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# Achieving 100% pass rate and NSS feedback: How we did it

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# Feedback context

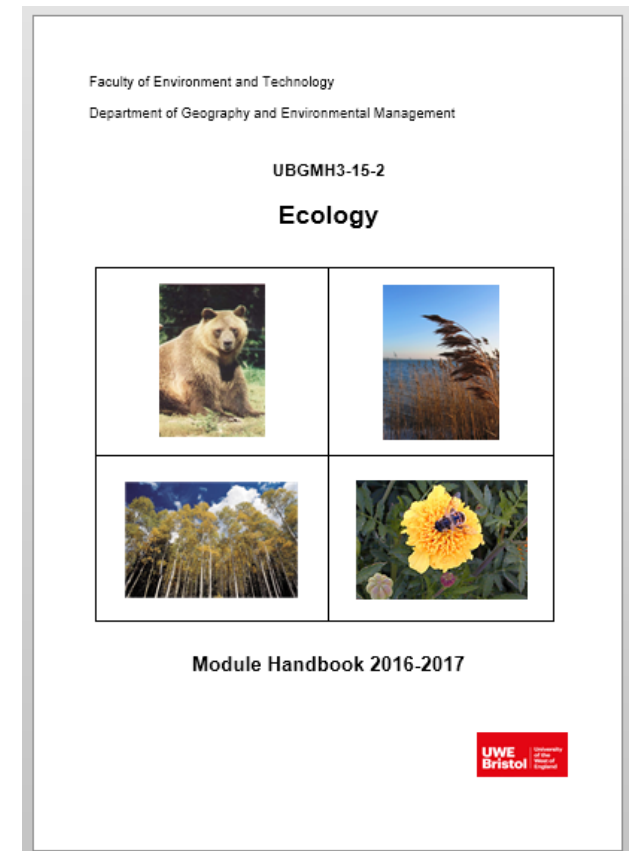
- feedback should help students to:
  - understand current performance
  - understand how to close the 'performance gap' in future assignments
  - have the confidence and belief they have control over their success
  - maintain motivation throughout their degree

(Hattie & Timperley, 2007)

- there is a recognised gap between staff perceptions of feedback and the student experience (Price et al., 2011)

# What we did

- we have implemented an assessment approach on a level 2 physical geography module to optimally support students' use of feedback
- based on premise that feedback should occupy a central position within a **dialogic** approach to learning & teaching (Alexander, 2004; Sutton, 2009) and be **future-oriented** (Sadler, 2010; Beaumont *et al.*, 2011)





# Definitions

- **dialogic feedback** is the creation of meaning and understanding via spoken discourse between lecturer and student, or student to student (Nicol, 2010)



- **feed-forward** refers specifically to feedback given by tutors that:
  - impacts upon an upcoming assignment
  - is given post-assignment with more specific direction on how this can be applied to future assignments (Carless, 2007)



# Research aims

1. Explore **student perceptions** of the dialogic feed-forward approach and whether it asserted a **positive influence on their learning experience**
2. Identify if and how the **task-specific behaviour** of students was altered by the assessment approach
3. Identify the extent to which students believed their **self-efficacy** and **self-regulation** skills were improved
4. Examine whether the assessment approach **enhanced student performance** and whether it could potentially raise **NSS scores** related to feedback

# Module assessment structure

Supporting Lectures

Students  
choose essay  
from selection

Students write  
draft essay

Students  
submit draft  
and attend  
'feed-forward'  
meeting

Students  
reflect on  
meeting and  
essay – grading  
their work

Students  
complete and  
submit final  
essay

Assessment  
discourse

Feedback  
discourse

25% module  
assessment

75% module  
assessment



# Data collection

## **Qualitative case study approach**

- semi-structured interviews ... from two consecutive level 2 cohorts at end of module (2015-16 and 2016-17)
- focus groups with level 3 students elucidating post-assignment behaviour and self-efficacy
- essay performance data pre- and post-assessment intervention
- answers to NSS feedback questions

# Selected results

## Enhanced learning experience

- **conversation** compels students to **engage critically** with their work:

*‘when I have had drafts handed back to me and it’s just written over, either **I don’t understand what they are trying to say**, or it’s not clear enough. I can ask you questions **if we’re talking to each other about it, it’s easier to see things** ... It’s definitely better to talk about it’ R7*

*‘I’ve had it before where you get electronic feedback and **you might not be sure what some of the comments mean** ... being able to discuss it is important. You get that progress and can **discuss how you can change it as opposed to just saying this is wrong**’ R9*

# Selected results

## Enhanced learning experience

- **Motivational** due to **pertinent application**:

*‘the bit in between my draft and writing the final piece was the best bit because **I knew what I was doing** and could tweak it and **I enjoyed that process of making it better**. It **gave me more confidence** in my writing skills’ R7*

*‘my first draft was quite vague and I didn’t really know what direction I was going with it. Then, **after speaking and having the feedback**, I spent more time on it because I **knew where I needed to go with it**’ R8*

# Selected results

## Task-specific behaviour and self-regulation

*'it helped me to **realise how to critique my own essays** because I was able to sit down with you and go through the essay and know exactly why you were commenting on something ... **It allows me now to see in other essays the same things I'm doing**'*

R10

*'I never understood how good submitting a draft and getting feedback is and now that I've done it I'm **definitely going to take advantage of it this year**'* R24

# Selected results

## Self-efficacy and graduate attributes

- students display increased self-efficacy: stronger beliefs in their capabilities to accomplish tasks in future
- believe learning is carried over to other level 2 assignments
- self-avow to altered level 3 behaviour
- we see students displaying **ready and able**, **future facing**, and **self reliant** competencies



# Selected results

## Enhanced student performance

Significantly higher marks 2015-17 v 2011-13  
( $p = < 0.0001$ )

Band (%)	2011-2012 (%)	2012-2013 (%)	2015-2016 (%)	2016-2017 (%)
0-39 (inc. NS)	16	5	0	5.5*
40-49	9	14	3*	5.5*
50-59	34	38	28	17
60-69	41	38	58	58
70-100	0	5	11	14
Number (n)	32	37	36	36

↑  
Dialogic assessment

\* Did not have a meeting

# Selected results

## Enhanced NSS and TEF metrics

- **all** students rated the module as giving them high quality feedback: detailed, conversational, personalised, timely (relevant application), multi-faceted
- **all** students said the feedback helped them clarify things they did not understand: proactive engagement with learning – they had to prepare for the meeting, think about their work, ask and answer questions



# How can I adapt this for my context?

1. Place dialogic feed-forward assessment into a level 1 core module?
  - 20-30 students per staff member (linked to APT?)
  - re-allocate staff time: less module content and summative feedback; more conversational feed-forward
2. Adjust this process for a level 2 module?
  - ask for discretionary workload bundles
  - research the outcome via LTF project – staff time
  - peer to peer feedback (via PAL?), facilitated by VLE
3. Finesse elements of this approach at level 3?
  - comment only upon a page of student work
  - answer 3 questions only posed by students

# What might the future look like?

1. We deliver **all feedback before grades**. When students start at UWE (e.g. field trips, lab work) they only receive comments ... then marks
2. We offer students **mastery experiences**, completing phased tasks, and receiving verbal feedback and encouragement to improve their capabilities
3. We deliver curricula that emphasize **coherence of assessment objectives** and adopt **standardised grading schemes** in order to facilitate developmental feed-forward
4. We offer **enhanced resource at specific, critical feedback moments** when students find learning development particularly challenging

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# Thank You For Listening



## Questions and discussion

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