

Student workshop:

Getting more benefit from feedback

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Introduction

Me, Steve Draper: a lecturer in the psychology department at Glasgow University. Research interest is teaching and learning in HE.

David Nicol: Professor at Strathclyde University, in a unit advising staff how to teach.

This workshop has 2 parts:

- A. A micro-exercise on critical thinking. Steve's brainwave: has been well thought of by students in workshops.
- B. Discussion of 8 tips for a more active approach by students to feedback on their work. David's brainwave. Students say they like the leaflet version.

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Part A:

Micro-exercise on critical thinking

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Why an exercise on critical thinking?

Although only some departments emphasise the phrase "critical thinking", in one way or another it is an underlying marking criterion for essays and exams in most essay-based disciplines: particularly in the final years.

Forgetting the content and looking at the basic markers of critical thinking is a way of getting to grips with what this criterion means in practice.

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The exercise

In a minute, I'll announce a topic.

From that moment you have 5 minutes to write something on that topic.

Most people write a medium length paragraph: about 14 lines of handwriting (depending on how big or small your writing is).

It will then be marked for the format of critical thinking:

1. Mentioning alternative possible views
2. Giving reasons or evidence for the views mentioned.
3. Mentioning reasons against your preferred view.
4. Clear support for **one view in preference to** the others on the topic. (Not sitting on the fence)

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Question (topic) 1

Travel abroad broadens the mind

It will then be marked for the format of critical thinking:

1. Mentioning alternative possible views
2. Giving reasons or evidence for the views mentioned.
3. Including reasons on **both** sides of the topic
4. Clear support for **one view in preference to** the others on the topic. (Not sitting on the fence)

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Peer marking

- Now stop writing.
- Swap your workbook with a partner
- Tear off from the back of the workbook a “structured feedback sheet”
- Read your partner’s micro-essay, and fill in the mark sheet

- Return both essay and completed mark sheet to your partner.

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Question (topic) 2

Children nowadays are wrapped in cotton wool

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Peer marking

- Now stop writing.
- Swap your workbook with a partner
- Tear off from the back of the workbook a “structured feedback sheet”
- Read your partner’s micro-essay, and fill in the mark sheet

- Return both essay and completed mark sheet to your partner.

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Part B:

8 tips for students: a more active approach to feedback

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The 8 tips

The eight tips are on page 4 of the workbook.

Read through them, and make notes against each one:

- How likely are you to act on this tip, and why / why not?
- Any other thoughts?

If you finish before we discuss as a large group, turn to your neighbour and compare notes and thoughts on each tip.

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Discussion: of tip 8

8. Keep a note of feedback, reflect, and act on it.

What will you do differently because of the feedback you receive on your work, and when?

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Discussion — the other tips

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Part C:

Wrapping up the two parts together

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Reciprocal Peer Critiquing

Part A, the micro-critical-thinking task, was also an example of Reciprocal Peer Critiquing: I.e. of getting peers (other students) to give you feedback, and doing that for them.

It has proved very useful for students when applied to normal assessments, and you might like to consider organising it for yourselves.

(Personally I make my tutorial group do it once; then suggest that if they found it useful, they should organise it themselves thenceforth. Almost always, they do.)

How many of the 8 tips do you think it embodies?

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Evaluation form

Please fill in the evaluation form (p.5):

- Tear it out of the workbook
- Fill it in
- Leave it for me to pick up

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Leaflets

We're now handing out the leaflet version of the 8 tips.

It is a homework exercise for you to link the 8 tips in the workbook to the 8 tips on the leaflet: different wording and order.

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A place to stop

For the slides, handout etc. see:

<http://www.psy.gla.ac.uk/~steve/talks/dundee3.html>

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