

# Evaluating assignment e-feedback in Higher Education

María Fernández-Toro, The Open University  
Elena Polisca, The University of Manchester

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## Rationale

- Assignment feedback is consistently reported by students as an area for improvement
- Technology can provide better ways of delivering feedback, but how much does it really help?
- The OU provides a good context for evaluating the actual strengths and weaknesses of different modes of e-feedback
- The University of Manchester provides a good context for determining to which extent the lessons learnt within the OU are applicable to other educational settings

## Aims

- To examine the ways in which students and tutors use spoken and written e-feedback

*Today → Introducing the FACT analysis method*

- To evaluate the perceptions and preferences of tutors and students in relation to spoken and written e-feedback

*Today → Preliminary results from OU tutor & student surveys*

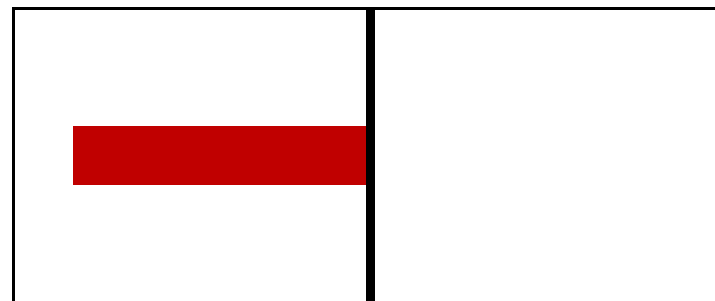
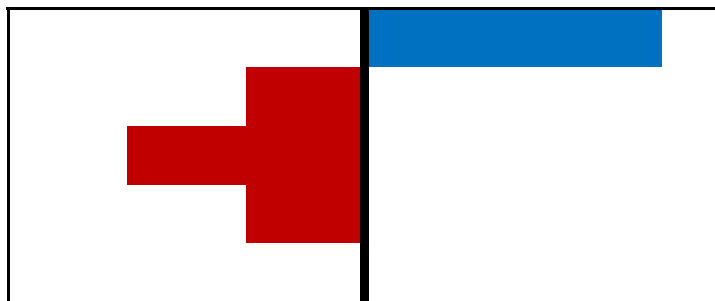
- To investigate the ways in which students engage with the written and spoken e-feedback that they receive

*Today → Evaluation of peer feedback at University of Manchester*

# Analysing assignment feedback



- Analysis criteria based around two dimensions:
  - Whether feedback focuses on strengths or weaknesses
  - How much information the feedback provides, cf ‘depth’ of feedback (Brown & Glover 2006) → layers of scaffolding
- Analysis tool: Feedback Analysis Chart for Tutors (FACT)  
Provides a visual ‘profile’ of a tutor’s feedback



# Layers of scaffolding in assignment feedback

Layers	Comments focusing on weaknesses	Comments focusing on strengths
1	Error identified only Manos blanc <u>o</u> s ??	Strength identified only Good work ✓
2	Error categorised, but not corrected Manos blanc <u>o</u> s → Agreement	Strength categorised or described as per marking criteria You use a wide range of language structures
3	Error corrected Manos blanc <u>o</u> s → blancas	Illustrated with specific example from student's performance No digo que quieran... → Good use of the subjunctive
4	Explanation given Although it ends in O, 'mano' is a feminine noun.	Explanation given This connector makes it very clear that a new section is starting here.
5	Advice given on how to prevent errors in future performance Revise section 6.1 of your grammar book	Advice given on how to develop existing strengths in future Good, you could also look up...

# Analysing what?

## Feedback on language assignments at the OU



Every year, OU language tutors return...

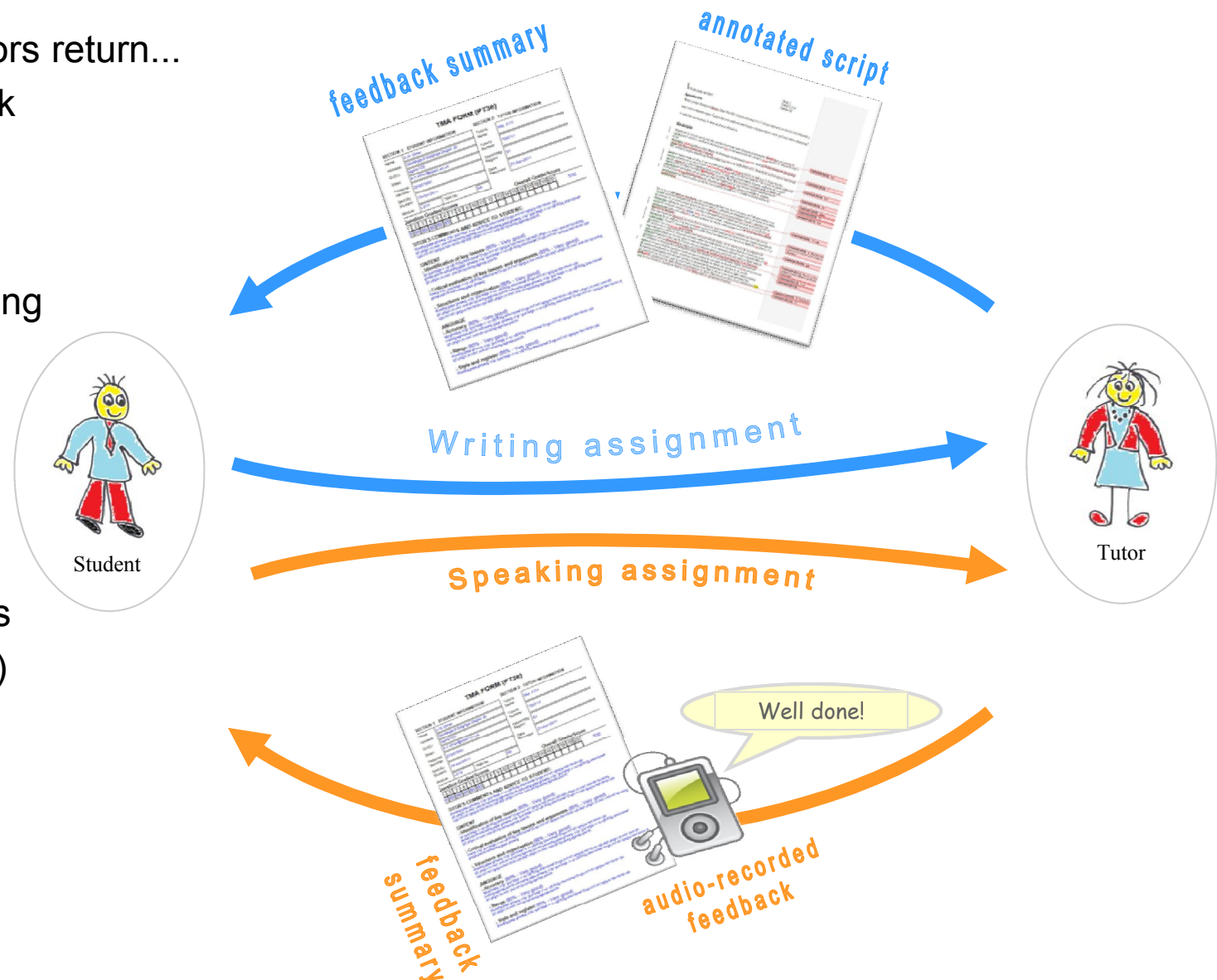
- 36,600 electronic feedback summary forms
- 19,000 annotated word-processed scripts
- 18,000 audio files containing spoken feedback

