Transforming retention and progression in a new Level 1 course

Chris Dobbyn and Frances Chetwynd

May 2014

Contacts:

chris.dobbyn@open.ac.uk

f.d.chetwynd@open.ac.uk

Executive Summary

This project was set up to evaluate the effectiveness of the models of assessment devised for the new Level 1 course, *TU100: My Digital Life*. Assessments and tutor guides based on novel models had been prepared by a small group of staff, including the investigators. The assessments were intended to improve retention by developing self-regulating learners capable of progressing an OU career, by offering joined-up, module-long assessment of, and feedback on, academic and learning skills – assessment *for* learning rather than assessment *of* learning.

The main objective of the project was to survey tutors' perceptions of feedback and their rationales in providing it, in the light of this new assessment and feedback regime; a second objective was to identify foundational concepts and potential "leakage points", (points in the course at which students seem to leave), at which support and additional material could then be targeted. The broad hypothesis was that tutor behaviour in assessment and feedback can be improved through an assessment policy specifically designed to build self-regulating learners.

Data was gathered from a series of structured interviews with a selected group of (13) TU100 tutors at appropriate points throughout the presentation; an analysis of monitoring reports and an analysis of responses to two surveys – the post-launch survey undertaken by the Module Team, and an IET tutor survey undertaken post 2012J and mid 2013B, including comparison with an earlier survey of T175 tutors.

Analysis of interview transcripts revealed a clear dichotomy among the tutors interviewed, mainly along the dividing line between experienced and relatively inexperienced tutors. Tutors who had worked for the OU for longer than 5 years were revealed to be primarily concerned with whether the changes would achieve their aim of providing enhanced skills development for students and more useful assignment feedback. They were secure in their understanding of feedback and its purpose, and at ease with the four-quadrant terminology described below. The new regime generally fitted in well with these tutors' past practices and they were generally happy with the new regime's focus on skills. Less experienced tutors, however, seemed primarily concerned with what the changes meant for them; how the changes would impact on their workload; and whether any difficulties in implementing the new scheme would reflect badly on their performance. Among this group, conceptions of feedback were diverse and occasionally seemed incoherent. The language of marks predominated, and *s*kills or skills development were rarely mentioned unless the interviewee was specifically asked about it.

However, all the tutors interviewed were initially enthusiastic about the greater focus on skills, and by the time they had marked 3 TMAs were still positive about the idea of focussed skills feedback. By the end of the module most tutors were showing more confidence in their ability to give skills feedback, although some still felt that it was hard to separate skills comments out away from the question/answer content.

There was one point on which there was universal agreement: that the most problematic foundational concept and stumbling block within TU100 was Sense programming. This

finding, we believe, raises questions about the way programming is taught and assessed on the module.

Aims and scope

Background

The advent of mass higher education has generally meant large classes and increasing distance between teacher and taught, rendering traditional strategies of assessment and feedback infeasible, – in distance education and across the entire sector. Furthermore, with increasing numbers, student retention and progression have become serious issues for many institutions.

Educationalists have long accepted that timely and effective feedback on assessment is essential for learning, and thus for retention. However, studies indicate that students value feedback (Weaver 2006) but that it is often ineffective (Crisp 2007) Several possible reasons have been suggested for this: failure to understand the discourse of the discipline, or academic language generally (Hounsell 2007; Lea & Stierer 2000; Lea & Street 1998); inappropriate understanding of the nature of learning (Gibbs and Simpson 2004); and, perhaps commonly, an inability to apply feedback on a current assignment successfully to future work. Students often simply do not find tutor feedback usable (Walker 2009).

