

**CHANGING THE
CONVERSATION: AN
EXPLORATION INTO THE IMPACT
OF STRUCTURED FEEDBACK
AND CONSULTATION IN THE
ENGLISH CLASSROOM**

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**A RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
SUBMITTED FOR THE
MSc LEARNING AND TEACHING 2015**

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Abstract:

Moll an óige agus tiocfaidh sí – Praise the youth and they will flourish

– An Irish saying

Identity as a learner in the classroom is a field that needs negotiating. As a teacher one must remember that the learners of any given class bring with them their own identities, pedagogies and experiences of learning. Thus it is worthwhile, as a researcher, thinking about the dynamics of the classroom and the need for both learners and teachers to negotiate the environment and educational climate we foster as a school.

All learners and teachers must mediate identities in the classroom in order to be effective learners. These identities have been defined by curriculum demands, targets, schools and the continual cycle of testing, assessment and reporting that we place upon students to see if they are, according to external parameters, characterised as effective learners

The question is; how do learners negotiate these identities successfully and to what extent can they really feel they have some sense of control or say within the context of the classroom?

From my perspective, in order to solve such questions, one must strive to create a conducive learning environment and foster a love of learning, hence, it is of the utmost importance; to consider how we as teachers create an inclusive classroom which promotes self-efficacy and self-reflection. The paradigm? A classroom

where one is not just concerned with the whole but the individual and the relationship between these two is the ideal; a classroom that develops learners to be self-regulating, empowered and in control of their learning

Chapter 1: The purpose of the action research project

When considering what to investigate for my action research project I decided to further act upon the findings of my part 2 dissertation “‘The English Gap’: How do notions of motivation, ability and effort lead to a ‘gap’ in the English classroom?” (Houlihan, 2014). The intention, to benefit, through further investigation, a clear grasp of some of the issues that are specific to the school in which I teach. The focus of that study was to explore the ‘gap’ in English. The English department and GCSE results in particular had become ineffective demonstrating the need for radical change. In order to do this, it was necessary for a clear investigation into the learning of students in the English classroom with specific focus on motivation. In exploring the findings, the following extract outlines the most motivating factors in the English classroom.

From the student survey we see that the following are considered the most motivating factors in the English classroom across the three year groups:

- 1. Getting a good grade.*
- 2. Understanding what they need to do to improve their work*
- 3. Knowing how to achieve their grade*
- 4. The teacher*

(Houlihan, 2014)

The conclusions that emerged from the research highlighted the need for development of effective student consultation and in particular feedback in the classroom. One of the clear gains of consultation is that students can feel that their voice is valued in the society of the classroom (Flutter and Rudduck, 2004: 5). From experience, the constraints of the expected processes of the classroom; marking, assessment, administration and curriculum, can dominate over learning, effective feedback becomes another onerous task that teachers must complete. Much of the

time, teacher workload and demands of the physical act of teaching alienate learners to become part of the whole rather than viewing learners as individuals with individual needs. The collective dominates; collective feedback, for instance when responding to issues or trends identified by the teacher (“you all did terribly”) or even collective criticism, as to how the learning is being conducted (“you’re not working hard enough”) What such methods mean is that teachers, indirectly provide feedback that is ineffective, ambiguous and leave the learner in a liminal position in the classroom; demotivated and feeling inept.

In employing methods of feedback that individualise the learning for students, not only can we promote agency and self-efficacy in the classroom, but we can address such concerns, to improve the teaching and more importantly, the learning of the classroom.

The aim:

The word assess comes from the Latin assidere, which means “to sit beside”; thus assessing a student literally means to sit beside him or her to examine what he or she does more carefully.

Stefanakis and Meier, 2010

The focus of the action research project is to explore the impact of consultation in the classroom. The term consultation needs to be defined for the purpose of this study. By consultation I mean the process through which a rich dialogue about students' individual learning is embedded, through discussion, investigation and feedback. The aim of the study is to investigate the impact such consultation has on students and how feedback can be used in the classroom as a tool for learning. The title itself signals how the project will be conducted, through consultation. In 'changing the conversation', I mean students and teachers working collaboratively; students recognising that they too can be agents of change; they can control their progress through detailed discussion. I hope to investigate how students feel about collaboration and explore the impact learning conversations can have on the classroom. For the purpose of the study, I have coined the term learning conversations to mean the process of consulting students about their learning; a dialogic questioning of learning in the classroom.

Learning conversations will become the central tenant – looking at the impact that verbal feedback can have on the students that we teach - thinking about communication in the classroom and how it can be effectively exploited to empower students. The study will look at the ways that learning conversations can

be used in the classroom; how a dialogue of learning can impact students' experiences of learning.

Subsequent to the implementation of my intervention and designing the focus of the study, I discovered that The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) are currently conducting a study into Powerful Learning Conversations (PLC's) where the principles used in giving feedback in sport is applied to subjects such as English and Maths to measure its impact. The report into PLC's will be published in 2016 however the aim of the research recognises the current gap in research, training and practice of delivering effective feedback.

The importance of effective feedback is clear from the Sutton Trust-EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit, with it being assessed as having a very high impact for a low cost. The challenge is in supporting teachers to adopt good feedback approaches in their classroom and there is a lack of well-evidenced training programmes to improve practices of teachers and schools. This project then is an opportunity to fill a gap in the wider evidence base and develop an approach that, if found to be effective, could be scaled to more schools. (EEF, 2015)

Validating the importance of exploring the research further, The EEF, in conjunction with The Sutton Trust further highlight the issues confronted when adopting good feedback approaches and the importance of pursuing the findings in order to address the gap between evidence and practice. For the purpose of this study, consultation in the classroom accommodates the process of feedback, however, the method by which it is delivered needs to be addressed. In order to consider the effects, I have designed a feedback grid (Appendix A) as a tool to be implemented in the classroom in conjunction with the process. This will be the innovation that I propose for my classroom, and the means by which feedback will

be structured. However it is with specific focus on learning conversations that I will be analysing how effective the grid is.

In order to explore the term feedback one must consider what defines effective feedback and consultation incorporating – self assessment, peer assessment, teacher-student conversation, and formal teacher feedback. I intend to use the feedback grid as a classroom tool, incorporating it into routines, to structure feedback so that students and teachers have an effective method of tracking, personalised to individual needs. Students need to feel valued, to have an environment conducive to learning if we wish to change the ‘exam factories’ system we believe to be in place today and I aim to foster such attitudes to learning through effective feedback and consultation.

Recent research published from The EEF, in conjunction with The Sutton Trust (January 2015) suggest that effective feedback leads to high impact for low cost (figure 1), however concurrently the research suggests that delivering effective feedback can be problematic unless implemented successfully.

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Such research has lead me to question how, as a school, we implement feedback as a tool for learning and thus the impetus for the research to be conducted. As part of the team working on the implementation of a new school wide

Assessment, Recording and Reporting (ARR) Policy the aim of the study is to support and inform through research, action and analysis how a dialogic based learning environment can be fostered and developed. With the potential to impact future practice and a school wide approach to our delivery of feedback and assessment for learning, for learners and teachers to develop a culture of enquiry and discussion in the classroom, I hope that the action research can contribute to and inform a new approach to assessment for learning.

In addition to the school based concerns, the volatile educational climate that we find ourselves in lends itself to consultation in the classroom. With the introduction of Life without Levels, abandonment of GCSE grades (in favour of numbers) and radical overhauls of GCSE and A Level curricula, such turbulent changes mean that for teachers' uncertainty is ever pervasive in the classroom environment. For students too, such changes are disconcerting; ultimately their stake in the improvement of learning is far more important and thus getting the basics right, the ways in which they learn, the how of their learning, will be far more beneficial for learners than the what. The processes by which they learn therefore becomes the focus for developed consultation and feedback through tailored learning conversations in the English classroom.

Putting circumstance into context:

It is important to understand the context of the school in which the action research will be conducted in order to comprehend the significance and potential impact of that research. The basic characteristics of the school can be seen in the 2014 RAISEONLINE summary report in comparison to the 2013 RAISEONLINE

summary report in appendix C. The change in the profile of the school can be determined from the comparison, specifically in the context of the drastic changes that have occurred in the English department, the results moving to 81% A*-C in summer 2014 from 58% A*-C in summer 2013. Our concern as a department is currently on the aforementioned curriculum changes, the future curriculum for English at all key stages is changing and thus unpredictability of the coming years means that we need to harness the power of the classroom and the relationships we have with our learners in order to implement strategies to combat such uncertainty.

What is clear of the school intake from RAISE online (Reporting and Analysis for Improvement through school Self-Evaluation) data, is that Free school meals (FSM), Special Educational needs (SEN) deprivation and English as a second language (ESL) are all below the national average whilst SEN, school action plus and percentage of pupils supported by a statement of SEN are above the national average

(Houlihan, 2014)

A breakdown of the school's intake in relation to these groups can be seen in figure 2. What is most noticeable from the RAISEONLINE data is evidence of a clear sociological shift, including more students at the top of the prior attainment band, in the intake of the school (see appendix D). Besides the change in the demands of the curriculum, it is true also that both the school's data and the profile of students demand a change in the learning and teaching, in particular ensuring that the needs of all our students are met and that all students can achieve their potential.

The figure originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The figure was sourced at Basic Characteristics by National Curriculum year group (BasicNCYearGroup), RAISE online, 2014

Whilst we have transformed curriculum areas and departments, the overall transformation must be of our learners, not just individual subjects. We must create a learning environment that encourages independent learners, foster a culture of discussion and debate about learning and nurtures our students to become autonomous and engaged in a dynamic and turbulent economy of education.

Essentially it is with this in mind that I turn to feedback and consultation in the classroom. Through structured learning conversations, do students feel in control, have ownership of their learning, and understand the how of the learning in the classroom?

Questions guiding the literature review:

When it comes to the literature, I am concerned with the term consultation, how it is applied to action research and whether it is possible to employ the term for the purpose of this study. Driving the literature is an attempt to understand what issues are embedded in the task of consulting students about their work. In particular I wish to investigate where feedback becomes consultation, to allow teachers to make a greater connection with learners, developing an understanding of how to support them in their learning. The essential questions that must be asked with regards to this are:

1. To what extent does the social process of learning impact the culture of the classroom?
2. To what extent is it possible to create a culture of discourse in the classroom?
3. Is it possible to support the process of learning through consultation?
4. By what means do methods of consultation support the process of learning in the classroom?
5. What conclusions emerge from employing consultation in the classroom?
6. Engaging with students; what makes them want to learn?
7. Assessment for learning – what does effective feedback look like?
8. How can feedback be used effectively in the classroom?

Chapter 2: Consulting the Literature

Literature Review:

In order to understand the impact that consultation may have in the English classroom one must of course consider the *purpose* of consultation. It is clear, in the context of this study, consulting students will be used as a method of supporting learning through consultative feedback. One would also hope that such collaboration in the classroom will culminate in motivating students and empower them to become agentic in their learning, understanding that they too have a role to play in their own progress.

Through analysis of the literature I hope to explore the methods used to implement consultation and feedback in the classroom which will inform my own research and practice.

When exploring the research it has become apparent that there are four key areas for investigation.

1. Socio-cultural views of education
2. Consultation
3. Assessment for Learning
4. Feedback

To what extent does the social process of learning impact the culture of the classroom?

When considering the social processes that impact in the culture of the classroom, one must reflect on a sociocultural views of learning. Emergent from Vygotsky, socio-cultural theories explore the process of mediating the curriculum for the learner, to make sense of the society of the classroom and their role within that sphere. From this perspective, Myhill et al (2006) explore the potential of Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and how "Vygotsky believed in the value of instruction, and learning as a social communicative process (2006: 8). The idea that learning is social however can be misconstrued and can be accepted readily by teachers searching for a way of describing the learning process of the classroom. It is however the work of Bruner, building on Vygotsky, that develops the concept of mediation of knowledge for the learner or "scaffolding". It is impossible for me to discount the importance of Bruner (1975) and the notion of scaffolding learning when considering my action research, however the concept of scaffolding has become problematic, accepted as an educational term yet its meaning has been concurrently morphed by that acceptance. Both Myhill et al (2006) and Didau (2014) question the implementation and understanding of the term scaffolding. Negative connotations have become inherent in our understanding of the term, Didau suggesting that it has become synonymous with an aid to access work easier for the learner and "has become conflated with writing frames (and other harbingers of low expectation)" (Didau, 2014: 39). Myhill et al correspondingly, suggest that in the classroom we use the term to describe

the relationships within that domain and that there is “growing tendency to use the word ‘scaffolding’ synonymously with the word ‘support’ (2006: 10)

Themes emergent from a socio-culturalist perspective of the classroom are reviewed by Barony Eun who posits Hedgegaard’s (1995) view that; “socioculturally oriented instruction [recognises] teaching and learning as a process, rather than product, aimed towards the co-construction of knowledge” (2010: 404). It must be considered from such a perspective that issues can emerge. Sharing a common culture, a culture of collaboration is vital for success from the sociocultural perspective, thus the relationship between the learner and the teacher is vital. If goals are not shared in the context of the classroom, it “may lead to misunderstandings that result in hindering the affective aspects of development. Students may feel that their values, beliefs, and ways of behaving are not respected by their teacher.” (Eun, 2010: 408) Clearly, the culture of collaboration needs to be invested in and established in order to negate such issues. On reflection, it would be erroneous of me to contemplate solely the idea that through scaffolding feedback, learning and teaching will progress in the classroom. Thus the literature brings me to question the roles that we assume as learners and teachers and the potential impact that the action research will have on those roles.

Bruner claims that the “introduction of an innovation in teaching will necessarily involve changing the folk psychological and folk pedagogical theories of teachers – and, to a surprising extent, of pupils as well.” (Bruner, 1999: 5) Such interpretations suggest that we must reconsider identities in the classroom,

adapting the characteristics traditional to learners and teachers in the social positioning of the classroom. This links to the idea presented through the research of Barnes and Rosen (1969) who claim that learners must negotiate their identity and contribution within the microcosm of the classroom. The question that must be explored is to what extent collaboration and consultation in the classroom can be successful as a method of reshaping the learning and the learners in the classroom? With this in mind, it is necessary to accept that through implementing an innovation to challenge how feedback is delivered through consultation the relationships of the classroom and familiar traditional roles may change as a result. Bruner explores the culture of learning and how;

children usually begin by assuming that the teacher has the knowledge and passes it on to the class. Under appropriate conditions, they soon learn that others in the class might have that knowledge too, and that it can be shared. (1999: 9)

Furthering the argument from a socio-cultural perspective, the potential impact of the innovation on the social process of learning is on the emerging roles defined by the consultation.

Essentially the culture of investigation and learning will inform the culture of the classroom. Bruner suggests that there are “four dominant models of learner’s minds...each emphasises different educational goals” (Bruner, 1999: 10) and thus one must consider to what extent these ‘models’ can impact on the educational environment in the classroom and concurrently the learners roles and identities. With specific focus on these ‘models’, the third that Bruner explores is “Seeing children as thinkers: The development of intersubjective interchange” (Bruner, 1999: 12). Through this model, Bruner suggests that the learner establishes

themselves and understands their place in the context of the classroom, their perspective of the process of learning becomes valued. This furthers the concept of altering the roles and identities in the society of the classroom.

Through this model of learning the teacher must be;

concerned with the child's perspective in the process of learning. The teacher, from this perspective, is concerned with understanding what the child thinks and how she arrives at what she believes.

From this child centred perspective;

Understanding is fostered through discussion and collaboration, with the child encouraged to express her own views better to achieve some meeting of minds with others who may have other views. (Bruner, 1999: 12)

Thus through Bruner's concept the ideal becomes less child centred and more a meeting of minds. Through exploring what matters to learners and how they organise ideas the teacher can support intersubjectivity. Mutual discourse then holds the key to a learning environment of active engagement with learners and "discourse, collaboration and negotiation" (Bruner, 1999: 13) The process of learning from this perspective is one of a shared experience, where co-operation alongside mutual understanding and experience is concerned with the practice rather than goal orientated, the how of learning rather than the what. Essentially; "this model of education is mutualist and dialectical, more concerned with interpretation and understanding than with the achievement of factual knowledge or skilled performance". (Bruner, 1999: 13)

To summarise from a socio-cultural perspective, learning can be viewed, in particular from the lens of this model as being "an exchange, an understanding between the teacher and the child". (Bruner, 1999: 13) and thus it supports collaborative learning in the classroom and perhaps consultation too.

Understanding becomes a tool, a concept of how we can act on the world; our mind is shaped by the culture we are in but we also shape the cultures we are in. In this guise, teachers become facilitators to learning rather than instructors;

Modern pedagogy is moving increasingly to the view that the child should be aware of her own thought processes, and that it is crucial for the pedagogical theorist and teacher alike to help her to become more metacognitive – to be aware of how she goes about her learning and thinking as she is about the subject matter she is studying. (Bruner, 1999: 18)

It is with this in mind that we must explore collaboration in the classroom, which can lead to “full mastery” through reflection of work and how to improve, essentially supporting students to “become more meta-cognitive” (Bruner, 1999: 18) Is it possible to develop students ownership of their learning and characteristics of self-efficacy, and agency through awareness, conscious consideration and ultimately consultation?

[To what extent is it possible to create a culture of discourse in the classroom?](#)

What we learn from the research is that learning is a social process and part of that process is the dialogue of the classroom. The culture of the classroom plays a vital role in supporting both learners and teachers to negotiate their roles within that sphere for as Barnes claims:

Not only is the teacher-class group a social microcosm, but one which also interacts with the social macrocosm of which it is a part And as the complicated commerce within the group is largely carried on through language, so is it largely through language that society explicit or covertly defines and limits the activities of the group.

(Barnes, 1969: 11)

Thus it is the value of discussion, for Barnes, the social interactions and the role that learners play within that interaction that impacts the culture of the classroom.

With the notion of conversation being the commerce of the classroom, Barnes

proposes that the language, the words that we use results in powerful collaboration between learner and teacher but also between learners too. According to Rosen too, the value of students voices in the classrooms must not be ignored for “their everyday talking voices are the most subtle and versatile means they possess for making sense of what they do and for making sense of others, including their teachers” (1969: 127) Essentially, a language that allows for us to make sense of the interactions in the classroom and to develop a culture of discourse. The Bullock Report (1975) explored the creation of meaning through a system of semiotics that are used in the classroom; ‘We interpret what we perceive at any given moment by relating it to our body of past experiences, and respond to it in the light of that interpretation’ (Bullock, 1975: 47). It is possible to make links to Bruner’s concept of folk-psychologies and folk-pedagogies and the need for these to alter in order to internalise what is to be learned. Bringing prior experiences to the classroom and thus impacting learning is furthered by the socio-cultural perspective of Moll and Greenburg, referring to ‘funds of knowledge’ (1990: 322). The term, coined to describe the knowledge that students bring with them to their learning, is defined by the past experiences of learning they have encountered. It is these “funds of knowledge” that can dictate their relationship with learning and the classroom. Myhill et al agree, and suggest that the negotiation of prior learning in the classroom is a difficult task for the teacher as;

Every child brings to the classroom a unique set of personal experiences, social encounters and understandings... for the teacher, the challenge is to enable and support children in making connections between this set of individual experiences and understandings and new ideas being introduced in school. (2006: 85)

To clarify, the literature suggests that it is prior experience, discussion and a system of semiotic meaning making through the language that we use that allows for a culture of discourse to be created in the classroom. In order to investigate further, theories of educational research and their views on consultation in the classroom, it is important for the literature of Mercer (1995) to be considered.

Through 'The Guided Construction of Knowledge', Mercer explores the socio-cultural aspect of talk amongst teachers and learners and how it is this 'talk' that creates a culture in the classroom. Mercer looks at how most consider teaching and learning as separate concepts when analysing classroom culture and the role of language within that classroom culture. In order to explore the construction of knowledge, Mercer recouples the concepts to become "teaching-and-learning".

(Mercer, 1995: 4) Through treating the concepts as a whole, Mercer posits that it is language, used as a tool, to interpret and thus construct knowledge that is essential, as a process in the classroom, in order to share our experiences, communicate and transfer knowledge (1995: 4). It is clear that Mercer places great value on the opportunities that communication can offer us, conversations allow students to develop and explore knowledge in a supportive culture where knowledge is shared. Furthermore Mercer claims that "by using language to learn, we may change the language we use. This is why an analysis of the process of teaching and learning, of constructing knowledge, must be an analysis of language in use." (Mercer, 1995: 6) In considering the value of collaboration, Mercer sets out that teachers must understand the learner's knowledge that they bring with them to the classroom in order to be successful. (1995: 10) Moreover learners may also be effective in constructing knowledge without the guidance of a teacher,

“some important kinds of learning are more likely to happen when learners are able to talk and work together without a teacher” (Mercer, 1995: 13). Essentially such literature provides vital relevance to the action research to be carried out. If one wishes to explore collaboration in the classroom then clearly one must consider different types of collaboration to be effective to engage learners in developing understanding and knowledge in the culture of the classroom. In developing such a culture, Mercer explores how teachers attempt to guide learning through talk, outlining three key features. He claims that teachers use talk to:

1. elicit relevant knowledge from students
2. respond to things that students say
3. describe the classroom experiences that they share with students

(1995: 25)

Moreover, Mercer recognises that “the success of the process of teaching and learning depends on contributions by both teachers *and* learners” (Mercer, 1995: 44). Throughout Mercer’s ‘Guided Construction of Knowledge’ it is clear that neither can be treated separately and as previously suggested teaching-and-learning become coupled, impossible to explore one without the other. Clearly in constructing knowledge and exploring teaching-and-learning, Mercer outlines that understanding is a mutual experience, “the essence of human knowledge and understanding is that it *is* shared” (1995: 66). Thus Mercer defines the socio-cultural approach as being a process of communication and shared knowledge and this approach “gives explicit recognition to how people construct knowledge together” (1995: 67). Through this however, Mercer deems that in order to be successful the construction of knowledge must demand “continuity” in order to

consolidate the knowledge gained. (Mercer, 1995: 68) Continuity must be considered and collaboration in particular, for collaborative talk can be viewed as part of a 'long conversation'. (Mercer, 1995: 70) In exploring how knowledge can be guided, conversed in the classroom, Mercer explores the theories of Vygotsky and Bruner. Vygotsky's importance to Mercer is the recognition of the social mode of learning through the thought that "the support of a teacher can enable learners to achieve levels of understanding that they never would alone." (Mercer, 1995: 72) In identifying the role teachers play in conjunction with learners Mercer sees knowledge construction as "a joint achievement". (1995: 73) Furthermore Mercer explores Bruner's concept of 'scaffolding' as a valuable model of how knowledge can be guided by teachers. In essence, Mercer views the concept as beneficial in supporting the learning process, providing students with the support that they need in order to be successful in the classroom in developing the ability and competence of those involved in collaboration. Additionally, Mercer deems that scaffolding reinforces how learning is a shared process, between more than one party, a culture that is reinforced and that learners may scaffold learning for each other, mediating the knowledge that needs to be gained. (Mercer, 1995: 73)

Mercer claims that:

One good test of whether or not you really understand something is having to explain it to someone else. And an excellent method for evaluating and revising your understanding is arguing, in a reasonable manner, with someone who you can treat as a social and intellectual equal. (1995: 89)

Simply put, we typically do not encourage this type of interaction in the classroom and thus students are not au fait with learning conversations between themselves.

