

Institution: University of Surrey		
Unit of Assessment: 23 Education		
Title of case study: Transforming the role of learners in assessment and feedback practices in education through the development of student engagement		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2014-2019		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Dr Naomi Winstone	Reader in Higher Education; Director of the Surrey Institute of Education	September 2009 - present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2016-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Dr Naomi Winstone's research led to the introduction of the concepts of '<i>proactive recipience</i>' and '<i>recipience skills</i>' to assessment feedback practices in education and informed the first evidence-based framework for developing students' capacities to engage effectively with feedback. This framework underpinned the design of two evidence-based educational tools [Developing Engagement with Feedback Toolkit (DEFT); Feedback Engagement and Tracking System (FEATS)], which have been implemented internationally in over 100 universities, colleges and schools. Dr Winstone's research has challenged conventional ideas of feedback 'best-practice', informed national and international educational guidelines, and influenced institutional feedback strategies, leading to improved teaching practices and learning outcomes.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Feedback can be one of the strongest influences on learning, yet in seeking to develop effective feedback practices, the emphasis in both educational research and practice has traditionally been placed on what teachers do and say. In Higher Education, the practices of assessment and feedback are often high on institutional agendas, with metrics such as the National Student Survey (NSS) in the UK and the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) in Australia indicating these practices as areas of relative weakness. The pressure to ensure student satisfaction with their experience of feedback can lead institutions to focus on the provision rather than the actual use of feedback information.</p> <p>Through their research representing a novel integration of psychology and education, Drs Naomi Winstone (Surrey) and Robert Nash (Aston University) proposed a reframing to emphasise the role of the learner, resulting in the first evidence-based framework for developing students' capacities to engage effectively with feedback information [R1]. This framework underpinned the development of two educational tools, which have been embedded in practice in universities, schools and colleges across the world.</p> <p>In their influential systematic review of the literature on students' engagement with feedback [R1], Winstone and Nash introduced the concept of '<i>proactive recipience</i>' of feedback and developed a taxonomy of '<i>recipience skills</i>' that underpin effective use of feedback: self-appraisal; assessment literacy; goal-setting and self-regulation; and engagement/motivation. Mapping the evidence base in this rigorous way allowed Winstone to stimulate a substantial shift in the field of feedback research, towards a new focus on the importance of developing students' capacities for using feedback. Whereas prior research had identified the important role for student action in response to feedback there had been minimal research focus on the skills required for this action, and how to nurture these skills.</p> <p>Winstone and Nash's empirical research [R2] identified that students' engagement with feedback can be limited because feedback can be difficult to 'decode' and understand (barrier of '<i>Awareness</i>'); because students are often unaware of strategies needed to implement feedback</p>		

(barrier of 'Cognisance'); because the ways in which assessment is designed can limit students' agency to act upon feedback (barrier of 'Agency'); and because students can lack the motivation to invest the effort needed to enact feedback (barrier of 'Volition'). Informed by their research, Winstone and Nash produced the **Developing Engagement with Feedback Toolkit (DEFT)** [R3] published by the Higher Education Academy (now Advance HE). DEFT is freely available to educators, has been downloaded nearly 10,000 times to date, and translated into French and Dutch. Each of the components of DEFT (*feedback glossary; feedback guide; feedback workshop resources; feedback portfolio*) is directly informed by the barriers to engagement [R2] and reciprocity skills [R1] identified through their research. Follow-up data indicated that DEFT resources have the potential to enhance students' feedback literacy [R4].

The feedback portfolio component of the DEFT has also been developed into a ground-breaking e-portfolio tool called the **Feedback Engagement and Tracking System (FEATS)**, through research funded by HEFCE [R5]. FEATS can be embedded into a University's Virtual Learning Environment/Learning Management System and is customisable for different academic disciplines. FEATS is commercially available via RM Results. FEATS also transforms the practice of teaching staff: by aligning their feedback with the systems' skills categories, and by receiving 'feedback on their feedback' through dialogue, tutors develop their feedback in partnership with their students.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

The high quality of the research is evidenced through its publication in leading peer-reviewed journals, by the Higher Education Academy (now Advance HE), and by the associated peer-reviewed competitive grant funding. R1 was awarded the 2017 APA Best Publication Award for Educational Psychology.

