

Centre for Bioscience Professional Development Programme

Effective Feedback to Students

Wednesday 22nd February 2006

University of Wolverhampton

Delegates gathered in the School of Applied Sciences for this the second event focusing on giving effective feedback to students.

- [Keynote: Effective Feedback to Students](#) Steve Swithenby
- [Using formative assessment feedback in pharmacology to encourage engagement](#) Iain Coleman
- [Effective Feedback to students](#) Maureen Dawson
- [Workshop session - Effective written feedback](#) Chris Glover
- [Student Feedback in a scientific writing assignment](#) Rob Reed
- [Student Feedback: Helping students to feed forward](#) Colin Hughes

[Keynote: Effective Feedback to students](#) [Steve Swithenby, FAST project](#)

Steve gave an excellent introduction to the day and the effective use of feedback in his keynote talk. He highlighted several aspects of feedback from a teaching and learning context, including the importance of the quality and timing of feedback. Steve also presented some of the work of the FAST (Formative Assessment in Science Teaching) project conducted at the Open University, and Sheffield Hallam University, which investigated student responses and attitudes to feedback and the use of computer-based feedback. During the structured discussion, talk focused on the three groups of criteria identified by [Gibbs and Simpson](#) to be important in giving effective feedback; 1) Quantity and Timing, 2) Quality and 3) Student response to the feedback.

[View Steve's "Effective feedback to students" slides](#)

[Using formative assessment in pharmacology to encourage engagement](#)
Iain Coleman, University of Wolverhampton

In his presentation Iain described how changes to a pharmacology module, including increasing the amount and speed at which formative feedback was made available to students, had improved student confidence and performance. Student attitudes and perceptions to the changes were gathered using questionnaires developed by the FAST project.

[View Iain's "Using formative assessment in pharmacology to encourage engagement" slides](#)

Effective feedback to students
Maureen Dawson, Manchester Metropolitan University

The National Student Survey highlights some aspects of feedback which concern students, most notably promptness and quality. Maureen discussed these aspects of feedback from a personal viewpoint and spoke about some of the issues she had encountered when giving students quality and timely feedback.

[View Maureen's "Feedback to students" slides](#)

Workshop session – Effective written feedback
Chris Glover, Sheffield Hallam University

Chris's session provided an opportunity to discuss the use and effectiveness of written feedback. He described a study conducted by the FAST project which surveyed the categories of feedback given to students, including noting omissions and use of English, investigated the effectiveness of different types of written feedback and asked "if a comment is made, what do you expect the student to do about it?".

[View Chris's "Effective written feedback" slides](#)

Handouts from the workshop:

- [Written feedback self-evaluation sheets](#)
- [How to use assessment to prevent learning!](#)
- [Tutor's perceptions of how students interact with feedback](#)

Student feedback in a scientific writing assignment – a case study
Rob Reed, University of Northumbria

Students don't always engage with the feedback they receive, Rob described how a scientific communication exercise conducted with second-year students at the University of Northumbria had been used to make students engage with peer feedback and introduce them to the peer-review process. Students wrote a short "New Scientist" style piece which was subsequently peer-reviewed and then interacted with the feedback they received, by either revising, or stating why they would not revise, the article in relation to the peer-feedback.

This project was a case study in the ["Self and Peer-assessment, Guidance on Practice in the Biosciences"](#) produced by the Centre for Bioscience. The [full case study](#) is available, along with the [associated mark sheets](#).

Student Feedback: Helping students to feed forward
Colin Hughes, [EFEL project](#)

Colin described some of the work conducted by EFEL (Effective Feedback Enhanced Learning) at Nottingham Trent University which focused on feedforward to students, whereby feedback from an assignment can be used to improve performance on

subsequent assignments. Feedforward was given through target setting sheets which could be consulted by students when completing their next assignment. Colin also discussed student's views and what they do, and don't, value in feedback.

[View Colin's "Student Feedback: Helping students to feed forward" slides](#)

Of possible further interest:

Brown, E., Gibbs G. and Glover C. (2003) [Evaluation tools for investigating the impact of assessment regimes on student learning](#). Evelyn Brown, Graham Gibbs and Chris Glover, Bioscience Education E-journal Volume 2

[Computer-assisted and Computer-based Testing to Assess Procedural and Conceptual Knowledge in Bioscience Undergraduates](#), Richard Rayne and Glenn Baggot, OLAAP project.

Feedback to students – [Extracts from "2000 tips for Lecturers"](#) edited by Phil Race

Hounsell D., Hounsell J., Litjens J. and McCune V. (2005) [Enhancing guidance and feedback to students: findings on the impact of evidence-informed initiatives](#), EARLI 11th Biennial Conference

Reports from other feedback events:

[Effective Feedback to Students](#), London Knowledge Lab

Event outline: Timely feedback is known to have a powerful effect on student learning and achievement. However, the production of feedback is potentially costly in terms of staff time and effort, and seems particularly so when students often fail to take notice of the recommendations and encouragement given. During this second Centre for Bioscience event on the theme of feedback you will be able to discuss with bioscience colleagues the issues surrounding the provision of feedback to students. As a result of attending this event you will have had the opportunity to:

- consider the key characteristics of effective feedback
- hear different examples of time-effective feedback strategies
- hear differing feedforward strategies to ensure students engage with feedback

Draft Programme	
10.00	<i>Coffee and Registration</i>
10.20	Welcome and Introduction to the day Centre for Bioscience
10.30	Keynote: Effective feedback to students Steve Swithenby, FAST project

	followed by structured discussion
11.30	<i>Refreshments</i>
11.45	<p>"FAST" Formative Assessment in Pharmacology - encouraging the students Iain Coleman, University of Wolverhampton</p> <p>Immediate formative assessment feedback has been integrated into student learning on a Level 2, Introductory Pharmacology module, with the intention of improving engagement, learning and assessment performance. Student experience of assessment was evaluated by means of a questionnaire provided by the FAST project. There has been a clear improvement in attendance, virtual learning environment (VLE) use and module performance. Students clearly valued immediate feedback, which was given orally and subsequently available in a VLE, and the importance of applying that feedback to their learning.</p>
12.15	<p>Example of giving feedback to students Maureen Dawson, Manchester Metropolitan University</p>
12.45	<i>Lunch</i>
13.45	<p>Workshop session - Effective written feedback Chris Glover, Sheffield Hallam University</p>
15.00	<p>Student feedback in a scientific writing assignment - a case study Rob Reed, University of Northumbria</p>
15.30	<p>Student feedback: Helping students to feed forward Colin Hughes, EFEL project</p>
16.00	Close