Our sample:

- 100 writing assignments
- 100 speaking assignments
- 4 levels (9 tutors per level)
- 108 students (3 per tutor)

Feedback consists of:

- 200 e-feedback forms
- 100 annotated scripts
- 100 audio files



# Student and tutor surveys



OU students:

	Beginner	Lower Int.	Upper Int.	Advanced	Total
Chinese	27				27
French	106	72	23	31	232
German	63	41	16	9	129
Italian	85	46			131
Spanish	90	80	18	22	210
Welsh	7				7
<b>Total</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>736</b>

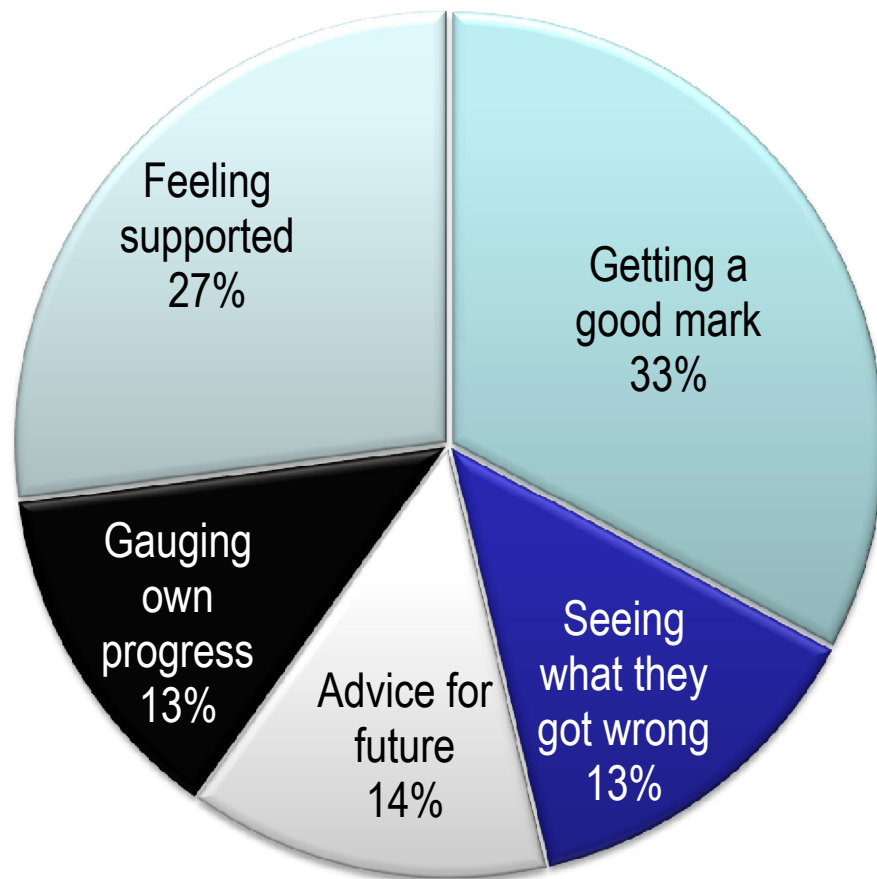
OU tutors: N=96 (same modules as above)

