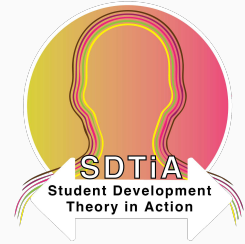


Formative Feedback



Pedagogical Rationale

Formative feedback is a pedagogical practice that centers learning as an iterative and relational process, rather than a one-time evaluation of student performance. Formative feedback consists of the recommendations instructors or peers provide to help students improve their future practice, deepen their reasoning, and refine their application of theory. Scholarship on effective feedback emphasizes that formative feedback is most impactful when it is timely, dialogic, and oriented toward supporting students' self-regulated learning (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Stern & Solomon, 2006).

When paired with case-based teaching, formative feedback strengthens students' capacity to translate student development theory into practice by encouraging reflection, revision, and ethical accountability. Case-based teaching can take many forms—including written case analyses, small- and large-group discussions, structured reflections, or multimodal responses—and formative feedback provides a mechanism for students to receive guidance across each of these formats. Rather than positioning cases as assignments with “right” answers, formative feedback reinforces the idea that case interpretation is provisional, situated, and open to refinement.

Within the SDTiA framework, formative feedback supports students in making visible how their positionality, assumptions, and sociopolitical context shape their interpretations of cases and their judgments about developmental outcomes. It also mirrors professional practice, where educators regularly provide and receive feedback as part of collaborative meaning-making and improvement, which is peer-learning and peer-review.

Implementation Strategy

Formative feedback can be incorporated as a stand-alone teaching method or embedded within case-based teaching assignments. After completing a case analysis—whether in written form, through recorded discussion, or as a reflective response—students exchange their work with peers and provide written formative feedback.

Guidelines for Formative Feedback

While students would have completed the same assignment, remind them that feedback must be aligned with the assignment criteria, and focused on supporting their colleagues' future learning and practice. Students prepare no more than **500 words** of formative feedback. Written feedback should be addressed to **their peer(s)** and should also include the name of the feedback's author.

The following prompts can be used to guide students' preparation of feedback for their peer(s). Feedback should be written in narrative form rather than bullet points.

- 1. Resonance and Meaning:** Describe the part of the argument constructed in your colleagues' analysis that resonated with you and explain why.
- 2. Strengths:** Identify strengths of the work related to content, quality of reasoning, organization, clarity of writing, and/or effective use of theory.
- 3. Areas for Growth:** Offer constructive suggestions for improvement related to content, argument development, organization, or clarity. For example, do the authors raise questions in their analysis that remain unanswered? If so, provide a specific example and explain how addressing it could strengthen the analysis.
- 4. Probing Question:** Pose one thoughtful, open-ended follow-up question for your colleague to address. The follow-up questions could:
 - a. Invite deeper reflection on how theory was applied in the case, or
 - b. Introduce a shift in the case's circumstances that requires reconsideration of how the selected theory might be expanded, challenged, or applied differently.

Instructors may then invite students to respond to the formative feedback they received through a brief reflection, class discussion, or recorded response, reinforcing feedback as a dialogic process rather than a final judgment.

Instructional Value

Coupling formative feedback with case-based teaching deepens students' analytical and reflective capacities while fostering a collaborative learning environment. Students learn not only how to interpret cases, but also how to articulate critique, offer constructive guidance, and engage feedback as a resource for growth. This process aligns with SDTiA's emphasis on translation, as students refine their theoretical interpretations in response to others' perspectives and reconsider how positionality and context shape meaning-making and the developmental outcomes they pursue.

For instructors, formative feedback provides insight into students' thinking processes and offers opportunities to intervene, clarify, and extend learning without relying solely on summative assessment. Together, case-based teaching and formative feedback create learning conditions that support sustained inquiry, reflexivity, and the development of ethically grounded educational practice.