

HEA Feedback toolkit



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Contents

Section	Page
Introduction	7
Formative feedback	7
Summative assessment	7
Why a focus on Feedback?	7
Is YOUR feedback fit for purpose?	8
The purpose(s) of feedback	8
What are the various forms that feedback can take?	9
How can I choose the best approach to feedback for myself and my students?	11
What do students want from feedback?	11
What makes feedback effective?	12
Ideas for Practical Implementation	12
Effective Feedback is:	12
How can I encourage my student to pick up, read and learn from the feedback I give them?	13
Possible strategies to encourage students to read feedback	14
Time is a real issue. Are there any strategies to give quality feedback in a timely manner?	14
How can my feedback help students take action to improve their learning?	15
Possible areas of misunderstanding	15
What sort of comments and level of detail is useful in feedback?	17
Reflect and Develop - Two different perspectives on detailed feedback	18
Speaking their language - How can I make sure students understand my feedback?	19
Feedback Strategies to help students understand feedback	19

How can I make my feedback forward-facing?	21
Strategies to ensure feedback functions also as feedforward	22
What sort of feedback builds motivation and self-esteem?	23
Example in practice:	23
Annotated feedback:	24
Summative feedback at the end of each essay:	24
How can I ensure my feedback is realistic and focuses on students' performance?	24
Giving students realistic targets	25
How should feedback reflect the assessment purpose and the grading criteria?	25
What makes a good feedback sheet?	27
How can I encourage dialogue around feedback?	28
Student input to inform tutor feedback:	28
Student contribution in response to tutor feedback:	29
How can I use self- and peer-feedback to develop students' skills of self-assessment?	29
Benefits:	29
Concerns:	30
What challenges do staff face in giving feedback?	30
How can technology enhance my feedback?	31
Enhancing your feedback - Action Planning for more effective Feedback	32
Staff & Student views on assessment	33
References	33
Feedback activity ideas	40
ACTIVITY - Student views of feedback	40
ACTIVITY - Exploring your own thoughts on feedback	40
ACTIVITY - Exploring your interests in feedback and the reasons which bring you to this feedback toolkit:	40
ACTIVITY - Why is Feedback so important to students?	42
ACTIVITY - Improving your own Feedback Practice	42
ACTIVITY - Discovering Student views	43
ACTIVITY - Explore the views of your own students	43

ACTIVITY - Feedback: efficiency for us, learning payoff for students	43
ACTIVITY - Enhancing your awareness of the Student Perspective	44
ACTIVITY - Exploring your own students' experience of feedback and developing their understanding	44
ACTIVITY - Reverse Brainstorming to explore the issue of effective feedback	45
ACTIVITY - Student Perspectives and Ideas for Practical Implementation	45
ACTIVITY - Starbursting Causes and Solutions	46
ACTIVITY - Time-saving strategies that do not compromise on meeting the aims of effective feedback	46
ACTIVITY - Exploring the root causes of student misunderstanding	46
ACTIVITY - Where would more detail be helpful?	47
ACTIVITY - Feedback Strategies to help students understand feedback - which could you use?	47
ACTIVITY - Strategies to ensure feedback functions also as feedforward	48
ACTIVITY - Promoting students' own engagement with turning feedback into feed forward	48
ACTIVITY - Self/Peer Review of Feedback Focus/Impact	48
ACTIVITY - Giving Realistic Targets within Feedback - Matching Targets to Level	49
ACTIVITY - Feedback Templates and Assessment Types	50
ACTIVITY - Peer Assessment as a strategy to aid student understanding of feedback	50
ACTIVITY - What's out there? Appreciative Enquiry of existing feedback forms	50
ACTIVITY - What's out there? Quick, paired comparison	51
ACTIVITY - Using Resources FOR students WITH students	52
ACTIVITY – The importance of self-feedback	52
ACTIVITY - Reflection on Strategies - Would these work for you?	52
ACTIVITY - Self and Peer Review of Feedback Practice	53
ACTIVITY - Reflection and Action Planning	53
Appendix I	54
Effective Feedback and Benefits for Student Learning	54
Appendix 2	55
Feedback: efficiency for us, learning payoff for students	55
Appendix 3	57
Survey on students' experience of feedback they receive on their assignments	57
Appendix 4	58

Starbursting Causes and Solutions – Getting students to pick up, read and learn from feedback	58
Appendix 5	59
Possible strategies to encourage students to read feedback	59
Appendix 6	60
Strategies for Timely Feedback – would they work for you?	60
Appendix 7	63
Feedback Strategies to help students understand feedback	63
Peer-Assessed Oral Presentations: A quick method to generate feedback for individual presentations in the biosciences	63
‘Think aloud Reading’ via MP3 recordings	64
Appendix 8	65
Codes for categorising tutor feedback comments on assignments	65
Target Monitoring Grids for Turning Feedback into Feedforward	66
Example Target Monitoring Grid	68
Example of Tutor Response to Target Monitoring Grid within Feedback	68
Appendix 9	69
Giving Realistic Targets within Feedback - Matching Targets to Level – Worksheet	69
Giving Realistic Targets within Feedback - Matching Targets to Level – Some suggested answers	70
Appendix 10	71
Aberystwyth University Feedback form for written assignments	71
Appendix 11	73
Solihull College Poster Presentation Grading and Feedback Sheet	73
Appendix 12	75
University of Ulster FRENCH DISSERTATION MARKING GRID	75
Appendix 13	76
Strategies for structured reflection and/or self-assessment – Would these work for you?	76
Appendix 14	78
Feedback to students would work much better for me if only I...	78
Instructions	78
Appendix 15	80
Enhancing Feedback with Technology	80

Appendix 16	83
Improving Feedback Practice through Reflection and Action Planning	83

Introduction

A popular view of feedback might be along the lines of seeing it as the correction of errors, or as letting students know their results in assessed work, informing them how accurate, or not, the evidence of their learning proved to be.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines feedback as:

- information about reactions to a product, a person's performance of a task, etc. which is used as a basis for improvement.
- the modification or control of a process or system by its results or effects, for example in a biochemical pathway or behavioural response.

Within this toolkit the emphasis is on a particular idea of 'formative feedback', used in relation to assessment to enhance or improve student learning:

Formative feedback is any information, process or activity which affords or accelerates student learning based on comments relating to either formative assessment or summative assessment activities'

Formative feedback

Any task or activity which creates feedback (or feedforward) for students about their learning. Formative assessment does not carry a grade which is subsequently used in a summative judgement' (Irons, 2007, p.7)

Summative assessment

Any assessment activity which results in a mark or grade which is subsequently used as a judgement on student performance. Ultimately judgements using summative assessment marks will be used to determine the classification of award at the end of a course or programme. (Irons, 2007, p.7)

During this section of the toolkit resources and activities that can be used to aid the development of new teaching staff can be found online and are available to download. This section also includes videos with student views and perspectives.

Now try these related activities:

[Student views of feedback](#)

[Exploring your own thoughts on feedback](#)

[Exploring your interests in feedback and the reasons which bring you to this feedback toolkit](#)

Why a focus on Feedback?

The spotlight on feedback is largely as a result of two very visible developments.

The first, and perhaps the most significant, is that year on year, the lowest scores received within the [National Student Survey \(NSS\)](#) are for the area of Feedback, and, as recorded by the [National Union of Students \(NUS\)](#) this is a pattern found nationally, almost without exception

The second derives from campaigns run by the National Union of Students (NUS), over a three-year period, 2008-11. These include a 'Great NUS Feedback Amnesty', launched in 2008, calling for students to comment on the quality of feedback they receive on their programmes, and the publishing of the NUS [Charter on Feedback and Assessment](#) in 2010, listing ten key principles for effective assessment and feedback, including five specifically related to feedback

Below are some ideas found within the literature exploring the ways in which effective feedback can benefit student learning.

Feedback can...

- raise students' consciousness of the strengths of their work
- boost students' confidence and self-concept regarding personal strengths and abilities
- provide guidance on areas for further development of skills and enhancement of work
- enhance students' own judgement, understanding of assessment criteria and ability to self-audit their own work

Last, perhaps least, but certainly still significant, another reason to focus on maximising the impact of our feedback is that it can take up quite a bit of our professional time: 'Writing comments on assignments, however, remains a major component of teachers' workload in higher education.' (Gibbs and Simpson, 2005, p.10). Given the time investment that Feedback represents, we want to find ways to ensure it is effective and encourage students to learn from it.

Now try this related activity: [Why is Feedback so important to students?](#)

Is YOUR feedback fit for purpose?

Feedback may sometimes feel like nothing more than an expected ritual within the cycle of assessment processes that are part of academic life. However it can potentially be much more than this and indeed feedback can have multiple functions:

- information as to how the current assignment could be improved;
- advice to improve work in future assignments;
- explanation, or justification of the grade or mark awarded;
- demonstration that the tutor has read the work and has expertise in the area.

The purpose(s) of feedback

Feedback can perform several functions. For example it can be used primarily to:

- correct errors;
- develop understanding through explanations;
- generate more learning by suggesting further specific study tasks;
- promote the development of generic skills by focusing on the evidence of the use of skills rather than on the content;

- promote meta-cognition by encouraging students' reflection and awareness of learning processes involved in the assignment;
- encourage students to continue studying.

(Gibbs and Simpson, 2011, p.19-20)

Common agreement concludes that effective feedback can:

- promote an individual's learning journey and encourage greater achievement;
- enable students to reflect and develop on their strengths and weaknesses;
- foster greater levels of self-esteem and motivation which, in turn, can result in greater progress;
- enable tutors to realign their teaching content and teaching methods in response to learners' needs; encourage a more effective dialogue between teachers and students;
- develop core skills around self-assessment and peer-to-peer evaluation.

(NUS, 2008, Feedback Campaign Briefing, p.2)

Now try this related activity: [Improving your own Feedback Practice](#)

What are the various forms that feedback can take?

It seems obvious that in order for students to benefit from feedback on their work, they must first recognise the feedback they are given as being feedback.

One of the recurrent themes within the discussion of feedback in HE, is that teachers and students differ in their perceptions of how much feedback is provided to students: students often say they do not receive much feedback, whilst staff feel that they dedicate a lot of time and effort to this element of their job and give lots of feedback.

Data collated by the NUS from the National Student Survey 2009, suggests that one reason for this difference of perspective is that, we may not be providing the types of feedback that students want. Another is possibly confusion arising from the variety of forms which feedback can take; students may simply not recognise the feedback they receive.

Results from 2009 NUS/HSBC Student Experience Report – showing student preferences for different types of feedback	How do you receive feedback on your coursework?	What would be the most useful way for you to receive feedback on your coursework? Please select all that apply
Written grades/ marks	89%	69%
Written comments	83%	81%
Verbal feedback provided in an individual meeting with the tutor/ lecturer who set the work	25%	66%
Verbal feedback provided in a group meeting with the tutor/ lecturer who set the work	22%	27%
Don't know	1%	1%

(NUS, 2008, Feedback Campaign Briefing, Table 4, p.4)

Different feedback mechanisms include:

1 Specific, targeted, tutor feedback

- Tutor written summative comments on a piece of work
- Tutor on-script comments on individual work
- Indication of achievement against various criteria on a marking grid
- Individual feedback using a departmental feedback form
- Oral feedback - of overall comments or in-line for specific points
- Comments with Gradebooks or their equivalent in a VLE

2 Generic tutor feedback

- Whole group feedback
- Printed responses to exercises
- Coverage of topics within class sessions

3 Automated feedback

- Tests within a VLE
- Self-assessment tasks

4 Feedback from people other than the tutor

- Fellow students commenting on each other's work
- Self-feedback - students' own evaluation of their work
- Feedback from PDP Tutors

5 Informal feedback

- Comments from the tutor made in the corridor
- Comments from the tutor within the VLE
- Reference to assessed work as 'asides' within a lecture

Now try these related activities:

[Discovering Student views](#)

[Explore the views of your own students](#)

How can I choose the best approach to feedback for myself and my students?

You will never find the perfect form of feedback! There is no such thing, and every type of feedback, each feedback mechanism has its advantages and its drawbacks. Phil Race has suggested that a key factor to bear in mind in selecting the most appropriate form of feedback for yourself and your students is to consider the balance or payoff between Feedback efficiency for us and learning payoff for students. This balance will be sensitive to your particular context, comprising factors such as subject area, group size, level of course, and assessment aim.

The point is explained very effectively, in a resource helpfully provided by the University of Reading: Available online at:

http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/EngageinFeedback/Race_feedback_efficiency.pdf

Now try this related activity: [Feedback: efficiency for us, learning payoff for students](#)

What do students want from feedback?

As explored in [Why a focus on Feedback](#), we should not underestimate the impact which effective feedback can have on student learning and there is plenty of evidence (Irons, 2007) to show that students WANT and VALUE feedback. The [NUS Charter on Assessment and Feedback \(2010\)](#) includes the following points relating to Feedback:

- Formative assessment and feedback should be used throughout the programme
- Students should have access to face-to-face feedback for at least the first piece of assessment each academic year
- Receiving feedback should not be exclusive to certain forms of assessment
- Feedback should be timely
- Students should be supported to critique their own work
- Students should be given the choice of format for feedback

Not all of these may be practicable within a specific context or situation, but the Charter affirms that the student body is aware of the potential benefit of feedback and the value which it could bring to their learning, their education and their achievements, and consequently their future.

However, students are also astute enough to recognise what makes feedback more, or less, effective. We spend a lot of time and effort on feedback, and so, as teachers it makes sense to listen to student views of what they value in feedback, and what they find less than helpful, so that we spend our time and effort wisely in producing feedback that they will WANT to read / listen to, and which they will use. For example, students can be demotivated as a result of feedback particularly when:

- they perceive the feedback to be unfair
- feedback is unclear
- they don't understand the feedback
- the feedback doesn't seem to relate to the work they have done
- they don't receive feedback in time
- feedback is overly critical, or
- feedback is non-constructive.

(Irons 2007, p.37)

Now try these related activities:

[Enhancing your awareness of the Student Perspective](#)

[Exploring your own students' experience of feedback and developing their understanding](#)

What makes feedback effective?

Ideas for Practical Implementation

Here are some features which are highlighted in the literature as making feedback effective. Follow the links which have most in common with the issues emerging from the Reverse Brainstorm and/or student videos to find ideas for practical implementation.

Effective Feedback is:

What comes across loud and strong from the students is the importance of placing the student or learner at the centre of all good feedback practice. Feedback should not be written with the aim of justifying the mark that has been given to the work (MacLellan 2001) or produced to meet institutional requirements 'as part of a learning and teaching strategy, as part of your workload or to be used as evidence for external examiners or external review' (Irons 2007, p.54). Effective feedback should be produced for the student, with the student's learning needs as the central concern.

In this, to be effective feedback:

- [Is feedback which is picked up, read, and acted on by students](#)
Feedback will have no impact on future student learning, unless they actually pick it up, read it and act upon it!
- [Is Timely](#)
To be effective feedback should be provided for students while it still matters to them and in time for them to use it as feed forward into their next assignment.
- [Helps students take action to improve their learning](#)
Feedback should be for learning, not just evaluation of learning. It should help to

close the gap between current performance and the expected standard of work, written to take into account students' understanding of what they are supposed to be doing.

- **Is clear, detailed and specific**

It is important that students can understand the feedback you give, and to achieve this feedback should be specific about where, for example, mistakes were made or where additional information can be found in the literature. It is important too to avoid too much academic jargon, and word **feedback in language students will understand**.

- **Has a forward-facing focus**

Feedback should be constructive, not just backward-looking, with a focus on aspects of the work which are relevant to later assessments. For example, a focus on generic issues such as study skills or presentational factors helps feedback to also function as feed-forward, building skills for future work.

- **Builds motivation and self-esteem**

Feedback should help students want to learn by being encouraging and supportive in tone, and including a focus on existing strengths and, where there are weaknesses, guidance how to improve.

- **Is realistic and focuses on students' performance**

Make sure your students realise that the feedback is about their work, rather than about them as people, with an appropriate level of challenge, asking them to do things they are able to do, not things they do not know how to do.

- **Is targeted to the purpose of the assignment and the criteria for success**

The functions of feedback vary according to the nature of the assessment and to its criteria for success. Be flexible and avoid a one-size-fits-all approach.

- **Encourages dialogue with tutors and peers as a way to make sense of their learning**

Feedback should not be seen simply as something which is delivered by tutor to students, leaving individuals to try to make sense of what has been said about their work. Dialogue between tutor and students, and in the form of **peer-to-peer feedback** and discussion around the meaning of feedback can help students learn more.

- **Helps students develop their ability to make informed judgements on their own work**

The goal of feedback is enhancement of learning and improvement of future work and should therefore develop students' abilities to self-audit the quality of their own work

Now try these related activities:

[Reverse Brainstorming to explore the issue of effective feedback](#)

[Student Perspectives and Ideas for Practical Implementation](#)

How can I encourage my student to pick up, read and learn from the feedback I give them?

Many students are poor at using feedback constructively. Often they are only interested in the mark and sometimes they do not even bother to read what we have written. When receiving feedback live, they frequently fail to retain what is said to them, apart from when their own views (or worst fears) of how they have performed are confirmed. We need to find ways to help students make good use of the hard work we put into giving them feedback, to interpret it appropriately, to see how the comments and advice they are given links to what

they are doing, and to turn this into improvements in competence and knowledge.

(Brown, S. 2007, p.1)

Clearly, feedback will have no impact on future student learning, unless students actually pick it up, read it and act upon it. (Gibbs and Simpson, 2011)! So why do some students fail to look at their feedback? Why is there such a mismatch between the value placed on feedback in the NUS campaign documents and students' failure to pick up their marked assignments? Why is so often the case that teaching staff report giving a good deal of feedback, with marking taking up a significant proportion of their professional lives, while students claim not to receive much feedback of value at all? What can YOU do to encourage YOUR students to pick up, pay attention to, and act on the feedback YOU give on their assessments?

