



Marking and Feedback Policy

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ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

1. Thomas Tallis School Plan 2020-23 has five aims.

1	A powerful curriculum
2	The best teachers
3	Great learning and progress
4	Excellent personal development
5	A model for a better world

As part of aim 5 Thomas Tallis School has adopted the *Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education*. This means that we try to behave in a principled and correct manner in everything we do. Schools and colleges serve children and young people and help them grow into fulfilled and valued citizens. As role models for the young, how we behave as leaders is as important as what we do. We therefore behave with **selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership**. We demonstrate **trust, wisdom, kindness, justice, service, courage and optimism**.

Marking is a central part of a teacher’s role and can be integral to progress and attainment. Written responses offer a key way of providing feedback to pupils and helping teachers assess their students’ understanding. However, the 2016 report of the Independent Teacher Workload Review Group noted that written marking had become disproportionately valued by schools, unnecessarily burdensome for teachers and that quantity of feedback has too often become confused with the quality. The group noted that there is no ‘one size fits all’ way to mark, instead recommending that all marking should be driven by professional judgement and be “meaningful, manageable and motivating”. For all these reasons, there is a clear need for high-quality evidence to inform schools’ decision-making about marking.

Individual departments should use the principles outlined in this marking and feedback policy to create their own subject-specific, tailored departmental assessment policies. This is really an ‘internalising’ of the school departmental policy, making it fit the demands of your curriculum, in the knowledge that curriculum and subject leaders are responsible for setting and monitoring the quality and frequency of feedback from teachers working within their team.

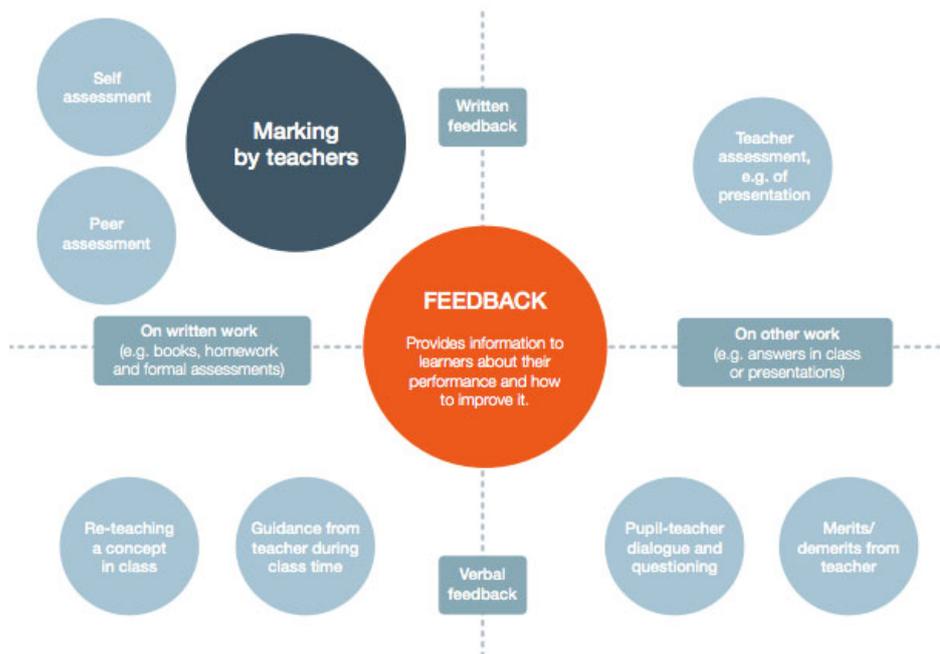
Please consider the following definitions and principles:

Marking = the routine activity of reading, checking, monitoring, (when appropriate) correcting, and (where appropriate) giving a mark to students’ written work.

Feedback = providing more detailed guidance to the learner in order to help them to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills.

Marking	Feedback
Summative	Formative
Assessment of Learning	Assessment for Learning
Measures learning	Moves learning forward
Directs thinking	Provokes thinking
Solves	Suggests
“You should...”	“How could you...?”

While it is important to note that written marking is only one form of feedback, as seen in the diagram below, marking offers an opportunity to provide pupils with the clear and specific information that the wider evidence base on feedback suggests is most likely to lead to pupil progress.



The type of feedback students get on their work will vary according to the subject. In drama, PE, art and music for example, much of the feedback will be verbal. In fact much of the best feedback in all subjects is verbal whilst the students are working. Departments should consider the role of verbal feedback in their departmental policies.

Marking

Marking is an act of love
- Phil Beadle

Marking students' books is part of our professional duty. Routinely reading, checking and monitoring students' books connects us to their learning and helps to ensure that they care about the work they produce. It shows students that we value their work and provides us with crucial on-going information about how well they are learning. It also enables us to monitor the completion of class-based and home learning tasks.

This kind of routine light marking should be regular, timely and manageable. Frequency will vary from subject to subject, but as a general rule books should be taken in and checked approximately every two to four weeks, or twice per half-term. In order to help with workload and consistency, staff may wish to use a Tallis Check sticker for this kind of light marking:

TALLIS CHECK (1 is excellent)	1	2	3	4
<i>Effort</i>				
<i>Presentation</i>				
<i>SPaG</i>				
<i>Home learning</i>				

Feedback

Feedback is specific information given to the learner about their performance relative to learning goals. It should aim to (and be capable of) producing improvement in students' learning.

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
- be supported with effective professional development for teachers.¹

Recent studies also suggest that careless mistakes should be marked differently to errors resulting from misunderstanding. The latter may be best addressed by providing hints or questions which lead students to underlying principles; the former by simply marking the mistake as incorrect, without giving the right answer.²

Given the increasing focus on quality of written communication (QWC) in all examinations with a written component, when and where appropriate, teachers should provide feedback on literacy; for example, addressing misspelling of key terms, lower case proper nouns and other punctuation errors. If teachers do not correct spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) in books we give implicit authority to students to continue making the same mistakes.

Our analysis of the research has informed four ground rules for giving effective written feedback:

1. Written feedback should result in more work for students than it does for teachers.

¹ <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/>

² https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/EEF_Marking_Review_April_2016.pdf

2. Written feedback should have some kind of meaningful impact on learning. If learning happens when we think hard, feedback should seek to provoke thought. Therefore, it should provide hints and clues but make students work for 'the answer'.
3. Written feedback should be given sparingly so that it is meaningful. Too-frequent written feedback can create dependence.
4. Written feedback should not be accompanied by a grade or measure of KS3 attainment, as this seems to interfere with students' ability to act on instructional feedback.

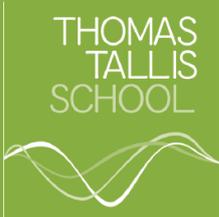
Directed improvement and reflection time

Once feedback has been given, students need to be enabled to respond. When giving feedback, therefore, we should offer students time to reflect critically on how to craft and improve their work and then to develop new techniques to put their feedback into practice. A dialogue is opened up with students about their feedback, and we offer time and space for this to happen. For ease of reference and the sake of consistency, we can label this time and space within our lessons Directed Improvement and Reflection Time, or DIRT.

Effective use of DIRT to develop more disciplined learners:

1. **Reflect critically** – we expect students to spend approximately twice their time reflecting on their feedback as we have devoted to giving it. This is most effective when done individually, in silence.
2. **Developing techniques** – although DIRT is about independent reflection, teacher guidance is crucial. We model and scaffold to exemplify the feedback we have given and show students how to improve.
3. **Crafting and improving** - As well as encouraging students to critically reflect on their feedback, DIRT can also be effectively used for crafting and improving work. This allows students to immediately apply their feedback and put the techniques into practice.

