

## Understanding the WBS UG Student Feedback Experience

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### Introduction

In recent times there has been much focus on 'feedback' within the higher education (HE) sector, (see for example, Hounsell, 2003; HEA, 2004; Nicol *et al*, 2006; Riordan & Loacker, 2009, Carless *et al*, 2011) stimulated, in part, by wider and on-going sector changes, e.g. increasing participation rates and changing fee structures. These have created a massified, commodified and competitive market in HE which scholars observe increasingly positions students as critical consumers of a HE product (Higgins *et al*, 2002; Singh, 2002; Gracia 2009).

As part of this 'consumerist' positioning, students are encouraged to focus on and formally rate (e.g. through the National Student Survey) the quality of central aspects of the education service they receive (Modell, 2005). Students evaluate and measure the performance, of their institutions across a number of core areas, including 'Assessment and Feedback'. It is beyond the scope of this project to consider the wisdom and desirability (or otherwise) of the use of league tables within HE, or the wider policy and sector changes that position students as critical customers. What is considered are students' conceptions and experiences of 'feedback' within the Undergraduate Programme at Warwick Business School (WBS).

The value of generating and providing feedback to students is well established within the literature (see, for example, Hattie and Jaeger 1998; Hounsell 2003). In addition there is an abundance of readily available 'best-practice guidance' for academic tutors that models the desirable components of feedback (see e.g. HEA SENLEF Report 2004). These dominant strands, although often critical of the common 'transmission model' of feedback practice as a transfer of information from tutors to students, continue to position feedback either as a tutor-led practice or as a facet of assessment (Boud and Falchikov 2006).

Perhaps as a consequence of this, what remains comparatively under-researched are student perspectives and contributions to the feedback discourse (Higgins *et al* 2002; Nicol and Macfarlane 2006), particularly concerning its relationship with learning. Our study considers feedback from this alternative perspective – that of the student experience. This is an important consideration since prior studies highlight a number of different perceptions between students and tutors of the usefulness of tutor feedback (Carless, 2006), with students continuing to rate feedback as an area of dissatisfaction e.g. within successive National Student Surveys and through the WBS Undergraduate Staff Student Liaison Committee (SSLC). Feedback quality has subsequently emerged as an issue of concern at an individual level, as a component of the student experience; at institutional level (with teaching quality emphasis being placed on strengthening performance in the areas of assessment and feedback); and also more generally across the HE sector (see, e.g. HEA SENLEF 2004 Report).

Our project therefore aims to respond to the deficit of student perspectives within the feedback discourse, exploring students' understandings and responses to the feedback they experience. In this way we contribute to a fuller understanding of the purpose and practice of feedback particularly in relation to strengthening its connection and utility to students' *learning* development.

### Research Method

The project was introduced to all members of WBS Undergraduate SSLC in March 2011, and an open invitation extended to all student representatives to take part. Nine student representatives volunteered to do so and each was invited to 'recruit' further students, from outside the SSLC, to participate in the study. This broadened the mix of participants and resulted in twenty students, drawn from across each undergraduate course and year of study, taking part in the research. The aim of the project was established with participants as exploring students' understandings, encounters and critical reflections on their feedback experiences. This aim was deliberately broad to allow students to lead and control the nature and scope of the discussion. An in-depth, unstructured group discussion was subsequently arranged and undertaken with these student participants. This group discussion enabled us to explore the shared understandings of feedback held by students, which resonates with the broader need to consider feedback from the student perspective identified within the literature (see Higgins *et al* 2001; Nicol and Macfarlane 2006). Our research study is therefore undertaken within this spirit of 'sharing understandings' where students were invited to talk together and share experiences of feedback with each other, in an undirected way. This discussion encounter sought to engage students in a meaningful dialogue about feedback, rather than extract responses to a series of already developed interview questions.

The selection of an unstructured group discussion approach is also consistent with our understanding that feedback practice does not occur within an educational vacuum, but as an integral part of students' broader learning experience. The meaning that students assign to feedback is created through their interactions with each other, their tutors and the learning environments in which they engage, i.e. it is socially constructed. Subsequent exploration of this meaning was undertaken using an interpretive approach, which also remains sensitive to the social construction of feedback meaning.

In advance of the discussion sessions, students were invited to reflect on feedback experiences whilst at WBS and to bring to mind instances of 'good' and 'bad' feedback practice which might be useful in drawing out issues within our discussions. To encourage an open dialogue we constructed the discussion session as a relaxed and interactive encounter, setting chairs in an informal circle; removing tables and other room furniture (as potential barriers to openness); and making refreshments freely available within the room throughout the session. Throughout the course of discussion students were encouraged to be open and honest to enable collection of their personalised and candid feedback accounts. To assist this we agreed with students at the outset that the identities of all participants would remain confidential and that all disclosures would be anonymous and only used by the researchers for the purposes of exploring feedback within this project. The discussion session lasted for four hours and was split into two halves with a short rest break in the middle. The session was also video-recorded (by the researchers) in its entirety and generated an abundance of rich or 'thick' experiential data.

During the first stage of data analysis we immersed ourselves in the data through the repeated viewing of the recordings. This allowed us to identify a broad structuring of students' experiential feedback discussions, useful in understanding the nature and scope of the overall discussions that students engaged in. This is reproduced within Appendix 1.

A detailed transcription of the entire dataset was subsequently completed. We analysed these transcripts firstly by performing a manual, double-blind coding. This involved both researchers independently scrutinising the transcripts and coding for key themes. We later compared our individual coding, discussing any discrepancies or omissions to agree on key themes and the significant issues underlying each of these themes. Following this, we employed data analysis software (Leximancer) to perform a detailed interrogation of the emergent themes within the data. The use of Leximancer to perform detailed, qualitative data analysis is well supported within the literature (e.g., Cretchley *et al.*, 2010; Hewett *et al.*, 2009; Rooney, 2005). It uses a machine-learning technique to perform a content analysis of

the text, identifying key concepts and the textual relationship between these within the analysed documents. It relies on coding techniques embedded within the software to establish connections and patterns of association between and across the discursive text. It therefore performs both a thematic (identification of concepts) and semantic (identifying how concepts relate to each other) analysis using word frequency and co-occurrence counts. For a more detailed description of the software's operation please refer to Smith and Humphreys, 2006; Smith, 2003; Smith, 2000.

In this way we constructed a detailed, 'Concept Map' – a relational picture (Appendix 2, Figure 1) of students' feedback discussions revealing significant thematic patterns within the data. Within the discussion that follows we undertake an interpretive analysis of these thematic patterns presenting our analysis around three overarching feedback themes: 'Conceptions', 'Service' and 'Relationships'. Throughout this analysis we interweave many verbatim quotes, lifted directly from the discussion transcripts, to allow students' voices to be heard, in a way that we hope remains true to the nature and intended meaning of these comments.

## **Data analysis and discussion of findings**

### **1. Conceptions of feedback (See Appendix 3 for conceptions overview)**

The strongest conception of feedback held by students is as a form of tutor-provided, narrative commentary that offers an "assessment critique", providing precise explanations of "...where we went wrong, where it went well or can improve, that's how I would define feedback". This is clearly seen within Figure 1 of Appendix 2. Within this figure, the labels appearing inside each coloured bubble are the identified 'themes', which group together clusters of related concepts. Concepts that frequently appear together in the discussion text attract one another and are positioned closer together within the map space. The colours of the bubbles are also linked to the relevance of the theme; hot colours (red, orange) signify the most important themes, and cool colours (blue, green) denote those less important, in accordance to the colour's chart. The 'hottest' feedback conception here is 'grade improvement'. This framing of feedback, and its role as a mechanism for 'mark' improvement and identifying what students did 'wrong', is also evident within the data. Table 3 (Appendix 2) reinforces the predominant view of feedback as assessment critique, identifying the three main concepts that students associate with feedback as, 'grade', 'wrong' and 'improve'.

