

Senior Tutor workshops and exam feedback sessions

What did/do you do?

The School of Psychology offers senior tutor workshops and exam feedback sessions to improve student performance and satisfaction.

Who is involved?

Stage 3 workshops and feedback sessions are run by the Senior Tutor (currently Dr. Val Tuck); Stage 2 exam feedback sessions are run by the Stage 2 Director. Workload implications fall primarily on the Senior Tutor (with the work for each workshop comparable to that of preparing a lecture, and a larger time commitment required for providing feedback on practice essays).

How do you do it?

Two sets of non-compulsory workshops are offered to Stage 3 students: "How to Get a 2:1" and "Aiming for the Top." Each set involves two workshops in Semester 1: a general workshop aimed at providing suggestions for improvement and a more specific workshop scheduled closer to examinations. In the "Aiming for the Top" workshop, students are encouraged to submit practice essays to the workshop leader (in addition to their module leader) and then have 30 minute individual sessions to discuss how to improve their work. (The practice of submitting practice essays for formative feedback is already routine in Stage 3 modules.)

After Semester 1 examinations, an exam feedback session is offered. Module leaders submit bullet-pointed generic feedback, and the workshop leader prepares a PowerPoint with the feedback and generic suggestions for improvement. A second set of workshops (one of each type listed above) is offered in Semester 2 to help students make use of the exam feedback provided.

Last year, in order to check that students really were finding the exam feedback useful, the School presented it in the form of a questionnaire, designed using Qualtrics software. This was used to judge students' perceptions of how their exam essay matched with the generic feedback they were given by asking for student feedback on the module leader feedback. It was discovered that students often misperceived their own work and, even though they got a poor mark, that they thought they were doing what had been asked. Therefore they felt that the feedback was not useful and that they could not use it to improve. This insight will be used to improve future exam feedback sessions.

Exam feedback sessions and feedback clinics are now also offered to Stage 2 students. Feedback sessions offer generic feedback compiled from module leaders and tips on how to apply it; the feedback clinics, run by a demonstrator, have students bring along work so as to get individualised feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Why do you do it?

The feedback sessions and workshops were originally offered to Stage 3 students in response both to low NSS scores on feedback and to external examiners' comments on the low number of 1st class results. The School devised the "How to get a 2:1" workshop series because 2:2 students are often the most dissatisfied and because they need the most help to succeed and to develop transferable skills. The Stage 2 exam feedback session and feedback clinics were offered in response to a student request through the Staff Student Committee.

Does it work?

Because the senior tutor workshops have only been offered for a few years, it is too early to judge an increase in the number of firsts and 2:1s. It does seem, anecdotally, that the number of students who achieved a first class degree by right has increased since the implementation of the workshops. Attendance at all events is strong, and the students who attend the "Aiming for the Top" series are particularly dedicated and consistent in attendance.

Teaching and Learning Case Study

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Coherent Curriculum themes:

- Assessment and feedback

Other keywords:

Undergraduate (Stage 2), Qualtrics software