Mercer goes on to posit that; "pupil – pupil talk is still regarded suspiciously by

many teachers.” (Mercer, 1995: 89) Furthermore Mercer explores the views of Piaget where, in his earlier work he “sketched out a role for the significance of interaction between peers – it helped children to ‘decentre’, to become sensitive to hear perspectives on the world than their own. (Mercer, 1995: 90)

Ultimately in exploring what type of talk should be encouraged in the classroom, Mercer admits that the research “does not provide a neat set of findings” however he claims that “talk between learners has been shown to be valuable for the construction of knowledge”. (Mercer, 1995: 98) Des-Fountain and Howe agree to some extent and conclude that “Learning through talk is often a long process... because it is social and collaborative it will often appear ‘untidy’”. (1992: 146) For them, in reference to research of Wood (1988) and Bennett (1984) of learner-learner interactions, the findings suggest positively how they can impact and support learning however the benefits are not always clear. They suggest two reasons as to why studies are not always supportive;

We believe that there are two related reasons for these disappointing findings. The first is that too few teachers understand, or know how to organise true collaborative work... the second reason is that there has been a surprising lack of attention to, and evidence of, the complex ways in which talk between children supports learning.

(Des-Fountain & Howe, 1992: 130)

Essentially, the issues suggest the need to understand how to support collaboration between peers in the classroom in order to discover meanings. Attention must also be given to the methods through which collaborative talk is conducted and, the purpose of that talk. To be effective, talk between learners must be purposeful, relevant and clear for both the learner and teacher. In order

to solve problems and ensure progress is made, Mercer claims that the ideal type of talk in the classroom:

is talk in which partners present ideas as clearly and as explicitly as necessary for them to become shared and jointly evaluated. Second it is talk in which partners reason together – problems are jointly analysed, possible explanations are compared, joint decisions are reached. From an observer's point of view, their reasoning is visible in the talk. (Mercer, 1995: 98)

Mercer presents the ideal – learners share experiences and knowledge through discourse. It is this discourse that defines the construction of knowledge as a social process and that “it is both desirable and possible to encourage learners to use some of those ways of talking to construct knowledge together”. (Mercer, 1995: 115)

Mercer (2008) further draws on sociocultural perspectives and in particular builds on Vygotsky when considering the social interaction in the development of children's thinking. In exploring Vygotskian tradition Mercer suggests, the importance of his work in determining the impact that dialogue can have on learning. Dialogue can be interpreted as the difference between speech and talk, which Mercer defines, through analysis of studies focused on the importance of teacher-student dialogue and referring to Alexander (2000) that “changes in patterns of pupil-teacher interaction increase pupils' active participation and motivation”. (Mercer, 2008: 92) Mercer's own research highlights the benefit of teacher – student dialogue “Our Vygotskian hypothesis was that the teachers who achieved better results used dialogue to provide more effective scaffolding for their pupils' learning”. (Mercer, 2008: 93) This study defines a set of characteristics that are distinguishable by these type of interactions which proves useful when

considering the action research project. The most relevant in terms of the proposed action research project is the conclusion that essentially the students that did better when dialogue was used to support learning were those who:

treated learning as a social, communicative process. They organised interchanges of ideas and mutual support amongst pupils and generally encouraged pupils to take a more active, vocal role in their education. (Mercer, 2008: 93)

Mercer ultimately focuses his work on talk in the classroom, the language that is used. The focus of the action research project; collaboration through learning conversations and the impact of feedback; develops this in that it is not the language that is being investigated but the process of building a dialogic classroom and a culture of discursive learning. It is with this in mind that we move to the next concern informing the study, consultation in the classroom. Thus far, the research has supported the action research project's purpose of employing learning conversations as learning is deemed to be a social process that requires communication, talk and the guided construction of knowledge through a culture of exchange and shared experience in the classroom.

[Is it possible to support the process of learning through consultation?](#)

Rudduck and McIntyre (2004) recognise that there is an increasing movement in the field of consultation in schools. Clearly, from the outset, Rudduck and McIntyre (2004) set out the basic tenant that consultation in the classroom is seen as giving pupils a voice, however there are increasing numbers in schools and movements who deem this as a right and entitlement to be consulted about their own education. Conclusively, Rudduck and McIntyre explain, whilst wholly in support of

consulting students to improve learning, “practice is far from a simple matter”.

(Rudduck and McIntyre, 2004: 3)

The ever developing field of consultation in schools is further explored by Flutter and Rudduck (2004) with a focus on the “how – and the why- schools have been developing strategies for pupil consultation and participation.” (Flutter and Rudduck, 2004: xi) Through their work they outline a rationale for consultation:

Consultation is defined as ‘the action of taking counsel together; deliberation or conference’ and this notion of ‘taking counsel’ suggests that the parties involved in the consultation process have been invited to contribute because they have relevant and important views and information to share. Pupil consultation therefore, rests on the principle that pupils can bring something worthwhile to discussions about schooling. The term can be applied to any research or development strategy or research approach that invites pupils to talk about their experiences as learners in school. Pupil consultation is nested within the broader principle of pupil participation. (Flutter and Rudduck, 2004: 5)

It is clear that Flutter and Rudduck identify consultation as being crucial in developing how students learn, through shared experiences, dialogue and certainly participation, students thrive. Furthermore it can be deemed that through consultation one is both employing and encouraging discourse about learning and thus students become acclimatised to and accomplished in talking about how to improve their learning. Moreover, Flutter and Rudduck posit the question: “Why should this process of dialogue – of thinking and talking about learning- affect pupils’ progress?” (2004: 7) The response is not as complicated as first thought, these shared experiences allow for a sharing of knowledge and a shared understanding of capabilities, ability and information about the students that we teach. Essentially, consultation can impact the culture of the classroom in that in having these shared moments between teacher-student or student-

student we are not just sharing knowledge but creating a richer classroom dialogue and engagement with students learning. Furthermore Flutter and Rudduck (2004: 22) suggest that in engaging in conversations about their learning the focus of learning shifts and students become participants rather than the object of the learning process. The difficulty lies in quantifying “the extent to which these strategies make an impact because they represent only one dimension of the context of learning in school”. (Flutter and Rudduck, 2004: 11)

Clearly there are other factors which also impact on learning in conjunction with consultation. Furthermore, Flutter and Rudduck suggest that “Teachers may find that pupil consultation brings to light issues which are not simple or straightforward to address” (2004: 23). Through their research, they identify issues for teachers such as; tensions developing, reluctance to participate alongside practical difficulties such as resources and time. The issues identified for students are that they may approach consultation with suspicion, anxiety, awkwardness (Flutter and Rudduck, 2004: 23). The drawbacks of pupil consultation are considered by Flutter and Rudduck, where consultation is implemented it is not always developed and thus has limited impact on the participants. In addition, in gathering data it can be deemed that consultation does not always glean a comprehensive picture of all, just those who were consulted. In terms of an educational context, this can be misrepresented by those chosen to be consulted. To overcome such issues, one must ensure that, as Mercer suggests, continuity of consultation is in place to “consolidate knowledge” and ensure that consultation becomes a “long conversation” (Mercer, 1995: 70).

Further to this, Flutter and Rudduck suggest that in order to overcome the issue of

gathering data, one must ensure that they use a variety of data gathering techniques and they must “‘triangulate’ findings drawn from different methods” (Flutter and Rudduck, 2004: 75) The research goes on to explore how consultation can be employed successfully when considering assessment; feedback is essential. Feedback must be clear in order to promote progress. Students must feel that they are making good progress in order to engage in the classroom; to do this feedback must be addressed as a focus for consultation between teacher, students and peers. In engaging in such dialogue about learning, students begin to mould their identity in the classroom and perhaps gain a sense of belonging, thus it can be considered that feedback creates a culture of consultation that promotes a cohesive classroom defined by shared interests and goals, dialogue and discussion. For Flutter and Rudduck, talk becomes a crucial element in consulting students; “pupils often said they did not have enough opportunities to talk to someone about their learning; when they are given these opportunities they found the experience valuable” (2004: 120). Ultimately that is what this research aims to uncover, to what extent can learning conversations be used to support the progress of learners in the English classroom?

By what means do methods of consultation support the process of learning in the classroom?

Young people are capable of insightful and constructive analysis of their experiences of learning in school

(Arnot et al, 2004: 4)

The ESRC/TLRP Consulting Pupils about Teaching and Learning Project, 2004, explored the issues surrounding consultation in an educational context. In

'Developing Dialogue about Teaching and Learning' (2004), Arnot et al outline how putting consultation into practice is not always straightforward. For Arnot et al, exploring consultation meant exploring how teaching and learning can be developed and enhanced through consulting students about their learning. In fact they deem their agenda as being somewhat "more radical than most of the consultation in schools today" (2004: 3) in that they are concerned with what learners have to say about their experiences in the classroom. Again the social process of learning comes under scrutiny supporting the consensus that consultation helps to facilitate learning as shared practice amongst learners. The first project presented in Arnot et al's research is that of Pedder and McIntyre (2004) who define four main areas that students deem valuable in their learning. Firstly, "engaging pupils more deeply in their learning" (Arnot et al, 2004: 10) clearly outlines that language is important in mediating guidance; it is through language students create meaning. Pedder and McIntyre (2004) identify that in order to be effective, we must also "contextualise learning more appropriately" (2004: 10), thus it must be necessary to ensure that students receive effective feedback, to consult them about their learning to make connections between understanding, knowledge and the tasks required of them. For Arnot et al, through consultation we can clearly see learners demonstrate self-efficacy, become agentic and also value their learning experience more, thus we must "[foster] a sense of agency and ownership among pupils" (2004: 10) According to the research we must also "[arrange] social contexts that are more amenable to learning" (Arnot et al, 2004: 10) thus, should we use consultation in the classroom, we must understand that we are re-contextualising learning, shaping

the culture of consultation as a valued method of progressing the acquisition of knowledge for our students. In relation to the literature, Pedder and McIntyre's project concludes that in consulting students, their responses were "designed to engage them more deeply, more actively in more diverse ways, more sociably and with more responsibility in classroom learning activities" (Arnot et al, 2004: 41); consideration of pupils ideas can enrich the learning process and the outcomes of the students; a reciprocal and mutually beneficial product of consultation.

The second project presented by Arnot et al (2004), 'The social dynamics of classroom learning', explores the research of Bernstein (1996) and his concerns with whose voice is heard in the classroom, defining it as the inequality in "the acoustic of the school" (2004: 43). They suggest that Bernstein's concept of "democratic pedagogic rights': enhancement, inclusion and participation" (2004: 43) are key in developing the process of learning through consulting pupils. Arnot et al (2004) reframe these notions around the themes of confidence, inclusion and control. All of these can be achieved through consultation and through effective social dynamics in the classroom. It is these dynamics that must be redefined in order to make effective use of consultation. The questions posed by Arnot et al (2004) provide a useful framework for further investigation perhaps, a useful tool in structuring discussion with students about their learning.

In order for students to engage effectively in the classroom they must feel as if their opinions are valued, promoting confidence and in turn ensuring that the culture of education is inclusive and all contributions are considered. Arnot et al (2004) explore how consultation must be carefully considered to be effective,

time must be dedicated to the process, “if teachers introduce consultation techniques which do not allow for reflection they are experienced as irrelevant” (2004: 79) reinforcing students’ lack of control in the classroom. Ultimately, the project determines that interactions in the classroom must be social in order to be considered important. In concluding their research, Arnot et al (2004: 87) explore how both projects present contrasting findings. In the first project Pedder and McIntyre (2004) outline how students yearn to have some control in their own learning. In contrast, Arnot et al (2004) deem that classroom social dynamics are far more complex in their nature and that in consulting learners one must be prepared to receive many different perspectives of the classroom. To summarise, the research suggests that thoughtful consideration must be given to consulting learners, “methods of consultation which give pupils supportive guidance, but which also give them space to say what is important to them, are likely to be most valued” (Arnot et al, 2004: 89).

What conclusions emerge from employing consultation in the classroom?

*We saw **consultation** as talking with pupils about things that matter to them in the classroom and school and that affect their learning. Ideally consultation is a conversation that builds a habit of easy discussion between teacher and pupil about learning.* (Rudduck and Intyre, 2007: 7)

Rudduck and McIntyre (2007) recognise how through consultation teacher-student relationships can be transformed. Fostering a culture of consultation encourages student motivation and a reinvigoration of teachers practice. Their research suggests that consultation as action research is both diverse and rare. For them, consultation is with regards to teaching and learning within the sphere

of the classroom, not just listening to student voices on how to improve school. It is clear that much value is placed on the practice of consultation and schools can benefit from this process if it impacts what happens in classrooms within the society of the school. From the literature it is clear that early studies conducted in the field of consultation did not place emphasis on the importance of feedback and highlight how there was not “any expectation that the episode would serve to open up dialogue, on a regular basis, between pupils and their teachers.”

(Rudduck and McIntyre, 2007: 21) For them, consultation is effective if it impacts on learning; how teachers reflect on and amend their practice as a result. How it is both implemented and conducted therefore is difficult to track as schools will use consultation in their own guise to address their own issues. In recognising such issues, Rudduck and McIntyre (2007) deem that conducting large scale investigations into the impact of consultation would not be fruitful; producing unrealistic evidence regarding the impact consultation can have on teachers and students. Furthermore they suggest what they can confidently present, in the absence of such evidence, is “the *potential* impact of pupil consultation” and the many benefits, to teaching and learning, which can be discussed as a result of consultation (Rudduck and McIntyre, 2007: 140). Arnot et al suggest too that practice is not so clear but that emergent from their research, the “desire for reflection on learning helps to define the potential of consultation techniques” (2004: 77) and furthermore “pupil consultation could potentially challenge taken-for-granted assumptions about learning processes” (2004: 84). In considering what the research tells us, Rudduck and McIntyre (2007) separate the impact into distinct findings; the impact on pupils’ and the impact on teachers. Primarily this

demonstrates the importance of these roles in the process of consultation in addition highlighting the duality of consultation; one's impact simply cannot be considered without the other. One of the most pertinent benefits of consultation from this perspective is the change in pupil's attitudes. If pupils have a say in their learning then surely they can become more engaged and motivated by becoming active participants and "develop more positive attitudes to learning" (Rudduck and McIntyre, 2007: 140). Essentially in redesigning students' roles in the classroom, consultation fosters a culture of education, a sense of ownership, whilst concurrently implementing shared goals and experience amongst the learners. Through changing perceptions and attitudes to learning, consultation allows students to change their attitudes toward teachers – they become partners in their learning and therefore consultation can develop more positive relations between students and teachers as well as "more positive perceptions of teachers" (Rudduck and McIntyre, 2007: 140) The sense of belonging to a group with shared goals and aims has already been recognised. The ability to have some input and control, a say in their own learning allows students to feel that they are an important part of the learning process; "when pupils find themselves treated as partners in the educational enterprise, not merely as objects, they can come to see themselves as members with a stake in the enterprise." (Rudduck and McIntyre, 2007: 142) Additionally Rudduck and McIntyre determine that consultation develops "capacity or readiness to talk about learning and teaching" (2007: 142) which cannot be dismissed in the context of a school setting. Talking about teaching and learning is something that does indeed need to be fostered and provides a rich environment in which a learning centred approach is valued

and developed. In considering such positives, Rudduck and McIntyre (2007) suggest the impact this has on individual pupils and their identity as a learner is also positive and thus as has been discussed and previously encountered, students become agentic – they can effectively contribute to their learning and progress.

With regards to the impact consultation has on teaching, the research suggests that for teachers it provides fresh perspectives on the students in the classroom, their capabilities and even themselves as teachers. Consultation provides a platform for insightful and meaningful relationships to be forged between teachers and learners and furthermore allows for critical insights into the society of the classroom. What is deemed as crucially important is the recognition that consultation leads to a renewal of some sorts in the classroom. As teachers at times we become too dependent on standards, curriculum and constraints of the classroom. Rudduck and McIntyre suggest that consultation can inspire teachers with a “renewed sense of excitement” (2007: 147) but also demonstrate that they are ready to embrace the potential to change and adapt because of consultation – the learning becomes the driving force in the classroom and teachers must adapt to the needs of those consulted. The drawbacks must also be considered, for consultation “would not be of much value to teachers in practice if it did not offer them practical agendas leading... to improvements in their teaching and in their pupils’ learning.” (Rudduck and McIntyre, 2007: 148) In conclusion, Rudduck and McIntyre suggest consultation can be effective in that the process itself yields a change in the dynamic between teachers and pupils through fostering relationships and valuing how both parties can become effective agents in the process of learning. (2007: 151) Concurrently, they outline that consultation must

be carefully considered, planned for and embraced to be effective. For it to be effective we must “create conditions of dialogue in which we listen to and learn from each other in new ways” (Rudduck and McIntyre, 2007: 36) Furthermore consultation should enlighten teachers about their students learning experiences in the classroom and cause them to act on them.

The issue that has become clear from this research is very much based around the term consultation. What the literature suggests is that consultation can lead to positive experiences, reformed classrooms and learning experiences, motivated students who are agents of the learning process in the classroom. What is unclear to me however is the method of consultation. Throughout the literature, consultation is understood to be representative of discussion, dialogue and feedback about the types of teaching and learning that is happening within the social dynamic of the classroom. I too wish to explore consultation through the medium of discussion and dialogue in the classroom but instead of using it to explore how students *feel* about teaching and learning, is it possible to use it as a tool to enable students to become reflective about specific learning, their learning? Rudduck and McIntyre (2007) recognise that across studies into consultation, four key areas are apparent and recurrently suggest what pupils’ desire in their learning. They are; “the avoidance of tedium, the pursuit of meaningful learning, the need for togetherness and the aspiration to be autonomous.” (2007: 59) Surely then it would appear possible, building on studies in consultation, to explore how utilising consultation as a way to provide structured feedback in the classroom, would allow these issues to be addressed.

“Meaningful learning”, the research tells us is what students’ desire and an aspect of this learning is that:

clear and thoughtful explanation of what pupils are supposed to be doing in a particular lesson or task, and the kind of feedback that helps them to understand how to improve their work. (Rudduck and McIntyre, 2007: 73)

Engaging with students, what makes them want to learn?

Postlethwaite and Haggerty (2002), explore students’ views of learning and link them to notions of motivation, they consider the impact that student views can have on the improvement of learning. In posing key questions to students, a consensus was reached through the responses gleaned. This study thus becomes important with reference to consulting students, considering their views and how this impacts on learning. Interest it seems from the student perspective is maintained through a variety of methods; building positive relationships, recognising the individuality of the learners in the classroom, encouraging and praising students which leads to increased confidence and increasing the variety in lessons. (Postlethwaite and Haggerty, 2002: 187) Of more interest to my study is the recognition of the importance of feedback and working closely with the students “it was important that the teacher knew their work well...teachers should ‘assess your work in relation to your previous efforts so that praise could be accepted and constructive criticism used’.” (Postlethwaite and Haggerty, 2002: 187). In considering such views one must think about the benefits to redrafting and improvement of work, with particular focus on the English classroom. Consultation may also be of benefit if considered in developing the teacher-student relationship – students clearly value feedback and it “should help them to

understand what was good about their work ... and where improvements might be made". (Postlethwaite and Haggerty, 2002: 187) This is a clear rationale for consulting students about their work and to be effective consultation must be individual and thought through. With specific reference to the assessment and marking of work, "references were made to the importance of regular marking of work...they really valued marking which included specific comments."

(Postlethwaite and Haggerty, 2002: 187) It appears that marking and feedback must be tailored to suit each student's needs. Clearly value is placed in ensuring that marking is specific, detailed and demonstrates a conceptual awareness of a student's ability and progress and how they can improve in their learning.

Consultation then becomes as important from a pupils perspective, they should be able to consult their teacher about their own learning and progress for "many students wanted teachers to be approachable so that they felt able to ask questions and make mistakes without fear of the consequences"(Postlethwaite and Haggerty, 2002: 188). Consequently, the literature suggests that engaging in conversations about learning develops a student's sense of self-efficacy and motivation, the teacher becoming a supportive frame of reference for them to use as a tool in their own learning.

[Assessment for learning – what does effective feedback look like?](#)

Black and Wiliam's seminal research 'Inside the Black Box' (2001) explores the methods by which Assessment for Learning can be employed to raise standards in the classroom. Feedback and the potential to improve learning are connected; through this foundation, Black and Wiliam (2001) explore the problems associated

with how feedback is delivered to learners in the classroom. They identify that in the educational environment, there is an over emphasis on giving marks and grades rather than giving useful advice. Furthermore, the purpose of feedback is often only to serve “social and managerial functions, often at the expense of the learning functions.” (Black and Wiliam, 2001: 4) The identification of the relationship between the input in order to achieve the desired outcome is commonly identified by the research as of the utmost importance thus such identification supports the idea of consulting students about the what and where of their learning in order to address how to get to the desired target. In order to do this, Black and Wiliam (2001) identify key ways to ensure improvement in formative assessment and in particular the delivery of feedback. They state that;

Feedback to any pupil should be about the particular qualities of his or her work, with advice on what he or she can do to improve, and should avoid comparisons with other pupils.

The dialogue between pupil and a teacher should be thoughtful, reflective, focused to evoke and explore understanding, and conducted so that all pupils have an opportunity to think and express their ideas.

(2001: 6-8)

How can feedback be effective in the classroom?

Much research has since emerged examining the power that feedback has in the classroom and its potential effect on learning. Hattie and Timperley (2007) explore the impact that feedback can have in the classroom, taking into account the different types of feedback offered in the process of learning. To them, feedback as a concept is seen “as information provided by an agent (eg teacher, peer, book, parent, self, experience) regarding aspects of one’s performance or

understanding". (Hattie and Timperley, 2007: 81) The most interesting aspect of such a definition is that they consider feedback as part of a process, it cannot exist without initial input and thus what is defined by them as "a continuum of instruction and feedback" (Hattie and Timperley, 2007: 82) In identifying feedback as part as a "continuum" it means they value the relationship between feedback and instruction as being inseparable and congruent. Feedback, has a purpose to fill the gap – the gap, being defined by Sadler (1989) as "between what is understood and what is aimed to be understood." (Hattie and Timperley, 2007: 82) Such definitions correlate with current educational research and specifically with concerns about the process that needs to be undertaken to "close the gap". As previously referenced, The Education Endowment Foundation and The Sutton Trust identify feedback as being effective in "closing the gap". However, they, along with Hattie and Timperley (2007) identify that feedback itself is not straightforward. Issues emerge; how feedback is delivered and the type of feedback used contribute to the process, which incorporates the initial instruction and the context of the learning. Feedback, it appears can be powerful if effective but can concurrently be unsuccessful and shape destructive learning experiences for students in the classroom. Hattie and Timperley go further referencing Winnie and Butler (1994) who claim that:

feedback is information with which a learner can confirm, add to, overwrite, tune, or restructure information in memory, whether that information is domain knowledge, meta-cognitive knowledge, beliefs about self and tasks or cognitive tactics and strategies. (2007: 82)

In effect, one must also remember that feedback can be, in reference to Kulhavy (1977), "accepted, modified, or rejected" (Hattie and Timperley, 2007: 82) and

thus the communication between the deliverer and the receiver, the dialogue of feedback supported by discussion and questioning is important to ensure that the message of feedback from both agents is grasped and understood. Effective feedback requires negotiation of what is currently understood and what is required to be understood to make progress and thus it is worth questioning whether the continuum of instruction and feedback must be returned to, whether it is a sequence where further instruction and feedback must be delivered in order for students to reach the desired goal and progress. Hattie and Timperley suggest that for both teacher and students, effective feedback needs to consider three questions;

Where am I going? (What are the goals?), How am I going? (What progress is being made toward the goal?), and Where to next? (What activities need to be undertaken to make better progress?) ... feed up, feed back, and feed forward. (2007: 86)

Such notions incorporated in the process of feedback require the incorporation of self-reflection and awareness of their own work. This is furthered by Hattie and Timperley (2007) further posit that self-awareness and error detection of one's own work, the where and how of the process, can be powerful and empowering for students in becoming self-regulating and effective agents in the construction of their own knowledge. It is worth noting here that Hattie and Timperley (2007: 97) suggest that each of the feedback questions works at four distinct levels as represented in figure 3. When each of these questions are considered, it is the learners' role in the process that is most active and involved. Feedback should not be done to them nor should it be delivered to them. In order for feedback to be successful it must be a collaborative, shared process of questions, enquiry into the

current understanding and the desired purpose to be achieved. It must be concluded then that the process of conducting feedback through consultation, through structured learning conversations is possible to be effective in the classroom and thus adding further credence to the research project to be conducted.