Students describe a close, and almost exclusive, link between feedback and summative assessment. Table 2 (Appendix 2) shows that the word-concept 'essay' is the one most strongly associated with feedback. In fact, within Figure 1 learning is not closely linked to assessment, being positioned at a distance from the central feedback concept. This result is exemplified in Table 2 where we observe that the concept of 'learning' is only marginally associated with feedback (10%) and, in Table 3, that the likelihood of the concept of feedback being linked to learning is only 27%. At first glance this may seem innocuous - students framing their discussions of feedback around assessment, rather than around a broader notion of learning. Indeed within the NSS itself the categories of assessment and feedback are combined. Yet assessment, whether formative or summative, is only one part of the wider social practice of learning. Further elaboration of students' comments reveals an understanding of feedback as something that "...shows you how to work, how to get a high mark". Students repeatedly express a narrow framing of feedback as largely embodied within formal, tutor-produced, and largely written, summative assessment commentaries. This highlights two important issues:

Firstly students appear to hold an instrumental positioning of feedback as a means of obtaining detailed and precise instruction, a road map if you like, that helps navigate assessment hurdles. This reduces feedback to a form of assessment translation that details "...what they [tutors] are looking for exactly", rather than in terms of a broader mechanism that supports and facilitates students' learning development. Feedback becomes primarily framed as an issue of assessment rather than of learning. Intrigued by this, we trawled the data for evidence of commentary that connected feedback with a broader notion of learning. Whilst students did talk about learning and the idea that they were "at university to learn", there was little specific discussion of how they engaged with feedback as a means of informing and shaping their learning approach or practice. We found only one account that connected feedback to a broader notion of learning: "...it's not feedback just to improve your grade...I'm not doing modules because they're going to get me a good grade or whatever, I'm doing modules because they're going to teach me something that's going to be useful. The same thing I expect from my feedback...to be able to help me, to develop as a person and not just be about my grades". Within this isolated account lies an important recognition of the value of feedback in terms of personal learning development.

Notwithstanding this exceptional voice, the broader picture emerging across students' accounts is one of a more restricted and instrumental conception of feedback as linked to assessment. For example, their accounts offer only a passing recognition of the developmental or transferable aspects of feedback, i.e. using it to inform and develop subsequent assessments, or to identify skills or knowledge deficiencies and consequent learning development activities. Even when encouraged to reflect on this aspect there was little indication that students make sense of and deploy feedback in this way. The stronger indication is an expectation that the developmental axis of students' learning rests with tutors, communicated through feedback: "...they [tutors] should tell us in the feedback, this is what you're missing, this is what you should do differently next time to get a first". Within this, feedback is strongly connected to the pursuit of the desired result or grade, as also shown by the data in Table 3, in which 'grade' is the most strongly associated concept (58%) with feedback. Hence a strong associated bond between assessment and feedback emerges, perhaps to the detriment of a more fundamental link between feedback and learning.

This may reflect a deeper issue concerning students' conception of higher learning and an apparent preoccupation with it in terms of the successful navigation of assessment hurdles. Indeed as curricula become modularised, student numbers increased and employment opportunities eroded, students are increasingly pitched in a competitive employability struggle (Gracia, 2009) within which higher grades become the currency of learning success. Within this cauldron of learning the risk of 'packaging' higher learning as a knowledge product, in contrast to a process of learning, arises. Structuring learning in short modular blocks (often delivered to large student cohorts) also creates numerous assessment events. The practical management of this volume of assessments might further encourage a more conventional transmission model of feedback that exacerbates a narrowing of students' understanding of the role of feedback within learning. We return to explore this aspect later in this section.

The second issue that emerges from students' narrow and instrumental framing of feedback framing is the positioning of the responsibility for feedback (both its practice and processes) onto tutors, "...it [feedback] comes from the staff", rather than as a collaborative and joint endeavour. Looking to their commentaries for further clarification of this, it is unclear whether this detachment arises as an active, conscious choice or as a less deliberate, more unconscious detachment of students within the feedback exchange. However, what is clear here is that students view feedback as the responsibility of tutors, unanimously agreeing that "tutors 'do' the feedback". Others raise the issue of engagement within this thread of discussion but largely in terms of seeking a greater engagement of *tutors* (as learning

directors) during the assessment process... “it would be nice if whoever's marking actually engaged with what you'd done”. Here too then discussion of feedback engagement is in terms of tutors' rather than students' engagement, continuing to position feedback as extrinsic to them.

Further scrutiny of their accounts reveals that descriptions of student involvement or engagement with feedback, as part of a wider relationship with tutors and learning, are sparse. Although one student states that “...we don't want to be spoon fed” this is quickly followed by expression of a clear directional expectation of tutors “...we just want to be pushed in the right direction”. In addition, scrutiny of their discussions reveals that students are largely silent about the existence of the many diverse feedback strands they are exposed to; where and how they might be encountered or initiated; and how they might actively respond to and use feedback to develop their learning. The concept map (Figure 1) supports this view through the absence of any alternative conceptualisations of feedback beyond that of “assessment critique”.

In terms of feedback best-practice, Royce Sadler (2010) suggests that peer assessment (and peer feedback) have a role to play in developing students' relationship with feedback. Students' accounts were scrutinised for commentary on peer assessment and feedback, but no direct commentary on these was found. We noted here too that there was little mention of the use of self-reflection or self-feedback as a means of learning development within their accounts. When prompted to consider the issues of peer and self-assessment and feedback, students were quick to dismiss both as viable learning development tools: “Our knowledge is too limited to be able to give really, really good feedback” and “only the staff can really help me to grasp things.” These views tend to support a more traditional and hierarchical teacher-learner relationship (where the tutor has knowledge authority) rather than one that inclines towards a collaborative learning partnership: “I'm not trying to say I want more work, but it's just that tutors' assessment feedback is the only way I can know if I fully understand the module”. This reiterates students' dependence on tutors' assessment feedback as a means of gauging understanding.

Within this, students do not appear to recognise that peer-feedback might be a valuable means of assisting their own and others' learning development. Although much of this sense of “not being qualified” to give feedback arises out of students' conflation of feedback and assessment, it also suggests a construction of feedback practice that relies on tutors providing the forward force of students' learning. By claiming to be less ‘expert’ than tutors, students disqualify themselves from producing feedback, disengaging from and moving back from the responsibility for this valuable aspect of learning. Students do not consider themselves the producers (as opposed to passive recipients), or even participants within, the feedback process. Comments reiterate a more fundamental and extrinsic reliance on tutors in terms of shaping and developing students' learning, itself narrowly framed as assessment performance: “The *whole* point of doing the essay is to see the feedback on the essay”. Students incline towards more passive forms of learning development that rely on being told how to improve, rather than engaging with more self-reflective learning development practices. Within this, feedback is viewed as a central part of the way that students receive learning instruction, i.e. ‘being told’ how to learn.

Reflecting on students' narrow feedback conception and the desire for detailed ‘telling’, it may arise partly as a consequence of the pervasive presence of assessment within the student experience. For students, there is probably no more central aspect within their learning experience than that of assessment and, with increasing modularisation, higher education has become congested with assessments that litter its landscape. Assessment looms large for students, who unsurprisingly respond by placing a keen focus on it and the pursuit of acceptable ‘grades’, perhaps to the detriment of personal learning development. A discourse of “using feedback to find out what you need to do to achieve a first” clearly emerges from their accounts.

Students also reveal a further view of feedback that supports its principal positioning as assessment critique: “I’m not interested in hearing what I did well, I’m more interested in hearing what I could do better...what can I do to make it better...give concrete examples of what I could do better”. Here students dismiss the merit of positive feedback, i.e. being made aware of strengths, ignoring the value of reflecting and building on, existing strengths. Students were critical of positive feedback commentary received on their work, feeling that they did not need to know what they had done well, or even that they had done well: “That is not feedback!” Feedback comments are only considered relevant if they centre on correcting errors or deficiencies since students perceive this to be the best way of improving grades, i.e. being made aware of shortcomings. They do not describe the purpose of feedback as including identification of strengths, nor articulate the value of encouragement: “Feedback should justify your grade...it explains your grade and it gives you some ideas of how you can improve”. Figure 1 (Appendix 2) demonstrates that there is a closer association between feedback and the concept ‘wrong’ in comparison to the concept ‘better’ which sits further away in the map space. Table 3 too demonstrates that ‘wrong’ is more closely associated with feedback (54%) than the concept ‘better’ (31%). Feedback is therefore not understood as a tool that supports balanced reflection and development, but as a corrective mechanism wherein tutors identify deficiencies and offer explicit remedies, through clear directional instructions for improvements. Here too then, we return to the notion that students express a desire for detailed instructions that *tells* them how to develop. One student was critical of feedback that highlighted her failure to “connect the discussion to other themes of the module” because “no one really told us to do that”! Students express a desire for clear and explicit learning instruction and seek precise ‘telling’ that directs learning: “Can they tell us in the feedback, this is what you’re missing, this is what you should do differently next time to get a first?”