Possible strategies to encourage students to read feedback

A fundamental factor in encouraging students to read your feedback is, of course, the quality of the feedback itself, and so all the features explored in the discussion of [effective feedback](#) are relevant, since, if students feel, for whatever reason, that feedback is ineffective, they are unlikely to read or act on it. However, as student behaviour is inevitably influenced by their previous experience of feedback, in their first year reacting to the contrast with the feedback practices they experienced in schools / colleges (Beaumont, O'Doherty, and Shannon, 2011), and later in their programme, acting out learnt experience from other tutors (Bailey and Garner, 2010) it is worth considering strategies specifically designed to address this issue.

Here are some strategies to make your feedback more effective:

- Give your feedback high profile
- Give feedback before, or without marks
- Embed some dialogue with students within your feedback process
- Promote Self-Feedback
- Staged assignments
- Involve students in actively doing something with the feedback, support, and follow-up.

More details on these strategies can be found [below](#).

Now try this related activity: [Starbursting Causes and Solutions](#)

Time is a real issue. Are there any strategies to give quality feedback in a timely manner?

[Effective Feedback is timely](#) - it is provided for students while they still care about the work they have done, and in time for them to pay attention to further learning or receive further assistance

(Gibbs & Simpson 2005; NUS, undated).

It is important to get feedback quickly to students, soon after the assessed work has been completed and submitted. The greater the delay, the less relevant and useful the feedback will be, however good the feedback itself may be. If students have moved on to other work, the feedback on that earlier assignment may not seem relevant, especially if the feedback comes after the end of the course. Ideally feedback from one assignment should be given early enough that the student can act on it in their next assignment.

However, of course, it is not always possible to achieve the gold standard of individual, personalised and targeted feedback provided to our students in a speedy manner:

Teachers [in HE] would love to provide personalised feedback, taking great care over the words used in formative feedback so as to encourage and motivate students and help them develop their knowledge and understanding. Teachers would love to be sensitive to individual students' needs and expectations, culture and disposition. But there is a dilemma - there is currently an environment of mass higher education, there are staff student ratios (SSRs) of 27:1, 35:1 or even 45:1, there is an increasingly diverse student body, there are many teaching pressures on staff, there are all sorts of bureaucratic demands and there is an expectation that staff participate in research.

(Irons 2007, p.9)

Indeed, 'lack of time' could be said to be the greatest barrier to ensuring effective feedback for students. With all the pressures of research, admin, programme management, developing new approaches to teaching, scholarship, as well as the actual teaching and assessment, and given the speed of turnaround expected for marking the work of ever-increasing class sizes, it is easy to see why finding sufficient time to produce quality feedback can be seen to be the greatest challenge faced.

Now try these related activities:

[Time-saving strategies that do not compromise on meeting the aims of effective feedback](#)
[Feedback: efficiency for us, learning payoff for students](#)

How can my feedback help students take action to improve their learning?

Most students try their best to submit work which meets the requirements of the assessment task and which achieves well against the grading criteria. Sometimes, when the work is not up to standard, it is not just a question of inadequate subject knowledge, but due to gaps in understanding which mean that the student does not fully grasp what it is that they should be doing in the assignment. If in our feedback we simply comment that the work is sub-standard, without taking such gaps in understanding into account, we will not succeed in helping students to close the gap between their current performance and the expected standard of work. Students will be no further forward in understanding what was expected of them, nor know how and where to improve in the future.

Possible areas of misunderstanding

Gibbs and Simpson outline different areas of possible student misunderstanding, related to student conceptions of:

- the task - what they think a particular academic task consists of
- the nature of learning and the nature of knowledge - they might perceive learning as, for example, the collection and presentation of points which are assumed to be equally valid (Perry 1970) rather than critical discussion of different viewpoints (Saljo 1982)
- the discourse of the relevant discipline - they may not have a clear grasp of the type of writing or other communication required in the particular discipline which, in these days of modular programme, may be outside their main subject area.

Steps in helping students to close the gap between current performance and the expected standard of work:

1 Help clarify what good performance is (goals, criteria, expected standards)

Carefully-worded rubric and grading criteria and feedback which overtly reflects and draws on the wording in the rubric / criteria are both important to clarify what is expected of students. However, where this has been misunderstood, it is important to reinforce and clarify through the use of dialogue, exemplars or formative classroom tasks engaging students in ranking criteria and/or peer-assessing others' work so as to help them gain a working understanding of what is expected.

2 Provide guidance to help students perceive the gap between current and desired performance

One approach to feedback which can supportively help students perceive the ways in which their work does and does not meet the standard expected is to approach the feedback not as judgemental comments, but from the perspective of tutor as reader (Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick 2006). **Talking in terms of how the work was 'experienced'** can be an effective way to convey to students how and where it differs from what was expected.

3 Include some clear, achievable, targets for future development, to close the gap between current and desired performance. These targets could include:

- General academic features / study skills
- Presentation, style, structure
- Range and use of reading
- Criticality
- Focus on the question / establishment of a key and relevant question.

(University of Hull Quality Handbook, Section F - Assessment, Annexe 10)

Such targets will be relevant at both mid- and end-module stages; however, for students to be empowered by the feedback to then act to improve their work, it is not enough simply to include a list of aspects where improvement is needed, but also to provide practical advice as to how to go about improving them.

Focus on the most important aspects of student work, as reflected in the criteria used for assigning grades.

In connection with this, remember that student pick up hints from our feedback as to what is important in their work. If feedback concentrates largely on the easy-to-spot presentational aspects of work (e.g. punctuation or grammar errors) then this is what students deduce is important. Feedback therefore needs to also include a focus on 'aspects

that are of greater importance to academic learning but that are more abstract and difficult to define (such as strength of argument)' (Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick 2004, p.11).

Now try this related activity: [Exploring the root causes of student misunderstanding](#)

What sort of comments and level of detail is useful in feedback?

You may find that there is institutional, faculty or departmental guidance determining the content, structure, and/or focus of feedback, perhaps according to negotiations undertaken with the local Students' Union. Within my own institution, for example, it was established in 2011 that written feedback on work should always include 'points to work on' in future assignments. So too, different disciplines will bring their own expectations, and Professional Bodies may also impose requirements which provide you with a structure and / or guidance to follow on the subject matter of your assessment feedback. However, despite such frameworks, you may still find yourself lacking clear guidelines to follow. In this case you may find the following list of possible feedback content / focus helpful, selecting from it according to the task type and assessment purpose:

Areas in which we can provide feedback include:

- criteria
- subject understanding
- alignment to learning outcomes
- communication skills
- academic skills
- style and approach
- transferable skills
- student effort

(Irons 2007, p.38)

Comments should not, however, be too general in nature. Brief comments such as the generic advice to 'be more critical' are not necessarily helpful because such statements don't tell the students what is meant by this phrase, nor where within a particular piece of work their writing was overly descriptive, lacking critical engagement with issues. Students may need you to indicate which passages in an assignment read as merely descriptive, perhaps because the facts within that description represent new learning to them.

They may benefit from 'pointers' as to how they could be more critical, such as annotations asking questions such as:

- How they know a statement to be valid
- What alternative explanations might be posited
- Why a given point is relevant
- What conclusions can be drawn from the issues presented?

Such questions give students an indication of what else is needed in their work, and thereby provide some advice how to address the weakness which has been a factor in their work

perhaps receiving a low mark. Thus the feedback does not solely justify the grade awarded; it provides a basis on which they can build to improve achievement in later work.

Irons points out that a comment 'Evidence' in the margin of a piece of work could, by itself, be interpreted by students in a number of different ways:

- This is an example of evidence
- Do you intend this to be evidence?
- This evidence is good
- This evidence is not detailed enough
- More evidence is expected to justify your assertion

(Irons 2007, p.54)

You may have intended the last of these meanings, but if a student interprets it as meaning one of the first three options, such feedback is worse than no feedback at all.

Positive comments too are less than helpful if only stated in general terms. If a student cannot tell which BIT of their writing is being praised then they lack the basis to repeat the strength in the future. Students do want to build on their good performance but may not realise where, or why, a particular section of their writing is strong. They may need staff to signpost the strengths to them. If you can pinpoint one or more examples of good summarising or clear explanation, this can help students recognise the positive features of their own work, which is important if they are to be empowered to reproduce such features in the future.

Reflect and Develop - Two different perspectives on detailed feedback

The following two recordings represent differing perspectives on providing feedback at the level of addressing errors within written English.

On the one hand, a member of staff explains the rationale for adopting this practice, at least with respect to initial pieces of work; on the other, an international student expresses surprise at the practice and feels it to be inappropriate.

Staff Perspectives on Feedback 2

International Student Panel

Now try this related activity: [Where would more detail be helpful?](#)

Speaking their language - How can I make sure students understand my feedback?

As we have seen, if students are to benefit from feedback then what is said or written should give them a clear picture of both the current level of their achievement, and the gap between their achievement and the intended goal. However, finding the appropriate approach and wording to use to communicate this can be a struggle.

Many students are simply unable to understand feedback comments and interpret them correctly'

(Higgins, 2000, p.1)

Feedback Strategies to help students understand feedback

A number of feedback strategies are suggested below, all of which might in some way be used to help students gain a better understanding of what we mean when we give them feedback on their work, involving them in making sense of the academic language and terms of phrase we use. Not all will, of course, be appropriate for all contexts, student groups, subject areas, or, indeed, teaching styles and approaches, but maybe one or two could be adopted, or adapted, as something useful for your own practice.

1 Ensure the communication of feedback is clear and legible

Coming right down to basics, as some of the students indicate, problems understanding feedback can be as basic as there being no way of them understanding what is intended by feedback which simply consists of highlighting sections of script or placing question-marks next to what has been written. Similarly, feedback needs to be legible. For some very good reasons, a proportion of staff are keen to retain the practice of handwritten feedback and reluctant to move to mirror the requirement for typewritten assignments by providing typewritten feedback. If so, then a simple, but very important strategy to ensure that handwriting is legible. If students are not able to decipher the feedback, the effort of providing quality comments will be wasted. Phil Race advises students to the importance of alerting staff if their handwriting is not legible (Race, 2008); perhaps we should second-guess the need for this by checking with students that they can read what we have written.

2 Draw on Module Learning Outcomes and Grading Criteria

Higgins (2000) draws attention to some of the extremely general comments sometimes used in feedback, akin to those mentioned in the student video:

"Be more critical!", "Your argument needs to be more academic", "More use of analysis would have helped", "You need to think carefully about your structure" - these are the kinds of written comments often confronting higher education (HE) students. But what do they mean? How do students make sense of them?

(Higgins, 2000, p.1)

These examples, and the student views again highlight the importance of detail within feedback, and at the very least feedback can make use of the level of detail available through overt links to the Module Learning Outcomes and grading criteria, and in this way achieve some coherence between the wording within the different elements of the assessment cycle. Discussion about assessment ahead of submission, providing explanation to enhance

student understanding of the assessment task and grading criteria, can encourage students to refer to both the Module Learning Outcomes and grading criteria when undertaking the work. Feedback drawing on the same language then consolidates this and locates the discussion of their achievements, and weaknesses, against the same landscape, making statements referring to the same features and qualities that were introduced, and hopefully clarified earlier, whereas using entirely new language can be confusing.

However, merely adopting the wording from the grading criteria, whilst ensuring coherence, may sound artificial or formal, and if the 'academic jargon' has not been explained, or understood, may not convey the feedback clearly to students. A particular challenge is faced in the case of weak work. In this instance adopting the wording from published grading criteria can sound harsh; the wording there is frequently couched in negative terms, as if written to justify the award of a low mark, and may be de-motivating. Conversely, if tempted to give positive feedback to soften the blow to weaker students, we risk giving inappropriate feedback which gives the wrong impression as to improvements needed. Both these alternatives raise the issue of language and academic jargon.

3 Explain the discourse of academic language

The discourse of academic language, and variation across disciplines, puts students at a power disadvantage compared to tutors, because they do not understand the language which tutors use in giving feedback: 'A sense of estrangement from the language of feedback affecting both students and teachers was mentioned by several respondents' (Bailey and Garner p.193).

Speaking the same language as students within your feedback is not about adopting 'text-speak' within your comments, but is far more about avoiding excessive and unexplained use of academic jargon. When 'adding flesh to the bones' of the academic language which almost inevitably is found in the wording of official documents such as assignment instructions, learning outcomes and grading criteria, use plain English where possible. Embed explanation and clarification of terms across your teaching more generally. In discussing their confusion regarding the instruction to 'be critical' some international students refer, in one case, to a module in which critical evaluation was embedded throughout module activities, developing a gradual, experiential, and pervasive understanding of the term and the practice which it is intended to embody. Using clear language where possible, alongside and/or in clarification of the academic terms themselves thus equips students for other parts of their programme: they should be able to develop an understanding of the academic language they are likely to encounter within other documentation and elsewhere on the course of their studies. In this way, we can be guided by advice from Einstein:

Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler.

(Albert Einstein, 1879-1955)

4 Pitch feedback sensitively

An often-forgotten message coming across in the student comments is their emotional reactions not so much to feedback indicating that work was weak, but to feedback which was poorly, and insensitively delivered. As discussed elsewhere in this Toolkit, feedback should be delivered in ways which are constructive, supportive and enhance students' motivation to learn. In this we do well to remember that it is not just within academic circles that we give feedback. We all give feedback as part of daily life and can draw on these skills when we come to give feedback to students. So too, just as we vary the approach

taken to feedback according to the people we are speaking with, and what we know of them as people and the skills and experience they have as individual, so too we should match the wording of feedback to the particular students on our courses. We can assume more acquaintance with, and understanding, of academic language on the part of many Masters students than you would expect of those newly arrived at university from school, although, again, it is not a case of one-size-fits- all and we should be sensitive to the fact that international students come from different traditions and that some more mature students might have been out of an academic environment for quite some time.

Further thoughts on feedback strategies:

- [Peer-Assessed Oral presentations - Anne Crook - CDOTL](#)
- [Think Aloud Reading via MP3 Recordings - Stephen Merry and Paul Ormond, Staffordshire University](#)
- [University Teaching and Assessment: 'Feeding Forward' - Murdoch University](#)
- [Staff Perspectives on Feedback I - Duncan Westbury, University of Reading](#)
- [Peer Feedback and Assessment - Paul McLaughlin](#)

Now try this related activity:

[Feedback Strategies to help students understand feedback - which could you use?](#)

How can I make my feedback forward-facing?

If you have already encountered the Higher Education Academy video of [Student Perspectives on Assessment and Feedback](#) in other sections of this Feedback Toolkit, you may have been struck by one feature which comes across very forcefully through many of the student comments, namely that they have a very strong sense of awareness that the purpose of **feedback** is really that it should act as **feedforward**. A few examples of this include:

In answering the question of what feedback is, comments from the students include:

- "A breakdown on your assessments to help you do better in the future"
- "Something that helps you produce better work"
- "Extremely important and a vital part of my life as a student"

When asked what they do with the feedback that is given, answers include:

- "Well, I use it to improve ... for the next piece of work that I've got to hand in"
- "Obviously I apply it to my work. If I don't apply it then I am just going to make the mistakes that they tell me I am going to make"

The student comments include many examples of ways in which feedback has contributed to their learning and the improvement of their work and a strong sense of awareness of the potential value of feedback to them as individuals.

However, in other comments the students are quite scathing of poor **feedback** which does not provide this opportunity for **feed-forward** into future learning – a warning to us all.

Strategies to ensure feedback functions also as feedforward

Three different types of activity or strategy are highlighted below as ways to explore this issue of feedback as feedforward and to enhance the potential of your own feedback practice to impact on student learning in this way.

1 Self-/Peer- Review of Feedback for Focus and Impact

This suggests an activity you can undertake to review examples of feedback which you yourself have given and to explore examples within your feedback where your practice already demonstrates the sorts of positive features advocated in this Feedback Toolkit and instances where a different approach could have been taken. One area highlighted within the tool is that where the feedback does include Comments that encourage further learning e.g. reference to dialogue with the tutor, future study / assessment tasks, resources. The tool can be used for Self-Review, or you could ask a trusted colleague to undertake Peer-Review and discuss the two perspectives on the examples of feedback which have been explored.

2 University Teaching and Assessment: 'Feeding Forward'

This is an example of an in-class activity which is specifically designed to engage students actively and critically with the meaning of the assessment criteria or marking guide in order that they internalise the expectations ahead of doing the work and submitting the assessment. In this way, by spending time engaging students in developing their understanding of the issues and processes, the teacher is able to then save time on the actual process of feedback production and give individual feedback speedily using a bank of feedback comments. The feedback given is more likely to be understood on a personal level and to function as feedforward into their next assignment because the groundwork has been laid through the explanation of criteria which is an important element of student interpretation of comments and marks.

3 Target Monitoring Grids for Turning Feedback into Feedforward

The tool presented here was designed to be used by students to provide continuity between assignments and modules, encouraging students to build on feedback they receive from one assignment / module, implement it actively within the work for a following assignment / module, reflect on their own development. As part of the feedback for that later assignment / module, they then receive feedback on their progress. It this can provide staff with a means of facilitating, supporting and tracking the academic development of students from assignment to assignment and module to module. The fact that students are expected to interact with earlier feedback in this way, and that the teacher responds to the comments the students have made about their own progress is intended to **motivate students** to engage with feedback and use it as feedforward in an active way.

Now try these related activities:

[Strategies to ensure feedback functions also as feedforward](#)

[Promoting students' own engagement with turning feedback into feed forward](#)

What sort of feedback builds motivation and self-esteem?