In work by Nicol (2008), principles of good assessment and feedback practice are laid down, and these have become foundations of current thinking. As Walker (2009) argues, feedback may either address the gap between the student's performance and the ideal for a particular assignment (retrospective feedback), or relate to more generic themes, applicable to future work (future-altering feedback). In Brown and Glover's (2006) classification, comments may refer either to the content of the student's work or to more general skills. This, together with Walker's distinction, suggests a four-category taxonomy of feedback: retrospective-on-content; future-altering-on-content; retrospective-on-skills; and future-altering-on-skills (Chetwynd & Dobbyn 2011), as illustrated in Figure 1.
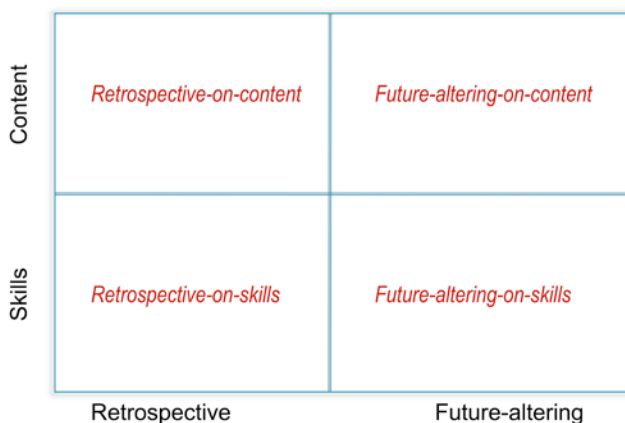
Figure 1. Four quadrant taxonomy of feedback

Price *et al* (2011) look critically at the current state of assessment practices in HE, stressing that assessment should focus on stimulating learning, rather than on measurement, and asserting that it is ineffective feedback that causes assessment to fail in this. Gibbs (2010)

considers whether assessment in open learning supports students, commenting that OU students frequently struggle to understand criteria and learning outcome statements, and that they learn through a repeated cycle of practice and feedback.

The new regime required tutors to feedback explicitly on various skills used in the 6 TMAs. This was achieved by setting aside 20% of the marks on each TMA to be given as a single skills mark organised as a separate question to fit in with the eTMA system. Feedback guidance in the Tutor Guides covers:

- English language usage
- Programming skills
- Numeracy (scientific notation; units)
- Referencing
- Structure/layout/compliance with instructions

There was initial concern about the introduction of new approaches to assessment and feedback in TU100 to a group of tutors many of whom already had many years' experience of OU tutoring, and for whom the rationale for these changes might be unclear. Introducing changes in working practices can be unsettling for those experiencing the change, and particularly difficult to implement when the workforce is remote and part-time. Gibbs (2010) notes that part-time teaching staff 'never attend departmental meetings or fully understand how the degree programme works'. In Scotland, a multi-institution project 'Re-Engineering Assessment Practices' (REAP) reported that a number of factors are crucial to successfully introducing persistent change to assessment practices (Draper and Creanor, 2007), crucially:

- Collection of evaluation data
- Staff training and pedagogical advice (Draper and Creanor, 2007).

Aims

The aims of the project were to:

- evaluate the success of the new approaches to assessment and feedback, introduced on TU100, in transforming tutor behaviour (Chetwynd & Dobbyn, 2010);
- gather information in order to improve the new-style assessments and Tutor Guides;
- identify *foundational concepts* and potential *leakage points* on TU100

The more specific objectives of the project were to:

- ascertain the extent to which the new feedback advice, based on the four-quadrant model (Chetwynd & Dobbyn, 2011), led to effective tutor feedback;
- ascertain whether the realignment of the TMAs had been successful in eliciting more effective feedback from tutors;
- establish which of the content and skills in the module students find most difficult to understand and engage with;
- establish which aspects of TU100 are causing students to fail to be retained;
- ascertain how assessment, feedback support and additional material could be successfully targeted at leakage points to improve retention;

- provide on-going feedback to the other members of the Module Team on these aspects of the first presentation.

Activities

The overall approach to the gathering of evidence was to establish, in depth, tutors' perceptions of feedback, their rationales in providing it, and the effect of the new TU100 assessment and feedback regime on their behaviour. To this end, we gathered data from three sources:

1. A series of (~20 minutes) structured conversations with a selected group of (15 – 20) TU100 tutors at appropriate points throughout the presentation.

2. An analysis of marked scripts, undertaken in conjunction with monitoring.

3. End-of-presentation surveys yielding numerical data on tutor guidance, leakage points and retention, for comparison with M150/T175 data.

