



Chat Transcript for Session Topic: The interaction of peer & tutor feedback

Discussion of
Bates "Collaborative Problem-solving in First Year Physics"
Crossouard and Pryor "Formative assessment in a professional doctorate context: developing identities as researchers"

Facilitated by
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Moderated by
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Date/Time	Author	Comment
30/05/2007 16:06:08	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	Ok, hello everyone. It's a cool day here in Glasgow, and just left 4pm, so I would like to open this session!
30/05/2007 16:06:21	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	Welcome everyone to this Session on the interaction of peer & tutor feedback. I'm Rachel Harris, conference organiser, and I'll be your moderator for this hour-long chat.
30/05/2007 16:06:34	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	Unfortunately, Prof Lewis Elton will not be joining us in the chat, although he will be responding to messages posted to the boards.
30/05/2007 16:06:51	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	I am delighted to introduce Simon Bates from the University of Edinburgh, and Drs Barbara Crossouard and John Pryor from the University of Sussex.
30/05/2007 16:07:11	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	We're going to start this session with the authors' responses to Prof Elton's reviews of their case studies. Then open for questions. So, over to you, Simon?
30/05/2007 16:07:26	Simon Bates (Simon Bates)	ok, fine. Hi everyone...
30/05/2007 16:07:44	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	Hi Colin, we're just starting
30/05/2007 16:07:50	Colin Milligan (Colin Milligan)	hi there
30/05/2007 16:08:54	Simon Bates (Simon Bates)	So, in his review Lewis Elton threw down the challenge of whether or not we should try using the peer and self assessment for real in the course
30/05/2007 16:09:50	Simon Bates (Simon Bates)	We have actually experimented with this in the last two years of the course. I am happy to describe this later in the chat, but rather than hog the virtual stage, I'll pass over to Barbara and John for their first comments.
30/05/2007 16:10:26	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	Lewis's comments are interesting in themselves, but we are worried that we have not expressed ourselves very clearly. We feel that they haven't actually picked up on the conceptualisation of formative assessment that we use in the case study, which is bas



30/05/2007 16:11:04	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	An important aspect of what is talked about in this case study is that the tutor actively collaborates with the students during the development of the assessment task. Thus this is not just tacked on at the end of the module, but designed so that students
30/05/2007 16:11:37	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	This means though that there's also therefore a misreading of the case study in the nature of the 'firm distinction' between formative and summative assessment. We see them as being in dialogue throughout the task development process. This happens through
30/05/2007 16:12:18	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	So, for the moment just a few reactions - we have a couple more comments in relation to the discussion forum comments, but better let others join in !
30/05/2007 16:13:24	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	Can we open for questions from the floor?
30/05/2007 16:13:25	David Nicol (DavidNicol)	but Lewis' points would seem to be the ultimate extension of your position would they not?
30/05/2007 16:13:59	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	Can you expand on that David, in what way?
30/05/2007 16:14:49	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	Yes, please, I see his position as rather different from ours, particularly in relation to the tutor clearing out the way after ground rules are set up.
30/05/2007 16:15:22	David Nicol (DavidNicol)	well difficult to summarise but if it is about collaboration and identity development together it ends in a power relationship where the tutor marks or have i misunderstood your position?
30/05/2007 16:17:13	John Pryor (JohnPryor)	I am having problems with my browser - sorry
30/05/2007 16:17:51	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	We see focusing on power relations as part of formative assessment, and bringing these into critical focus for the students as important. But the tutors are representatives of the institutions - and students come to institutions because of their accrediti
30/05/2007 16:18:37	Maha Bali (MahaBali)	But I see Elton's point about the fact that peers do not participate in the summative assessment (even by 10%)
30/05/2007 16:19:07	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	Maha could you repost for Barbara?
30/05/2007 16:19:17	Maha Bali (MahaBali)	I see Elton's point that not involving students in the summative assessment affects how seriously their formative feedback is taken (i think that's what he meant!)
30/05/2007 16:19:18	John Pryor (JohnPryor)	I do not understand what you mean
30/05/2007 16:19:29	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	Just been bumped out but back in again!
30/05/2007 16:19:56	Maha Bali (MahaBali)	I get Barbara's point about accreditation but peers could get like 10% of the summative assessment, leaving most of it to the accrediting bodies but still involving them
30/05/2007 16:20:15	Terri Rees (trees)	For what reason specifically?
30/05/2007 16:20:23	Maha Bali (MahaBali)	if there are clear "criteria", i think students (particularly graduate students of education!) can be objective and thoughtful
30/05/2007 16:20:42	Maha Bali (MahaBali)	I was just commenting on Elton's point (I think I read this in his review!)
30/05/2007 16:20:46	Terri Rees (trees)	Is there an educational reason why though?
30/05/2007 16:21:07	Terri Rees (trees)	I mean does it help them to learn any more?