The figure originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The figure was sourced at Hattie, J. Timperley, H., 2007. The power of feedback. Review of Educational Research, .77, pp.81 – 112. Available at: <http://education.qld.gov.au/staff/development/performance/resources/readings/power-feedback.pdf>. [Accessed June 18, 2015]

Hattie and Timperley (2007) conclude their investigation through discussion of the importance of the learning environment. In order for feedback to be successful, the climate of the classroom must accommodate the conditions required for feedback to take place. It is the need to foster the culture of dialogue and discussion in the classroom that may need careful consideration when moving forward with the research.

Whilst Hattie and Timperley (2007) explore the power that feedback can have, the issues that feedback generates must be considered. There is much research to be consulted when considering the impact that feedback can have but what is clearly common of all studies, concerned with feedback, is that it is an influential but difficult tool or as Voerman et al state “feedback has a powerful but variable influence on learning”. (2012: 1107) Shute too recognises, research concerning feedback can be inconsistent and conflicting, the goal of her research to make meaning of “the tangled web of formative feedback research and its relationship to learning” (2007: 1). Feedback can be difficult to measure precisely, as a concept it embodies many different forms and methods and it is difficult to define what effective feedback is. A commonality of all the literature is that for feedback to have an impact it must be effective. Voerman et al suggest that two types of feedback must be considered when exploring the issues, ‘progress-feedback’ and ‘discrepancy-feedback’ (2012: 1108) and that both can be considered in combination yet maintaining distinctive roles in the process (figure 4).

The figure originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The figure was sourced at Voerman, L. et al., 2012. Types and frequencies of feedback interventions in classroom interaction in secondary education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 28, pp.1107–1115. `

The identification of feedback lying at some point within a process links to Hattie and Timperley's (2007) concept of feedback being part of a continuum. That said, the issues prevail. Low frequency, non-specific feedback is recognised as the main issue gleaned from the literature and Voerman et al (2012) suggest that there is much still to be discovered through research in this field. Shute too identifies the field of research as problematic and the conclusions that emerges from it somewhat vague (2007: 5) Despite such concerns, the focus of my action research is consulting students in order to provide feedback and thus through discussion we change the conversation in the classroom. It is this concept of creating a discursive environment that I am most interested in however it leads to further questions as to how can one embed a culture of dialogue and discussion to promulgate the process of feedback effectively in the classroom?

Questions emerging from the research

Through investigation of the literature and research considered, concepts of consultation and feedback, must be considered when embarking on the action research project. The research has informed the construction of the intervention, understanding that in order for it to be successful, both the learner and the teacher need to renegotiate their roles in the classroom. To move forward this must be considered through the process of consultation and learning conversations, fostering a culture of dialogue and shared experience, a discursive environment and shared goals.

Furthermore, the literature raises questions about the nature of consultation, when combined with the concept of feedback, issues come to the fore regarding what is effective. There is no direct answer but investigation of effective delivery of feedback through consultation will be required in order to clarify *how* feedback can be delivered rather than *what* feedback is. Perhaps it is this questioning of the process of feedback that will redefine the concept rather than the traditional educational view as a tool in assessment *of* learning. The literature highlights concepts of feedback and consultation and the role they play in creating a culture of enquiry in the classroom.

The literature has guided the research to now consider how, through combining these concepts it is possible to change the methods we employ to deliver feedback in the classroom. In order to guide the research the questions that I aim to explore are:

Is it possible to foster students' ownership of learning and develop emergent characteristics of self-efficacy, agency and identity through awareness, conscious consideration and ultimately consultation?

To what extent can the traditional roles of learner and teacher be negotiated to become one of consultation and collaboration?

How can one embed a culture of dialogue and discussion to promulgate the process of feedback effectively in the classroom?

To what extent can feedback effectively be tailored to individual student needs?

Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Data

Methodology:

If you want to truly understand something, try to change it.

- Kurt Lewin

Action Research:

In designing an action research study one must be reminded that the purpose of the study is to change the way that we deliver feedback to students and as to whether the use of structured feedback and consultation can impact learning in the English classroom. Cohen et al (2011: 345) explore the definitions of action research through Kemmis and Mc Taggart (1988) who suggest that:

Action research is concerned equally with changing individuals, on the one hand, and, on the other, the culture of the groups, institutions and societies to which they belong. The culture of a group can be defined in terms of the characteristic substance and forms of the language and discourses, activities and practices, and social relationships and organization which constitute the interactions of the group.

The core focus here is the idea of change. Change must take place in the practice, for both the individual and the group in order to be successful. Noticeably, one of the aims of this action research project is to change the culture of how we approach feedback in the classroom. The emphasis on self-reflection, being reflective to improve practice are characteristic of action research, alongside which, the classification of action research as being collaborative, about the collective and the impact on the culture of the group correlates with the topic of the action research project.

Ultimately, Cohen et al (2011: 345) identify that action research is best defined by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) and “their all-encompassing definition”:

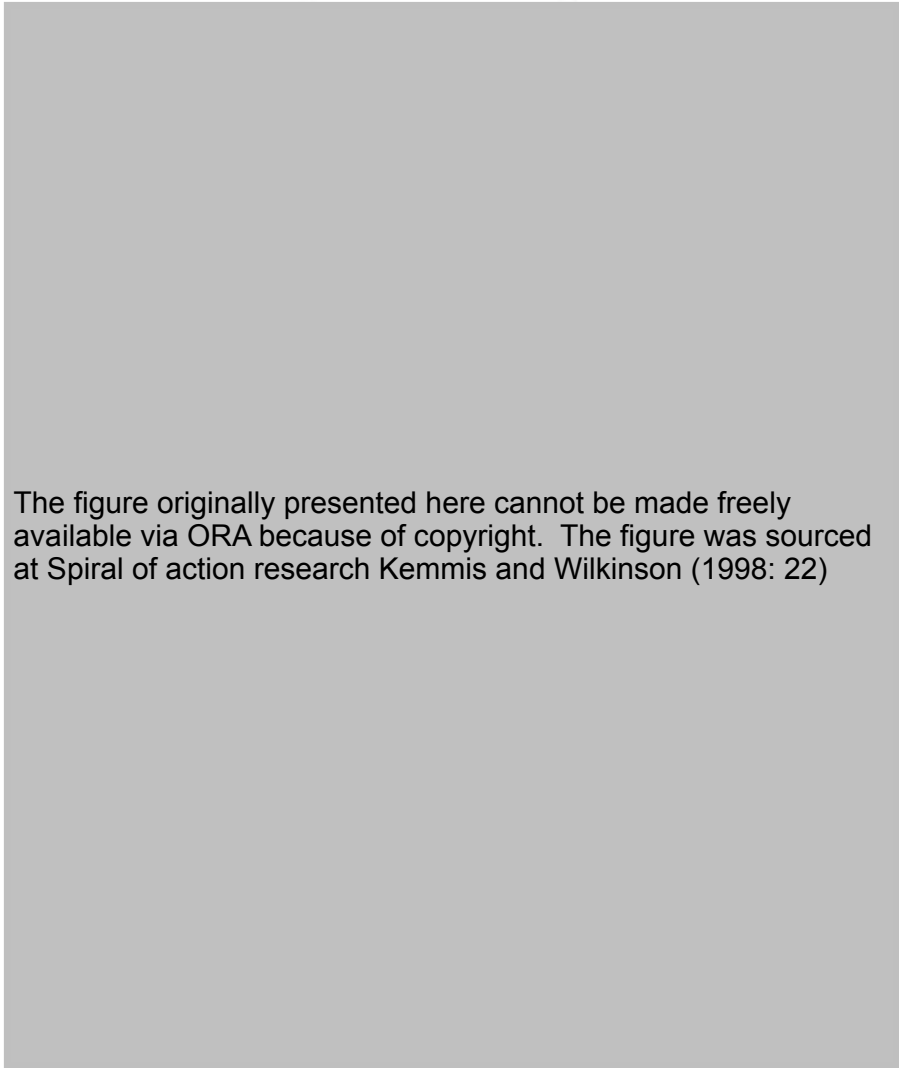
Action research is a form of collective self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of the own social or educational practice, as well as their understanding of these practices and situations in which these practices are carried out... The approach is only action research when it is collaborative, though it is important to realize that the action research of the group is achieved through the critically examines action of individual group members.

Action research being collaborative and cooperative method allows for consultation with students and for the teacher to act as researcher. O’Hanlon suggests that “Inclusive practice requires an investigation of its effectiveness, developed through a democratic, discursive process that attempts to include all relevant participants” (2003: 23). Thus the model suited the project with its; requirement for reflection, implementing change in the culture of the individual and the group and emphasising the need for discursive cooperation between participants.

Kemmis and Wilkinson (1998: 21) suggest that the process of action research is typically seen as a series of steps or spirals (figure 5.) that encourage self-reflection. It must be clarified that such steps are not fixed and resolute but can be amended, overlap and be repositioned.

These are typically defined as;

- planning a change
- acting and observing the process and consequences of the change
- reflecting on these processes and consequences, and then
- re-planning, and so forth



The figure originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The figure was sourced at Spiral of action research Kemmis and Wilkinson (1998: 22)

Limitations of action research:

Cohen et al (2011) refer to Winter (1982) who presents the issues of action research and interpreting data; “The action research... tradition does have a methodology for the creation of data, but not... for the interpretation of data.”

(2011: 361) The claim by Winter is that the use of the researchers notes, journal and intervention are used to “confront” the data but not to interpret it. In order to address this, surveys and interviews have been employed to add validity to the issues and to triangulate the data gathered. Furthermore in order to address limitations to the action research project where the intervention may not be fit for

purpose or become obsolete to students needs, each cycle was carefully planned for, adapting the feedback grid per cycle in response to the students emerging requirements and developing needs. The limiting factors are ensuring that all research and data is presented clearly in order to allow commonalities and disparities to emerge to be discussed as findings.

Research tools:

Implementation of action research lends itself to the use of both quantitative and qualitative research. The study clearly lends itself to qualitative research through the consultative nature of the action research, the implementation of a feedback grid and supported by the quantitative data gathered through staff and student surveys. Mixed method research provides legitimate results in correlation to the nine types of legitimization identified by Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006), referred to by Cohen et al (2011). The strengths of such research that are possible to correlate to this action research project are; sample integration, weakness minimization, commensurability and political. Essentially such strengths suggest that through mixed method research, high quality inferences can be enabled and catch a 'worldview' of responses providing validity to the investigation (Cohen et al, 2011: 198).

The importance of the study, in informing practice within the school, meant that data needed to be gathered in order to support as evidence of key concerns of a wider audience. Surveys and interviews, alongside collaboration with colleagues, and implementation of structured feedback and consultation in the classroom,

and the documentation of the process through a research journal allowed for me as the researcher to triangulate data in a comprehensive manner.

The initial steps of the action research required designing a list of questions which became a pre-investigative survey (appendix E) to consult students about the feedback they receive in the classroom; incorporating the feedback they receive on their classwork, homework, progress and reported grades. The key tenant of the pre-investigative survey was to consult students about their learning before implementation of the feedback grid.

To support this data, I also invited teachers to participate in a survey (appendix F) about their views about the methods of feedback that we use in the classroom, designed to correlate with some of the student questions, allowing for the identification of any commonalities or disparities between learners and teachers. The use of student interviews (appendix G) allowed for a direct consultation with the students and their views on feedback, ensuring that they became active participants in the research conducted. Finally, the design of the feedback grid, the intervention to be implemented, became the physical guide to providing feedback in the classroom and the device to which learning conversations were recorded and justified as not just a method of gathering data but also a method of recording the extensive collaboration of agents in the classroom, agents of the research.

Surveys:

The use of surveys allowed me to gauge the responses of staff and students to particular issues surrounding feedback and how we deliver it in school. The

importance of this was that it allowed confidentiality, clear and focused questions and access to a variety of large scale responses at one time. Furthermore it was important for me to conduct the student survey before and after the action research in order to understand the impact on students and to consider whether the effect on the students was measurable and evident. Cohen et al (2011: 257) identify the attraction of using surveys for data research in that;

The attractions of a survey lie in its appeal to generalizability or universality within given parameters, its ability to make statements which are supported by large data banks and its ability to establish the degree of confidence which can be placed on a set of findings.

As the action research was implemented with my year 10 class, it required the study to be designed in a manner that allowed me to conduct the research in conjunction with my teaching, enhancing the learning of the agents involved but concurrently fostering a culture of reflection, consultation and feedback as everyday practice for both the learners and the teacher in the classroom.

In using pre and post action research investigative surveys (appendix E), I wished to gather accurate and detailed data from my year 10 class to give me further insights to key issues that needed to be addressed by the research. In order to conduct the surveys, an internet based survey provider, www.surveymonkey.com was used to support the design, collection and analysis of results. This allowed for confidentiality, ease of analysis, and most importantly it allowed for me to gather both quantitative and qualitative data through the use of questions to illicit statistical data whilst concurrently, extended answers. The appeal of this method was the potential range and variety of responses that can be gleaned;

Typically, surveys gather data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions, or identifying standards against which existing conditions can be compared, or determining the relationships that exist between specific events (Cohen et al, 2011: 256)

Such characteristics are attractive to the researcher, in particular, the use of surveys in this action research project is for exactly that – “to make statements” supported by relevant and accurate data in order to inform the future practice in our school – and thus the importance of surveys and their results informs the research too. Furthermore in order to gather a snapshot teacher view, surveys were also utilised, allowing for confidentiality and ease of access in order to have little impact on workload whilst concurrently garnering important reflections on consultation and feedback in the classroom. As the research would be feeding into school policy, teachers were given the opportunity to contribute to the findings, thus further weight is attached to the use of surveys. Finally, in using an Internet based survey provider, the method contributed to confidence in both anonymity and honesty as researcher to help inform practice and gather effective, accurate data to support the research.

Interviews:

In order to gauge the opinions of the students directly I chose to interview six students (3 pairs) about their learning experiences in July 2015 (appendix G). As the research centred around the importance of conversing and interviews can be a type of social interaction, students were interviewed in pairs for “the potential for discussions to develop, thus yielding a wide range of responses” (Cohen et al, 2011: 432). The pairs of students were selected according to firstly; accessibility –

who I could get permission to remove from a lesson to interview and secondly; as each pair had worked together as peer or target partners at some point during the action research cycle. Such consultation allowed me to gain a deeper insight into the opinions of the students involved in the study – at times surveys, albeit allowing anonymity, are not tailored to individual students, therefore they do not reflect the true thoughts of the participants. This mirrors the purpose of this study – when consulting learners one must tailor the feedback given to them in order to make it purposeful, similarly in consulting students about feedback, I felt consultations should be tailored to the individual students thus interviews allowed me to do this. Cohen et al (2011: 409) refer to Kvale (1996) who claims that the use of interviews support the intimacy of communication, the research and data becomes humanised and personal, interviews add a contextual factor that is difficult to interpret from data. Moreover, Kvale (1996) sees the use of interviews as “an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production... the social situatedness of research data.” (Cohen et al, 2011: 409) It is clear from the strategies presented by Cohen et al (2011) that interviews are seen as constructed by both the interviewee and interviewer as the experience is one of consultation and thus a shared experience. Furthermore the shared nature of interviews highlights the importance of the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee. Cohen et al, (2011: 410) refer to attributes they believe as being important to the interview and also everyday life. Adapted from Woods (1986), they suggest that trust, curiosity and naturalness are all aspects that are required by interviews. The correlation between the attributes required for both the

interview and everyday life, is not just important to the data but also the action research project and the relationship between the learners as active agents in the research, thus why interviews are necessary for the research. In conjunction with the theme of consultation, the style of interview conducted was through an interview guide approach where “topics and issues to be covered are specified in advance, in outline form; interviewer decides sequence and working of questions in the course of the interview” (Cohen et al, 2011:413) Such characteristics determine that whilst the questions were not set and the sequence and wording was modified in reaction to the learners responses, the key issues were addressed and decided before conducting the interview, but not restricted by the questions asked. Cohen et al (2011: 413) explore the strengths and weaknesses of an interview guide approach.

The strengths are described as:

the outline increases the comprehensiveness of the data and makes the data collection somewhat systematic for each respondent. Logical gaps in data can be anticipated and closed. Interviews remain fairly conversational and situational

The weaknesses outlined as:

Important and salient topics may be inadvertently omitted. Interviewer flexibility in sequencing and wording questions can result in substantially different responses, thus reducing the comparability of responses.

As the students selected for interview are all different with different experiences of consultation and feedback in the classroom it must be clarified that despite the weakness of “substantially different responses” (Cohen et al, 1998: 413) such a result would be expected as a researcher due to the students differing

experiences in the classroom and as a member of the learning community within the school.

Data:

With such a variety and range of data it was important for me to analyse it to elicit key themes. Through thematic analysis it became possible to consolidate the significant issues that emerged from the research. The survey data has been tabulated in order to consider the mixed method quantitative and qualitative data that the survey gathered due to the inclusion of questions that generated statistical, quantitative responses to feedback alongside extended comments and qualitative data. Cohen et al suggest that in presenting data in a tabulated manner allows one to address “the twin issues of qualitative research: data reduction through careful data display and commentary”. (2011: 547) Clear themes emerged from such analysis that must be considered when confronting issues regarding feedback. The data has been presented in the appendices and in order to focus on key findings, the pre-investigative and post- investigate student survey (appendix E), the staff survey (appendix F) and the student interviews (appendix G)

Data Analysis:

Student survey: Quantitative and qualitative data

The questions and survey used for pre and post investigate research is presented in appendix E. Whilst a number of questions may be considered quantitative, most questions asked students to extend their answers and thus the survey allowed a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data to be gleaned. Questions were

designed to gather a variety of mixed responses in an attempt to gauge the key issues surrounding feedback across curriculum subjects. The purpose, to gather a comprehensive picture of what needs to be confronted in order to amend how we approach feedback across the school and inform the new Recording, Reporting and Assessment Policy. In gathering mixed responses the survey has supported the avoidance of opinion colouring. Appendix E presents the tabulated data, as a method of presenting common findings and organising data (Cohen et al, 2011: 547) Findings extracted from the data will be discussed in further detail thematically below.

Teaching staff data:

The teaching staff survey has been tabulated and is presented in appendix F, designed in order to gather qualitative data and identify commonalities and disparities in feedback methods across the school. In order to ensure clear links, a number of questions mirror those in the student survey, allowing alignment of learning and teaching responses.

Interviews:

Interviews conducted with Students A-E have been presented in appendix G. The interviews have been presented in a table, allowing for the researcher commentary on each response to be presented alongside the data presenting an insight into the researcher's responses to the student answers.

Feedback grids:

The intervention through feedback grids has allowed for me to gather data through completed grids and work samples. Aubusson et al suggest that “The work students do and the products they create are important indicators of their progress and can be used as evidence in action learning.” (2009: 98) Feedback grids have been presented, alongside work samples and interviews for students A-E in order to allow triangulation of data and a comprehensive insight into how the data and evidence correlate and to demonstrate how the action research cycle progressed throughout the research project. Feedback grids can be found at appendices H-J.

Limitations of tools used to generate data:

The limitations faced by the tools used to generate data encompass: anonymity, honesty, validity and interpretation of data. Anonymity, whilst essential for action research, presents a drawback in the tools used to generate data as in surveys that gather qualitative as well as quantitative data, it is difficult to investigate further some issues regarding feedback and the staff/student profile from where such issues arise. Furthermore with the surveys being anonymous it is difficult to ascertain the validity and honesty of responses. In order to address this, students and staff understood the importance and potential benefits of the research project and why they should be completely honest in sharing their insights and responses to surveys. The use of interviews to gather data present further limitations. External factors may play a role in interviews and depending on the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee, communication may be

misread, unclear or miscommunicated. Cohen et al simply state that, “no matter how hard an interviewer may try to be systematic and objective, the constraints of everyday life will be part of whatever interpersonal transactions she initiates. (2011: 410) To address such issues it was important as a researcher to present the interviewees with questions emergent from the answers they presented. Whilst throughout each interview it was important to maintain a common purpose, it was also important to use an informal conversational interview, the strengths of which have been identified as “increases the salience and relevance of questions... the interview can be matched to individuals and circumstances” (Cohen et al, 2011: 413) Whilst the weakness of this type of interview is the differing information gathered from the variety of questions and responses. In order to combat this, the interviews have been presented in tabulated form with researcher commentary to support findings.

Ethics

An action research project that incorporates consultation with students must require ethical planning and preparation. At a variety of different stages it is imperative to address different ethical considerations. Approval for this study was given by Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) in order to ensure that participants’ confidentiality was preserved and any potential risk was avoided.

Cohen et al (2011; 83), with reference to Bell (1991) outline a variety of conditions to be considered when undertaking action research:

1. All participants must be given the chance to remain anonymous.

2. All data must be given strict confidentiality.
3. Interviewees should have the chance to verify statements at the stage of drafting the report (respondent validation).
4. Participants should be given a copy of the final report.
5. Permission for publication must be gained from the participants.
6. If possible, the research report should be of the benefit to the school and participants.

(Adapted from Bell, 1991)

When implementing action research within the context of the classroom, participation in the research was guided by BERA, through the condition of informed consent. In order for the students to fully participate in the action research, the purpose of the study was explicitly explained as without such an understanding of the purpose of the research, collaboration would not be possible. One must also consider the issues that might arise with such an investigation. According to BERA's guidelines when conducting action research, researchers;

must consider the extent to which their own reflective research impinges on others, for example in the case of the dual role of teacher and researcher and the impact on students and colleagues. Dual roles may also introduce explicit tensions in areas such as confidentiality and must be addressed accordingly.

BERA, 2011

With this in mind, a concern that may arise, for participants in the research, was whether the project would impact on learning if the teacher in becoming researcher does not prioritise the learning in favour of the research.

To combat issues such as duality, the project focused on the students' needs and requirements, considered in accordance with the curriculum through each cycle of the action research project. In adapting the grid that was implemented to the classroom, the aim of the project consistently addressed the students' needs as

learners in the classroom, placing their learning as priority. In order to address any further concerns, all parents of the students involved in the research were written to and informed of the project.

Informed consent was also important for the staff who participated in collaboration. It was imperative that they clearly understood the nature of research and the potential impact it may have on our teaching in the English department and the wider school. The Head teacher granted approval to conduct the data research, implement the action research and consider the topic as a focus of the study with a view to its importance in benefitting the school. In addition the research will support the school design a new Assessment, Recording and Reporting policy (ARR policy) following on from my findings. Copies of my research will be made available to all of those concerned but also to the wider school teaching staff as in using such research to design a new ARR policy, the research must be made available for teaching staff to understand the justification for its implementation. Throughout the research I collaborated with students through interviews, surveys and discussion. It may be considered that such consultation is not equal in terms of the relationship between researcher and participant. In order to address this, students were encouraged to suggest changes and put forward ideas in how to develop feedback in the classroom. Amendments to the feedback grid was completed working in conjunction with students to develop and improve.

The collection of data was designed to have as little impact as possible on both staff and student workload, anonymised and stored in secure files that only I can

access. All data has been dealt with confidentiality and treated sensitively, taking great care to safeguard participants' anonymity. All participants were aware that participation in the study is voluntary and they had the right to withdraw at any time. Anomisation of both students and staff was conducted through the use of an online survey provider when conducting surveys in accordance with ethical guidelines.

Cohen et al (2011: 442) identify three main areas for ethical consideration when conducting interviews as; "informed consent, confidentiality and the consequences of the interviews". I have already outlined how the research project has considered informed consent. With regards confidentiality, interviews have been recorded on a password-protected audio recording device to ensure that only I have access to the data collected. From here, files were transferred directly from the device to a secure hard-drive that is also password protected.