Motivation and self-esteem play a very important role in learning and assessment

(Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick 2006, p.211)

Phil Race argues for a strong emphasis on the importance of promoting motivation and confidence in our learners and the potential role which effective feedback can play in this. He criticises what he sees as a feedback culture which 'tends all too often to take the form of giving students critical feedback when things go wrong, and precious little comment when things go right. In this situation, the feedback which students receive can be almost as damaging to their motivation as the label of failure we pin on their not-yet-successful learning' (Race, 2006, p.28).

So too, there is the issue of student emotional investment in the assessment, arising from the time, effort and 'selfhood' that they put into their work, and therefore the emotional impact of feedback on their work, which can feel like a comment on them themselves: 'Assignments are mainly a personal and individual activity, so if feedback is negative it can be threatening to a student's self-perception' (Carless 2006, p.221). This is exacerbated by the 'power' dimension to traditional approaches to feedback where the teacher is giving the feedback and the student may be seen, or feel, like the passive receiver of the feedback comment.

So, the impact of the balance of positive and negative comments in our feedback, and of the wording we select, can be very great. But how can we gauge the positivity and negativity within our feedback? How can we judge how far our approach and comments are encouraging and motivational on the one hand or driven primarily by a felt need to highlight weaknesses and both explain and justify the marks awarded? We may have an instinctive impression of the emphasis within our feedback comments, but there is scope too for a more evidence-based overview an audit of our feedback practice.

Example in practice:

In 2012, I asked a colleague to review a sample of my feedback practice for a particular module at Masters level. I was keen to have another, focused, perspective on how useful and constructive my feedback on written assignments was. My gut feelings driving the request for peer review were threefold:

- That I give a good amount of detailed feedback, possibly too much detail
- That I am possibly guilty of too much focus on what could be better + not enough emphasis on highlighting the positive
- That I probably focus too much on form and insufficiently on content of work.

Thus the key issue for the review of my feedback practice related to the possible impact of my feedback on the motivation and self-esteem of learners: 'How useful and constructive is the feedback on written assignments?'

Having reviewed the feedback, the peer reviewer felt able to draw conclusions about the feedback:

Annotated feedback:

This is in the form of comments and track changes too. I particularly liked the fact that there is a sense of having a dialogue with the student by asking various questions that make them think rather than “telling” them how they should do it.

Summative feedback at the end of each essay:

Again, I found this very constructive, highlighting both positives as well as areas for improvement. I like the fact that you also respond to the areas that the students had set as targets for the specific piece of work.

The review revealed areas for development ('possibly too much detail is given e.g. the track changes' and 'You have a tendency to comment more on form compared to content of work. So, this might be an area that you might want to think about in the future') but overall revealed 'a good balance on improvements and highlighting the positive.'

Now try this related activity:

[Self/Peer Review of Feedback Focus/Impact](#)

How can I ensure my feedback is realistic and focuses on students' performance?

Literature on formative assessment distinguishes between feedback which tells students they are hopeless, or amongst the bottom 10% of students (a grade D, for example), and feedback which tells students exactly where they have gone wrong and what they can do about it.

(Gibbs and Simpson, 2011, p.17)

A striking, slightly disturbing, example of feedback making a potentially damaging judgement on a student as a person is found in the words of one student speaking in the HEA video

Well he basically wrote 'This person is completely useless and shouldn't be,' it was literally in that word, 'and shouldn't be allowed to perform', which was, unconstructive to say the least, and also not essentially accurate.

Higher Education Academy video presenting student perspectives on assessment and feedback: <http://vimeo.com/channels/154640/9319496> - section 10:05-10:21

The way that this particular student speaks, and other comments he makes within the video, suggest that he did not allow this comment to damage his motivation for study or weaken his commitment to achieving his personal goals. However, his experience illustrates the importance of focussing our feedback on an evaluation of the work undertaken and making sure that students do not see it as a judgement on themselves as people. This is as true for strong work as for weaker work. Research suggests that when giving feedback on good work, rather than referring to ability or intelligence, it is more effective to praise the way that the task has been undertaken or the evidence of hard work (Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

Listen to another excerpt from the Higher Education Academy video presenting Student Perspectives on Assessment and Feedback where students give their views on useful feedback. What features do they value?

Higher Education Academy video: <http://vimeo.com/channels/154640/9319496> - section 07:00-08:37

One issue coming through loud and strong is the emphasis on detail and clear guidance which they can act on. One aspect of this is that feedback should provide students with realistic targets to work towards in future work.

Giving students realistic targets

Prioritising key targets: One aspect of giving students realistic targets is the number of targets we set. Feedback should not simply list everything that is wrong with a piece of work, but rather we should prioritise the main areas for improvement. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) draw attention to guidance suggesting that 3 targets per piece of work is the optimum if students are to find them realistic guidance to work on.

Relating targets to level of study: A key theme within UK Higher Education over recent years has been that our assessment should 'align' with the learning outcomes we expect students to demonstrate and that these should relate to the level, or stage of the programme they are following (Biggs, 2003). So too part of giving students realistic, manageable, targets for improvement within our feedback means matching those targets to the level of the course of study. In this a key reference point is the Framework of Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), published in 2008 (QAA, 2008) and to be found within the UK Quality Assurance Agency '[UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#)'.

Now try this related activity:

[Giving Realistic Targets within Feedback - Matching Targets to Level](#)

How should feedback reflect the assessment purpose and the grading criteria?

Feedback does more than simply convey what is in the tutor's mind concerning a piece of work. The way we focus our feedback and the things we choose to highlight in comments on students' work, play a part in the message conveyed to students as important aspects of the work we expect them to produce, and if we are not careful, the impression we give might not be that intended.

The following videos reflect the perspectives, firstly of two new members of teaching staff, and secondly of a group of International Students, regarding approaches to assessment and feedback, and factors which are, or are not important.

- [Staff Perspectives on Feedback 1 + 2](#)
- [International Student Panel](#)

Listen to the recordings and make a note of issues which strike you as significant to this issue of targeting feedback appropriately to reflect the assessment purpose and the grading criteria.

- What are the factors which drive the teachers' approaches to feedback?
- What impression comes through from the students?
- What needs do the students express? What do THEY say they need from feedback?

One of the issues coming through from the students is confirmation of the principle that if feedback concentrates on 'surface' features (e.g. punctuation or grammar errors) the message that students pick up is that it is the superficial presentational aspects of their work which matter most. Therefore, if we want students to develop their learning in ways which align with the academic and professional skills underpinning the design of their course it is vital to provide feedback that goes beyond the easy-to-spot presentational aspects of work. To match our feedback to the purpose of an assessment and the criteria on which effective performance is valued, feedback should include a focus on 'aspects that are of greater importance to academic learning but that are more abstract and difficult to define (such as strength of argument)' (Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick 2004, p.11).

In support of this, Gibbs & Simpson (2005) point out that feedback is not a one-size-fits-all but should be targeted to the purpose of the assignment: the functions of feedback vary according to the nature of the assessment and to the criteria for success.

They outline a number of different uses or functions feedback may perform according to the nature of the assessment, to what is being tested.

It might:

- correct errors
- develop understanding through explanations
- generate more learning by suggesting further specific study tasks
- promote the development of generic skills by focusing on evidence of the use of skills rather than on the content
- promote meta-cognition by encouraging students' reflection and awareness of learning processes involved in the assignment
- encourage students to continue studying.

(Gibbs and Simpson, 2005, p.19-20)

By altering the use or focus of feedback according to the focus of a particular assessment, we help students understand the criteria which were used in assessing their work, and why they were given a particular grade or mark. Below we explore some of the ways in which we can both vary our feedback approach and help students to grasp the differing expectations and standards within different assessments.

Now try these related activities:

[Feedback Templates and Assessment Types](#)

[Peer Assessment as a strategy to aid student understanding of feedback](#)

What makes a good feedback sheet?

There is of course no one perfect feedback sheet, no single template which suits all contexts or all assessment types, nor a single format which captures all possible features of good feedback practice with no drawback; if there was, decisions concerning our own feedback forms would be easy, and in fact we would all already be using the ideal format!

Instead, the varying formats used across the sector all present differing strengths and weaknesses and each carries its own pros and cons. Additionally, what counts as a 'pro' or 'con' can vary according to which of a range of perspectives or role which might be considered as 'stakeholders' within the context of feedback.

Some of these might include:

- the students of course, and how well a particular format aids their understanding of the feedback on their work and their ability to understand the strengths and weaknesses of their work and pick up guidance how to improve in the future
- the staff, and here we might consider factors such as ease of completion, flexibility to personal style and approach, and not least the time involved
- administrative issues and institutional requirements for 'processing' the feedback forms within an assessment cycle
- the second markers and external examiners and the extent to which a form provides transparency for the moderation process and clear evidence of how the mark was arrived at, evidence of fairness and 'fit' between the assessment task and feedback given.

Examples of some elements included in a good feedback sheet might be:

- A clear and logical structure so that students can 'follow' the message being given
- A summary of the main feedback points
- Reference to assessment criteria and/or Module Learning Outcomes
- Comments on different elements of assignment structure
- Information as to what has been done well, and why
- Information as to areas which need to be improved, and why
- Reasonably attainable targets for improvement – even for good work
- Guidance as to how the improvements could be made
- An invitation for comments / questions back from student

Now try these related activities:

[What's out there? Appreciative Enquiry of existing feedback forms](#)

[What's out there? Quick, paired comparison](#)

How can I encourage dialogue around feedback?

One of the aspirations of Assessment 2020 'propositions for assessment reform in higher education' published by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (Boud *et al*, 2009) is that 'dialogue and interaction about assessment processes and standards [should be] commonplace between and among staff and students' (Boud *et al* , 2009, 3: iii), reflecting an aspiration that feedback should be seen more as discussion between tutor and students than as something delivered by the tutor to students in the role of passive recipients.

This emphasis on dialogue is also reflected in the campaign on feedback run by the National Union of Students. The UK [NUS Feedback Amnesty](#) document and the associated suggested templates for an assessment cover sheet and an assessment feedback sheet, both of which provide for students to self-assess their work and share their views with staff as a basis for discussion around achievement. The underpinning conception is that students should be active in receiving and responding to feedback, that such discussion will enhance understanding and facilitate improvement in students' work:

One way of increasing the effectiveness of ... feedback, and the likelihood that the information provided is understood by students, is to conceptualise feedback more as dialogue, rather than as information transmission.

(Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006, p.210)

Dialogue around feedback can take two forms:

- Tutor-Student Dialogue
- Peer-Dialogue including Peer-Feedback

It may be that you already promote dialogue in relation to feedback, perhaps without thinking of it in that way. What examples can you think of? and are there any other strategies you would like to try?

Here are some ideas

Student input to inform tutor feedback:

Encourage students to think about feedback **IN ADVANCE** and target your feedback accordingly - when they submit an assessment ask them to:

- indicate what they would like feedback on, which may be an academic skill (e.g. structure of argument) they are trying to develop
- indicate what aspects of an assessment they found difficult

Then, in giving feedback, include comment on the points they raise, whilst also drawing attention to any key issues in the work which they may have missed (Irons 2007)

Student contribution in response to tutor feedback:

Tutorial discussion, with module teaching staff or with Personal Development Planning (PDP) tutors, can provide opportunities to invite students to read the feedback comments they have been given and

- identify and any feedback they do not understand
- discuss them with peers to identify how they will act on key feedback points in the future
- pick one or two comments that they feel are especially useful and explain how the comments are helpful.

Now try this related activity:

Using Resources FOR students WITH students

How can I use self- and peer-feedback to develop students' skills of self-assessment?

The Student Enhanced Learning through Effective Formative Feedback (SENLEF) project gives 'the development of self-assessment (reflection) in learning' as the first of 7 Principles of Good Feedback Practice (Jawah *et al*, 2004, p.6). The National Union of Students similarly promotes the importance of students developing skills of Self-Assessment:

Students should be supported to critique their own work: Students should not be overly reliant on feedback from tutors. One of the key skills developed in higher education is the ability to critique, and students should be supported to be able to review their own work and that of fellow students. Developing students' abilities to peer review and self-reflect are important skills for future employment, as well as deepening their own learning.

(NUS Charter on Assessment and Feedback, 2010)

(NUS Charter on Assessment and Feedback, 2010, available online at: <http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/asset/news/6010/FeedbackCharter-toview.pdf>)

Benefits:

- From receiving feedback from their peers....
 - Feedback from peers is more likely to be given in language they can understand and causes them to review and question their personal beliefs. Peer feedback may be available more speedily than tutor feedback, and ensures they gain more than one perspective on their work.
- From giving feedback in response to the work of others....
 - Providing feedback to others involves active engagement in critical understanding of what an assessment task demands and the criteria used to assess and grade work. It can enhance student subject knowledge and develop their reflective and evaluative skills; the process of evaluating the work of others both mirrors and helps to develop the internal process which is a natural part of learning and of

preparing students' own work for assessment by tutors, ascertaining the gap between performance and the standards expected for a task.

Concerns:

Student concerns may include the following:

- They may not trust the judgements their peers make about their work
- They may fear receiving negative comments from peers, or may not know how to accept praise from peers
- They may worry that they do not have sufficient subject knowledge to evaluate either their own work or the work of others
- They may worry that they do not understand the expected standards or assessment criteria well enough to evaluate either their own work or the work of others
- They may worry that they do not know how to give feedback that is constructive and supportive, and/or about being critical of friends.

For these and other reasons, many students need teaching staff to initiate and facilitate both peer-assessment and self-assessment and will often require tutor support to undertake such a process effectively to enhance own learning.

Now try these related activities:

[The importance of self-feedback](#)

[Reflection on Strategies - Would these work for you?](#)

What challenges do staff face in giving feedback?

This is not a pretty picture. Assessment sometimes appears to be, at one and the same time, enormously expensive, disliked by both students and teachers, and largely ineffective in supporting learning.

(Gibbs and Simpson, 2005, p.11)

Use the [worksheet](#) linked here to reflect on the factors which challenge you personally about giving effective feedback, to ask yourself what makes feedback hard for you, what aspects of feedback, if changed, would make a big impact on your experience of the process.

Within the worksheet are a list of statements made by other teachers. Your task is to:

- 1 Read through the statements, and, in the second column tick those which you feel are 'true for you'.
- 2 Consider the responses you ticked as true for you, and in the third column, jot down the source of challenge – you might find the following categories helpful, but if not, use some of your own: 'the institutional system', 'student attitude', 'my attitude', 'Time', 'my skills or abilities'
- 3 Pick three or four of these challenges which feel the most pressing and explore strategies suggested elsewhere in the Feedback Toolkit.

Strategies others have suggested: - click on the link below for each Feedback Challenge to view hints to strategies others have suggested. How do these compare with the strategies you have designed? Which would work for you?

Getting students to READ the feedback in the first place!

Time to write quality feedback and timeliness in getting feedback to students

Miscommunication and student misunderstanding / misinterpretation of feedback comments

Pitching the message appropriately

Emotional barriers student may erect to feedback, and the potential emotional impact of feedback on their work

Staff feeling that students are not receptive to feedback

Students finding feedback less helpful than staff imagine

How can technology enhance my feedback?

The pervasive and growing role that technology plays in our daily lives, in our communications, and in our learning and teaching, is well known, around us in the media almost every day. And the issues technology presents to the Higher Education community with regard to challenges to address and potential enhancements to embrace are immense.

But what role can technology play with respect to assessment feedback? How can we harness the potential new opportunities it offers to enhance this aspect of our practice and our professional interaction with students? The potential includes, but goes far beyond, the benefits which Irons predicted in 2007, namely that technology can:

- automate elements of the task of marking student work, which in turn reduces the teacher workload
- enable students to receive more detailed formative feedback on their learning in a way that is more efficient than is possible using traditional means of assessment.

There are a multiplicity of avenues to pursue when it comes to the contribution technology can make to enhance the feedback process. Below are some possibilities you might like to explore, and further details and examples are provided in the [attached resource](#).

- 1 Speed and ease of processing: Using technology can ensure we deliver instant, or speedy, feedback to learners:
 - Email to speed up the return of individual feedback
 - VLE forum, bulletin board or other social media tool to distribute generic group feedback
 - Tools to automate aspects of tutor feedback
- 2 Immediacy and contingency: Feedback is provided rapidly when using technology for formative interactive online tests and activities involving tools in the hand (such as voting devices and internet-connected mobile phones) which can immediately correct misconceptions.
 - Immediate expert, personalised, feedback through online interactive testing

- 3 Technology can offer enhanced opportunities for self-evaluation, reflection and self-feedback, which in turn can generate ownership of learning and promote higher-order thinking skills. Activities include checking of own work, peer-feedback, and reflection on achievements in e-portfolios and blogs.
 - Self-generated feedback on the accuracy of referencing
 - Anonymous peer-feedback for group work
- 4 Authenticity: The feedback received through participating in online simulations and video technologies which support risk-free rehearsal of real-world skills, can enhance future performance in professional and vocational education.
 - Problem-based learning enhanced through simulation
- 5 Additionally: Technology can add facets, such as a personal quality, to feedback, even in large-group or distance contexts, and, through efficiencies gained from asynchronous communication and automated marking can enable practitioners to make more productive use of their time.
 - Personalised spoken feedback outside timetabling constraints
 - Technology engaging students in reflection and dialogue around Feedback
 - One-to-one (or group) discussion of feedback even at a distance
 - Peer feedback promoted and facilitated through sharing of student work online

Enhancing your feedback - Action Planning for more effective Feedback

The hope is that this Feedback Toolkit will provide you with information, ideas, strategies and opportunities to improve your own feedback practice and with the inspiration and motivation to give some of the new possibilities a try.

The Toolkit has tried to engage you with some key issues in the area, to signpost you to some current developments in the area, and to inspire you with some practical ideas to adapt and implement for yourself.