Additional sources of evidence used were the assignment monitors' end of presentation reports, and a later whole-cohort tutor survey. The dissemination of results was planned both as an on-going activity, based on evidence as it emerged from the interviews, and at the end based on analysis of all collected data and evidence.

Semi-structured interviews

The main activities undertaken in the first six months of the project were interviews conducted with TU100 tutors at three stages in the first presentation of the new module. A group of 15 tutors were selected according to the following criteria:

- Length of OU service - less than 6 years x 5; 6-15 years x 5; greater than 15 years x 5
- Tutor background – M150 x 5; T175 x 6; M150 + T175 x 3; neither x 1
- Gender – male x 7; female x 8

There were four main areas of interest:

- *Tutor attitudes:* tutors' rationales/perceptions of their own conduct of assessment and feedback.

- *Tutors and the new policy*: were tutor perceptions of their behaviour aligned with the assessment policy?

- *The policy and TU100*. How well-designed is the assessment policy (and the course generally) for retention and progression?

- *Wider issues*. What might be the value of the new policy in the broader higher education world?

This subset of tutors on the 11J presentation were interviewed at 3 stages of the module:

1. *Early on, after receiving the first 2 assignments and accompanying Tutor Guide, but before using it for marking and feedback*. These interviews were aimed at establishing a rapport with the tutors by discussing their OU background, and impressions of the module materials. The conversation then moved on to their initial impressions of the first

2 TMAs, how students would cope, and the initial impact of the Tutor Guides. Finally we talked about each tutor's ideas on assessment feedback and what they aim to achieve.

2. *Mid-module, when the tutors had given feedback on 4 TMAs, and had sight of the final 2 TMAs and the EMA.* These interviews began with a short discussion on how the module was progressing, which followed on into some data gathering on the foundational concepts that were causing problems and any observed leakage points. Tutors were then asked about the strong skills focus in the assignments and tutor guides – had the TGs helped with skills feedback? Were students showing skills progression? Finally, tutors were asked about their experiences of using the Tutor Guides, specifically was the four-quadrant structure useful in giving effective feedback?

3. *Near module end, after marking 6 TMAs and whilst preparing students for the EMA.* In these interviews tutors were asked about their impressions of the module as a whole, and how the assessment has fitted in. Also, discussions were held about the Tutor Guides, their usability and whether the marking guidance was adequate. Another topic covered was skills progression – Was this explicit enough in the assignments? Did the Tutor Guides assist with skills advice? And lastly had students shown skills progression across the module. Finally tutors were asked what the major sticking points of the module were and what, in their opinion, had led to their students actively or passively withdrawing from the module.

All the interviews were conducted via Skype, digitally recorded and then transcribed for linguistic analysis.

Analysis of monitors' end of presentation reports

The written reports from assignment monitors were used to assess whether, across the cohort, tutors were implementing the new assessment and feedback regime as anticipated. This included looking for reported evidence of good and bad practice and tutor engagement. In addition monitors reported on the assessment from the students' point of view. Reports as follows were assessed:

Cohort	Number of peer monitors	Number of reports submitted by peer monitors	Total number of tutors monitor reports covered	Total number of tutors in cohort
11J	28	23	85	102
12B	29	19	76	109

Tutor surveys

As TU100 was a new module, the Module Team were required to conduct a post-launch tutor consultation at the end of the first (11J and 12B) presentations. This and other feedback, along with the on-going dialogue between Module Team members and tutors, led to a number of changes for 12B, with further modifications in 12J. In the summer of 2013,

after these changes had been incorporated, all TU100 tutors were surveyed by IET, including questions on both the Tutor Guides and the assessment regime, giving us detailed feedback relevant to this project's aims. In the light of all this it was felt inappropriate to attempt to survey the 11J tutors for the purposes of this project. However, data from two tutor surveys was available.