Furthermore I have ensured that in any data representation of interviews, students names have been anonymised and a letter, which has no bearing on the students name, has been used in its place. Finally in addressing the consequences of the interviews, students were fully aware that the interview would be used as data for the action research project, their anonymity maintained and their views may impact greatly on the implementation of policy in the future.

Research data and records will only be retained for as long as they are of continuing value to my research and the wider educational community. After such time as the records are no longer required, they will be deleted and permanently destroyed.

Finally in preparation for the research project, I completed the Social and Behavioural Sciences online CUREC training and attended lectures run by the Department of Education, Oxford that focused on designing ethical research projects.

Chapter 4: Changing the conversation – The Action Research cycle

In conducting the action research, I saw it as important to ensure that after each phase of implementation and reflection to amend the feedback grid to elicit new forms of feedback, encourage engagement and in response to the student's values and needs. The grid must be fit for purpose for the learners participating in the research and thus must be adapted to suit the learning needs. As previously explored through Kemmis and Wilkinson (1998), action research can be seen as a spiral where elements overlap and reoccur. It is not a direct continuum but a cycle of reflection and redesign. The process that I undertook through this action research cycle demanded the process of implementation and introduction, analysis and self-reflection then amendments before implementation again (figure 6). In all, the action research took three full cycles to complete in three half terms. I decided to use the natural delineation of terms to allow full implementation of the grid, ensuring that the successes and failures became evident alongside the requirement of students receiving four different types of feedback each term. Delineation allowed for me as researcher time to: gather learners' insights through reviewing their personal grids, noting similarities or inconsistencies; reflect on the process each half term break; implement changes and concurrently review the impact on the students work. Aubusson et al (2009) explore the importance of this process of reflection and collaboration defined as "reflective conversations". (2009: 98) Furthermore, they refer to Ghaye and Ghaye (1998) who claim that;

Such productive collaborative reflections are characterised by the following: consideration of values; making the private public; looking back to look forward; making sense of teaching learning experiences; and interrogation of experiences and assumptions (Aubusson et al, 2009: 98)

The initial identification involved consideration of a variety of factors. It was necessary for me to reflect on the conclusions and findings from previous research, exploration of the literature and designing the feedback grid before conducting the pre-investigative survey with students to gauge their ideas about the use of feedback.

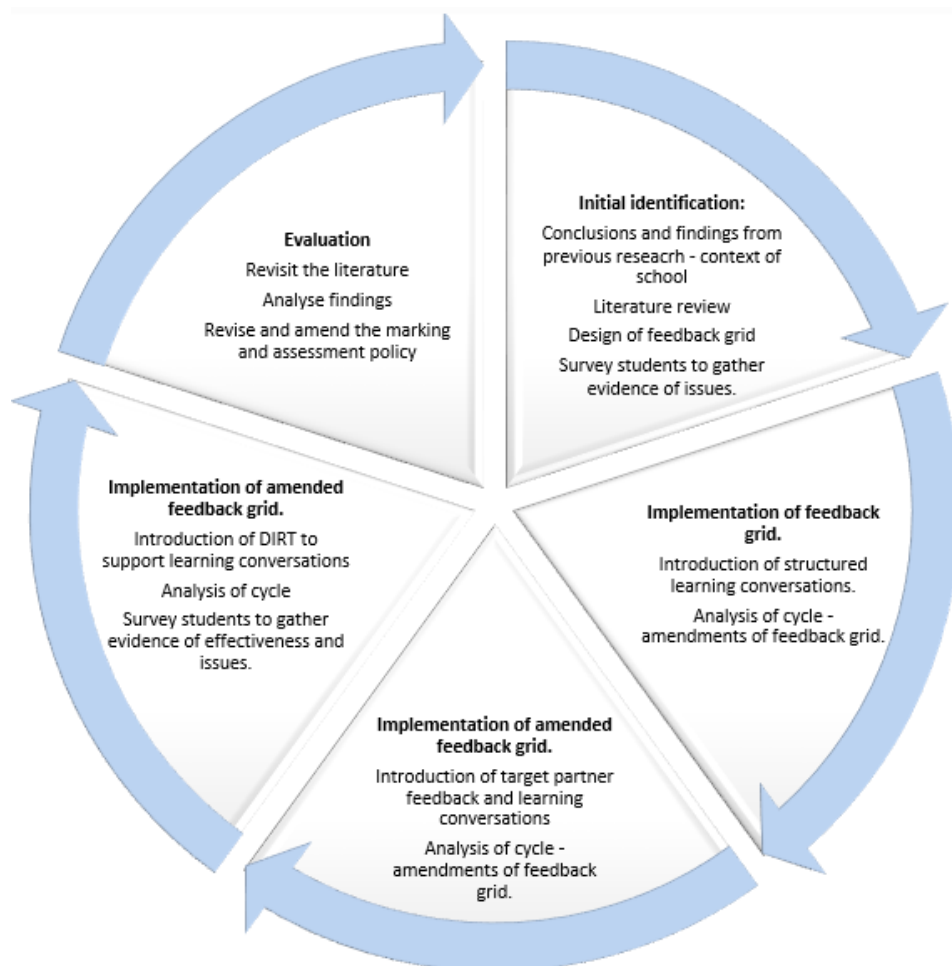


Figure 6. The action research cycle

Preparation for cycle 1: Devising a feedback grid:

The aim of the research is to investigate how in the classroom, structured feedback can be delivered to learners through consultation, a discursive investigation into how to improve their work. The requirement for a feedback grid emerged from the recognition of the need to somehow record 1:1 learning conversations. Designing a feedback grid was necessary for practical as well as structural reasons; allowing me as teacher to keep a record of the conversations that occurred with learners. In delivering feedback in the classroom I recognised the importance of students receiving a variety of different types of feedback and thus a four part grid was decided upon to maximise the feedback students received but also to allow for them to become an integral part of the process through consultation with one another as well as with the teacher. The initial premise was that each student would receive four different types of structured feedback each term, the learning and self-reflective nature of the research demonstrated by the notes the students take, amendments made to their work and the impact on their progress as learners. The purpose of the grid, to act as a guide to support the students in monitoring their progress but also to keep feedback at the fore in the classroom. Often, students receive feedback and don't act upon it, thus it becomes meaningless; the grid counteracts this as a guide to structure feedback in a meaningful manner.

Action Research Cycle one:

Feedback types and focus of the cycle:

- *Self-Assessment*
- *Peer Assessment*
- *Teacher – Student discussion (1:1 Learning conversations)*
- *Formal teacher feedback*

The feedback grid implemented in cycle one can be seen in appendix (H)

In order to introduce the feedback grid to the class it was important that students understood the premise of the feedback grid and the purpose to deliver structured feedback in order to demonstrate and understand how to improve their work. The grid was introduced alongside the students' first coursework task. This allowed for the grid to be seen as supportive of and in conjunction with the students' coursework with the hope that it would become integral to the reviewing and redrafting process and normalised as everyday practice. The students were each given a feedback grid to remain as part of their English folders. Individual learning conversations began during lesson time to support the students work on their first piece of coursework. Each lesson, students were given the opportunity to add to their feedback grids through; teacher consultation, peer assessment or self-reflection. Analysis of the action research cycle was conducted during the half term break to review the feedback grid and in order to implement any necessary changes. To conduct this analysis, I reviewed student books, coursework and feedback grids with the intention of identifying any anomalies or commonalities that signified the need for change or development.

Action Research Cycle Two:

Feedback types and focus of the cycle:

- *Peer Assessment – Target partner and seating partner*
- *Teacher – Student discussion (1:1 Learning conversations)*
- *Self-Assessment*

The feedback grid implemented in cycle two can be seen in appendix (I)

A new feedback grid was introduced at the start of cycle two, which was amended in response to analysis conducted of cycle one and the research journal that was kept throughout. The feedback grid implemented in cycle two had the additional element of target partner feedback. For this to be successful it was necessary to set students up with feedback partners based on their Key Stage 4 aspirational target grades. Once the students were paired up it was necessary to implement time in lessons, throughout the term, which allowed for target partners to meet and review each other's work. Alongside this method of feedback, 1:1 learning conversations continued alongside peer assessment and self-reflection. Once again analysis of the action research cycle was conducted during the half term break as had been done at the end of the previous cycle.

Action Research Cycle Three:

Feedback types and focus of the cycle:

- *Action Plan for improvement – Teacher Discussion*
- *Learning conversations: Target partner and seating partner*
- *Directed Improved Reflection Time (DIRT)*
- *Self-Assessment*

The feedback grid implemented in cycle three can be seen in appendix (J)

As with the previous cycles of research, a new feedback grid was implemented to the class routines at the beginning of cycle three, the beginning of a new half term. In addition to the amendments made between cycle one and two, further amendments were made to the grid to ensure it was fit for purpose. The removal of 1:1 learning conversations between teacher and student have been replaced by learning conversations between target partners and seating partners. This had previously been referred to as Peer Assessment. At the beginning of this cycle it was important to change target partners in order to allow students to build new relationships and give them a new insight into their work. A section was added to the grid that allowed for Directed, Improved, Reflection Time or DIRT (Didau, 2014: 185), a method of reflection that allows students to critically evaluate what needs to be improved, developed or amended in their own work. This differs somewhat to self-assessment and so the self-assessment section of the grid remains in this cycle. As with the previous cycles of action research, at the end of the term analysis was conducted through reviewing students' coursework, books, feedback grids and the researcher's journal.

Collaboration:

Collaboration was crucial for this project as the purpose for undertaking the research and the potential impact that it could have on the everyday practice of our staff and students needed to be considered. Firstly, as part of the schools Monitoring, Evaluating Teaching and Learning (METAL) review process I observed a number of teachers in the English department and across the school. Through these observations I had the opportunity to review methods through which feedback is delivered to students across all subjects and key stages. It is through this collaboration that I first encountered the use of target partners (demonstrated by a colleague) and through this that I decided to implement the use into cycle two. The need for a new Assessment, Recording and Reporting (ARR) policy in the school also inspired the action research. As one of members of the Senior Leadership team, specifically the working group with responsibility for Teaching and Learning in the school, I collaborated with two other senior colleagues in order to review how learning is assessed across the school. The aim, to write a new policy to reflect the needs of the learners in our school that was for purpose and effective. In order to develop the new policy, we consulted with a variety of colleagues from different areas of the curriculum to understand the diverse needs of subject areas, teachers and learners in our school. Collaboration with this group was effective from the outset (figure 7) and the action research conducted proved integral to the process.

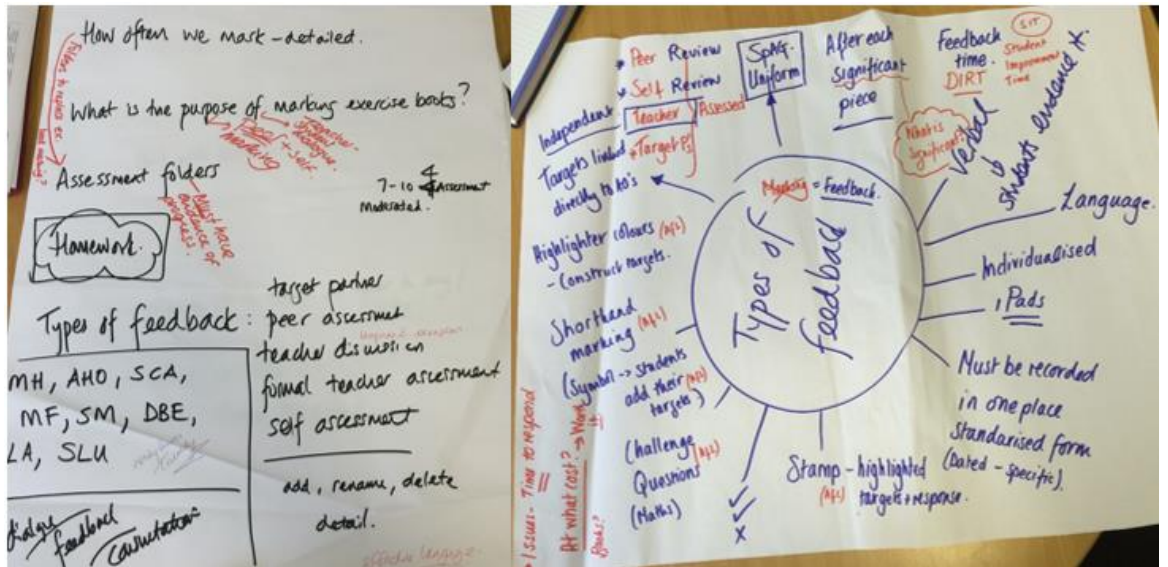


Figure 7. Notes from collaboration with the ARR working party.

The group that we consulted with were tasked with trialling a variety of assessment procedures that we deemed purposeful to the review. The collaboration proved extremely fruitful. The use of feedback grids was trialled in the Mathematics department (appendix K) to great success and now forms part of the schools ARR policy (appendix L). There is yet much work to do to successfully implement the new policy and the SLT working party will lead many CPD sessions in the coming months to ensure that a common framework for assessing learning is embedded throughout the school, meaning further collaboration with staff across the curriculum.

Chapter 5 Analysis of Data

Action research cycle 1

Cycle one of the action research incorporated implementation of the feedback grid and concurrently introduced structured 1:1 learning conversations. The premise behind these conversations was that students would be encouraged to work with the teacher to receive verbal feedback, taking notes and using feedback to amend and improve their work, culminating in progress. From this cycle of research it became evident how time consuming learning conversations were. However, it is clear that learning conversations do not just have to be teacher-student conversations thus this initial conclusion required further exploration in the second cycle of action research. It is important whilst the teacher is engaged in structured feedback or learning conversations that students are engaged in drafting of work or acting upon feedback. To ensure that all students engaged with this fully, I introduced the concept of DIRT to support the students work, not as part of the feedback grid but implemented alongside it.

In marking the students work, it was possible to evaluate the impact of structured feedback on the learning. Students participated fully with both the feedback grid and DIRT during this cycle (see appendix M). An interesting development was the quality time the students spent assessing their own work, implementing their own keys and annotation devices to track changes and development. Throughout the cycle, learning conversations were used in a twofold manner. Firstly, during an extended task whilst students were working on a piece of coursework, the teacher working with individual students on their progress so far. The focus of the

discussions was to explore how a specific piece of work could be improved, and developed, what could be amended, identifying elements with clear potential and finally recognising the marked improvement students had made. All students were required to bring their feedback grid with them so they could take notes during the learning conversations. Cycle one demonstrated that students who had previously shied away from discussing their work began to volunteer or request a learning conversation with the teacher. There was certainly an opening up of the dialogue in the classroom – sharing work and seeking to improve became the new dialogue of learning and the culture of the classroom became a collective goal to progress. Some students sought reassurance, some affirmation or praise. In all, the use of learning conversations before a student completed a piece of work allowed intervention, but what appears to be more important is that it allowed students to engage with how they could produce the best piece of work before final marking.

Secondly, learning conversations were used on completion of a final marking of coursework. Consultation was then employed to provide feedback which aimed to improve, develop and explore issues, or improvements to be made. Ultimately whilst students were acting upon formal written marking, the teacher concurrently delivered verbal reinforcement in order for students to fully understand how to improve their work. It is clear from this process that both teacher and student were actively engaging in feedback in order to progress and improve. The use of learning conversations further ensured that students understood the comments made on their work, and allowed students to ask questions about the feedback given.

Preparation for cycle two:

The second cycle of the action research project required some practical consideration in amending the feedback grid. Space for writing was required, some students found the grid to be too small for the amount of feedback received.

During this phase of the action research project I observed a colleague conducting feedback and assessment for learning through the use of target partners. The premise behind target partners is that students are matched to deliver feedback to each other according to their aspirational targets, encouraging mutual goals in their learning if paired with someone who has the same aims as them. It was transformative. Students either foster a relationship of competition or co-operation to achieve which is mutually beneficial. Seating partner feedback is still valued, not only do the students use their seating partners effectively but this relationship allows them to track the developments and progress each other have made in a specific piece of work. Self- Assessment can demonstrate the students' ownership in the classroom. Allowing the students thinking time, to consider what the gap in their learning is before they meet with another feedback partner (including their teacher) allowing them time to recognise misconceptions or misgivings in their work. Formal teacher written feedback has been removed from the cycle two grid as it can be seen as somewhat repetitive. Students receive formal teacher feedback on each piece of work and by incorporating that into the grid it has become a transposing activity rather than actively engaging students in feedback. It was seen important to maintain the action plan for improvement as

students need a conceptual overview or focus for each term. Each action plan was individualised to allow students to have personalised, focused action points through each cycle of research.

Action Research cycle two:

Cycle two of the action research project revealed many issues to be considered with the use of the grid to structure feedback in the classroom. Firstly feedback became extremely time consuming and thus not fit for purpose. Further investigation must take place to explore what the grid can bring to different topics. In terms of the English classroom and more specifically addressing issues in coursework, the grid is both valuable and informative, allowing detailed feedback through a continuum of instruction and feedback. The grid focused on the feedback between self-assessment, peer assessment (target and seating partner) and 1:1 learning conversations with the teacher. With all four types of feedback on a piece of work, it became a complete thoughtful and comprehensive piece of work. Hattie and Timperley (2007) speak of this when exploring the power of feedback – one must remember that feedback is part of a continuum of learning, part of a process and it is in response, the second part to the initial instruction or task. For feedback to be effective it must:

1. Be relevant and focused in suggesting how the student can improve and make progress.
2. The initial instruction must be clear and inform fully the action to be evaluated once completed.

Preparation for cycle three:

In preparation for cycle three, it was required for me as teacher and as researcher, to make quite radical changes to the feedback grid in order to be able to conduct the final stage of the project. It was necessary to make the feedback more explicit, explicit in that it makes the focus, progress and learning through structured feedback and consultation, transparent. As researcher I had been somewhat reluctant to remove myself from the grid but what became very apparent is that if learning is to be a process and feedback part of a continuum then students must be given the opportunity to have ownership in the classroom. The focus is still very much on structured feedback and consultation in the classroom through learning conversations but students learning conversations.

Action Research cycle three:

The students, after three cycles became adept in consultation, using structured feedback to inform their work in order to progress. It became apparent throughout the previous cycles that in order for feedback to be effective it must be specific and thus the feedback grid evolved to become more specific to the students' needs. The addition of a section to allow for notes about DIRT ensured that once students reviewed their work they noted the required amendments to complete to make progress. Self-Assessment was used still as a separate form of feedback, DIRT is specific to pinpointing alterations that are required but self-assessment involves reviewing and evaluating progress and where students are in their learning. Learning conversations with the teacher were removed as a separate section of the feedback grid and instead were combined with the targets

or action plan for improvement in order for a specific action plan to be both individualised and structured. The front of the grid for cycle three was solely dedicated to learning conversations – seating partner learning conversations and target partner learning conversations, using peers as a resource and fostering a culture of discussion and dialogue in the classroom. The reverse of the grid was dedicated to self-reflection and review, allowing for structured feedback in conjunction with self-reflection on their learning. This cycle saw the students use the grids in the most effective manner throughout the research project. It is clear that in order for structured feedback and consultation to be effective the feedback grids must be specific to the work. What this potentially means going forward is that in order to employ a feedback grid to support learning conversations, no one size fits all, grids must be like feedback; tailored to the work or task, specific, fit for purpose and must support the learners needs..

Chapter 6: Findings

Themes emerging from the data:

Clear themes emerged from the data gathered. From all of the research conducted it is clear that there are very specific requirements and issues connected to feedback.

In order to consider the issues emergent from the research one must conclude that the purpose of feedback is that it is beneficial in supporting students to understand and improve. Four key areas where feedback can be seen as significant are;

1. Relationships.
2. Gender matters.
3. Empowering students.
4. Time.
5. Generalisation.

Relationships:

The data suggests, specifically the interviews, that trust is a necessity in the classroom where feedback is concerned. Learners not only need to trust their teachers, but trust their peers too, for feedback to be effective. Student D recognises this in the interview where she states:

Feedback is meant to help you and most of the time, some people if you're doing peer assessment or someone doesn't really care about it then it's not going to be helpful, they're just trying to get it out of the way but usually if it's teacher assessment teacher feedback and feedback from, not your seating partner....Target partners, then they're

actually trying to help you, they're trying to improve it so its important to listen to it.
(Appendix G)

Throughout the data, the issue of trust is apparent. The view of the teacher as the expert in the classroom has been challenged by the action research and in particular in cycle three where learning conversations are conducted by the students, seeing their peers as resources to help improve their learning. It is clear that we must encourage a culture of collaboration among students, structured and supported, orchestrated by the teacher. An example of the effective use of this is through the implementation of target partners, which derived from the observation of a colleague who coined the concept and had implemented it successfully, highlighting the benefit of collaboration. Flutter and Rudduck (2004) also identify the potential of peer relationships on pupil progress, in their research they suggest that some students "explained how [their] motivation and engagement with learning was enhanced by the competitive edge of peer relationships" (2004:104) thus one can understand in such context the potential for target partners. Mercer too supports the importance of pupil- pupil talk as valuable for "the construction of knowledge" (1995: 98) and through collaboration with the working party responsible for the ARR policy, the impetus for the concept of target partners became significant to promote the ideal type of investigation and talk in the classroom. Target partners will be employed by teachers across the school and my colleague, it's originator, will deliver CPD sessions on its potential in the coming weeks, for it to be embedded across the curriculum.

The action research has developed insightful and mutually beneficial relations between teacher and learner. The use of consultation, through conversation has

created a classroom dialogue of learning, achievement for all and mutual trust, the students feel that their learning is cared for and cared about. In hindsight the use of the feedback grid has simply been the tool to structure this consultation it is the actual process of sitting with the learner and considering what they have done, taking the time to work with them that has been the most beneficial aspect of the action research.

Gender matters

The grid initially worked more successfully with the girls in the class who sought to consult about their learning in order to progress. They enjoyed discussing their learning with me and their peers; utilising learning conversations to redraft and improve their work. The boys initially shyed away from learning conversations, perhaps due to the way they are conducted in the classroom. The introduction of target partners altered their perception, as the use of consultation extended beyond the teacher-student relationship to the student-student relationship. Learning conversations were valued between peers and clear evidence of self-efficacy emerged among the students. The students' value feedback and consultation but what has become most valued in this cycle is the use of DIRT in their learning, used in two ways:

1. To inform the process- feedback on the piece of work then the student uses DIRT to analyse how they can improve.
2. Students use DIRT to analyse their work then use feedback to further develop revisions or to comment on the revisions made

Students clearly demonstrated the ability to think about the process of learning and how to develop and progress that learning.