Disciplined:
 Crafting and improving
 Reflecting critically
 Developing techniques



No DIRT means no gap is closed: learning has not moved forwards. This means the time we have spent marking students' work is wasted time. Often, 15 minutes can be sufficient for DIRT, although sometimes you may dedicate a whole hour to it, for example if a significant piece of written work is being redrafted.

Of course our curriculum time is limited and we all have to teach lots of content. But without giving up time for DIRT we are picking up errors/omissions/misconceptions, commenting on them, but not allowing pupils to address them; we have flagged up a learning gap but not given pupils the opportunity to bridge it. Closing this gap in learning needs to be prioritised.

To support this process, we have designed a Tallis Feedback sticker to structure feedback. The sticker has been designed for two reasons: to provide an effective reminder of how feedback should be structured, and to limit how much feedback teachers should be writing:

 TALLIS FEEDBACK	
What went well?	How to improve:
Directed Improvement and Reflection Time (DIRT)	

What should students be doing during DIRT time?

There are many different tasks that pupils can do during DIRT. It depends on what they got wrong or missed out in their assessed work. The following list is by no means exhaustive:

- Redrafting of a whole piece of work
- Redrafting of a section of the work
- Redoing something (for example a graph)
- Answering a question / questions
- Editing.

Feedback should be given and followed up with DIRT in accordance with this policy every 4-6 weeks, or a minimum of once per half-term.

Peer feedback

Peer feedback (sometimes referred to as ‘green pen marking’) should also be a regular part of classroom practice. Using peer feedback as part of a culture of critique within the classroom can have a transformational effect on learning, particularly if students are given time to act on and use it. Peer feedback should be modelled as part of a culture of classroom critique which

is kind, specific and helpful (Ron Berger). Peer feedback should be done in green pen, and pens for this purpose can be collected from the office. (See appendix v)

Summative assessment

Summative assessment will vary according to the key stage. At KS3, summative assessment will be informed by KS3 attainment criteria. At KS4/5 assessment will be informed by the criteria and grade boundaries published by the exam boards. These are most effective if used alongside Question Level Analysis (QLA) and Personalised Learning Checklists (PLCs) which support forensic use of summative assessment to diagnose precise areas for improvement.

Tracking progress

In all curriculum areas, students should be provided with **progress sheets**, which track learners' progress. The design of these sheets can be unique to each curriculum or subject area, but they should give students a clear understanding of how well they are making progress, how well they are achieving in relation to the standards expected, and how they might improve. These should be updated approximately once per term. The **Tallis Progress** sticker has been designed for this purpose:



TALLIS PROGRESS

Target:	How am I doing?	How can I improve?
Autumn		
Spring		
Summer		

Frequency

The frequency of marking and feedback will depend on the curriculum time allocated to each subject and the frequency of lessons. However, as a general rule teachers should adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Marking – every two to four weeks, or twice per half-term**
- **Feedback – every four to six weeks, or once per half-term**

- **Tracking sheets – each term**

Other classwork should be checked and monitored as appropriate to the curriculum time allocated and the frequency of lessons.

Curriculum and subject leaders are responsible for setting and monitoring the quality and frequency of feedback from teachers working within their team. This will be set out in their departmental policies.

Marking, feedback and workload

In 2016-17, the 'Reducing teacher workload and prioritising impact on outcomes Research & Development group trialled a range of strategies for marking efficiently whilst providing effective feedback. Sadly, we found no magic formula: but there were plenty of interesting findings to inform our policy moving forwards. The following 'fine-gains' in terms of giving written feedback may be useful for teachers to bear in mind:

- Whole-class oral feedback is an efficient system for managing student progress between assessments
- Using Tallis Check stickers is an efficient way of acknowledging students' work
- Using Tallis Feedback stickers forces a limitation on the amount of feedback teachers need to write, and may therefore be a more efficient way of providing written feedback
- Using coded or numbered feedback may reduce the time taken to write out targets. Research suggests that there is no difference between the effectiveness of coded or uncoded feedback, providing that students understand what the codes mean. However, the use of generic targets may make it harder to provide precise feedback. *(see appendix iv)*
- Limiting the amount of targets given to students (to e.g. one at a time) is more time efficient and avoids cognitive overload for the students processing them
- Using explicit success criteria in setting and marking assignments can be more efficient because it makes marking more selective, particularly if highlighting is used.

In addition, further work needs to be done on helping students to understand and appreciate the value of oral or non-written feedback, and for all stakeholders to be clear that this is a valuable method of giving student feedback which is supported by research evidence and valued by the school.

However, there is a further need for more studies so that teachers have better information about the most effective (written) marking approaches, in particular:

- Testing the impact of marking strategies which are primarily based on formative comments and which rarely award grades
- Investigating the most effective ways to use class time for students to respond to marking

- Comparing the effectiveness of selective marking that focuses on a particular aspect of a piece of work to thorough approaches that focus on spelling and grammar, in addition to subject-specific content
- Testing the impact of dialogic and triple marking approaches to determine whether the benefits of such approaches justify the time invested.

We would welcome further research studies into these and other ideas for reducing teacher workload from Tallis colleagues.