# Survey preliminary results

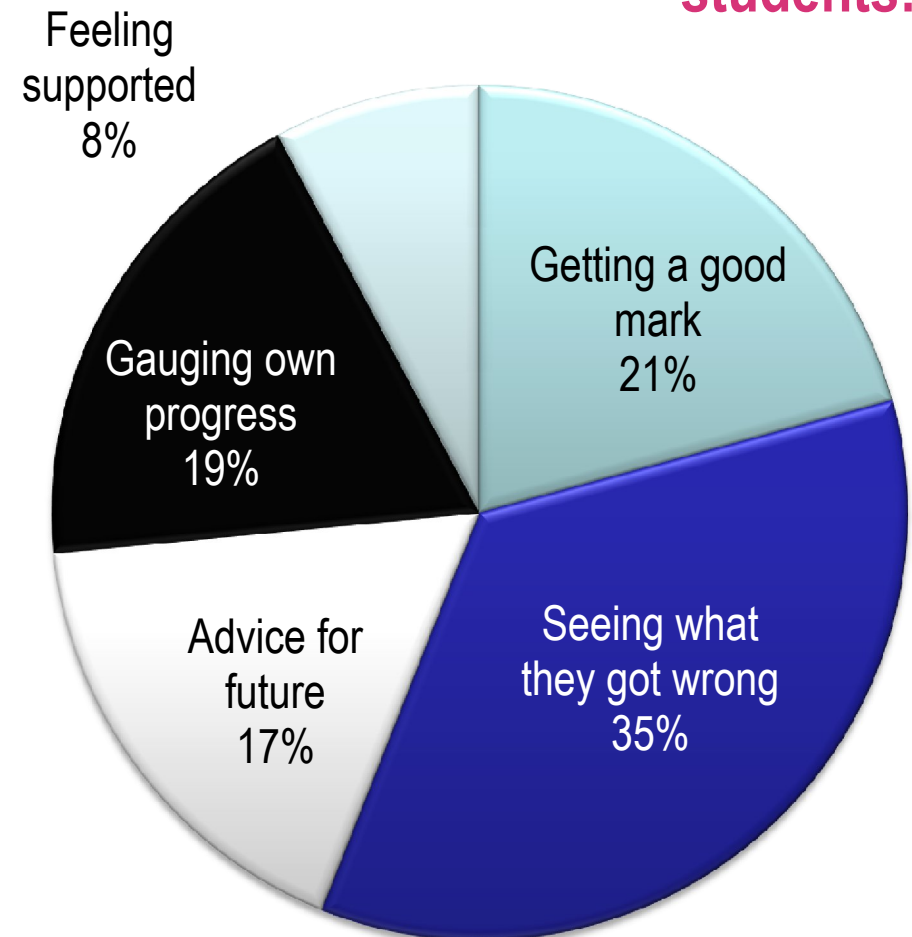
Most important aspect of feedback for the students



**According to  
the tutors:**



**According to the  
students:**



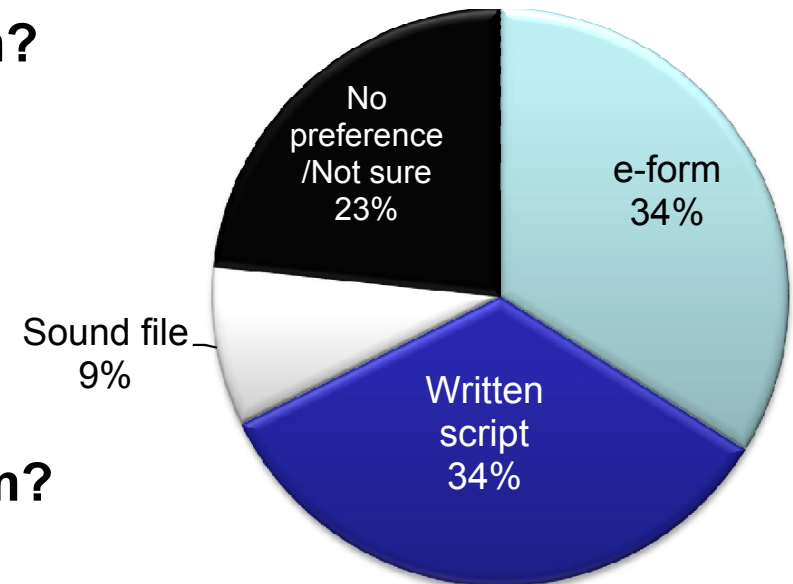
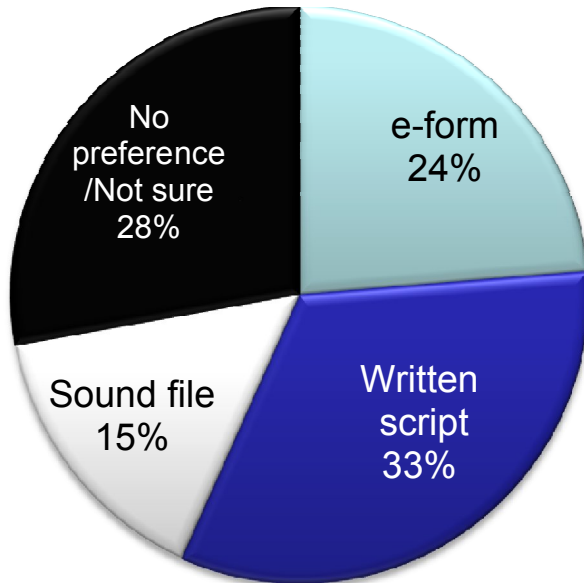