Royce Sadler (2010) identifies this desire for ‘telling’ as problematic; ‘...the fundamental problem lies less with the quality of feedback than with the assumption that telling, even detailed telling, is the most appropriate route to improvement in complex learning’ (2010: 548). Changes within the HE field that position students as ‘consumers’ may encourage a more instrumental view of feedback and, as pressure mounts from student ‘consumers’ for more detailed and explicit tutor feedback, the risk of tutors being framed as learning ‘producers’ and hence drawn into directing students’ learning arises. Students’ desire for feedback that ‘tells’ moves against the central HE ethos of creating a deep and engaged learning experience that fosters students’ personal development. The data within our study paints a picture of over-emphasis (and over-reliance) on tutor’s assignment feedback to drive students’ learning. This may also crowd out other notions of, and opportunities for developing learning through a broader range of feedback forms and practices. Discussions of the latter are noticeably absent from students’ accounts.

Exploring students’ desire for feedback as ‘detailed telling’, the use of feedback as a way of managing anxiety and uncertainty arises. Students talk anxiously about the risks inherent in expressing ideas or arguments in their assessments that might be inconsistent with that of the tutor, and hence penalised. They struggle to balance the need to express their own ideas whilst contextualising and developing these within the wider academic literature. They view feedback as key to developing these skills: “It’s up to us to assess whether we should take the risk within the assignment, but we do expect some feedback at the end.” In addition, with increasing emphasis on critical and creative engagement, students feel under pressure to be original, interpreting this as further exposure to grade uncertainty. Thus, they seek feedback that provides more certainty about how to meet the expectations of the lecturer and more successfully blend their own thoughts, opinions and ideas into their academic thinking. Feedback here is framed as a means of mitigating assessment risk and uncertainty. Again the perceived absence of specific instructions (the ‘telling’) of how to develop and demonstrate critical or creative skills generates uncertainty, risk and anxiety for students. Indeed, many students identify personal learning deficiencies, particularly essay

writing, which they feel are not addressed by tutors through forms of 'telling': "You haven't had any lecture on how to write an essay or anything and you won't...being in year two I still didn't know what was expected from an English essay...I still have no idea whatsoever"; "From school and college teaching to university learning, is completely different and in the first term we're expected to do a whole discursive module without [being] giving any guidelines on how to write an essay."; "I had no idea how I was meant to write an essay and later my feedback didn't help me by just telling me I needed to 'restructure my essay'...like I know what that meant!"

In addition to highlighting the risk and uncertainty that students face, their comments also demonstrate students' ability to actively reflect on and identify limitations within their own learning development - essay writing in this case. However, their response to this identified 'deficit' is not to actively seek its remedy or locate assistance with it (e.g. by using library texts on learning development; attending an academic writing support session; consulting Student Careers and Skills Development; discussing with their personal tutor etc.). Instead students allow the self-identified learning need to persist, write the essay anyway and then develop feelings of dissatisfaction towards tutors who failed to 'tell' students how to write the essay. Students are subsequently dissatisfied with tutors' feedback that highlights poor essay-writing skills because this is seen as merely identifying a problem that students already know exists. Students indicate a preference for learning direction rather than developing a more active engagement with their learning that would enable them to take the initiative and responsibility for their learning development. One student however had identified support services to assist with this aspect of their learning development, but had not experienced a very positive response: "On the My Advantage site there was a 'how to write an academic essay', but I applied to go - tried to go to one of them and they said that it was only for second and third years. So first years weren't allowed to go". Other comments suggest that students become frustrated with tutors who do not take on the active responsibility for students' learning: "Every single answer we get when I ask the teacher something is: 'Yes you're not at school and we're not going to spoon feed you anymore'. It's the number one excuse for the university to say that we don't have the resources. You need to be spoon fed a bit for you even to have a hint of what to do". Although this may highlight a lack of available opportunities (or awareness of opportunities) to support the development of students' independent learning what it also suggests is an over-reliance on tutors for students' learning development.

Within their discussions, students made no mention of any form of feedback other than that which they receive from tutors in relation to assessed work, so we prompted them: "...*could I push you a little bit more about where that feedback comes from for you...what are its sources?*" However, students' discussions continued to focus on tutors' feedback on assessed work, expanding only to consider other strategies and approaches deployed to acquire more feedback from tutors on their assessed work e.g. paying them personal visits, complaining to UG office etc. Students did not identify any informal opportunities for feedback nor recognise broader interpretations of feedback e.g. asking questions in seminars to stimulate learning feedback; instigating seminar discussions to create feedback; reflecting on lecture notes to self-feedback on understanding gaps; attending tutors' open-access hours to discuss issues etc. Hence, despite a multiplicity of available feedback sources and opportunities students apparently ignore, or fail to recognise the range of available feedback information and opportunities. Each time we hinted at other sources or forms of feedback, students offered a counter, e.g., students became critical of poor seminar tutor quality, overcrowded lectures, disinterested personal tutors etc. Indeed even when discussing the constraints of the feedback system the 'faults' identified by students were all in terms of deficiencies within the university or tutor systems (e.g. lack of time; lack of resources). There was very little recognition that students could be active agents in generating or instigating feedback, nor that it could be obtained and provided in different ways, from a range of sources and at different stages of the learning experience. The clear

expectation is that tutors provide feedback in response to assessed work and students see themselves largely as passive agents in this.

Also largely missing from their discussions were accounts of how they subsequently use the feedback to improve or develop their learning. We trawled the data for examples of this and found only one account: “We got together as a group and put our essays together...and read each other’s essays because we know that the high mark for that essay means there’s something in that essay that is good”. This demonstrates some collaborative feedback action amongst students, scrutinising the highly-graded work for clues as to what constitutes ‘good’ work. They also describe motivation to compare feedbacks arising from receiving “bad feedback”: “I got this terrible feedback...if we get upset then we share...everyone talks about it”. One student also hints at the responsibility for acting on feedback as resting with the student: “I think it’s up to the person to go back maybe a day or two days later and actually read through the feedback again.” Within these sparse comments there is evidence of some active response. However, the much stronger strand of response is one of pressurising tutors for more detail; for more ‘telling’ about how to develop rather than reflecting on this for themselves.

There is a final facet of feedback conception that emerges from students’ narrative – the view of it as a grade justification device, “...a reasoned explanation for why you got that grade.” Our data analysis shows that ‘grade’ is the concept most closely associated with feedback, reporting a 58% of likelihood of association (see Table 3). When exploring this further within the ‘grade’ concept, we discover that it is most closely associated with the words ‘better’ and ‘improve’ but much less frequently with ‘learning’. Lack of control over the grading process and lack of consensus over its rigour also leak out of their commentaries, “...you will take several essays, people will read them beforehand and say, this one is amazing, this one is OK, this one is not great. Then the grades don’t correspond...Clearly we are not agreeing with the markers”. This disagreement leads to challenge of the grading and marking processes. This leads students to contest the marks, and the process of marking that their work has been subject to. Students describe using feedback as a means of holding tutors to account for the marking and grading processes. Here tutors’ feedback is positioned as a form of narrative ‘proof’. The degree, positioned as an end-product, emerges from assessment grades, and hence the processes of marking and grading become important sites of intense ‘consumer’ interest. This may reflect the shift taking place in the positioning of students within the learning relationship as ‘consumers’ (and tutors as ‘producers’) of a learning product and hence students flex consumerist power and hold tutors accountable for their academic judgements. From this consumerist perspective students identify a range of issues concerning the quality of the feedback service they receive, and it is to these issues that this report now turns.

