Enhancing student learning through *effective formative feedback*

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Aims of this session

- To know what is formative feedback
- To know the steps needed to provide formative feedback in the classroom
- To understand how formative feedback can impact on pupils’ learning
Why Formative Assessment?

‘There is a body of firm evidence that formative assessment is an essential component of classroom work and that its development can raise standards of achievement. We know of no other way of raising standards for which such a strong prima facie case can be made.’ (Black & Wiliam, 1998)
‘Traditional’ Assessment Practices

- Generally encourage rote/superficial learning
- Can predict students results on external tests, but provides little information about students’ learning needs
- Focus on quantity, rather than quality, of work
- Over-emphasize grading, under-emphasize learning
Purposes of Formative Assessment

- Monitoring Learning
  - Whether learning is taking place
- Diagnosing (informing) learning
  - What is & isn’t being learned
- Forming learning
  - What to do about it
Components of Formative Assessment

- **Eliciting** assessment information
- **Interpreting** elicited assessment information
- **Acting** upon interpretations
  - Providing feedback to students
  - Reflecting upon & revising teaching
Workshop 1

Effective Feedback

- Which statements did you all feel were effective, quality feedback?
- Which were not? Why?
What is Formative Feedback?

‘Formative feedback is any information, process or activity which affords or accelerates student learning based on comments relating to either formative assessment or summative assessment activities.’

(Irons, 2008)

‘Feedback to any pupil should be about the particular qualities of his or her work, with advice on what he or she can do to improve, and should avoid comparisons with other pupils.’

(Inside the Black Box, Black & Wiliam, 1998)

- How do they fit with your own thinking?
- What makes feedback formative?
Feedback has to be from:

- Teacher - Student
- Student - Teacher
- Student - Student
Feedback should provide:

evidence on where they are now

some understanding of how to close the gap

the desired goal
Timing of feedback

- Formative feedback should take place during the learning.

- Allow time for improvements to be made (give your feedback and let them go away, try to follow the advice, and improve the work).
Workshop 1b
Formative Statements
- Which statements did you all feel were formative? Why?
- What about those statements that you previously labelled as effective?
- Do you see a match between these and those you labelled as formative?
- Are there any that you originally indicated as effective that you now want to re-evaluate?
Types of feedback

- Oral feedback
- Written feedback
Oral Feedback

Oral feedback can be a very powerful and effective tool if it is:

- given during the lesson/activity
- personal and immediate
- interactive (two-way)
Effective Oral Feedback

**Activity:**
Pupils cut out, order and glue pictures of a story in sequence

**We Are Learning To:**
Sequence events

**Success Criterion:**
The pictures will be in the same order as the story we read

- You are getting better at cutting out. Well done!
- Good strategy, you have cut out all the pictures first so you can shuffle them around and change your mind
- Good girl, you have glued that picture very neatly
- Well done. I see you have got the first picture in place. What happened next in the story?
When offering oral feedback yourself, remember to relate the feedback to the learning intention, so that pupils do not get confused about what it is they are learning to do.
Focusing the Feedback

‘I recognised things in myself like commenting about the handwriting and spelling, when I should be commenting on the learning intention. It’s been a real revelation to me. I’m aware of it all the time now and when I hear myself starting to say “you’ve left a capital letter out there”, I stop really quickly now and go back to talking about the learning intention.’

- A teacher from S. Clarke’s research project
Tips for giving Oral Feedback

- Focus on the student’s work not on the person
- State specific ways on how the work can be improved
- Compare the work the student produced with what was previously done
- Do it all along the activity
- Give critically constructive feedback
- Use appropriate tone of voice and body language
Written Feedback

- Tends to be after the task is complete
- Comments only
Tips for giving Written Feedback

- Find 2 successes against the success criteria
- Show what needs to be improved
- Provide time for them to read, process and respond to your prompt

Ideas for structured feedback
- Tickled pink & green for growth
- Two stars and a wish
Teacher feedback

- Pupils really valued individual feedback from a teacher who was genuinely interested in them.
- They felt that getting a positive comment first helped them to take on any criticism of their work.
- Getting general comments did not really help.
- Phrases like ‘Satisfactory’ or ‘Could do better’ did not tell them how to improve.
- They felt they could do better when the teacher gave them feedback against the success criteria.