[R1] Winstone, N., Nash, R., Parker, M., & Rowntree, J. (2017). Supporting learners' engagement with feedback: A systematic review and a taxonomy of reciprocity processes. *Educational Psychologist*, 52, 17-37. DOI: 10.1080/00461520.2016.1207538

[R2] Winstone, N., Nash, R., Rowntree, J., & Parker, M. (2017). "It'd be useful, but I wouldn't use it". Barriers to University students' feedback seeking and reciprocity. *Studies in Higher Education*, 42(11), 2026-2041. DOI: 10.1080/03075079.2015.1130032

[R3] Winstone, N. E., & Nash, R. A. (2016). *The Developing Engagement with Feedback Toolkit*. York, UK: Higher Education Academy. Available from <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/developing-engagement-feedback-toolkit-deft>

[R4] Winstone, N. E., Mathlin, G., & Nash, R. A. (2019). Building feedback literacy: Students' perceptions of the developing engagement with feedback toolkit. *Frontiers in Education* (Vol 9, p. 39). DOI: 10.3389/feduc.2019.00039

[R5] Winstone, N. E., Bourne, J., Medland, E., Niculescu, I., & Rees, R. (2020). "Check the grade, log out": Students' engagement with feedback in Learning Management Systems. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, Advance Online Publication. DOI: 10.1080/02602938.2020.1787331

Funding:

1. Higher Education Academy, £29,976 (2014-2015). PI: Naomi Winstone, CI: Robert Nash, "A receiver psychology approach to nurturing students' active engagement with feedback".
2. Higher Education Funding Council for England, £44,416 (2016-2018). PI: Naomi Winstone, "Feedback footprints: Using learning analytics to support student engagement with, and learning from, feedback".
3. Leverhulme Trust, £98,236 (2017-2019). PI: Robert Nash, CIs: Naomi Winstone, Nathan Ridout, "Cognitive biases in the reciprocity of past- and future-oriented feedback."

4. Assessments and Qualifications Alliance, £24,568 (2018-2019). PI: Naomi Winstone, CI: Robert Nash, "Memory for feedback in the context of linear A Level qualifications".

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

1. Informing UK and international guidance on assessment feedback practices.

The Developing Engagement with Feedback Toolkit (DEFT), and Winstone and Nash's research on recience skills, have been incorporated in the international *Transforming Assessment Framework guide* (2020, Advance HE) [S1a]. The research and resulting tools have "significantly informed the strategic change work" led by Advance HE across the UK HE sector by providing "The intellectual and practical means through which to encourage staff from across the disciplines to examine and reconsider their feedback strategies" [Former National Assessment Lead, Advance HE] [S1b]. In November 2018, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) published the revised *Quality Code for Higher Education* which provided guidance on assessment in Higher Education in the UK. The QAA recommended DEFT to support the implementation of this guidance [S2a]. Similarly, the Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum, Examinations, and Assessment (CEA) highlighted recience skills as an important aspect of feedback and recommended that teachers modify and apply DEFT for KS3 learners in its guidelines *Providing Effective Feedback: implications for Teaching & Learning* (first published 2018, revised May 2020) [S2b].

2. Influencing assessment feedback practice strategies at UK and international Higher Education Institutions.

Research by Winstone and Nash has directly informed feedback strategies and practices at over 100 UK and international universities, as well as schools and Further Education colleges, and in doing so, it has substantively influenced the process of student feedback. Research intensive, as well as teaching-focused, universities' leaders have shifted their collective thinking to recognise their students as 'proactive recipients of feedback'. There is abundant evidence that both UK and international universities have changed their educational practice by incorporating recience skills and components of the DEFT in their assessment strategies and feedback guidelines for academic staff (e.g., University of Edinburgh; Edinburgh Napier University; Kings College London; London School of Economics and Political Sciences; Radboud University, Netherlands) [S3a]. The DEFT has also been widely embedded into feedback resources for students (i.e., University of Cambridge; Sheffield Hallam; Imperial College, London; University of Western Sydney, Australia) [S3b].

