



Providing effective feedback and feed-forward

A practical fact sheet for trainers and assessors

Definitions

Feedback	Feed-forward
Information is provided about current performance, so the learner understands what they did well, what needs improvement, and why it matters.	Guidance about the next step. It turns feedback into action by making clear what the learner should do next, how to do it and what success should look like.

In practice, feedback looks back at performance that has already been observed. Feed-forward looks ahead to the next attempt, shift, task, or assessment. Strong trainers use both together.

Why are these concepts important in mining and automotive environments?

Mining and automotive training takes place in workplaces where the consequences of poor performance can be serious. A missed isolation step, poor handover, unsafe use of a hoist, weak fault diagnosis or incomplete job documentation can affect safety, quality, compliance and productivity.

That is why feedback needs to be timely, specific, and linked to the job standard. ASQA's Training Practice Guide (2025) states that training should provide sufficient time for instruction, practice, feedback, and assessment. It also expects assessment to include practical application, so learners can demonstrate relevant skills and knowledge in a practical setting. Therefore, using a combination of feedback and feed-forward is not just good for learners; it also supports compliance functions.

How feedback and feed-forward guide performance and change behaviours

Used well, feedback tells a learner exactly where their performance sits against the required standard. Feed-forward then shows them what to do next, so future performance is better, safer or more consistent. This is useful because behaviour does not usually change from correction alone. The shifts come when the learner understands the gap, sees the standard clearly, and is given a practical next step.

In a mining setting, a trainer might observe a pre-start inspection and say: "You completed the walk-around, but you did not explain what action to take when you found the damaged step. Next time, stop at the defect, state the risk and tell me the reporting action before you continue."



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In an automotive setting, a trainer might say: "Your service checks were completed in the correct order, but your job card notes were too vague. On the next vehicle, record the finding, the location and the action taken so the next technician and the customer record are clear."

This approach keeps the focus on observable performance and future action. It helps learners improve without having to guess what "better" means.

Tips on framing feedback and feed-forward

- Give feedback as close to the task as possible, while the details are still fresh.
- Focus on the task, the process, and the standard, not the learner's personality.
- Be specific about what you saw or heard. Use examples from the actual job or activity.
- Link comments on safety, quality, procedure, communication, or documentation as relevant.
- Keep the message short enough to be usable, especially in busy work environments.
- Pair every improvement point with a clear next action.
- Check that the learner understands what to do next.
- Follow up on the next attempt so the learner can apply the feed-forward.

Things to avoid

Avoid	Why does it weaken learning?
Being vague, such as "good job" or "needs work".	The learner is unsure of what was specifically good, what requires improvement, and what to do next.
Focusing on the person, not the performance.	Comments such as "you are careless" create defensiveness and do little to inform the learner's practice.
Being critical without being constructive.	This reduces the learner's confidence and provides no clear pathway to improvement.
Raising too many issues at once.	The learner is less likely to remember the critical points and link them to performance.



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Avoid	Why does it weaken learning?
Giving feedback too late.	The feedback lacks impact because the learner may not remember the details of the completed task or the decisions made.
Ignoring what was done well.	The learner may feel disheartened as their effort is not acknowledged. Balanced feedback helps to reinforce effective practice and keeps the standard visible.
Answering without checking understanding.	The learner may copy the fix without learning how to judge the task correctly next time.

Practical reminders for trainers

- Use plain language. Keep instructions and comments clear, direct and easy to act upon.
- Match feedback to the learner's role and level of responsibility. Pitching it too high or too low can make the feedback feel like it isn't for them.
- In safety-critical tasks, correct the risk immediately, then explain the reasons why reinforcing the required standard.
- Document patterns where feedback links to supervision needs or workplace risk.
- Use feed-forward in every practical session, not only after problems. It is just as useful for building consistency as it is for correcting errors.

Key message

Effective feedback and feed-forward help learners improve performance in real time and over time. In mining and automotive environments, they support safer work, stronger practical skills, and clearer accountability. The strongest approach is specific, respectful, and action-focused: say what the learner did, explain why it matters, and make the next step clear.



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