# Survey preliminary results

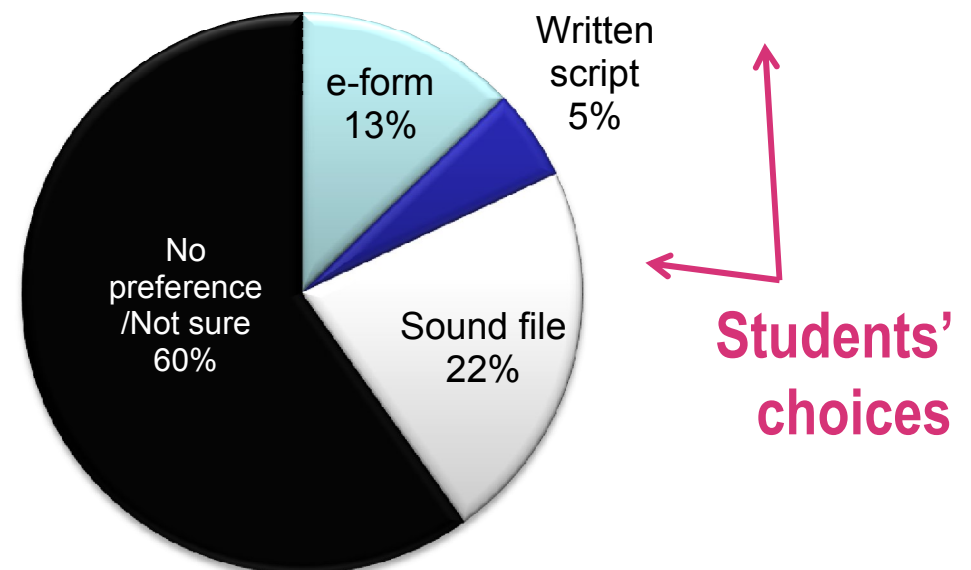
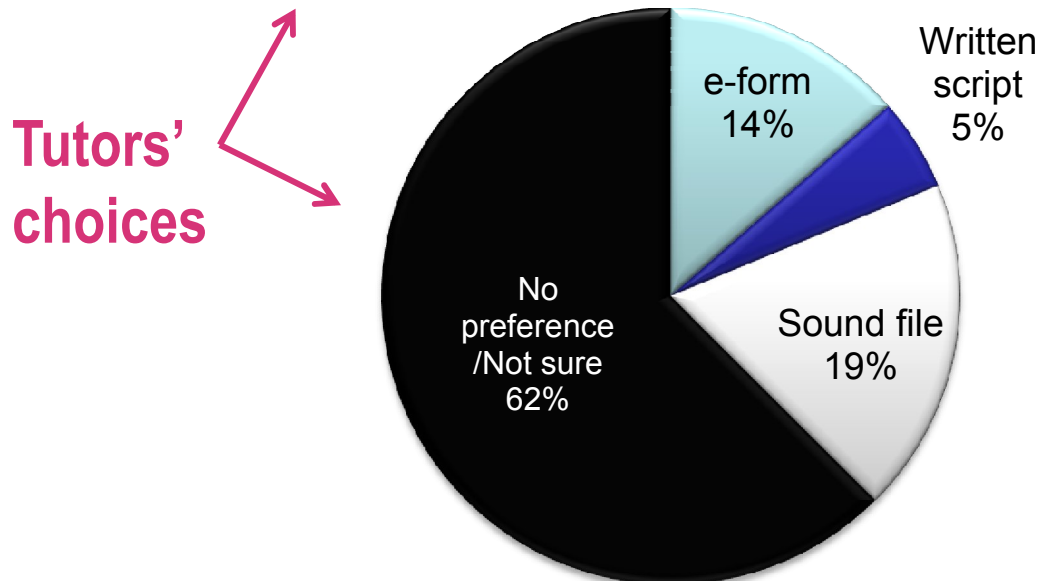
Medium preferences for giving and receiving feedback



