Effective and efficient feedback

This activity works on the principle that in choosing a feedback method one important factor to consider is the balance or payoff between:

a) Feedback efficiency for us (the time and effort required for a particular feedback method);

b) Learning payoff for students (the extent to which the method helps to develop students’ learning).

Looking at the matrix below, the ideal is to find methods that would sit within the top left quadrant – where they are highly efficient for staff and highly beneficial for students. Similarly, to avoid the bottom right quadrant – time-consuming for staff but resulting in little student learning. Placing different methods on these axes helps us to evaluate different feedback methods in terms of these factors or criteria.

Instructions

- Consider different feedback methods, and your own methods of providing feedback to students.
- Select around 8-10 of the methods and decide where they sit on the matrix – you can write them in for later comparison. Make sure to include methods you currently use.

Example feedback methods

- live feedback in class
- individual written feedback
- ad hoc verbal, e.g. In seminar
- written feedback, unreadable or too short
- peer group discussion
- exam marks, no comment
- peer assessment, assuming fairly
- generic written report for all students
- recorded audio feedback for individuals
- self-feedback/self-assessment
- talking to small groups about common problems
- face-to-face, one-to-one
- self-assessment
- recorded generic audio feedback to a whole group
- criteria sheets – rubrics
- email feedback
- track changes

What conclusions do you reach?

Where do your current feedback methods sit? What does this suggest about continuing to use these methods or changing to other methods? Are you able to find methods which would work in your context and which are highly efficient for staff and highly beneficial for students?

Is there an argument for including a feedback method that is perhaps not ideal in terms of the contribution to students’ learning but where potential speed of feedback turnaround brings advantages?

Are there methods which, though time-consuming, you prefer to retain because of the significant contribution to student learning?

How might some of these methods be adapted to bring them closer to the top-left quadrant?