University of Glasgow | School of Modern Languages & Cultures

Maximising formative assessment opportunities on pre-sessional writing programmes

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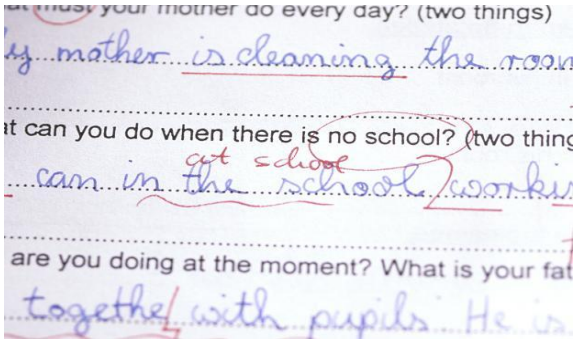
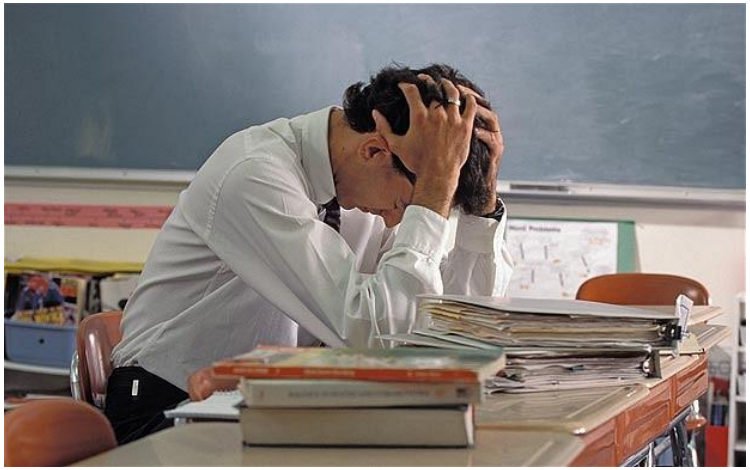
Feedback on writing

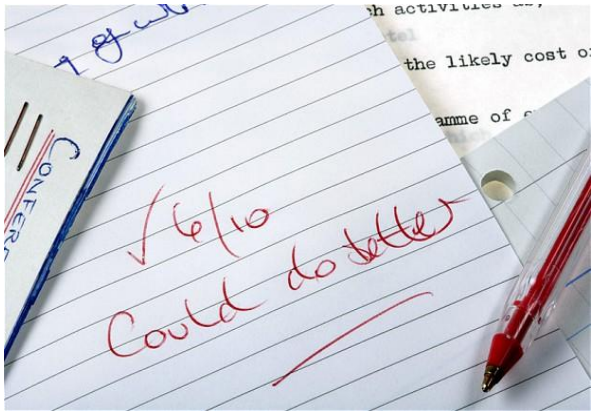


In this session we will ask:

- 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”

- Ferris in Hyland & Hyland, 2006.

Quick Lit Review

- Quality – comments
- Quantity – focus

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

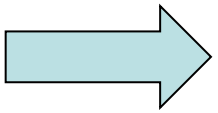
Should avoid providing *too much* feedback.
(Timperley in Bruno and Santos, 2010)

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

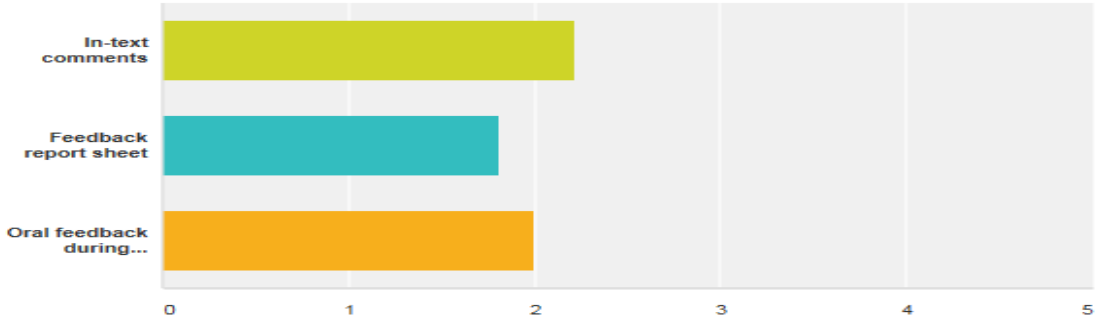
- Questionnaire
- 75 students responded out of 90
- One essay on chosen topic
- Formative feedback after first draft using a feedback sheet.
- In-text comments – open to tutor (quantity & quality).
- Follow-up tutorial.
- Summative feedback only on final draft.

Most useful kind of feedback

Q1 Customize Export

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.