30/05/2007 16:21:23	Maha Bali (MahaBali)	Elton said: If peer feedback is confined to improvement and excludes judgment, it will probably not be
30/05/2007 16:21:40	Maha Bali (MahaBali)	cont'd: taken seriously by either tutors or peers, and almost certainly not by the receiving students
30/05/2007 16:21:58	Terri Rees (trees)	hmm. I need to think about that
30/05/2007 16:21:59	Suzanne Shaffer (suzshaff)	I find this approach very interesting - because it is asking student to take responsibility for their own learning and it asks students to think more about process (problem solving/thinking skills) rather than getting to one correct right answer (although
30/05/2007 16:22:00	Maha Bali (MahaBali)	am not sure I agree with Elton, but just reiterating the point
30/05/2007 16:22:23	Terri Rees (trees)	ok Maha.
30/05/2007 16:22:32	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	Is this something you have considered John and Barbara - including an element of peer assessment in the summative component?
30/05/2007 16:23:07	John Pryor (JohnPryor)	Yes this is possible and maybe desirable in that the affordances of peer and tutor assessment may be different. However mostly we work within situations where peer summative assessment is not mandated Sorry it takes me ages to type
30/05/2007 16:23:38	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	In engaging with the later point about improvement and judgement we would contend that judgment is always there either explicitly or implicitly. Formative assessment is about exercising judgement but as Derek suggests assigning a mark is not usually useful
30/05/2007 16:24:27	Maha Bali (MahaBali)	but checking off a "rubric" as "met or not met" is useful (vs. just assigning a mark)
30/05/2007 16:25:15	John Pryor (JohnPryor)	It is even more useful when it is part of a dialogue rather than just a bald statement
30/05/2007 16:25:24	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	Well this assumes that the rubric makes everything 'transparent' - and when you're dealing with complex tasks, it's not that simple, as Sadler also argues
30/05/2007 16:25:26	Maha Bali (MahaBali)	Barbara: in your experience, did students take peer feedback into account seriously anyway? It's the evidence that's more important than the theory
30/05/2007 16:25:59	John Pryor (JohnPryor)	Yes, they did but less so than the tutor's
30/05/2007 16:26:22	Maha Bali (MahaBali)	John: can't blame them :o)
30/05/2007 16:26:27	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	Many did - but not all. For some it was engaging with the feedback process that was very important, and disrupted relationships in the classroom where they were 'just' a student, and helped them shift into a different position
30/05/2007 16:26:54	Suzanne Shaffer (suzshaff)	Is there any data about exactly what made the difference for students - why students weren't dropping out of the course? Was it the hands-on element, the support of peers/tutors/instructors, what exactly made the difference?
30/05/2007 16:26:54	David Nicol (DavidNicol)	In the last talk by TBanta she talked about assessing the development of identity. You talk about identity as well. Do you think this can be assessed, and if so, how? This is a genuine interest I have as I subscribe to some of what you write.
30/05/2007 16:27:26	Terri Rees (trees)	Maybe thought about students second marking each other, thereby re-inforcing the value of the student feedback?



