

## **2A Assessment for learning – closing the feedback loop**

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It is universally acknowledged that feedback plays a key role in the learning process, but it is also clear that there are many challenges to the provision of effective feedback.

A common complaint from staff is that students do not use feedback and may not even collect their graded work. Recent research suggests that although the majority of students do pay attention to feedback, it is apparent that students may not be able to utilise feedback effectively, for example because the feedback has not been understood, or the student cannot see the relevance of the feedback to future work (feed-forward). Formalized reflection by students in order to improve their utilization of feedback has been reported in some studies (Gomez & Osborne, 2007; Franks & Hanscomb, 2012), and this is the direction we decided to take.

Our first change was to introduce short written reflections on feedback; and in the subsequent year we introduced a further change: withholding of grades to prevent the emotional response to the grade detracting focus from the feedback itself (Taras, 2002). We found the majority of students to be in favour of these changes, and several student comments indicated a change in their approach to using feedback.

One interesting finding was that the group of students who wrote the most insightful reflections made the most significant improvements in grades, whilst the group of students who tended to reiterate feedback comments demonstrated less improvement.

### **References**

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