



Facing the dilemma in providing effective student feedback

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Effective feedback in Higher Education

- What is it?

One definition of feedback in HE

- Information provided to students in order to help them improve the quality of their work, their learning and consequently their academic achievements.
- *Information provided staff to help them adjust their teaching.*

HEA 7 principles

- Facilitates the development of self assessment (reflection)
 - Encourages teacher and peer dialogue
 - Helps clarify what good performance is
 - Provides opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance
 - Delivers high quality information to students about their learning
 - Encourages positive motivational beliefs and self esteem
 - Provides information to teachers that can be used to help shape their teaching
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- Enhancing student learning through effective formative feedback, HEA generic centre, 2004


What is the issue then?

- NSS and internal university surveys tell us students are not satisfied with the feedback they receive on their work.

Vs

- The steady increase in the number of good degrees suggests that students are achieving despite being dissatisfied with the feedback they receive
- So it a real issue?

Implications

- League tables!
 - NSS
 - Good honours
- Differences in Departmental practice
 - Formative  summative assessment
 - Practice exercises
 - Exemplars
 - Mark work twice
 - Exam topics – feed forward
- Standards?

Actions

- Introduction of learning, teaching & assessment policies
- Seminars /workshops/ guidance manuals
- Course level LTA strategies
- Annual monitoring/ External Examiners
- More surveys/ focus groups.....

The Solent way

- Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy
- Assessment policy
- Guidance
- Teaching and Learning Fellows
- External examiners
- Research projects
 - On-line marking/ recorded feedback
- Internal workshops for staff
- Formative feedback strategy for each unit
- Question on unit questionnaire
- Information to students
 - Handbooks,
 - Pamphlets
 - Tell them when giving verbal feedback



View from a Head of an Academic Department

Feedback Drivers

- Improving:
 - student success
 - student experience
 - key indicators (e.g. Value added, classification)
 - Improving course desirability
 - NSS scores, especially feedback

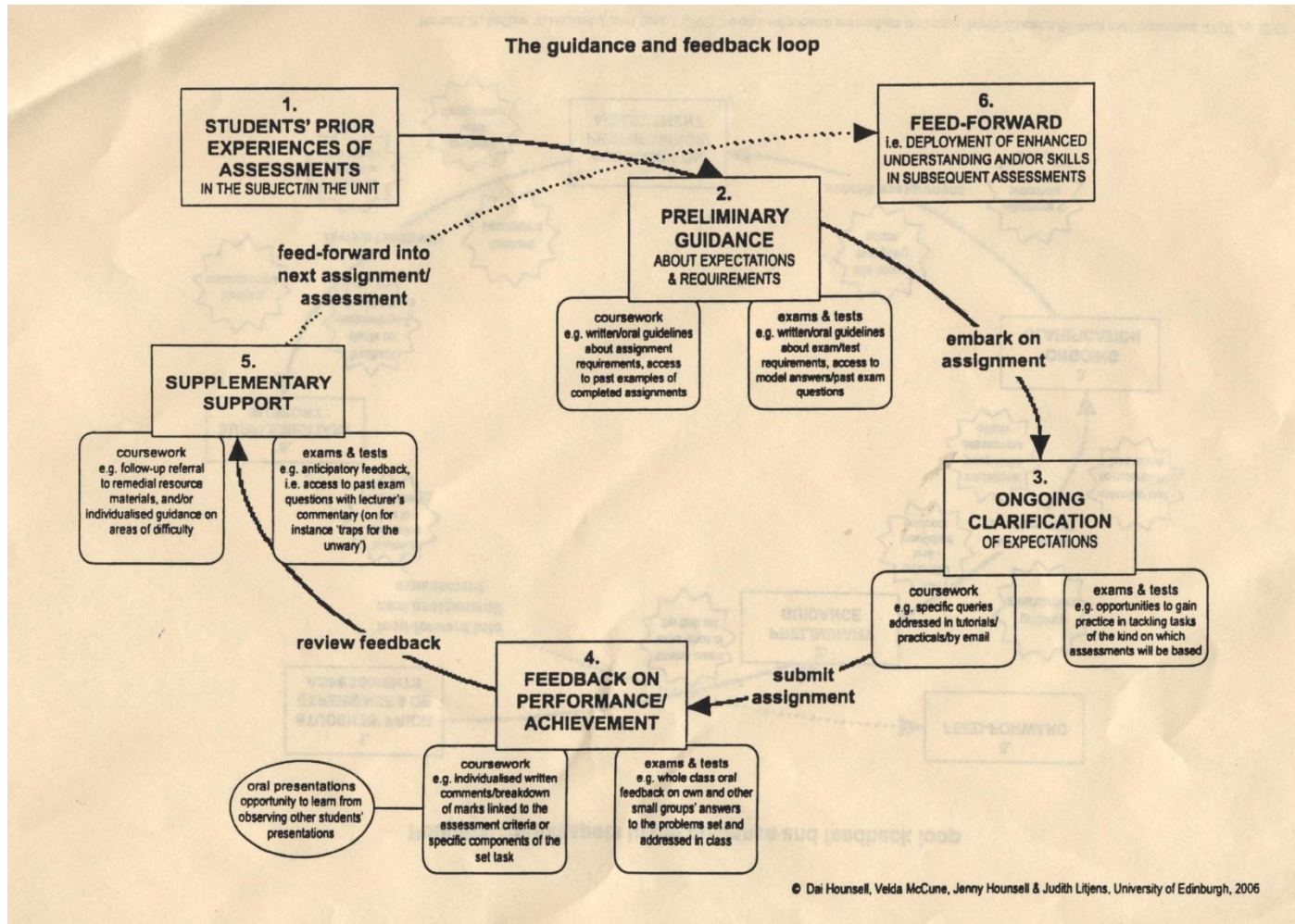
What do students want from feedback?

- Why they got a mark and how they could of improved on this (summative)?
- What to do to get the best mark on an assessment (formative)?
- Question – is summative feedback too late to be useful?

Types of feedback

- Summative
 - To understand reasons for mark and how it could of been improved
 - To improve performance in future assessment
- Formative
 - To enhance learning
 - On summative assessment, to improve final summative mark

A Feedback Model



Concerns with formative feedback on summative assessment

- Academic staff resources/time
- Academic staff attitudes
- Is the work still the student's own?
- Are students being taught to pass assessment rather than learning?
- Accusations of 'spoon feeding'
- Academics may feel they are blamed for poor mark
- Grade inflation

The Portsmouth Way

- Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy
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Outcomes

- Not working consistently
 - Variable NSS outcomes
 - Variable degree classification
- Research shows
 - More active learning activities... more engagement better understanding of requirements ... higher levels of performance.
- Where does this leave us in terms of standards?

In conclusion:

*Damned in you do,
...Damned in you don't*

Discussion points

- What are the implications for standards?
- Is this dilemma really caused by UK media?
- W & how can Institutional research contribute?