

Six Stages of Feedback

Category: Assessment, Feedback and Learning

The Six Stages of Feedback is a structured conversational model described by Jim Gould and Jodi Roffey-Barentsen. It begins with the learner's account of performance before the educator presents an assessment, then moves from specific evidence towards a jointly understood improvement action.

The sequence supports learner participation and reduces the risk that feedback becomes an uninterrupted judgement delivered by the educator. It is a practical framework for a feedback conversation rather than a universal theory, and stages may be adapted to context while preserving their dialogic purpose ([Gould & Roffey-Barentsen, 2014](#)).

Six Stages

1. **Listen:** Invite the learner to describe and evaluate their own performance first.
2. **Confirm:** Demonstrate that the learner's account has been heard and understood accurately.
3. **Explain:** Make the reasoning and evidence behind the educator's assessment transparent.
4. **Focus:** Discuss specific, significant features of performance rather than general impressions.
5. **Summarise and agree:** Consolidate the discussion, then agree what action will improve performance.

Examples in Practice

After a teaching observation, the mentor asks the trainee to evaluate learner participation, checks understanding of that account, explains evidence from the observation, explores two specific moments, summarises strengths and priorities, and agrees one strategy to trial.

Why It Matters

A staged dialogue can preserve dignity, reveal differences in interpretation and convert judgement into a feasible next step. Its quality still depends on psychological safety, credible evidence, specificity and a genuine opportunity to apply the agreed action in later performance. Agreement should specify when, where and with what support the action will be tested ([Cantillon & Sargeant, 2008](#)).

Further Reading

6. Gould, J., & Roffey-Barentsen, J. (2014). [Achieving your diploma in education and training](#). SAGE.
7. Cantillon, P., & Sargeant, J. (2008). [Giving feedback in clinical settings](#). BMJ, 337, a1961.
8. Shute, V. J. (2008). [Focus on formative feedback](#). Review of Educational Research, 78(1), 153–189.

Related Terms: Dialogic Feedback | Feedback Literacy | Reflective Practice | Feed Forward