

Improving Feedback via Technology

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Edinburgh University Students' Association Feedback

Feedback is a big issue at Edinburgh at the moment, as the NSS results have shown, students aren't satisfied with the level, timeliness and quality of feedback they receive on their work. This affects academic understanding/engagement and often leaves students feeling generally unsupported at University.

That's why an event like this is so positive – looking at innovative ways to improve feedback at Edinburgh University.

I've prepared some feedback on today's presentations:

David – Re-engineering assessment practices

Introducing more self-regulated learning is necessary and vitally important for students in gaining skills for future life. But I'm sometimes cynical about this – as I feel that it's sometimes seen as an easy way to use less time and resources. An alarm bell goes off when I think of 'self-regulated learning' as it reminds me of a lazy maths teacher I had at school who would just say 'go off and ask your classmates' if you had a problem you didn't understand. But I'm so glad that David's presentation was not like this – it was showing how to effectively provide time and space for self-regulated learning and successfully foster it; something which might actually end up taking more resources to set up! Linking this up closely with changes in assessment is key too – as in the end this is often what directly motivates students.

Wesley & Paul – Richer fuller feedback for essays

Great!

No, I will provide more feedback than just that.

I can imagine that providing feedback on computers or through AV makes it easier to read/take in (some academics' writing can be illegible) more personal, engaging – but the key question for me is - would my lecturers have actually used it?

The best tutors I had actually provided me with ½ an hour face-to-face discussion and feedback on my essay, and I might prefer this over 10 minute recorded feedback.

The worst tutors bragged about marking 30 essays overnight – they were so tight for time they must have only been able to spend a minimum amount of time on the minimum level of feedback I received. Would they bother spending extra time and effort giving AV feedback?

Maybe something needs to be done about the underlying issue of staff not having time or will to spend on feedback?

Andrew – Self and peer assessment in Groupwork: TeCTra

Great to see engagement with employability and the skills agenda.

A lot of students end up resenting group work because they feel that the division of labour and assessment isn't fair and this could be a really positive way to solve that problem.

It would be interesting how we could link self-assessment, self-reflection and peer assessment at Edinburgh through the e-portfolio VLE and linking it into assessment – so students would have a real reason – an impetus to actually use the e-portfolio!

Hazel – Blogging, reflective learning and peer support

A very interesting idea – and it certainly provides a more accessible and level playing field for interaction by different groups, particularly international students. But I recently spoke to group of students who were assessed for blogs on their course, and their views were mixed on it. Some of them said: what's wrong with meeting face to face? They didn't see why they were blogging – how it linked into learning outcomes. But in addition to face-to-face learning I think blogging could have interesting outcomes.

Dave – Experiment on using new technology for student presentations

Really encouraged by the way that this project constantly reassessed what it was doing and how it linked into student learning and student expectations and experiences. Using clickers for feedback for constant improvement of the way the course was run is very positive – and is the kind of way I wish most courses were run!

Daniela & Ruby – Learning academic referencing: Turnitin

I remember in 1st year being so scared about plagiarism – what if you do it by mistake? And the “regulations” and the page you sign for an assessment – is so inaccessible and frightening, even to someone who's first language is English – so I can only imagine for international students whose first language isn't English and who come from a different academic culture, that there are even more complications with plagiarism. The ability to self-check your work by submitting to Turnitin would be so valuable and would hopefully reduce quite some worry. I hope this can be rolled out to be used by all courses soon.

I hope the feedback I presented was timely, detailed enough and was generally useful to you!