Closing the loop on a weekly cycle

Purpose:
This document outlines a simple approach for the effective use of continuous student feedback to enhance teaching and learning.

Approach:
Closing the loop on a weekly cycle is a feedback elicitation and dissemination approach that can be carried out each week and consists of a simplified electronic version of the Harvard Minute Paper (Angelo & Cross, 1993). The process takes at most 5 minutes and is administered in an interactive fashion using a word document that is displayed to students through the projector in the lecture theatre at the end of each lecture. The word document consists of three questions with space to write responses (see Preparation section below for questions).

At the end of each lecture, the lecturer asks the students as a group to give direct spoken feedback on what are the *least useful, most useful, and least clear* aspects of the lecture. The responses from students are then written directly into the word document underneath the relevant question so that students can see that the feedback has been received. Note that the student responses need not be limited to content from the lecture.

Once a response has been received and the lecturer has written it into the word document, a follow-up question can be asked to clarify the issue or determine if this is a common concern. At this stage, the lecturer can immediately close the feedback loop by publically acknowledging the feedback, addressing any concerns on the spot, and/or providing a timeframe in which the feedback will be acted upon. If a concern is identified, a useful follow-up question is to ask "How could this be improved for you?"

Benefits for the student:
This weekly closing the loop process empowers students to provide direct and continuous feedback on all aspects of the lecture and course instead of waiting until the course has ended. Over time, students become accustomed to having their voices heard and despite the lack of anonymity will feel comfortable sharing their experience and suggestions for improvements.

This process allows students to gain a sense of ownership of the learning and it empowers students to take control of their own learning. It also assists in promoting a sense of connectedness, purpose and resourcefulness which are key indicators for student success (Lizzio, 2006).

Benefits for the lecturer:
There is no delay between the activity and the feedback. Therefore, the lecturer can immediately resolve potential issues that may have a negative impact on the student experience and learning outcomes as they occur. This fosters a sense of connectedness between the student cohort and the teaching team. In addition, the lecturer has a weekly record of the issues students face in the course which can be used to focus further development for a subsequent offering.

Preparation before the lecture:
For each week in which you would like to run this process, create a one page word (or other text editor) document with the following three questions:

1. What is the least useful aspect of this lecture?
2. What is the most useful aspect of this lecture?
3. What is the least clear aspect of this lecture?

Leave some blank lines between the questions as you will be updating this document with feedback elicited from students.

Alternative ways to elicit feedback:
Note that questions could be tailored to suit the specific context and alternate forms of feedback elicitation could be used. For example, the word document could be replaced with an online poll or student-accessible google documents which could be embedded in the lecture or course Website.

References
Angelo, T. A. & Cross, P. K. (1993). *Classroom assessment techniques: A handbook for college teachers* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
Lizzio, A. (2006). *Designing an orientation and transition strategy for commencing students*, Griffith University First Year Experience Project.