30/05/2007 16:27:45	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	Can we start with suzshaff's question?
30/05/2007 16:28:18	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	The notion of students' identities was something that was invoked by the teacher in his teaching and was quite a powerful element it seemed for some students - helping them look at their learning in a more reflexive way.
30/05/2007 16:29:23	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	Do you have data on this, if that is possible?
30/05/2007 16:29:29	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	Responding to trees point above, not sure that grading in terms of peer assessment is what we were trying to do - don't see this as helpful and productive for taking learning forward - students can get too hooked on grades, rather than the qualitative aspe
30/05/2007 16:29:29	Suzanne Shaffer (suzshaff)	Richard Felder (engineering prof) did research on why so many engineering students were dropping out and he concluded it wasn't because of ability levels in math/science (which was the current assumption) rather students were unhappy with traditional teaching
30/05/2007 16:30:17	Suzanne Shaffer (suzshaff)	http://www4.ncsu.edu/unity/lockers/users/f/felder/public/RMF.html
30/05/2007 16:30:44	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	Thanks, can you also post any references in the discussion board, later on?
30/05/2007 16:30:48	Carl Beckford (CarlBeckford)	Soory about that. Machine rebooted
30/05/2007 16:30:52	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	Responding to rachel's query, in my interviews with students, some referred to the tutor 'going on' about their identities as professionals and researchers for example, and there were other examples in the interviews of similar comments that are difficult
30/05/2007 16:30:53	John Pryor (JohnPryor)	I am going to join barabra as I am unable to type fast enough and without being able to see what I have already written to participate like this. My stuff will come through her.
30/05/2007 16:31:18	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	Ok, thanks john
30/05/2007 16:31:32	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	Yes sure, we've got an article in pedagogy culture and society next year on the case study and another theoretical one in Oxford Review of Education later this year
30/05/2007 16:32:27	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	DAvid also asked about the possibility of assessing the development of identity?
30/05/2007 16:33:22	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	Can you comment on that John/Barbara?
30/05/2007 16:33:27	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	In terms of suzshaff's query earlier on what made the difference - difficult to say, but by emphasising learning as becoming seemed quite powerful for them
30/05/2007 16:34:14	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	In terms of assessing identities we would claim that all assessment assesses identities. One of the reasons for invoking identity is to alert students to the social construction of knowledge
30/05/2007 16:34:42	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	And of course also the power relations that are involved, so that they can engage with this and critique it also
30/05/2007 16:35:03	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	Simon, can you relate to any of this in terms of your physics students?
30/05/2007 16:35:17	Suzanne Shaffer (suzshaff)	Barbara - this touches a chord with me because I can quite viscerally remember the moment when I started to study theology and it opened all sorts of interests because it was tied to identity so strongly - I always thought it was because I was older and so



