



Assessing Design through Assessment Buddies

Jane OSMOND

Centre of Excellence for Automotive and Product Design (CEPAD)

Brian CLOUGH

Department of Industrial Design

Coventry University School of Art & Design

United Kingdom

Teaching Aims

- The philosophy
 - ✓ **To foster creativity and critical thinking**
- Underpinned by
 - ✓ Provision of **positive critical assessment and feedback**

Context

Creative **discipline:**

-no 'finite solutions'

-contain **ambiguous** terms such as 'creativity' and 'originality'

-**summative marking** schemes are seen to offer **little value in isolation.**

*Davies, A. (2003). Writing learning outcomes and assessment criteria in art and design. *Report for the ADCLTN* (ADM Subject Centre)

UK National Union of Students' Survey

Higher education students have consistently expressed **dissatisfaction with assessment and feedback**

Students baffled by feedback. Retrieved 24 December 2011 from <http://nus.org.uk/en/Advice/Your-Study/Struggling-With-Study/Students-baffled-by-feedback/.Acc>

Launch of **Assessment and Feedback Charter: ten key principles** addressing issues such as the lack of formative, face-to-face, verbal and timely feedback.

NUS Charter on Feedback & Assessment. Retrieved 8 January 2012 from <http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/news/article/highereducation/720/>

Origins of the Assessment Buddy System

Changes to the Industrial Design Programme created new modules including:

201AT Automotive and Transport Design Specialist Skills

- A quadruple module
- Worth 2/3 of marks
- 3 Assignments of increasing complexity and content
- Teaches specialist skills in Design, Ergonomics and Engineering
- Runs for full academic year

Previously

1. 'Pin-up in absentia'
2. Assessment of verbal presentation via written feedback

