Effective Feedback to Students

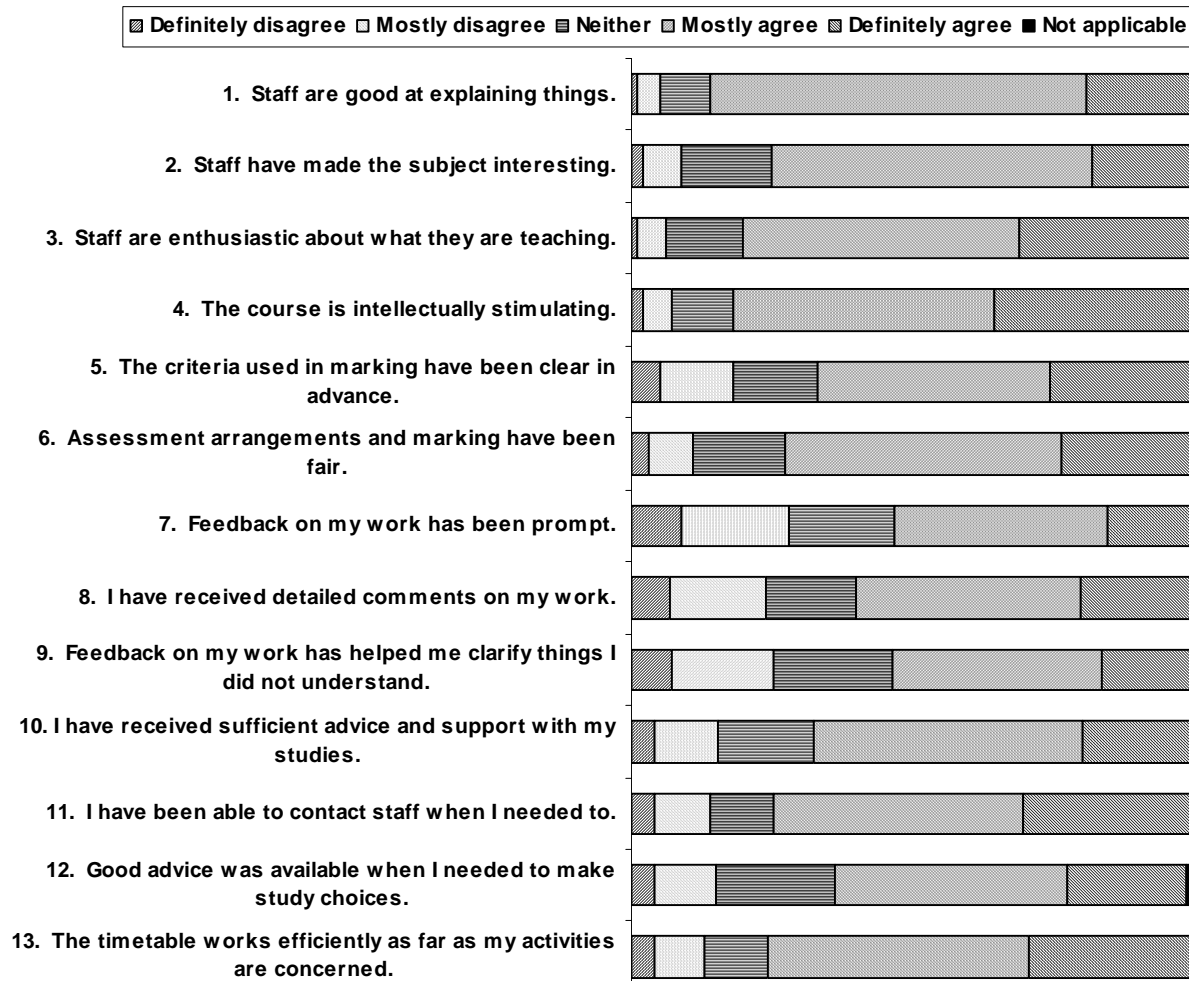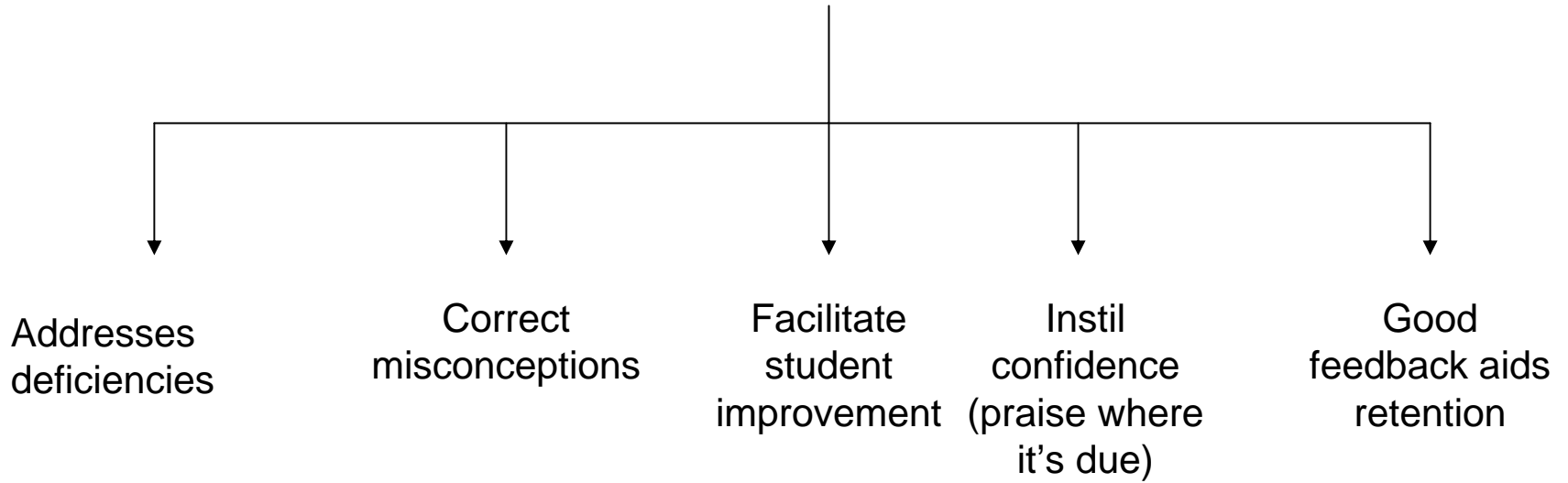Maureen M. Dawson

