Developing course climates for sustainable feedback

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Overview

1. Feedback challenges & research
2. Situating feedback
3. Trust, distrust & feedback
4. Feedback as dialogue
5. Issues & Implications
Aim

To explore possibilities for a more dialogic & sustainable approach to feedback processes
Frustrations
Staff frustrations

- Heavy marking load
- Students don’t collect feedback
- Students mainly interested in the grade
- Students lack motivation to act

.....
Student frustrations

Feedback often seems like a perversely belated revelation of things that should have been made clear earlier (Crook, Gross & Dymott, 2006)
MY RESEARCH INTO FEEDBACK
Differing perceptions

Study 1. Questionnaire data from 460 staff & 1740 students
+ qualitative data from BEd Students

Key finding: Teachers thought their feedback was much more useful than students did (Carless, 2006)
Sustainable feedback

Study 2. Interviews with 10 award-winning teachers from 10 different Faculties

Key finding. Conventional & sustainable feedback orientations (Carless et al. 2011)
Sustainable feedback in practice

Study 3. Follow-up case study of a Business teacher

Key finding. Classroom evidence of sustainable feedback; supported by trust (Carless, 2013a)
Exploring assessment practice

Study 4. Multiple disciplines. Award-winning teachers

SITUATING FEEDBACK
Bigger picture

Feedback as assessment design issue

Feedback as a pedagogical issue

Feedback as a relational issue
Learning-oriented assessment framework

Productive assessment
task design

Understanding quality in the discipline

Developing sustainable feedback processes
Sustainable feedback defined

“Active student participation in dialogic activities in which students generate and use feedback from peers, self or others as part of developing capacities as autonomous self-regulating learners” (Carless, 2013b)
Sustainable feedback principles

• Prompting learner action
• Peers as active source of feedback
• Inner dialogue/internal feedback/self-feedback
Aim of sustainable feedback

To enhance student ability to self-monitor their work in progress
TRUST AND DISTRUST
Pervasive distrust

• Accountability as antithesis of trust (Stensaker & Harvey, 2011)

• Distrust inhibits risk-taking and innovation (Vidovich & Currie, 2011)
Porter: Trust in numbers

Decrease in trust, increase in quantification

Societies which trust teachers have less need for standardised testing
Conservatism in assessment

Generally low levels of staff assessment (and feedback) literacy (Norton et al., 2013)
Trust in teachers

Innovative assessment thrives when teachers are trusted (Carless, 2009)
Relational trust

Trust as key factor in feedback processes (Carless, 2013a)
Trust in students?

Students respond to feedback processes based on their own motivations
Faith in students

To carry out peer feedback effectively

To engage in dialogue

To self-regulate
IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE FEEDBACK
Sustainable feedback strategies

1. Teacher-facilitated

2. Technology-enabled

3. Peer feedback and internal feedback (Nicol, 2010)
Assessment dialogues

Discussing assessment processes to help students understand rules of the game (Carless, 2006)

The first rule of any game is to know you are in one.
Guidance & feedback

Integrated cycles of guidance & feedback within learning activities (Hounsell et al. 2008)
Failing to connect

Difficulties for lower achievers to make sense of feedback (Orsmond & Merry, 2013)
Exemplars & feedback

Analysis of exemplars can support students in decoding teacher feedback (Handley & Williams 2011; To & Carless, 2015)
TECHNOLOGY ENABLED FEEDBACK STRATEGIES
Technology-Enabled Feedback in the First Year:
A Synthesis of the Literature
Two common strategies

Learning Management Systems

Use of clickers, EVS
Use of Facebook

History students uploaded drafts & received peer feedback (Carless, 2015)
Audio (& video) feedback

Providing recorded verbal commentary (instead of written feedback?)
Scaling up

Need for more critical research into technology-enabled feedback strategies (Dawson & Henderson, 2017)
Scaling up Assessment for Learning in Higher Education

Co-edited by Carless, D., Bridges, S., Chan, C.K.W., & Glofcheski, R.
STUDENT ROLE IN SEEKING, GENERATING & USING FEEDBACK
Peer feedback

Potentially more plentiful ...

But peers often viewed as lacking expertise
To give is better than to receive

Providing feedback more cognitively engaging
(e.g. Nicol et al., 2014)
Enhanced student role

Enhancing student role to generate & use feedback (Carless et al., 2011; Hounsell, 2007)
Implications
Programme-based approaches

• Peer feedback embedded
• Plentiful in-course guidance
• Analysis of exemplars
• Trusting relationships developed
• Student self-evaluation
• Students using feedback
Feedback designs

Feedback as integral part of curriculum & course design (Boud & Molloy, 2013)
Feedback literacy

The development of staff (and student) feedback literacy
Good feedback practice

Integration of feedback & assessment task design;

Timely dialogues: in-class, online & peer feedback;

Development of student self-regulation for sustainable feedback
Closing feedback loops

It’s only feedback if learners take some action
THANK YOU
## Shifts in priorities

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increase</th>
<th>Decrease</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-class dialogic feedback within module time</td>
<td>Unidirectional comments after completion of module</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written feedback comments on first assessment task of module</td>
<td>Written feedback comments on final task of module</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feedback for first year students</td>
<td>Feedback for final year students</td>
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References


References (continued)


Defining feedback

“A dialogic process in which learners make sense of information from varied sources and use it to enhance the quality of their work or learning strategies”.