Findings

Findings from interview transcript analysis

The aim was to identify underlying themes and emphases in the tutors' discourse. In the transcripts, we looked for key words and phrases that indicated their focus, in the following areas of the four main areas of interest (among others):

- the range of tutors' views on the fundamental nature and purpose of feedback;
- the relative weight tutors placed on marks versus feedback;
- the relative weight tutors placed on content versus more generic skills;
- tutors' past and current practices in supplying feedback in each of the four quadrants illustrated in the Figure above, and the extent to which the new Tutor Guides had influenced tutors' to change past practices and to see feedback in a different light;
- their views on the merits and drawbacks of the new regime, and whether it benefited students, themselves, both or neither;

We were also, of course, keen to pick up constructive criticism and practical suggestions for improvement. Thus, a concurrent activity was the regular feedback to the rest of the Module Team to allow for reactive changes to be made where necessary.

General findings

Analysis of the interviews revealed one fairly clear split in emphasis, substantially along the lines of the tutor's length of experience with the OU:

- Tutors who had been with the Open University for 5 years or less were primarily concerned with what the changes meant for them; how the changes would impact on their workload and whether any difficulties in implementing the new scheme would reflect badly on their performance. This was apparent from the frequent discussion of the effect the new regime had on their methods of working, the repeated mentions of monitoring reports and the many references to time needed to provide assignment feedback in the manner required.

  Tutors in this group gave varied answers when asked about their understanding of feedback. Sometimes the answers became quite confused, e.g.

  > Well I suppose what you are trying… You see, when you are writing yourself it is sometimes difficult to see what you are not focusing on, if you know what I mean. Then sometimes, so what you are trying to do. I know most spend time writing … and I suppose a lot of variation, a lot of feedback is variation on that theme

  or concentrated very heavily on the correction of errors in content, e.g.

> *Um, Oh. One on the script, because from experience you have to put quite a lot of feedback on the script itself and it is to try and guide them towards where they have gone wrong …*

It became very clear that, generally, most inexperienced tutors understood the purpose of feedback as being related closely to marks and a means to "Improve marks". In the words of one tutor

> *I think, if you want to do something which is distinctionable then really have that … so that five marks right at the top or four… not even five actually. Three marks right at the top, where one could safely say to the student and go 'you know what? It is ok not to….'*

In general, they gave the impression of being nervous about the new scheme, and lacking in confidence about implementing it, fearful of the monitoring:

> *… so I found myself on TU100 marking for the monitor rather than for the student and I am trying to pull apart every tutor guide and saying 'Want me to do and if I get monitored where am I going marked down for in the monitor system?' and I found myself feeling I was marking for the monitor rather than the student.*

And so, for some, the tutor guides were prescriptions to be closely followed:

> *…I have just been taking the stuff that is on the tutor guide and altering it to fit the particular student*

Skills or skills development were rarely mentioned unless the interviewee was specifically asked about it.

- Tutors who had worked for the OU for longer than 5 years were revealed to be primarily concerned with whether the changes would achieve their aim of providing enhanced skills development for students and more useful assignment feedback. Most were secure in their understanding of feedback and its purpose. One fairly typical comment was

> *… two types of feedback. One is one tells the student about their performance in that particular task … how you have done it, this is where you have gone wrong, but then there is an aspect of feedback which is about helping them to do right the next time*

with others highlighting the importance of altering students' future outcomes, commenting on it as a means of providing "a focus on future actions" and something to "build confidence". Many used the vocabulary of the four quadrants presented above. Although these tutors were not necessarily in favour of all aspects of the new design they were enthusiastic about the principle of a much stronger focus on feedback in the guidance, and the reduced focus on marks. This often fitted in well with the more experienced tutors' past practices: typical comment

> *It is trying to build that culture; don't go straight to the mark, have a look at where we are trying to steer you if you like, and in the, any forward feedback that I give I am going to be checking on that feedback.*

Another experienced tutor remarked that

> *So it is a different way of marking, it does concentrate and attribute marks to those key skills, which are all important for building up the skills of the learner for the future*

Few of the experienced tutors, in fact, referred to marks very often, preferring to talk instead in terms of "skills", "learning outcomes", "strengths and weaknesses" and so on. Most of them felt that, in general, the new regime could easily be accommodated into their existing practices, without major change, since they had experienced many of the concepts underlying it in other modules. In contrast to the less experienced tutors' perception of feedback as a means of improving marks, these tutors were generally also at ease with the new regime's focus on skills – typical remark:

> *From that point of view I saw that, the PT3 comments if you like, as being the skills kind of feedback so hopefully next time they do an assignment they will use some of those skills hopefully and...*

There was frequent unprompted discussions of the need to build up skills and how the new guidance would help with this.