The Toolkit has repeatedly encouraged you to reflect and consider your own views and experiences.

The Toolkit has, from time to time, suggested activities to help you explore and interrogate your own practice and to interact with, and seek the views of your students.

In all of these ways, the Feedback Toolkit aims to be more than an information resource, but also a professional development tool.

Thus, at this point, you are invited to take a structured approach to

- reflecting on your learning and your ideas
- researching and enhancing your own practice
- planning, recording and demonstrating the development of your practice.

In this way you will not only gain a sense of your own growing understanding and achievement but also develop a record which you could use, if you wish, to demonstrate the progression in this area of your career.

Now try these related activities:

[Self and Peer Review of Feedback Practice](#)

[Reflection and Action Planning](#)

Staff & Student views on assessment

This section of the New to Teaching toolkit comprises of a series of videos looking at staff and student views on assessment. These videos dealing with the questions of:

1. What is the role of Assessment?
2. Examples of Assessment.
3. Experiences of Assessment.
4. What does assessment look like when it goes well?

In addition to the videos provided there are also hand-out materials showing the types of assessment and their purposes.

Resources for this section can be found here:

<http://www-dev.heacademy.ac.uk/content/staff-student-views-assessment>

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Feedback activity ideas

ACTIVITY - Student views of feedback

Listen to the first section of the Higher Education Academy video of Student Perspectives on Assessment and Feedback to discover how a group of students have described feedback: Available online at: <http://vimeo.com/channels/154640/9319496> (Section from 00:09-00:54).

ACTIVITY - Exploring your own thoughts on feedback

To start exploring your existing thoughts about feedback, you might like to use the [Card Sort Task - What is Feedback?](#) exercise.

Available online at: <https://www-dev.heacademy.ac.uk/content/feedback-toolkit-card-sort-task-what-feedback>

Instructions:

- Print the Instructions document, which includes the worksheet for recording your decisions from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.
- Print the Cards.
- Arrange the 5 Header Cards organised in sequence from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree
- Sort the remaining cards under these Header Cards, according to your views - Use the blank cards to add any definitions of your own.
- If you have the chance for discussion with others, compare your views with those of other colleagues. You might do this in a structured way, by all completing the Card Sort activity, or you may choose to discuss particular issues informally with colleagues.

ACTIVITY - Exploring your interests in feedback and the reasons which bring you to this feedback toolkit:

- What do you want to learn?
- What do you want to know about feedback?
- What worries you?
- What challenges and opportunities do you face in feeding back on students' work?

Instructions:

- Make a list of the questions in YOUR minds about feedback.
- Write them down and use them to guide how you access this toolkit, selecting the sections that answer your questions.
- Come back to the list periodically and tick off the questions that have been answered, and adding new questions.

Here are some possible questions which have been used to structure the Toolkit. You may have worded your questions differently; don't worry about that. Just start with something

which sounds close to one of your questions, and work from there – you will find that the different sections of the Toolkit are all interlinked anyway.

Key questions you may have in mind might include the following:

- Why a focus on feedback?
- Is YOUR feedback fit for purpose?
- What are the various forms that feedback can take?
- How can I choose the best approach to feedback for myself and my students?
- What do students want from feedback?
- What makes feedback effective?
- How can I encourage my students to pick up, read and learn from the feedback I give them?
- Time is a real issue. Are there any strategies to give quality feedback in a timely manner?
- How can my feedback help students take action to improve their learning?
- What sort of comments and level of detail is useful in feedback?
- Speaking their language - How can I make sure students understand my feedback?
- How can I make my feedback forward-facing?
- What sort of Feedback builds motivation and self-esteem?
- How can I ensure my feedback is realistic and focuses on students' performance?
- How should feedback reflect the assessment purpose and the grading criteria?
- What makes a good feedback sheet?
- How can I encourage dialogue around feedback?
- How can I use self- and peer-feedback to develop students' skills of self-assessment?
- What challenges do staff face in giving feedback?
- How can technology enhance my feedback?

Reflection and development

You might like to keep a blog or other record about your thoughts and reflections as you explore the topic of feedback, noting the key ideas and insights gained, the resources found useful, and also the additional questions which come to mind.

Tools you could use might include an eportfolio, a blog, a wiki, or any other IT or social networking tool of your choice.

One option is to use Twitter. Why not Tweet key points from your initial thinking on feedback to **#HEFeedback**? This can act as a quick form of note-taking and is a way to follow the thoughts of others exploring this topic across the Higher Education community.

To get started on Twitter, see: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J0xbjIE8cPM>

For guidance on using hashtags (#) on Twitter, see: <http://support.twitter.com/articles/49309-what-are-hashtags-symbols>

ACTIVITY - Why is Feedback so important to students?

Instructions:

- Listen to the following excerpt from the Higher Education Academy video of Student Perspectives on Assessment and Feedback.

Available online at: <http://vimeo.com/channels/154640/9319496> (Section from 02:00 - 03:07)

- Note down student views of the benefits which can be gained from feedback on their work

Below are some ideas found within the literature exploring the ways in which effective feedback can benefit student learning. Consider how these compare with the issues you identified in the student video

Feedback can...

- raise students' consciousness of the strengths of their work
- boost students' confidence and self-concept regarding personal strengths and abilities
- provide guidance on areas for further development of skills and enhancement of work
- enhance students' own judgement, understanding of assessment criteria and ability to self-audit their own work

Pick two key learning points for you concerning the benefits of effective feedback. Make a note in your personal Blog and/or Tweet to #HEFeedback to share and discuss with others.

ACTIVITY - Improving your own Feedback Practice

In this activity you should work with a recent piece of your own Feedback which you have given to a student

Instructions:

Comparison:

- Read some purposes of feedback as reflected in the literature;
- Read how the National Union of Students has portrayed the purposes of feedback;
- Add to your notes any you missed and note any you have listed which the literature does not mention.

Evaluation:

Read through your own sample of feedback and consider the following three questions:

- What were your overall aims in that piece of feedback?
- Were different parts of the feedback trying to do different things?
- Do you think your aims will have been clear to the STUDENT?

Improvement:

- Identify any ways in which you could change, re-word, or add to the feedback to further achieve these purposes;
- Draft those changes.

ACTIVITY - Discovering Student views

Listen to what students have to say about types of feedback, in the HEA Video.

Available online at: <http://vimeo.com/channels/154640/9319496>

- Consider how the pros and cons which they mention compare with those listed here, as Forms of Feedback
- Jot these down
- Given the views expressed there and reflected in the NUS data, are there strategies which you could adopt which might help you meet student expectations of feedback?
- Jot these down
- Tweet your thoughts to #HEFeedback.

ACTIVITY - Explore the views of your own students

Instructions:

- Conduct a survey of students' experience of feedback they receive on their assignments and
- Reflect on your students' responses.

You will find a sample survey [here](#), which should be edited to reflect the types of feedback you use and wish to explore.

(The resource is a simplified version of a survey produced by Sheffield Hallam University, and could be adapted to find out student views of OTHER types of feedback you are considering for future use.)

ACTIVITY - Feedback: efficiency for us, learning payoff for students

The activity involves consideration of a range of different feedback mechanisms and for each deciding where it should sit on a [matrix](#) where:

- within the top left quadrant the methods are highly efficient for staff and highly beneficial for students
- within the bottom right quadrant the methods are highly time-consuming for staff but resulting in little student learning.

Placing different methods on the axes within the diagram on the worksheet helps us evaluate different feedback methods in terms of these factors or criteria.

Instructions:

Use the activity: [Feedback: efficiency for us, learning payoff for students.](#)

What conclusions do you reach?

- Where do your current feedback methods sit? What does this suggest about continuing to use these methods or changing to other methods?
- Are you able to find methods which would work in your context and which are highly efficient for staff and highly beneficial for students?
- Is there an argument for including a feedback method which is perhaps not ideal in terms of the contribution to students' learning but where, for example, potential speed of feedback turnaround brings advantages?
- Are there methods which, though time-consuming you prefer to retain because of the significant contribution to student learning?

ACTIVITY - Enhancing your awareness of the Student Perspective

Within the following section of the HEA video we gain insight into student perspectives on feedback they value and use, and feedback which they find less than helpful and either ignore or struggle to understand.

Instructions:

- Listen to sections of the video in which the students talk about what they do with feedback they receive, the tutor role with respect to feedback, and ways in which feedback can contribute to their learning. Some use the feedback they get; some do not. Some understand the feedback they get; some do not:
<http://vimeo.com/channels/154640/9319496> - section from 03:07 - 07:00
- Identify what we can learn from these students about feedback they value and use, and feedback which they find less than helpful and either ignore or struggle to understand?
- Make notes of student views as to:
 - features of effective feedback;
 - characteristics of 'bad', 'useless' or unhelpful feedback

What new insights did you gain into what students want from feedback?

How well do you think YOUR feedback meets their expectations and needs?

- Compare the views expressed here with the points raised under [What makes feedback effective?](#)

ACTIVITY - Exploring your own students' experience of feedback and developing their understanding

How does **YOUR** own students' experience of feedback compare with those of the students in the video?

Do they share your personal impression of the value of the different types of feedback you provide?

Would they be interested in new ideas you might be considering?

The [below resource](#) was designed to capture student views on such matters. You might like to use it as it stands, or adapt it with extra, or different, questions.

ACTIVITY - Reverse Brainstorming to explore the issue of effective feedback

The activity of Reverse Brainstorming from the Mind Tools site combines brainstorming with reversal techniques and is a fun and interesting way to find creative ideas to address tricky problems. To use this technique, you start by reversing the issue. Instead of trying to solve or prevent the problem, you ask yourself "How could I possibly CAUSE this problem?" Brainstorming ideas to solve the 'reverse problem' tends to open doors to new realisations of possible solutions to the original problem.

As a way of exploring the question of how we ensure that the feedback we give is effective in developing and promoting student learning, try Reverse Brainstorming to help gain new ideas of the factors which are important.

The Reverse Brainstorming Task - Instructions:

- Your challenge is to identify what it is that makes feedback effective.
- Reverse the problem or challenge by asking "How could I possibly stop feedback being effective for students?"
- Brainstorm solutions to this reverse problem ... ways to CAUSE the problem you wish to avoid! Jot down all ideas that come to mind, ways to ensure that feedback is NOT effective. Don't reject ideas at this point. Write all ideas down.
- Now take each brainstormed idea and reverse it into a possible strategy to address the original problem or challenge.
- Evaluate the strategies you have come up with - are some of them workable in your context?

ACTIVITY - Student Perspectives and Ideas for Practical Implementation

In this activity you can explore student perspectives on the following questions:

- What does effective feedback look like?
- What is 'bad' feedback like? - Student Perspectives

Instructions:

- Click [here](#) to listen to student perspectives on what makes feedback more or less effective for their learning. HEA Video Available online at: <http://vimeo.com/channels/154640/9319496> -Section from 07:00 - 10:22
- Jot down the issues they raise, and listen for any of the strategies you identified through Reverse Brainstorming.

ACTIVITY - Starbursting Causes and Solutions

It is often said that identifying the problem is half the solution, and if we think of a medical comparison it is clear that to cure an illness it is important to think past the symptoms appearing on the surface to find, and address, the underlying causes. In this activity you are invited to think about the problem of students not picking up their feedback from a variety of perspectives, and to see whether breaking the issue down into constituent causes can help you identify strategies which might help to improve the situation.

Instructions:

- Download the activity sheet found [here](#).
- Using the prompts, jot down aspects of feedback practice which may be barriers to students collecting and acting on feedback: might it be to do with
 - **How** it is sent to them,
 - **How** it's worded,
 - **When** they get it,
 - **What** it communicates?
 - **Who** does this problem affect – all students?
- Write down all the ideas that come to mind
- Try to think of at least one strategy to address each 'barrier' and add these to your notes.

ACTIVITY - Time-saving strategies that do not compromise on meeting the aims of effective feedback

Instructions:

- Read each of the suggestions in the attached worksheet - [here](#).
- Consider the questions and jot down your ideas.

ACTIVITY - Exploring the root causes of student misunderstanding

The Mind Tools activity [5 Whys](#) is 'a simple problem-solving technique that helps you to get to the root of a problem quickly ... looking at any problem and asking: "Why?" and "What caused this problem?"' (Mind Tools website). It consists of starting with the end result, the presenting problem, in this case the weaknesses found in work submitted for a particular assessment, and working backward by asking a series of 'Why' questions, each of which queries the response to the previous question, to drill down into the misunderstandings underpinning weaknesses in the work.

Instructions:

Reflect on an occasion where you have come across student misunderstanding of what was expected of them in an assignment. You might:

- think back to an assessment you set, where one / more students did not produce work as expected

- recollect your own experience as a student when you were unclear what a particular assessment entailed
- interview one of your students about a time when they did not have a clear picture of what it was that they should be doing in an assignment

Ask:

'Why did the work not meet the standards expected?'

Take the answer to this first 'Why' question, and probe that by again asking 'Why', through a sequence of 5 'Why' questions.

Make a note of all the problems or misunderstandings that come to mind as you complete the activity as they are likely to reflect the range of difficulties you may encounter with students in the future.

ACTIVITY - Where would more detail be helpful?

Instructions:

- Review an example of your own feedback
- Identify statements which are generic in nature and where more detail would have been helpful.
- Choose 1 or 2 such statements and re-write in a way which provides more a helpful level of detail to the student

ACTIVITY - Feedback Strategies to help students understand feedback - which could you use?

A number of feedback strategies are suggested in the [pages above](#), all of which might in some way be used to help students gain a better understanding of what we mean when we give them feedback on their work, involving them in making sense of the academic language and terms of phrase we use. Not all will, of course, be appropriate for all contexts, student groups, subject areas, or, indeed, teaching styles and approaches, but maybe one or two could be adopted, or adapted, as something useful for your own practice.

Instructions:

- Open each link in turn and access the information or resource
- Identify ways in which the feedback strategy or activity described might help students gain a better understanding of what we mean when we give them feedback on their work
- Consider whether you could make use of any of the strategies or activities and where you might use it within your practice, for example:
 - Where might you use it? - on which course, or with which students?
 - At what point in the course would you use it?
 - Would you have to make any changes to your course in order to introduce this practice?

- Would you wish to adapt the strategy or activity at all to adapt it to your context?
- Identify how you will evaluate the effectiveness of introducing the new strategy or activity in order to decide whether to continue using it in the future.

ACTIVITY - Strategies to ensure feedback functions also as feedforward

Three different types of activity or strategy are highlighted [above](#) as ways to explore this issue of feedback as feedforward and to enhance the potential of your own feedback practice to impact on student learning in this way.

- Consider each idea in turn and decide which would work best for you.
- When could you implement it with respect to your own practice, and how would you evaluate the effectiveness?

ACTIVITY - Promoting students' own engagement with turning feedback into feed forward

In the [linked extract](#) from his own book 'How to get a good degree: Making the Most of Your Time at University', Phil Race (2007) includes a number of activities, targeted directly at students, to help and encourage them to take action themselves to ensure that the feedback they receive functions as feedforward to improve their future performance and learning.

- [Audit your own channels of feedback](#) - this invites student reflection on their own typical response to different forms of feedback
- [Task: what I currently do with written comments from lecturers on my work](#) - this invites students to consider how they currently respond in different feedback situations and to explore what might be a more helpful response; related comments provide guidance to help students ensure they respond in a way which will develop their future learning
- [Working out what written feedback really means!](#) - this leads into an Action Planning activity and supports students in actively engaging with whatever feedback they get and, for themselves, identifying actions which will enhance their future work.

The activities appear within a resource written for, and directed to, students.

Instructions:

- Explore the activities and
- Identify whether you would highlight them to your own students for independent use
- Consider whether they could be used in class - it may be that the students who most need to act on this advice are those least likely to do so independently.

ACTIVITY - Self/Peer Review of Feedback Focus/Impact

The following Feedback Review activity aims to provide a tool for reviewing and analysing the kinds of feedback written on students' assignments, in order to provide a form of systematic analysis or overview of the approach to feedback than the sort of 'gut feeling' we

each have about our own practice, and to provide a perspective on student response to the feedback they receive and their subsequent progress.

You can use the tool independently, to review your own feedback, or ask a trusted colleague to undertake peer review of a sample of feedback you have given in the past.

Instructions:

- Use the [coding system](#) with respect to a selection of marked assignments.
- Focus the review on the comments made by the marker on the work, coding each tutor comment.
- Then look at the spread of 'codes' across the assignment sample to gain an impression of the pattern of the feedback being given.

For example:

- Does the feedback concentrate on aspects of content or academic skills?
- In relation to content or skills:
 - does the tutor simply point to the weakness,
 - provide a correction
 - or also provide an explanation of the weakness / correction?
- How far does the feedback point towards and encourage future learning?
- Is the balance of the feedback encouraging and motivational or is it demotivational in tone, perhaps concentrating on judgements?
- Does the feedback include holistic summary of strengths? And weaknesses?

The more complex original coding document, produced by the Open University can be found here: http://www.open.ac.uk/fast/pdfs/feedbck_codes.pdf.

ACTIVITY - Giving Realistic Targets within Feedback - Matching Targets to Level

Instructions:

- Download the Giving Realistic Targets within Feedback - Matching Targets to Level - Worksheet attached [here](#).
- Look at the suggested 'weaknesses' on the left - these are deliberately written in general terms, but you may recognise them as representing problems in your own students' work, and 'areas for improvement' you might suggest in feedback
- Using the columns to the right, draft the 'target' you might give to students working at Levels 4 (Certificate level), 6 (Honours Degree level) and 7 (Masters Degree level).
- Compare your drafts with the Suggested Answers linked here - note that these had necessarily to be worded in a very generic way: you will be able to make yours much more personalised and focused to the task in hand.