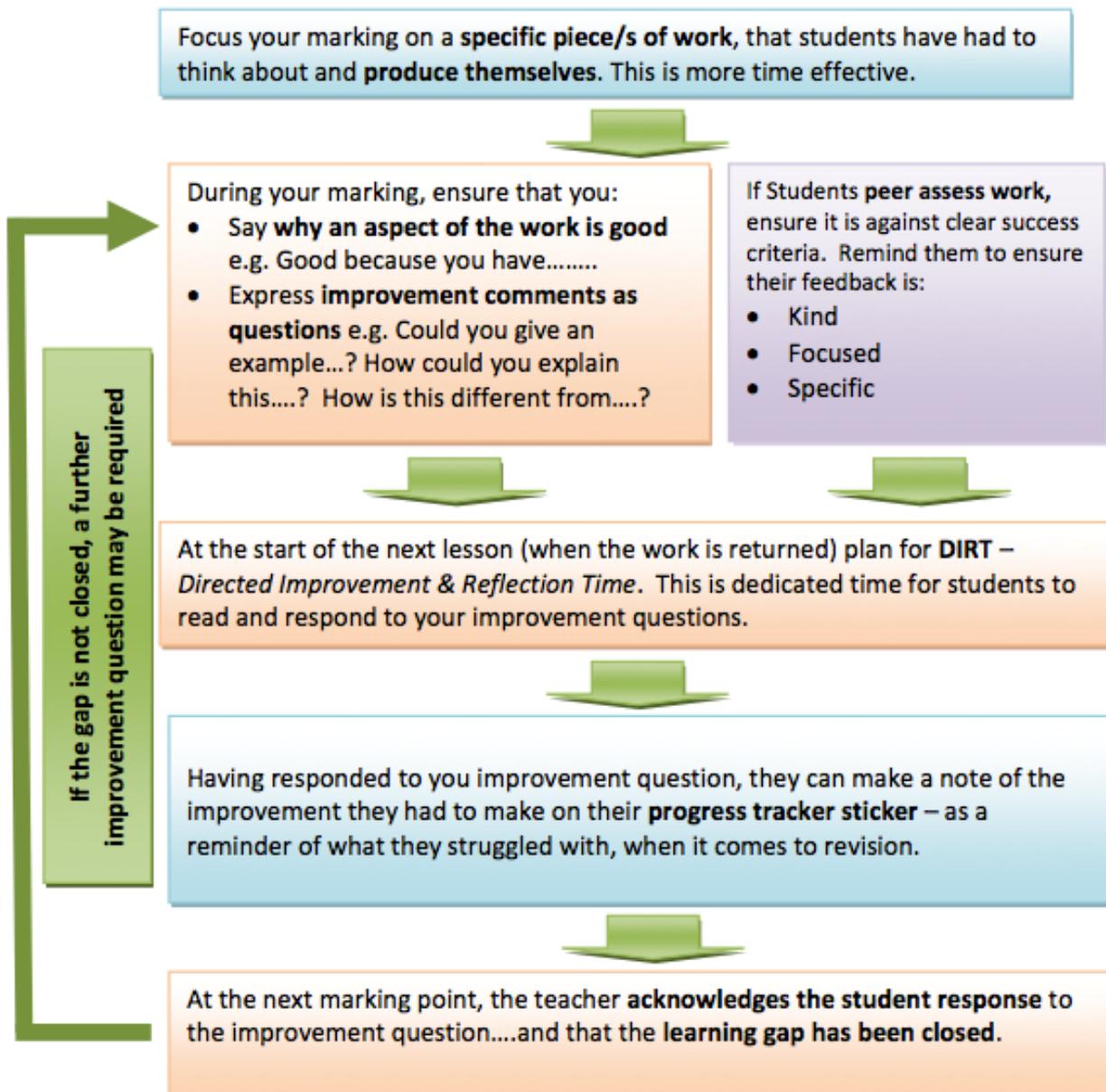
JCB 9.19

Appendices

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- iii. Reduce workload AND increase impact! (p.10)**
- iv. What might efficient, effective written feedback look like? (p.11)**
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Appendices

i. Effective feedback through marking



ii. Formative assessment and the feedback loop

An assessment functions formatively to the extent that evidence about student achievement elicited by the assessment is interpreted and used to make decisions about the next steps in instruction that are likely to be better, or better founded, than the decisions that would have been taken in the absence of that evidence. (Wiliam, 2009)

The outcomes of written and verbal feedback should be used by teachers to plan the next steps of learning and pitch the work appropriately for the class. This means that assessment is used to establish where the learners are in their learning, where they are going and how they will get there.

	Where the learner is going	Where the learner is	How to get there
Teacher	Clarify and share learning intentions	Engineering effective discussions, tasks and activities that elicit evidence of learning	Providing feedback that moves learners forward
Peer	Understand and share learning intentions	Activating students as learning resources for one another	
Learner	Understand learning intentions	Activating students as owners of their own learning	

iii. Reduce workload AND increase impact!

Reduce workload AND increase impact! Student engagement with written feedback

Instead of...	The teacher...	The student...
Writing annotations in the body of a piece of work and giving an overall comment	Only writes annotations in the body of the work.	Writes an overall review highlighting two strengths and one area for improvement
Writing annotations in the body of a piece of work and giving an overall comment	Only writes an overall comment.	Annotates areas of the work where the areas of strength are apparent and where improvements need to be made
Writing extensive comments	Only gives one strength and one possible improvement; WWW: EBI:	Works to "Close the Gap" on the one issue identified
Writing 'well done you have...' next to good aspects of the work	Puts a double tick next to the best parts of the students work	Adds the reasons for the double ticks
Marking every question in detail	Only marks the highlighted questions in detail. There is no expectation that all class notes will be marked. Check your area policy and mark tasks where your marking will have an IMPACT!	Marks (or peer marks) the work before it is submitted, highlighting the two areas where they would most like help
Writing the same explanation on every piece of work when the same mistake is made by many students	Goes over this question in class	Writes their own correct answer
Writing out a full solution when a student gets a question wrong	Writes a hint or the next step	Completes the correction
Correcting work when a student makes a little mistake	Writes WWWT? (What's wrong with this?) Or RTQ! (Read the question!)	The student makes their own correction
Marking only extended pieces of work	Reviews in class students' initial plans for this work prior to marking the extended piece of work	Does not hand in rubbish!
Giving back work and moving straight on... Give students time to Close the Gap to make all that marking time worth it	Departments have lots of strategies for giving students specific skills to work on. A way of starting this can be if teacher asks students to "put a tick next to my comment if you know how to improve and a ? if you don't". This can be a first step to engagement. Paired work to resolve some of the ? prior to asking you for guidance is good practice and reduces workload.	Students read and start to engage with marking before working on the "Close the Gap" task the teacher has identified.

iv. What might efficient, effective written feedback look like?

The process of writing out comments is laborious, repetitive and time-consuming: avoid it where possible. Many experienced teachers do this by anticipating the kinds of comment they would need to write in books / on work, making a list of these predictions and assigning each a number. When you encounter a situation where one of your pre-prepared comments needs applying, simply write the assigned number instead. Where possible it can help if the 'comment' is phrased as a question (this has the twin advantages of being more palatable for students to read and inviting them to consider possible answers: How could you...? Why did you...? Is there another way to...? etc.)

Then, when you return the work to the students, simply display the comments along with the relevant number and ask the students to write out the comments themselves. For example:

1. How could you use verbs to change the effect of this sentence?
2. How might you avoid starting each sentence with 'I' or 'The'?
3. Can you find a way of rewriting these sentences without 'and' or 'but'?
4. How could you vary your sentence structure here?
5. How else could you connect this paragraph?
6. What vocabulary could you use here instead? Suggest three other examples.

Alternatively, this process can be realised by noting down the different comments as you work your way through a set of responses. If you come across a mistake or misconception you hadn't anticipated, simply add it to the list. Some teachers using this method prefer to use symbols rather than numbers.

As well as saving time, this method also increases the likelihood students will process your feedback as they are recording it. Cognitive load can be decreased by placing the number next to the mistake or increased by putting them at the end of the piece or work as appropriate. The trick is to make your students work as hard as possible – use your professional judgement to determine what's possible for the students you teach.

Of course, after writing out your feedback, students need to be given time to respond. As they do this, you could take the opportunity to talk to them about their work: "I was really pleased to see that you..." or "Can you tell me why you didn't...?" or "I'm not happy about..." This time for conversation is the space where relationships are forged and epiphanies sometimes happen.

v. What can students do before they hand their work in for marking?

Another way of improving the quality of learning and making our marking and feedback a more streamlined process is by thinking about what we ask students to do before they submit a piece of work for assessment:

Most discussions of assessment start in the wrong place. The most important assessment that goes on in a school isn't done to students but goes on inside students. Every student walks around with a picture of what is acceptable, what is good enough. Each time he works on something he looks at it and assesses it. Is this good enough? Do I feel comfortable handing this in? Does it meet my standards? Changing assessment at this level should be the most important assessment goal of every school. How do we get inside students' heads and turn up the knob that regulates quality and effort.³

Here are some strategies that raise the expectations for students before work is submitted to be marked:

1. Do not accept substandard work.

We need to create and maintain a culture of challenge and high expectations in our classrooms. It is therefore important to communicate to students that we will not accept “sloppy” work. It may bring some logistical problems, but there are occasions where we could give a pupil a “redraft” deadline to improve the structure and presentation of their work. Of course this relies on us knowing our students and what represents “sloppy” work for each of them.