Several factors might be contributing to this manifest divergence in outlook:

- Many ALs tutor on a varied portfolio of courses, with a diversity of approaches to assessment and feedback, indeed some are radically different. Such experienced tutors are likely to accept a new approach more readily. However, a analysis of the actual figures suggested that the number of courses taught is not a factor.
- ALs who have been with the OU for 10 years or more have experienced a significant process of change in the delivery of their marking and in the software employed. so the idea of change is certainly not new to these tutors.
- Monitoring reports were a consistent anxiety among the newest tutors, while over half of the tutors with 5+ years experience had been appointed as monitors themselves. Such tutors were likely to be more confident about the quality of their own work.

Feeding back on skills

All the interviewed tutors were initially enthusiastic about the greater focus on skills in both the questions and the tutor guidance, commenting that with the gathering together of skills this would mean that comments do not need to be repeated from question to question. One tutor commented that

> *…when I looked at the questions in detail I could see the flow if you like with the arc of where they were going and really saw where they were going.*

As mentioned above, longer standing tutors were much more skills focussed in their discussions with us.

In the second round of interviews, when tutors had marked 3 TMAs, they were still positive about the idea of focussed skills feedback, in a separate section. Some felt that it was possibly creating work, with one tutor commenting that she ended up being too verbose,

and that they were still repeating themselves in different parts of the TMA. Two commented that the better students picked up on the skills feedback more effectively, and that in some cases genuine skills progression could be seen across TMAs.

By the end of the module most of the tutors were showing more confidence in their ability to give skills feedback, although some still felt that it was hard to separate skills comments out away from the question/answer content. They felt the tutor guidance was helpful in focussing on the important skills tested in each TMA and providing a framework for their comments. Again, better students were found to be more receptive to skills feedback.

Programming in Sense

Tutors participating in the project were asked, at the second and third discussions, about their impressions of the Sense programming element of TU100 (not just the assessment but also how students were coping with it generally). As the style of programming tuition for Sense on TU100 is very different to all previous Level 1 MCT programming modules, feedback to the Module Team on the learning and teaching aspects as well as assessment, were considered very important.

Student engagement – tutors reported that many students had struggled to fully engage with Sense, both over the main Block 1 programming week and in subsequent weeks. They noted that students were not trying the programming activities listed on the website, and indeed had difficulty finding them in a lot of cases. Study time was a recurring factor for students, and programming appeared to be one of the 'obvious' ones to sideline, with students not working through the SPG or going back over exercises they found hard.

Several difficulties were noted with the assessment of programming. The question style was felt not to be close enough to the style of the exercises in the SPG, making it hard for students to tackle the TMA questions. Many students were reportedly daunted by the sophisticated programs they were presented with (which they were asked to modify) and tutors felt it would be better to ask students to build up their own program from a simpler base, in a more stepwise fashion.

As a result of feedback from this project to the Module Team, several changes were made. The main Sense learning week was extended to a 2 week block, and the website location of the activities revised. TMA questions were simplified with smaller chunks of work required, more similar in style to the SPG activities. Tutor Guide Sense notes were rewritten to focus less on the tutor solutions provided, which often did not match the creative solutions students produced.

Findings from the monitors' reports

On TU100, on the first presentations, peer monitors were required to review one marked script per tutor from each of TMA02, 03, 04 and 05.

Around 50% of monitors commented that some of the tutors monitored initially did not engage with the new feedback and marking requirements, with comments such as 'some ignored instructions', or 'not all tutors provided any or suitable skills feedback'. It was noted that, in some cases, no improvement or change was visible until at least 3 reports had been returned from monitor to tutor.