## ■ Most useful medium?

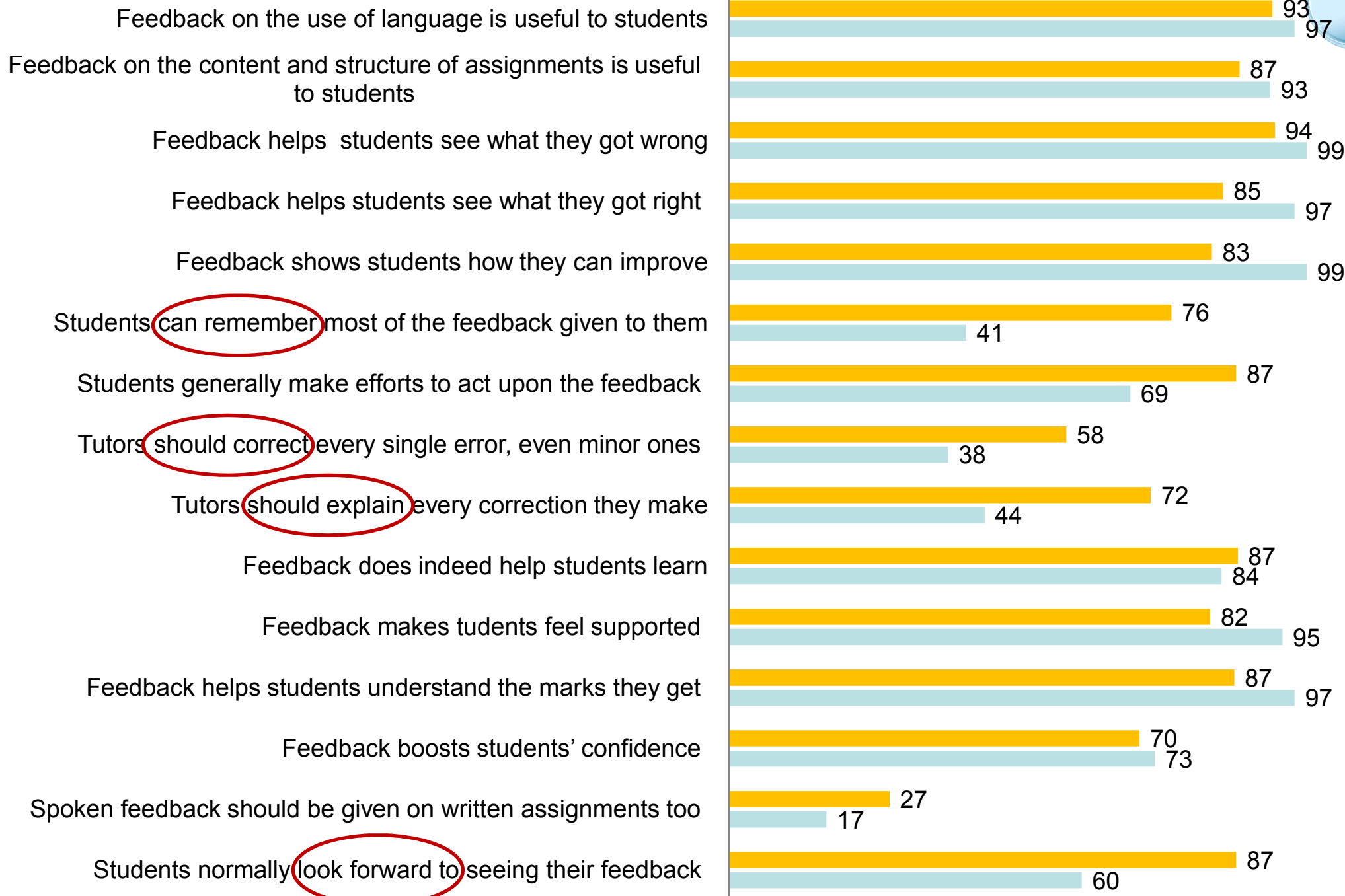


## ■ Least useful medium?



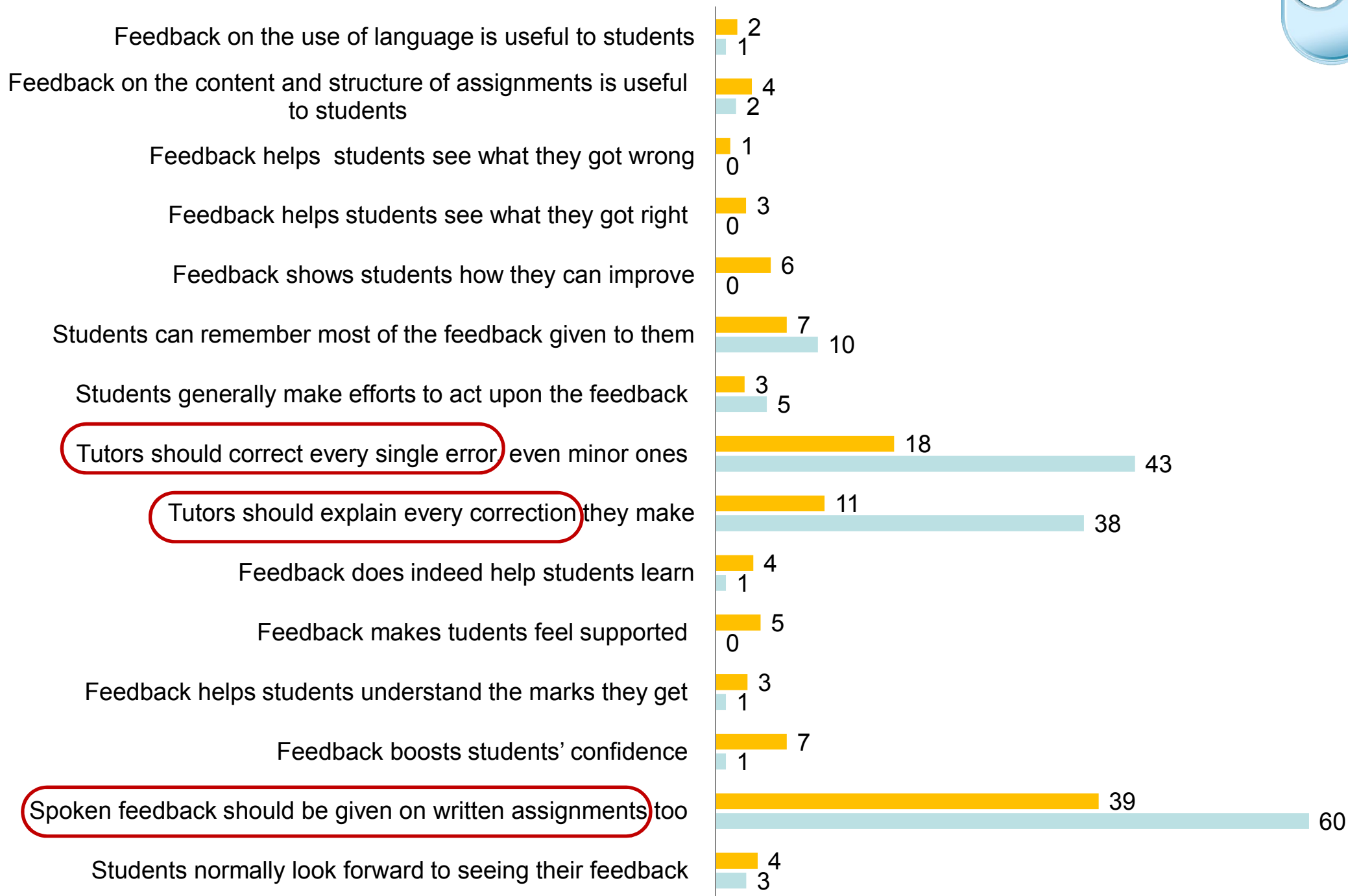
# Attitudes and perceptions: % of agreement with survey statements