2. Proof reading and editing (by the students).

If we are going to be assessing a piece of written work, then it will be beneficial to give pupils time to proof-read and correct it. They may need dictionaries to check words they may have spelt incorrectly. They can also re-read their work so it flows and makes sense. This will cut down on the number of literacy corrections we need to make and can also lead to better content being handed in.

3. Triple Impact Marking.

Before handing in their work, pupils could self-assess against the success criteria for their task. These criteria might have been shared at the start of the task or only revealed once the work has been completed. Pupils then highlight the bits of work that they are proud of and explain how they have met the success criteria. The teacher then takes in the work and comments on the self-assessment of the student. The teacher then gives pupils a task based on the parts of the success criteria they did not meet (the task could be a redraft, a partial redraft or something else completely). Pupils then complete the follow-up task. Alternatively, triple impact marking could be self-assessment against success criteria, peer assessment against success criteria then finally teacher assessment against success criteria.

³ Ron Berger, *An Ethic of Excellence* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 2003), p.103

4. Pupils use a “pre-flight checklist” when completing their work.

It is clear that the provision of **quality success criteria** is key to effective assessment. In his book “Embedded Formative Assessment” Dylan Wiliam refers to an example in an Art lesson where students determined seven criteria for a successful portrait of a face. The success criteria were numbered and simply ticked if met or crossed if requiring further attention – just like a **pre-flight checklist**. As well as being suitable for peer and self assessment, this technique takes up very little teacher time, whilst still leaving plenty of work for the student to do.

Simple success criteria grids
...“pre-flight checklist”

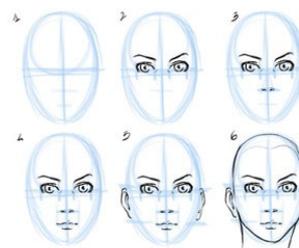


✓	X	X	?	X	✓	✓
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Feedback grid for a face-drawing task

Success criteria

- 1 Eyes halfway down face
- 2 Distance between eyes roughly same width as one eye
- 3etc.
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7



<http://art-references.tumblr.com/post/28389059514>

vi. Self and peer assessment (and Gallery Critique)

The distinction between self or peer marking and self or peer assessment is as important as the distinction for ourselves. Self or peer marking is when students (or their peers) check and mark work which is either right or wrong. This could be answers to questions, a cloze exercise or a maths problem like addition. It makes sense both in terms of instant feedback to the students (and the teacher) to ask students to mark this type of work themselves.

Self or peer assessment on the other hand is when students (or their peers) assess a piece of work against explicit success criteria. This is similar to how we as teachers would assess their work against these criteria during book marking. Self and peer assessment is a very valuable process because by sharing and exemplifying success criteria we are sharing what excellence looks like. The success criteria may have been given by the teacher or constructed in discussion with the class.

The students are not the experts when it comes to assessment. This is why the process must be crystal clear and explicitly modelled. This process must be constantly reinforced so students are clear what the success criteria are and what constitutes “success” against the success criteria. It is good idea for a “dummy” piece of work to be displayed on the board to be critiqued by the teacher (in discussion with the class) against the success criteria. This modelling process will help pupils understand why and how to assess.

Effective Success Criteria...

- are **linked** to the learning objective;
- are specific to an activity;
- are **discussed and agreed** with pupils prior to undertaking the activity;
- provide a **scaffold** and focus for pupils while engaged the activity; and
- are used as the basis for **feedback** and peer-/self-assessment.

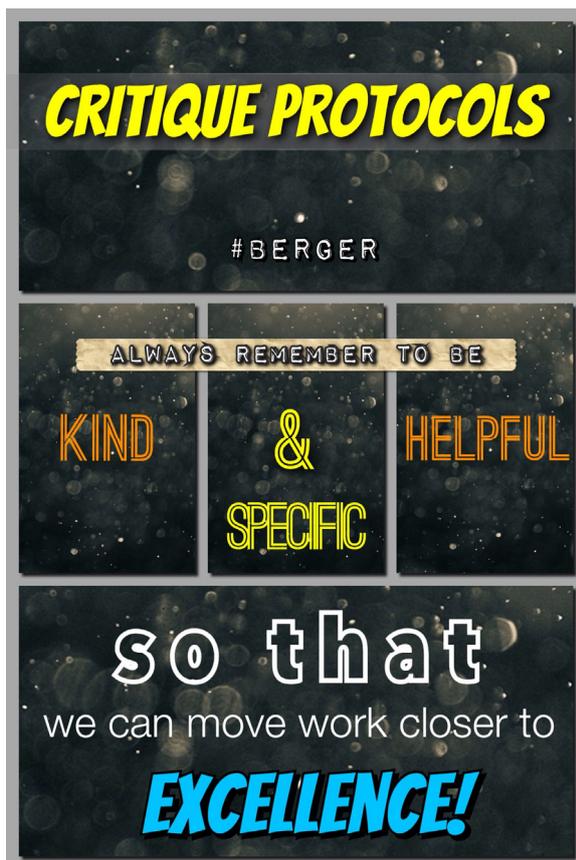
Success Criteria for Graph on Melting Ice (marks in brackets)

1. Time goes on the x axis, volume of water on the y axis (1)
2. Both axes are labelled (2, 1 for each axis)
3. Both labels include units (2, 1 for each axis)
4. The scales of the graph is sensible, over $\frac{1}{2}$ of the graph paper is used (1)
5. Readings are plotted accurately (3 marks for all correct, minus 1 for each error)
6. An appropriate line of best fit is drawn (1)

Assess against these criteria. Give a mark out of 10.
Can you give advice on how to improve the graph?

Students may not always understand and value peer and self-assessment, so we must clearly communicate why we are doing it. It is not to save us time because we don't have to mark the work (although this is true)! We ask them to peer and self-assess to give them instant feedback, to give them the opportunity to see their peers' work (sharing excellence) and to help them see what meeting success criteria actually looks like so they can build this into their future learning.

When peer assessing, students need to stick to the following 3 rules:



Be kind: All comments should focus entirely on the work. No personal comments at all. No sarcasm or put downs. The comments can be challenging but the creator of the work should feel that the feedback is work orientated and be happy to receive it. 'Hard on content, soft on people.'

Be specific: Refined and precise dialogue with detailed explanations on positives and steps to improve. Comments should explain exactly what needs to be worked on (like a set of instructions) which the writer can simply take away and use. The success criteria need to be referred to.

Be helpful: If the comments don't benefit the work, the learning, the learners or the class, then don't share it. Everything you provide feedback on is there to help make the work better.