ACTIVITY - Feedback Templates and Assessment Types

Instructions:

The example feedback sheets linked below have been selected to reflect different types of assignment.

As you look through them:

- Pick out features of the sheets which you feel appropriately relate to characteristics of the assignment type
- Consider the impression a student might gain of what is important within that type of assignment
- Identify any features you think work especially well, or any ways in which you would want to adapt the format used.

[Aberystwyth University Feedback Form for Written Assignments](#)

[Solihull College Poster Presentation Grading and Feedback Sheet](#)

[University of Ulster FRENCH DISSERTATION MARKING GRID](#)

[University of Reading Essay Feedback Form Using Core Criteria](#)

[University of Reading Student Presentations Assessment Sheet](#)

ACTIVITY - Peer Assessment as a strategy to aid student understanding of feedback

Instructions:

Listen to the video linked here outlining one instance of [Peer-Feedback and Assessment](#) - Paul McLaughlin

Consider:

- the motivations for introducing the activity and the student response
- the suitability of the activity across different assessment types and levels of programme - would it work for both undergraduate and postgraduate students, and could it be applied to enhance student understanding of different task-types?
- whether you would be interested to introduce such a task with your students.

ACTIVITY - What's out there? Appreciative Enquiry of existing feedback forms

This activity is based on the principle that there is no one perfect template for a feedback form. Among all the variety in use across the sector, each has its different pros and cons, advantages and disadvantages. Therefore, rather than looking for the 'bad features' within any individual form, a more positive approach is to consider the good features of any particular example.

A selection of different feedback forms has been prepared – they have been selected to provide a range of formats and features rather than by any particular qualitative judgements.

Instructions:

- Look at each example feedback form in turn, and for each, consider what you feel are its strengths: the forms are listed in the attached worksheet.
- For each form, jot down the positive features which come to mind. (Some empty spaces are included for you to add your own examples)
- Finally draw out some key themes apparent across your notes.

[Aberystwyth University Feedback Form for Written Assignments](#)

[Solihull College Poster Presentation Grading and Feedback Sheet](#)

[University of Ulster FRENCH DISSERTATION MARKING GRID](#)

[University of Reading Essay Feedback Form Using Core Criteria](#)

[University of Reading Student Presentations Assessment Sheet](#)

ACTIVITY - What's out there? Quick, paired comparison

You might prefer to make a quick, impressionistic comparison of some or all of the suggested feedback forms above. One strategy, found on the Mind Tools website is [Paired Comparison Analysis](#). The advantages of this approach are that it helps when selecting between options which are quite different in nature, and where you lack objective data and hence are making a subjective choice: 'Paired Comparison Analysis helps you to work out the relative importance of a number of different options - the classical case of "comparing apples with oranges."' (Mind Tools, Paired Comparison Analysis, http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED_02.htm)

A selection of different feedback forms has been prepared – they have been selected to provide a range of formats and features rather than by any particular qualitative judgements.

Instructions:

- Pick any two of the forms - look at them, and decide which of the two you prefer, and why?
- Jot down the factor which influenced your choice.
- Now pick one further form, and compare it with your earlier preferred form.
- Decide which of the two you prefer, and why?
- Jot down the factor which influenced your choice.

Repeat these last 3 steps through the complete list of forms, then consider the factors listed in your notes.

Reflect and Develop

- What key themes emerge in your notes?
- Would you consider adopting any features observed in the forms? Why?

ACTIVITY - Using Resources FOR students WITH students

There are some very interesting feedback-related resources for students, some of which are linked [here](#), for example resources from

- the National Union of Students
- Phil Race
- ASKe (Assessment Standards Knowledge exchange) a former Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) based at Oxford Brookes University
- Learn Higher

As they are written for students, many of these resources assume individual, independent, student-led use. However, they could often be adapted for tutor-initiated dialogue around feedback, and incorporated into course activity, either in-class or online.

Instructions:

- Look at the resources
- Identify 2 examples which you feel you could use with your students
- Try them out
- Reflect on their effectiveness and share via Twitter to #HEFeedback.

ACTIVITY – The importance of self-feedback

Listen to the podcast by [David Nicol](#) about the importance of self-feedback, and consider the questions which follow:

What are your thoughts on the following questions:

- What are the benefits of engaging students in self-feedback?
- In what ways do students benefit from receiving feedback from their peers?
- What do students learn from the process of giving feedback to their peers?

What concerns do you think students themselves may have about any or all of these processes?

ACTIVITY - Reflection on Strategies - Would these work for you?

Instructions:

Self-Feedback

- Download the document [Strategies for structured reflection and/or self-assessment](#) – Would these work for you?

- Read each of the suggestions given
- Consider the linked questions and jot down your ideas.

Peer-Feedback

- Listen to the three example strategies below
- Jot down the benefits found and the challenges faced
- Identify what such strategies may have to offer your own professional context.

[Using Blogs for peer feedback and discussion](#) - Tam Nguyen

[Peer Assessed Oral Presentations](#) - Anne Crook

[Peer Feedback and Assessment](#) - Paul McLaughlin

The above case studies represent different approaches to Dialogue through Peer Feedback. One does not use technology at all; the other two use it in different ways. One of them was not originally conceived as a peer-feedback activity, but this emerged from the students themselves exploiting a natural feature of Blog technology.

ACTIVITY - Self and Peer Review of Feedback Practice

The Feedback Toolkit has often talked of the benefits of Self- and Peer- Feedback in relation to student assessment; it applies equally to our professional development as teachers.

A variety of activities and tools are linked within the [10 Tools for Exploring and Evaluating your own Feedback Practice](#) which can be used either individually for reflection and to interrogate your own practice, or in collaboration with a colleague for discussion or as a form of Peer Review.

Select those which are of interest, give them a go, and build the outcomes into your Reflection and Action Planning.

ACTIVITY - Reflection and Action Planning

Below is a suggested format for reflection and action planning to help you build on new ideas encountered in the Feedback Toolkit and use them to enhance your own Feedback Practice:

There are two sections:

- General Reflection
- Action Planning

The suggestion is also to relate your thinking to UK Professional Standards Framework, which provides the structure for professional development in learning teaching and assessment within the sector.

Appendix I

Effective Feedback and Benefits for Student Learning

Below are some ideas found within the literature exploring the ways in which effective feedback can benefit student learning.

Feedback can...

Raise students' consciousness of the strengths of their work

Feedback helps students to learn both faster and more effectively by giving them a sense of how well they are doing, of improvements that are needed and of what they might need to do in order to make those improvements. Learning has been described as involving a process in which our knowledge and skills are continuously modified (Pellegrino et al, 2001). Feedback on student work is a means by which we can indicate to students the areas in which their work is strong, demonstrating appropriate levels of knowledge and skill, and also draw student attention to aspects where they do not yet demonstrate the competences expected within a given piece of work or course. In this way, Feedback can play an important part in learning by providing students with the basis on which their knowledge and skills are modified, through Feedback which is used to 'guide, test, challenge or redirect the learner's thinking' (Irons 2007, p.21).

Boost students' confidence and self-concept regarding personal strengths and abilities

Self-concept and confidence are positively correlated with students achieving well, and it has been suggested that positive Feedback can play an important role in boosting students' confidence in their ability to achieve in academic work (Schunk, 1989), and in turn actually lead to improvement in their academic abilities and performance as students develop confidence in their academic abilities; 'in other words a self-perpetuating confidence spiral improves academic performance' (Irons 2007, p.37). To achieve this, Feedback should not just point out weaknesses and areas for improvement; positive feedback of what learners can already do well, and strengths already evidenced within their work, is also important. If attention can be drawn to strengths and in a way which does not simply make a bland statement but points to convincing examples of excellence, then learners are more able to both replicate existing strengths and build on them to enhance future performance.

Provide guidance on areas for further development of skills and enhancement of work

Students need to know where to direct their effort and attention in order to enhance their work and develop the skills and knowledge expected of them and appropriate to their chosen course of study. Feedback is one way in which teachers can provide personalised guidance to students and, through detailed and targeted comments on their work, point them to the things which they, as individuals, need to improve. Such guidance may be both on the more generic level of overall academic skills (e.g. a need for clearer signposting of the structure / organisation of their work), or at a level of detail (e.g. we might point out specific errors, mistakes in their writing or gaps in their argument, evidence or understanding of an issue), and may help them to see where their learning needs to be improved.

Enhance students' own judgement, understanding of assessment criteria and ability to self-audit their own work

The ultimate aim of our feedback on students' work should be to develop their skills, abilities, and confidence to evaluate the quality of their own work in the future, so as to be able to enhance their own performance in an ongoing and independent way. Feedback can contribute to meeting this goal in at least two ways:

'Feedback from teachers is a source against which students can evaluate progress, and check out their own internal construction of goals, criteria and standards ... in effect feedback from teachers can help substantiate student self-regulation' (Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006, p.208).

'Good quality ... feedback is information that helps students troubleshoot their own performance and self-correct: that is, it helps students take action to reduce the discrepancy between their intentions and the resulting effects' (Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006, p.208).

Appendix 2

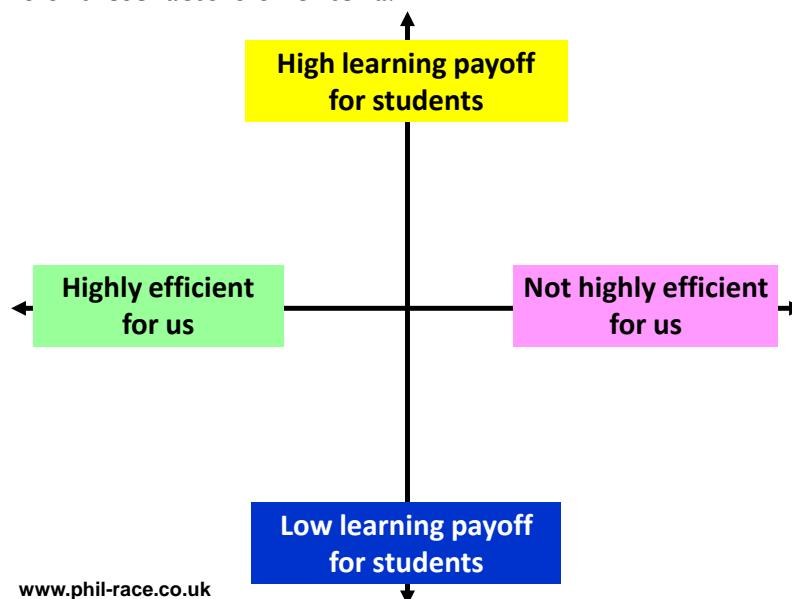
Feedback: efficiency for us, learning payoff for students

Phil Race – see http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/EngageinFeedback/Race_feedback_efficiency.pdf

This activity works with the principle put forward by Phil Race that in choosing a feedback method one important factor to consider is the balance or payoff between

- on the one hand Feedback efficiency for us (the time and effort required for a particular feedback method) and
- on the other hand, the learning payoff for students (the extent to which the method helps to develop students' learning and skills).

Looking at the matrix below, the ideal is to find methods which would sit within the top left quadrant - highly efficient for staff and highly beneficial for students – and to avoid the bottom right quadrant – highly time-consuming for staff but resulting in little student learning. Placing different methods on these axes helps us evaluate different feedback methods in terms of these factors or criteria.



Instructions

- Consider the list of methods given below, which are taken from workshop sessions led by Phil Race.
- Pick 6-10 of the methods and decide where they sit on the diagram above – you can write them in for later comparison. Make sure to include methods you currently use.

Example Feedback Methods

- live feedback in class
- Individual written feedback
- ad hoc verbal, e.g. In seminar
- written feedback, unreadable or too short
- peer group discussion
- exam marks, no comment
- peer assessment, assuming fairly
- generic written report for all students
- recorded audio feedback for individuals
- ipsative (self) feedback/assessment
- talking to small groups about common problems
- face to face one to one
- self-assessment
- recorded generic audio feedback to a whole group
- criteria sheets – rubrics
- email feedback
- track changes
- hand-written feedback on end of semester major assignments

Are there ways in which some of these methods can be adapted slightly to bring them closer to the top-left quadrant?

Appendix 3

Survey on students' experience of feedback they receive on their assignments

Adapted from the Sheffield Hallam University Survey for Students of Science and Maths

The survey below is a simplified version of the full survey developed by Sheffield Hallam University. You might use it for small-scale exploration of student response to different types of feedback which you yourself use.

Edit the column headers to reflect the types of feedback you would like to explore, and distribute to students.

Examples of the types of feedback you might edit into your chart, according to your own practice:

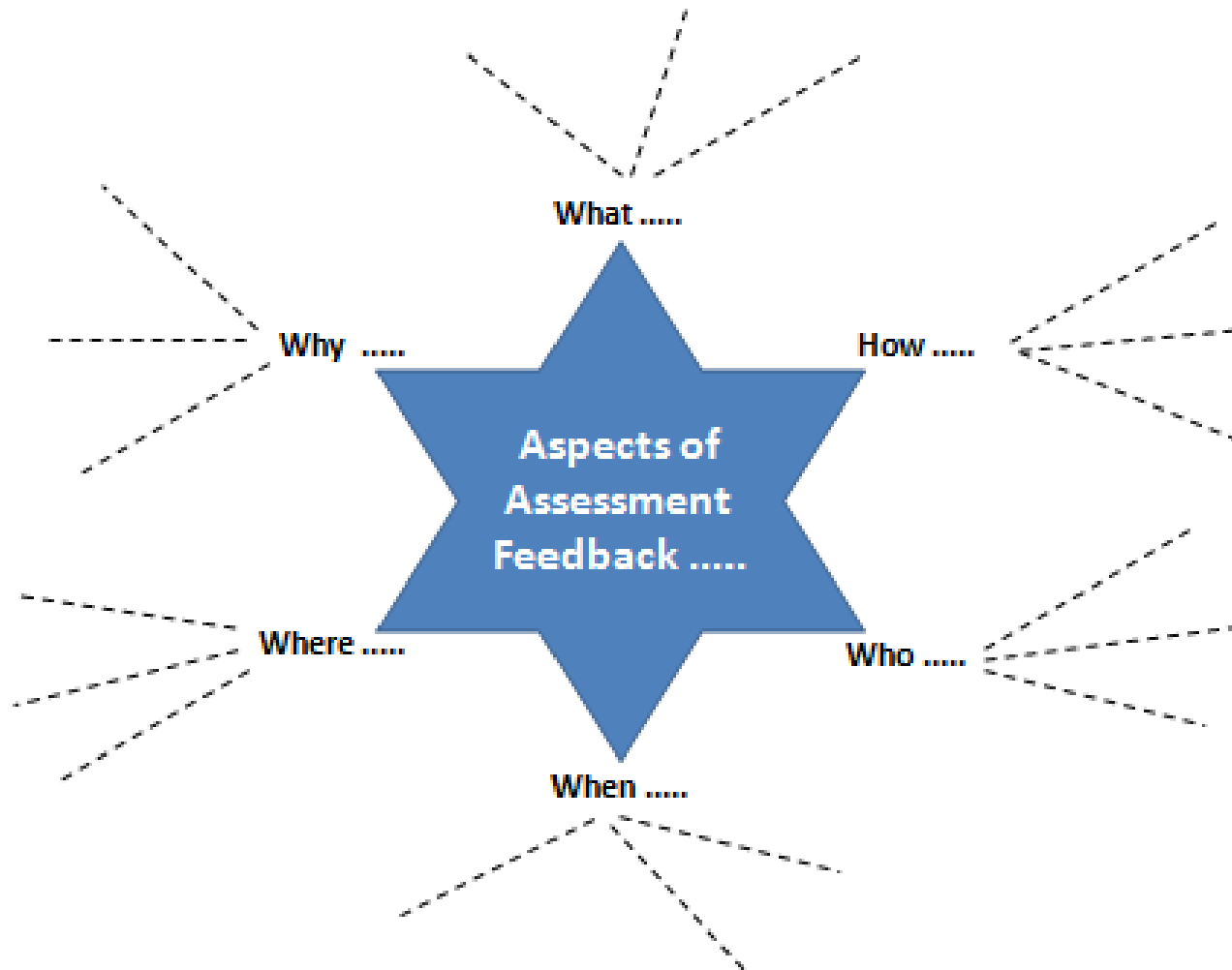
- Written feedback on assignments
- Generic feedback to all students, e.g. emailed, posted in forums, distributed in lectures
- Model or specimen answers
- Other students' feedback on written assignments
- Individual discussion between tutor and students in tutorials
- Any type of self-assessment of my own assignment(s)

Type of written feedback (1 = Not useful – 5 = Extremely helpful)															
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Helped me to understand why I got my grade or mark															
Helped me to appreciate how well I am getting on															
Helped me to understand where I went wrong															
Helped me to understand specific course content															
Helped me to develop my intellectual skills (e.g. problem solving and analysis)															
Helped me to develop my learning skills (e.g. reading and note taking)															
Helped me to develop my academic writing skills (e.g. referencing)															
Helped me with the subsequent assignment(s)															
Engaged me in further study (e.g. going back to the course material)															
Made it clear what I need to do to improve															
Helped me to keep going and try harder															
Helped towards exams															
Helped me to develop my subject knowledge															

Timeliness + Amount of Feedback	Always	Some of the time	Most of the time	Never
Feedback comes back too late to be useful				
I get plenty of feedback on how I am doing				
What do you do with the feedback:	I read the feedback carefully and try to understand the meaning	I use the feedback to go back over what I have done in the assignment	I tend to only read the marks	I use the feedback for revising

Appendix 4

Starbursting Causes and Solutions – Getting students to pick up, read and learn from feedback



Adapted from Starbursting – Mind Tools

Appendix 5

Possible strategies to encourage students to read feedback

1 Give your feedback high profile

On the simplest of levels, a key strategy to encourage students to pay attention to feedback is to indicate to them when feedback is taking place. This might sound very basic, but there is much evidence to suggest that some students may have a very narrow or restricted perception of feedback and may not always recognise feedback when it is being given to them. Their conception of feedback may be limited to the individual comments written on a piece of work and they may not recognise other forms such as general comments made in class, or informally in tutorials. It may be necessary to find ways to flag up to students that 'this is feedback on your work'.