## 2. Feedback service

Students expressed considerable negativity about the overall quality of the feedback service they received, identifying a number of criticisms of feedback ‘service’.

Firstly students raise concerns about feedback incidence, which in our analysis appears clustered under the word-concept ‘year’ (Appendix 2 – Figure 1). The intensity of the colour of the bubble highlights the relevance of the topic. Surprisingly, students revealed that many experience very few incidences of feedback, because of the predominance of examination assessment: “I’ve only, in two years, got two pieces of feedback...that’s all I’ve received over two years.” This low feedback incidence creates a lack of opportunity for students to receive and reflect on feedback which they view as unsatisfactory: “We’re here to learn and two feedbacks in two years, I think it’s shocking really”. Additionally some students highlighted that they had not had to write any assessed pieces in their first year of study.



This situation was considered problematic because students felt they were denied the opportunity to develop their academic writing in the first year, where grades did not count towards degree classification. The low feedback incidence led to students feeling isolated and unsupported: "It's kind of like we're just on our own, just go away and do an essay and that's it!"

Related to the issue of incidence, students also identify a low level of feedback frequency (i.e. feedback encounters within a piece of assessment) was also identified as an issue for students. Some students suggest a form of "continuous feedback" to overcome this where they would receive comments on earlier drafts of work during its developmental stages and prior to the submission of the final version: "It's nice while you're writing and while you're doing something to have some sort of feedback". Students also feel that feedback on early drafts "gives you a sense of security". This desire creates a balancing tension for tutors – providing sufficient feedback that appropriately and meaningfully supports learning, whilst not over-providing and undermining the writing challenge and potential for learning development. Indeed, *if* part of the remit of HE is to develop wider skills such as employability or entrepreneurialism, then developing feedback practice that stimulates independent working, self-reflection and a focus on personal and professional development is essential.

Students also criticised the content of the comments they receive, identifying much of the feedback commentary to be statements of fact about what they had written. Students felt that this fails to provide specific, sufficient and individually relevant insights into the strengths and weaknesses of their submission. Most argued for a greater quantity of feedback: "...what we need are detailed comments that give us lots of information about where we went wrong and what we need to do to improve." Others however, hold a contrary view and suggest that too much feedback might be counterproductive: "It is better to get feedback that is limited or students will get upset...that would be bad". There is a more consensual criticism of feedback that fails to provide specific recommendations on where and how students need to improve – i.e. identification of action points with ideas about resources available to assist in undertaking these actions: "Feedback should also justify your grade... so that overall, it explains your grade and it gives you some ideas of how you can improve".

Further heated criticisms surrounding feedback content, focussed on the generic nature of much of their feedback and a view that "...generalised feedback comments are not productive and not constructive". Most students view generic feedback comments as providing insufficient learning support: "Many of my friends got different marks for the same piece of work...I read all their feedback and it was essentially the same. If you get the same feedback on a first class essay and 2:2 class essay how can that possibly help a student?" Others report receiving "...the same feedback as other students, with identical phrases and comments" creating a view of it as impersonal, and disconnected from the specifics of their individual work. One student suggested that tutors' feedback could extend beyond the confines of the particular assessment under review to offer comments that support the development of transferrable skills: "Feedback should be expanded to include things that could help me with another piece of work". In addition a further student understood feedback as having a role to play in facilitating HE transition: "Feedback has to be more thorough, especially in the first year to bridge the gap between learning at school and university". This is an interesting suggestion, providing different levels and types of feedback for students at different stages of their study. For example, first year students may benefit from feedback practice that is more attuned to the issues of raising awareness of and developing higher learning skills, whereas finalists might respond more to a shared feedback discourse that fosters employability skills such as demonstrating initiative, reflection, personal development etc.

Students identify variability of feedback practice as a further issue, complaining of "...a lack of standardised assessment feedback across modules" and highlighting gaps in service

provision, for example, feedback on draft assessment submissions or examination feedback. Students described being dismissed by tutors when they query these gaps with a typical response of: "We don't do that in WBS". Students perceive that the quality of feedback service, across assessments, often relies on individual tutors' attitude towards feedback rather than overarching practice standards: "He [the tutor] decides how he does feedback in that module...it doesn't seem to matter what others do or what the department says". Some students express more direct dissatisfaction with the variability of the marking process within a module's assessment: "Different markers have different opinions...we will rarely agree with what the marker says". Across students' accounts is a strong feeling that practice quality should be more standardised, consistent and equal: "Feedback is just not established enough...it should benefit every student". This often translates into students' perceptions that tutors demonstrate a lack of care about feedback, for example, reflected in students' experience of receiving illegible feedback and "having a hard time actually even reading or understanding what's actually there."

Exploring this theme of variability, students considered the WBS 17-point marking guidance, judging this as too general and open to different interpretations. There is a tension here between students' desire for predictable, standardised marking guidelines and their preference for non-standardised, individual feedback commentaries. Furthermore, the issue of standardising marking processes across assessments (as opposed to within a particular assessment) is problematic because of the inherent variability and diversity of assessments. The desire for standardisation may also reflect the positioning of higher learning as a knowledge product and resonate with students' desire to reduce learning risk and uncertainty identified earlier within this report. Other more isolated criticisms made by individual students concern disparities between the mark and the nature of the feedback provided: "I got 46%, but the feedback said it was 'a good piece of work'! How does that make sense?"; the difficulty of remedying any mistakes made in the marking and grading processes because of the problem of "not being allowed to challenge marks"; and the perception that feedback service (and often themselves as UG students) are low priority areas amongst academics: "It would be good if we got a bit more attention...feedback is very important".

Students were unanimous in their desire for individual examination feedback, or an opportunity to review their own examination papers: "They [tutors] have a page up on everyone's general feedback, but I tried to find out a bit more about my own individual performance, where I've gone wrong...if I could actually just even have a look at my papers, not take them away, but just have a look at them...they said 'no we don't give out individual papers'. It was pretty much a stop there...a no". All students shared this frustration, identifying this as a key feedback issue: "Exams are a problem in that there is no feedback whatsoever. So now you don't even know what went wrong or went bad". There is a strong desire for examination feedback across students' accounts. Reflecting on this, students face examinations as the main assessment method, yet are given very little examination feedback. At best examination feedback takes the form of a generic analysis of cohort performance and the provision of solutions, but there is an absolute absence of any individual examination feedback. In addition they feel that being denied access to their examination papers is problematic: "The main feedback I want is on my exams. I really don't like the fact that we can't get our papers back. For me, that's my best way of learning, being able to go through my work and see where I've gone wrong. If we were able to get our own papers back, we could go through it ourselves". Students perceive this absence of examination feedback as a significant barrier to their learning progression.

### 3. Feedback relationships

A significant issue arising from students' accounts is a lack of communication opportunities with tutors: "It's supposed to be a learning environment but pretty much the only way we can communicate with the lecturer is getting feedback on essays and stuff". The assessment, and consequent feedback on it, mediates the communication between lecturers and students. This is important and relates to earlier interpretations of students' conception of feedback largely as "assessment critique". The relationship with tutors is shaped in part via low contact hours and large class sizes where opportunities for discussion are limited. Feedback becomes one of the few legitimised opportunities for students to receive individualised tutor communication, and as a consequence their expectations of it as an interactional encounter may be heightened. Students are clear about their desire for communication opportunities with tutors and lament the lack of dialogue that exists generally, but especially in relation to the existing feedback system: "You can't come back with that feedback to the person who wrote it and ask...what was (sic) the problems in my essay, can you please tell me...telling you straight to your face, it would be so much quicker...and would give you [tutors] a more individual and firm way of giving feedback because students can ask questions"; "When you get a piece of paper with your feedback on it, you have many questions and no-one to ask them to". This does more than hint at the desire students hold to develop a feedback dialogue with tutors, albeit articulated here largely in terms of extracting learning direction ('telling') from tutors in order to "get an explanation".