(Credit @ICTEvangelist and @davidfawcett27)

The main issue with peer assessment is that some students will give better feedback than others (particularly at KS3 as they get used to the process). One way around this is to employ "*Gallery Critique*" as the format of peer assessment. In essence, pupils will have their work assessed (against the success criteria) by at least three of their peers. This gives a number of benefits:

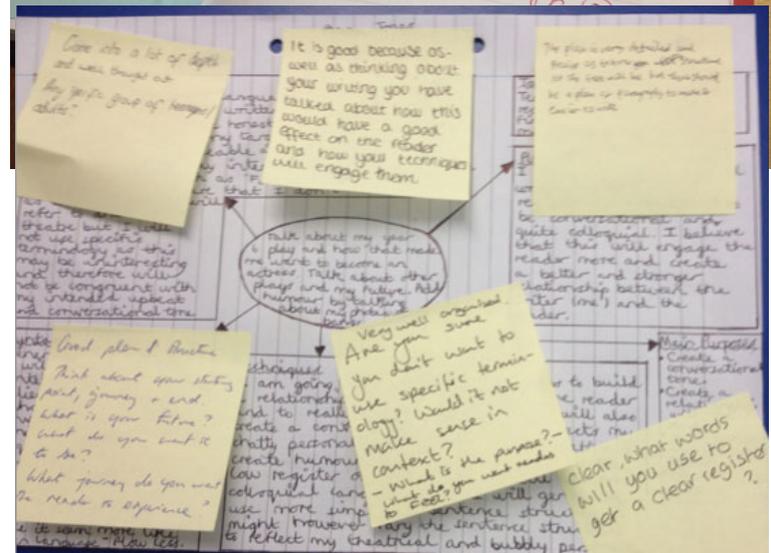
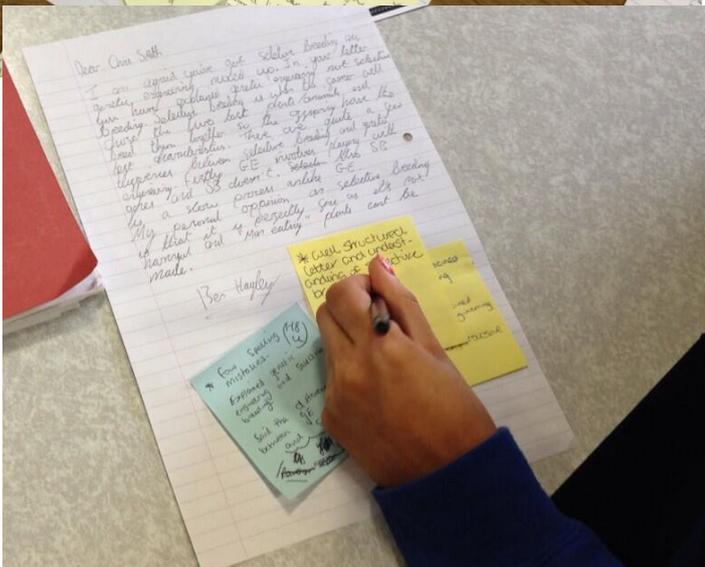
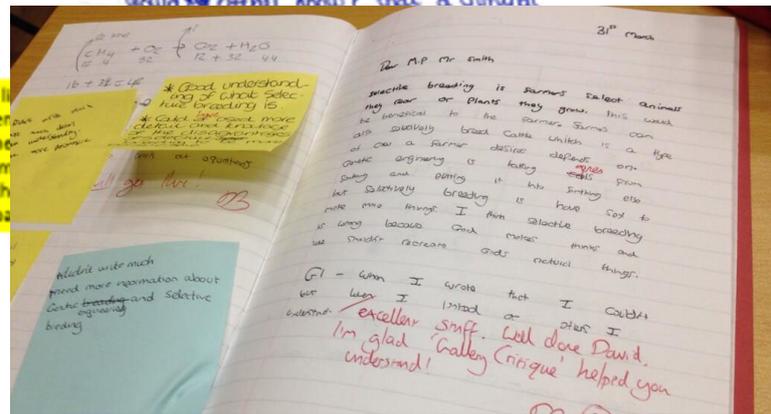
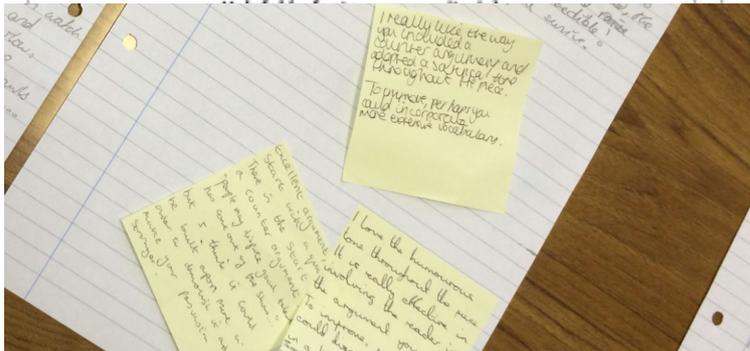
- Students get to see more than just one piece of work. This means they are more likely to see excellent work.
- Students get feedback from a number of their peers and, even if one pupil has struggled to give specific feedback, there should be something more constructive from one of the other assessors.
- Students get to see how others have peer assessed and this extra modelling should help in how they assess (just watch that they don't copy what others have written).

Examples of Gallery Critique

Kind
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I really like the way you _____ throughout Excellent _____ throughout The most successful thing about this was _____ I enjoyed reading this because _____ It was especially good when you _____
Specific
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the first/second/third paragraph... I think _____ is quite difficult to understand/could be explained better/could include more detail etc Your sentence/paragraph about _____ was _____ because _____

I like the way that you say a criminal will 'roam' the streets – it makes it sound like they are up to no good. Perhaps you should be more extreme in the second sentence – rather than call them a 'person', call them 'a vicious attacker'?

Picture this, your loved one has been a victim of a serious crime, the crime was committed by a complete stranger – you have no idea why this happened. You find out this has happened to at least 10 other people, but now this person has been arrested & proven guilty. They are now in jail for 30 years but can be released earlier. What would the public know? That a criminal



In an ideal world students would then have the opportunity to improve/redraft their work by using the feedback of their peers.

F.A.I.L to S.A.I.L

F.A.I.L. (first attempt in learning) to S.A.I.L. (second attempt in learning) is an excellent strategy to develop peer assessment, feedback and redrafting.

Energy Transfer



Leigh Halfpenny plays rugby for Wales. During training he practises kicking the ball in the air as high as he can. This is called an "up and under".

Shown below is the flight of the ball of one of his practice kicks. - Explain in as much detail as you can about all the energy changes that take place when he kicks the ball to when the ball stops.



Peer Feedback:

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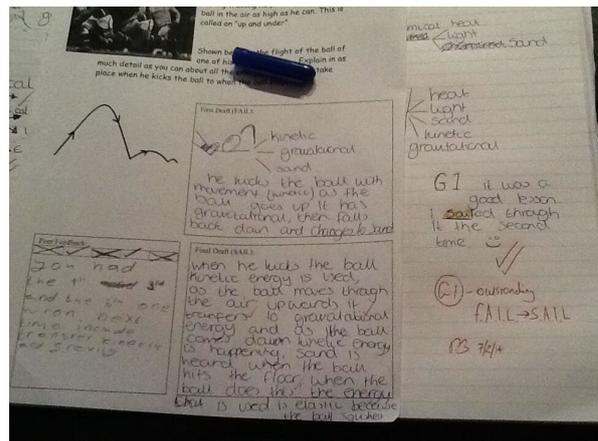
First Draft (FAIL):

Peer Feedback:

Final Draft (SAIL):

The principle of FAIL to SAIL is that students complete their first draft on a topic without knowing the success criteria. They then swap their work with their peer. The teacher then shares the success criteria one by one (the peer gives a tick for each success criteria hit and a cross if it is absent or wrong). The peer then gives feedback on how the draft can be improved (based on the success criteria). The work is then returned and the student completes a second draft by using the peer feedback. It combines peer assessment with "closing the gap" redrafting.

Whilst written feedback is of course very useful in terms of developing student learning, so is verbal feedback – it's regular, in the context of the learning that is happening there and then and so deserves to be highlighted.



