

Report of Focus Groups run 23 and 24 November 2004

Students

5 students from Faculty of Science: x 2nd years and x 3rd years

Purpose of feedback

Reassurance (if positive)

What the lecturer thinks about your work

Tells you how to improve

Its after the event so does not affect performance

Not interested in feedback, only the mark

Needs to be annotated on script in relevant place

Provides opportunity to avoid repeating errors

Quality of feedback

Not enough if part of a large group

Amount varies but generally is insufficient

Illegible comments

Feel that lecturers don't think it is important

Face to face is best because you can ask questions

Tick lists feel impersonal

Inconsistency between staff e.g. referencing style

Timing

Timeliness a big problem (3 months wait in business school)

May forget feedback if assessments far apart

Next assessment may be different type e.g. essay then chart work

Staff forget to set courseworks on time

Other Feedback Issues

Students are constantly evaluating feedback, deciding whether to act on it, if transferable to other assessments, whether time effective to implement

Non electronic coursework may not be suitable for this system

This could feel impersonal

Desired SHELL-FISH features

Would like to be able to calculate degree grade so far

Positive reinforcement very necessary

Need facility for free text feedback

Access to resource database

Like the potential for anonymous marking

Other SHELL-FISH Issues

Not keen on saving as RTF because of extra work, may lose formatting and not all will understand how to do this

Staff

7 members of staff

Purpose of feedback

Good for staff as it reveals any major teaching problems

Students apparently not interested e.g. if emailed marks they do not collect the work (no correlation between mark and collection rates)

Students are more interested in feedback if they get an unexpected mark

The same mistakes are found time and again

Quality of feedback

Very time consuming - nursing requires special forms to be completed

Some develop own pro forma

Feedback through tutorial groups is interactive

If assessment presented in stages then lots of feedback needed at start and less as assessment progresses

Face to face is best

It is not good practice to get post grads/post docs to do the marking

Peer assessment often results in harsher marking

Timing

Some staff negotiate on amount of feedback versus speediness of marking

Students forget what they have been told

Next assessment may be different type e.g. essay then chart work

Other Feedback Issues

There is a trust gap between staff and students

There are no consequences if students repeatedly get the same thing wrong - perhaps should penalise for this but as there are few assessments this could be catastrophic for degree grade

Students take a strategic approach when deciding whether to act on feedback - exacerbated by having to work to survive

Could make mark provisional until feedback acted on

Desired SHELL-FISH features

Need positive feedback

Double marking facility would be useful

Categories and themes could vary from year one, two and three.

Ability to use anti-plagiarism software

Ability to compare courseworks against each other

Double marking resolution mechanism

What about amending/adjusting marking

Undesired SHELL-FISH features

Grade calculator - hate the idea + how would you manage non electronic assessments

Marking/criteria grids loathed

Other SHELL-FISH Issues

Could be too mechanistic

Not keen on increasing screen based marking

Concerned about handing everything to students on a plate and thus making them dependent

Themes

Logical progression

Basic grammar

Paragraph construction

Presentation

Using the third person

Report writing

Citation of sources

Scientific formal writing

References

Bibliography

Imprecision of language

Punctuation - particularly apostrophes

Writing for the particular audience

SCREEN GRAB	STUDENT COMMENTS
Screen 1	Add SHELL-FISH as a link from portal
Screen 2	No comment
Screen 3	<p>Remove <i>courseworks being assessed</i> (students do not care about it)</p> <p>Change <i>1 completed courseworks for you to review</i> to <i>1 coursework marked for you to review</i></p> <p>Send email to student when coursework/action plan ready to review</p> <p>Would like to be emailed to remind them about next deadline and able to select lead time i.e. remind 1, 2 or 3 weeks before deadline</p>
Screen 4	<p>Concern about submitting work to the wrong module</p> <p><i>Select module</i> box: give title and number</p> <p><i>Select tutor</i> box change to <i>Select lecturer</i></p> <p><i>Select assignment</i> box, give title and number</p> <p>May need an option to state that there is a non electronic component to this coursework</p>
Screen 5	Where will the coursework receipt get its timing from - student's computer may be different time to server and cause deadline problems
Screen 6	No comment
Screen 7	No comment
Screen 8	No comment
Screen 9	Students not concerned about status - just want to know when its done and available for them
Screen 10	Students not concerned about status - just want to know when its done and available for them
Screen 11	What will happen if there are parallel errors e.g. problem with a paragraph and a word within that paragraph
Screen 12	No comment
Screen 13	<p>Maybe append the work plan to the end of the assessment</p> <p>Maybe email to student one week before next assignment due in</p>