3. Implementing the DEFT in teaching practice.

Example 1: The Florence Nightingale Faculty of Nursing, Midwifery and Palliative Care at King's College London have successfully embedded the DEFT toolkit in their Assessment Strategy. "We chose to do this because central to our strategy is our commitment to transforming assessment for student success using the best available evidence to inform policy and practice. We believe the DEFT toolkit is best placed to support us in achieving this commitment." [Associate Dean for Assessment and Teaching] [S4]. All first-year undergraduate nursing and midwifery students (N=650) attend a feedback literacy workshop (1.5 hours) in which they complete activities from the DEFT. All second-year students attend a follow-on workshop building on skills they have learnt in the first year. A student feedback guide, based on the DEFT, is available on the Faculty's virtual learning environment (VLE) [S4].

Example 2: Wolfson College, University of Cambridge have recognised the benefit of the DEFT for their mature students who are returning after a break from education, pursuing a professional qualification, or have previously studied internationally. As such, Wolfson have successfully included components of the DEFT in their *CamGuides* – aimed at new and arriving undergraduates (ca. 3,500 per year) – and have adapted DEFT resources for inclusion in their self-directed online *LibGuides*, designed to accompany an in-person feedback workshop. Comments from workshop attendees show an enhanced appreciation of their responsibility for interacting with their assessment feedback. "I have learned different skills that I can put into practice in order to take into account the feedback in a positive manner. I definitely feel more able

to do this.” [Wolfson College, Undergraduate A] and “I will set time aside for going through my feedback and sit with feedback whilst I complete a new piece of work.” [Wolfson College, Undergraduate B] [S5].

4. Transforming feedback practice in Further Education.

Although rooted in Higher Education, the DEFT has been successfully adapted by educators working with 16-19 year-old learners. For example, the effective introduction of the DEFT at Godalming (Sixth Form) College, Surrey – supported by Winstone and her team – led to a “Statistically significant increase in students’ sense of accountability to use feedback” with students reporting that “[...] the skills they had developed in using feedback effectively had supported the further development of academic skills and their subject knowledge.” [Principal, Godalming College] [S6]. Engaging with the resources has also supported teachers in reflecting upon their own practice, informed professional development and impacted on teaching practice at Godalming College. One teacher commented that this had made them “reflect more on the feedback I gave, both written and verbal. I also got some good feedback from the students about my feedback and I have since tried to include more positive comments than just a tick” [Biology Teacher, Godalming College] [S6]. As a result of this success, DEFT has now been shared with all Sixth Form Colleges across Surrey, Sussex and Wessex (S7 colleges consortium and Wessex Group of Colleges), and as a result has improved teaching practices and learning outcomes [S6]. Subject teachers commented that the DEFT resources provide “space for students to self-reflect and actively consider the feedback given not just the results” [Geography Teacher, Godalming College], helping them “really focus on the feedback and think about how they were going to act on it, rather than just looking at their mark/grade” [Music Teacher, Godalming College].

5. Inspiring innovation in education

Inspired by the work of Winstone and Nash [R1], Floop Edu – a US-based Educational Technology Company – have independently created and commercialised a web-based app that implements the concepts of proactive recipience and recipience skills. This web-based feedback app aims to provide secondary school students with the agency to act upon feedback and support their learning. It is currently used by over 8,000 teachers across the USA who attest to the tool’s impact on students, where they have seen an increase in students’ development as a result of their engagement with and use of feedback [S7].