Some departments are using 'Verbal feedback given' stampers to formalise this process. Here's how to try using your stamper:

- They ask question / for help
- You give verbal feedback
- You stamp work
- They summarise your feedback
- They complete the improvement

Question: Explain what we mean by the idea of 'conservation of energy'

Energy cannot be created or destroyed, it just gets transferred from one form to another. Some will be transferred into useful energy, and some will be wasted. Eventually the energy spreads out and becomes less useful.

Verbal feedback given — Use an example to illustrate my answer

For example, in a light bulb, electrical energy is transferred into light (useful energy) and heat (wasted energy). When the light is switched off, the heat energy from the bulb is passed on to the surrounding air particles (by conduction), becoming less useful.



What's good about this strategy?

- It's quick and effortless
- It can be highly regular
- It gives a higher profile to the verbal feedback that students receive
- It allows them to log and record their own personalised improvement strategies
- It makes us as teachers think about the verbal feedback we are giving
- It gives a purpose to the feedback we are giving
- It makes the student respond to the feedback, so closing the feedback loop

See Jon Curtis-Brignell to collect a free stamper!

viii. Getting Feedback Right, by David Didau

It's become a truism that feedback is the most important activity that teachers engage in. Feedback, we are repeatedly told, is tremendously powerful and therefore teachers must do more of it. Certainly Hattie, the Sutton Trust and the Education Endowment Fund all bandy about impressive effect sizes, but the evidence of flipping through a pupil's exercise book suggests that the vast majority of what teachers write is ignored or misunderstood. Teachers' feedback can certainly have a huge impact but it's a mistake to believe that this impact is always positive. These are some of things Hattie (2007) *actually* says about feedback:

*Feedback is one of the most powerful influences on learning and achievement, **but this impact can be either positive or negative.***

Simply providing more feedback is not the answer, because it is necessary to consider the nature of the feedback, the timing, and how the student 'receives' this feedback (or, better, actively seeks the feedback)

*With inefficient learners, it is **better for a teacher to provide elaborations through instruction than to provide feedback on poorly understood concepts...***

In addition, Soderstrom and Bjork (2013) tell us that less feedback might actually be better: *Empirical evidence suggests that **delaying, reducing, and summarizing feedback can be better for long-term learning than providing immediate, trial-by-trial feedback.***

*Numerous studies—some of them dating back decades—have shown **that frequent and immediate feedback can, contrary to intuition, degrade learning.***

So, too much feedback might have a potentially negative effect on pupils' ability to retain and transfer new concepts and information. This has been important in developing my thinking, but I keep coming back to this slide Dylan Wiliam uses in loads of his presentations:

Response type	Feedback indicates performance...	
	Exceeds goal	Falls short of goal
Change behaviour	Exert less effort	Increase effort
Change goal	Increase aspiration	Reduce aspiration
Abandon goal	Decide goal is too easy	Decide goal is too hard
Reject feedback	Feedback is ignored	Feedback is ignored

The point is that teachers' feedback often has unintended consequences; if we're not careful, it may have the exact opposite result to what we intended. I've been thinking about this for some time now and it occurs to me that it might be helpful if we were a lot clearer about *why* we were giving feedback.

There are perhaps only three reasons that make giving feedback worthwhile:

1. **To provide clarity** – most mistakes are made because pupils are unclear on precisely what they should be doing. Providing feedback that points out misconceptions and provides clarification is an essential first step. If we don't get this right all else is for naught.
2. **To get pupils to increase effort** – this is the hoary old chestnut at the heart of every success. Try harder is usually of huge benefit. Getting pupils understand what they should be doing is hard enough, but motivating them to actually do it is the master skill.
3. **To get pupils to increase aspiration** – There's certainly some merit in overlearning concepts and practising to the point that errors are eliminated, but feedback may not be necessary to achieve this. But once a goal has been met or exceeded, pupils need to aim for something more challenging. No challenge means no mistakes and no mistakes means that feedback is unlikely to be useful.

If we understood which of these purpose we were engaged in, our feedback might be a lot more useful and a lot more likely to produced the desired results. As always, if we've dealt satisfactorily with the *why*, we are much better placed to think about *how*.

Providing clarity

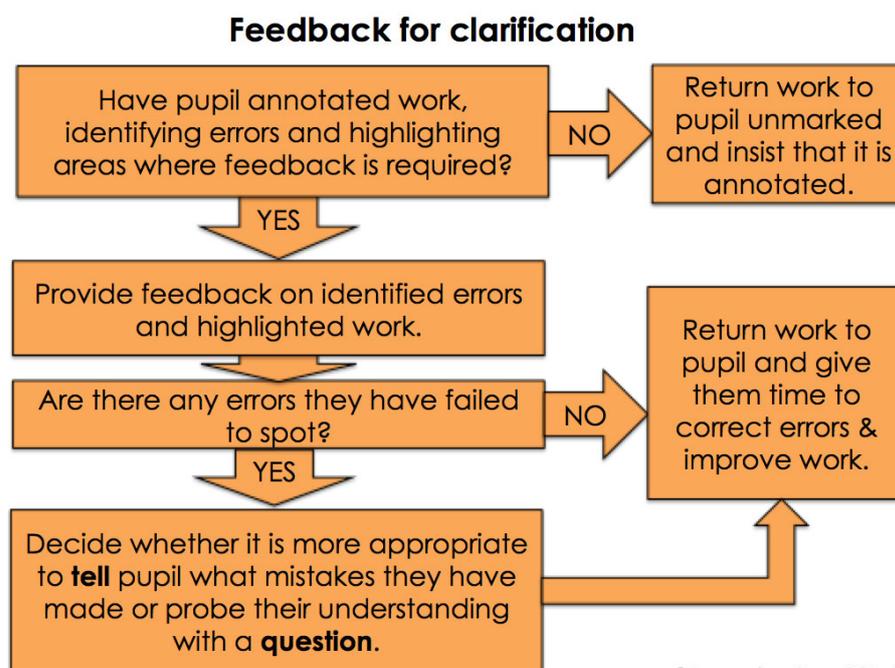
It ought to go without saying that if pupils aren't clear about how to improve; they're unlikely to get any better. The chances are that they will embed mistakes through repeated practice and end up getting good at doing it wrong. This is not to be encouraged. As teachers it should be reasonably obvious to us when a pupil has misunderstood something and when they have made a mistake due to carelessness or lack of effort. Our problem is that we face Hobson's Choice: we know that if we just point out some of the mistakes pupils have made we allow them to embed bad practice, but if we point out every mistake we overload pupils' ability to learn.

So here's my tentative solution. If we insist that pupils annotate every piece of work with the mistake they are able to spot, our clarification can then be applied with pinpoint accuracy at the exact they have identified as where they are ready to learn. They will receive feedback only on those areas they've identified as containing errors or misunderstandings.

We all know that pupils' self assessment is often rubbish, we let's prevent them from writing meaningless descriptive comments about how they feel about their work and instead let's make them proofread, error check and highlight the areas where they feel uncertain or where they might have taken a risk. This approach forces them to engage meta-cognitively with their work and think about they have produced in a more or less meaningful way.

I realise there is a weakness here: what about those errors, which pupils make unknowingly, or in the belief they are right? These are errors, which they may be unable to spot, and therefore errors they will continue to make. What do we do about that? Again, we're faced with a choice: we can either tell them what to do, or we can probe their misunderstanding by asking questions. I don't believe there's a right answer on this one; I think it's up to you as a teacher to use your professional judgment to decide whether it will have more impact to tell or question. But it's worth knowing that there are consequences to every choice.