Everything was - Empowering students:

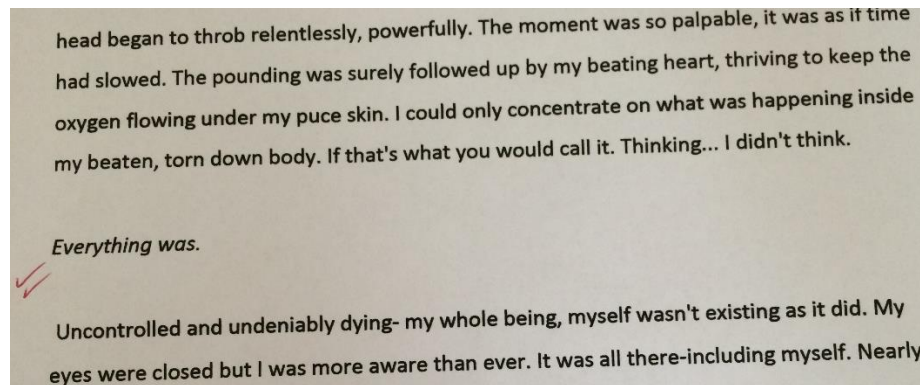


Figure 7. An excerpt of work from student G

Undoubtedly of the most valuable aspects of the action research project was the power given to students to be agentic in their learning. Firstly the concept of DIRT (Didau, 2014: 185) encouraged learners to become critically aware of their ability, to engage with learning on a new level and to embrace the process and opportunity to reflect and improve their work. Flutter and Rudduck in their definition suggest that consultation with learners “rests on the principle that pupils can bring something worthwhile to discussions.... an approach that invites pupils to talk about their experiences in school.” (2004: 7) From the interviews conducted too, the need for ownership over the students own work became apparent, student D commenting on teachers making changes to, and editing students work:

it's not really your work anymore, I mean you do need feedback from a teacher who knows what they are doing but you also need responsibility for your own thing that you've produced that you've put time into. (Appendix G)

One of the most interesting learning conversations throughout the action research was with student G in my class whose creative writing piece we were discussing. The student wished to know why I had corrected a sentence which read: "Thinking... I didn't think. Everything was." In my corrections, I had stated "Everything was." didn't make sense as a sentence on its own. She needed to clarify, "Everything was" what? The student sat with me as I tried to explain why I felt the sentence didn't work whilst she justified the reasons for it to remain as it was. In the end her argument, for its value, was so compelling that I couldn't remember why I decided it didn't make sense in the first place. It was, I understood, her story, it was, her words and it was, she assured me, ok sometimes to break the rules in English as many famous authors before her had done. From that moment on the story became entitled Everything Was. We agreed if she was to use it then she was to make it obvious (see figure 8). What I learnt from the action research is that for teachers, the students can be resources of knowledge in the classroom too, justifying Postlethwaite and Haggerty's (2002) research, we just have to change the conversation and dialogue of the classroom to posit learning at the fulcrum of all activities, to actively engage with the learners in front of us not just the curriculum we have to teach them. In this instance, the action research clearly supports Rudduck and McIntyre's point, for consultation to be effective the conditions of the classroom must support "dialogue in which we listen to and learn from each other in new ways" (2007: 36) Thus clearly, in engaging with students through conversations about learning we are created a valued and valuable shared experience in the classroom.

The issue of time:

From the research it is clear that a concern for all participants of the learning process is time. Not only is this an emergent theme from the data gathered through surveys but from the interview data also. For Postlethwaite and Haggerty (2002) this too was of concern. Teachers struggle to find time to deliver timely and effective feedback to students and students are well aware of this, student A, when asked about the value of written feedback commenting that;

It's useful sometimes but when they like leave marking the book to like ages and then you go back through it and they tell you improvements you can do on something but you have gone past that subject, you're like, I don't know how I can fit these improvements in 'cause I've done so much work after it... Appendix G

Not just is timely marking an issue, the process of treating feedback as a continual cycle of feedback and instruction, suggested by Hattie and Timperley (2007: 82) can be problematic too. Clearly students need time in that cycle to reflect, student E highlighting when interviewed that teachers don't seem to have the time to give students effective feedback, "they don't really give us any time to look back to last lesson. If they have marked it we just get on with a new topic." (appendix G) This is true too for the action research. It is clear that the need to spend time with learners is far outweighed by the demands of the curriculum, and the sheer difficulty in trying to share learning conversations between just student and teacher within a restricted time frame. What the research found however is in developing the aforementioned culture of discussion and dialogue teachers can trust that learning conversations are valuable whether they be fleeting or extended. Supported through structure by a feedback grid, students can feel that over time their work has been reviewed from numerous perspectives. In looking

at the completed samples of feedback grids in appendix M, it is clear that using such structured methods of delivering feedback there is variety, substance and attention given to support students learning.

Generalisation:

The final theme emerging from the research is the issue of generalisation. From both the surveys conducted and the interviews with students, feedback is deemed, in the school, as being generalised for the whole rather than the individual (student). The theme of generalised feedback can be seen through a variety of responses in the student interviews at appendix G:

Student A:

It's like, it's personalised feedback that focuses on your own work and it's not generalised to everyone, cause what's generalised for everyone could not like, be for you... and it doesn't apply to you.

The consensus from the literature is clear. Feedback must be timely and it must be specific to be effective. This supports Black and Wiliam who state that "feedback to any pupil should be about the particular qualities of his or her work, with advice on what he or she can do to improve, and should avoid comparisons with other pupils." (2001: 6) Students, as suggested by Hattie and Timperley can engage in feedback by assuming responsibility as reflective learners and thus opening up the learning opportunities available to the students that we teach (2007: 88). Thus the action research and in particular the implementation of the feedback grid can be deemed as opening up not just the power of feedback but the potential for the students to engage in opportunities to learn.

Conclusion: The impact of the action research project

The impact of the action research project is measured through reflection on the progress made by year 10 students who participated in the project but also on the staff who I collaborated with and the policy which now informs school practice (appendix L). Feedback grids (appendix N) have been implemented in a variety of other forms, through collaboration with the English department, alongside the process of DIRT to encourage students to reflect, revise and redraft. Through the research and working with the ARR team, methods such as learning conversations, feedback forms and DIRT have been implemented as school policy. Furthermore stemming from the action research project, the key terms, self-assessment and peer-assessment, have been revised school wide in the new guise of self-reflection and peer review. The motivation behind the new terminology, to encourage students to become reflective and engaged understanding that learners are integral in the process of feedback.

The aim of the project was to change the methods through which we conduct feedback. Certainly through changing our approach, to structure feedback effectively, the dialogue of the classroom and of the school has transformed.

There has never been a greater opportunity to engage with the learners, to impact their progress and nurture a culture of “feed up, feed back, and feed forward”.

(Hattie and Timperley, 2007: 86) It is clear that as a school we have embraced the opportunity to change the conversation and collaborate with the young people that we teach. Careful collaboration will be needed in the coming year but it is with great anticipation and excitement of the potential discourse to come.

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Appendices

A: Initial feedback grid

B: Sutton Trust toolkit

C: RAISEONLINE Summary Report

D: The Prior Attainment of pupils

E: Pre and Post investigative surveys

F: Teacher surveys

G: Student Interviews

i) Students A&B

ii) Students C&D

iii) Students E&F

H: Cycle 1 feedback grid

I: Cycle 2 feedback grid

J: Cycle 3 feedback grid

K: Mathematic department feedback grid

L: Assessment, Recording and Reporting policy

M: Completed feedback grids and samples of students work that demonstrate DIRT

N: Alternative feedback grids:

iv) Year 7 feedback and work sample

v) Year 12 feedback and work sample

Appendix A


Student feedback and consultation: Term 1


Student: _____ Target Grade: _____

Self-Assessment	Peer Assessment
Teacher- Student Discussion	Formal Teacher feedback
Targets this term: 1. 2. 3.	Progress this term:

Appendix B Sutton Trust Toolkit - Feedback

Feedback

High impact for low cost, based on moderate evidence.



+8
months

What is it?

Feedback is information given to the learner and/or the teacher about the learner's performance relative to learning goals. It should aim to (and be capable of) producing improvement in students' learning. Feedback redirects or refocuses either the teacher's or the learner's actions to achieve a goal, by aligning effort and activity with an outcome. It can be about the learning activity itself, about the process of activity, about the student's management of their learning or **self-regulation** or (the least effective) about them as individuals. This feedback can be verbal, written, or can be given through tests or via **digital technology**. It can come from a teacher or someone taking a teaching role, or from **peers**.

How effective is it?

Feedback studies tend to show very high effects on learning. However, it also has a very high range of effects and some studies show that feedback can have negative effects and make things worse. It is therefore important to understand the potential benefits and the possible limitations of the approach. In general, research-based approaches that explicitly aim to provide feedback to learners, such as Bloom's 'mastery learning', also tend to have a positive impact. Feedback has effects on all types of learning across all age groups. Research in schools has focused particularly on English, mathematics and, to a lesser extent, science.

Research evidence about feedback was part of the rationale for Assessment for Learning (AfL). One evaluation of AfL indicated an impact of half of a GCSE grade per student per subject is achievable, which would be in line with the wider evidence about feedback.

Other studies reporting lower impact indicate that it is challenging to make feedback work in the classroom. This has also been demonstrated in a **recent EEF pilot study** where teachers tried to apply the evidence on feedback through an action research approach.

How secure is the evidence?

There are a substantial number of reviews and meta-analyses of the effects of feedback. Educational (rather than psychological or theoretical) studies tend to identify positive benefits where the aim is to improve learning outcomes in reading or mathematics or in recall of information. The most recent meta-analysis of studies focusing on formative assessment in schools indicates the gains are more modest, suggesting an improvement of about three months' additional progress is achievable in schools or nearer four months' when the approach is supported with professional development.

What are the costs?

The costs of providing more effective feedback are not high. However it is likely to require sustained professional development to improve practice, and this includes active inquiry and evaluation. Overall, costs are estimated as under £80 per pupil and very low.

What should I consider?

- Providing effective feedback is challenging. Research suggests that it should be specific, accurate and clear (e.g. "It was good because you..." rather than just "correct"); compare what a learner is doing right now with what they have done wrong before (e.g. "I can see you were focused on improving X as it is much better than last time's Y..."); encourage and support further effort and be given sparingly so that it is meaningful; provide specific guidance on how to improve and not just tell students when they are wrong; and be supported with effective professional development for teachers.
- Wider research suggests the feedback should be about complex or challenging tasks or goals as this is likely to emphasise the importance of effort and perseverance as well as be more valued by the pupils. Feedback can come from other peers as well as adults (see Peer tutoring).
- Have you considered the challenge of implementing feedback effectively and consistently?
- What professional development requirements are likely to be necessary for success?

Appendix C i) – 2014 RAISEONLINE Summary report

Section	RAISE judgement	Issues and actions
Key Characteristics		
FSM SEN, SA+, ST Deprivation indicator ESL	Below average Above average Below average Average	Below average last year
Absence and exclusions		
Absence Exclusions	Below average Not yet available	Down from 5.9% to 3.5% in one year
Prior attainment		
Prior attainment	Significantly below average in all year groups	Year 7 and 8 most able
KS4 attainment		
5+ A*-C En/Ma 5+ A*-G Best 8 points E Bacc v National	55% = national average Sig + Average Sig -	(1023) down from Sig + due to new accountability framework
KS4 progress (all students)		
Best 8 English Mathematics Science Languages Humanities	Sig - Sig + Sig + Average Sig - Sig -	18 th Centile Action plans in place for - Science - Geography - French (down from last year)
KS4 progress (groups)		
All students Boys Girls FSM Low attainers Middle attainers High attainers ESL SA SA+ Statements	Sig + Sig + Sig + Sig + Sig + Average Average Average Sig + Average	Improve progress of - High attainers Sig + last year Implement new SEN policy and monitor progress of groups
KS4 progress (English, Mathematics)		
English expected English more than Mathematics expected Mathematics more than	81% (National 70%) 47% (National 32%) 79% (National 65%) 41% (National 29%)	Maths bar raised
Narrowing the gap (FSM and CLA)		
5+ A*-C En/Ma { Attainment Non FSM FSM gap Expected progress English { No FSM/CLA FSM/CLA Gap Mathematics { No FSM/CLA FSM/CLA Gap Value Added Overall { Non FSM FSM English { Non FSM FSM Mathematics { Non FSM FSM	60 31 -29 83 71 -12 82 83 -19 1025 1016 1004 1005 1004 1002	No change Gap closing over 3 years in English but not in Maths. Narrowing the gap in both English and Mathematics remains a priority

Appendix C ii) 2013 RAISEONLINE Summary report

Section	RAISE judgement	Issues and actions
Key Indicators		
FSM SEN, SA+, ST SEN deprivation ESL	Below average Above average Below average Below average	
Absence and exclusions		
Absence Exclusions	Average High (twice national average)	Target has been set to half the exclusion rate
Prior attainment		
Prior attainment	Significantly below average in all year groups	Year 7 most able year group
KS4 attainment		
5+ A*-C En/Ma Best 8 points A*-C/A*-G GCSE school v National	Sig - (52% against 60% National) Sig + Sig -	Issues being addressed in English Impact of vocational curriculum. Measures are changing form DfE . Action plans in place for - English - Science - Geography - French
KS4 progress (all students)		
Best 8 English Mathematics Science Languages Humanities	Sig + Average Sig + Average Sig - Average	Action plans in place for - English - Science - Geography - French
KS4 progress (groups)		
All students Boys Girls FSM Low attainers Middle attainers High attainers ESL SA SA+ Statements	Sig + Sig + Sig + Sig + Sig + Average Sig + Sig + Average Average	Improve progress of - High attainers . - SA+ students - Statemented students
KS4 progress (English, Mathematics)		
English expected English more than Mathematics expected Mathematics more than	64% (National 69%) 23% (National 30%) 81% (National 70%) 43% (National 32%)	Improve progress of level 4 and level 5c students in English
Changing the gap (FSM and CLA)		
Overall English Mathematics	Value Added All FSM/CLA All FSM/CLA All	1042 1048 1000.1 998.5 1002.3 1003.6
English Mathematics	Expected progress No FSM/CLA FSM/CLA Gap No FSM/CLA FSM/CLA Gap	66 50 -16 84 71 -13
		Improve progress of FSM/CLA students in English Gap closing over 3 years iq Maths but not in English. Narrowing the gap in both English and Mathematics

Appendix D: The prior attainment of pupils – a sociological shift.

	% by Prior Attainment Band					
	School			National		
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High
Year 11	17.3	62.9	19.8	14.6	52.5	32.9
Year 10	20.5	62.9	16.7	16.3	49.1	34.7
Year 9	26.2	61.2	12.6	17.5	51.7	30.8
Year 8	12.3	66.0	21.7	13.6	48.1	38.3
Year 7	13.1	64.6	22.4	13.5	48.7	37.8

Figure 2: The prior attainment of pupils at KS3 and KS4 2014

Appendix E: Pre and Post investigative student surveys

i) Pre-investigate survey tabulated data responses.

Question 1 – What form of feedback do you find most beneficial in the classroom?

<i>Formal written feedback</i>		<i>Conclusions Only 4% saw this as being most beneficial</i>
<i>Positives</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beneficial in supporting students to improve. • Gives the students the ability to look back at the feedback • Teacher is seen as the expert and thus the feedback is beneficial.
<i>Negatives</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irregular feedback – work is not marked with specific frequency. • Language of feedback is difficult to understand. • Feedback is not elaborated upon or does not allow for questions to be asked by student to clarify meaning.
<i>Peer feedback</i>		<i>Conclusions Only 8% saw this as being most beneficial</i>
<i>Positives</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers a different perspective/ opinion on their work. • Feedback is from a colleague – someone their own age. • Discussion of work allows students to understand it better
<i>Negatives</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are self-conscious about their work they feel awkward sharing it with others • Peers are not experts and don't understand marking criteria fully. • Lack of trust in the feedback they receive.
<i>Self-Assessment</i>		<i>Conclusions Only 8% saw this as being most beneficial</i>
<i>Positives</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows a freedom over students own work • Much harsher on themselves • Self-discovery – find their own mistakes.
<i>Negatives</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacking trust in their ability to mark their own work. • Find it difficult to improve work without advice from others. • Not sure how to mark or make improvements to their own work.
<i>Verbal feedback</i>		<i>Conclusions 40% saw this as being most beneficial</i>
<i>Positives</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualised to the student and not to the group. • Teacher explains the problems in more detail, expands and discusses how to improve. • Easier to understand
<i>Negatives</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easier to forget before a student acts upon it.

1:1 Learning Conversations Conclusions 40% saw this as being most beneficial

Positives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less distractions, more focused. • Able to ask questions, discuss and bounce ideas • Targeted, individual and private
Negatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be intimidating. • Can be embarrassing. • Easy to forget as it is not written down.

Question 2: Why do you think feedback on your work is important?

Thematic Conclusions from developed responses

Pre-investigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It helps you to understand what you have done wrong. • It allows you to understand what you need to improve your work
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Question 3: Do you think you receive enough feedback on your work?

Responses

Yes	16%
No	4%
Only in some subjects	80%

Thematic Conclusions from developed responses

Pre-investigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are clear inconsistencies between subjects and the amount of feedback received by students. Either very frequent or not at all – no middle ground. • Feedback is seen as ineffective – teachers can't be bothered, it's unclear, not very thorough or biased. • Teachers only feedback to students (mark their work) because they have to.
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Question 4: What type of work receives the most feedback?

Responses

Classwork	36%
Homework	4%
Exams	48%
Other	12%

Question 5: Do you discuss your work with your teachers?

		<i>Responses</i>
	<i>Only in some subjects</i>	24%
	<i>I would never approach the teacher to discuss my work with them.</i>	0%
	<i>Yes, discussing how to improve work is a feature of lessons</i>	0%
	<i>Other</i>	76%

Thematic Conclusions from developed responses

<i>Pre-investigation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only when you know the teacher will give you honest responses. • Only if the teacher is approachable, encouraging and you feel confident about asking them. • Teachers don't really have time for detailed feedback or are only willing to give it outside of class time. • Sometimes students don't feel confident enough or are embarrassed about discussing their work.
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Question 6: Do you discuss your work with your peers?

Response Percent

<i>Yes</i>	88.0%
<i>No</i>	12.0%

Thematic Conclusions from developed responses

<i>Pre-investigation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's useful to have opinions from others. • Students lack confidence to share their work with those they don't know. • If you are proud of your work you are happy to share it with your peers. • It's difficult to discuss work with peers due to the classroom environment – silence is requested too much.
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Question 7: Is there any work that you feel you need to receive feedback on that you don't?

Thematic Conclusions from developed responses

<i>Pre-investigation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students feel that in a variety of subjects work is not marked to a particular frequency or regularity. • Feedback is often given to the collective but not extended to the individual and so students find it difficult to pinpoint exactly what they need to do to improve their work.
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Question 8: Do you read the written feedback comments your teacher makes on your work?

<i>Answer Options</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Yes, all of the time</i>	68.0%
<i>Sometimes</i>	32.0%
<i>Never</i>	0.0%

<i>Response category</i>	<i>Thematic Conclusions from developed responses</i>
<i>Yes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students feel that it's rude not to read it but this may not mean they act upon it. • It helps to understand how to improve your work.
<i>No</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It can be difficult to read the comments due to handwriting. • Feedback is not direct and clear. • Sometimes teachers only tick work and do not make a comment. • Comments can be lazy and generalised.

Question 9: What supports you to improve your work?

	<i>Thematic Conclusions from developed responses</i>
<i>Pre-investigation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the teacher cares • Constructive criticism • Clear feedback • Knowing that the work counts for something – has a purpose. • Praise

Question 10: How do you feel when your teachers discuss your work with you to ensure you understand how to improve?

	<i>Thematic Conclusions from developed responses</i>
<i>Pre-investigation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confident • It motives students to improve their work • Students feel that the teacher cares about their work • Students feel that if teachers take this time they are working as hard as students to improve their work • Allows students to feel improvements are possible.

ii) Post-investigate survey tabulated data responses.

Question 1 – What form of feedback do you find most beneficial in the classroom?

<i>Formal written feedback</i>		<i>Conclusions 13% saw this as being most beneficial</i>
<i>Positives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives the students the ability to look back at the feedback • Teacher is seen as the expert and thus the feedback is beneficial. 	
<i>Negatives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not cover all points – not comprehensive enough • Language of feedback is difficult to understand. 	
<i>Peer feedback</i>		<i>Conclusions 0% saw this as being most beneficial</i>
<i>Positives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers a different perspective/ opinion on their work. • Feedback is from someone who understands their work more • Feel confident and comfortable about discussing their work with someone they work well with. 	
<i>Negatives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of trust in the feedback they receive. • Peers are not always interested in giving feedback. • Less reliable than the teachers feedback 	
<i>Self-Assessment</i>		<i>Conclusions Only 6% saw this as most beneficial</i>
<i>Positives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps students to understand what they have done wrong and edit before receiving teacher feedback. 	
<i>Negatives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find it difficult to improve work without advice from others. • Not sure how to mark or make improvements to their own work. 	
<i>Verbal feedback</i>		<i>Conclusions 20% saw this as being most beneficial</i>
<i>Positives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows the student to collaborate with the teacher. • Fully understood – clear and easier to process. 	
<i>Negatives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not allow discussion just reception of feedback • If is not said correctly it will not be understood. 	
<i>1:1 Learning Conversations</i>		<i>Conclusions 56% saw this as being most beneficial</i>
<i>Positives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students understand clearly what they need to do to improve their work • Gives students the ability to discuss their work and explain their ideas. • Allows students to ask questions. 	
<i>Negatives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to forget as it is not written down. 	

Question 2: Why do you think feedback on your work is important?

Thematic Conclusions from developed responses

<i>Post-investigation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can understand their mistakes. • As mistakes can be corrected • As students understand what they can improve on. • Allows students to improve
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Question 3: Do you think you receive enough feedback on your work?

Responses

Yes	13%
No	6%
<i>Only in some subjects</i>	81%

Thematic Conclusions from developed responses

<i>Post-investigation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers have to mark books but written feedback is not beneficial. • English offers a lot of feedback • A variety of other subjects do not offer enough feedback on student work.
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Question 4: What type of work receives the most feedback?

Responses

<i>Classwork</i>	25%
<i>Homework</i>	0%
<i>Exams</i>	63%
<i>Other</i>	12%

Question 5: Do you discuss your work with your teachers?

Responses

<i>Only in some subjects</i>	88%
<i>I would never approach the teacher to discuss my work with them.</i>	6%
<i>Yes, discussing how to improve work is a feature of lessons</i>	6%

Thematic Conclusions from developed responses

<i>Post-investigation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only some teachers are interested. • Some teachers do not give enough time to feedback.
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- Some teachers don't give enough feedback/ think written feedback is enough
- Discussing work with teachers allows students to improve their work.

Question 6: Do you discuss your work with your peers?

Response Percent

<i>Yes</i>	81%
<i>No</i>	19%

Thematic Conclusions from developed responses

<i>Post-investigation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many teachers don't give the opportunity for peer assessment. • Allows another viewpoint on your work. • In English peer assessment is used to share ideas
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Question 7: Is there any work that you feel you need to receive feedback on that you don't?

Thematic Conclusions from developed responses

<i>Post-investigation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More 1:1 feedback should be given to students. • More feedback should be given on exams
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Question 8: Do you read the written feedback comments your teacher makes on your work?

Answer Options Percent

<i>Yes, all of the time</i>	56.0%
<i>Sometimes</i>	44.0%
<i>Never</i>	0.0%

Response category *Thematic Conclusions from developed responses*

<i>Yes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students feel it is interesting to see what they have said about their work. • Students feel that this is beneficial but like teachers to write underneath the work rather than ruining their workbook.
<i>No</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments make no sense and are scarce. • Some comments are broad and do not tell you how to actually improve it.

Question 9: What supports you to improve your work?

Thematic Conclusions from developed responses

<i>Post-investigation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning conversations • Feedback and redrafting • If a student feel comfortable talking to a teacher about their work. • Verbal feedback
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Question 10: How do you feel when your teachers discuss your work with you to ensure you understand how to improve?

Thematic Conclusions from developed responses

<i>Post-investigation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It helps students to understand how to improve. • Not all teachers discuss work with students • Teachers do not always have time to discuss work with students. • Students feel their English teacher discusses work with them and spends time sharing ideas.
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Appendix F: Teacher survey tabulated data responses.

Question 1 – What form of feedback do you find most beneficial in the classroom?

<i>Formal written feedback</i>		<i>Conclusions 13% saw this as being most beneficial</i>
<i>Positives</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If done well it is beneficial to students. • If specific to students, provides clear guidelines and responded to or acted upon it is beneficial. • Allows targeted individual feedback.
<i>Negatives</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time needs to be given to students to reflect upon feedback • Written feedback is often misinterpreted by students. • Students rarely consider the comments being useful to help them learn and instead view as criticism.
<i>Peer feedback</i>		<i>Conclusions 4% saw this as being most beneficial</i>
<i>Positives</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beneficial if a very clear criteria is used with students. • Allows students to see others work which can be helpful to improve their own. • Students accept each other's comments
<i>Negatives</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reluctant to share criticism • Not always fair or accurate • Less able students need a lot of structure to help them assess each others work.
<i>Self-Assessment</i>		<i>Conclusions 0% saw this as most beneficial</i>
<i>Positives</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps students to become self-reflective learners • Students gain a deeper insight into criteria to improve their work
<i>Negatives</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find it difficult to improve work without teacher discussion • Not sure how to mark or make improvements to their own work. • Less sense of self – this develops later and thus students find it difficult to be critical of their own work.
<i>Verbal feedback</i>		<i>Conclusions 20% saw this as being most beneficial</i>
<i>Positives</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instantaneous. • Students feel valued • Allows teachers to ensure that students engage with their work
<i>Negatives</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It can be easily forgotten as there is no record of it. • Difficult due to time constraints.

