Student Engagement With Feedback

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Introduction

Within the realm of student progression there is a key issue: engagement with feedback. Through observations during previous academic years, it became clear that students were predominantly engaging with feedback, both formative and summative, at a surface level. Rather than using it to inform future assessments, they tended to repeat similar mistakes, which in some cases led to additional issues. The purpose of this intervention was to determine whether dedicated tasks in and out of the classroom around feedback, with a focus on written, would lead to greater understanding from the students and therefore an overall improvement in their performance.
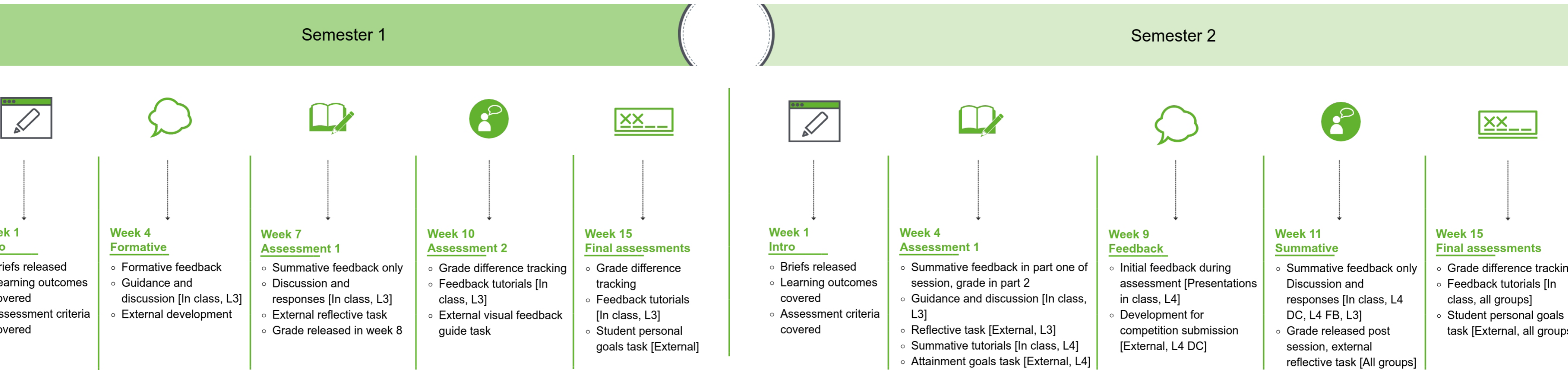
Literature Review

Bout and Molloy state that *"commonly it has no effect because information from teachers is not taken up by the students and sometimes it is not even read"* (2012), this underpins the reasoning behind this intervention and forms the direction of the tasks that have been implemented to create student engagement. As part of the Higher Education Academy's Enhancing Student Learning Through Effective Formative Feedback study, Juwah et al (2004) discuss a model for formative assessment and feedback, highlighting how students may go about developing internal feedback, leading to their own development and *"processes of self-regulation."* A key aspect of driving and then reinforcing this student engagement is through activities built around the use of written summative feedback, Evans (2013) comments *"those reportedly successful approaches to enhancing self-regulatory practice focus on student responsibility and ways of generating genuine involvement in the feedback process,"* from which they cite Sendzuik (2010), who highlights examples of students who utilise written feedback to grade themselves, alongside written explanations. Careless (2006) notes *"37.8% of students felt that feedback was rarely followed by actions to improve student learning, as opposed to 16.1% of tutors,"* results that derived from a questionnaire within their study. They also raise the prospect of differing opinions between lecturers and students around usefulness and satisfaction derived from feedback in addition to the grades. This difference, whilst unsurprising, is a key driver in the reasoning behind my intervention.

Context

Tools utilised for intervention

- 1-2-1 tutorials
- Group tutorials
- Written feedback
- External writing tasks

The intervention took place predominantly during timetabled sessions within the modules, in direct response to an assessment that had been handed in.

Participants

L3 Foundation
All modules

L4 Fashion Branding & Marketing, Buying & Management
Fashion Business (Start Up)

L4 AD&PR
Digital Creativity

Methodology

The literature was a core part of the building of my aspect of this intervention, I combined elements from each other the studies I had read about to form a methodology that would work best for my students in their respective classes. In terms of evaluation, tracking of the grades via Blackboard, as well as student reflections and discussions both in out of class were used to determine the successfulness and overall satisfaction of the study.

Implementation

Semester 1

Week 1
Intro
- Briefs released
- Learning outcomes covered
- Assessment criteria covered

Week 4
Formative
- Formative feedback
- Guidance and discussion [In class, L3]
- External development

Week 7
Assessment 1
- Summative feedback only
- Discussion and responses [In class, L3]
- External reflective task
- Grade released in week 8

Week 10
Assessment 2
- Grade difference tracking
- Feedback tutorials [In class, L3]
- External visual feedback guide task

Week 15
Final assessments
- Grade difference tracking
- Feedback tutorials [In class, L3]
- Student personal goals task [External]

Semester 2

Week 1
Intro
- Briefs released
- Learning outcomes covered
- Assessment criteria covered

Week 4
Assessment 1
- Summative feedback in part one of session, grade in part 2
- Guidance and discussion [In class, L3]
- Reflective task [External, L3]
- Summative tutorials [In class, L4]
- Attainment goals task [External, L4]

Week 9
Feedback
- Initial feedback during assessment [Presentations in class, L4]
- Development for competition submission [External, L4 DC]

Week 11
Summative
- Summative feedback only Discussion and responses [In class, L4 DC, L4 FB, L3]
- Grade released post session, external reflective task [All groups]

Week 15
Final assessments
- Grade difference tracking
- Feedback tutorials [In class, all groups]
- Student personal goals task [External, all groups]

Evaluation

From the standpoint of attempting to generate a deeper engagement with written feedback from students, the intervention has been successful. The tasks have been met with favourable reception, with subsequent elements at L3 being worked into an assessment to allow students further connection to the work they are producing. At L4, the students have expressed awareness of the learning outcomes in a greater context, which has led to improvement in grade averages. Collectively the cohorts have not seen massive shifts, but individual students have shown improvement over time, with an eagerness to pursue the tasks of their own volition. Upon sharing the set up with colleagues, several have mentioned that they are seeking to implement something similar within their modules to further student understanding and make the feedback a two way dialogue.

Final Considerations

55%

Average median grade for all three student sample groups.

+12%

Median increase, from 55% to 67%, L4 AD&PR. All students achieved 60% or more

Moving forward, improved consistency, more rigorous application in delivery and also the overall tracking of grades will be applied, with a greater push for students to continue to build their own progression goals.

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