Industry Practice



**Image showing the indoor viewing area at Ford 's
Design Studios in Essex**

Problem and Solution

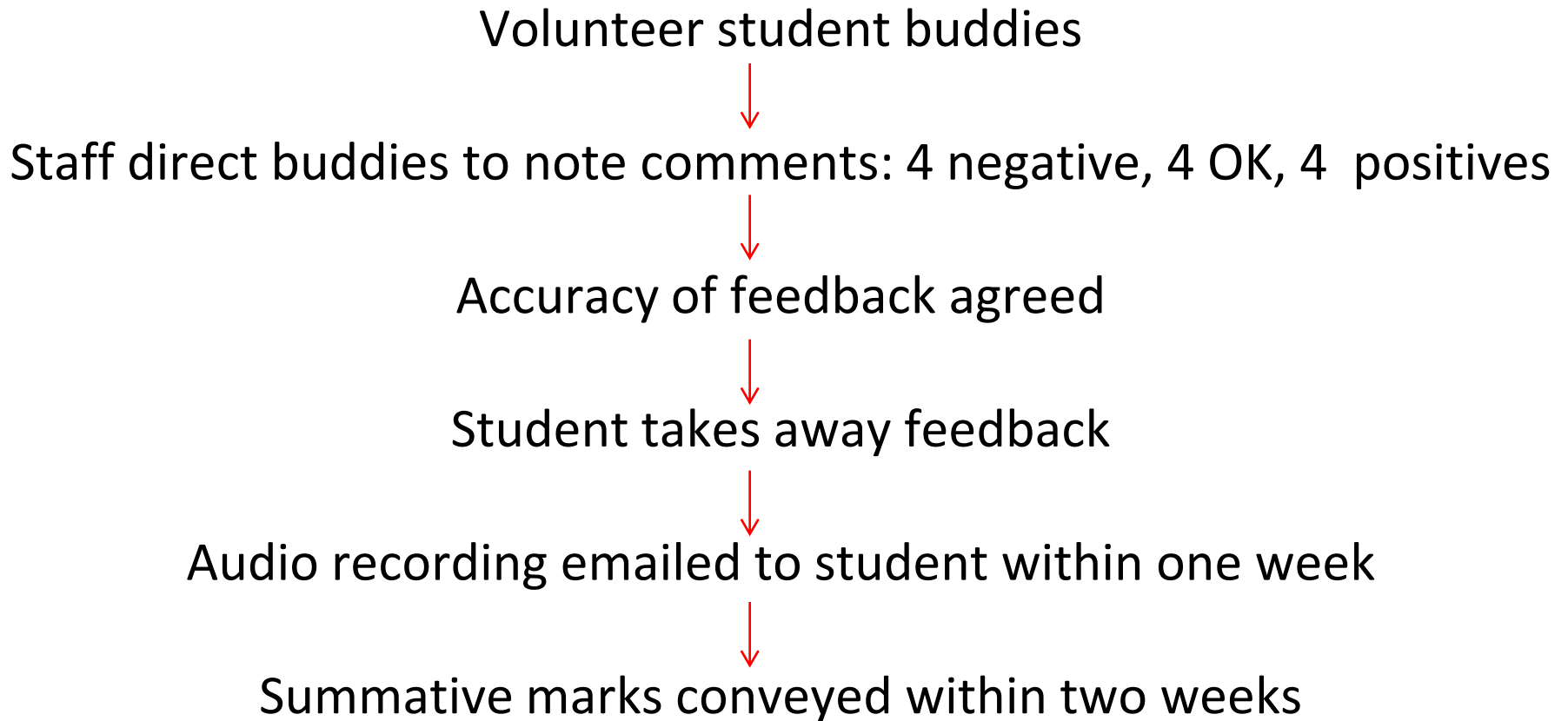
The Feedback Problem

- Complex pieces of work
- Assembled audience
- Scary
- 'Deaf ears' (Blair 2006)

The Coventry Solution

- 'Assessment Buddies'

Assessment Buddy System



Assessment Buddies in Action



First Iteration (November 2009)

- Written feedback forms only
- Two columns: buddy/assessed student
- Buddies 'conscripted'
- All parties signed and dated form
- Photocopy made
- Student takes form



Second Iteration (May 2010)

- Form redesigned - single large box for feedback
- Only assessed student/staff sign and date
- Audio Feedback emailed at end of assessment week.



Third Iteration (May 2011 – Present)

- Form redesigned now just 12 comments required (4 good, 4 okay, 4 needing improvement)
- Buddies now volunteers

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Effectiveness of 'Assessment Buddy' system

- Focus groups with:
 - Year 4 students - 1st/2nd iteration of system in 2009-2010
 - Year 3 students - 3rd iteration of system in 2010-2011
- Adapted National Union of Students' survey

Findings

You can tune out sometimes when you are having your feedback – it depends on your mood, how nervous you are or how confident you are.

(Year 4 student)

It is tricky because the course is trying to accommodate different job titles so areas will almost be given a similar weighting to each other...you might find a package drawing or technical drawing is given the same value as a render or a really nice illustration

(Year 3 student)

Findings

Get it on the day: that is a major advantage

(Year 3 student)

As an immediate form of feedback you instantly know where you have gone wrong

(Year 4 student)

To be honest I have got to the point where I just don't care about the mark

(Year 3 student)

Marks are not really my biggest concern – it is just a bit of paper at the end of the day what degree classification - marks for me are not hugely important it is whether I have learned something, moved forward, pushed myself further

Year 4 student

Findings

[the] comments that were made [were] tailored and bespoke to the person's project [so] you are not being shoehorned into categories

Year 3 student

From that point of view when you are in a presentation and you have someone with their head down writing notes, it does have a confidence effect, so that is more a 'pro' as opposed to a 'con'

Year 3 student

Findings

It was really useful seeing other people's work and you can gauge an imaginary league table kind of thing. I also benefited from seeing how everything was done so you knew what to expect when it was your turn to go and present and it was interesting to see what the lecturers had to say

Year 3 student

Findings

Worse still is when people completely miss the point of what the buddy system is and write their own assessments or opinion – this lecturer here giving you their opinion is actually just decoration, but actually ‘you fellow student, what do you think’?

(Year 4 student)

When you are in industry you are one unit supporting a company and it is important that everyone gets a view on what could go into production – whereas when you are a student it is about your personal development

(Year 4 student)

Findings

Much better than the pin up and leave: in fact it highlighted it – it wasn't that much of a problem until we started doing the buddy system just how crap it is to do the work, put it on the wall and just leave it and then come back and get a nod or a shake about whether it was OK

Year 4 student

Findings: NUS adapted survey

Assessment and Feedback: agreement	Year 3 (%)	Year 4 (%)
5. The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance	50	43
6. Assessment arrangement and marking have been fair	75	14
7. Feedback on my work has been prompt	75	71
8. I have received detailed comments on my work	75	28
9. Feedback on my work has helped me clarify things I did not understand	50	57

National Union of Students' Charter on Feedback and Assessment

Points 1 – 5:

1. Formative assessment and feedback should be used throughout the programme
2. Students should have access to face-to-face feedback for at least the first piece of assessment each academic year
3. Receiving feedback should not be exclusive to certain forms of assessment
4. Feedback should be timely
5. Students should be provided with a variety of assessment methods

Advantages of Assessment Buddies

- Staff
 - ✓ spontaneous feedback dialogue
 - ✓ feedback that is not specifically included in module outcomes
 - ✓ eye contact with students
- Students
 - ✓ immediate personalised feedback including 'average' comments
 - ✓ follow up audio/tone/international students
 - ✓ reflection before numerical mark
- System
 - ✓ simple to implement using readily available tools
 - ✓ addresses aspects of the National Union of Students' Feedback and Assessment Charter

Any Questions?

Brian Clough: arx094@coventry.ac.uk

Jane Osmond: arx162@coventry.ac.uk

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