1:1 Learning Conversations Conclusions 60% saw this as being most beneficial

<i>Positives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted to the individual • Allows discussion and dialogue between teacher and student
<i>Negatives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deeper feedback is possible • Must be supported by written comments to be remembered and effective • Time is an issue and thus must be conducted in catch up

Question 2: What type of work do you feel you spend the most time marking?

Responses

<i>Classwork</i>	36%
<i>Homework</i>	16%
<i>Exams</i>	32%
<i>Coursework</i>	60%

Thematic Conclusions from developed responses

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exams marking for GCSE and A level groups take priority and the volume of these per year means a significant amount of time is spent on them. • Exam, coursework and assessment is seen as being time consuming but beneficial over classwork and notes copied from the board. • Coursework and controlled assessment is extremely time consuming due to the volume and value. • Teachers feel pressured to mark books yet feel it is least effective • Classwork that is in preparation for coursework/assessment is seen as significant to spend time marking.
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Question 3: Is there any marking that you feel is unnecessary and does not benefit the students?

Thematic Conclusions

<i>Most common responses</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marking class work to simply show that a book has been looked at. Classwork notes that are teacher produced or from a textbook • Homework tasks that have been set for the sake of it, and class notes that have been copied off of the board. • Coursework marking is not looked at or students claim they do not understand/do not know what to do to improve it, This may be their fault for not trying to understand, or simply that they understand much more clearly if it is verbally explained rather than written.
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- The time taken to mark a set of 30 class books (in excess of 5/6 hours) could be spent improving lessons to ensure teaching is of a good/outstanding level.

Question 4: How do you use feedback in your lessons? (e.g. Create a dialogue with students, learning conversations, informs planning etc)

Thematic Conclusions

<i>Most common responses</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a dialogue with students about their learning. • Correct misconceptions as a class. • Use feedback to plan future lessons • Consistent verbal feedback during lessons • To create individual action plans
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Question 5: What type of feedback do you feel best supports students to improve their work?

Thematic Conclusions

<i>Most common responses</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning conversations • Verbal feedback • If written feedback is supported by verbal feedback
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Question 6: How do you ensure that students understand how to improve their work?

Thematic Conclusions

<i>Most common responses</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questioning. • A combination of verbal and written feedback is issued. • Written feedback is given, they then self and peer-assess while learning conversations take place individually with me • Modelling, use of exemplar work • Spending time with them. • Reviewing wide spread errors or misconceptions as a class and giving individualised feedback to students.
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Question 7: How do you discuss students work with them?

Thematic Conclusions

<i>Most common responses</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Base this around a discussion of the success criteria so that students can see where they are going wrong and/or excelling. Students are then encouraged to have similar conversations with their peers when I am not available to them. • Parents evening, • Written and verbal feedback.
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- On a one-to-one basis in small classes or with coursework. With larger classes, it will more often be a dialogue in writing, supported by exemplar pieces/models.
- Highlight areas needed for improvement. Ask them what they need to do when redrafting. Go through verbal suggestions and answers any questions. Work through a section together and let them proofread their work against levels/bands - focusing on key skills, such as 'analyse'/ 'evaluate'.
- Address whole-class misconceptions as a group/ in general
- Individual and group conversations
- During catch up's
- Sometimes, students are placed in working groups so that they all have a common objective for improvement & can thus be spoken to en masse.
- Sitting students in ability groups (P, M, D) can allow you to give specific feedback to each group related to their coursework, allowing them to discuss as a group and then use the feedback to achieve the next grade.
- This is usually done through written feedback in their books unless the students are in a smaller class or take up my invitation to come and see me to discuss their work after school.
- I walk round and check how they are getting on. If they are doing extended writing I pick students to read out their work and we correct / improve it together.

Question 8: Which do you find more effective; verbal, written or peer feedback?

<i>Answer Options</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Verbal feedback</i>	68%
<i>Written feedback</i>	28%
<i>Peer feedback</i>	4%

Question 9: Do you think students read and respond to feedback on their work?

Thematic Conclusions from developed responses

<i>Post-investigation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students read but do not respond. • Only when given the time and opportunity to do so. • Lower ability students tend to less but not all. • Only if there is a strong classroom structure led by the teacher
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Question 10: Finally, if you could amend the way we mark work in school, what would you change?

Thematic Conclusions

Most common responses

- Reduce frequency and increase quality and response time provided.
- More frequent graded work with clear targets and praise. Less frequent book marking.
- Whole school marking policy could be used to ensure consistency.
- Perhaps have a literacy marking code across all subject areas to improve minor technical errors. This could be implemented into a peer activity.
- Make this less time-consuming. Perhaps have a quick, standardised approach that the students can then use to build their own targets.
- A marking key/code for coursework and exercise books would be useful.
- Eliminate book marking by teachers as these should be practice books for students and a way of recording feedback from verbal feedback by teachers.
- Use of exercise books. I would prefer a folder of work to show progress and books used to make notes only etc
- Insist on coursework and coursework prep. marking only. Homework and classwork as peer and self only. Exercise books used only for students' benefit, no marking of them for the sake of it. Assessment folder with marked work only.
- Make it more meaningful by allowing self-assessment using a clear framework.

Appendix Gi: Interview with Students A&B and researcher commentary

Question	Student A	Student B	Researcher Commentary
What makes you a successful student and what makes you a failure?	Em..... Hard question....		Students seem unsure of what to respond with.
What tells someone if you're a success or a failure at school?	<p>Well sometimes it's not about the grades that you get. As like in some lessons you could be really good at like one thing but they may base your grades on the thing that you're not so good at. I guess being a successful student could be like.....</p> <p>Yeah but then it could be like being good at what it is and I don't know, I guess the grades do play into it but even if you get like D's in everything doesn't mean....</p> <p>You're like a failure of a student..</p> <p>It's also being good is a successful students it means that you're not obstructing the work.</p>	<p>...getting A*'s in every subject,</p> <p>You're like a failure of a student.... Yeah</p>	<p>Interestingly when the response is rephrased the students are able to respond. The initial question was phrased asking them to identify features of themselves as learners to be conscious of what defines them as a success or failure. In contrast the rephrased question asks them to define what success or failure looks like to others. The students' response is interesting, they understand that success is not just about grades or being assessed at one thing but that these play such a big part in how we measure students. It's also very insightful that students recognise being successful is also linked to behaviour and "not obstructing the work".</p>
Do you mean as in behaviour?	Yeah.	Yeah.	
So talk to me about effort and ability, are they important and which one is more important?	<p>Effort...</p> <p>.... it shows you care more.</p> <p>Cause if you're just good at something, then you stop caring at putting effort into it. And you can slip and other people can...</p>	<p>Yeah</p> <p>Yeah... Effort means that you have determination and motivation to do things. If you just have the ability it's not really useful is it like for example if you're really good at em, science and you go into a job of like science it's because</p>	<p>Both A&B suggest that effort is more important. Interestingly student B mentions the terms determination and motivation and how they are linked to enjoying what you are doing. You've got to enjoy something and put effort in to it, they recognise that you also need to care about your work, just being able</p>

	Yeah...	you're really good at it but you don't like what you're doing then there's no point really, you gotta enjoy what you are doing and enjoy like to the fullest as we only have a few years to live.	means that you may "slip" and "stop caring".
Do you think your ability can be developed?	Yeah You know the saying practice makes perfect so if you're like good at drawing you don't just always draw what you're good at drawing you go out of your comfort zone to improve what you're good at.	Yeah Yeah	There is a clear sense of understanding how they learn and what type of learners they are despite the difficulty in answering the first question. Clear recognition of the need to apply effort, not obstruct the work and now going outside of your comfort zone to improve.
How do you feel about the term assessment? ... The word assessment.	Yeah And it gives, like if you have like an assessment every term, it shows you where you are... And like what you need to improve on, what you're good at.	Generally you are just like (sharp intake of breath) oh no assessment but.... I guess we have just gotten used to it after a while. It's just, it's an assessment now Yeah	I'm not sure that teachers would expect such an answer from the students. They embrace assessments as they understand that it shows them where they are as learners, what they need to improve on and what they are good at. This seems to be a common theme with students and the things they identify as being important in their learning.
So generally you like having assessments because it helps you?	Yeah I like having them but not when they're like surprise attack, like Like you go into to class and they're like, oh you've got an assessment today you're like... (Both) Ohhh... (giggling)	YEAH (Both) Ohhh... (giggling) Great (Sarcastically)	Interesting use of the word "attack" here. Students like to be prepared and informed about their learning.

<p>Do we overuse the word assessment?</p>	<p>Em, I think it depends what you're saying it for, like assessment sometimes, like in science at the end of every unit you get like...</p> <p>But it's not like, it doesn't show you're progress, as it's only one unit, so...</p>	<p>An end of term assessment, yeah</p>	<p>The response to this question and the previous one reminded me that the students have such a varied experience of learning. As teachers we are at times consumed by our own subject and do not think of the students wider experiences outside our classroom.</p>
<p>What about like peer assessment or self-assessment?</p>	<p>I don't know....</p> <p>Yeah... and they never wanna give you like...</p> <p>Criticism they don't wanna like</p> <p>Offend you, yeah</p>	<p>I don't know....</p> <p>During peer assessment I feel more comfortable talking to my friends about my matters. But talking to your friends, they know what you can do but not what you're capable of sort of thing?</p> <p>Harsh feedback, yeah...</p> <p>... Demoralise you</p>	<p>Students are aware of the issues around peer assessment, they like to share their learning with their friends but they also recognise the limitations is the feedback that they receive is not honest, critical and direct. Students also use words such as "demoralise" and "offend" perhaps also suggesting that in giving peer feedback students keep in mind their colleagues feelings.</p>
<p>So is feedback important?</p>	<p>Yeah it helps you improve. When you have like peer assessment, like I said you don't wanna say anything bad cause you feel bad cause you're like 'oh this doesn't work' and then they're like 'oh I thought it did' and you're like 'ohhh, I'm sorry'</p>	<p>Yeah most definitely</p> <p>'I'm, sorry!'</p>	<p>An interesting response – feeling the need to apologise for feedback. Students don't always feel able to give honest feedback as they feel bad but there is a dichotomy here as they recognise the need to give honest feedback to improve.</p>
<p>So you feel you can be honest? But in giving feedback what's it's purpose? From teachers too, what's the purpose of feedback?</p>	<p>It's like helping the student improve the work and get like better marks on it and helping them to develop what they have already done.</p>		<p>It is clear that the concept of feedback is linked directly to improvement and developing work.</p>

And is it always useful?	Yeah...	It's purpose is to be useful but sometimes maybe not.	Recognition of the fact that at times whilst feedback intends to be useful it is not always executed to be so.
Why not, give me an example of when it's not useful.	<p>Yeah...</p> <p>Yeah...</p> <p>Yeah...</p> <p>Yeah...</p>	<p>Well not really an example but sometimes all the student needs is like motivation and compliments on the work...</p> <p>Because sometimes, maybe for example you're, this is, I am student A and then there's another called student B, and student B is great and the teacher is always like 'oh my god this is amazing work' and...</p> <p>...like the teacher goes to student A, which is like me, and they'll be like 'you need to do this and this and this' no compliments so like</p> <p>it makes student A feel a bit bad and maybe I can't do this at all so like they just give up in the end.</p>	The concept of motivation is also mentioned here – deemed as the teachers responsibility. The need to receive compliments on their work is deemed as important alongside the recognition of bias in how feedback as delivered – often this happens unconsciously.
So, the purpose of feedback should be to motivate students?		Yeah...	No development of the response suggests that it is a clear cut response. The purpose of feedback is to motivate.
What about written feedback, you know, so a teacher marks your book and writes a little comment at the end, is that useful?	It's useful sometimes but when they like leave marking the book to like ages and then you go back through it and they tell you improvements you can do on something but you have gone past that subject, you're like, I don't know how I can fit		Clear understanding of the need for feedback to be timely in order to be effective. The expectation for students to complete improvements after marking books is unrealistic. We must give students time to reflect on the work that they do in

	... and it doesn't apply to you.		
Do teachers tend to do that, do they group feedback so they come in and they say...	Yeah	Yeah	Before I could finish the question the students responded. It is clear that this is an issue – teachers grouping feedback – we need to understand that grouping feedback has negative connotations and can have a negative impact.
Can you tell me how or give me an example?	It's like, sometimes if like a majority of people are bad at one thing.... ... they go over that one thing a lot, like you could be bad at one thing that everyone is good at so it hasn't been gone over and you don't get help on it.	Yeah	Students understand that teachers tend to focus on the majority rather than the individual. They also identify that this means at times their learning needs are neglected for the majority.
Do you often talk about your learning with your teachers?	Not really... Yeah same.. Really approach my teachers....	I don't... I'm kind of an awkward person.... ... and I don't Yeah	The response indicates that students see if they want to talk about their learning with their teachers they need to approach them. What about teachers approaching them about their learning, making direct comments to them in class or speaking to them directly. They feel uncomfortable.
So you don't want to approach them?	No Yeah	No It's kind of like and sometimes, like from my friends experience it's like the teachers like kind of like basically embarrass the students... ... I really hate it when I see that happens, it's kind of like you don't	It is clear from student B's comments that this perception of talking to students about learning is in a reprehensible way, demotivating and negative not a positive learning experience that I wish it to be.

		have the need to do that, why would you do that and also, again, it demotivates the student because everyone is just staring and the student is just standing in the classroom when the teacher is like reprimanding them, it's just... it would be better if you took the student outside, you know.	
	Yeah...		
So are you nervous to ask teachers about your learning and how to improve your work.	Yeah.....		The fact that students are actually nervous to ask teachers about their learning suggests that the culture is not quite right. We should be immersed in a dialogue with the students about learning, openly, honestly and in a supportive manner.
Don't you think that that is like the key thing we need to get right in school, that we should be talking about learning all the time?	It's like some teachers are like 'you guys are going to get this mark' and like when you go up and ask for help, you feel like oh they think I'm not going to get that mark...	Exactly	The students seem concerned with teachers' perceptions about their ability and that consulting them about their learning is something that suggests they are not capable. Consulting about learning should be a positive learning experience.
Do you sit with a lot of teachers and talk about your work with them?	No		The lack of response to this question was interesting. I find it difficult to comprehend that such capable students never sit with other teachers to work on their progress.
Do you sit with any other teacher besides me and talk about your work?	My music teacher sometimes calls us up and wits with us and helps us with our work.	Occasionally with my Maths teacher.	I needed to rephrase the question to determine whether they has any other experiences of learning conversations (besides in English)

<p>What subject do you feel uses feedback most effectively?</p>	<p>I mean English is good for feedback, as obviously with the coursework you need to try to get the best marks.... em not many other subjects.</p> <p>Yeah</p>	<p>Em, awkward silence...</p> <p>It's kind of difficult to give feedback to every individual person cause like there are so many students and it's something that's, like there's some troublesome kids and they cause some trouble and like it's just, I want feedback but the teachers end up spending more time with the kids who are making some kind of riot than focusing on the actual work. it kinda just takes away the time</p>	<p>The students took a minute to respond (hence the comment "awkward silence") I find it intriguing that they couldn't pinpoint any subject that used feedback effectively (besides English). This suggests that we do need to focus on delivering feedback effectively for all students. The development by student B who suggests that teachers are typically concerned with managing behaviour meaning that they do not get the opportunity to support students with feedback is interesting. The student's use of "riot" is in exaggeration but an interesting link to the identification at the beginning of the interview that a successful student is typically those who do not obstruct the learning.</p>
<p>And so if there's not enough time, what can we do to improve that?</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>I'm not really quite sure.</p>	<p>The understanding of lack of time is interesting but also the recognition that it's not an easy fix for anyone.</p>
<p>Cause I'm not either. Do you think there's other ways? So I won't have time to speak to every single one of you during every single class every single week but is there another way we could do it?</p>	<p>Maybe like, once a term have one or two lessons where you pull up students individually while other students get on with something else so they all get like spoken to every term.</p> <p>Yeah</p>	<p>Yeah like Mrs, you've done that always and I find it quite helpful.</p>	<p>Refers directly to leaning conversations and how they appreciate the benefit of them.</p>

Would you mind if I spoke to both of you at the same time?	I think if it was like two then... ... that would be ok.	Yeah and it would be quicker as well.	The potential to give feedback in pairs is accepted.
But any more than two is too much?	Yeah	Yeah	But the use of more than two to deliver feedback to is seen as too much.

Appendix Gii: Interview with Students C&D and researcher commentary

Question	Student C	Student D	Researcher Commentary
Talk to me about your success and failures in school, what makes you successful and what makes you a failure in school?	<p>What makes you a successful student, I think is putting in the effort because</p> <p>Yeah...</p>	<p>And your classwork</p> <p>Rather than exams because they just, exam you could have just had a bad day rather than your overall work throughout the year.</p>	<p>The students identify that being successful is determined by more than just exams – it’s cumulative. Putting in effort means that you are successful.</p>
Ok, what makes you a failure?	<p>Not caring yeah but also not putting in any effort cause it just, you can’t expect to get a good grade if you don’t do anything toward it.</p>	<p>Not caring.</p> <p>If you don’t revise, if you don’t listen in lessons, not just, you need to... help the teacher teach you otherwise you’re just sitting there and there’s no point you being there if you’re just not gonna...</p>	<p>It’s interesting that the students have decided that that caring makes you a failure. The students see their role as putting in the effort to learn. They do not see bad grades as being a failure but a lack of effort, lacking the will to learn. Both students seem confident in their definition of what makes a good student and who they are as learners.</p>
So you need to be an active participant in your learning.	<p>Yeah.</p>	<p>Put your hand up, listen to what you’re saying, take notes, you know.</p>	<p>Clear in their expectations of what makes a good learner.</p>
Talk to me then about effort and ability, what’s more important?	<p>Effort</p> <p>If you don’t put effort in the ability won’t develop</p>	<p>Effort, because if you just don’t put any effort in then you won’t have any ability, you might still have ability but there’s no way of proving it</p> <p>Yeah, if you put effort in, your ability will just develop, your ability will improve with the amount of effort you put in.</p>	<p>The students are very sure of their choice in effort being more important than ability and clearly have a growth mindset in viewing their ability as capable of being developed through effort.</p>

<p>What do you need to put effort into to increase your ability?</p>	<p>The work that you do and the revision that you do so that you can get better grades, cause if you don't put effort into anything then.... it's not important.</p>	<p>You need to put effort into not only doing the work but trying to improve it after you've done it so you're not just trying to get it out of the way you're just trying to do the best for yourself.</p>	<p>Recognition of the need to make a conscious effort to make improvements in their work. Trying to improve after you've done the work also suggesting that one needs to reflect on how they can improve and be self-reflective in their learning.</p>
<p>What do you think about the term assessment?</p>	<p>Yeah, scares you. Not as much as the word exam but it does still scare you cause it feels like you are being assessed personally and not just through the work that you can do.</p> <p>Yeah.</p>	<p>It's daunting.</p> <p>It's overused I think, I think teachers and students use it too much, it's scary and it makes everything to feel like it's a big big deal and I know it's important to actually do work and treat it like it's a big deal but it makes me panic a bit</p>	<p>The students see the term as being "daunting", a personal scrutiny as if they are being judged. The understanding that we "overuse" it is an interesting insight to the students' perception of assessment suggesting that we place so much weight on making judgements about students, their progress, work and predicted grades and the students are conscious of this continual assessment.</p>
<p>So talk to me about how it's used then cause you said that it's overused. So how do we use it?</p>	<p>(Both) Peer assessment... Teacher assessment, assessment, assessment!</p>	<p>Eh, self assessment... (Both) Peer assessment...</p>	<p>Clearly we use the term assessment far too often in the classroom.</p>
<p>Does it take away then from the weight of assessment and the importance of it?</p>		<p>It does, it doesn't make you think of individual assessments like what do I need to do for this assessment, you start thinking about all of the assessments, all of the things you have been told, and it becomes a separate entity almost as in this is an assessment,</p>	<p>It can be derived from this that we place a vast amount of importance on assessments and forget the importance of individual pieces of work. It can become all-consuming for the students and perhaps overwhelming.</p>

		rather than this is English work this is something scary that I have to try and do.	
Talk to me about feedback, do you think it's important.	<p>Yes, because otherwise, without the feedback you're not going to progress cause if you just keep doing what you think is right and it's not then you're just going to keep on doing that and it won't allow you to progress.</p> <p>Target partners?</p>	<p>Feedback is meant to help you and most of the time, some people if you're doing peer assessment or someone doesn't really care about it then it's not going to be helpful, they're just trying to get it out of the way but usually if it's teacher assessment teacher feedback and feedback from, not your seating partner....</p> <p>Target partners, then they're actually trying to help you, they're trying to improve it so its important to listen to it.</p>	<p>Student C highlights that feedback is necessary for students to make the appropriate progress in their learning and that with intervention and effective feedback learning does not happen.</p> <p>It's interesting that students D talks about the different types of feedback that they engage in how they recognise that at times, feedback is not effective. They like the tenant of target partners not just seating partners and identify that these can support learning and be effective in their learning.</p>
Do you get enough feedback in your books, on your homework, on your coursework? Talk to me about the feedback you get in school.	<p>I think the worst, the worst, like the marking in the books is the worst thing, cause no one really, they'll scan over it but</p> <p>Yeah you can scan over it and use it during the lesson but you're less</p>	<p>Most of the time it's quite detailed but it can be a bit sparse sometimes and toward the end of a piece, some teachers can just get a bit lax and not really be caring, they just wanna get it marked.</p> <p>It's helpful</p>	<p>Student D raises an interesting point. Marking can be "sparse" perhaps tick and flick? Furthermore student D gives us an insight into a student's perception of teacher marking. It is possible for students to identify that a teacher is not engaging with marking and feedback but doing it because they have to. The marking in books is identified as being a negative thing in comparison to verbal feedback and reinforcement through learning conversations.</p>

	<p>likely to remember it as if you're...</p> <p>Yeah because you can put it into practice but if you're told it then you look at it and you go away and do something, you're not going to physically remember what that said on your page...</p> <p>... asking questions.</p>	<p>Verbally told something...</p> <p>Whereas if you had a conversation and talked about what's best for it</p> <p>Asking questions and you then, then you can be clear on what you're doing and clear on what you need to be improving.</p>	<p>Both students also recognise that learning conversations are a two way street that they must be active participants and be involved ask questions to be clear about their learning.</p>
<p>Do you act on the formal written feedback that you are given by teachers, lets say when they finish marking your book?</p>	<p>It's often the um, if a teacher has marked your book and then made a comment at the end it's often less, there's often less of it than if someone is talking to you in person because they can remember things in your book that's not quite right and they can change them but if they just write a comment at the end it's just like an overall...</p> <p>Yeah.</p>	<p>Yes, I think but not to the same extent as one on one feedback where it's not just written down. I mean, you do try to pay attention to it, you try to incorporate it in your work when you are trying to make it better but it doesn't seem as...</p> <p>It's just what they are thinking in that moment, isn't it?</p>	<p>The students clearly don't value the written comment at the end of their work, they don't see it as being effective as verbal one to one feedback.</p>

