“Feedback is the breakfast of champions.”

Quoted by Ken Blanchard

For me the most important assessment method that has helped me has been the reflective journals. I did not fully appreciate or understand the impact of reflection until I began to generate my own journals. I found that I was able to visualize solutions to some of the concerns I had identified in relation to my teaching practice.

I am so impressed by the way you approached and dealt with an unfamiliar teaching situation which had been thrust upon you. You showed great good humour, enthusiasm and professionalism. I am very interested in how you feel about this new teaching commitment now – could it be an exciting new chapter for you? It’s also great that you have had some good support and advice along the way from experienced practitioners, which you will remember and draw upon when needed in the future.

Very good teachers are those whose practice is the result of careful reflection and self-critical evaluations to adjust what they do next time (Why Colleges Succeed, Ofsted 2004). Even though most of us would prefer not to be criticized Hainsworth (2005) in the Guardian online discovers that learning how to respond positively to criticism will help acquire precious life skills.

The Dreyfus (1986) model of stages of skill acquisition (novice to expert) emphasized how expert learning is derived increasingly from reflective experience rather than theoretical learning. As experts no longer rely on rules or guidelines but have an intuitive grasp of situations based on deep understanding and can visualize what is possible through reflection.

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Another significant factor that has shaped my professional development through assessment and feedback was the ungraded observations. I found that I was able to experiment with my delivery. Surprisingly all my observations were done by different lectures/tutors so I was able to obtain a variety of knowledge from a vast pool of professionalisms. I have learnt and implemented various proposals via the feedback received and discovered that the feedback obtained has helped improve my own personal development as a tutor. From the feedback received I have been able to influence the classroom dynamics to get the most from the learners.

I really enjoyed reading about your adventures, thank you. Your ‘next steps’ are very sensible and demonstrate both your willingness to learn from more experienced colleagues and your re-kindled motivation to take on this new challenge; you have faced what could have been a difficult situation and have come out triumphantly!

It’s great that you are thinking and reflecting on how you could modify your practice to enhance the learning of a group that is unfamiliar to you (and relatively short-term). Well done and keep me posted!

Professor Paul Black and Professor Dylan Wiliam's initial research has proved that informal classroom assessment with constructive feedback will raise levels of attainment if carried out effectively (Assessment Reform Group [pamphlet] 1999). Likewise poor feedback can result in losing learners as cited by the Guardian online, Major (2001).

Reality about the importance of feedback hit home whilst studying the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS) course. I was astounded to find out how much the feedback received affected my motivation and progression.

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