30/05/2007 16:35:44	Simon Bates (Simon Bates)	Some of it perhaps, but in a very different context
30/05/2007 16:36:23	Maha Bali (MahaBali)	(sorry I'm going to have to leave now - really enjoyed this)
30/05/2007 16:36:30	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	Is that subject differences, or maturity? Doctoral students are not quite first years afterall?
30/05/2007 16:36:40	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	Thanks, Maha!
30/05/2007 16:36:44	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	The students weren't actually young - ages ranged from around 30 to 50ish - it was first year of a doctoral programme. However John has done a lot of work with younger students in shcools and this is where this comes from and this is where the theories ha
30/05/2007 16:36:58	Helen Ashton (helen)	Simon: As a physics student, we have a similar session every week in my undergraduate - still the best think we did! Trying to encouporate it into a Computer Science degree at the moment - know anyone doing the same in this discipline for ideas?
30/05/2007 16:37:05	Simon Bates (Simon Bates)	Rachel; both really
30/05/2007 16:37:35	Simon Bates (Simon Bates)	Helen; not off the top of my head, but I think the design we have used is very transferable across to disciplines such as CS.
30/05/2007 16:38:10	Helen Ashton (helen)	Simon: I agree - just sometimes helps the grey matter to start with an existing implementation!
30/05/2007 16:38:30	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	What about the earlier point of the weight of peer vs tutor feedback, how does that playout in your case study, Simon?
30/05/2007 16:39:00	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	Simon - John thinks he has heard of something very similar to your innovation within CS at a conference we attended in Brighton?
30/05/2007 16:39:11	Simon Bates (Simon Bates)	Rachel; I don't think we capture the various levels of peer feedback too well.
30/05/2007 16:39:48	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	Just wondering how the different types are received by physics students
30/05/2007 16:39:55	Simon Bates (Simon Bates)	Some of the students do tend to feel that the tutor's word is definitive; whereas in reality of course there peers can show a better appreciation of the problem at hand (as they might be experiencing something similar too)
30/05/2007 16:40:15	Helen Ashton (helen)	Barbara/John: Any more details? If you come across them could you post on discussion board? Ta :)
30/05/2007 16:40:30	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	The point about the weight is that formative assessment is really about what happens to the student rahter than what the teacher does, so in some sense it's unpredictable about which feedback students will find most meaningful.
30/05/2007 16:42:02	Simon Bates (Simon Bates)	Lewis mentioned John Cowan's work with first years in his reveiw; does anyone have a reference for this?
30/05/2007 16:42:15	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	Peers appreciation of each others' problems are really important at an affective level - and this also is something that formative assessment dialgoues can recognise, in ways that can support sutdents possibly.
30/05/2007 16:42:20	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	I have some old papers hidden away on that
30/05/2007 16:42:47	Suzanne Shaffer (suzshaff)	When I think about past experiences with peer feedback - the times that I found it most valuable were the times when I perceived my peers to be "experts" in a certain area and felt I could learn from them - eg. studying with instructional design



30/05/2007 16:43:35	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	John adds that the other thing about peer assessment is that it extends the dialogue so that it's multivocal - this is really important in terms of engaging with disciplinary cultures and identity construction
30/05/2007 16:43:35	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	Is that why it works in with your students Barbara - they were drawing on other professional experience?
30/05/2007 16:43:36	Helen Ashton (helen)	suzshaff: I was going to say the opposite. Explaining a point to someone who was clueless was hugely valuable - exposed all the "holes"! Perhaps a mixed group is the key?
30/05/2007 16:44:07	Simon Bates (Simon Bates)	Group allocation and subsequent dynamics is something we thought hard about.
30/05/2007 16:44:09	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	Depends whether your receiving or giving perhaps?
30/05/2007 16:44:21	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	For our group giving the position as a professional, and recognising vulnerabilities as learners was really important.
30/05/2007 16:44:25	Suzanne Shaffer (suzshaff)	interesting HElen, but then how to keep the experts motivated - so they don't feel like their own learning has slowed
30/05/2007 16:44:47	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	How did you decide on allocation, Simon?
30/05/2007 16:45:05	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	The whole point about peer assessment is that it's a learning experience for the assessor also - in sometimes and complex ways. We have data on this.
30/05/2007 16:45:20	Simon Bates (Simon Bates)	We tried self-selection, then mixed ability and now settle for good ol' purely random!
30/05/2007 16:45:48	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	Do the students comment on their group allocation?
30/05/2007 16:46:32	Simon Bates (Simon Bates)	Not really; we do allow really dysfunctional ones to rebalance (but that has only happened once, due to 2 very combative personalities!)
30/05/2007 16:46:55	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	In physics? Can't imagine it ;-)
30/05/2007 16:47:06	Simon Bates (Simon Bates)	It;s always the quiet types :-)
30/05/2007 16:47:19	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	Was gender important Simon?
30/05/2007 16:47:22	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	(I was a first year physics student myself)
30/05/2007 16:47:36	Simon Bates (Simon Bates)	In what way Barbara?
30/05/2007 16:48:15	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	In our study there was a gendered difference in the ways students engaged - acknowledging vulnerabilities for example
30/05/2007 16:49:03	Simon Bates (Simon Bates)	I don't think that we really looked too deeply into this.
30/05/2007 16:49:03	Suzanne Shaffer (suzshaff)	yes, learning on both sides - my question is, how do you make the learning process transparent for the assessor? - is someone monitoring their learning/thinking too to help nudge them forward - who helps unravel the complexities, Barbara?
30/05/2007 16:49:33	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	I think an important point is that learning isn't transparent
30/05/2007 16:50:07	Suzanne Shaffer (suzshaff)	I just remember one faculty member who just always KNEW what we didn't know and could point to it - this amazed me
30/05/2007 16:50:26	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	Tha'ts what the 'meta' discussion of their engagement is about i suppose.
30/05/2007 16:50:59	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	Can you expand on that barbara? How did it help the tutors?



