered their self-esteem. The standard of the feedback is important for students as well as for the Teaching and Learning Development Unit when designing activities to bring about quality assurance in the university.

It was also very important for teachers to know that appraisal forms filled by the students were to be used for the purpose of making changes to the content and delivery methods. Students should not be victimized for airing the flaws of certain courses and also

department Heads must make it their responsibility to discuss these reports so that all Schools are working on the same level to achieve the goals of the tertiary institution. An appraisal is an on-going process that aims to bring about constructive progress through formative assessment and a periodic measurement through summative assessment.



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APPENDICES

Appendix 1**EDU 408 INDEPENDENT STUDY 2 - QUESTIONNAIRE****TOPIC: IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING USING FEEDBACK – APPRAISAL FORMS**

1. As a lecturer/ tutor, how do you provide feedback to your students? Which is most effective?

2. Can feedback improve teaching and learning? Explain

3. What are your views on the appraisal forms provided to students at the end of the semester? Does it assist your teaching?

4. When students submit assignments for marking, how long does it take for you to provide feedback to them?

5. From your experience, do students improve after provision of feedback? Explain.

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING

Appendix 2: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

1. What is your understanding of feedback? Do you know the tools of absenteeism?

2. Why is feedback important for you? And for learning as a whole

3. How does your lecturer provide you with feedback?

4. Does the feedback received from your lecturer effective to improve?

5. Is feedback given on all your assignments and tests?

6. What is your view of the duration and quality of feedback here at this institution?

Appendix 3: LIKERT SCALE**STUDENT RESPONSES TO FEEDBACK**

Please share your thoughts regarding student attendance by placing an X in the appropriate box

Scale: 5 - Strongly AGREE 1 – Strongly DISAGREE

Statement	5	4	3	2	1
1.Feedback is important for my learning					
2. I only get feedback in some courses and look forward to feedback from the course I like					
3. Lecturers give feedback all the time					
4. My lecturer does not always give individual feedback, it is always general					
5. I receive feedback after 2-3 weeks					
6. Feedback given to me are either verbal, written or electronic					
7. My lecturer assists me when I make mistakes and correct me quickly					
8.I am able to gauge my performance from the feedback I receive from my lecturers					
9. It is my responsibility to go to my lecturer when I want to know my academic progress					
10. All lecturers must provide feedback on all assessments					
11. Remedial practices is very important					
12.My lecturer conducts a remedial class after marking a test or an assignment					

Appendix 4: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DEPARTMENT HEADS**TOPIC: IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING USING FEEDBACK – APPRAISAL FORMS**

2. As the Head of Department, do the appraisal forms filled by students at the end of the semester provide valuable information for your staff?

2. How do you use information presented in the appraisal forms?

3. What are other means of assessing your staff members' performance?

4. From your experience, do the staff members improve after provision of feedback?

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING

Appendix 5: SAMPLE CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING TEACHER PERFORMANCE**I. LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE****A. PREPARATION****1. SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE – The teacher:**

- a. maintains broad, accurate and organized knowledge of subject matter.
- b. is knowledgeable of appropriate resources.
- c. is knowledgeable of appropriate curricula.

2. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE – The teacher:

- a. is knowledgeable of appropriate and current theories and practices.
- b. is knowledgeable about the intellectual and social developmental stages of children.
- c. is knowledgeable of how content areas relate to each other.
- d. is knowledgeable of higher level thinking skills.

3. COMMAND OF LANGUAGE – The teacher:

- a. models communication skills effectively and accurately.

B. EVIDENCE OF PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

1. participates in professional development activities such as coursework, in service, academic readings, travel, cultural exchange activities, professional organizations and other enrichment activities.
2. continues to develop a general understanding of educational technology and its relationship to the instructional process.

II. TEACHING POWER & INSTRUCTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**A. SELECTION AND ORGANIZATION OF SUBJECT MATTER – The teacher:**

1. has clear goals and objectives and clearly communicates them.
2. maintains compatibility with county curriculum.
3. adapts subject matter to student needs, interests and abilities.
4. teaches prerequisite skills.
5. recognizes the sequence in which skills are developed.

6. establishes relationships between content areas.
7. promotes parental understanding and cooperation.

