



## Whole class feedback: Developing a Sevenoaks model

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### Introduction

Feedback provided via marking has an effect size of 0.79 (Hattie, 2012 referenced in Fletcher-Wood, 2018), with 8 additional month's progress potentially made by students (Education Endowment Foundation, 2017). The albatross like burden (Kirby, 2013) of marking means that good feedback is often difficult to achieve, with poor quality, generic (Christodoulou, 2019a; Foster, 2017), comments frequently seen. Students often do not act upon feedback and therefore make progress (Jones & Essery, 2018; Percival, 2017), as they may not understand actions to improve based on vague comments like 'explain this'; guidance steps on how to 'explain' have not been given (Christodoulou, 2019a; Jones & Essery, 2018; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). Marking individual student work therefore has limited

effectiveness (Elliott et al., 2016 referenced in Fletcher-Wood, 2018) and is a high teacher effort, low student impact method that Kirby (2015) & Facer (2016b) liken to a hornet.

A DfE (2016) marking review noted how it has 'become common practice for teachers to provide extensive written comments on every piece of work when there is very little evidence that this improves pupil outcomes in the long term', especially when 'driving pupil progress... can often be achieved without extensive written dialogue or comments'. The authors also reported that the 'obsessive nature, depth, and frequency of marking was having a negative effect on teachers' ability to prepare and deliver outstanding lessons' (Jones & Essery, 2018 (also alluded to in EEF, 2017)). Therefore, it is important to find a method of feedback that meets DfE guidelines whilst not being at the detriment of teacher's workload.

Whole class feedback (a low effort, high impact, 'butterfly' method (Kirby, 2015)) is a solution, which this study aims to investigate. Most work that exists on whole class feedback (WCF) is published on teacher's blogs where they reflect on the effectiveness of this strategy, both for students and teacher workload (the pros and cons are outlined in table 1). The premise of WCF is outlined in Jones & Essery (2018), Sherrington & Stafford (2019), and Percival (2017): work is read through whilst making notes on a feedback sheet, with common errors, things done well etc. recorded. Nothing is written on work itself, though a star in the margin next to good work that a student can read out could be added. The time saved on marking is utilised to create feedback tasks, which are added to the sheet. Christodoulou (2019b) recommends that the feedback tasks should involve 'a recipe, not a statement' that is 'specific and actionable' (Christodoulou, 2019c). i.e. students know how to progress with more specific comments than 'explain this'. The sheet is photocopied for pupil's books and feedback should be provided as close to when the students completed the original task as possible, so they can remember the task.

**Table 1: Pros and cons of WCF outlined by various teachers online.**

### Pros

- Timely feedback.
- Students make more progress.
- Saves having to repeatedly write the same comment on student's work.
- Can reflect more on overall class' performance.
- Students can easily find feedback later.  
-Race, (n.d.)
- Decreases marking time by over a third.
- Greater opportunity given to model strengths and weaknesses to students.  
-Jones & Essery (2018)
- WCF encourages pupils to discover errors for themselves, thus engaging with feedback more.  
-Enser (2017)
- Makes students responsible for their own learning.  
- Sherrington & Stafford (2019)
- More effective marking.
- Reduction in teacher workload.
- Fine tunes planning for future learning.  
-Thornton (2016)

### Cons

- Less personal.
- If students submit work late, you may have to delay providing the class with the feedback sheet, or risk providing feedback prior to all students completing a piece of work.  
-Race (n.d.)
- Sometimes miss writing comments on individual student's work!  
-Thornton (2016)

## Trialling whole class feedback

For the initial trial I used a Doodle 'Class Mark' template (Doodle, 2019) with two year 8 classes during Michaelmas term 2019. Overall, WCF was a much quicker method to mark a whole class set of assessments. However, this template is not suitable for Sevenoaks; it is too informal, some 'boxes' could be omitted, whilst others could be made larger to enable space for better quality feedback tasks for students to complete. A focus group was held with one of the year 8 classes to gather their views; overall this was positive as students do not mind receiving feedback using WCF; occasionally students were unaware of what specific feedback applied to them; and students would prefer a space for the class average mark, and space to write their mark so they know how they compare and 'how much they need to do to improve'.

## Development of the Sevenoaks class feedback template

An audit of current use of WCF at Sevenoaks was conducted. Various types of feedback that could be classified as WCF are used by a variety of teachers across a range of departments. None use a template; it is usually written out on an ad-hoc basis. All teachers still write individual comments on student's work and use WCF in addition, thus believing WCF hinders workload. This reflects how reluctant teachers are to stop writing comments on student work (as they perceive this to be more accountable to observers (Facer, 2016a & 2016b); encouraging a switch to WCF is a huge cultural shift for teacher and student alike. The audit was interesting to see what others do, though has not informed the creation of the template much as no other teacher uses one. It has, however, reinforced that WCF at Sevenoaks will be a big change.