■ Student survey ■ Tutor survey



# Attitudes and perceptions: % of disagreement with survey statements

■ Student survey ■ Tutor survey




# Peer feedback: How do students engage with feedback?

In Manchester, students:

- Receive paper-based feedback
- Receive audio-feedback
- Are involved in peer-to-peer feedback
  - Beginner and finalist groups
  - Composition / paraphrase work
  - Students provide corrections on paper
  - Students provide comments on work (audio or written) + mark
  - Tutor revises mark and gives further inputs

The University of Manchester



**Feedback Sheet for  
Composition in the Target  
Language**

School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures  
Italian Studies

Reg N°

First Marker

Course Code

Second Marker

Date

Agreed Mark

Indicators of high quality	>86	76-85	70-75	60-69	50-59	40-49	30-39	0-29	Indicators of poor quality
Excellent command of morphology and syntax				✓					No real command of morphology or syntax
Excellent use of appropriate lexis, register and idiom				✓					No use of appropriate lexis, register or idiom
Addresses the question set explicitly and directly				✓					Fails to address the set question
Supports argument effectively with examples				✓					No examples given or not deployed effectively
<p><b>Other comments</b></p>									

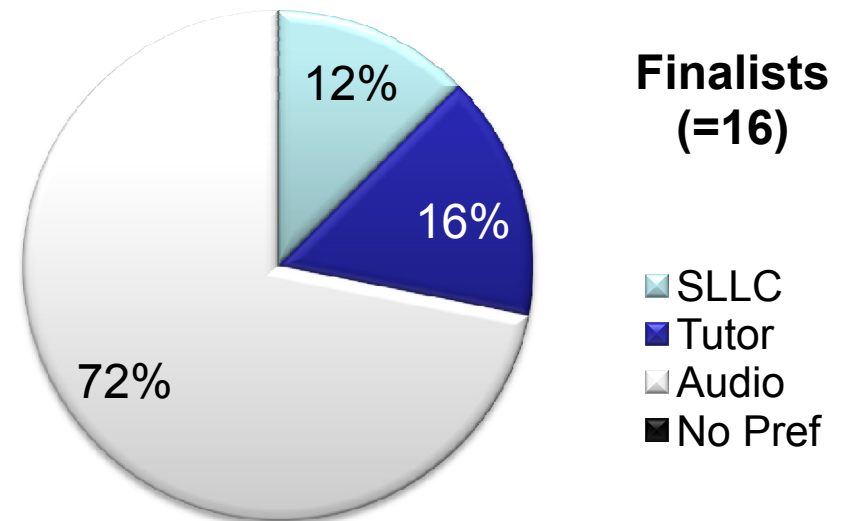
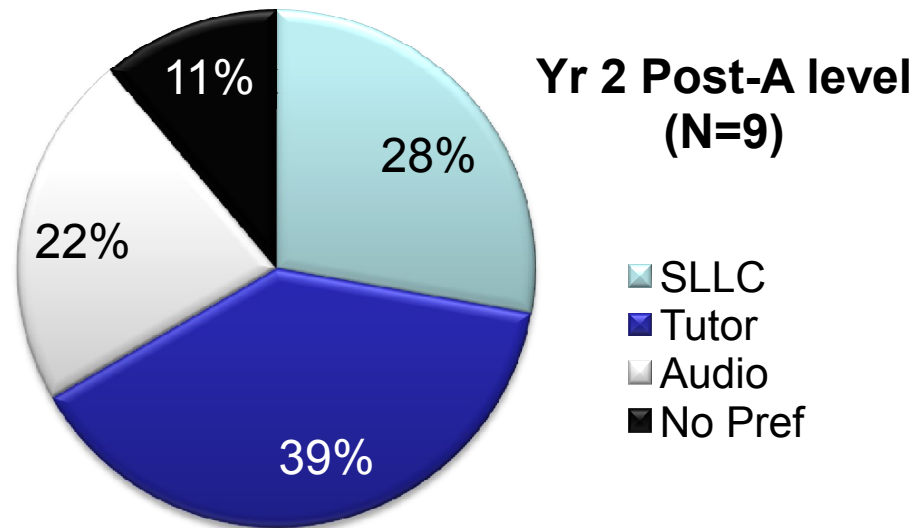
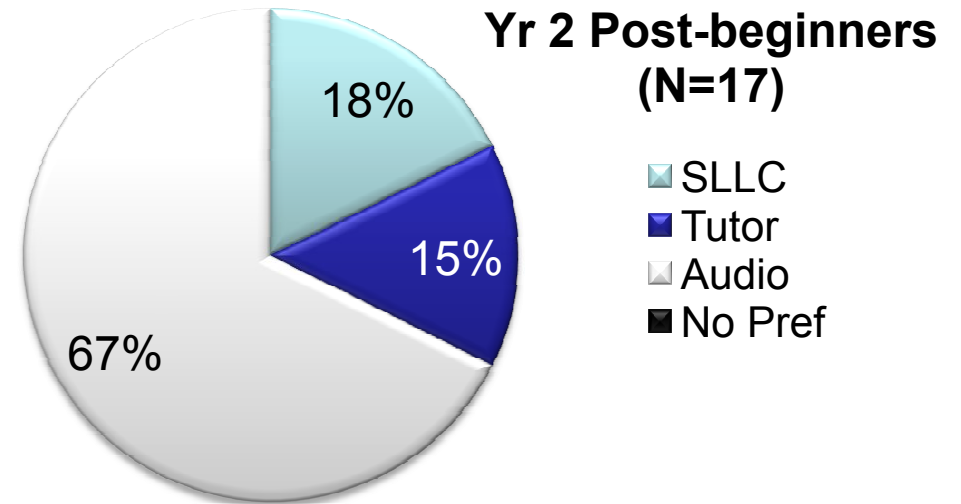
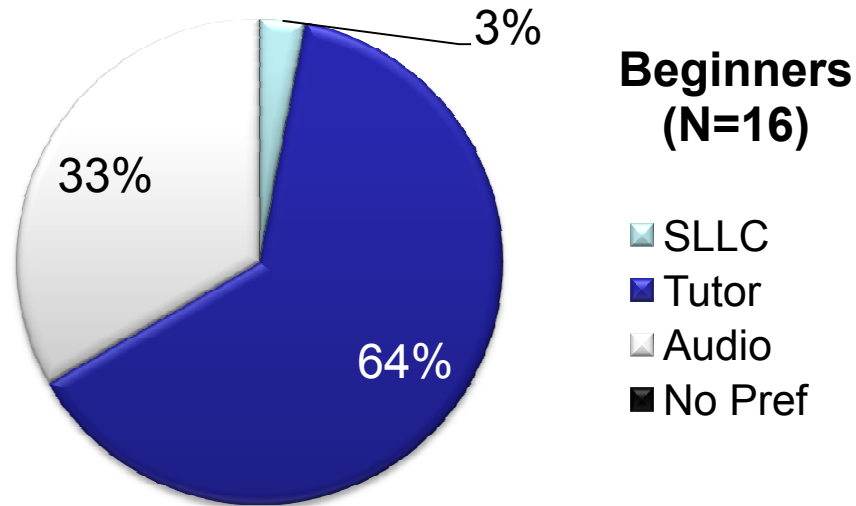
# Peer feedback: How do students engage with feedback?

