

Strategies for making exam feedback dialogic

Prof Alasdair Blair

Dr Sam McGinty

Dr Alun Wyburn - Powell

NTFS 'It's Good to Talk: Feedback, Dialogue and Learning'

- 3 years
- 2009-2012
- 3 institutions: De Montfort, London Metropolitan, Warwick
- History
- Politics/International Relations

Dialogue

- A range of feedback researchers have argued for engaging students in a dialogue (Sadler, 1989; Hounsell & Hounsell 2007; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).
- Feedback should be a collaborative process that *'encourages teacher and peer dialogue around learning'* (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006, p. 205).
- Peer feedback can be defined as *'a communication process through which learners enter into dialogues related to performance and standards'* (Lui & Carless, 2006, p. 280).

Exam feedback: initial findings

308 student questionnaire responses

I receive written feedback on my examination scripts:

Frequently	18%
Sometimes	13%
Never	40%
N/A	29%

I receive verbal feedback on my examination scripts:

Frequently	7.1%
Sometimes	23.2%
Never	48.5%
N/A	21.2%

Exam feedback: initial findings

In the exams, we never really get feedback from the exams and it would be nice to get to know what we have done wrong instead of just getting a mark for the exam from the actual board. Then you've got the opportunity to get the exam papers back but you don't get the opportunity to sit down and talk to anyone about it. (Female 1, History and Education Studies, Level 5 interview).

But also, if you have access to your scripts...in exams obviously there are very pressured situations, so you do have to write as fast as you can, and sometimes it would be interesting to see what you wrote in that situation in retrospect, and can reflect on it calmly, and to really analyse your own arguments, because I often come out of exams feeling completely drained, and so at the end of the exam when you're reading over it, you don't have much idea whether it is a good argument or a bad argument. So to be able to look back in hindsight would be quite useful. (Student 1, Level 5, focus group 1)

Level 5 History students

- 3 or 4 exams per year
- 40-50% of assessment mark for each module
- 41.2% worried about exams
- 5.9% stressed about exams
- 82.5% never receive any exam feedback

Level 5 History students

Feedback is the basis for improving my grades so I would take any chance to get more feedback especially with exams.

With feedback from previous exams you may be better prepared in the next year's exams.

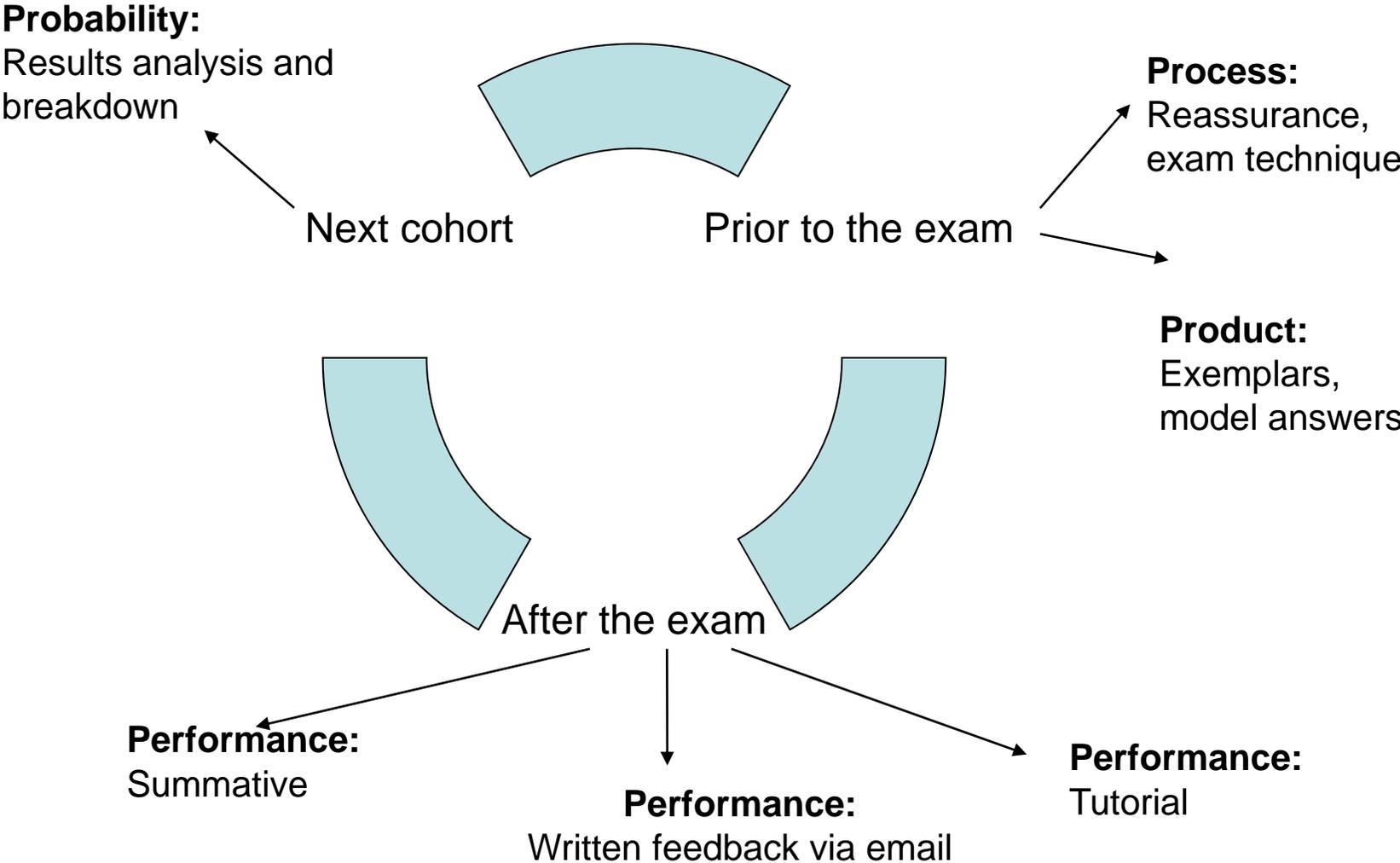
My exams are my weakest area – I need all the help I can get!

Like any graded work it would be nice to receive an idea of where I went wrong or indeed right!

Exam feedback principles:

- Dialogic
- A variety of mediums
- Different feedback needs (process, product, performance and probability feedback)
- Feedback intervention points

Exam feedback cycle



Product feedback

- Exemplar exam answers activity

Students' estimates of marks

Students' estimates of marks									
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6	Average student mark	Tutor mark	Difference
Answer 1	66	75	62	55	67	70	66	79	13
Answer 2	49	40	35	35	45	40	41	56	15
Answer 3	38	41	68	42	59	57	51	39	- 12



Q&A

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Recommended reading

- Hounsell, D., McCune, V., Hounsell, J. & Litjens, J. (2008) The quality of guidance and feedback to students, *Higher Education Research & Development*, 27 (1), pp. 55-67
- Nicol, D. (2010) From monologue to dialogue: improving written feedback processes in mass higher education, *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 35 (5), pp. 501-517
- Orsmond, P., Merry, S. & Reiling, K. (2002) The use of Exemplars and Formative Feedback when Using Student Derived Marking Criteria in Peer and Self-assessment, *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 27 (4), pp. 309 – 323