6. Research led to the commercialisation of an evidence-based feedback e-portfolio

Building on the success of DEFT, the feedback portfolio was adapted to enable integration with an institution’s Virtual Learning Environment/Learning Management System. The resulting e-portfolio tool – known as the Feedback Engagement and Tracking System (FEATS) – was initially developed and piloted through research at the University of Surrey [R5] in 2018 before a commercial partnership with RM Results led to FEATS becoming commercially available in 2019. RM Results have invested in the further development of FEATS, and have been working with six ‘early adopter’ universities in the UK representative of the HE sector. [S8] Feedback from adopting universities suggests “FEATS has an impact on knowledge, behaviour and practice of both staff and students across the institution” [Associate Dean]. Further comments from student users illustrate the positive impact on their understanding and use of feedback; “By using FEATS, I have been able to understand and overcome weaknesses in my writing” [Undergraduate A] and “FEATS has got me to look at feedback more often and I know how to apply it more now” [Undergraduate B]. Also, Staff have commented on the positive impact of FEATS on teaching practice; “Before FEATS, the feedback process for many students stopped after reading their feedback. Now students can take control of their learning and drive their own development” [Learning Developer], and “FEATS has made me monitor the feedback I give students and promotes dialogue” [Academic].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[S1a] Elkington, Sam (2020). *Essential frameworks for enhancing student success: Transforming Assessment in Higher Education. A guide to the Advance HE Framework*. Advance HE. (PDF)

- [S1b]** Testimonial Letter from Dr Samuel Elkington, former national academic lead (Assessment) for the Higher Education Academy (2016-2018). (PDF)
- [S2a]** The Quality Assurance Agency (2018) webpage directing users to the DEFT under the Further Resources tab. Accessed 20 October 2020. <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/assessment#> (also PDF)
- [S2b]** Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum, Examinations, and Assessment (CEA). *Providing Effective Feedback Implications for teaching and learning* (last updated 22/05/2020). (PDF)
- [S3a]** Corroborating sources from Universities who have drawn from reciprocity skills and DEFT in their assessment strategy and feedback guidelines for academic staff:
1. University of Edinburgh [Rhind, S. (2017). *engageEd in... feedback and assessment*] (PDF)
 2. Edinburgh Napier University [Edinburgh Napier University (2017). *Assessment and Feedback Design Guidelines*] (PDF)
 3. Kings' College London [Learning and Assessment Blog describing how to use the DEFT. <https://blogs.kcl.ac.uk/aflkings/students-directing-their-own-learning/helping-students-engage-with-feedback/> and <https://blogs.kcl.ac.uk/aflkings/students-directing-their-own-learning/helping-students-engage-with-feedback/how-can-i-help-students-engage-with-feedback/>] (also PDFs)
 4. London School of Economics and Political Sciences <https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Eden-Centre/Resources-from-Eden/Effective-feedback/> (also PDF)
 5. Radboud University, Netherlands <https://www.ru.nl/docenten/onderwijs/didactiek-en-begeleiden/feedback-geven/constructieve-feedback/> (also PDF)
- [S3b]** Corroborating sources from universities who have drawn from reciprocity skills and DEFT in their resources for students:
1. University of Cambridge <https://libguides.cam.ac.uk/uqcamguides/skills/feedback> (also PDF)
 2. Sheffield Hallam https://blogs.shu.ac.uk/feedbacktoolkit/?doing_wp_cron=1530742137.4839150905609130859375 (also PDF)
 3. Imperial College, London <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/staff/education-development-unit/public/How-to-use-your-assignment-feedback.pdf> (also PDF)
 4. University of Western Sydney, Australia <https://www.smores.com/cqhv4-teaching-tuesdays-csu> (also PDF)
- [S4]** Testimonial Letter from the Associate Dean for Assessment and Teaching, Florence Nightingale Faculty of Nursing, Midwifery and Palliative Care, Kings College London (PDF)
- [S5]** Testimonial Letter from the Academic Support Librarian Wolfson College, Cambridge (PDF)
- [S6]** Testimonial Letter from the Principal of Godalming College, Surrey (PDF)
- [S7]** Testimonial Letter from the Co-Founders of Floop Edu Inc. (PDF)
- [S8]** Testimonial Letter from the Head of Formative Assessment & School Platforms, RM Results (PDF)