More Effective Feedback

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The FIRST thing you think of…

What is the *first* **type of feedback** you think of when you are presented with these statements:

Feedback on my work has been prompt

I have received detailed comments on my work

Feedback on my work has helped me clarify things I did not understand

NSS has focussed minds on feedback,

but maybe on a very narrow part of it,

and is not the focus of this talk.

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Typical feedback...

- Model solutions?
- Ticks, crosses, circles, corrections on scripts?
- The odd word or two?
- A mark?

Who could ask for anything more?

Feedback is also...

- Group **oral feedback** in class
- **Written generic** feedback
- **Model answers** <u>with commentary</u>
- Allowing student work to **impact on your next class**
- Individual **conversations with students**
- **Self** and **peer assessment**
- and…

You're strange!

Some instant feedback

Brainy but no common sense	Intelligent
Obsessive	Motivated
No social life	Hardworking
Stubborn	Determined
Loner	Independent learner
Swot	Good study skills
Weird…	Mathematically able…
… really weird	… and fascinated by maths
No interests except maths	Maths central to working life
Live in an ivory tower	Surrounded by similar people
Insensitive	**Able to deal with criticism**

Our students

Our students are …

… less strange (usually);

 … concerned with much more than just their studies;

  … insecure;

   … in a new environment,

    … with new people,

     … and new ways of learning, teaching and assessment;

      … inexperienced;

       …often lack effective study skills;

        … coping with a big life change

Not like us (often)

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Typical feedback...

- Model solutions?
- Ticks, crosses, circles, corrections on scripts?
- The odd word or two?
- A mark?

Who could ask for anything more?

What is feedback for?

- Enable the student to see **what is required**
- **Identify the gap** between what is required and what they are doing/have done
- Prompt them to **take** *appropriate* **action** to **close the gap**

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How do we prompt action?

- **Frequent …**
- …and **fast**
- **Constructive**
  - Acted upon – **prompt changes/further work**
  - Feed forward to future work
  - Motivate and encourage
  - Focus on the work itself, not the student
  - Promote a dialogue
  - Do more than justify the mark
- **Develop an appropriate response to feedback**

Feedback Challenges

The challenges might be…

- faster feedback

- more frequent feedback

- **Promoting student engagement and action**

- Increasing student awareness of how to deal with feedback

…all without increasing our workload!

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Frequent

Fast

Constructive

Feed forward

Motivate

Focus on work

Dialogue

More than marks

Develop feedback awareness

Prompt action

Motivate and encourage

"How often do we tell them that, actually, they're really rather good?"

- Include the **positive**

- "**Feedback sandwich**":
  - Good points
  - points for improvement
  - encouragement

  - *or* good, bad, and next time...

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More than marks

Develop feedback
awareness

Prompt action

Feed Forward

- **Avoid giving too much** feedback
  - Two things they got right, and why
  - Two key suggested improvements
- Be **explicit** about what they should do
  - *"In future, you should…"*
  - *"Poor structure"* cf *"The structure would be better if…"*
  - *"Bad referencing"* cf *"See … for how to reference"*

Frequent

Fast

Constructive

Feed forward

Motivate

Focus on work

Dialogue

More than marks

Develop feedback
awareness

Prompt action

Talk to students

Let's not be cynical, but...

- **talk to students** about feedback

- give **clear expectations** about what they should do with it

- be explicit that we give feedback so that they can **do better next time**

- discuss how to **deal with criticism** without feeling attacked

  – and be sure we don't attack!

Frequent

Fast

Constructive

Feed forward

Motivate

Focus on work

Dialogue

More than marks

Develop feedback awareness

Prompt action

Increasing awareness

Ideas for developing good attitudes towards feedback

- tell them to **take notes** or **record** when you are giving oral feedback

- **next time,** ask them to say how they have responded to your feedback

- **ask them what they think** of the feedback

- **encourage them to ask** you about it

- use **peer** and **self assessment** exercises...

Frequent

Fast

Constructive

Feed forward

Motivate

Focus on work

Dialogue

More than marks

Develop feedback
awareness

Prompt action

Peer assessment

- In class, swap submissions and get them to give **peer feedback**
  - Give them a proforma with space for 'good points/points to improve on'
  - In teams
  - Return the proformas to students for immediate feedback, whilst you collect the original to mark
  - Or: collect the student feedback (and marks?) and act as moderator
  - Award marks for effective engagement in this?

Frequent

Fast

Constructive

Feed forward

Motivate

Focus on work

Dialogue

More than marks

Develop feedback awareness

Prompt action

Self assessment

- Get students to use model answers to assess their own work.

- Collect the self-assessment with the original work for you to mark.
  - or mark the work first but don't write the marks on the script

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Focus on work

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More than marks

Develop feedback awareness

Prompt action

Marks

"The only look at the mark"

- Exploit their **eagerness to know how they did**.
  - They'll pay less attention when they have a mark.
- Give comments but **withhold the mark** until later
- Consider **less summative** and **more formative** work

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More than marks

Develop feedback awareness

Prompt action

Fast feedback

- **Don't wait** until you've finished marking.
  - Start as soon as all submitted.
  - Use your experience…

    … or mark a sample.
- A **general feedback sheet** can be used immediately
- Likewise **model answers/commentary**
- **Discussion in the next class**

Frequent

Fast

Constructive

Feed forward

Motivate

Focus on work

Dialogue

More than marks

Develop feedback awareness

Prompt action

Frequent

- Use little-and-often assessment
- Mix it up: online tests, self-assessment, peer-assessment, homework, pre-seen questions…
- Mark it with them in the tutorials

Frequent

Fast

Constructive

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Motivate

Focus on work

Dialogue

More than marks

Develop feedback awareness

Prompt action

Simplify

- **Simplify** your mark scheme

- Exploit technology

- Don't over-assess

Frequent

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Dialogue

More than marks

Develop feedback awareness

Prompt action

Checklists and grids

- Use a **checklist** of common comments
  - Refer to it with codes/numbers/ticks, or…

    …use technology to generate feedback with relevant comments
  - Use it to refer students to resources or further work
- Use **marking grids**
  - containing comments related to marks/grades

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Develop feedback awareness

Prompt action

Proformas

- Use a **proforma** instead of writing on the script
  - Space for good points, areas for improvement
  - Improve your focus on the key learning outcomes
  - Which feedback is the most important?

Frequent

Fast

Constructive

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Dialogue

More than marks

Develop feedback awareness

Prompt action

Technology

- Record audio feedback
  - Personal, appreciated, can be synched to email
- Screencast model answers or general feedback
- Screencast as you mark to record your feedback.
- Handwrite on electronic submissions using tablets, and email directly back to students.
- Ever evolving possibilities!

Frequent Fast Constructive Feed forward Motivate **Focus on work** Dialogue More than marks Develop feedback awareness Prompt action	**Focus on the work**
	...not the students. - Disparaging remarks almost always counter-productive - Do we feel the same about positive statements? - Comparisons with peers serve no purpose and are often counter-productive

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Back to my earlier feedback…

~~You're strange!~~

Our previous work demonstrates a high level of mathematical ability and excellent study skills.

We can sometimes forget that our students need help to develop these attributes.

In future we should

- be positive and encouraging,

- be explicit about what a student should do next,

- plan activities to support the development of skill with feedback (and independence from it)

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