If we choose to tell pupils the answer, then they may not value it. It may be that they fail to remember the answer, as they haven't had to think about it. But equally, it could be that they will both remember and value the answer; the outcome is uncertain. If we choose to ask a question to probe a pupil's understanding we run the risk that they won't arrive at a correct answer and their misconceptions will be embedded. There's also the problem that it takes time to think about something new and pupils may decide to ignore the question. However, if they do decide to answer the question and they have the necessary knowledge to think meaningfully about it then they are perhaps more likely to both remember and understand the correct information.



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Increasing effort

Once we can be reasonably sure that pupils understand how to improve, our next step is to check that they can actually be bothered. It's become something of a cliché to say that success depends on hard work, but essentially that's the message we need to convey.

Tragically, far too many pupils would rather be seen as lazy than stupid. It's much more preferable not to try because then you have an excuse for failure: "Of course I could've done it, but I couldn't be arsed." Why is this considered so much more socially acceptable? Well, that's actually fairly straightforward. Most people see effort as something that is transient but

intelligence as something that is fixed. It seems obvious that if we believe we can't get clever then it might not make much sense to try.

But we know not true, don't we? We readily accept that training improves sporting performance and that music and drama improve with rehearsal. Why is it that so many of are so convinced that practice won't make us smarter?

In Embedded Formative Assessment, Dylan Wiliam explores the effects of effort in forensic detail and synthesises the results of many different studies to arrive at some sensible conclusions. The table below is the result of a survey designed to discover why pupils invest effort and understand to what they attribute their success.

Attribution of	Ego	Task
Expenditure of effort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To do better than others To avoid doing worse than others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interest To improve performance
Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability Performance of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interest Effort Experience of previous learning

Butler (1987) quoted in Embedded Formative Assessment p 110

What would seem clear from this is that if our feedback is to have any impact on learning it must be directed at the task rather than at the pupils themselves. The research of Kluger & DeNisi (1996) confirms this supposition. They suggest that future research on feedback ought to focus less on the impact it has on performance and more on the sorts of responses triggered in pupils when they're given feedback. And, as luck would have it, Carol Dweck has spent her career doing exactly that.

Dweck posited that our perceptions of success or failure are dependent of three factors:

- Personalisation: the extent to which we believe success is influenced by *internal/external* factors
- Stability: whether success is perceived to be transient or long-lasting
- Specificity: whether success is one are is interpreted as being likely to lead success ^[1] in other areas.

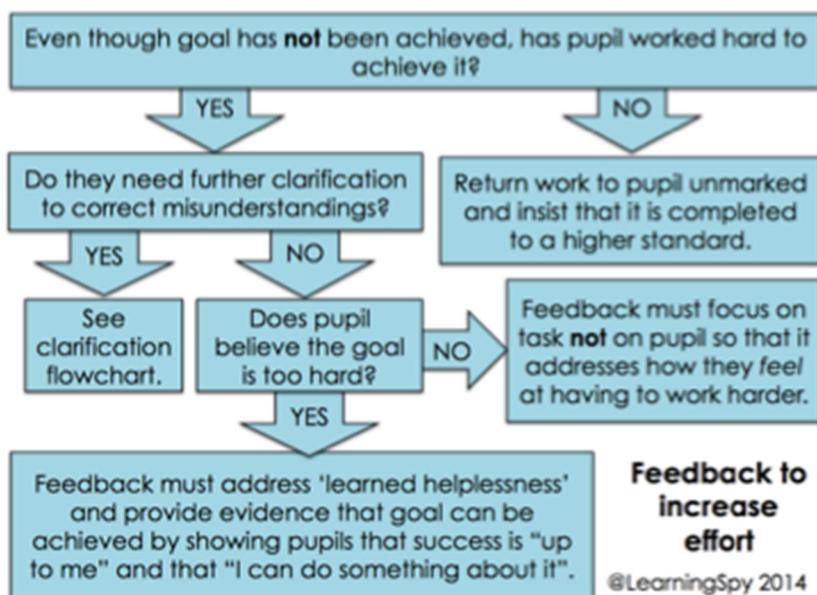
Attribution	Success	Failure
Personalisation	Internal: "It was a good piece of work." External: "The teacher likes me."	Internal: "It wasn't a very good piece of work." External: "The teacher doesn't like me."
Stability	Stable: "I'm good at the subject." Unstable: "I was lucky with the questions that came up."	Stable: "I'm rubbish at the subject." Unstable: "I didn't bother revising."
Specificity	Specific: "I'm good at that, but that's the only thing I'm good at." Global: "I did well at that, so I'll do well at everything."	Specific: "I'm no good at that, but I'm good at everything else." Global: "I'm rubbish at everything."

Dweck (2000) quoted in Embedded Formative Assessment p 117

This suggests that if our purpose for giving feedback is prompt pupils to make greater effort we need to do the following:

1. Target feedback to increase *task commitment*
2. Design feedback that will be attributed *internal*/factors that pupils can control
3. Design feedback that makes pupils consider *unstable* factors that are dependent on effort
4. Make feedback as *specific* as possible (bit obvious this one!)

The point of all this, as Wiliam concludes, is for pupils to believe that “It’s up to me” (internal) and “I can do something about it” (unstable).



Increasing aspiration

Many high achieving pupils will be naturally hungry and will want to take every opportunity to improve even further, but some won't. What do we do about those pupils who meet our expectations but are satisfied with doing just enough to get by?

So, there are two issues to deal with here:

1. How can we formulate feedback that has the effect of raising aspiration?
2. What do we do about those pupils who, when they meet or exceed expectations, decide to exert less effort or that the goal is too easy?

On the first question, the Education Endowment Fund reports that, “On average, interventions which aim to raise aspirations appear to have little to no positive impact on educational attainment.” This is bad news. They go on to provide the following explanations: *First, evidence suggests that most young people actually have high aspirations, implying that much underachievement results not from low aspiration itself but from a gap between the aspirations that do exist and the knowledge and skills which are required to achieve them.*

As a result it may be more helpful to focus on raising attainment more directly in the first instance.

Second, where pupils do have lower aspirations it is not clear that any targeted interventions consistently succeed in raising their aspirations. Third, where aspirations begin low and are successfully raised by an intervention, it is not clear that an improvement in learning necessarily follows. In programmes which do raise attainment, it is unclear whether learning gains can be credited for raising aspirations rather than the additional academic support or increased parental involvement.

The clear message is that we are better off spending our time on increasing attainment rather than worrying ourselves about imponderables like aspiration. So is trying to design feedback aimed at raising aspirations doomed to fail? And if it is, what do we do with those pupils who are making the grade? Just leave them to it?

Dylan Wiliam has the following to say:

When the feedback tells an individual that he has already surpassed the goal, one of four things can happen. Obviously one hopes that the individual would seek to change the goal to one that is more demanding, but it might also be taken as a signal to ease off and exert less effort. Also, when success comes too easily, the individual may decide that the goal itself is worthless and abandon it entirely or reject the feedback as being irrelevant.

Embedded Formative Assessment, p 114

If we're not careful, any feedback we give may well have a detrimental effect. Our focus must be on providing feedback that raises pupils' aspirations. Ringing in my ears is this message from John Hattie: "A teachers' job is not to make work easy. It is to make it difficult. If you are not challenged, you do not make mistakes. If you do not make mistakes, feedback is useless." This implies that if pupils are not making mistakes, this is the teacher's fault. And if it's our fault, the solution is to consider how to design assessments without a ceiling on achievement.