2 Give feedback before, or without marks

Would it be possible to give your students the feedback on their work before the marks? We know that when the two come together, some students only look at the mark, and ignore the feedback, or at best glance briefly at the comments without trying to make sense of what they say. It's as if the mark blinds them to the feedback:

If the mark is good, they smile and file ... If it's low, they frown and bin it
(Race, P. 2012)

If feedback is given by itself, without, or ahead of, the mark, there is a strong probability that this will encourage them to read the feedback as the only way to get a sense of how well they have achieved. One 'window' might be between your initial marking of the work and the completion of the full moderation process of second marking and scrutiny by the External Examiner. Could your initial feedback be given immediately to students, clearly flagged as provisional feedback, before the final results are released?

3 Embed some dialogue with students within your feedback process

Traditionally feedback can feel like something which is done TO students; tutors write feedback which is given to students as passive recipients, a process which does not empower or engage students, especially when combined with the difficulties they may have in understanding the feedback we write. The NUS is in favour of strategies in which we **ask students to indicate what aspect of their work they would like feedback on**, and include reference to this within our comments.

To do this, encourage students to think about feedback **IN ADVANCE** and target your feedback accordingly - when they submit an assessment ask them to:

- either indicate what they would like feedback on, which may be an academic skill (e.g. structure of argument) they are trying to develop;
- or to indicate what aspects of an assessment they found difficult.

However, it will also be important to draw attention to key issues in the work which they may have missed (Irons 2007, p.76).

4 Self-Feedback

Again, as a strategy to empower and interest students in your feedback, consider setting up activities to encourage student self-assessment of their work. By engaging them in evaluating their own work, you will encourage them to later compare your feedback with their own. This involves work to help students develop the Self-Assessment skills they need to use feedback to improve future work.

5 Staged assignments

Within some courses, there is a tradition of assessing only by one long assignment at the end of a module. Given the length of time between assignment submission and completion of the university moderation processes, there can be some considerable delay before students receive their feedback, their attention may have moved on, and the assignment feedback may no longer feel relevant. This can be tackled by the use of two-stage assignments in which both stages 'count' but where feedback from Stage 1 feeds into the work for Stage 2. Students will at least then read the feedback for Stage 1, and hopefully act on it. Having done so, they will hopefully see the value also of reading the feedback for stage 2.

6 Involve students in actively doing something with the feedback, support, and follow-up

Don't just assume that students know what to DO with their feedback comments; ensure that they know how to use them to enhance their learning. Activities integrated with course activities, within the classroom, online, and/or via PDP processes can be used to:

- encourage reflection on what the feedback means and how they can act on advice
- encourage students to compare tutor feedback with their own impression of their work
- involve students in evaluating their next assignment using points arising in previous feedback
- develop Action Plans

Remember too that students to read their feedback if they know that you will be following up to check whether they do in fact act on the feedback given. (This is a principle underlying the Target Monitoring Grid Case Study.)

Appendix 6

Strategies for Timely Feedback – would they work for you?

Instructions:

- Read each of the suggestions below.
- Consider the linked questions and jot down your ideas.

I Manage students' expectations of when they can receive feedback.

A friend's daughter, recently waiting for the feedback and results from her end-of-year assignments, found the most distressing aspect of the delay was the lack of information as to how long the wait would be; simply providing students with the date of the Exam Board, and hence the release of feedback and marks would have avoided a lot of distress.

- **To think about:** Where do your students find information telling them when feedback will be available? Can you make that information any clearer?

2 Ring-fence time

Use your diary efficiently, and as far as possible block out 'feedback time' immediately after assessment dates, to protect the time from competing priorities.

- **To think about:** Look at your own diary - Have you clearly marked the periods when you will need to ring-fence times for a focus on feedback? Can you predict, and avert, other tasks which may crop up at these times so as to leave the ring-fenced time clear?

3 Self- or Peer Feedback AFTER submission

Introduce activities within your courses which involve Peer- and/or Self- feedback on work; these could be within the face-to-face teaching session or could be done using the VLE. The quality of Peer- and/or Self- feedback may be lower than your own feedback, but if it comes immediately after an assignment, it may have more impact than tutor feedback which does not arrive until weeks later.

- **To think about:** Consider the outline of your course. Could you find a slot soon after the assessment date where you could fit a Peer- and/or Self- feedback activity? Even 10 minutes would be better than nothing.

4 Self-evaluation of work even BEFORE submission

Could you involve students in self-evaluation of their work even before it is submitted? Use of a self-evaluation pro-forma can not only mean that students provide themselves with evaluation, and hence feedback, on their draft work, but gives them a basis on which to improve the work before final submission. This then, in turn, may help to make your own feedback less onerous because some problems will already have been addressed, and you can refer to the proforma as a speedy way of highlight remaining issues.

- **To think about:** Think about the typical errors that students make in one of your assignments, or generic weaknesses in students' work. Could you draw up a list to give ahead of time to the next group of students to do that assessment task?

5 Generic Group Feedback

When dealing with a large set of assignments, which frequently results in repeated use of similar comments, an effective time-saving strategy can be a generic report outlining common weaknesses and strengths. You may be able to provide such generic group feedback to the whole cohort more quickly than individualised feedback which is dependent on the full moderation process and it may help to encourage students to pay attention to the individualised feedback later. Remember however, that going on to supplement such generic feedback with individual comments is important to support students' understanding of the relevance and application to their own work.

- **To think about:** The data collected by the NUS suggests that students prefer individual feedback to such whole-group approaches. How could you 'sell' it to your students? What sorts of individual feedback would you give to accompany generic approaches?

6 Marking grid or feedback chart

Making use of a marking grid or feedback chart, which lays out the learning outcomes or grading criteria and indicates the quality of work with respect to that aspect of the assessed work is a quick way to provide students with a 'profile' of their achievement. It can also save time as it avoids having to say the same thing time and time again in feedback across the student group. However, to be maximally effective needs to be used in combination with developmental comments.

- **To think about:** Opinions are divided on the value of such 'itemised' approaches within feedback. I personally find this approach helpful; others prefer a more holistic approach. What do you feel are the pros and cons?

7 The rule of 3s – concentrate on key issues

It is time-consuming to pick up every problem or strength in a piece of work, and perhaps, anyway, is distracting for students. If you pick out the 3 key areas for development (and 3 points where you can make positive comments!) then you can save time, whilst also providing the focus and detail such illustrative examples which will make your feedback meaningful to students.

- **To think about:** Next time you mark a piece of work, concentrate on identifying 3 key issues to pick up in feedback. Does this work for you? Or did you feel important things were missed?

8 Automated formative assessment for speedy feedback

For some subjects, topics, and aspects of a course, there may be a place for automated, multiple-choice-type assessment, perhaps as a form of formative assessment ahead of the main summative assessment. This can ensure immediate feedback to students about their knowledge.

- **To think about:** Are there elements of any of your own courses where this would be useful?

9 A databank of common feedback phrases or comments

A databank of common feedback phrases or comments can be developed and embedded as part of the feedback, used as and when appropriate. This is an approach which is perhaps easiest implemented by using technology, for example using the Grademark tool within the originality-checking software, Turnitin. Colleagues making use of this have, however, commented that the bank of statements provided automatically are best replaced with your own comments, to give a more natural, personalised and 'human' touch.

- **To think about:** Perhaps make a start on such a list by jotting down phrases which you know you use frequently in feedback. Add to this list next time you give feedback - would a bank of feedback phrases be useful to you?

10 Take advantage of technology

Some of the delay in getting feedback out to students comes from the process of passing around paper copies of work and feedback, and providing opportunities for students to collect feedback from a central location. Even sending feedback by email can help save time, and directs the feedback directly to students, enhancing the chances that they will pick it up

and read it. Other developments to consider include using technology for the moderation process – the use of a ‘moderation site’ within the institutional VLE can facilitate a smooth and speedy process of first and second marking, and can be used for the External Examiner stage of the assessment process too.

There are also reports of staff finding that audio feedback, completed in a simple way using mp3 files, can save time over written feedback.

- To think about: Consider the assessment and moderation process within your local context. Are there areas where technology could be used and might speed up the feedback process? What would need to be put in place for you to take advantage of these?

Appendix 7

Feedback Strategies to help students understand feedback

Peer-Assessed Oral Presentations: A quick method to generate feedback for individual presentations in the biosciences

Dr Anne Crook, CDOTL

- Every student in the class has to give a pre-prepared presentation on a particular topic;
- Each student in the class is given an oral presentation marking criteria sheet (as used by the lecturers) and are talked through each of the criteria at the start of the session;
- Each student is given two ‘post-it’ notes of different colours;
- Using the marking criteria, each student writes down one good feature of the presentation on one of the coloured notelets and one ‘weakness’ onto the other notelet; the ‘weakness’ comment has to be qualified by a suggestion of how that aspect of the presentation could be improved (note: the names of the student providing the feedback are not put onto the notelets);
- At the end of each presentation, the audience is given two minutes to complete their feedback; the lecturer collects the notelets, keeping the coloured notelets separate. A quick skim through the notes is made by the lecturer to ensure all feedback is ‘appropriate’. The notelets are then given to the student who has just given the presentation;
- The advantage of this approach is that in addition to feedback comments from the lecturer, each student receives (a large) amount of peer feedback within a few minutes of their presentation;
- In addition, the task of having to actually ‘do’ something whilst listening to a peer’s presentation has the effect of keeping the class ‘on their toes’ since everyone in the audience has to give a presentation and everyone is ultimately on the receiving end of peer feedback!
- This approach has worked successfully in class sizes of between 6 and 45 students (2nd & 3rd years) for formative assessment purposes in preparation for summative oral assessment (i.e. an improvement in class marks were observed in the final summative assessment, compared with previous years in which there was no formative (peer or lecturer) assessment).

'Think aloud Reading' via MP3 recordings

Stephen Merry and Paul Orsmond, Staffordshire University

<p>Focus</p>	<p>Explores the use of spoken feedback in the form of 'think aloud reading', recorded by staff as mp3 audio files and records student favourable response to this as a Feedback mechanism. The 2007 study was small scale (15 students in the pilot sample), but positive responses suggest value in wider application.</p>
<p>Form of Feedback</p>	<p>The audio feedback, recorded using Audacity (freely-available software - audacity.sourceforge.net), took the form of 'think aloud reading'. This form of response to the assignment is experiential, recording the reactions and thoughts of the tutor as a reader of the work. This may be to express confusion, seek clarification, reflect of the strengths and meaning of the work, summarise conclusions etc. Questions may be asked of the text and key strengths highlighted. It provides the student with a 'reader's eye view' of how their work is received and where there is any weaknesses interfering with the communication of the idea. The files were then converted to mp3 files for easy accessibility and sent as email attachments.</p>
<p>Student Response</p>	<p>Student views were wholeheartedly positive. They found this audio feedback to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • easier to understand because handwriting is often illegible; • in greater detail compared to traditional feedback formats • in more depth because possible strategies for solving problems were included rather than just stating what the problems were; • more 'genuine', a reader's response rather than an academic necessity. <p>Students found the recorded feedback to be 'more genuine' than their traditional forms of feedback, a more personal response to the work, and frequently found it easier to read.</p> <p>Most students listened to the feedback repeatedly, whereas they tended to read written feedback once only, that they read their work and listened to the feedback simultaneously, and that some students made notes on their work in response to the feedback and/or took advantage of the opportunity to pause and rewind the recording in order to gain a clearer understanding.</p> <p>Some students reported a greater sense that recorded feedback from one assignment offered advice which would be relevant to later assignments or courses taught by other staff.</p>
<p>Rationale:</p>	<p>The activity assumes that, at least for some people, use of the spoken word is more meaningful than written communication, which heightens student response to the recorded feedback.</p> <p>Both students and teachers reported that the recorded feedback was more detailed than typical written feedback with, for instance, a greater tendency to include examples of points made, and it is likely that this is one factor in the recorded feedback as being more meaningful.</p>

Appendix 8

Codes for categorising tutor feedback comments on assignments

Adapted from work by The Open University, 2005 (itself adapted from Brown, Gibbs and Glover, 2003)

This coding system is for reviewing and analysing the kinds of feedback written on students' assignments, in order to provide a more 'objective' overview of the approach to feedback than the sort of 'gut feeling' we each have about our own practice, and to provide a perspective on student response to the feedback they receive and their subsequent progress. The coding system has been simplified from the original scheme developed by, and for, the Open University which is available online from http://www.open.ac.uk/fast/pdfs/feedback_codes.pdf.

Instructions:

Use the coding system with respect to a selection of marked assignments. Focus on the comments made by the marker on the work, and code each comment. By then looking at the spread of 'codes' across the assignment sample, it will be possible to gain an impression of the pattern of the feedback being given.

For example:

- Does the feedback concentrate on aspects of content or academic skills?
- In relation to content or skills, does the tutor simply point to the weakness (1), provide a correction (2) or also provide an explanation of the weakness / correction (3)?
- How far does the feedback point towards and encourage future learning?
- Is the balance of the feedback encouraging and motivational or is it demotivational in tone, perhaps concentrating on judgements?
- Does the feedback include holistic summary of strengths? And weaknesses?

Type of comment	Code
Comments on the content of student's work e.g. error in content, misconception, omission of key content, irrelevant material	C 1 - Point to a weakness 2 - Provide correction 3 - Provide Explanation
Comment designed to develop student's academic skills e.g. communication, structure, written English, presentation, referencing	S 1 - Point to a weakness 2 - Provide correction 3 - Provide Explanation
Comments that encourage further learning e.g. reference to dialogue with the tutor, future study / assessment tasks, resources	F
Motivational comments e.g. Encouraging comments, praise, confirmation of student views	M

De-motivational comments e.g. negative words ('you should not'), negative + personal judgements ('careless')	DM
Holistic summary of student's performance e.g. Summary of strengths and/or of weaknesses	HS / HW

Target Monitoring Grids for Turning Feedback into Feedforward

University of Hull, Scarborough School of Education & MEd eLearning

Aims:	A strategy which aims to get students to act and build on feedback they receive and to provide staff with a means of facilitating, supporting and tracking their academic development from assignment to assignment and module to module.
Preparation:	<p>Plan the mechanism for using the Target Monitoring Grid. This might be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A paper slip attached to assignments handed in as hard copy • An attachment to work submitted electronically. • An insert within the 'cover sheet' for the submission of work. <p>Plan how you will integrate student issues within your feedback – where the Target Monitoring grid comes in electronically, and feedback provided electronically, it is possible to use an efficient process of cut and paste into feedback.</p>
Instructions / Guidance:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In advance of the assessment, engage students in discussion of the value of feedback and on strategies to act on areas of weakness highlighted in feedback on one assignment to help improve the next. 2. Ask students to take 2 or 3 points for improvement from previous feedback (e.g. structure, referencing, supporting points with examples), work on them while completing their assignment, and make notes in the Target Monitoring Grid to show <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What points they have worked on • Their evaluation of progress made on these points. 3. When work comes in, by including comment on the points they list in their Target Monitoring Grids as part of your feedback on the task, thus adding a personalised and focused response to the points they have raised. <p>As I work with electronic submission and electronic feedback, this is easily achieved by pasting their comments in and adding my own, but this can equally be achieved directly onto the paper slip if completing feedback by hand.</p> 4. Repeat the process from assignment to assignment and module to module to give continuity across a programme involving different staff.

<p>Rationale:</p>	<p>The strategy gives students a specific reason to look at and read the feedback they receive, and to work with key guidance for improvement from one assignment to improve their work on the next. In this way FeedBACK is turned into FeedFORWARD.</p> <p>The expectation to comment on progress made in attempting to improve on each of their chosen points, students are encouraged to be self-critical and to evaluate their own progress.</p> <p>By commenting on the points raised, and responding to students' self-evaluation, within your next feedback, you place value on their engagement in the task of acting on feedback and are seen to be 'monitoring' their involvement.</p> <p>If implemented across a programme, the use of the Target Monitoring Grid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides some continuity and progression from module to module • alerts each tutor to issues raised by the members of staff with respect to individual students' progress • can act as a form of Personal Development Planning (PDP) integrated within students' regular module learning activity; this can be an especially significant point on part-time programmes where students may be juggling work and study and find it difficult to find additional time for distinct PDP activity.
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Example Target Monitoring Grid

List here any targets e.g. referencing skills, from previous assignments that are appropriate to this assignment, and indicate to the marker of this new assignment that you have addressed them.	
Target	Notes on how this has been addressed in this assignment

Example of Tutor Response to Target Monitoring Grid within Feedback

List here any targets e.g. referencing skills, from previous assignments that are appropriate to this assignment, and indicate to the marker of this new assignment that you have addressed them.		
Target	Notes on how this has been addressed in this assignment	Response
To ensure I keep my work within the word count	Throughout writing I have been aware of my word count and have used as part of planning, which has ensured that when I came to editing there was little need to cut anything out	Well done. This was an appropriate approach, and I think has resulted in a well-balanced piece of work.
To ensure learning outcomes are addressed	I have kept referring back to the outcomes during the planning/writing of this task. This has made me fairly confident that this submission works towards these.	I think that, again, the success of both these aspects of your approach to the work is clear and is evidenced in the mark achieved. Well done Gina. 😊

Appendix 9

Giving Realistic Targets within Feedback - Matching Targets to Level – Worksheet

Instructions: Consider each of the suggested ‘weaknesses’ on the left. Suggest level-related ‘guidance’ or ‘targets’ which might be given in Feedback.