Notwithstanding this, students identify the importance of developing interaction between students and lecturers, arguing for "more exchange of ideas between lecturers and students...more discussion of ideas...and opportunities to be inspired by them [tutors]". Students express a desire to be engaged with and stimulated by academic staff. This is an issue worthy of reflection. Students suggest that the way learning is structured creates insufficient opportunities for communication with tutors and hence describe difficulty in developing these important learning relationships. In particular they seek more relevant feedback; feedback that is individual rather than generic; more (or even some) time with tutors to discuss this feedback – what one student describes as an "individual feedback conversation". Although in a different context (Australian urban university offering both academic and vocational programmes), Budge (2011) reflects on the importance of the human aspect within feedback practice, through face-to-face verbal interaction between students and tutors, as the preferred method of receiving feedback cited by the students surveyed.

However, and albeit anecdotally, many tutors arrange weekly open-access hours to facilitate students' opportunities for broader learning conversations, but often find that few, if any students actually take up this opportunity. Tutors also commonly find that many students lack learning engagement within seminars, e.g. attending without completing the necessary reading or tasks, struggle to participate in class discussions, raise few searching questions and are reticent to share their own ideas and opinions. In contrast, in relation to a 'feedback conversation', it is students who complain about tutors' silence in this regard. Here students identify that current feedback practice fails to meet their need for individual and personalised feedback that connects with them and their work: "Some of my friends went to get feedback for their essay from the lecturer and he just said 'no, I'm not giving personal feedback' and that was that." That said, some students do not appear to recognise the connection between their learning engagement and performance: "We complained about our grades and they [tutors] said, 'well, you didn't turn up to lectures' and people don't!" Others however were aware of the importance of the learning relationship and students' responsibility within this: "I completely understand where tutors are coming from...how can we make students respect staff more and staff respect students more?" Students also express resentment at being placed in a position where they have to ask for further feedback, identifying this as a failing of tutors: "The staff didn't feedback properly...it shouldn't happen in the first place". Students imply that if tutors 'do' feedback (the practice of telling) properly then students

would not need to confront or discuss feedback. This suggests that a 'feedback conversation' is sought mainly to obtain adequate explanations from the tutor. Interestingly some students express an even more contrived view of the learning relationship with tutors: "If you expect something from the teacher, then you have to do a minimum to contribute and get something back from the teacher." The emphasis here is on surface learning where students seek to engage in particular aspects of learning behaviour in order to invoke tutor support – what Mann (2001) describes as an 'alienated' learning relationship where students are remote from their learning. Others felt that engagement in this learning relationship was "reliant on the student being a driven, extrovert person" and as such intrinsically more difficult for more introverted students to establish.

Of importance here is that many students feel that tutors' attitudes towards developing feedback dialogues is unsatisfactory: "For me it feels like students are here and academic staff are there. It feels like there's a very great barrier between them". Others concur: "Aside from one seminar tutor, I've had no interaction with any academic staff at all...I've been incredibly disillusioned coming to University". A further student elaborates: "They [tutors] don't want to go into detailed feedback because then students come and confront it and attack the tutors". Others develop this issue: "What they don't realise is that we are all angry when we get poor feedback, and we are all upset!" They suggest that tutors use generic feedback statements to avoid confrontation and dialogue with students "...they just put 'good use of this' and then we can't confront that...it's very unconstructive". Others express frustration at tutors' responses: "They [tutors] say 'I don't see anyone, sorry'...the door's closed...we are angry and we want to confront them!" Assessment exposes students to the uncertain marking and grading processes and the inherent risk of failure however defined, creating feelings of anxiety. Indeed many of the students' quotes throughout the report illustrate the often overlooked emotional dimension within students' learning. Feedback and indeed higher learning itself are not merely matters of cognition, but also powerful, emotional experiences (Gracia, 2006). A desire for more explicit guidance and feedback through 'telling' may arise partly as a means of students seeking to manage these emotions.

Despite the broadly critical picture students painted of their experiences with tutors, amongst these were a small number of contrasting accounts, for example, one student extended criticism, in relation to poor learning relationships, across students as well as tutors: "I think that students don't put enough in... [but] you need somehow to make it so that students have to do the seminar work *and* seminar tutors have to do the work, and then it's going to improve." Here too the remedy suggested lies in tutors somehow enforcing students' participation rather than seeking ways of enabling students to take responsibility for their own learning engagement. Another expressed the student-tutor relationship as a confrontation rather than collaboration at least in relation to feedback: "When I receive feedback, I think you have to go by this idea of like (sic) confrontation between the student body and the staff body." These experiences have done little to foster productive feedback conversations, leaving students feeling isolated: "We feel abandoned by tutors".

Further analysis reveals that students' descriptions of the type of relationships they desire with tutors are complex and at times contradictory. When pressed on what this 'feedback conversation' would mean in practice, responses mostly centred around having opportunities to meet with tutors who would further analyse students' work, going through it in detail and pointing out all the faults or deficiencies or limitations within it. Although students talk about wanting to be in an environment in which they can discuss and interact with lecturers – actively engaging as partners in the learning - at the same time the weight of their expectations falls onto tutors in terms of creating the stimulus and drive both their learning and feedback. This resonates with the earlier interpretation that students demonstrate a preference for tutors taking responsibility for students' learning. This student view may fall somewhat short of tutors' expectations that students actively engage with their learning,

leading to an expectations gap which results in dissonance and confrontation as described by students. This expectation gap may be exacerbated as HEI's are increasingly held to account for the employability of their graduates and hence likely to focus even more keenly on the development of independent self-motivated and directed learning. Of note here is that Adcroft (2010) identifies a more fundamental 'perception gap', beyond the practice of feedback, concerning the essential meaning and role of feedback within higher learning.

A few students however recounted more positive experiences and spoke about being able to "...go up to his [tutor's] office and chat through the topic...obviously he didn't mark or write the essay for you, but it was an interesting discussion which really helps form your thoughts and it would be nice if we had more tutors engaging in that kind of way". Another describes a further positive feedback experience: "He [the tutor] allotted times for students to come, so he actually requested students to come to get their individual feedback. He was open about it, I thought that was really good...progressive." Despite these relatively isolated positive experiences, important questions arise concerning whether tutors - and importantly HEI's - value (in terms of both principle and resourced practice), encourage and engage in dialogue, including feedback conversations, with students about their learning.

Whilst considering the notion of learning relationships, it is pertinent to mention that WBS operates a personal tutoring system whose remit includes creating a supportive learning relationship between tutors and students. However, students offered very mixed views about the role of personal tutors in the feedback process: "As for helping students with their academic work, I don't think personal tutors play much of a role in that at all." Others disagreed: "My personal tutor helped me quite a lot with my essays" and "she guided me through the research and what approaches I should take...I was lucky". Another student also described an active interaction with her personal tutor, who "...read early drafts of written work and provided some comments on how to improve it". The development of the remit of the personal tutoring system, to include specific focus on feedback conversations or review, might be a useful development.

## **Conclusions and Practice Reflections**

This research explores WBS UG students' feedback experiences and reflections. It considers the in-depth experiences of 20 students enrolled on each year and course of the UG programme, and offers a reflective interpretation of these experiences.

Students fundamentally frame feedback as an issue of assessment, a means of improving grades through tutors' learning direction, or 'telling', rather than as a tool of broader learning and personal development. Students were very critical of the quality of the existing *assessment* feedback service they experience, particularly identifying:

- Few opportunities to receive assessment feedback due to the predominance of examination assessment with relatively few coursework assessments.
- No provision of individual examination feedback or return of examination papers which would provide an opportunity for self-reflective feedback.
- Lack of opportunity to develop personal learning relationships, including "feedback conversations" with tutors.
- Variability of feedback practice across modules and departments.
- Perception that feedback practice is a low priority area, in terms of resources to support it and tutor interest in it.
- Insufficient quantity ("a few short sentences") and poor legibility ("I didn't have a clue what he had written").
- Dislike of generic comments and use of standardised phrases – perceived as impersonal and insufficiently focused on the students' unique submission.

- Lack of developmental focus or improvement suggestions.

Within this, students perceive feedback largely as the practice and responsibility of tutors, typically restricted to written comments on assignment cover sheets. Students' position themselves as the passive recipients of feedback, rather than as active participants or even producers of feedback which suggests a narrow and instrumental view of feedback, as a phenomenon that is extrinsic to them.

