Do we want to overcome the failure of feedback?
New analyses for new times

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YOU’RE DOING GREAT!
STOP
LISTEN
YOU'RE GETTING
FEEDBACK
I need some feedback

I agree with this
That's cool Thank you

1. Blah..Blah Blah..

I don't agree. It's clueless

2. Blah..Blah.. Blah.. Blah..

Ok Thanks

Of course Thanks

Was this helpful?
What is the problem?

• No matter what we do in the area of feedback, it is always found wanting and students criticise us (NSS, CEQ)

• Is it just a matter of taking the problem more seriously and doing what we currently do more vigorously and comprehensively? Or, ...?
Some typical solutions

• More feedback means better feedback
• Quicker turnaround time means better feedback
• Automated feedback means better feedback
Conventional ‘feedback’

- Adjunct to ‘marking’
- Undertaken by teachers on students
- Focuses on what teachers do
- A vague hope that it might be taken into account
- But, no direct response is required or expected
Without the conventional approach, how might good feedback be created?

• Judge it in terms of effects
• Focus on what learners do, not what teachers do
• Examine key ideas from feedback in other disciplines
• Ensure that feedback is self-improving
Generations of feedback

**Feedback Mark 0**  Conventional. Pre-feedback

**Feedback Mark 1**  Behavioural. Closed

**Feedback Mark 2**  Agentic. Open
The role of feedback

• It bridges the gap between teaching and learning, to ensure that the curriculum adjusts to the needs and learning of students
• It cannot be enacted without the engagement of actual participants—students and teachers.
• It is not meaningful as an independent act; it is necessarily stimulated by what students do.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Approach</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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Feedback Mark 1

- Idea of ‘feedback’ taken from control systems
- Information from the student is used to influence their subsequent work
- This work is monitored to determine if the desired effects have been achieved
- Knowledge of effects is subsequently used to provide further information to the same students and for later cohorts
What is *essential* in feedback Mark 1?
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Problems with Feedback Mark 1

- The teacher (or teaching system) is the driver and needs to continually provide comments and monitor the situation.

- The learner is dependent on the teacher (or teaching system) to generate what they need to learn.

- It is not sustainable assessment. It doesn’t equip the student beyond the immediate task or course.
What is sustainable feedback?

• That which doesn’t continually need a teacher (or teaching system) to generate
• Helps develop a student’s judgement of their work
• Develops learner’s capacity to identify appropriate standards and criteria
• Develops learner’s ability to locate and access useful sources of feedback
• Involves learners working with multiple others in giving and receiving feedback
Feedback Mark 2

- Taken from open adaptive systems
- Central role for learners as active
  - two-way interactions/dialogue between giver and receiver
  - use of peers, non-human sources and practitioners as well as teachers
  - other parties used to enable learners to calibrate own judgements
WELL, YOU'VE BEEN A PRETTY GOOD HOSS, I GUESS. HARDWORKIN'. NOT THE FASTEST CRITTER I EVER COME ACROSS, BUT...

NO, STUPID, NOT FEEDBACK. I SAID I WANTED A FEEDBAG.
Active role of students in eliciting, processing and using feedback

Activity 1
- Orientation to standards of work and purpose of feedback
- Student judges work
- Student asks for specific feedback
- Others judge work
- Compare judgments
- Plan for improved work

Activity 2
Feedback Mark 2

• Feedback is a curriculum element responding to and driving learning
  – a pedagogical practice integral to all learning processes
  – deployed by learners as needed for their own learning paths
  – feedback becomes a design feature of courses, located to enable:
    • sufficient practice to be had
    • feedback loops to be completed
    • effectiveness in self-judgement developed as a learning outcome
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Feedback-enabled curriculum

• Early strategies to shift learner identity to becoming self-regulated
• Position feedback as part of learning, not as an adjunct of assessment
• Students skilled and comfortable with negotiating learning outcomes, feedback processes and information needs
• ‘Dialogue’ between students and teachers about curriculum priorities, feedback processes, the nature of standards and opportunities for the practicing of judgement.
• Activities to enable students to calibrate their judgement (of their own work and that of others)
What is the role of the digital environment?

• It offers some affordances, but without thinking differently about what feedback does, it just means doing bad feedback more efficiently.
Examples of the role of the digital environment for Mark 2 feedback

• *For students, it can offer:*
  – More practice
  – More/different occasions for practice
  – Quick knowledge of results/ calibration of judgements
  – Remedial sequences instantly at hand

• *For teachers, it can offer:*
  – Instant records of prior feedback data and student responses to it

• *For both, it can offer:*
  – More opportunities for dialogue on standards and judgements
  – Management of self and peer feedback
In conclusion

• New conceptions of feedback are needed, not just new practices
• They must position students differently, and in an active role
• Feedback must shift from being an adjunct of marking to a key strategy of curriculum and pedagogy
I just love feedback, don't you?
Some useful websites on feedback in higher education

University of Edinburgh:
http://www.tla.ed.ac.uk/feedback/index.html

University of Strathclyde: Feedback is a dialogue
http://www.strath.ac.uk/learnteach/feedback/

Re-Engineering Assessment Practices in Scottish Higher Education
http://www.reap.ac.uk/

Assessment futures
http://www.assessmentfutures.com

University of Hong Kong: Exploring the Feedback Conundrum
http://hkufeedback.blogspot.com/
Feedback, Where's Mine?
"Here! Do me!"
Thanks for the feedback!

WOW! He listened?