Example area of weakness within assessed work	Suggested target you might expect a student to meet at Level 4 (Certificate Level within *FHEQ)	Suggested target you might expect a student to meet at Level 6 (Honours Degree Level within FHEQ)	Suggested target you might expect a student to meet at Level 7 (Masters Degree Level within FHEQ)
Failure to demonstrate understanding of the inter-relationships of different topics and relationship to situation / context			
Failure to use information from the literature effectively as part of the argument within a piece of work			
Inconsistent or incomplete referencing			
Failure to show appreciation of the role of other disciplines / professions in relation to the assessment topic			
Problems in the handling of ethical and legal Issues			

* FHEQ = Framework of Higher Education Qualifications from the UK Quality Assurance Agency – Full document available from <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/Quality-Code-Chapter-A1.pdf>

Giving Realistic Targets within Feedback - Matching Targets to Level – Some suggested answers

Example area of weakness within assessed work	Suggested target you might expect a student to meet at Level 4 (Certificate Level within FHEQ)	Suggested target you might expect a student to meet at Level 6 (Honours Degree Level within FHEQ)	Suggested target you might expect a student to meet at Level 7 (Masters Degree Level within FHEQ)
Failure to demonstrate understanding of the inter-relationships of different topics and relationship to situation / context	In future work try not to simply list the topics but show some of the inter-relationships between them, and suggest relevant to the context you are discussing	In future work try to demonstrate that you understand the complex and potentially contradictory nature of inter-relationships between the topics you are discussing.	In future work try to show you understand that within such an ambiguous situation or context the inter-relationships between topics may be complex, potentially contradictory and constantly changing.
Failure to use information from the literature effectively as part of the argument within a piece of work	In future work make sure you link references to literature with your own ideas within your work.	In future work make sure you don't just quote from literature, but rather integrate the references to literature effectively with your own ideas within your work.	In future work try to integrate the references to literature effectively with your own ideas in ways which demonstrate your understanding of alternative points of view.
Inconsistent or incomplete referencing	Make sure you use the referencing information in the handbook and reference sources in a consistent pattern in line with the guidance provided.	When referencing, take care to pay attention to the types of sources you are using and reference each type accurately in line with standard conventions.	Take care to draw on standard conventions and make effective and accurate use of reference and citation of the different types of sources to a publishable standard.
Failure to show appreciation of the role of other disciplines / professions in relation to the assessment topic	When discussing your own role in the situation, make sure you also identify the other professions / disciplines which have a relevant contribution to make to that particular area of practice.	When exploring the different roles within a professional situation include discussion of the similarities / differences in the contributions of your own and other professions / disciplines to that area of practice and barriers to working effectively within a multidisciplinary team.	When exploring the different roles within a professional situation include some evaluation of the impact which the different professional responsibilities and approaches of other disciplines / professions have on the process of collaborative working within that area of practice and ways of improving multidisciplinary working.
Problems in the handling of ethical and legal Issues	In future pieces of work make sure you identify the application of principles of legal / ethical issues within your own practice.	In future pieces of work make sure you analyse the potential influence of the ethical / legal issues within your own role.	In future pieces of work make sure you analyse and respond to the complexity of the legal / ethical issues within own role and with respect to the ambiguities within a particular situation.

Note: FHEQ = Framework of Higher Education Qualifications from the UK Quality Assurance Agency – Full document available from <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/Quality-Code-Chapter-A1.pdf>

The suggested targets are based on the University of Hull Learning Outcomes Tool – available on request

Appendix 10

Aberystwyth University Feedback form for written assignments



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 Adeilad Parry-Williams
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Feedback Form for Written Assignments

Module (Code, Title)					
Coordinator/Marker					
Student				Email	
Assignment	#	1 of 1 only	<input type="text"/>	1 st of 2 assignments	<input type="text"/>
Date	Special circumstances				

[bracketed figures represent available range]	Excellent 70%-100%	Good 60%-69%	Reasonable 50%-59%	Weak 40%-49%	Unsatisfactory 0%-39%
Presentation [0-8]	[6-8]	[5]	[4]	[3]	[0-3]
Coverage [0-10]	[7-10]	[6-7]	[5-6]	[4-5]	[0-4]
Sources [0-12]	[8-12]	[7-8]	[6-7]	[5-6]	[0-5]
Knowledge & Understanding [0-20]	[14-20]	[12-14]	[10-12]	[8-10]	[0-8]
Critical Evaluation [0-24]	[17-24]	[14-17]	[12-14]	[10-12]	[0-9]
Evidence & coherent argument [0-26]	[18-26]	[16-18]	[13-16]	[10-13]	[0-10]

If this box is ticked you are invited to have this assignment published online at <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media>. Forward to **dgc** as an email attachment in *Word* format.

Subtotal	Lateness Penalty	Total Mark
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	-	=

Comments

Presentation The text must be presented so that it is readable in its expression and legible in its format on the page. Word-processed presentations are expected, the main font being a 12-point serif font (such as Times Roman). The text should be printed clearly in black (except where colour is needed for illustrations) on one side of the paper only. You must number your pages, double-space lines, leave broad margins and use paragraphs (separated by a blank line). Use bullet points for lists, indent quotations of 4 lines or more and use italics for occasional emphasis (not for quotations). Do not use underlining (an old typewriter convention). Express yourself as clearly as you can. 'Signpost' the structure of your text for the reader—for instance, by including section heads (in bold). Illustrations can be used to enhance the presentation—figures and tables—they are indeed expected where your topic is visually-oriented (shot-by-shot analyses of films or ads, for instance, should include sample frames wherever possible). The careful selection and use of relevant images scanned from print or downloaded from electronic sources and strategically pasted into your document can improve both your presentation and your argument. Cropping may also be used to good effect, focusing the reader's attention on key details. Avoid purely decorative images. If you include an illustration, be sure to discuss it in the text. All illustrations must be properly labelled (e.g. Fig. 1: Close-up of Coca-Cola bottle). Note that the titles of books, films, television programmes, newspapers and magazines should always be in italics (without quotation-marks). Submit your assignment in a transparent cover. Copy-edit your text (e.g. for spelling, grammar and style) as carefully as is expected for published work.

Coverage All parts of the set assignment must be covered (note in particular where a question has more than one part). All of the content must be *relevant* to the set question and the relevance of each point must be clearly established. Get to the topic immediately: long introductions which are not closely related to the exact topic are a waste of space. Waffle, in particular, is guaranteed to lose marks. Make sure that you cover all of the key issues but on the other hand don't try to cover too much territory. If space limits your focus, explain what you are *not* trying to cover. Make up for this in the detail which you go into about the aspects that you *are* covering.

Sources You must demonstrate consultation of relevant academic source materials, which can include books, journal articles, reports, databases and webpages. Both extensive and intensive critical reading must be evident. Avoid referencing in footnotes; you should refer to your sources in the main body of your text thus: (Smith 1990, p. 25). Secondary references should be cited thus: (Smith 1990 cited in Jones 1999, p. 62). Unless otherwise instructed, reference films within the text thus: *Cruising* (Friedkin 1980). Lectures, lecture notes and general student textbooks should not be used in the references: these are merely a guide to study. You are welcome to read essays by other students but do not cite them. Where sources are specified for the assignment, focus on these but go beyond them. Use bibliographic searches to extend your reading. Avoid direct quotation of academic sources-- demonstrate your understanding by paraphrasing points. Where you do quote directly, indent quotes which take up more than 3 lines and drop the inverted commas. Do not use italics to indicate quotes. You are normally expected to include an alphabetical list of references at the end of your text. These are works actually cited in the main body of the text (unlike a bibliography). *All* of the in-text citations must appear in this list. Follow the following format closely unless otherwise specified (noting in particular that the titles of books and journals should always be in italics).

References

- Brown, Mac H., Patsy Skeen & D. Keith Osborn (1979): 'Young Children's Perception of the Reality of Television', *Contemporary Education* 50(3): 129-33
- Chandler, Daniel (1995): 'Children's Understanding of What is "Real" on Television: A Review of the Research Literature' [WWW document] **URL** <http://users.aber.ac.uk/dgc/realrev.html> [accessed 21/1/03]
- Hodge, Bob & David Tripp (1986): *Children and Television: A Semiotic Approach*. Cambridge: Polity Press
- Jaglom, Leona M. & Howard Gardner (1981): 'The Preschool Television Viewer as Anthropologist'. In Hope Kelly & Howard Gardner (Eds.): *Viewing Children Through Television (New Directions for Child Development 13)*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, pp. 9-30

Knowledge and understanding It is essential to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of relevant issues, concepts, theories and findings introduced in lectures and other sources. You need to be able to provide an accurate and balanced summary of these and to apply them appropriately to the topic. Do not rely on standard dictionary definitions of key technical terms: such definitions should be based on relevant academic reference sources. However, do not explain technical terms with which your reader should be familiar: demonstrate your understanding by applying such concepts to the current task. Map out key standpoints regarding the main issues. Synthesise where appropriate—that is, bring together similar approaches by different writers. Summarise the views of particular theorists and researchers in your own words. Relate these closely to the specific focus of the assignment. Provide appropriately detailed examples.

Critical evaluation The best work not only describes and summarises theories and findings but also critically interprets them. When an author's views are simply declared as part of evidence and argument, this is known as an 'appeal to an authority': you need to critically evaluate such views. The task is not to 'criticise' the work of experienced professionals on the basis of your own knowledge of the topic or of research methodology but to show that you are capable of thinking critically and with insight about the issues raised. Relate different studies to each other. Compare and contrast different approaches and identify their strengths and limitations. What questions do they leave unanswered? Try to be as balanced and impartial as possible.

Evidence and coherent argument Organise your materials as effectively as you can to support the development of an orderly argument. Do not leap from point to point. Take nothing for granted. Simply quoting assertions does not count as evidence. All assertions must be supported with the best evidence you can find. Evidence is provided by drawing upon the analysis and interpretation of findings. Conclusions must follow coherently from the evidence; do not be tempted into speculation, prediction or moralising. Unless specifically called for, personal opinions should not feature. Where data collection and analysis is required (qualitative or quantitative), it should be undertaken by using an established methodology. Specify this methodology and refer to a published example of its application in the field. Discuss the appropriateness of that method for the task in hand. Show an awareness of the limitations of your own study. Have regard to any legal or ethical considerations (e.g. the importance of anonymising informants).

Tip: Many students produce a better essay if they revise it some time after producing their first version.

Printed for dgc on 24/06/2014; this form can be found online at: http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Modules/feedback_form.doc

Appendix I I

Solihull College Poster Presentation Grading and Feedback Sheet

Title: *Poster Presentation Grading Criteria*

Category: **Assessment Example**

Subject: **Any**

Context

This example provides the format for an assessment grid which can be used in the assessment of student poster presentations (30%) which also require an oral presentation (35%) and a question and answer session (35%).

Student name.....

Title of poster.....

Unit and Programme.....

Poster (30%)

	D	M	P	F
Organisation of the material	Innovative, and stylish. The organisation allows the viewer to easily find their way through the presentation.	Overall the impression is good. There are some imaginative aspects and sequence is logical.	Some thought given to overall image. Difficult to follow the story.	Haphazard presentation which appears to be little more than a collection of images and words in an almost random order.
Image content	All images are imaginatively chosen and convey the message in an informative manner.	Images are used appropriately and answer the question.	The images are appropriate and partly answer the question.	Images are poorly selected and add very little to the answer.
Image quality	Excellent throughout. Good use of colour.	Good quality images. Any variance in quality does not detract from overall impression	Images are of an adequate standard	Little effort shown in attention to detail. Most of the images are of poor quality and may show signs of ill-treatment.
Written word	Excellent use of written word. Short statements, which add to the quality. Correct use of quotes and appropriate fonts & style.	Mostly good choice of statements. Relevant and concise.	Appropriate use of words adds to understanding.	Generally poor choice of written words which tend to distract rather than inform. Too many words and/or inappropriate font/style.

Oral Presentation (35%)

Content	Shows excellent knowledge of subject area and talks at a level appropriate to the audience.	Shows good knowledge of subject area with few omissions or errors.	Knowledge of subject area is satisfactory with few errors or omissions.	Little evidence of any real knowledge of subject area.
Delivery	Clearly well-rehearsed and fits into 10 minute time limit. The talk adds to and develops understanding of the poster.	Generally well delivered. The talk is relevant and builds on the content of the poster.	The talk explains the poster and provides some extra information.	Reads from notes or poster and level not appropriate to audience.

Question and Answer Session (35%)

Response	Demonstrates a high level of understanding and where appropriate expands on the answer.	Shows good understanding with few mistakes.	Generally able to answer questions adequately. Short answers.	Shows little knowledge of area. Unable to respond to most questions.
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Suggestions: The grid is generic and can be tailored to specific topics

adrian.taylor@solihull.ac.uk for Hospitality, Sport, Tourism and Leisure Network

Appendix 12

University of Ulster FRENCH DISSERTATION MARKING GRID

University of Ulster FACULTY OF ARTS, FRENCH DISSERTATION MARKING GRID

Student's Name: _____ MARK: (1st Marker): _____
 (2nd Marker): _____
 AGREED MARK: _____

Dissertation title: _____

KEY TO GRADES: On a scale of 1 to 5:

Outstanding in all respects 1) 70%+
 Some very good features 2) 60% - 69%
 Satisfactory overall 3) 50% - 59%
 Some serious inadequacies 4) 40% - 49%
 Inadequate in most respects 5) under 40%

A: Structure, organisation, argument:

Originality

Original and creative approach _____ No evidence of originality

Sources

Proper and independent use of sources	_____	Overly derivative
Adequate understanding of sources	_____	Misunderstandings
Evidence of substantial research	_____	Inadequate research and reading
Correct citation of references	_____	Incorrect referencing
Effective use of figures and tables	_____	Lack of analysis; figures, etc. add little to argument

(The two subsequent categories are ticked only where there is sufficient *original* input by the student to make an assessment.)

Overall structure

Satisfactory in-depth treatment of topic	_____	Superficial treatment
Adequate length	_____	Under/over length

Argument

Well-presented introduction	_____	Unsatisfactory introduction
Accurate presentation of facts and	_____	Much material inaccurate or evidence questionable
Logical development of argument	_____	Dissertation rambles
Adequate illustration and analysis	_____	Poor or no illustration and analysis
Adequate and well-argued conclusion	_____	Feeble conclusion

B: Style and use of language

French <i>clearly</i> student's own	_____	French over-derivative
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(A [5] here indicates that the French is entirely, or almost entirely, derivative. No further comment can be made. If 1 – 4 is ticked, an assessment of the points listed below is based strictly on those passages which are *clearly* in the student's own French.)

Correctness of grammar and spelling	_____	Incorrect grammar and spelling
Correctness of register	_____	Register frequently inappropriate
Well-formed and concise sentences	_____	Clumsy and imprecise writing
Succinct writing overall	_____	Unnecessarily repetitive

Marker: [1st:] [2nd:] (Please tick as appropriate); NAME: _____
 General Comments: _____

Appendix 13

Strategies for structured reflection and/or self-assessment – Would these work for you?

The Student Enhanced Learning through Effective Formative Feedback (SENLEF) project provides a number of suggestions for structured reflection and/or self-assessment, many of which are reflected too in other guidance:

1 Invite students to request the kinds of feedback they would like when they hand in work

Deciding on the type of feedback they would personally like involves students in reflection on their own learning styles and preferences, and evaluation of the aspects of their work for which they would like feedback involves a focus on the areas in which they hope to develop. This idea is promoted too by the NUS, who have produced templates for a cover sheet and feedback sheet which provide opportunities for students to say what kind of feedback they would like - <http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/campaigns/highereducation/learning-and-teaching-hub/feedback/campaigntools/>.

- **To think about:** How practicable do you think this suggestion would be in your context? Would you encourage your students to use the NUS-sponsored coversheet or feedback sheet? Why? / Why not?

2 Invite students to identify the strengths and weaknesses in their own work in relation to criteria or standards before handing it in for teacher feedback.

This could also involve students in decisions about the grade they feel is appropriate for the work and both aspects involve students in self-assessment of their own work, developing their judgement and their understanding of the assessment criteria, and providing a basis for their confidence in their own ability to evaluate their work, as they can compare their own judgements with those of the tutor.

- Phil Race has suggested an interesting way to motivate their engagement, through the chance to gain a few extra marks – see *Enabling and Motivating Student Self-Assessment* - Phil Race
- A form of Personal Development Planning in which students pick points from the feedback on a previous assignment, reflect on progress in relation to the current assignment and receive tutor response to their self-evaluation provides an alternative approach in which the dialogue with the tutor will similarly encourage engagement – see *Target Monitoring Grids for Turning Feedback into Feedforward* - Scarborough School of Education
- **To think about:** How do you feel your own students would respond to this suggestion? Would they embrace the opportunity to self-assess or might they see it as an additional burden? If the latter, how might you encourage their engagement?

3 Portfolio tasks which require students to reflect on their achievements and select work in order to compile a portfolio

Portfolio assessments are becoming increasingly popular and are well-supported through the use of technology. This particular approach is similar to the previous idea in involving students in self-assessment of their own work, developing their judgement and their understanding of the assessment criteria. The motivation to engage in such self-assessment is in-built within the activity as students will wish to select the examples of their work which they judge to be of the highest standard and likely to gain them a good mark.

- **To think about:** Does portfolio-style assessment suit your own teaching context? What are the pros and cons of this type of approach, for yourself and for the students?

