Best practice in feedback for successful learning  
Examples from the BA Professional Development and Teaching Qualification Further Education (TQFE)

**Feedback approaches on the BAPD and TQFE**

We use a wide range of techniques to ensure feedback is unambiguous, specific, timely, delivered appropriately, efficient and effective including:

- informal verbal tutor feedback in face to face and online workshops
- formal written summative feedback on submitted work
- formative feedback at individual and small group tutorials and via email
- written and oral feedback from learners on peers’ activities and practice
- planned self-evaluation activities

Our guidelines for best practice in summative feedback include returning written comments within 3 weeks, making checks by email or through informal discussion that learners have understood tutors’ comments, and providing feedforward guidance for learners on how to develop their skills and knowledge for future tasks.

**Developing learners’ skills**

Developing learners’ skills in giving and receiving feedback is an important element of the BAPD and TQFE programmes. A typical ‘scaffolding’ strategy to develop appropriate skills might involve the following activities at intervals throughout the programme:

1. A group discussing another group’s presentation then giving verbal feedback focusing on ‘things they liked’ or ‘suggested improvements’
2. A group jointly wording brief written feedback for another group
3. A group giving feedback on the feedback another group has given them
4. Group discussions and agreement on an appropriate strategy for feedback before peer observations
5. Individual provides feedback to peers after observation of practice

**Providing effective feedback**

To ensure that feedback is effective we have found that:

- it needs to be provided with sensitivity to individual learners’ needs
- there needs to be a developmental relationship between tutor and student – on BAPD and TQFE one or two tutors will assess a learner’s work throughout their programme of study, which allows for evaluation of an individual’s development
- there needs to be a mutual understanding between tutors and students as to what constitutes feedback and the purpose of feedback
- there should be effective communication between student and tutor
- the student needs to understand feedback and USE IT!

**Peer support for tutors**

Efficiency is important from the tutor perspective to ensure a manageable workload. Templates for written feedback are used, opportunities for one to one and small group tutorials are carefully managed using both online and face to face strategies, and peer feedback is encouraged. Peer support for tutors is provided through regular ‘marking meetings’ to check standards and consistency through cross-marking, and to allow review of procedures and instructions.

**Feedback on feedback**

- Thanks for your feedback/forward...I'm pleased to have passed but I am annoyed at myself
- Yes sure I'm a little disappointed but on reflection your comments are fair
- This is something to work on for the future. As you know I prefer to have guidelines written down...so hopefully I can learn from your written comments and try to improve my grades...
- I have read your feedback and read over my project submission again. I'm disappointed that I didn't produce a better piece of research but value your feedback in helping me do better in the future. You have identified some key weaknesses in the research that I accept.
- Thanks for the very detailed feedback – I will certainly use it to improve what I have done so far
- Peer feedback was useful - you learn so much from each other

**From external examiners:**

- Feedback on assignments is returned promptly, is detailed and supportive, encouraging students if necessary to seek advice and to arrange tutorial support
- Praise and guidance [are] given to ensure that students are encouraged to continue to achieve high marks
- Feedback is of a high standard and internal moderation appears consistent and fair

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