Maximising formative assessment opportunities on pre-sessional writing programmes

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Feedback on writing

In this session we will ask:

• What are we doing when we provide feedback?

• Is what we’re doing consistent with research and/or valued by students?

• How can we make the most of feedback opportunities so tutors and students benefit?
Discussion - task 1
Written Corrective Feedback

• Keywords:

1. Negative
2. Direct (explicit)
3. Meta-linguistic
4. Indirect (implicit)
5. Tutor/Peer/Self

Ellis (2009); Ellis, Loewen & Erlam (2006).
Assumptions – task 2

• We also (possibly) make a large number of assumptions when we mark…

• What might some of these be?
Assumptions

- That parameters of target text type are agreed
- That feedback on that has a focus
- That students understand what that focus is
- That students understand the feedback provided
- That we know how we would like our students to respond to it
- That that desired response is realistic
- That students then do respond in that way
- That students learn (are ‘ready’, motivated) in short- and long-term
- That therefore – feedback works
Content or Language – EAP

- Which of these are we giving feedback on?
- To what extent can we [always/ever] separate these two?
- Which to prioritise given target context?
Quick Lit Review

“research literature has not been unequivocally positive about its feedback’s role in L2 development”

Ellis, 2008: 97.

Or consistent
Quick Lit Review

• However:
  • Explicit
  • Meta-linguistic information
  • Implicit

Ellis, Loewen & Erlam (2006).
Quick Lit Review

• Similar result:

• Group A = explicit meta-linguistic
• Other groups = indirect/modelling

Both lead to learning but explicit more successful (grammar)

Carroll and Swain (1993)
Quick Lit Review

• Short-term = explicit
• Longer term = implicit

• Yilmaz, 2012
Quick Lit Review

• 80% “successfully edit errors”
• This figure more or less the same independently of degree of explicitness

“Superiority of indirect feedback over direct feedback...over time”

Quick Lit Review

- Quality – comments
- Quantity – focus

“Insufficiently explained, badly distributed….”
(Fernandes in Bruno and Santos, 2010)

Should avoid providing too much feedback.
(Timperley in Bruno and Santos, 2010)

Comments should be worded ‘positively’ not ‘negatively’.
(Litherland Baker, 2013)
Quick Lit Review

- Further question of consistency:

- Where are different teachers coming from when they give feedback on a text? *What text? What context?*

- Shared “goal model”? Bridging a gap.

- Parr & Timperley, 2010.
Classroom research

• Bearing in mind some of the research…

1. What we were doing during pre-sessional?
2. How effective was this from students point of view?
3. Aim of making most of the feedback due to high-pressure context, tutor profile and workload.
Background

• Questionnaire
• 75 students responded out of 90
• One essay on chosen topic
• Formative feedback after first draft using a feedback sheet.
• In-text comments – open to tutor (quantity & quality).
• Follow-up tutorial.
• Summative feedback only on final draft.
Most useful kind of feedback

For the first draft of your SSE, you were given three kinds of feedback: in-text comments on your essay, a feedback report sheet and oral feedback during consultations. Can you please rank EACH of these feedback methods, with 1 being the most useful, 2 second most, and 3 third most useful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In-text comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>41.18%</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>38.24%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20.59%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>26.47%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27.94%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>46.69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>32.35%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>33.32%</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Ranking</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>1.81</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback report sheet</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oral feedback during consultations</th>
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Answered: 68    Skipped: 0
You also received feedback in three different ways; from your tutor, from peers, from yourself. Again, can you rank EACH of these in terms of how useful you thought they were, with 1 being the most useful.

Answered: 68  Skipped: 0

<table>
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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Average Ranking</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tutor</td>
<td>83.82%</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
<td>10.29%</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>2.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer</td>
<td>7.35%</td>
<td>67.65%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>1.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>8.82%</td>
<td>26.47%</td>
<td>64.71%</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Expectations

With regard to feedback on your writing from tutors, what do you expect? Select the most appropriate response:

**Answer Choices**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I expect tutors to show me specifically what the error is and what the solution is.</td>
<td>30.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect tutors to show me specifically what the error is and indicate what kind of error it is; however, I want to work out the solution myself.</td>
<td>41.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect tutors to indicate specifically where there is an error; however, I will try and work out what kind of error it is and try and solve it myself.</td>
<td>16.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect tutors to tell me what problems there are in my writing, but I will try and find those problems in my text and solve them myself.</td>
<td>11.76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** 68
Your answer to the previous question was about what you expected from feedback. This time, can you think about those options in terms of which one you think is most likely to help you learn in the longer term.

- I tend to learn more if I... 
- I tend to learn more if I... 
- I tend to learn more if I... 
- I tend to learn more if I... 

**Answer Choices**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I tend to learn more if tutors show me specifically what the error is and what the solution is.</td>
<td>19.70% 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tend to learn more if tutors show me specifically what the error is and indicate what kind of error it is and I then work out the solution myself.</td>
<td>37.88% 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tend to learn more if tutors indicate specifically where there is an error and if I then try and work out what kind of error it is and try and solve it myself.</td>
<td>31.82% 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tend to learn more if tutors tell me what problems there are in my writing and I then try and find those problems in my text and solve them myself.</td>
<td>18.18% 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Respondents: 66
Can you select the option below which best describes how much SSE feedback you like to receive and when?

Answered: 62  Skipped: 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I prefer to get small; specific pieces of feedback in response to more regular but shorter writing assignments (paragraphs).</td>
<td>30.77% 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer to get smaller, specific pieces feedback in response to two or three drafts, rather than one draft.</td>
<td>47.69% 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer to get all my feedback at once in response to one longer first draft.</td>
<td>21.54% 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions – task 4

• Given research overview and results from own research, what sort of formative feedback would you give, how would it be given and by whom?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
Conclusions

• Mid-range - realistic

• Maximum - optimal

• Minimum – one-off opportunity

Going back to the research to fine tune each of these
Mid-range

- In-text comments
- Tutor
- Where the error/problem is – direct (short time)
- Indication of kind of error/problem - metalinguistic
- Do not correct – even though 30% would like the solution, the majority recognise that they learn more by solving themselves
- Smaller amounts of feedback more often
Maximum

• All the stages of ‘realistic’ with additional

1. 1:1 consultation to consolidate feedback
2. Peer feedback built into staging – Sato & Lister
3. Getting most out of in-text comments by encouraging improved identification of error/problem - Litherland Baker and Bruno & Santos
4. Some kind of written global summary
Minimum

• If only one feedback opportunity is available....

• Developed feedback sheet.
Preferences

Given that tutors have limited time during courses to provide feedback, if you could only have one form of feedback for your SSE first draft, select which option you would prefer.

Answered: 65  Skipped: 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A 30 minute consultation.</td>
<td>33.85% 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A more clearly developed and detailed feedback report.</td>
<td>43.08% 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More in-text comments.</td>
<td>23.08% 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 65
References