‘If you get, like, a bad comment from the teacher, it can make you feel a bit bad about yourself. But if you hear what you’ve done good first, you might feel better about making just a little mistake.’ (Female pupil)
A Controversial Question About Marking

Which is most effective in helping learners improve?

- Mark/grade only (e.g. 4/10, B+)
- Mark/grade and comment
- Comment only
Comment-only Marking Is the Best Way to Help Learners Improve

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups of pupils given:</th>
<th>Improvement in Work</th>
<th>Interest in Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marks/grades only</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>+ for high attainers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- for middle/low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marks/grades + comments</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>+ for high attainers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- for middle/low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments only</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>+ for all groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research findings from two Israeli studies, Black & Wiliam, 1998
We must remember that:

- Students tend to ignore feedback when accompanied by a grade or overall judgment (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, & Wiliam, 2004)

- “A numerical mark or grade does not tell you what to do: if it is high, you’re pleased but have no impetus to do better, if it is low it might confirm your belief that you are not able to learn the subject.” (Black & Harrison, 2001)
Research by Carol Dweck (2005) found that feedback in the form of goldstars, grades, or place-in-class ranking focuses students on performance rather than their learning. As a result, learners actively avoid risk and extending themselves during new learning in order to ensure they secure the reward.
Formative feedback counteracts these issues by:

- focusing on improvement;
- de-emphasising competition; and
- improving motivation and learning ambition.
AfL practices strive to help pupils concentrate on how to improve their own performance rather than compare themselves to others.
Prompts for improvement

To close the gap between where a pupil is and where you want them to be in their learning, there are three types of prompts that promote improvement.

- Reminder Prompt
- Scaffold prompt
- Example prompt

These prompts also help the teacher differentiate her support
Reminders are the least supportive type of prompt - the most basic instruction on how to improve the work/learning and the most suitable prompt for able pupils. It draws the learner’s attention back to the learning intention.

- ‘Say more about how you feel about this person.’
- ‘How could you make this story flow better?’
- ‘Explain why you think this....’
Scaffold Prompt

A scaffold prompt: scaffolds the learning for children who need more support than a simple reminder.

- ‘Can you describe how this person is a ‘good friend’?’
- ‘Describe something that happened that showed they are a good friend.’
- A sentence given with missing words.
- A specific focusing directive or an open ended question - Can you explain why?
An example prompt: can be extremely successful with all children, but especially with average or below average children.

- ‘Choose one of these or your own: “He is a good friend because he never says unkind things about me”, “My friend is a friend because he never tells me lies.’”
- “What did he look like? ... it would make your story more interesting...”
- “How did it make you feel? ... happy? ... sad?...
Workshop 2
Prompts for Improvement
Assessment Policy - Feedback
Whole school policy for feedback

Essentially it is the schools themselves that have it within their control to make substantial impact upon levels of achievement

MacGilchrist, 1996

But What Are The Problems?

GUESS I`VE GOT BRAIN PROBLEMS!
Problems

- Teachers feel they should mark all the work as a measure of their worth: for accountability.

- Teachers feel that the quality of their feedback is measured by how much they have written on the child’s work.
Problems...

- Teachers feel that oral feedback is vital but not as valid as written feedback.
- Teachers feel guilty if every piece of work is not completely marked.
More Problems...

Teachers wonder if their marking really makes any impact on children’s progress.
Analyse Practice

- Brainstorm all different types of feedback
- Score the different types of feedback for
  - Impact on child’s learning
  - Manageability

When these are written in a policy, then decisions concerning feedback are more easily justified.
Final Tips and Reminders

To deliver formative feedback:

- Relate the feedback to the learning intention and success criteria;
- Identify where success has occurred;
- Set a goal for improvement;
- Show where and how improvement could take place;
- Allow time for pupils to make improvements; and
- Start small