Answered: 68 Skipped: 0



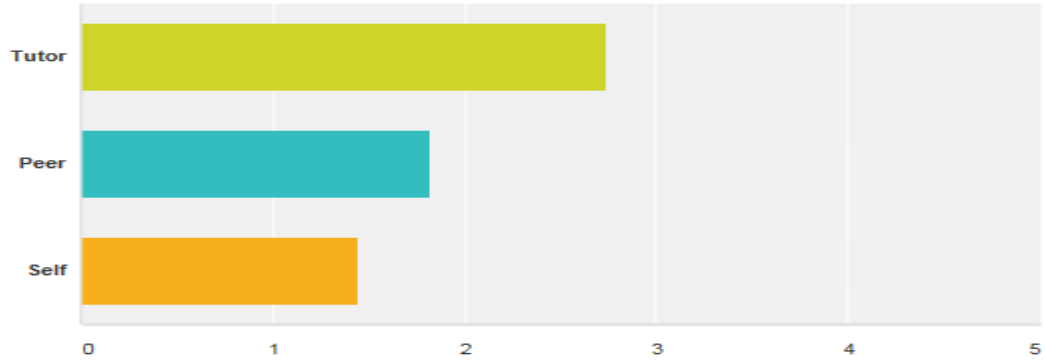
	1	2	3	Total	Average Ranking
In-text comments	41.18% 28	38.24% 26	20.59% 14	68	2.21
Feedback report sheet	26.47% 18	27.94% 19	45.59% 31	68	1.81
Oral feedback during consultations	32.35% 22	33.82% 23	33.82% 23	68	1.99

Tutor, peer & self

Q2 Customize Export

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



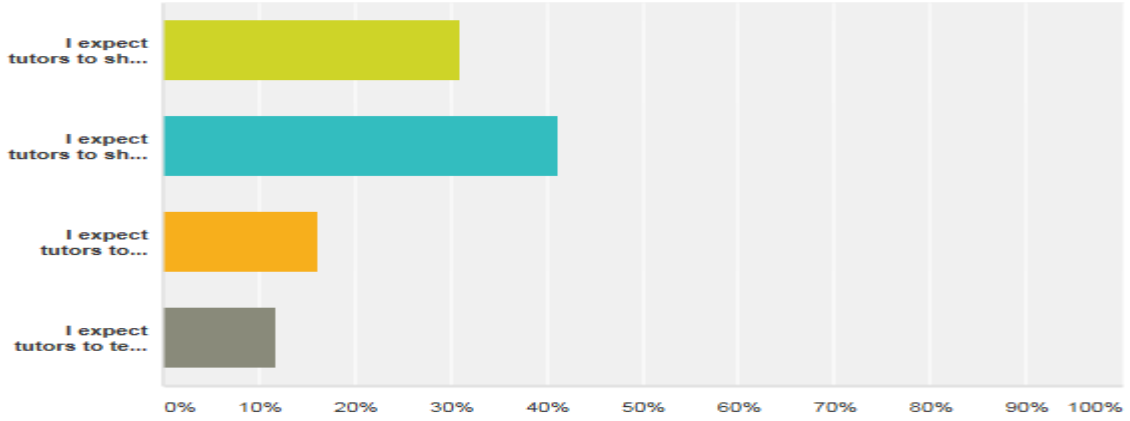
	1	2	3	Total	Average Ranking
Tutor	83.82% 57	5.88% 4	10.29% 7	68	2.74
Peer	7.35% 5	67.65% 46	25.00% 17	68	1.82
Self	8.82% 6	26.47% 18	64.71% 44	68	1.44

Expectations

Q3 Customize Export

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

Answered: 68 Skipped: 0



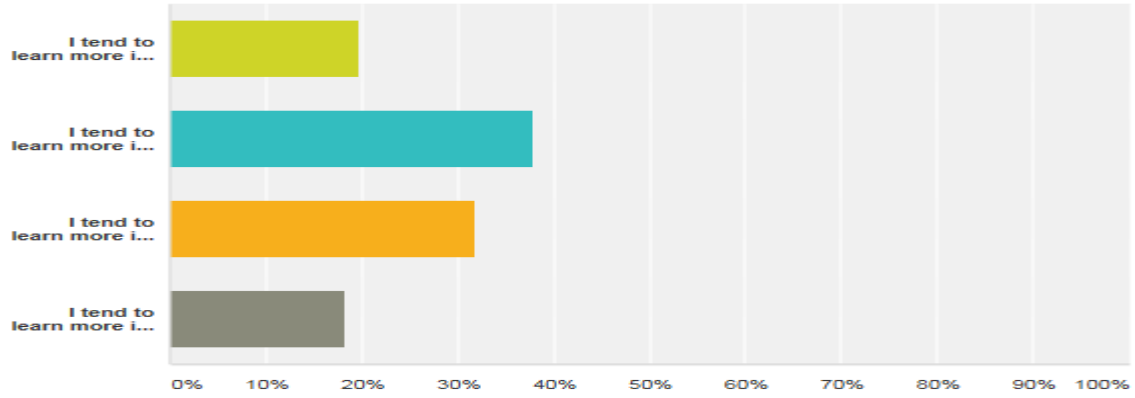
Answer Choices	Responses	
I expect tutors to show me specifically what the error is and what the solution is.	30.88%	21
I expect tutors to show me specifically what the error is and indicate what kind of error it is; however, I want to work out the solution myself.	41.18%	28
I expect tutors to indicate 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.	16.18%	11
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.	11.76%	8
Total		68

