Transforming retention and progression in a new Level 1 course

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A Taxonomy of Feedback

Context

Research has highlighted the crucial role of assessment design and feedback in the progression of Level 1 HE students. A CETL Project (Chetwynd 2009) indicated that Level 1 MCT tutors provide ineffective feedback grounded in outmoded pedagogic concepts. It also proposed a four-quadrant framework for classifying types of feedback available to tutors. (Chetwynd & Dobbyn 2011).

TU100 – a new Level 1 course

TU100: My Digital Life (first presentation 2011J) offers opportunities for experiment with improved assessment design and feedback advice. Novel assessments and tutor guides are being prepared by a group including the proposers, with the aim of developing assessment *for* learning rather than assessment *of* learning. These assessments are intended to develop self-regulating learners capable of progressing an OU career, by offering joined-up, module-long assessment of, and feedback on, academic and learning skills.

Objectives of the project

Broadly. we propose to evaluate the effectiveness of the new models. Specifically, we propose

1. to evaluate the success of the new approaches in transforming tutor behaviour;
2. to gather information on improving the assessments and the Tutor Guides, by ascertaining the extent to which
   - the feedback advice, based on the four-quadrant model, led to effective tutor feedback;
   - the realignment of the TMAs has been successful in eliciting more effective feedback from tutors.
3. to identify *foundational concepts* and potential "*leakage points*", (at which students seem to leave), at which assessment, feedback support and additional material can then be targeted.

Methodology and plan

We propose to draw data from three sources:
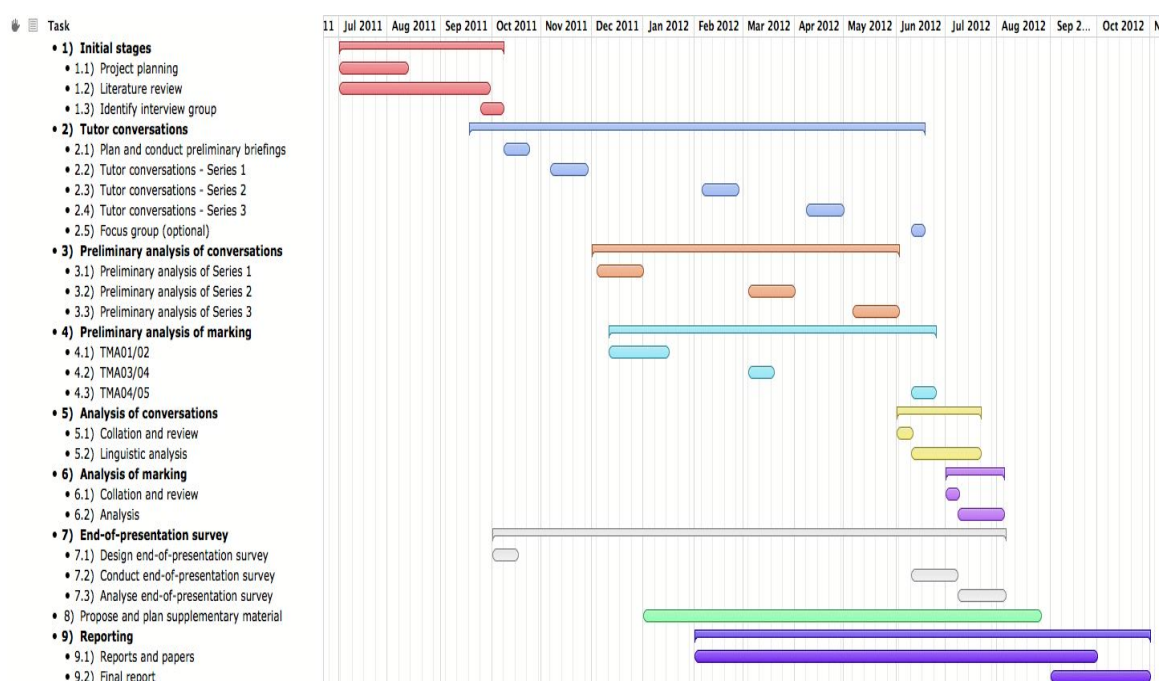
1. A series of structured conversations with a selected group of TU100 tutors through one presentation, for linguistic analysis

2. Analysis of marked scripts, undertaken in conjunction with monitoring.

3. An end-of-presentation survey yielding numerical data for comparison with M150/T175 data.

Further tutor resources will be prepared, based on the results.

Impact

New fee structures mean that universities need to focus more strongly on teaching areas such as feedback on assessed work; retention and student satisfaction will exert stronger influences. Well grounded research conducted by Open University academics is likely to have National and International impact.