Feedback type:	Tutor to Student 1	Student 1 to Student 3
<b>Morphology + Syntax</b>	Italian reads very well, particularly <u>you have used – ING forms</u> (gerunds) very well; Italian is correct but mistakes in <u>spelling and gender of x</u> is feminine. Language is coming on; I am pleased	Essay reads well, morph and syntax generally correct. Small mistakes: you <u>use article la</u> ; <u>Italians don't use articles</u> with cities. Two examples of <u>lack of agreements</u> (quotes them) Syntax: <u>here I would say x</u>
<b>Lexis + Register</b>	Appropriate lexis: high vocab	Lexis is excellent ( <u>gives examples</u> )
<b>Content</b>	Good to divide texts in two areas: <u>data + opinion</u> I was expecting more personal engagement! Very clinical!	Addressed q. properly. Appropriate structure ( <u>short intro, I like conclusion</u> ). Very Italian question in intro, well done.
<b>Examples used</b>	<u>Good percentages and opinions</u>	
<b>Additional comments</b>	Good work, for future mind <u>'small' mistakes</u>	I really enjoyed reading your essay

# Peer feedback: How do students engage with feedback?

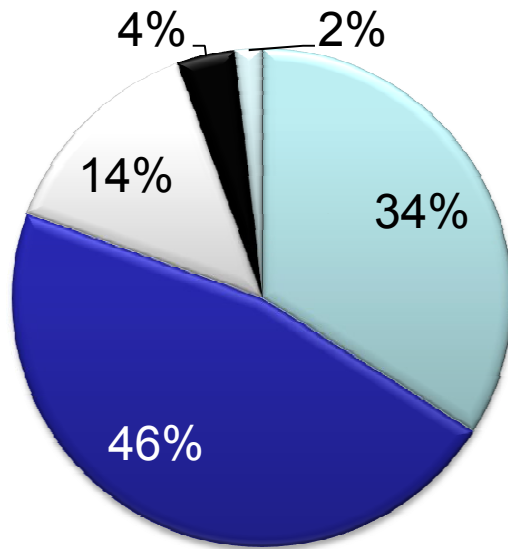
Feedback type:	Tutor to Student 2	Student 2 to Student 4
<b>Morphology + Syntax</b>	Pleased to see Italian is consistent with last 2 pieces. Language is fluent. Morphology is correct but <u>careful with prepositions and articles</u>	Italian reads well. <u>You use subjunctive a lot</u> : good! Use more paragraphs
<b>Lexis + Register</b>	<u>Several ticks</u> to highlight appropriate vocab. Good effort in vocab selection	Used appropriate lexis: <u>words such as x, lots of formal words</u> ; x I wasn't sure about; could have phrased more clearly
<b>Content</b>	Good job: <u>coherent argument and personal interpretation</u> . Reader is engaged	Addressed q well, but you answered more the quote than q.; <u>you talked about x instead of y</u>
<b>Examples used</b>	<u>Good balance between figures and reported opinions</u>	Examples are good: <u>real-life examples</u> . Structure good (gives explanation)
<b>Additional comments</b>	Very pleased; for future <u>mind prepositions</u> . Carry on!	

