Understanding ‘Feedforward’ through an evidence based approach

4th European Coaching Congress organised by SGCP, Edinburgh 2013
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Impetus: Evidence on Feedback

One of the seminal studies:
Kluger & DeNisi (1996); meta-analysis of thousands of studies on feedback interventions (FI)
Considered the association feedback and performance, comparing to control groups:
Feedback does change performance (modest effect sizes!), but:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{in of 2/3 of observations performance went up} & \uparrow \\
\text{in 1/3 of observations performance went down} & \downarrow
\end{align*}
\]

Professional interest: e.g. feedback of psychometrics, potential for harm.
“Feedback is just common sense. Coaches and psychologists know the basic principles anyway, and apply them well”

• Feedback in coaching (see also McDowall & Millward, 2010):
  – **Content** Feedback: what you do in the session
  – **Process** Feedback: what is happening, interpersonal process
  – Over-emphasis on feeding *backwards, and using feedback information*?

• Psychologists like data – but are we focussing too much on the past?

• Feedforward!
Feedforward
Not a new, or unique term

Feedforward algorithms in exothermic batch reactor?

Treatment of Diabetes
‘Feedforward’ Interview (Kluger & Nir, 2006; 2010)

Rooted in:

- Recognition that you can’t just rely on the fact that feedback will work
  - Feedback has a more positive effect if people are in a positive mood
  - Appreciative enquiry: eliciting stories that focus on positive experiences
  - Goal setting and gap analyses: linking positive experiences to future plans and being open to change these
  - Feedback Intervention Theory
Creating the right environment for Feedforward:

• Uninterrupted one to one environment
• Facing one another, very open; try not to distract (perhaps tape sessions after seeking consent?)
• Acknowledge openly that there are positive and negative experiences, but that the focus of this session is on positive experiences
• Coach/ feedback giver: active use of summarising, reflecting back
• Let coachee do the talking: needs to be in right frame of mind
Elicit story about positive experience

Clarify conditions for positive experience (self – mental and physical, situation, others)

Link story and conditions to current context: what can you make the most of? Anything that needs to be changed/ adapted?

Raise awareness Positive Emotions

Engaging constructive dialogue

Utilise potential gap between what you know is good for you and current conditions productively

Feed forward

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Feedforward interview:

• Can you tell me a story about a specific event that involved you giving feedback to someone else, during which you felt at your best?
• What where the conditions that allowed this to happen?
• What was the highpoint of the event? How did you feel during that moment?
• How does what we have just talked about link to your future plans?
Adapted Feedforward interview

• Elicit event: story, highpoint
• What does this even tell you about your strengths: list three of these
• What conditions were necessary – list
• Rate conditions
  – 5-10 how crucial the conditions are in your story
  – 0-10 how they currently exist
My story: ‘Running with it’ (complex project with competing demands)

Three strengths: adaptable, “thinking outside the box”, able to liaise with different parties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List conditions</th>
<th>Contribution to my story (5-10)</th>
<th>Currently exists in my context (0-10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Used own initiative</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant experience</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleagues all chipped in</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Really engaging topic</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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27/01/2014
So how does ‘feedforward’ work?

• Makes strengths salient
• Puts coachee in driver seat to find own path
• Gap between actual and ideal encourages reflection
• Fosters communication, relationships, trust
• Visual, vivid element to story
• Goals
Recent research (under review)

• Trained two MSc students
• Does FFI have more positive effects compared to Feedback?
• 54 individuals took part in either feedforward coaching or feedback, randomly allocated (ended up with 32 in FFI condition)
  – 1 hour + FFI interview
  – Feedback interview using Career Indepth Pathfinder Inventory Statements
• Measured perceived (generalised) self-efficacy, mood (PANAS), strength-knowledge before and after coaching; and goal attainment and coachee reactions (usefulness, enjoyment, difficulty) once activity was completed.
Results

• Self-efficacy greatest effects including a significant interaction: it dipped in FB condition!

• In FFI condition, all participants met or exceeded the goal which they had set themselves

• In FB condition, 13 participants met or exceeded the goal, 9 had somewhat less than expected attainment outcome

• Strengths knowledge increased in both conditions, participants like FFI better!

• Mood dropped in FB condition
Next on the menu

More variations on the theme

• FFI compared to FB compared to control
• FFI compared to different FB conditions
• Adapted FFI (so integrating worksheets)
Future research questions

• What exactly are the *active ingredients*

  – Overall process (holistic technique)?
  – Could you take any one of the ‘ingredients’ out?
  – What would happen if you put the FFI in reverse order?
  – FFI and its effects as part of an overall coaching process
.. And last but not least:
What are you feeding forward from today?

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Huge thank yous and due acknowledgement to Anna Fehervari, Katie Freeman, Suzanne Marshall, Jordon Jones, Lydia Rollin, Harriet Western-Williams
Some tips for evaluation of FFI as part of a coaching process:

- Goal attainment/commitment, e.g. Scaling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predicted attainment</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Much more than expected learning outcome</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat more than expected learning outcome</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected level of learning outcome</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat less than expected learning outcome</td>
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<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much less than expected learning outcome</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References:


• *Avi Kluger’s web-site, dedicated to Feedforward: [http://www.feedforward.co.il/](http://www.feedforward.co.il/)*