One comment seemed particularly significant: that 'providing retrospective-on-skills feedback and future-altering feedback [of any sort] was an additional task'. This is consistent with the findings of two predecessor COLMSCT projects, which investigated (1) the nature of the advice given to tutors on marking and feedback and (2) the quantity of feedforward comments provided by tutors. These projects found that both the feedback advice (Chetwynd, 2011) and the actual feedback (Walker, 2009) were overwhelmingly retrospective-on-content.

A number of monitors also commented that the tutors they monitored, and they themselves, had found the transition to the TU100 feedback and marking scheme hard. Comments such as 'the new marking style was a real struggle for tutors' and 'the absence of [a detailed] marks breakdown was disconcerting', suggested that even where tutors had engaged with the new scheme, providing feedback of the required style and standard had been hard work for them. The majority of monitors recommended a similar level of monitoring for the next presentation, either to provide further advice and guidance or to bolster the confidence of tutors in using the new scheme. All monitors stated that the grading assigned to work was consistent and at the right level.
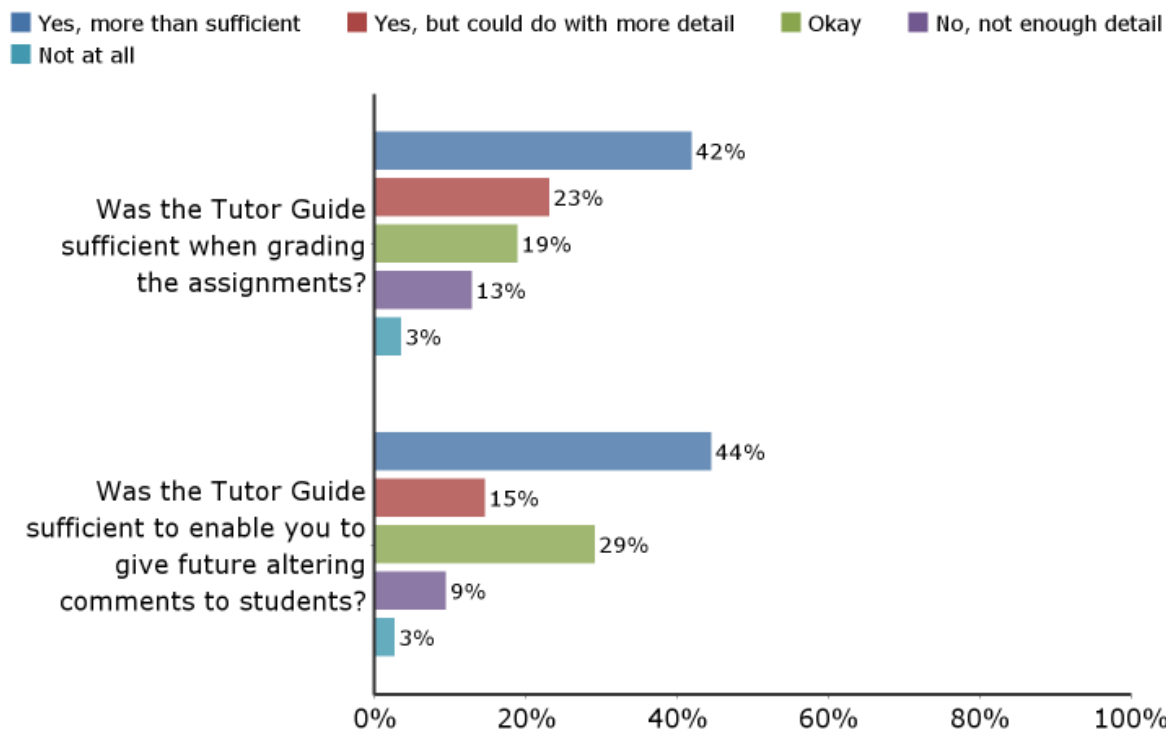
Findings from the tutor survey

Of the two surveys, the most useful source of feedback for this project was the IET survey conducted at the end of the 12J presentation and part way through 13B. However, by that stage a number of changes had been made to the module materials, as a result of feedback from various sources including this eSTEeM Project. The following summarises the results from the IET survey:

Programming: When asked about how their students had progressed in understanding the module concepts 97% of tutors said students had 'progressed well' or 'done OK'. When asked to comment further 42/93 tutors stated that programming concepts or use of Sense were a stumbling block for students. Whilst argument mapping and maths were also mentioned, programming was mentioned significantly more often. An interesting further observation on why programming presents such a hurdle was as follows:
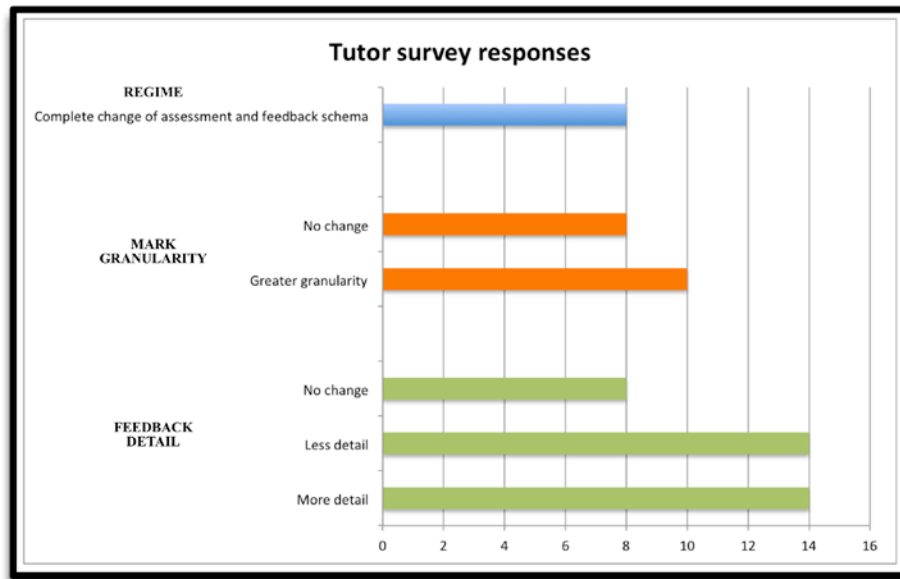
> *Mostly to do with the time they had to put into it and the programming was the most difficult aspect to do if they were unable to do the exercises. It was much easier to attempt or guess other parts.*

Tutor Guides: Tutors were asked two questions regarding the Tutor Guides, and responded as shown below.

Legend:
- ■ Yes, more than sufficient
- ■ Yes, but could do with more detail
- ■ Okay
- ■ No, not enough detail
- ■ Not at all

Was the Tutor Guide sufficient when grading the assignments?
- 42%
- 23%
- 19%
- 13%
- 3%

Was the Tutor Guide sufficient to enable you to give future altering comments to students?
- 44%
- 15%
- 29%
- 9%
- 3%

(X-axis: 0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%)

It is of note that, as with the interviewed tutors, the Tutor Guide content on future-altering comments has been well received and appears to provide the required detail. Similarly, the percentage of tutors in the survey asking for more detailed guidance in the Tutor Guides – around 1/3rd – is similar to the results obtained in the interviews. These results are also supported by the free-text comments in the same section of the IET survey, illustrated below. Here 3/5ths of tutors that made comments, said that they were either happy with the level of detail in the Guides or wished for less detail. However, only 39/93 tutors made a comment either way on the TG level of detail.

The results are summarised in the table below.

Tutor survey responses

Dobbyn, C. and Chetwynd, F. (2014) *'Transforming retention and progression in a new Level 1 course'* eSTEeM Final Report

Impact

In an institution as large, venerable and complex as the OU, change may happen frustratingly slowly. Retention on TU100 continues to be unsatisfactory, for reasons that are complicated and contested. Nevertheless, we do believe that the project, and the related changes to an important assessment regime, had made a difference.

Immediate impact

A key aspect of this project was the need for rapid and frequent feedback to the rest of the Module Team, to allow for on-going development of the assessment and feedback regime in time for the following presentation (12B) and to put in place additional resources and make module modifications in the fastest timescale possible. The interviews supplied us with material for many changes to the design of 12B TMAs and Tutor Guides.