<p>You're talking a lot about one to one conversations, learning conversations, why do you guys like them?</p>	<p>Because I find that teachers can explain the comments more. Cause if you look at a comment sometimes they just circle things or underline things and don't actually tell you what it means but if you're having a learning conversation they can tell you what it means and you can ask questions and it's just a lot easier to understand.</p>	<p>And it feels um, personal, it feels like you're being cared for more than just having words written down, you feel like they actually want to help you.</p>	<p>Students identify the use of comments as being vague or unclear. Learning conversations are targeted to them and personal, individualised and effective.</p>
<p>Do you feel like that's a problem sometimes, that you're not cared for or treated as individuals?</p>	<p>Sometimes teachers, I find it hard when like in one particular point the teacher had told us we had all done bad on assessments and then some people got them back and they had A's and A*'s and it just feels like she just...</p> <p>Yeah and it doesn't feel like... it makes you feel really bad cause you're like 'oh that's not good enough'.</p>	<p>They got the general vibe...</p> <p>It is important to be treated individually in lessons I think as well, because sometimes, especially in Science individuals are asked if they're ok on this but the whole class needs to be sure and they just sort of ask a couple of people rather than if the whole class gets it</p>	<p>The grouped delivery of feedback is identified as being a negative and ineffective method of giving students feedback. Generalising feedback and delivering group evaluation is negative and unproductive. Furthermore students identify the need to be treated as an individual and learning and feedback tailored directly toward them.</p>

<p>So do you think feedback is grouped then, is that what you're saying. They'll talk to the collective rather than the individual?</p>	<p>Yeah, well I think the best thing, they should put them into like groups and talk to them in that way and talk to people who have the same sort of marks and went wrong in the same sort of places so they don't collectively talk to the class and tell them all that they have done really badly and</p>	<p>But they can still give accurate feedback and not take up too much time.</p>	<p>The need to deliver feedback accurately is the students' main concern. Collective feedback as a class is an issue in the classroom. Students C's idea that it is possible to deliver small group feedback is useful and could be used effectively in the classroom.</p>
<p>Is it important that your feedback is accurate?</p>	<p>(Both)Yes. Cause if someone, I find it weird when, one teacher marks it and you get a completely different grade to if another teacher marks it just shows that it's not being assessed completely properly.</p>	<p>(Both)Yes. If it's not accurate then there's no point in them, if you've written a completely amazing thing and someone's said you need to include this and it doesn't need to be included then it's pointless.... Tis a broken pencil.</p>	<p>The metaphor of a "broken pencil" to describe inaccurate feedback is very apt. There is no point in delivering feedback if it is not accurate, then it is not effective and will not benefit the receiver. The students' are so insightful, if schools too could recognise and rectify this as a key issue that needed to be considered in schools perhaps the culture of education would change.</p>
<p>What's the requirements for good feedback do you think?</p>	<p>But it needs to have some... It's amazing... Yeah but I think the best thing on like coursework and pieces</p>	<p>Not overly negative cause that can make you feel that there is no point in doing it. Don't try to sugar coat it and make it sound like... It's amazing, I don't need to do anything but honest but not harsh.</p>	<p>Honest, clear and relevant feedback is valued by students. Marking with students is also important. Whilst issuing feedback it is possible for learners to become actively involved in the feedback process and take notes, make amendments and rectify issues alongside and working with their teacher, collaboratively.</p>

	<p>of writing is if they make comments on it individually and then at the end round it up into three or four complete targets that you need to work on...</p>	<p>Or you could... sorry, I've had an idea... or you could, whilst you are talking to your teacher and they are talking about how you could improve, mark it in pen then so you could have all of your ideas down, the things that you need to improve on and the things the teacher thinks you need to improve on. You could do it at the same time, mark it together.</p>	
<p>But time is a problem isn't it?</p>		<p>Yeah that's with the grouped idea thing, you could get people with the same sort of problem or same sort of issues together and they could help each other as well. They could help each other and the teacher could help them and that would save time and be helpful.</p>	<p>There is a clear emphasis here on feedback being a collective experience that it should be delivered collaboratively and through consulting students about their learning.</p>
<p>So what's the ultimate purpose of feedback?</p>	<p>Yeah to improve and to allow the students to progress, so they can get better.</p>	<p>To improve.</p>	<p>The students are very definite in their response, clear in their expectations of feedback.</p>
<p>Talk to me about peer assessment.</p>	<p>Get comfortable with the person and know... it's like good to do it with your friends as</p>	<p>It is helpful cause they're not necessarily your friends, they're not just trying to make you feel good about what you've done but if you don't know each other so well you can't really....</p>	<p>The students identify the use of target partners as being effective and useful to them in their work. The use of structured learning conversations (between peers) in order to do this is important. Furthermore the students identify the need to alter target partners regularly in order for feedback to remain</p>

	<p>they're more likely to tell you the good things about it but if you go to someone you don't really know then they're more likely to not sugar coat it and they're going to give you the comments that you need to improve and not just what you can keep the same.</p> <p>Yeah target partners...</p> <p>They get used to it.</p>	<p>It's a good idea to keep changing them though cause otherwise they just get...</p> <p>... Used to it</p> <p>God forbid we might become friends, they might try and sugar coat it as well.</p>	<p>effective. There is a clear understanding that friendships can mean unclear feedback as friends are more concerned with feelings than offering effective feedback.</p>
<p>What about how we can improve feedback, what would you do if you were in charge of designing how teachers give feedback across the school, what would you do?</p>	<p>I wouldn't give as much written feedback, as I don't really think people take that as much into account. I'd give more one to one conversations but then while you're doing that maybe write down what they are saying so that you get but if you're doing it in the books, I know quite a few people who just ignore it.</p> <p>Yeah</p>	<p>Less of the sort of 'I know everything, you must do what I am telling you to do as I have the ultimate word on everything', I know teachers they study the subject, they know what they are talking about but sometimes it feels too, like you have no say in how you make something better...</p>	<p>An extremely interesting insight into the students' perceptions about formal written feedback. It's very clear that they take little notice of written feedback and the value that they place on learning conversations. They also recognise the need to have a say in their learning, they want to be involved in feedback not just told what to do but to uncover how they could improve with their teacher.</p>

<p>So you want a say in how you make you work better?</p>		<p>Yeah, one of the art teachers, I've been told, this is a story from someone else, I don't do art, that they did their work and it was, well they were pleased with it and then this teacher came along and did something else to it and marked them down for what they the teacher had done to it and I think, students should have a say.</p>	<p>The use of such a story to respond to this question highlights the students need to have a say in their learning, to not feel as if they are determined by the teachers' ideas on their learning. Clearly the students feel impeded by some instances of this in their learning.</p>
<p>So is having ownership over your work important to you?</p>	<p>Yeah. It is cause if you don't want to like write something and then to teacher to completely change it and you don't feel like it's what you've said anymore.</p>	<p>It is. Cause then if that's marked it's not really your work anymore, I mean you do need feedback from a teacher who knows what they are doing but you also need responsibility for your own thing that you've produced that you've put time into.</p>	<p>In following on from the previous story, it's interesting that the students refer to how they feel at times teachers amend work in a manner that they don't agree with and thus they feel as if ownership of their work has been taken from them. They wish to be responsible for what they have produced and wish for guidance from their teachers not dominance.</p>

Appendix Giii: Interview with Students E&F and researcher commentary

Question	Student E	Student F	Researcher Commentary
How do you explain when you're successful or when you fail at something, what do you think determines that?	Assessments	Yeah, when I get a bad grade on that, that's when I know I need to start, that I'm like, it feels as if I'm failing.	It's interesting that this pair of students identify their failures in school as bad grades and assessments.
What's a bad grade?	Em just when you expected target grade, you're really far away from it, like you're not going to achieve it by the end of year 11.	When I see like, D or an E, when I get something that no one else has got, a bit lower than the rest of the class that's when I feel like... oh	It is clear from this discussion that student E is insecure about the aspirational target grades attributed to her. Interestingly that students are continually thinking about their own progress and ability. Feeling singled out is clearly another issue for these students especially when student F suggests getting "something that no one else has got"
So do you think they are unrealistic or the target grade can be achieved?	I think it can be achieved, it will just take a lot of work and focus.		It is clear that the student understands the possibility of achieving target grades – suggests that there is still somewhat of a growth mindset present.
Is being good at school down to effort (working really hard) or is it down to ability?		Both cause if you're good at one thing and you're not at the other then no matter how hard you work you're not going to change that. I mean, I feel that I'm better at science than I am English or Maths and no matter how hard I try in Maths, I feel I still achieve	The language used by the students is very interesting here they talk about being good and bad rather than just focusing on effort and ability. They suggest that effort is important but so that you are not bad at

	I feel like if you're not as good with one subject then you need to put more effort in to be the same as your other subjects, so you're not really bad in one.	better... I don't know why that is but I ...	something rather than suggesting that effort makes you good at something.
What is effort?	Just focusing in lessons and revising what you've done during the lessons.	Yeah, I think it's just focusing harder and just taking it a bit more seriously	Both identify the need to focus as being a characteristic of effort.
How do you feel about the word assessment?	Just reminds me that I need to go over everything that we have learnt during the year so I know the questions easier.	I don't think it scares me or anything, I mean I always get excited about assessments as it's a chance to see how well I am doing, what I need to improve on so I kinda like them to be honest.	Students don't seem fazed by assessments but enjoy being able to use them to demonstrate gaps in their learning.
Do you think you get enough feedback on your assessments?	Not really cause they just tell you to look at the exam that you've done to see what you need to improve, but they don't actually talk to you about it or leave any comments, just a cross or a tick.	Yeah, cause I always feel like we are doing GAP analysis or we always take a lesson after the assessment to go over it so that's what's good.	Interesting use of terminology here. Rather than talk about feedback, student F suggests feedback is just gap analysis but to student E it is more important to discuss/leave comments on the examined response, a cross and a tick are not sufficient.
And you don't like that just the cross or the tick?	No you need to know how to do it, to get the right answer.		This suggests that student E is frustrated in the feedback received on exams where understanding how to improve the work is the most important aspect of feedback and thus the feedback provided by a cross

			or a tick does not suffice.
So to understand what to do to improve your work?	Yeah.		
Talk to me about feedback is that important in your subjects and is it more important in some subjects than others?	<p>I think it's important in English cause it helps me get a better grade and helps me to improve my work.</p> <p>Yeah, I prefer one to one cause then it's what you need to improve not the whole class.</p>	<p>I really like feedback cause it's kind of like, when a teacher talks to the whole class and gives feedback to the whole class I feel like sometimes, that doesn't include me, like I feel like they're not actually telling me what to do or helping me. But when they actually give you proper feedback like one to one and that, it helps me so much because I need to know what I need to do to improve but what I am doing good also.</p>	<p>The issue of group/collective feedback, a common trait in all of the interviews conducted as an issue in the way that feedback is delivered to students. The use of the word "proper feedback" identifies one to one feedback and the most important aspects of feedback – knowing what is needed to improve and what they are doing well also. Individual, personalised feedback is the only way to ensure that the student feels they can progress as it identifies their weaknesses and strengths and can target what needs to be done to improve.</p>
Teachers don't really have time to do it every lesson, so how often do you think they should be doing it, the one to one?		<p>I think they should take, maybe one lesson out of a term, the end of term assessment, cause I would like at the end of term to see how I've improved that term, then it goes up in like stages throughout the year.</p>	<p>It is clear from this response that student F wishes for regular feedback delivered one to one to review how they have improved each term, almost like progress checks throughout the year.</p>
So to have feedback lessons at the end of each term to tell you 'this term you...'	(Both) Yeah	(Both) Yeah	<p>Before I could finish the question they confirmed that they desire feedback lessons at the end of each term – it seems</p>

			an important requirement for the students.
Because teachers don't always have time are there some subjects who give more one to one feedback than others or is there certain subjects that don't do it so well?	I don't really get any feedback in like science, we just get help on the day but they don't give you really much feedback of what you've done wrong or how to improve the work.		Again the key focus that is emanating from the student responses is that students want to understand what they need to do to improve their work and see it as the most important aspect in progressing at their learning.
So it's more guidance you're looking for?	Yeah.	Science, I don't get a lot, English is good at that and Maths, I don't think I get feedback, no I don't.	Interestingly the students both have identified throughout their responses that English provides them with feedback (clearly due to the action research) but that they don't get a lot or none at all in some subjects.
What about sharing your work with your peers? You two work together a lot, and I think you are used to that in English but obviously you're in different lessons for other subjects, how do you feel about sharing your work with your peers?	I find that helps quite a lot and if you're not with someone you're normally with you tend to get more feedback cause they're not trying to be like nice all the time and you get some more criticism.	Sometimes, if I don't know the person that well then I don't want to, cause then I don't feel like, it's hard to explain but I feel like they wouldn't give me the right feedback I need cause I don't feel that they would look over my work enough so I kind of think 'oh I'll just carry on working' so that I can work on it myself rather than showing them.	These students as identified by the introductory preamble are seating partners and so work together often. Again there is a mixed response to the use of peer assessment in that students don't always feel confident in sharing their work with others in the classroom.
So it's a double edged sword?		People I don't know, don't really talk to me.	Interestingly the need to discuss learning rather than

		But people I know we have a conversation on it, we talk about it, we explain	just assess learning seems to be the issue. I think that often, students are asked to peer assess just review each other's work and are not given the opportunity to discuss their work together, they are just expected to swap books and mark each other's work.
Are you given enough time in your subjects to talk about your work and what you're doing?		Sometimes but I think that in some subjects we could have a bit more time to talk about them.	The importance of having time to discuss work is highlighted again here. The students understand the need to have a dialogic culture in the classroom and are enthusiastic about it.
What about your work in general, what do you think helps to improve your work?	When the teacher goes over it as a class I seem to understand a bit more rather than doing an individual task straight away you don't really know what you are doing.	I don't know really I mean the teacher is always the best at helping me with the work and improving the work and I don't think anything else helps.	Seeing the teacher as the expert in this case is evident here. The students see the teacher as the main resource in helping them to improve their work.
What about having more time to look over work or being given more time to reflect on your work, is that important?	Yeah they don't really give us any time to look back to last lesson. If they have marked it we just get on with a new topic.		Again, the issue of time, in this instance to reflect or look back, is raised as a key concern or issue that students have.
What kind of feedback is most beneficial do you think? Which		They're all important but I think teacher's the best, em peer is good cause me and E actually get along so we can improve each	Student F identifies that peer assessment is good because students E&F "get along". It is

type do you like the best?		other's work really well. Em Target partner, I find that good but at the same time sometimes I don't feel confident enough to talk to my target partner.	clear that relationships are important to these students in ensuring that feedback is effective. Being confident in their relationships (with the teacher too) is clearly an issue that needs to be further considered.
What about self assessment?	I find it helps but sometimes you don't get the right like help you need like you might change a sentence and you might think it's actually helping you but you have changed it the wrong way. I like the target partner's cause you're at the same ability so you know how to help improve each other	I find that good.	I find it enlightening that student E doubts her ability to self-assess as from the evidence in her feedback grid suggests otherwise. The purpose of target partners is that students work together at the same ability to discuss their learning and thus improve by aiming for the same grade.
When you get formal written teacher feedback, do you always act upon what they say and understand what they say?	Sometimes, I find it hard. I would prefer a one to one conversation cause I would be able to understand the improvements better.	I think it's really good but sometimes I don't really understand so I have to ask someone but normally we've moved on to the work and then I don't get time.	It's insightful that both students suggests that formal written feedback can be difficult to understand at times. There is clearly a need to ensure that we address how we deliver this formal written feedback to maximise understanding and progress.
So it's the time element, having some time to look back over the teachers comments?	(Both) Yeah	(Both) Yeah	
Do teachers write enough, comment enough on your work?	In some lessons but in like Maths you don't get any like comments it's just like	I don't feel they do.	Interesting that they feel they don't get enough comments on their work –

	a marking at the end of term, if they even do that.		similar to comments by students C&D who mentioned comments being "sparse".
How would you like teacher to give you feedback in your lessons?	One to one I think.	Yeah one to one	Students feel as if one to one feedback is more beneficial as they don't get enough comments or understand comments in written feedback so prefer to have direct learning conversations with their teachers?
So you like learning conversations, why?	I just feel like I'd understand it better and how to improve my work not the whole class' work.	Cause it's directly to you and not to anyone else and it's getting someone who's experienced in that subject to tell you how to improve and I wouldn't know and no one else would like in the class but the teacher does so what they say is what I need to do.	It is clear that the students see the teacher as the key agent to help improve their learning but that these conversations must be individual, one to one so that it is specific to them.
Do you think it's important to reflect on your own learning?		I think it's good to reflect but sometimes it doesn't help me as I don't know where I've gone wrong.	Clearly understanding what they have done wrong and what they need to do to improve are the key factors that these students require in order to receive effective feedback on their work.

STUDENT FEEDBACK AND CONSULTATION: CYCLE 1

STUDENT:	TARGET GRADE:	CLASS:
SELF-ASSESSMENT	PEER ASSESSMENT	

TEACHER- STUDENT DISCUSSION	FORMAL TEACHER FEEDBACK
------------------------------------	--------------------------------

TARGETS THIS TERM:	PROGRESS THIS TERM:
1	1
2	2
3	3

Appendix I: Cycle Two feedback grid

STUDENT FEEDBACK AND CONSULTATION: CYCLE TWO

STUDENT:	TARGET GRADE:	CLASS: 10FEN1
ACTION PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT		
1		
2		
3		

PEER ASSESSMENT	TARGET PARTNER
	SEATING PARTNER

Front side

STUDENT FEEDBACK AND CONSULTATION: CYCLE TWO

SELF ASSESSMENT	
TEACHER STUDENT DISCUSSION	

Reverse

Appendix J: Cycle Three feedback grid

STUDENT LEARNING & FEEDBACK: COURSEWORK CYCLE THREE

STUDENT:	TARGET GRADE:	CLASS: 10FEN1
ACTION PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT- TEACHER DISCUSSION		
1		
2		
3		

LEARNING CONVERSATIONS	A1 COURSEWORK	A2 COURSEWORK	A3 COURSEWORK
	TARGET PARTNER – NAME:		
	SEATING PARTNER – NAME:		

Front side

STUDENT LEARNING & FEEDBACK: COURSEWORK CYCLE THREE

DIRECTED IMPROVED REFLECTION TIME	A1 COURSEWORK	A2 COURSEWORK	A3 COURSEWORK
SELF ASSESSMENT			

Reverse

Following up from the Year 10 exam

Building Skills with PIE CHARTS

Skill	Date Achieved	Comments and Targets
Interpret simple sections of pie charts, e.g. half or a quarter	12/6/15 Tom Hart	
Interpret all angles of pie charts	12/6/15 Tom Hart	- I disagree. One full pie chart not interpreted when I checked on 15/6/15. Please fix
Work out a single angle for part of a pie chart	15/6/15 ✓	
Work out all angles for a whole pie chart	16/6/15 Tom Hart ✓	How many tables have errors in them like the ones I've circled? You need to check. 15/6
Correctly use compasses to construct a perfect circle	16/6/15 Tom Hart ✓	radius like you draw round a protractor - oval shape please correct before continuing
Draw one angle correctly using a protractor	16/6/15 Tom Hart ✓	Target set 15/6
Draw a full, correctly measured, pie chart	16/6/15 Tom Hart ✓	Target set 15/6
Label correctly all sectors of the pie chart	16/6/15 Tom Hart ✓	Target set 15/6. at least 2 full pie charts needed.
Extension: work out percentages for each pie chart sector		Target 22/6 - now link this type to our next one well done!

Assessment Procedures

The School implements a whole school marking and feedback procedure which all staff and students should be familiarised with. The procedure allows for whole school consistency and coherence, in order to support students in understanding how to improve their work. The procedures for marking and feedback can be accessed in the staff handbook and are shared with students in their lessons. All procedures should be followed by teachers in accordance with the Assessment, Recording and Reporting policy and their department guidelines for marking, assessment and feedback.

Ofsted

Consistent with Ofsted's School Inspection Handbook 2015, The School will ensure that the following guidelines are adhered to:

- Ofsted recognises that marking and feedback to pupils, both written and oral, are important aspects of assessment. Marking and feedback should be consistent with [the school] policy, which may cater for different subjects and different age groups of pupils in different ways, in order to be effective and efficient in promoting learning.
- The specific frequency, type or volume of marking and feedback are for the school to decide through its assessment policy.
- Ofsted **will** take a range of evidence into account when making judgements, including published performance data, the school's in-year performance information and work in pupils' books and folders.

At The School we expect teachers to foster a culture of Assessment for Learning

What is Assessment for Learning?

Assessment for Learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.

Assessment Reform Group (UK 2002):

Assessment for Learning is also known as formative assessment.

What is the difference between formative and summative assessment?

Activities associated with *summative assessment* (Assessment **of** Learning) result in an evaluation of student achievement - for example, allocation to a level or standard or allocation of a letter or numerical grade, which might later appear in a report.

Activities associated with *formative assessment* (Assessment **for** Learning) do not result in an evaluation. Information about what a student knows, understands and is able to do is used by both the teacher and the learner to determine where learners are in their learning and how to achieve learning goals.

Feedback:

The School aims to support students through high quality feedback informed by the research that suggests:

- Feedback to any student should be about the particular qualities of his or her work, with advice on what he or she can do to improve, and should avoid comparisons with other students.
- The dialogue between students and teacher should be thoughtful, reflective, focused to evoke and explore understanding, and conducted so that all students have an opportunity to think and express their ideas.
- Assessments and homework exercises can be an invaluable guide to learning, but the exercise must be clear and relevant to learning aims. The feedback on them should give each student guidance on how to improve, and each must be given opportunity and help to work at the improvement.

(Black, P. and Wiliam, D, 2001)

All staff must recognise opportunities to support learning through a variety of methods:

- Formal written marking
- Self-reflection
- Peer review
- Learning conversations

Formal written marking:

Teachers should mark at least one piece of **significant** work per term. ***Significance is defined by 'a piece of work that can be submitted to the assessment file as evidence of the students best practice'***. Teachers should formally mark any extended response or independent work that the students have completed. **This should be in addition to assessment cycle.**

All teachers should keep a folder of marked work in their classrooms to demonstrate evidence of formal written marking.

The marking key should also be used by teachers to maintain consistency and coherency in understanding assessment. **Teachers should review student work in red pen.**

Self-reflection:

All students should be encouraged to become self-reflective in their work, understanding that in order to make progress they must review their work and improve, redraft and edit. At The School we recognise the need to ensure that students gain life skills and view editing and redrafting as important in creating reflective learners. In aiming to encourage a greater sense of control and self-efficacy in their learning, students should be given ample opportunity to review their own work.

The marking key used by teachers should also be used by students to maintain consistency and coherency in understanding assessment. **Students should self-assess their work in green pen.**

Peer review:

Students should create purposeful relationships with their peers through the use of feedback and assessment. Teachers should encourage the use of learning conversations and target partners to support peer review. Target partners are students who are specifically chosen to work together according to their targets.

The marking key should also be used by students to support peer review in order to maintain consistency and coherency in understanding assessment. **Students should peer review their work in purple pen.**

Learning Conversations:

***Consultation** [can be defined] as talking with pupils about things that matter to them in the classroom and school and that affect their learning. Ideally consultation is a conversation that builds a habit of easy discussion between teacher and pupil about learning.*

(Rudduck and McIntyre, 2007, p.7)

We recognise the value placed on discussing learning with students.

Learning conversations are defined as “the opportunity within the classroom to engage in structured consultation about learning”. Learning conversations can be used between students or students and teachers in the classroom. A record of the discussion of learning must be kept in line with department procedure. Teachers should use feedback forms, tailored to the needs of the class, subject, students or topic in order to do this. In order to support effective learning conversations, adequate time must be given to allowing students reflect on their work once these conversations have occurred.




