

Addressing Common Challenges

As an instructor, you can improve the effectiveness of your feedback by addressing common errors. By creating an announcement, a short video, or a microlecture to address common errors or misconceptions, you can deliver feedback to a larger number of students all at once. Not only will addressing common errors give students important feedback, it can also be comforting to students to know that they are not the only one who struggled with a particular concept or problem.

Posting an Announcement

One way to address common errors is to post a course announcement or send out an email to everyone describing an error or misconception that was made by multiple students. For example:

Dear Class,

We made it through the first module! You all did an excellent job of posting your initial response to the discussion forum, watching the microlecture, and using the quiz feature to practice running descriptive statistics using the SPSS software. Nicely done! One area that I noticed a few of you seemed to have a hard time with was posting the graph you get in the software into the discussion forum. This is a little tricky and, to tell you the truth, I still have to follow the directions every time I do it! I have attached the directions to this email. If you have any questions or problems at all, please let me know and I will be happy to try to help.

On to module two!

Creating a Mini-Lesson

Another way to provide feedback and address a common error with the whole class is to create a mini-lesson or video. Once you have reviewed and assessed the submitted assignments for the class, create a short lesson on the common misconceptions or areas of confusion. You can aim to create a video that is no more than five minutes in length.

For example, if the assignment was an algebra quiz and you realized that many students did well on the questions with one variable but struggled with the questions that had two variables, you can surmise that the class will benefit from a lesson on solving for multiple variables. By creating a short video and developing a microlecture to address common errors or misconceptions, you can address this generally while still providing students with feedback. As a reminder, students knowing that they are not the only one who struggled with a particular concept can be encouraging.

Below is an outline for providing group feedback presented in mini-lesson format:

1. Commend the class on common strengths and areas of understanding.
2. Explain the learning goal for the mini-lesson and that it was a common misconception.
3. Provide instruction on how to successfully meet the learning goal.
4. Model the use of the skill or strategy.
5. Provide examples of the acceptable work.
6. Encourage students to reach out with questions, post in the Q & A forum, or come by your virtual office hours.
7. Set a date for revisions to be submitted or for students to take a similar test or quiz.

Source

Bowen, J. A., & Watson, C. E. (2017). *Teaching naked techniques: A practical guide to designing better classes*. Jossey Bass.