As stated earlier, the interviewees were virtually unanimous on one point: that Sense programming is a key foundational concept, and at the same time the principal cause of students leaving, or failing, TU100. The impact of TMA03, where Sense skills are first assessed in earnest, was the major leakage point in the module. The implications of this finding are serious: there is a case to be made for the view that the current model for Sense teaching on TU100 is flawed, and needs to radically rethought.

The longer term

In a critical look at the current state of assessment in HE, Price et al (2010) list ten key premises relevant to good practice. Two of these relate most strongly to TU100 and to our project:

1. Assessment must focus on learning rather than on marking and measurement.

Assessment needs to motivate and challenge the learner, to stimulate learning and to provide feedback ….. If feedback is concentrated on summative work it tends to be used to justify the grade rather than develop learning (Price et al, 2010).

The new assessment regime in TU100 was designed with this comment fully in mind. The evidence of the project is that there is a wellspring of support for a style of assessment and feedback that motivates and challenges. We found wide areas of excellent practice, especially among the more experienced tutors. Many tutors are aware of the differences between retrospective and future-altering feedback, and of the need for feedback to be a means of improvement, rather than just criticism (as many students still see it) – and they put this philosophy fully into practice. We have frequently drawn on the suggestions and criticisms of these tutors in the course of the project.

However, there is also a minority view that continues to see feedback as marks, and as a means of satisfying monitors, rather than benefitting students. This, we believe, is partly due to some current monitoring practices, and to the wide range of tutors that TU100 has necessarily had to employ. There are implications here for better tutor training and for improved systems of monitoring. The practice of the (minority of) poorer and less confident tutors may improve as we continue to push for better feedback, and as newer tutors gain experience.

2. A key reason for assessment failing to support learning is ineffective feedback.

If assessment is simply an afterthought in the course design process, feedback is distanced even further, rarely being considered strategically.

The experience of carrying out this project has emphasised the need to design a course around an assessment regime, rather than the reverse. One of the investigators has carried the experience through into the design of a second level OU course, and will shortly be embarking on the writing of a third level course with assessment at the forefront of its design.

Reflecting on whether assessment in open learning supports students, Gibbs compliments the OU on its successes but does pick out one area for improvement. He comments:

> *We also know that students struggle to understand criteria and learning outcome statements. However useful they are to course designers, students actually learn about goals and standards through a repeated cycle of practice and feedback, not through reading statements in their course guides. This feedback cycle can work with seven assignments within a course – but not if the assignments keep changing in their format and demands, and have different criteria (Gibbs 2010)*

Whatever the retention figures, we believe the student experience has been enhanced by the forward-looking emphasis on generic skills, rather than TMA content, and on the joined-up assessment that this emphasis provides. This pattern is surely essential in all Level 1 courses, if rates of progression are to improve.

Deliverables

Academic papers

Chetwynd, F. & Dobbyn, C. (2010): Proposal for TU100 assessment regime, *The Open University*

Chetwynd, F. D. & Dobbyn, C. (2011): Assessment, feedback and marking guides in distance education, *Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning*, 26(1), pp. 67-78.

Chetwynd, F. D. & Dobbyn, C. (2012): Consistency v autonomy: effective feedback to a very large cohort, *HEA STEM Conference*, April 2012, London.

Chetwynd, F. D. & Dobbyn, C. (2013): Foregrounding skills assessment and feedback on a Level 1 module, *FELS New Directions in Learning and Teaching Day*, October 2013, Milton Keynes.

Internal communication

The project yielded the following data to be used by the TU100 team

- Data on effectiveness of new assessment and feedback models;
- Identification of foundational concepts in TU100;
- Data on course "leakage points";
- comparative analysis of TU100 retention data with other Level 1 modules;
- Recommendations to Faculty and beyond on how to identify and target foundational concepts and leakage points in order to reduce retention and enhance progression;

In addition to the eSTEeM deliverables of news items, reports, conference contributions and poster, the associated deliverables are:

- New tutor support material, targeted at foundational concepts
- Reports and briefings to TU100 Module Team on suggested actions in relation to the assessment and tutor guides on TU100
- Detailed feedback to TU100 tutors on effective assessment feedback and targeting leakage points and foundational concepts
- Seminars and briefings to MCT Faculty research groups

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