Exercise books:

*Ofsted **does not** expect to see a particular frequency or quantity of work in pupils' books or folders. Ofsted recognises that the amount of work in books and folders will depend on the subject being studied and the age and ability of the pupils.*

Books are recognised as being a tool to support students learning. At The School we do not expect teachers to mark books to any frequency or quantity. We recognise that exercise books are used as student notes, records of lessons and notes of teacher instruction in a lesson. **Any extended pieces of work in exercise books should be marked and feedback should be given through self, peer or teacher evaluation.**



Feedback Key:

All work should be reviewed using the feedback key, the meaning of which is outlined below:

FEEDBACK KEY	
	Denotes a positive aspect of the work reviewed. Comment should focus on the skills the student has demonstrated and the progress that is evidenced from the work.
	Denotes a target that the reviewer suggests in order for the student to improve their work. This should encourage students to review and redraft their work in order to demonstrate progress.
	Denotes a question that the reviewer asks in order for the student to give a response. This should encourage the students to extend their learning and provide stretch and challenge, engaging the student in further independent learning.

Marking Key:

All work should be assessed using the marking key, the meaning of which is outlined below:

MARKING KEY	
SYMBOL	MEANING
O	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Circle punctuation choices (or lack of).• Circle missing words / words that don't make sense.• Identify errors
T/D	Improve with a Thesaurus / Dictionary
SP.	Spelling mistake
//	Paragraphing
MU	Meaning Unclear
UL	Underline
CL	Capital letter
	Grammatical mistakes
	Accuracy
[.]	Put in your own words
MM	Method Missing
N	Numeracy
+	Develop / Add in what you have forgotten to include

Appendix M: Completed feedback grids and corresponding samples of students work that demonstrate DIRT

Student 1 – Cycle 1

STUDENT FEEL BACK AND CONSULTATION: TERM 3

STUDENT:		TARGET GRADE:	CLASS: 10FEN1
SELF-ASSESSMENT		PEER ASSESSMENT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - check spelling mistakes. - improve the sentence structure in my piece. - use punctuation effectively. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - work out structure of piece. - improve on sentence structure. - punctuation. - more varied vocabulary. - spelling "themselves" = themselves. - awkward phrasing. - change speech marks to ' '. - capital letters, question marks, sticky mistakes. 	
TEACHER-STUDENT DISCUSSION		FORMAL TEACHER FEEDBACK	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - explain plan a social media topic. - changed awkward words to more powerful words. - take note of changes that we discuss. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - add further description. - changing awkward phrasing. - better vocabulary choices. - Rewording = powerful. 	
TARGETS THIS TERM:		PROGRESS THIS TERM:	
1 use more varied vocab.		1 used more powerful words.	
2 improve on sentence structure.		2 improved my description.	
3 improve my punctuation.		3 I have improved my plan.	

Student 1 – Cycle 1 evidence of DIRT corresponding with feedback grid

Final piece of creative writing. *A pungent, morose smell of death hangs in the air.*
→ Some rewording needed here.

Wandering closer to the neglected train. A taste almost like a bubble of flavouring has been popped in my mouth. I couldn't help but gag because of the decaying flavour had almost choked me to death. Stepping closer and closer, the taste of damp hits me. My heart starts to pound, sweat dripping into my hands creating puddles on my palms and shivers going down my spine.

Feeling around the outside of the train with bare finger tips, the feeling of rust made me queasy. Slime, *mucus,* and rust oozing through my fingers. The more I kept my hand on it the more I felt it. Slowly and steadily taking my hand off as if it was sticky. The colour of my hands, *filthy*, Dirty orange stained, it was revolting. *repellent*

The train door opened! I looked mysteriously, peaking my head around the corner whilst my legs were shaking almost like jelly. Slowly stepping into the train, I here a noise. An ear piercing noise it is; like someone was scraping their finger nails against the walls. Then, before I know it, I here a hand scratching frantically. I panicked turned and stumbled out of the door, once out I gaze back trying to get my head around the crazy things that happened in there. Memories start flashing back into my head. *The scare hit me like* *unlighted, dark, dingy* *tip to palm.* *alteration from finger tip to palm.*

What has this world become, pollution escaped, leaving the world to become empty and demolished. Starvation hit us so *hard* it wiped out thousands, it's been three years now, nothing has got any better. I have been living in this deserted world, living on innocent animals and contaminated water. The most distressing thing is I don't know if any one else is around here. I have lost all of my family, I have no hope to live in this world alone. However, I have survived till this day so I will carry on. *person or pronouns*

I walk away from this deafening moment in time. I spy in the distance a statue, a statue in the distance, a statue of liberty. Does it still mean hope or is it just a statue waving in a barren world.

Word count: 648.

Some really stunning description throughout this piece. To improve you must;

- 1) Reword some awkward/dumsy phrasing
- 2) Add further description and detail.
- 3) Use powerful vocabulary throughout.

W1 - B3
 W2 - B3
 W3 - B4
 W4 - B3
 W5 - B3

Handwritten notes on the left side of the page:
 I had to keep
 as I tug
 at my
 hand,
 I see the
 slime
 fungus
 still
 attached
 to me,
 I yank
 my hand
 away as
 the fungus eventually
 tears
 away bit
 by bit
 from detaching from
 my hand

STUDENT LEARNING & FEEDBACK: COURSEWORK

STUDENT:

TARGET GRADE: A

CLASS: 10FEN1

ACTION PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT- TEACHER DISCUSSION

- 1 Work on the descriptive details. Use a thesaurus to further develop your description.
- 2 Refine the details - be forensic. Think about the impact of punctuation/vocabulary.
- 3 Think about the use of emotive vocabulary to add further weight to feelings/views.

A1 COURSEWORK	A2 COURSEWORK	A3 COURSEWORK
<p>TARGET PARTNER - NAME:</p> <p>Macaulay -</p> <p>You need to add your own opinion. You've used vocabulary very well and punctuation in the correct places. Try to remove some of the questions</p>	<p>Your punctuation needs more variation and impact.</p> <p>A lot of repetition of the word "meaning".</p> <p>You use metaphors & length of sentences very effectively.</p> <p>You use different techniques in your sentences to make your writing stand out.</p>	<p>Needs a little rewording.</p> <p>Add in some more quotes that you can analyse.</p> <p>Very good use of phrases.</p> <p>Make sure your sentence starters are not 'This'!</p> <p>Very long.</p> <p>The analysis that you have done are very good.</p>
<p>SEATING PARTNER - NAME:</p>		
<p>On the statistics you could include your opinion to develop them.</p> <p>You used really good vocabulary like 'trivialised'.</p> <p>You use a lot of questions throughout adding to the atmosphere of the piece.</p>	<p>Very good descriptive vocab. Punctuation and punctuation used frequently but could you develop it and use more of it range? Also try not to become narrative.</p>	<p>Good analysis of quotes and good quotes chosen.</p> <p>You could choose even more quotes to analyse and go into more detail on the ones you have already done.</p>

STUDENT LEARNING & FEEDBACK: COURSEWORK

SELF ASSESSMENT	DIETED IMPROVED REFLECTION TIME		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added in-discourse markers to be more sophisticated. • Developed and revised examples. • changed sentences starting with 'this'. 	<p style="text-align: right;">A1 COURSEWORK 30/40 C</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be more sophisticated and use better words than, what and told. • Add to my argument. Use evidence rather than commentary. • Develop my examples used. • Add to sentences that don't make sense on their own. • Structure it as a sophisticated argument rather than a rant. • Don't start sentences with 'this'! • Stop repeating. 	<p style="text-align: right;">A2 COURSEWORK 54/60 C</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overuse of particular punctuation (e.g. exclamation marks). • Refine my descriptions • Bring back the descriptive aspect in parts that seem too narrative. • Reford particular sentences • work on my punctuation. • ensure I don't make silly mistakes (e.g. capital letters in the wrong place). 	<p style="text-align: right;">A3 COURSEWORK 33/40 E/1/D C</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reworked particular sentences. • make sure I show if it is a quote or not. • make sure I trust statements. • make sure I'm careful of sentence length. • stop using the word 'y'. • ensure my sentences make sense. • Add further quotes. • Analyse words in quotes.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • changed punctuation and added in more punctuation. • Revised description of 'home' and being 'alone'! • changed silly mistakes! • Reworked sentences I didn't think sounded right. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some quotes need to be further analysed in order to increase my reading mark. • I need to read through and ensure everything makes sense. • Try to change 'This' and 'y'. • Refine description • I've changed everything that starts with 'y'! • Made it less ranty. 	

A2 Coursework

DRAFT TWO

Battered and bruised



- ✎ - change word
- ✎ - Refine description
- ✎ - Get rid of

I'm slowly losing my mind. Pathetic, forsaken, invisible. Only breathing, not living. I'm mentally crushed. Loneliness is an attitude of mind defined by many things, mine being: abandonment, fear, and never seeing the light of day, only the thickness of the shadow at night. *Persisting?*

being torn from the protection the shadow at night.

consternation

This pain, it's piercing; battering and bruising me, paralysing my mind. Their mocking voices echoing, tearing my heart to pieces. Words fired relentlessly, each syllable penetrating my ever thinning barrier of safety. My body is lined with battle wounds and scars that will never heal... Sometimes I just pretend that everything is alright; fake a smile, *conceal my issues* and cover my scars. I pretend to be *rationally* mentally stable. That's the problem... I'm not. These voices in my mind won't go away; *haunting* clouding me each day and night. They won't leave me alone! He says that my wounds will heal and the pain will subside. I don't think they will.

Overuse of ellipsis

I sit, gazing at the ground. Darkness hugging my body; silence echoes in my ears; I feel isolated from the world. My head swims in the fire burning inside me; the smouldering ashes reminding me that I am, in fact, human. The void is gradually filling with a cold, *sharp* howling storm of fear that refuses to let go. Nobody knows who I am anymore; who am I? The only thing to be heard is the sound of my breathing, staggered and rough. I want to feel something; to feel anything. I'm alone.

I wish I could the dawn to come and kiss the land and remind my faithless heart that I'm not the only one here - that there is a whole planet of other sentient beings alive out there. But for now it's just me. ~~can~~ without companion.

Student 2 – Cycle 3 evidence of DIRT corresponding with feedback grid

The moon, glistening mesmerisingly in the darkness, ^{is} it's the only thing that gives me light in this world. Nothing else is as beautiful and gives me such pleasure than the moon; ^{it con.} it transforms ^{ing} the dingy park into a elegant, effulgent, exquisite heaven. This is home. ^{Refine...}

Join together

I know of nowhere but here. During the day the forest encloses me. The leaves soak my entire being up; camouflaging my very ^{reality} essence. My breath dims; its as if I was never there. No-one can ridicule me here. The pain tortures my existence; I wish I was never born. ^{Mum didn't want me, no-one does.} The only person that cares is me, and even I don't really bother anymore. ^{Losing the descriptive aspect? Becoming narrative.}

Pushing myself forward, I start to rock on the swing, Hands trembling on the chain, ^{my} feet brush against the sodden ground. The ghost of memory ^{hauls} pulls my hair into a chaotic frenzy. My hair is somewhat like my mind, tangled and busy, filled with thoughts. Thoughts about where I'm going and what I'll achieve. Nothing... I'm slouching, ^{the} my shoulders are pushed forward and my pale, haggard legs swing before me. ^{have} ^{wish I was never neglected.}

Reword

My mind begins to wander; ^{the} unknown slowly creeping its way in. What if I was never born? ^{What if I was never neglected?} These are the thoughts running on a constant replay in my head. I stare out at the deserted park. The estranged roundabout spinning in the breeze reflecting on its life before; before it became rusty and the children rejected it. The slide; at a standstill, ^{my} not moving; never moving. Creaking next to me, the swing; ^{holding on,} trying not to let go of a hopeful future. Pushing towards its goal. This park is much like me. Discarded, but yet still pushing forward. ^{diminished} Everything else has melted; as if it was never ^{disintegrated.} ^{tormented} The twisted, knotted trees reach towards the blackened sky; ^{warped} warping their hands, hovering above me; ^{watching.} The branches haunting my very existence. ^{curled} Curled above my head; towering over my ever-failing body, fragile and taunted. Leaves, desolate and abandoned create a skittering when squirrels ^{scuttle by.} ^{scamper} ^{past}

Gripping onto the ^{twisted} cold metal chain, the flesh on my hand turning a ghostly white. I run my bare feet over the dew-drop laden grass, goose bumps overtaking my body. Overwhelming darkness shatters my existence; gripping my heart in an icy vice, the tears begin to fall down my face. My loneliness only serves as a reminder of my pain.

The clouds around me start to pour and billow, casting a shadow over the park. A serrated bolt of lightning cuts the sky in half, I wince as each icy raindrop punctures my skin leaving a cold; yet warming ^{burn} pain in my heart. Numbness grips my body as more thunder rolls across the sky. It resounds around the tender landscape; ^{ruining} ruining all I have left. Harshly booming as I push forward ^{trembling} trembling towards shelter. ^{stumbling}

I am completely and utterly alone in my mind, body, soul and most of all, in the world.

Word count: 732

A really good piece.
You must work on your punctuation to improve.
34 marks - Band 2.

I heard a gruff voice and one of the men twisting my arm behind my back. I screamed in pain as a hand quickly grasped over my mouth. I bit his hand in frustration and before I knew it his fist came at me faster than I thought. I had a feeling that he had knocked all of my teeth out to with the amount of blood pouring out my mouth. My eyes rolled to the back of my head and I felt really faint. I could feel the colour draining from my skin. Sudden memories flooded in my mind of the time I had my very first injection, with my dad squeezing my hand, telling me it's going to be ok, it was the exact same faint feeling but not as much fear.

I was wearing old rags the men shoved on me, they were a sandy cream colour and they were dirty. I felt disgusting and like all my identity has been taken away. Tears of anger and sorrow emerged from my tear ducts. I fought back the tears but they came flooding out. They added heavy steel weights to my ankles, laughing intimidatingly. Sheer panic raged in my mind, thinking of a way to escape this living nightmare. The plank rocked back and fourth in the crashing waves.

I screamed for any help and all I got was a violent slap across my right cheek, it burnt so much. I was shaking with fear. All I could think about is my beloved family, wondering were I am and what I'm doing. They had no idea I was going to die soon. I remembered all the good times on holiday we had together in the waves, messing around. I didn't think I would end up here, alone, scared and isolated.

Before they were about to push me in one of them whispered in my ear "Nice try Hun, this time you're going to die, don't try to escape, ha, where will you go? And you do know the coincidences if you try to fight back..."

They pushed me in backwards, the water slapped my back indiscriminately. They shook hands and sneered as they looked down on my sinking body. My eyes stung like a thousand needles were being stuck in them and my heart was beating faster and faster. I could hear the water swirling around my ears and nose, and I could feel the salty, destroying liquid building up in my lungs. The discomfort of not being able to have gasp of breath and the tightness of my lungs became unbearable. I felt like screaming and crying, fighting to get to the surface, but blue fingers had a tight hold around me and were pulling me down deeper. I had no chance.

All of a sudden the terror and panic settled, I accepted the fact I am going to die, although the it was hard. I'm here now, half way down in the deep blue sea. The ocean can be an extraordinary yet scary place. I'm slowly shutting my eyes as well as my body down. This is the end.

agonny
twisted
fresh
name/label
speech new? me
reader wondering
mysterious, leaves
- lbs happened before?
mystical
personification
petrifying
Gradually sapphire
consequences

Althgy
describe it
What are they?
leaves
Reader with questions

- Makes them think - Try to vary punctuation for effect
- Creating more empathy for the reader to be feeling for the character.
- slow down some of the action.
 - Ensure you are always showing not telling.
 - Proof-read carefully.
 - Describe emotions rather than just say them.

v) Year 12 feedback grid and corresponding work samples

GCE English Literature AS coursework LitB2
The History Boys

Class: 12XEn1 Teacher: AHoulihan Coursework portfolio: Worth 20% of AS 60 marks

Name: _____

Assessment Objective		Estimated band The History Boys
AO1	Articulate creative, informed and relevant responses to literary texts, using appropriate terminology and concepts, and coherent, accurate written expression.	Band 3 - 15
AO2	Demonstrate detailed critical understanding in analysing the ways in which structure, form and language shape meanings in literary texts.	Band 4 - 16
AO3	Explore connections and comparisons between different literary texts, informed by interpretations of other readers.	Band 3 - 11
AO4	Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.	Band 2 - 10
Total		13 /30

Target grade:		Coursework Grade:				
Grade	A	B	C	D	E	
Marks	50	42	34	26	18	

Peer Assessment	<p>AO1 - Good use of terminology and well structured sentences - any mistakes or rewording is marked. Always make sure you are linking back to question.</p> <p>AO2 - Limited structure analysis - other theorists and develop on how Bennett is constructing the play. Language analysis is very good.</p> <p>AO3 - Made clear links but make sure they are linking to question. Maybe other theorists?</p> <p>AO4 - Limited contextual links. The ones you have made - you need to develop further.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to analyse the structure in more depth to strengthen your AO2! • Very strong introduction which outlines what you will be debating in your essay. • Links to context need to be stronger + supported • Good key terminology - AO1

Reverse of feedback grid

Self Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Key terminology used throughout (eg linked with plays + comedies)◦ AO1 - writing style is weak, wording needs work. USE YOUR WORDS!◦ Refine and cut out weak parts◦ weak lines to AO4 → context ... reception?◦ Used theorists eg Frye + Todorov◦ link everything back to my question◦ be aware not to waffle.◦ Analyse more AO2 eg structure.
Teacher Student Discussion	<p>The skeleton of the essay is good and it has clear potential. Cut down on some unnecessary words to ensure that you are not over complicating things. Sharp focus - less words.</p>

Action plan for improvement:

1. Reread comedy course book/ pack and pick out points I can use in my essay.

2. Discourse markers more frequently, eg. furthermore, firstly, subsequently

3. Dedicate more time to the essay. Plan an essay.

4.

Corresponding work samples:

A01 A03
A02 A04

"One of the hardest things for the boys to learn is that a teacher is human, one of the hardest things for a teacher to learn is not to try and tell them"

To what extent could it be argued that the source of comedy in 'The History Boys' originates from the unlikely relationships and interactions between the characters within in the play?

In the words of W.H. Auden, "almost all of our relationships begin and most of them continue as forms of mutual exploitation, a mental or physical barter."¹ Throughout 'The History Boys' the exploitation of relationships and unlikely interactions juxtapose the conventions expected within the school environment. Often offering the audience moments of laughter and euphoria but not without blurring the lines between a modern comedy and tragedy with aspects of despair and fear common throughout. Although on the surface the interactions seem purely comical it could be argued the underline meanings have a darker and sinister connotation behind them.

Excellent introduction

Either underline or inverted commas, not both.

A little rewording needed.

Relationships in 'The History Boys' lay down the foundations of the play, their development aids the construction of the comedy and the journey both the play and the characters take.

Could use square brackets here?

Hector as the protagonist of the play, violates the boundaries of teacher-pupil relations from the outset; yet his pupils are reluctant to stop the acts that occur in his classroom as they are seen as a "token of my (Hectors) trust." Hectors classroom acts as the barrier for the boys from their current lives to their futures as university students; even if the classroom acts as a safe place in the eyes of the boys where they feel comfortable. Hector often reasserts his authority and labels himself as god like over the boys, for he is in his eyes "far gone in age and decrepitude," because of this authority Hector holds over the boys he

A little rewording needed here

You can refine and add to this

feels he can hit them over the head multiple times. To a modern audience this may be shocking to see an authority figure abusing a student, however the reactions of the boys and their calm nature provoke audience members to feel more at ease with the events that occur even if they are unconventional. The harmless act of hitting the boys around the head is common in slapstick comedies, this element of comedy is introduced by the playwright to employ a lighthearted undertone to the exposition of the play. Slapstick moments are common in many dramatic comedies for example misfortune and 'harm' is usually brought

→ embed

A little wordy, you could refine.

¹ W.H. Auden

Corresponding work samples:

Further link to your question.

around by an over exaggerated act carried out by the protagonist. Hector's moments of slapstick are similar to those of Charlie Clench in 'One man, Two guvnors' whose slapstick interactions with other characters on stage provoke laughter as the audience are able to witness the misfortune and setback of others from the outside of the action that's taking place on stage in front of them while not being part of it themselves.

↳ Link Charlie Clench to Hector?

Edit and refine to work on structure and punctuation

The following scenes with Hector and the boys develop more unlikely interactions between pupil and teacher. 'The French scene' carries a humorous tone behind it due the blasphemy used throughout. In this scene Hector is more than willing to allow the boys to act out a "brothel" in French and replies to the suggestion with "oo-la-la." A reply unanticipated for the audience considering context of setting. As the authority, Hector initially was able to uphold order towards the exposition of the play but this is slowly being broken down making it harder for the audience to see the divisions between pupils and teacher. As the playwright has constructed the scene in a different language the audience are forced to concentrate on the physical interactions of the characters not just the language. Therefore triggering more chaos as the language barrier hinders communication in this scene. It could

New Paragraph

be argued that Northrop Frye's theory of the worlds could be applied to this modern comedy not just Shakespearean comedies. This scene could be used to portray the green world as disorder is rife and confusion is key. Hector's classroom itself could represent the green world as that's where a lack of authority is at its most and chaos at its highest. What is most surprising for the audience is that Hector encourages the behaviour and doesn't try to put an end to it, however the audience at this point in the play are able to see how the nature of the relationship between Hector and the boys holds little boundaries allowing the comedy to develop in whatever way the playwright deems. Moreover, the whole French scene shows transgression as the limits of normal tolerance are broken, but the relationships between the principal characters are still strong. Akthar, Timms and Dakin

Further link to your question

blasphemy - expand

Is this needed?

reciprocate when they support Hector as he orchestrates the cover up of the brothel re-enactment with acting out a hospital in World War 1. The use of the blasphemy here could be seen as on the border line funny and disrespectful especially now when received by a modern audience, as the importance of paying respect to people involved in conflict is higher than ever and as it's just passed 100 years since World War 1 started. However this would be effective as the events do not pull too far away from the genre of comedy and into

Corresponding work samples:

tragedy but they do have ability to make the audience wince and cower at the events discussed due to the bawdy language used, the comedy is heightened as the interactions between characters are unexpected and unusual.

Good point

Throughout 'The History Boys' relationships change and develop endlessly, there is no constant in the play. Although there is always interactions and relationships between characters, the theme of loneliness recurs throughout the majority of the play. Throughout 'The History Boys' the theme of loneliness alone triggers changes in relationships and certain interactions. Posner's and Hector's relationship takes a dramatic change in the 'Hardy' scene. To start their relationship triggered moments of laughter in the audience, along with sympathy due to Posner's rejection by Hector for a lift "home." The boys also found the rejection of the boy who doesn't quite "fit the bill" highly amusing. However the 'Hardy' scene sees the relationship between Hector and Posner change from rejection to acceptance as an equilibrium is beginning to be created. The 'Hardy' scene could be applied to the fourth step *Todorov's equilibrium Theory*. "An attempt to repair the damage of the disruption," [1] as past viewpoints are subtly questioned and changed. Bennett has picked certain literary references for a reasons, Thomas Hardy for example..

Too wordy

Incident

"Posner: How old was he?

Hector: If he was a drummer, he would be a young soldier, younger than you probably.

Posner: No. Hardy.

Hector: Oh, how old was Hardy? When he wrote this, about sixty. My age, I suppose."

This direct dialogue between Posner and Hector although a misunderstanding of question creates similarities between the poem and the characters on stage. The use of presentism allows the audience to link Drummer Hodge and Hardy to Posner and Hector as the past and present are always in direct link. This ignites conversation regarding loneliness prompting Hector to describe his own "gobits" as being "as if a hand has come out and taken yours."

How does this link to your question?

Not only has this but Hector took the time to explain the importance of the soldier in the poem in fact having a name, this insight of significance then sees both characters acknowledge their mutual loneliness and for a brief moment both Posner and the audience see Hector's recognition of his own hamartia and the flaws in himself he's failed to recognize throughout all his years of teaching. However both characters can make direct links to the poem, both Posner and Hector understand Hardy's use of compound adjectives

↳ It was Posner who triggered Hector's change in state + emotion even though Hector rejected him to start