# What is your favourite way of receiving feedback? (audio / written)



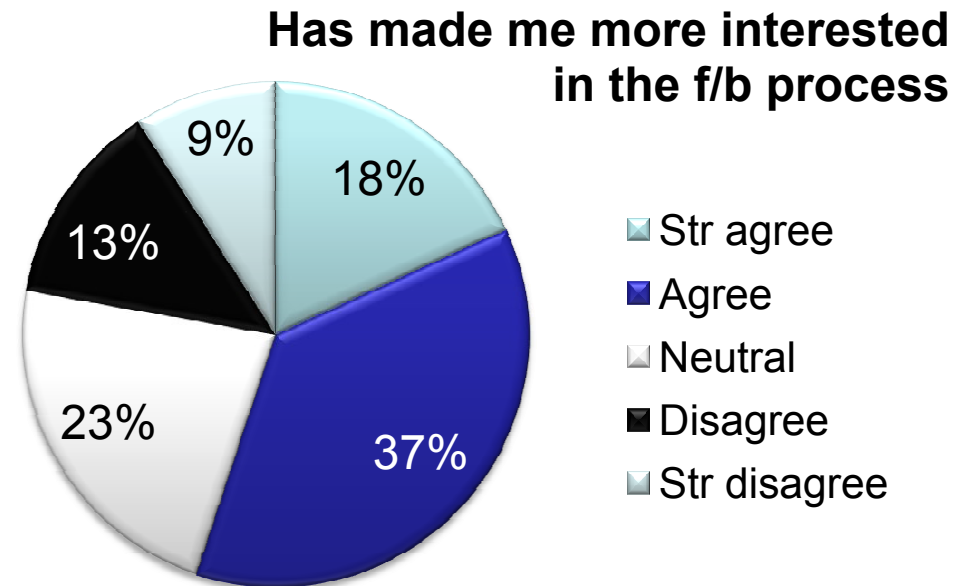


# Evaluation of peer feedback (audio / written)



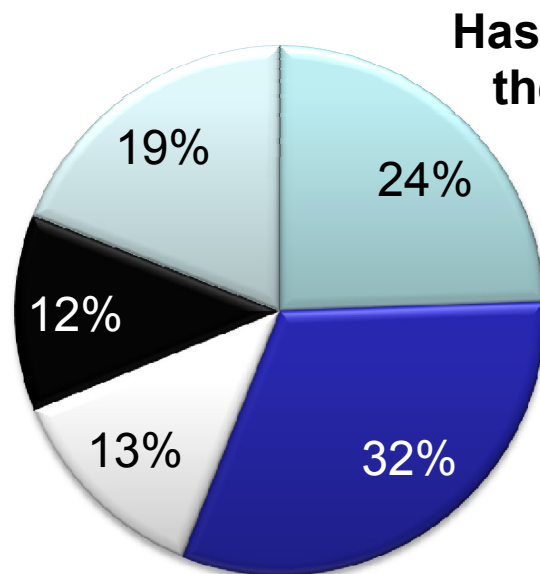
**Helped me understand  
how giving f/b works**

- Str agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Str disagree



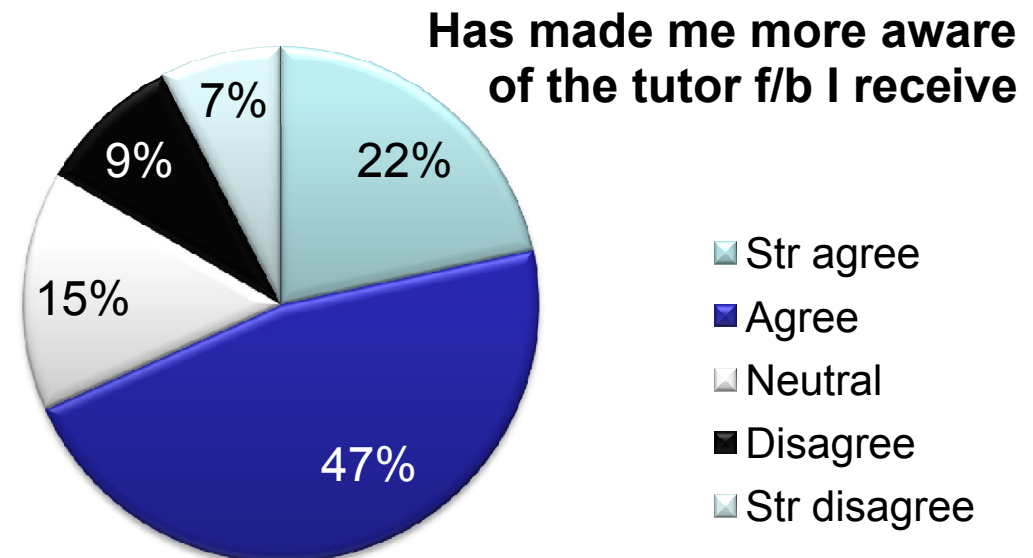
**Has made me more interested  
in the f/b process**

- Str agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Str disagree



**Has helped me understand  
the language of f/b better**

- Str Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Str Disagree



**Has made me more aware  
of the tutor f/b I receive**

- Str agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Str disagree



# What happens next?

## So far...

- Student and tutor surveys completed
- Sample of tutor feedback collected & anonymised
- Peer to peer feedback data collected
- Project blog up and running: <http://www.open.ac.uk/blogs/efep/>
- Three conferences attended

## In the next year...

- Further analysis of survey results
- Analysis of feedback collected (FACT profiles, student/tutor rapport, etc.)
- Student screencast recordings ('feedback on feedback')
- Evaluation report on different e-feedback modes
- Guidelines & training materials for tutors and students
- Online open workshop for HE tutors across the UK
- Article for peer-reviewed journal
- New collaborations based on project findings ???



The Open University





Project blog: **<http://www.open.ac.uk/blogs/efep/>**

María Fernández-Toro, The Open University

Concha Furnborough, The Open University

Elena Polisca, The University of Manchester