B. MOTIVATION – The teacher:

1. develops student interest in learning
2. uses appropriate problem solving strategies to develop higher level thinking skills.
3. clearly communicates common goals to students.
4. demonstrates sensitivity to the academic and social needs of students.
5. promotes student interest and participation in extra-curricular activities.

C. LESSON DEVELOPMENT & IMPLEMENTATION – The teacher:

1. appropriately allocates time, energy and resources.
2. uses teacher and student experiences for the enrichment of content.
3. organizes daily plans as a part of a larger unit.
4. adapts instruction to unexpected situations.
5. simulates student learning through varied questioning techniques.
6. treats student responses appropriately.
7. complies with system policy regarding nature and use of assignments.
8. directs supervised study.
9. uses a variety of effective and realistic forms of student assessment and evaluation.
10. adapts lessons based on immediate analysis of student responses.
11. develops instructional approaches to improve student test taking skills.

III. EXECUTIVE ABILITY & MANAGEMENT SKILLS

A. CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT – The teacher:

1. organizes the classroom to fit different learning situations.
2. applies classroom rules and procedures fairly and consistently.
3. effectively encourages positive student behavior.
4. maintains positive learning climate for students.
5. organizes effective transitions for students.
6. involves parents, staff, and other agencies as appropriate.

B. PERSONAL ORGANIZATION – The teacher:

1. plans appropriately
2. proficiently performs required duties.

3. makes appropriate and timely decisions.
4. appropriately organizes, cares for, and utilizes equipment and materials.
5. utilizes technology to personally manage daily tasks.

IV. PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY, ETHICS & INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS –

The teacher:

1. demonstrates understanding for discretion in the use of confidential information.
2. shows understanding and sensitivity in working with school personnel.
3. acknowledges the importance of the group decision making process.
4. observes school practices and administrative procedures such as designated school hours, punctuality, and attendance.
5. demonstrates an interest in students and their welfare.
6. maintains appropriate appearance.
7. displays self-control, initiative, confidence, and flexibility.
8. maintains effective and appropriate communications with students, parents and co-workers.
9. evidences integrity and understands the established conventions of the school and the community.
10. treats students and staff fairly.
11. uses self-evaluation for improvement.

(Adapted from Dorothy Spiller – University of Waikato, Teaching Development Unit)

Good assessment and feedback practice should:

1. Help clarify what good performance is (goals, criteria, standards). To what extent do students in your course have opportunities to engage actively with goals, criteria and standards, before, during and after an assessment task?
2. Encourage 'time and effort' on challenging learning tasks. To what extent do your assessment tasks encourage regular study in and out of class and deep rather than surface learning?
3. Deliver high quality feedback information that helps learners self-correct. What kind of teacher feedback do you provide—in what ways does it help students self-assess and self-correct?
4. Provide opportunities to act on feedback (to close any gap between current and desired performance). To what extent is feedback attended to and acted upon by students in your course, and if so, in what ways?
5. Ensure that summative assessment has a positive impact on learning. To what extent are your summative and formative assessments aligned to and supportive of the development of valued qualities, skills and understanding?
6. Encourage interaction and dialogue around learning (peer and teacher-student). What opportunities are there for feedback dialogues (peer and/or tutor-student) around assessment tasks in your course?
7. Facilitate the development of self-assessment and reflection in learning. To what extent are there formal opportunities for reflection, self-assessment or peer assessment in your course?
8. Give choice in the topic, method, criteria, weighting or timing of assessments. To what extent do students have choice in the topics, methods, criteria, weighting and/or timing of learning and assessment tasks in your course.
9. Involve students in decision-making about assessment policy and practice. To what extent are students in your course kept informed or engaged in consultations regarding assessment policy decisions?

10. Support the development of learning groups and communities. To what extent do your assessment and feedback processes help encourage social bonding and development of learning communities?

11. Encourage positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem To what extent do your assessment and feedback processes enhance your students' motivation to learn and be successful?

12. Provide information to teachers that can be used to help shape their teaching. To what extent do your assessment and feedback processes inform and shape your teaching

Adapted from “Assessment: Feedback to promote student learning- University of Waikato”