We found little evidence of more pluralistic understandings of feedback practice arising from alternative learning exchanges, forms or voices. For example, students did not identify other forms of feedback emerging from learning encounters beyond assessment, such as informal discussions with tutors and peers or other commentary, guidance, descriptions or explanations that tutors provide on a daily basis within seminars, lectures, via my.wbs etc. as forms of 'feedback'. There was also little evidence of the value of self-generated feedback in terms of descriptions of active or reflective learning development practices which might include consulting learning development and study skills texts, reflecting on learning performance or engaging with available learning support opportunities e.g. academic writing drop-in sessions or the UG Skills Programme run by Student Careers and Skills. Students also quickly disqualified themselves from direct involvement with practices of peer and self-feedback, both dismissed as invalid sources of expert feedback, regarding both as having little value. In this way, students' conception of feedback and their relationship with it (in terms of how they frame and use it, where they seek it from and their responsibility for it) are restricted.

This may arise, in part from students' becoming positioned more as 'consumers' within the learning relationship. Consumerist framings of students encourage the conception of learning as a knowledge product, rather than as a developmental process and risks positioning tutors as the 'producers' of this knowledge product. This position is exacerbated by the proliferation of 'bite-sized' learning modules each associated with learning assessments which collectively dominate the learning landscape. Students become preoccupied with assessment rather than learning *per se* and hence desire feedback that directly supports assessment outcomes. There is also evidence of students using feedback as a grade justification device, beginning to hold tutors to account for the processes of marking and grading. These findings suggest that students' attention is focussed on the end-product of their learning, overlooking the development of important, integrated and sustained personal learning development across their studies. Learning and assessment, whilst enjoying some overlap, are distinct entities. Limiting feedback focus to assessment undermines its influence and the significant contribution it can make to students' learning development. Conversations about the development of feedback practice and policy need to take place within the context of the broader consideration of the teaching and learning environment.

Faced with increasing pressure from student 'consumers' (e.g., via the NSS) for more explicit and detailed feedback, HEI's and tutors risk being coerced into providing it. This is problematic in that practice development is seen to emerge from the short-term management of the 'problems' identified by students (a consumerist response) rather than through a more careful and thorough consideration (pedagogic response) of how best to develop forms of feedback that supports students' learning and self-development. Indeed, using students' evaluations to shape feedback policy is not without its critics. For example, Price *et al* (2010) identify reliance on students' feedback evaluations as problematic because students "lack sufficient pedagogic literacy to go beyond mere judgement of feedback service" (2010: 288). Within our research we concur that over-reliance on students' critical commentary to drive developments in feedback practice is imperfect because students' desire for feedback through detailed 'telling' may not optimise deep, engaged and self-directed learning. Price *et al* caution that whilst recognising the value and contribution of

students' views to the development of feedback practice, it is only one consideration, and hence the wider pedagogic and feedback literatures also have important roles to play. Ironically, it also strikes us that if, as tutors, we engage in knee-jerk practice responses to NSS or other student feedback, in isolation from wider practice guidance and academic understandings, we mirror students' instrumental use of feedback as a form of 'telling' to drive development – i.e. using students' 'telling' to direct tutors' practice. Prior to making practice changes it is pertinent to first reflect on whether the type of feedback practice we currently engage in adequately supports the development of desirable learning and personal skills and development within the student body, and what evidence (if any) we have to support this. Detailed studies of the effect of forms of feedback on learning development are noticeably sparse within the literature.

If feedback is to be effective it must also speak to and connect with students in a way that is accessible – enabling them to decode and meaningfully deploy its learning development content. It is tempting here to suggest that what we require is some 'best-practice guidance' for tutors. However, in terms of improving the quality of assessment feedback service, it is important first to clarify the more fundamental issue of what we are seeking to achieve via feedback. Although we make widespread use of assessment feedback, its purposes are not clearly articulated and without a shared understanding it is difficult to describe the forms of feedback that are best suited to achieving these and feedback practice remains contested ground. For example, the popular rhetoric is that students require more detailed feedback from their tutors, but if the aim is to facilitate students becoming autonomous, self-reflective learners, providing them with copious written commentary on assessment performance may be counter-productive, or at least inconsistent with this aim. Hence a clearer understanding of what we are seeking to achieve through feedback practices would be useful in terms of directing its development. This also resonates with our earlier suggestion that feedback focus and practice could be adapted to better reflect students' level of study (learning development). For example, a heavier use of peer-assessment may be better suited to students in the later stages of UG study.

We also highlight students' desire for receiving feedback as a form of learning through 'telling', i.e. receiving detailed learning direction and instruction from tutors, partly as a means of reducing assessment anxiety and uncertainty. The challenge of more closely aligning feedback with aspects of learning (including attendance, seminar preparation, contribution to class discussion, evidence of reading, expression of ideas and opinions, evidence of personal learning development etc.) rather than assessment itself, may be useful in creating appropriate feedback practice. It is particularly important since Royce Sadler (2010) cautions that "for many students, assessment feedback seems to have little or no learning impact...often leading to little if any improvement in their subsequent work" (2010: 535). Expecting *assessment* feedback to have a significant influence on students learning may be a flawed strategy. A more effective approach might be a combination of more robustly linking feedback to the broader parameters of learning development beyond knowledge acquisition. Additionally, we suggest there is room for a more sympathetic engagement of students directly within feedback practice and an opportunity presents to link it more centrally to supporting students' personal learning development, extending past and through its many learning assessments. This would reposition feedback as a learning development mechanism (learning process) rather than an assessment commentary (learning product). This would require working with students to help them develop a more active awareness of, and responsible engagement with, feedback practice.

One way this might be achieved is through the creation of some form of Personal Development Planning (or learning development portfolio) for students. This is not a new idea within the HE sector, but it might be a useful means of students undertaking continuous, self-appraisal of learning development, informed in part by formal and informal feedback that students both receive and generate. Beginning in Year 1, perhaps as part of students'

induction programme, students could engage in an opening assessment of their personal learning development and identify learning development needs. It could progress across their study, joining up learning across modules and years with a focus on students' personal learning development. This could also usefully be tied in to making students aware of the many and varied University learning support services and opportunities that exist and feed into the wider aim of improving the student experience. Discussion of this plan, including students' more meaningful termly self-review of their personal learning performance, identification of learning development needs and an action plan for addressing these needs could also form the basis of termly discussions with personal tutors. (It would be useful here if personal tutors, as well as having access to tutees' assessment grades could also have online access to assessment feedback). This may also provide a means of facilitating a more active and collaborative personal tutoring exchange.

An opportunity also arises to broaden students' awareness of the range of feedback sources and forms; highlight how they might take a more active feedback role; and facilitate students' engagement with self and peer-feedback. This may also enable development of a shared understanding and expectation of feedback between students and tutors. More explicitly, exploring the role, nature, scope and sources of feedback and its important links to learning (as opposed to simply being concerned with assessment) may be useful. This could be tailored to meet the needs of students at different stages of their learning, moving from an early focus on transition into higher learning and what that means in terms of becoming active, engaged, autonomous learners (some work on this has already begun – e.g. 'Rainbow Lecture' delivered in 2011/12 induction programme to all 1<sup>st</sup> Year WBS UG students – see Appendix 4); through to developing into critical, self-actualised, self-motivated and engaged learners. This also connects with the observation of some students that different types of feedback are more relevant at different levels of study. Such initiatives may help students nurture more informed expectations and understandings of feedback enabling a more active responsibility to be undertaken within feedback practice – what Cassidy (2011) refers to as 'self-regulated' learning. It would also better position feedback as an intrinsic driver of learning development, as opposed to its current status as an extrinsic driver of assessment performance.

Notwithstanding this need for further understanding of the purpose of summative assessment feedback our research supports the provision of a wider range of opportunities for students to develop broader and more active conceptions of feedback – formal and informal; online and face-to-face; written and verbal; tutor generated and self-generated; reflective and directive - and establish more robust links between it and learning. It would be useful to consider what changes might raise this wider awareness of the sources, forms and uses of feedback such as amending module outline information provided to students to explicitly identify for students the range of feedback mechanisms used within that module to support learning: e.g. verbal feedback in seminars, questions in lectures, conversation opportunities in open-access hours, written assessment feedback, commentary on my.wbs, use of feedback blogs, discussion group-feedback; self-reflection; revision materials; and other advice and guidance.

