An Academic Essentials Case Study

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| Title | Incremental Formative Feedback for Success |
| Brief | Weekly, scheduled Formative Feedback and Optional Formative Submission |
| Profile | **Tutor names** | Jo Watts and Marc Duffy |
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| **College** | **Business Technology and Engineering** |
| **Department** | **Strategic Management, Enterprise and Change** |
| **Size of cohort** | **65 (20/21) 101 (19/20)** |
| **Technologies used** | **Google Sheets, Office 365, Zoom** |
| **Hallam Model** | **Engage** (UN Sustainable Development Goals)**Collaborate** (Developing networks through engaging with a relevant academic or professional society)**Thrive** (Consistent and accessible academic and pastoral support advice through embedding the student support triangle – support from named advisers) |

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| The Aim |
| In the backdrop of *‘pass and progress’* for students entering Level 5 and progressing to Level 6, we wished to improve the formative feedback and support available to students. In order to achieve this, we offered weekly formative feedback for 30 minutes and an official formative submission towards the end of the module. Additionally we created academic support videos in relation to the assignment and referencing.  |

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| Benefits |
| * Increased student attainment and first time pass rates
* Enable students to produce genuinely outstanding work.
* Feel confident that your students are on track and understand the work they need to produce.
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| The Approach |
| **Formative Feedback in Class**The 36 teaching hours for the 12 week semester were bundled together. The one hour lectures were delivered throughout the 12 weeks of the semester – including the use of a guest lecturer to reduce academic input and enhance student engagement. 12 hours lecture time on the student timetable, 11 hours for the academic. This left a balance of 25 hours for seminars. These seminars took place over 10 weeks and were 2.5 hours long with 30 minutes dedicated to formative feedback at the end of each session.Students were clearly told in the module guide that “All Seminars last 2 hours and 30 minutes. The additional time allows you to build on your assessment each week and receive formative feedback on the application of theory to your case and the development of your work.”The type and nature of in class support during those additional half hour sessions varied over the semester, as the design was left to individual seminar tutor discretion – as they knew the areas where their students needed support. Typically the delivery looked something like: * An extended Q&A about the assignment
* A short 'writing snack' based on Murray’s (2014) shut up and writes session framed by a short slide set, where students would share their ideas for a certain section of their assessment
* Peer support group where students who were willing to share, would talk about their work / seek feedback in a larger group.
* Tutors would see students on a 1-1 basis in a breakout room.
* Feedback literacy (and academic advisor support) – students were asked to consider how feedback in one context or module might map to another.
* Signposting students to relevant sessions at the skills centre thus contributing to the development of holistic study skills.

It was clear from student voice comments that many students really valued this extended weekly feedback opportunity (having said that like all approaches to feedback, it isn't flawless, some students felt it was too much). Here are some of the benefits they found:* Having time at the end of the seminar to work on my project
* Assignment related seminars, lecture recap and understanding
* Module Assignment was very clear from the first lecture, so was easy to grasp.
* Feel confident on the assignment.
* The fact that the assessment is related to every seminar is very helpful, helps me to structure the assignment week-by-week.
* The extra half hour after seminars are also really helpful as you can get good feedback to enhance our work.

**Formative Feedback Submission on Assessment** The assessment for this module required students to produce a 3000 word case study. * For their formative feedback students were asked to submit a 1,500 word to Blackboard. Following the submission we gave 5 minute verbal feedback uploaded to Blackboard. They did this at the end of their 10th week of teaching – when all of the formal seminars had been completed.
* We were able to manage the time for this because:
	+ Some of our 30 minute sessions did not run to the full 30 mins
	+ We had 10 weeks of teaching, which left us two weeks with space to provide the verbal feedback
	+ Not all students took up the opportunity to submit work for this feedback – indeed it averaged around 50% of students. We don’t see this as an issue, as many students had engaged in the week by week formative opportunities.
	+ We were able to generate reduced feedback at the summative stage as students had resolved their issues that the formative stage or where they hadn’t we could refer them to their verbal feedback.
	+ We had told the students (and colleagues) in advance that the verbal comments would be a maximum of 5 minutes and this helped to manage expectations and workload.
	+ Rather than full marking the formative feedback recording was a scan and speak exercise highlighting where the student was on track and areas that had been overlooked rather than a full marking process, much the same as would be carried out in a classroom environment

Students comments on the formative feedback included:* The chance of formative feedback like the 1,500 submission and the time taken at the end of seminars is very helpful, gives me a real good understanding of the things i have done well and the things i need to develop further. Applying the concepts of sustainability, and ethics to real-life organisations brings the module to life, which is extremely helpful in better understanding the concepts.
* The opportunities to gain feedback, for example the formative submission
* The verbal feedback was really beneficial and I found it better than written feedback

**Self-directed formative feedback*** Students were offered support videos about the assessment, so that they could evaluate their own work. Our advice is to place support videos on BlackBoard next to the Assignment Submission point so that they are not missed. Examples of the videos can be found below.

Task One Support: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OfQAKOYmeb8Citation Support: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OfQAKOYmeb8; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rtlUh9bccJc How to be Critical: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SC1cfrLCfNYReference:Murray, R. (2014) *Writing in Social Space: A social processes approach to academic writing*. Routledge. |
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| The Outcome / Impact |
| * Increased student attainment by 7 percentage points in the first year.
* Increased first time pass rate from by 3 percentage points in the first year.
* In particular several students who deeply engaged with the process, achieved genuinely outstanding grades for this module.
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| Future Developments |
| * Maintain current approach and encourage more students to engage in the work on a weekly basis.
* Look at ways to encourage more students to opt for the formative feedback submission.
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| Recommendations |
| * Sell this approach to students as something they *‘get to do’* as opposed to *‘have to do’*
* Repeat the message each week in seminars about the benefits of participation
* Ask engaged students to reflect on the benefits they have experienced by participating in the progress.
* Experiment and vary your approaches to the half hour formative feedback sessions to maintain engagement and provide stretch.
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