

Point-of-use formative feedback

What did/do you do?

Formative feedback is provided at point of use on a piece of assessment after an IT-skills workshop.

Who is involved?

Rebecca McCready (Learning and Teaching Advisor) and her team mark the IT-skills aspects of the assessments and provide feedback. The practice works with first year MBBS students.

How do you do it?

Formative feedback is provided on a piece of assessment after an IT-skills workshop. The feedback is tailored to individual students and is scheduled so that it can immediately be applicable for an upcoming summative assessment. IT-skills feedback is also provided on a first year summative assessment before a second summative assessment is submitted. Markers refer to a "Chinese menu" of common comments to draw attention to areas that need improvement; practical advice, including steps for implementation, is also provided. Markers then use Excel and Mail Merge in Word to send individualised reports to students. This provides an audit trail of marks and feedback, standardises comments, clearly draws attention to the feedback and allows the whole marking and feedback process to be dealt with electronically.

The feedback team is also working on software that can provide IT-skills feedback to students immediately. The software will ideally perform first-pass marking and flag problematic assessments for further review. It would also serve as a resource and a diagnostic tool for students, who would be able to submit assessments to the software and identify errors before the formal submission deadline. The team hopes that the software might also be able to provide accreditation of IT skills and evidence of proficiency to aid students in seeking employment.

Why do you do it?

The feedback team wanted to provide feedback that would be tailored to individual students and directly relevant/at point of use. Formative feedback fulfills this need and allows students to apply it directly to the next assessment in a way that summative feedback often cannot because of time scales.

Does it work?

A significant majority of students do seem to apply suggestions for IT-skills improvement to subsequent assessments.

Teaching and Learning Case Study

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Coherent Curriculum themes:

- Assessment and feedback
- Skills and employability