Marking Guides and Effective Feedback

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• Only 4 in 10 new OU students take a second course
• New students are unprepared for HE – need to become active learners
• First year assessment and feedback

Formative assessment is particularly important in the first year where students entering higher education must quickly come to terms with the demands of a new academic environment, develop appropriate study strategies and cultivate supportive social relationships. All these factors can be influenced by formative assessment practices. (Nicol 2008)

• Marking Guides as a major point of teaching contact
Seven principles of effective feedback

- Help clarify what good performance is (goals, criteria, expected standards)
- Facilitate the development of self-assessment (reflection) in learning
- Deliver high quality information to students about their learning
- Encourage teacher and peer dialogue around learning
- Encourage positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem (Threshold plus \textit{versus} Ideal minus)
- Provide opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance (high v low stakes assessment)
- Provide information to teachers that can be used to help shape teaching (Nicol 2006)
Effective assessment – the survey

Tutor aspirations

- Deliver high quality information about learning
- Develop ability to reflect and self-assess
- Help clarify good performance
- Close the gap
- Improve motivation and self-esteem
- Encourage dialogue about learning

Marking guides

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A possible taxonomy of feedback

Retrospective

- Concepts
  - Theories
  - etc.

- Verbal
  - Numerical
  - Planning
  - Study
  - etc.

Future-altering

- Content
  - "Retrospective-on-content"
  - "Future-altering-on-content"

- "Retrospective-on-skills"
  - "Future-altering-on-skills"

Retrospective

- Refer to assignment just completed
- Details content omitted
- Explain how answer could have been improved

Future-altering

- How concepts and skills can be applied in future
- Clarify concepts and avoid future errors
Analysis of feedback opportunities

- T175 – 1 presentation, 4 TMAs
Feedback – Retrospective on Content

- Mainly checklists
- Ideal minus approach
- Excludes other possible, or arguable answers
- Generally no help for tutors in closing the gap, correcting misapprehensions, clarifying concepts
- Used principally for mark allocation

Students are simply asked to list these components so bullets are acceptable here. Award 1 mark per ICT component listed below:

- The touch screen
- RFID reader
- RFID tag
- Computer terminal
- Library computer network
- Library database
- Sensor gates
- Alarm
Feedback – Retrospective on Skills

- Tend to fall back on model answers
- Underlying concepts may be implied only
- No specific help on corrections and typical errors

Award up to 4 marks. 1 mark for correct use of scientific notation, 2 for correct conversions of KB and Mbps and 1 for answer.

File size = 42KB = 42 x 1024 x 8bits = 344 064 bits
Download speed = 0.9Mbps = 0.9 x 106 bps
Time to download = file size/ speed = 344 064/(0.9 x 106)
= 382 293 x 10^-6 s
= 3.82 x 10^-1 s
Feedback – Retrospective on Skills

- Reference back to the course texts – maybe some added value expected?

- For some skills, tutors are left to their own devices

Students’ explanations should refer explicitly to the guidelines on netiquette given in Part 3 Section 4.2 on the Web. If the student has not referred directly to the netiquette principles, use your feedback to direct the student to the relevant parts of this material.

Clarity, grammar, spelling and punctuation. Award up to 2 marks for a cohesive report, clearly written that flows well. Award up to 3 marks for grammar, spelling and punctuation. Use the following as a guide:

- Very good (e.g. no errors or 1 error) 3
- Good (e.g. 2 or 3 errors) 2
- Needs improvement (e.g. 4 or 5 errors) 1
- Poor (e.g. 6 or more errors) 0
Feedback – Future altering on Content

- Notable by their absence
- Many model answers that could be rewritten as future altering, clarificatory feedback

The number of pixels in each file is the same ie 1280 x 960 Pixels (1.23 MPixels). JPEG is a lossy compression technique meaning that during compression information is lost.

JPEG compression works by taking a block of pixels and seeing out how the colour changes across the block. When the picture is viewed these blocks are converted back to the individual colours for each pixel so the number of pixels is the same regardless of the quality. As the quality setting is reduced larger variations in colour are sacrificed in order to reduce the file size.
Again, tutors are left very much on their own

With some (often unhelpful) advice

To what extent should we expect tutors to be tutors in basic skills?

Award high marks for clear and well structured notes suitable for intended audience. Give fewer marks if students use jargon, acronyms or unexplained technical concepts, but also use this as a teaching point about writing for specific audiences. Also do not award full marks to students that use full sentences rather than notes, as required.

Do not deduct any marks if students go over the suggested 200 word limit but explain the importance of word limits in TMAs and generally.
Some open questions

- What is the right balance between AL independence and MG guidance?
- How can we make the pool of expertise in feedback accumulated by ALs manifest in MGs?
- What form, if any, should remedial feedback take?
- Should it form a part of the MGs?
- Where is best practice in the OU?