In the longer term it might also be useful (e.g. as part of wider teaching and learning, or curriculum reviews) to consider feedback incidence and forms. Many students highlighted the lack of feedback opportunities, particularly in the first year of study, largely as a consequence of examination assessment emphasis. Building opportunities for feedback exchanges about a broader range of learning skills and abilities (beyond assessing knowledge) – such as how well students work in groups, contribute to class discussion, provide peer-feedback, engage with seminar work etc. might be useful. Extending or adapting existing assessment forms to facilitate the development of broader skills – such as peer-assessment, or perhaps more controversially aspects of self-assessment might also be beneficial in more centrally linking feedback with learning. As part of this it seems timely to



revisit the practice of not providing examination feedback. Some form of direct examination feedback may be warranted. This could take a variety of forms including the use of 'mock' examination papers that students self-complete and self- (or peer-) mark against provided 'model' answers etc. By not providing any individual examination feedback we may deny students the opportunity to learning from their examination performance which inadvertently reinforces the message that it is the mark ascribed to the learning (the learning product) rather than the means through which this is achieved (the learning process) that is valued. We need to ensure that feedback practices are fundamentally structured around the practices and processes of learning itself, rather than those of assessment, in ways that both engage and challenge our students.

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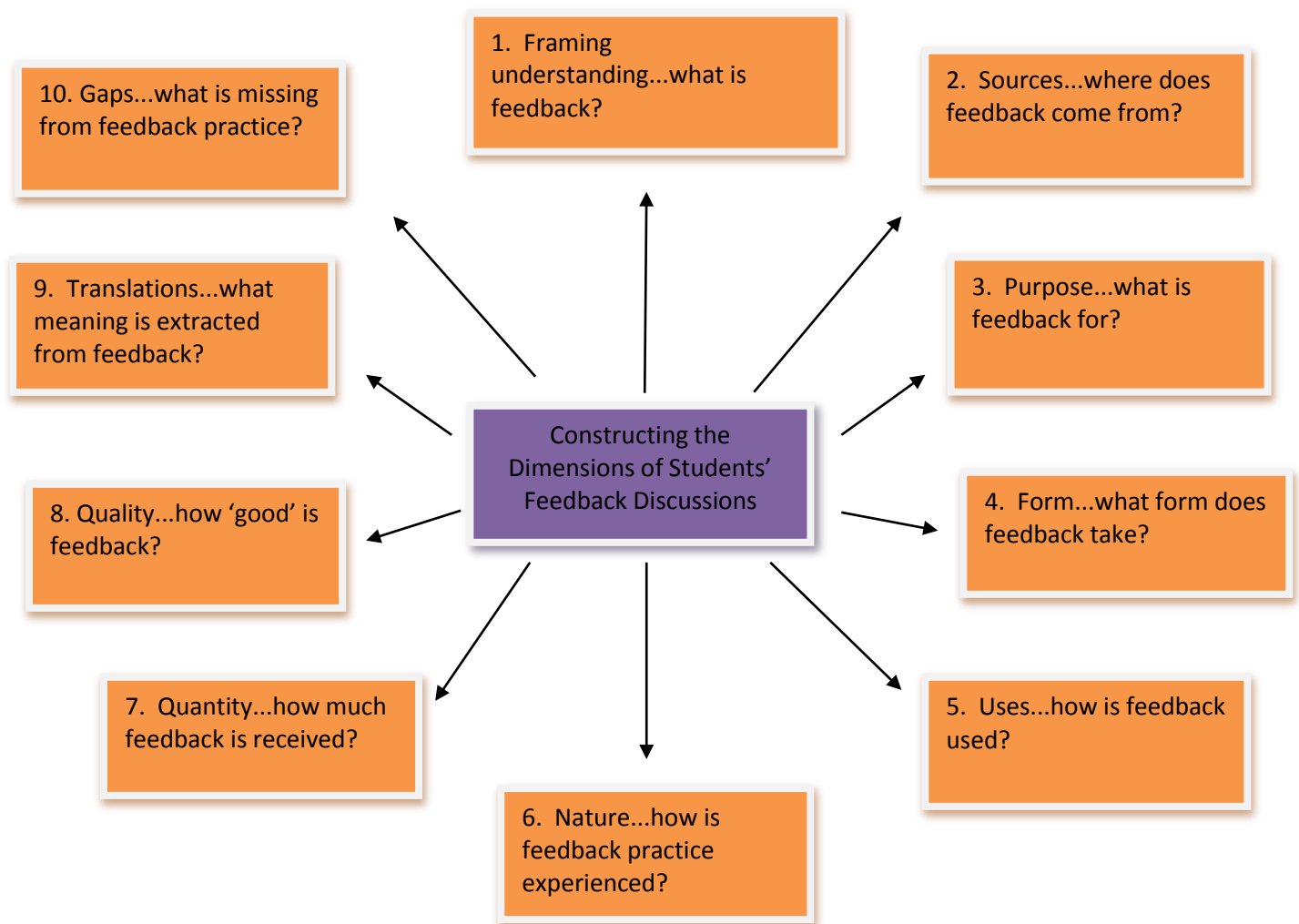
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## Appendix 1:

### First Stage Analysis: Scope and Structure of Students' Feedback Discussion



## Appendix 2

Leximancer analysis of the transcript data produces a range of Concept Maps, which are visual displays of concepts and their relationships to each other, represented as bubble diagrams, see Figure 1 below.

It is possible to adjust the number of themes that are visible in the map, reducing or increasing the number of themes shown. Table 1 below shows the thematic summary related to the diagram presented in Figure 1.

Table 1: Thematic summary

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Connectivity</b>
<a href="#">feedback</a>	100%
<a href="#">year</a>	38%
<a href="#">work</a>	33%
<a href="#">tutor</a>	30%
<a href="#">time</a>	29%
<a href="#">module</a>	28%
<a href="#">university</a>	28%
<a href="#">people</a>	23%
<a href="#">doing</a>	21%
<a href="#">students</a>	21%
<a href="#">school</a>	17%
<a href="#">seminar</a>	17%
<a href="#">learning</a>	15%
<a href="#">different</a>	13%
<a href="#">mark</a>	12%
<a href="#">grade</a>	12%
<a href="#">better</a>	11%
<a href="#">wrong</a>	10%
<a href="#">understand</a>	08%
<a href="#">thought</a>	07%
<a href="#">agree</a>	07%
<a href="#">research</a>	06%
<a href="#">lecture</a>	04%

For each of the themes listed above, the software provides a list of the concepts contained within each theme, followed by examples of text containing each of the constituent concepts clustered in the themes.

Figure 1 below presents the overall Concept Map for the analysis of the transcript data.