Learning

Q4 Customize Export

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.

Answered: 66 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Responses	
I tend to learn more if tutors show me specifically what the error is and what the solution is.	19.70%	13
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.	37.88%	25
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.	31.82%	21
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.	18.18%	12
Total Respondents: 66		

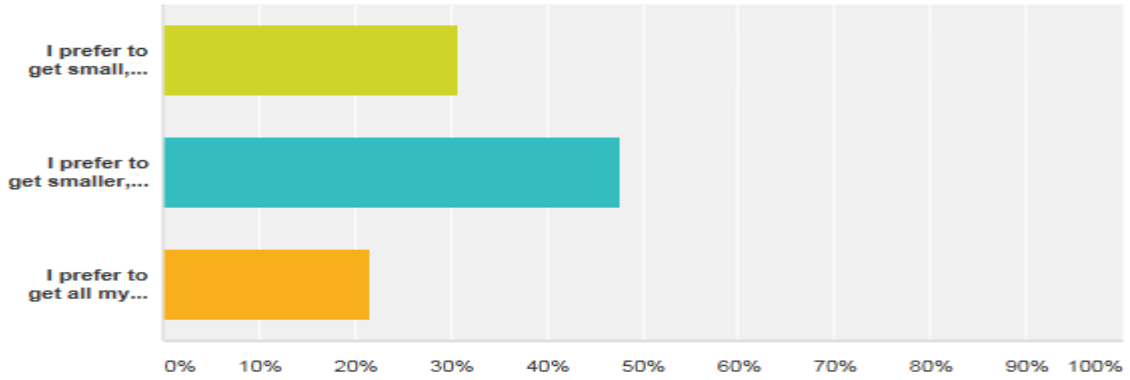
Staging of feedback

Q8

Customize Export

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

Answered: 65 Skipped: 3



Answer Choices	Responses	
I prefer to get small, specific pieces of feedback in response to more regular but shorter writing assignments (paragraphs).	30.77%	20
I prefer to get smaller, specific pieces feedback in response to two or three drafts, rather than one draft.	47.69%	31
I prefer to get all my feedback at once in response to one longer first draft.	21.54%	14
Total		65

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.

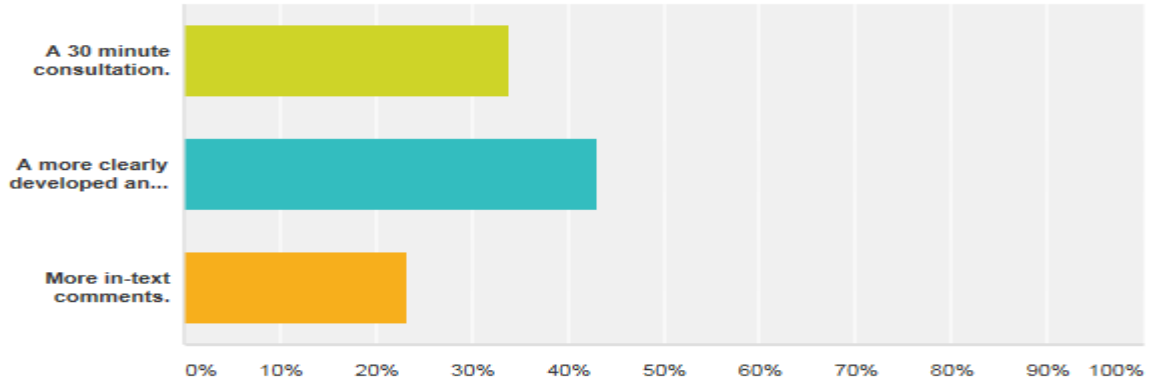
Preferences

Q9

Customize Export

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



Answer Choices	Responses	
A 30 minute consultation.	33.85%	22
A more clearly developed and detailed feedback report.	43.08%	28
More in-text comments.	23.08%	15
Total		65

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