4 Invite students to set achievement milestones for a task and to reflect back on progress and forward to the next stage of action

This strategy suits courses where the learning and teaching approach involves an extended active learning activity such as a project, whether working individually or as a group. Here the process of self-assessment and self-feedback on progress is embedded within the activity process itself.

- **To think about:** Do you teach any courses where this strategy might be appropriate? If you are involved in the supervision of dissertations, at either under-graduate or post-graduate level, to what extent do you already involve your students in such self-assessment and self-feedback on progress?

5 Involve students in Action-Planning based on points from assessment feedback they receive

Just as quality tutor feedback is not just about making judgements about a completed assignment, but includes feed-forward, advice as to how work can be improved in the future, so too, student self-feedback can involve an element of forward planning as to what they plan to do with the feedback they receive, how they will act on it to improve their work. Whether the starting point is feedback from others, or their own self-feedback approaches to include such forward Action-Planning include the following:

- Working out what written feedback really means, and planning for action - Phil Race - <http://phil-race.co.uk/wp-content/plugins/download-monitor/download.php?id=53> – advice as to how students might go about working out what their feedback really means is supplemented by a proforma Action Plan which supports and guides them in structured thinking towards putting this into practice.
- SNOB Analysis - University of Salford - [http://www.careers.salford.ac.uk/cms/resources/uploads/File/Making%20the%20most%20of%20Feedback\(1\).pdf](http://www.careers.salford.ac.uk/cms/resources/uploads/File/Making%20the%20most%20of%20Feedback(1).pdf) - page 9 - Students are encouraged to draw on the feedback received to identify their Strengths, Needs, Opportunities and Barriers and they are encouraged to build the points emerging from this into an Action Plan for future development.
- **To think about:** Do you agree that students need this sort of support and encouragement to act on feedback and plan for future improvement of their work? Would you use such activities?

Appendix 14

Feedback to students would work much better for me if only I...

(Activity based on material within a workshop entitled 'Smarter Feedback' delivered at the University of Hull, 2012)

Instructions

Below are actual responses from teaching staff on things which would make feedback better from their own perspective. This activity works with these statements to help you reflect on challenges you yourself face with respect to feedback, the source of challenge, the factors which are perhaps within your control and the areas where you would like to explore strategies suggested by others.

- 1 Read through the statements, and, in the second column tick those which you feel are 'true for you'.
- 2 Consider the responses you ticked as true for you, and in the third column, jot down the source of challenge – you might find the following categories helpful, but if not, use some of your own: 'the institutional system', 'student attitude', 'my attitude', 'Time', 'my skills or abilities'
- 3 Pick three or four of these challenges which feel the most pressing and explore strategies suggested elsewhere in the Feedback Toolkit.

Staff Responses	True for me ✓	Source of challenge
<i>Feedback to students would work much better for me if only I...</i>		
Thought they'd read and digest it.		
Could give them back their essays to keep.		
Thought it would make a difference.		
Was able to do it more quickly.		
Could be in the right frame of mind when meeting them face to face.		
Could be sure they would understand what I'm trying to tell them.		
Could get them to turn up to receive feedback.		
Had some expectations that they would use it to improve their next mark.		
Cared less about the judgements I make, and how to articulate these in writing.		

Could get more of them to attend workshops, and engage in the learning activities.		
Knew the students better.		
Could discuss this with my students.		
Knew them personally, and their profiles.		
Knew how to phrase it in terms students understand.		
Saw evidence of improvement as a result of that feedback.		
Knew what to say to them.		
Made more time for giving effective feedback.		
Could be clearer about why they got the grade they did.		
Knew they would read the comments and not just look at the grade.		
Could identify better what the student needs to do to improve the next piece of work – feedforward.		
Could do this as a dialogue.		
Didn't take so long over it.		
Had the chance to discuss it and explain it.		

Appendix 15

Enhancing Feedback with Technology

Technology can facilitate a range of benefits to feedback – The following 5 headings appear, in a slightly different order, within the JISC (2010) document *Effective Assessment in a Digital Age*, and are used and adapted here to reflect the range of ways in which technology can enhance assessment feedback:

- Speed and ease of processing
- Immediacy and contingency
- Self-evaluative, self-regulated learning
- Authenticity
- Additionality

(Adapted from JISC (2010) *Effective Assessment in a Digital Age: A guide to technology-enhanced assessment and feedback* (Available online at http://www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/programmes/elearning/digiassass_eada.pdf p.17)

I Speed and ease of processing: Using technology can ensure we deliver instant, or speedy, feedback to learners

- Email to speed up the return of individual feedback

Simply sending feedback to students by email, or through the VLE, has the advantage of speeding things up and increasing the chance that students receive their feedback in a timely manner, while it still matters to them. It additionally avoids the need for students to collect feedback in person; we push feedback TO students rather than expecting them to collect it.

Example: Hepplestone, S., Parkin, H., Irwin, B., Holden, G. and Thorpe, L. (2010) *Technology, Feedback, Action!* pp.7-9. Available online at: <https://www-dev.heacademy.ac.uk/elro-technology-feedback-action-impact-learning-technology-students-engagement-feedback>

- VLE forum, bulletin board or other social media tool to distribute generic group feedback
- Research shows that timeliness is a critical factor in the effectiveness of feedback. Students have expressed a preference for individualised feedback, it is true, but technology additionally offers us the opportunity to share generic feedback for whole group ahead of the processing of moderation of individual feedback and marks.

For guidance on effective use of generic feedback see: ASKE Using generic feedback effectively. Available online at: http://www.brookes.ac.uk/aske/documents/2483_123-GenericFeedback.pdf

- Tools to automate aspects of tutor feedback

Various technological tools are being used to help teaching staff save time and thereby provide richer feedback to students. The application of editorial highlights, and insertion of customised comments and pre-written editing marks can all be added directly onto the student papers through tools such as the Grademark tool from Turnitin.

Example: Information about the Grademark tool from Turnitin is available from http://submit.ac.uk/en_gb/products/grademark

2 Immediacy and contingency: Feedback is provided rapidly when using technology for formative interactive online tests and activities involving tools in the hand (such as voting devices and internet-connected mobile phones) which can immediately correct misconceptions.

- Immediate expert, personalised, feedback through online interactive testing

Feedback which focuses on individual weaknesses in skills and conceptual understanding can be provided through the use of Computer Based Testing, especially for formative assessment, and in this case we provide the opportunity for frequent feedback on progress: 'Immediate expert feedback delivered online in response

to answers selected by learners can rapidly correct misconceptions; and the time saved in marking can be used in more productive ways, for example in supporting learners experiencing difficulties.' (JISC 2010 p.8).

Example: Adaptive eLearning - a new medium for intelligent assessment and feedback – Dror Ben- Naim in Posters Booklet L&T Forum 2011 Semester, UNSW, p.27-28 - Available online at https://docs.google.com/file/d/0BzBa-7dgHH4sNWYwOWY5YzAtM2FINS00NWY0LWlzMDEtMWQ5MTE3YjU2NWEx/edit?hl=en_US&pli=1

Example: The Open University (2010) Case study 4: Designing interactive assessments to promote independent learning, in Effective Assessment in a Digital Age, JISC. Available online at http://www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/programmes/elearning/digiassess_interactiveassessments.pdf.

3 Technology can offer enhanced opportunities for self-evaluation, reflection and self-feedback, which in turn can generate ownership of learning and promote higher-order thinking skills. Activities include checking of own work, peer-feedback, and reflection on achievements in e-portfolios and blogs.

- Self-generated feedback on the accuracy of referencing

By adjusting settings within originality checking software such as Turnitin students can be given the opportunity to formatively check the accuracy of their referencing without any interference with later formal checks for improper citation or potential plagiarism in submitted work. Because the system works only by a process of comparison, seeking similarity with other sources, academic judgement is still required to evaluate what emerges through the reports, and to decide on any action to be taken to improve referencing.

Example: See information on Turnitin – the software typically used across UK Higher Education institutions at http://submit.ac.uk/en_gb/products/originalitycheck

- Anonymous peer-feedback on written work and for group work

Opportunities for students to learn from each other through structured, anonymous peer-feedback can be enhanced using technology. The PeerMark tool from Turnitin facilitates peer feedback on individual written work. WebPA supports online peer feedback, by every team member, in relation to individual contributions to group work: 'learners find that anonymous online peer assessment develops skills of self-appraisal and makes the assessment of group work fairer' (JISC 2010, p.22).

Example: See information on the PeerMark tool from Turnitin at http://submit.ac.uk/en_gb/products/peermark

Example: University of Hull and Loughborough University (2010) Case study 7: Facilitating peer and self-assessment, in Effective Assessment in a Digital Age, JISC. Available online at http://www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/programmes/elearning/digiassess_assessingselfpeers.pdf
See also related video at <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/assessresource>

4 Authenticity: The feedback received through participating in online simulations and video technologies which support risk-free rehearsal of real-world skills, can enhance future performance in professional and vocational education

- Problem-based learning enhanced through simulation

The use of computer simulations as a learning tool, provides feedback to students in relation to the complex decisions they make in authentic professional scenarios, and information on their performance of vital professional skills. Students report this to be of tremendous importance and even report taking the opportunity to further their learning by using the technology to explore the likely consequences of wrong decisions and seeing, as feedback, what the resultant outcome would be.

Example: St George's, University of London (2010) Case study 9: Assessing my own professional performance, in Effective Assessment in a Digital Age, JISC. Available online at http://www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/programmes/elearning/digiassess_assessmyown.pdf

Example: University of Strathclyde and Northumbria University (2010) Case study 10: Assessment in an authentic learning context, in *Effective Assessment in a Digital Age*, JISC. Available online at http://www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/programmes/elearning/digiassess_assessauthen.pdf

5 **Additionality:** Technology can add facets, such as a personal quality, to feedback, even in large-group or distance contexts, and, through efficiencies gained from asynchronous communication and automated marking, can enable practitioners to make more productive use of their time.

- Personalised spoken feedback outside timetabling constraints

Technology allows us to achieve the power of personalisation in feedback through providing recorded Audio / Video feedback even where timetabling constraints and staff-student ratios do not permit one:one tutorial time: 'Many learners find feedback via digital audio and video more detailed and helpful. In contrast, written feedback is perceived as brief, unclear and difficult to recall' (JISC 2010, p.22).

Example: University of Leicester (2010) Case study 6: Enhancing the experience of feedback, in *Effective Assessment in a Digital Age*, JISC. Available online at

http://www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/programmes/elearning/digiassess_enhancingfeedbk.pdf .

- Technology engaging students in reflection and dialogue around Feedback

Technology allows us to break the traditional system of providing feedback alongside marks and delivering the feedback as a one-way process which does not necessarily engage the learner. Through technology we can break the process down, and formally involve students in reflection and/or dialogue in relation to the feedback they receive.

Example: Hepplestone, S., Parkin, H., Irwin, B., Holden, G. Thorpe, L. and Burn, C. (2010) *Feedback: A student guide to using feedback*. Sheffield Hallam University, pp.8-11. Available online from

<http://evidencenet.pbworks.com/f/guide+for+students+FINAL.pdf>

Example: University of Westminster (2010) Case study 8: Reflecting on feedback in *Effective Assessment in a Digital Age*, JISC. Available online at

http://www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/programmes/elearning/digiassess_rereflectingfdback.pdf

- One-to-one (or group) discussion of feedback even at a distance

One-to-one discussion of feedback on work can be undertaken even at a distance using a Virtual Classroom or VOIP (e.g. Skype). Similarly, tutors can facilitate discussion around feedback with a whole group, either synchronously through a Virtual Classroom tool, or in a simple, asynchronous, text-based way within a VLE. In this way, common mistakes can be highlighted, misunderstandings clarified, and questions asked and answered, thus providing the opportunity to enhance student understanding of the expectations and standards outside the confines of timetabled class time.

- Peer feedback promoted and facilitated through sharing of student work online

Technology allows students a wider audience for their assessed work than is commonly available in traditional assessment contexts. This means that they have access to multiple sources of feedback from peers rather than just the one tutor, which in itself can lead to enhanced understanding and self-awareness. In the context of an extended project-like assessment undertaken through a tool like a wiki, this can take the form of an ongoing, iterative, process of peer-feedback through cycles of Critical Friend Review. The shared environment similarly allows students to view good pieces of assessed work produced by their peers, and by comparison with their own work, understand where the weaknesses highlighted in feedback on their own work lie.

Example: Nguyen, T. (2010) *Using Blogs for peer feedback and discussion - Case study*. University of New South Wales. Available online from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T4HLGRzhVBs&feature=related>

Appendix 16

Improving Feedback Practice through Reflection and Action Planning

The following provides a suggested format for reflection and action planning to help you build on new ideas encountered in the Feedback Toolkit and use them to enhance your own Feedback Practice.

You might like to download and add to this as you go along. Complete it in a timeframe, and at a speed, to suit your own circumstances and development.

There are two sections:

- General Reflection
- Action Planning

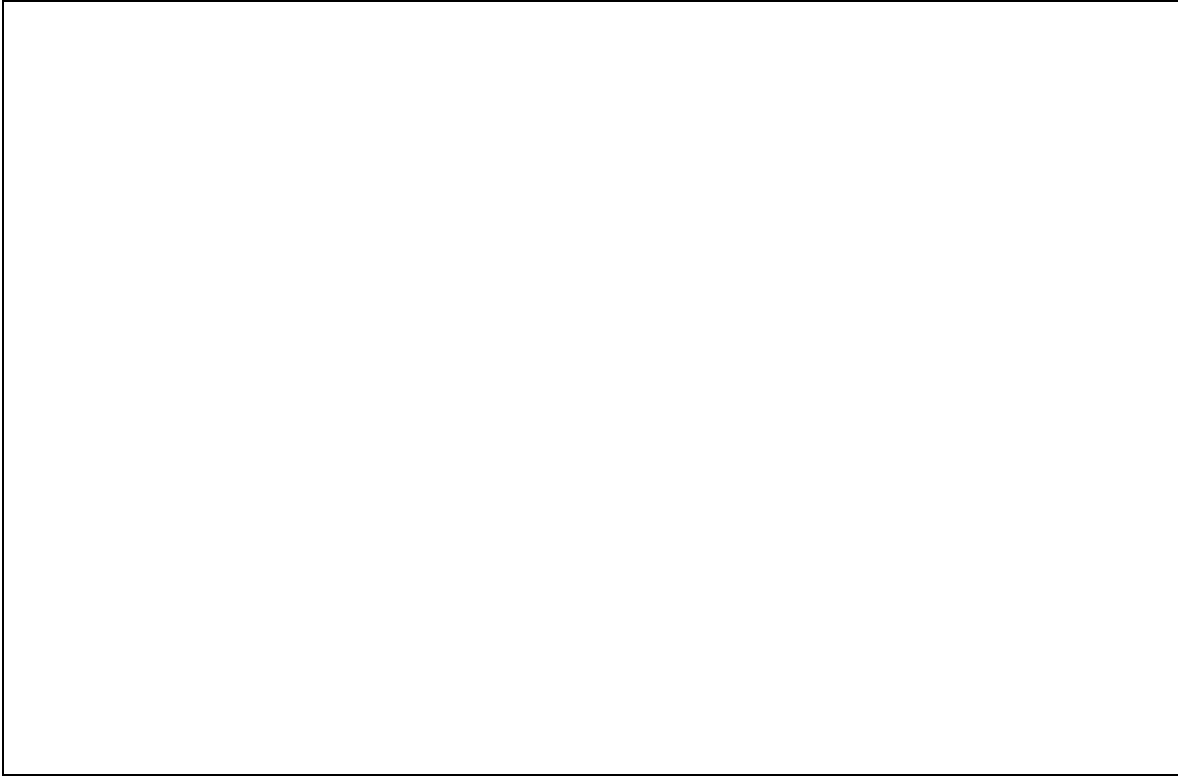
The suggestion is also to relate your thinking to UK Professional Standards Framework, which provides the structure for professional development in learning teaching and assessment within the sector.

<p align="center">Relevance to the UK Professional Standards Framework Within the framework, the focus on feedback falls most obviously within Area of Activity 3: Assess and give feedback to learners However, central to the framework is the principle that nothing stands in isolation and the various dimensions of practice are inter-related; your reflections and actions may touch on any of them.</p> <p align="center">In your planning make note of the dimensions (A1, K2 etc) which relate to your plans.</p>		
Areas of Activity	Core Knowledge	Professional Values
A1 Design and plan learning activities and/or programmes of study A2 Teach and/or support learning A3 Assess and give feedback to learners A4 Develop effective learning environments and approaches to student support and guidance A5 Engage in continuing professional development in subjects/disciplines and their pedagogy, incorporating research, scholarship and the evaluation of professional practices	K1 The subject material K2 Appropriate methods for teaching and learning in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme K3 How students learn, both generally and within their subject/disciplinary area(s) K4 The use and value of appropriate learning technologies K5 Methods for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching K6 The implications of quality assurance and quality enhancement for academic and professional practice with a particular focus on teaching	V1 Respect individual learners and diverse learning communities V2 Promote participation in higher education and equality of opportunity for learners V3 Use evidence-informed approaches and the outcomes from research, scholarship and continuing professional development V4 Acknowledge the wider context in which higher education operates recognising the implications for professional practice

Part A – Personal Reflection

To think about:

- The learning aims you had in mind when working with a particular part of the Feedback Toolkit
- Your exploration of the Feedback Toolkit and the learning gained
- anticipated professional development outcomes in relation to the UKPSF and your ongoing development plan.



Action Plan:

Emerging areas for Development	Links to UKPSF A1 / A2 / A3 / A4 / A5 K1/ K2/K3/K4/K5/K6 V1 / V2 / V3 / V4	Approaches for Success	Useful Resources / People to help	By When

Issue(s) / Area(s) emerging as a possible focus for the next time you work with the Feedback Toolkit:

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