Recently, I was involved in an extremely unscientific project, which looked at how we add value to high attaining pupils. A group of Year 10 pupils who were achieving A* grades across a range of subjects were put forward and, following conversation, we realised that almost all of them felt that their success was despite not because of their teachers' efforts. One said, "I've never had any feedback which helped me improve." Maybe this is understandable: busy teachers who are being held accountable for the progress of their pupils are not going to prioritise those who are already achieving at the top of the scale. But surely someone has to?

We explained to the pupils that we were going to give them a series of challenges designed get them to make mistakes so that we could give them meaningful feedback on how to improve their performance.

Firstly, we tried getting them to complete tasks in limited time: if we deemed that a task should take 30 minutes to complete, we gave them 20 minutes to complete it. The thinking was

that one condition for mastery is that tasks can be completed more automatically. Also, by rushing they would be more likely to make mistakes. This had some success.

Next, we gave the pupils tasks in which they had to meet certain demanding conditions and criteria for success. These were difficult to set up and always felt somewhat arbitrary in nature. For instance, in a writing task we made it a condition that pupils could not use any word which contained the letter E. This kind of constraint lead to some very interesting responses, but ultimately, the feedback we were able to give felt superficial and was deemed unlikely to result in improvement once the conditions were removed.

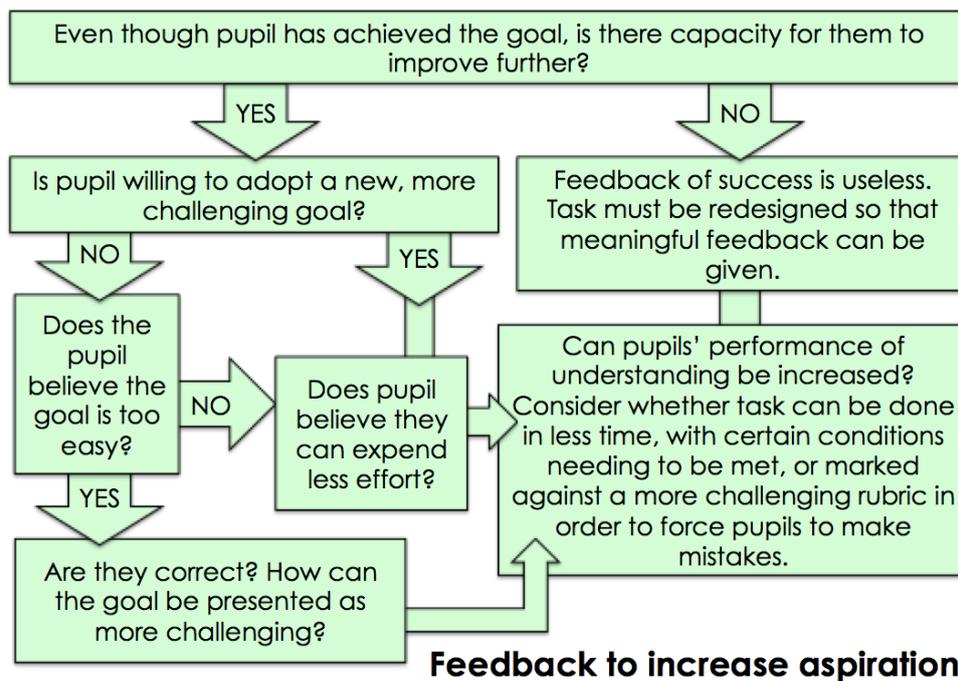
Finally, we decided that we would try marking work using ‘A level’ rubrics. This had a galvanising effect. Suddenly, pupils who were used to receiving A* grades as a matter of routine, were getting Bs and Cs. The feedback we were able to give was of immediate benefit and had a lasting impact. When interviewed subsequently, one pupil said, “For the first time I can remember, [the teacher's] marking was useful – I had a clear idea of how I could get better.”

Now this is of course highly anecdotal and not worth a hill of beans in terms of academic research: there were no controls, and our findings cannot be claimed to be in any way reliable or valid. But they’re interesting. Perhaps the most powerful aspect for the pupils who took part was the novelty of teachers being interested in exploring how to add value to them.

Designing assessments that allow pupils to aspire beyond the limits is no mean feat. Tom Sherrington has written about ‘lifting the lid’ so that we don’t place artificial glass ceilings on what pupils might achieve. The notion of Performances of Understanding from Y Harpaz, quoted in *Creating Outstanding Classrooms* suggests a potentially useful model:

To present knowledge	To operate on and with knowledge	To criticise and create knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To express knowledge in your own words • To explain knowledge • To interpret knowledge • To construct a model • To present knowledge in various ways • To create knowledge from different perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To analyse knowledge • To synthesise knowledge • To imply knowledge • To bring example, to invent metaphor, to make comparison etc. • To generalize • To predict on the basis of knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To give reasons to knowledge • To find contradictions or tensions in knowledge • To question knowledge • To expose the basic assumptions of knowledge • To formulate counter-knowledge • To generate new knowledge

Although these performances are not intended to be seen as hierarchical, it’s possible to trace potential progression both within each category of performance, and across the categories. Interestingly, most assessments tend to be capped at some point with the “operate on and with’ category. Very few assessments are interested in exploring pupils’ ability to ‘criticise and create knowledge’. As ever, we teach what we assess, and if it’s not assessed, it’s not valued. How much scope would the dialectic process of questioning, exposing assumptions and formulating counter-knowledge give to pupils stuck at the top of the assessment tree? How much more productive might our feedback be if it were to encourage pupils to criticise what they have been taught?



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So, that's it. Getting feedback right is a difficult business but I hope that some of the questions I've raised and issues I've discussed are useful in helping you to think more about both why and how you're providing feedback. I'm afraid though that the what is up to you.

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David Didau @LearningSpy, April 2014

ix. What do Ofsted say about marking and feedback?

- Ofsted recognises that marking and feedback to pupils, both written and oral, are important aspects of assessment. However, Ofsted **does not** expect to see any specific frequency, type or volume of marking and feedback; these are for the school to decide through its assessment policy. Marking and feedback should be consistent with that 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.
- While inspectors will consider how written and oral feedback is used to promote learning, Ofsted **does not** expect to see any written record of oral feedback provided to pupils by teachers.
- If it is necessary for inspectors to identify marking as an area for improvement for a school, they will pay careful attention to the way recommendations are written to ensure that these do not drive unnecessary workload for teachers.

154. Inspectors will consider:

- scrutiny of pupils' work, with particular attention to:
 - pupils' effort and success in completing their work, both in and outside lessons, so that they can progress and enjoy learning across the curriculum
 - how pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills have developed and improved
 - the level of challenge and whether pupils have to grapple appropriately with content, not necessarily 'getting it right' first time, which could be evidence that the work is too easy
 - how well teachers' feedback, written and oral, is used by pupils to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills. Inspectors should note the clarification points set out in Part 1 about pupils' work and marking.

Grade descriptors for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding (1)

- Teachers provide pupils with incisive feedback, in line with the school's assessment policy, about what pupils can do to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills. The pupils use this feedback effectively.
- Pupils are eager to know how to improve their learning. They capitalise on opportunities to use feedback, written or oral, to improve.

Good (2)

- Teachers give pupils feedback in line with the school's assessment policy. Pupils use this feedback well and they know what they need to do to improve.