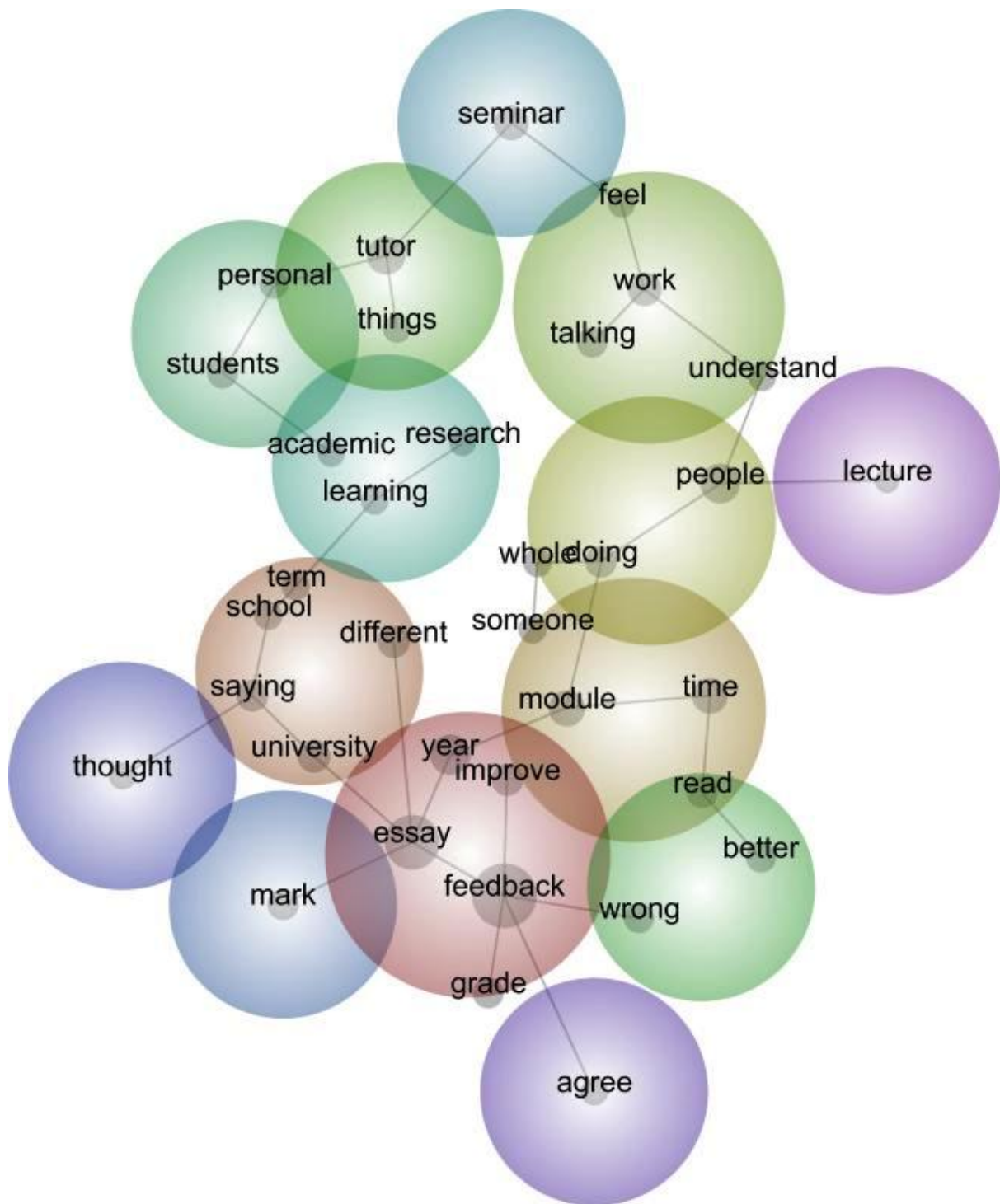


Figure 1: Overall Summary Concept Map

Table 2: Associations between concepts

The concepts are listed and ranked according to their frequencies and relevance within the text. Table 2 below lists these concepts ranked in order of count and relevance:

Word-like concept	Count	Relevance (%)
Feedback	146	100
Essay	98	67
People	54	37
Year	48	33
Seminar	41	28
Tutor	40	27
Time	39	27
Work	36	25
Mark	32	22
University	31	21
Module	30	21
Saying	29	20
Read	28	19
Students	27	18
Talking	26	18
Better	26	18
Wrong	26	18
Different	25	17
Doing	24	16
Grade	24	16
Improve	22	15
Agree	21	14
Personal	19	13
Understand	18	12
Thought	18	12
Things	17	12
Someone	16	11
Learning	15	10
School	14	10
Term	13	9
Academic	13	9
Whole	12	8
Feel	12	8
Research	11	8

Table 3: concepts connected to feedback concept

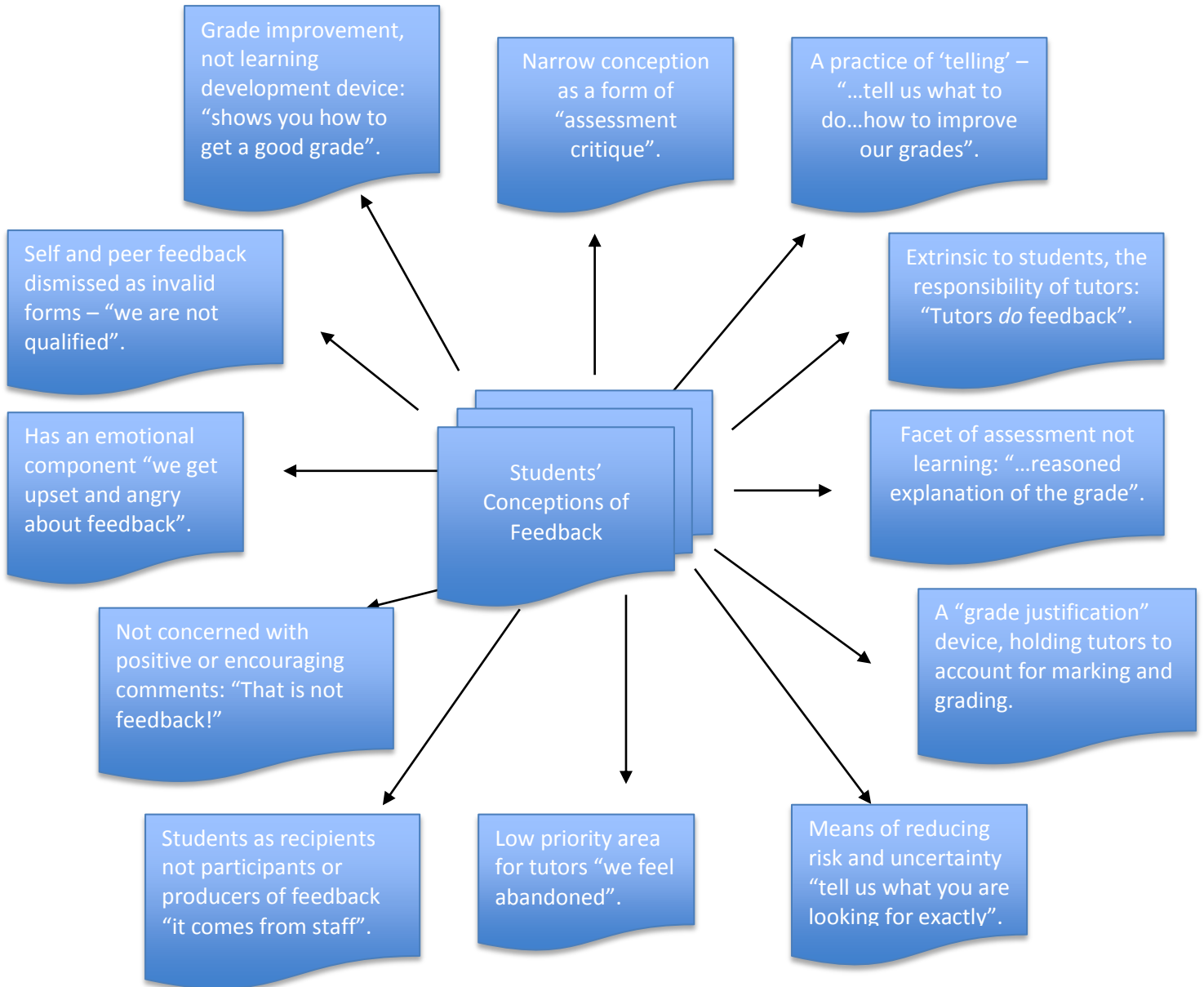
Furthermore, for each concept is possible to see its connections to other concepts. Table 3 below, shows the concepts that are connected to “feedback”:

Related word	Count	Likelihood (%)
Grade	14	58
Wrong	14	54
Improve	11	50
Research	5	45
Someone	7	44
Whole	5	42
Mark	13	41
Time	14	36
Essay	35	36
Read	10	36
Year	17	35
Module	10	33
University	10	32
Saying	9	31
Better	8	31
Talking	8	31
Doing	7	29
Agree	6	29
Different	7	28
Thought	5	28
Learning	4	27
People	13	24
Things	4	24
Term	3	23
Academic	3	23
Students	6	22
Understand	4	22
School	3	21
Personal	4	21
Work	6	17
Tutor	5	12
Lecture	1	11
Feel	1	8



### Appendix 3

#### Map of Students' Conceptions of Feedback



**Appendix 4 – ‘Rainbow’ Lecture**

**Please see separate file attached.**