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National student satisfaction survey

Definitely disagree ▨ Mostly disagree ☐ Neither ▤ Mostly agree ▥ Definitely agree ▥ Not applicable ■

1. Staff are good at explaining things.

2. Staff have made the subject interesting.

3. Staff are enthusiastic about what they are teaching.

4. The course is intellectually stimulating.

5. The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance.

6. Assessment arrangements and marking have been fair.

7. Feedback on my work has been prompt.

8. I have received detailed comments on my work.

9. Feedback on my work has helped me clarify things I did not understand.

10. I have received sufficient advice and support with my studies.

11. I have been able to contact staff when I needed to.

12. Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices.

13. The timetable works efficiently as far as my activities are concerned.

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12. Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices.

13. The timetable works efficiently as far as my activities are concerned.

14. Any changes in the course or teaching have been communicated effectively.

15. The course is well organised and is running smoothly.

16. The library resources and services are good enough for my needs.

17. I have been able to access general IT resources when I needed to.

18. I have been able to access specialised equipment, facilities or rooms when I needed to.

19. The course has helped me to present myself with confidence.

20. My communication skills have improved.

21. As a result of the course, I feel confident in tackling unfamiliar problems.

22. Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the course.

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

Purposes of feedback

- Addresses deficiencies
- Correct misconceptions
- Facilitate student improvement
- Instil confidence (praise where it's due)
- Good feedback aids retention

What do students want

- Prompt feedback on work; preferably before next assignment

- Sufficient comments to allow improvement

- Explanations they can understand

What do we think they want?

- The mark!

Problems

- How quick is quick?
- Large classes
- Many classes
- Lots of assessment (move to more continuous assessment)
- Faculty/University assessment regulations
  - Submission window
  - Feedback on examinations

Tailored assessments

- posters
- essays
- exams
- mcq
- data handling
- oral presentation
- case study
- project
- leaflet
- scrapbook
- cv writing

- groupwork exercise
- live project
- GVA
- problem-based exercise
- data interpretation
- critique of literature
- comprehension exercise
- essay plan/mindmap
- lab exercise
- lab report

Timeliness

- Tailor assessments to allow rapid feedback of some
  - oral presentations
  - Problem-based learning
  - Posters
  - Data handing exercises
  - Mcq

  NB still have prac reports/essays but not the be all/end all

Timeliness

- Need for short/sharp assessments early on
  - Mcq/machine marked

  eg on-line Health and Safety test for all first year students

Timeliness

- Proformas for some feedbacks aid more rapid turn round (and improve consistence?)
  - can be as detailed or simple as you wish

Timeliness

- On-line assessments: can be written to give feedback
  - Eg mcq for SCL unit in BMS; allow retake after 24 hours

Timeliness

- Peer assessment (Ian Hughes)

Timeliness

- Post one-page feedback of common mistakes- could be done immediately afterwards

Practical report: common mistakes

- Well written background but own experiment not introduced

- Avoid use of personal pronouns

- No aims given

- Changes in methods not detailed

- Headings not underlined

- Same material presented in two forms

- No title on graph

- Axes on graph not labelled

- No units given

- Incorrect units given

- Mathematical errors in determining concentrations

- Common spelling errors (see WebCT glossary)

- Poor presentation

Good points

Introduction concise and relevant

Aims appropriate

etc

Quality feedback

- Constructive
- Supportive
- Not humiliating
- Sufficient and, if possible, personalised
- On-line submission and return?
- Ask students to write a paragraph of reflection on the mark they achieved; PDP; give marks!