30/05/2007 16:51:33	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	Although also i did participant observation of the workshops for example, some of hte interview commetns showed that for the students learning it was very non-evident from the 'visible' evidence in the setting what was going on for the students.
30/05/2007 16:52:22	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	Expanding on the 'meta' - this is about alerting students to the social construction of the different texts that are contributing to their learning - and this is complex
30/05/2007 16:52:25	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	So the students themselves couldn't see the learning process?
30/05/2007 16:52:53	Suzanne Shaffer (suzshaff)	does this happen routinely and is it scaffolded - I mean - are the complexitites or development of their thinking - ability to assess - could this be explored as steps in the development of their thinking ability in physics for example
30/05/2007 16:53:36	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	The idea is that they do see it, but a huge amount of pedagogical research would suggest that this is very problematic. You're just working towards what is often an illusory goal that they do understand.
30/05/2007 16:54:07	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	Sorry that was in response to Rachel's question!
30/05/2007 16:54:21	Suzanne Shaffer (suzshaff)	I think this is fascinating - the progression from novice to master in any content area and how that happens - often in unspoken ways
30/05/2007 16:54:22	Simon Bates (Simon Bates)	Hmmm. Hard to do in practice I think. You can test conceptual understanding with well-crafted questions.
30/05/2007 16:55:03	Suzanne Shaffer (suzshaff)	especially in the thinking part - how a physiscist thinks - or how a philosopher thinks
30/05/2007 16:56:31	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	You mention ni your case study that students like the workshops Simon, do you have feedback on why?
30/05/2007 16:56:55	Simon Bates (Simon Bates)	Many different reasons;
30/05/2007 16:57:03	Simon Bates (Simon Bates)	(i) working in groups
30/05/2007 16:57:10	Simon Bates (Simon Bates)	(ii) variety of activities
30/05/2007 16:57:48	Simon Bates (Simon Bates)	(iii) social aspects as well
30/05/2007 16:58:08	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	We are almost near the end of our scheduled session, are there any closing questions from the floor?
30/05/2007 16:58:54	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	Just like to say thanks Rachel for your moderation - v helpful
30/05/2007 16:59:03	Simon Bates (Simon Bates)	Agreed!
30/05/2007 16:59:32	Alison Muirhead (AlisonMuirhead)	Thanks all!
30/05/2007 16:59:34	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	Ok, then, as we've reached 5pm, I would like close this session by saying thank you to our authors, Simon, Barbara and John. Thank you!
30/05/2007 16:59:47	John Pryor (JohnPryor)	Thank you
30/05/2007 16:59:47	Suzanne Shaffer (suzshaff)	Thanks everyone!
30/05/2007 16:59:51	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	Thanks also to you all, please do continue your discussions or post any unanswered questions in the conference discussion boards.
30/05/2007 17:00:03	Simon Bates (Simon Bates)	Pleasure.



30/05/2007 17:00:05	Barbara Crossouard (BarbaraCrossouard)	Cheers Rachel - I'll post in the couple of references we mentioned in teh discussion foruma nd thanks to everyone!
30/05/2007 17:00:21	Carl Beckford (CarlBeckford)	Thanks all and Bye.
30/05/2007 17:00:23	Rachel Harris (rachelharris)	The next scheduled session will start sharp at 8am tomorrow! Have a nice evening!

- TRANSCRIPT ENDS -

We apologise that owing to the limit on storage of individual messages within the chat software, particularly long messages have been truncated. Unfortunately, we are not able to recover these.

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