The Sevenoaks class feedback template was created drawing on experience of, and feedback from, using the Doodle template, alongside exemplar templates from other teachers published online. The template (named 'class feedback' rather than WCF to dispel the perception students aren't getting as much, or as specific feedback as they would with individual written comments) was used with two year nine classes and two year eight classes during Lent term 2020 (use in Summer term was curtailed by COVID-19). Initially the template contained space for WWW and EBI comments, feedforward tasks, and space for duplication of an excellent example of the piece of work which students could analyse to assist their understanding of the feedback. The template was revised with usage (see figure 1 for one version), combining the WWW and EBI boxes into a 'feedback' box with statements that could be interpreted either positively or negatively dependant on whether they have a tick (WWW) or hashtag (#) (EBI) next to them on student work. This is as the WWW and EBI boxes were essentially duplicates of each other, thus still adding to workload. Initially WWW and EBI points were just bullet pointed, and students had to work out what feedback applied to them. Based on the focus group feedback, this evolved to have numbered points, with the corresponding number being annotated on the student's work. This was because some, especially lower ability, students found it difficult to engage with the feedback and work out what applied to them. The template does not have space for the average class mark as evidence suggests students will fixate on marks, rather than feedback, if given grades.

## Findings and recommendations

Whilst this is purely empirical evidence, after using the template for several months, students appear to be better at interrogating their own practise, self-assess more, and perform better in assessments than if they had not used WCF. Year 9 student feedback was that the Sevenoaks template was clear, well formatted, and stood out in their folders, which they liked. Most students did not mind WCF. From a teacher's perspective, WCF cuts down workload considerably (I would estimate I now spend a third of the time I would have originally spent marking assessments), enabling saved time to be spent on producing a higher quality feedback lesson, thus aiding student progress. After initial 'set up' and familiarisation with WCF students are quite self-sufficient with knowing what to do when they get a A5 light blue WCF sheet in class. Due to printing on coloured paper I no longer worry about accountability in the eyes of observers as my marking and feedback is easily recognised in folders.

This is, however, a small-scale study that was curtailed by the impact of COVID-19. Thus, I would like to continue to use the template with more classes over the next academic year, developing meaningful feedback tasks, and would like to see more Sevenoaks teachers start using the template in order that students become more familiar with this style of feedback to benefit further. There is the potential to get all students set up on OneNote too, with areas to submit work, the teacher can 'mark' it using whole class feedback online, including the feedback template, and this can allay any fears parents may have about students either not receiving feedback or it not being detailed enough, as parents can view feedback through their child's account and be shown it at parents evenings by the teacher too. I will also be implementing Kirby's (2013) idea of a colour coded MS Excel spreadsheet to track students have appropriately responded to feedback and ensure maximum metacognitive benefit is achieved.

### Figure 1: Exemplar completed Sevenoaks class feedback.

Class: 9L

Date: 25.02.2020

Topic: China – BRI essay

#### What went well:

1. Good utilisation of the article for research purposes to aid in planning your essay.
2. Good preparation and planning for your essay.
3. Good knowledge and understanding of both viewpoints demonstrated.
4. Good use of appropriate terminology (e.g. string of pearls, debt trap, trade, economic belt, maritime silk road etc.).
5. Clear evidence (examples and statistics) provided.
6. Good overview of what the BRI is in your intro.
7. Clear outline of what you will cover and allusion made to the command term in your intro.
8. Opinion clearly stated in conclusion and question clearly answered.

#### Even better if:

1. What the BRI is was clearly outlined in your intro.
2. You had a better overview of what you will cover in your intro.

3. Q is a 'to what extent' one, so you need to clearly state your opinion in the conclusion.
4. Do not state your opinion in the introduction in a geography essay! Save this for the conclusion, once you have presented your evidence!
5. Could you have included evidence?
6. Do you have a balanced view of both arguments presented?
7. Could you have utilised the research article more?

#### Feedforward task:

1. The WWW and EBI comments above have a number next to them. On your work, if there is a tick next to a number this is a WWW comment. If there is a # next to a number, this refers to an EBI comment. Look at your work and the associated numbers. Interpret what you did/ didn't do well. Your grade will be a number in a circle on your work. If you have a \* somewhere on your work this is an excellent exemplar aspect/ paragraph which I would like you to share with the class.
2. Annotate the example below in one colour to show what this student did well, and another colour to highlight what could have been done even better. What grade do you think this piece of work achieved? Remember to look back at your task instructions and marking criteria to help you.
3. If you had to do this task again, what would you do differently? How would you organise yourself and structure your time?

In 2013, Chinese Premier Xi Jin Ping announced plans for a ambitious revival of the Ancient Silk Road, which would modernise the world and revive. A massive trade and infrastructure project which would be split into two components, a Maritime road and highways which would connect the world. The Chinese claim the main points of this project are to promote economic prosperity, cultural exchange and world peace and development. So far China has spent 1 trillion to 8 trillion dollars on the Belt and Road, with 71 countries taking part. However critics are not convinced by China's plans and say that the Chinese are instead planning to gain geopolitical control throughout the world. In this essay I will be putting forth both sides and analyse them.

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