

## Timely Feedback

Feedback is timely if it is returned in time for students to make good use of it. However, “with modular programmes, it is often the case that even two or three weeks’ delay in getting feedback to students is too much, as they will have moved on to other aspects of their studies before the feedback reaches them, and will therefore take little or no notice of it” (Race & Pickford, 2007, p. 139).

Below are a few suggestions to help improve the timeliness of feedback. Many of these tips were taken from contributions made by Goldsmiths’ staff during an interdepartmental workshop on “Sharing Good Practice in Assessment and Feedback”.

- During the Sharing Good Practice Workshop most staff agreed that students are more irritated by work being returned late than by the set waiting time. Media, Communication and Cultural Studies have devised an effective approach by which the schedule for the return of work is managed and monitored through their main office. Several departments noted that the return of work is sometimes delayed by unforeseen circumstances such as tutor illness. Psychology does their best to arrange for contingency markers, but this is often more easily said than done. Everyone agreed that *swift and transparent communication* with students about possible delays is essential.
- Avoid over assessing your students. One tip is to process map your assessment schedules across full programmes to see how one can spread deadlines out as much as possible and reduce the amount of assessment points if need be.
- “Where possible, reduce the size of the pieces of work you will mark... Rather than saddle yourself with a pile of 3000 word essays or reports to mark, consider having 300 word critical arguments or ‘interpretations’. This also helps

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to ensure that assessment links to higher-level thinking skills, rather than routine writing skills” (Race & Pickford, 2007, p. 140).

- Use immediate feedback on Learn.gold quizzes. Quizzes are not appropriate for all subject material, but where they can be used, one can provide immediate automatic feedback to student responses. For advice on devising Learn.gold quizzes contact TaLIC on [tel@gold.ac.uk](mailto:tel@gold.ac.uk).
- Use free response systems during face-to-face teaching. Students can respond to surveys or quizzes or make comments during lectures, tutorials or even some practical sessions using their smart devices. The tutor can go over the results providing immediate feedback. Contact TaLIC on [tel@gold.ac.uk](mailto:tel@gold.ac.uk) for more information.
- Make sure students know they are getting feedback. We may know that we are giving them feedback, but it is useful to actually say so to them at the time. Thus, when using a response system in class, it is important to explain to students how this is a useful form of feedback for you and them to get a sense of what they do and don't understand. Similarly, students might not recognise that oral comments by peers and tutors on presentations, performances and practical work are a form of feedback unless you point it out to them.

### References

Race, P., & Pickford, R. (2007). Making teaching work. Sage Publications Ltd.