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Re-conceptualizing feedback processes and strategies

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Overview

- Challenges and possible ways fwd
- Researching award-winning teachers
- The 'crit' in Architecture
- Implications



Challenges for feedback processes

- Students find it difficult to use feedback: understandings; timeliness; uptake
- Too much feedback as telling (Sadler, 2010)
- Structural challenges e.g. end-loading of assessment tasks in modularized systems



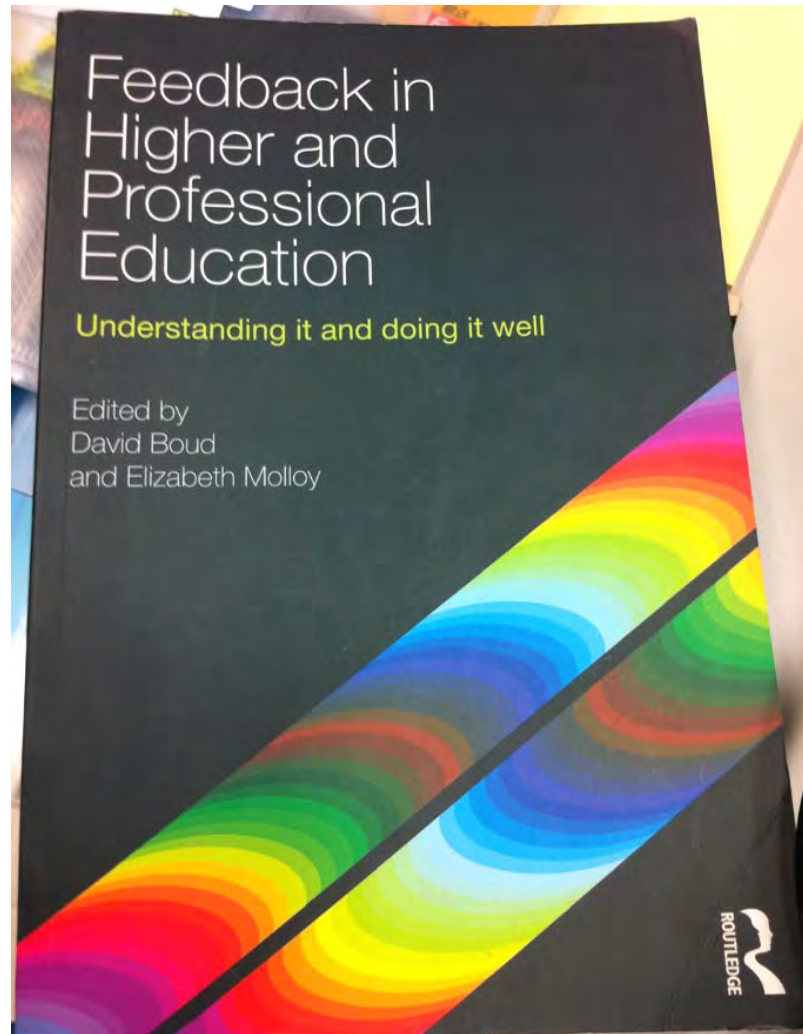
Reconceptualizing feedback

- Dialogic feedback aimed at the development of self-regulation (Nicol, 2010, 2013)
- Developing expertise in complex appraisal (Sadler, 2010)
- In-class interaction rather than post-assignment monologue (Carless et al., 2011)



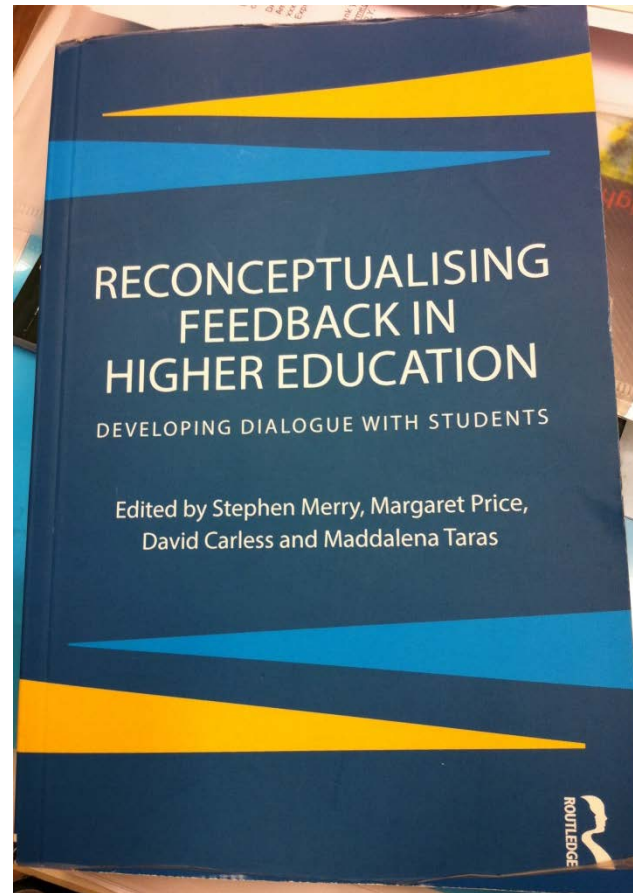
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Boud & Molloy (2013)





Merry, Price, Carless, & Taras (2013)





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RESEARCH PROCESSES



The Research

Exploring the interface between learning and assessment in the practices of 5 award-winning teachers

Disciplines of Architecture, Business, Geology, History and Law



Research methods

- Classroom observations
- Interviews with teachers
- Interviews with students



Research questions

RQ1: How do teachers help students to develop an understanding of quality in the discipline?

RQ2: How is feedback generated and managed?



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THE ARCHITECTURE CASE



Context

- Year 1: Introduction to Architectural Design
- Village house design for a Chinese village
- Assessment by portfolio of designs



The Studio Environment





The 'crit'

- Crits or critical review: students present design work in progress in front of peers
- Receive feedback and interact with two or more tutors
- Approx 3 crits per semester



Issues in crits

- The public nature of the crit
- Site for dialogic feedback
- Potential learning from other crits, including peer learning



Student preparing for her 'crit'



Teacher view of crit

“All teaching is based on some kind of dialogue. The crit allows it to be personal, it also allows for feedback to be reflective of the students’ intentions. In addition, you are opening it up to an outsider view.”



A student presenting for critique



Student 1

“I need to ask myself how I can make my design better. It is part of learning to be self-critical. ... We learn to be critical from listening to their analysis and so we can start to see things from another viewpoint.”

Student 2

“We should learn to make the judgments and decisions for ourselves. I need to try to convince the tutors even though I know that I may yield to their ideas eventually.”

Student 3

“What I learnt is the importance of reflecting critically. Sometimes you can’t see the flaws and you need a third party to point them out.”



The tutor dialoguing in a 'crit'



Teacher rationale

“We are trying to teach the students how to critique. To let them see the project a bit differently ... to be provocative and open up some discussion”

But what about the audience?





Learning from other crits

- More difficult to discern: every design is different but some wider issues emerge
- Flexibility in terms of attendance, engagement
- Little peer input to the crit discussion



Peer feedback

- Evidence of informal peer interaction in the studio
- Especially, during final crits in relation to displays of work
- Spontaneous peer collaboration vs teacher-directed peer feedback



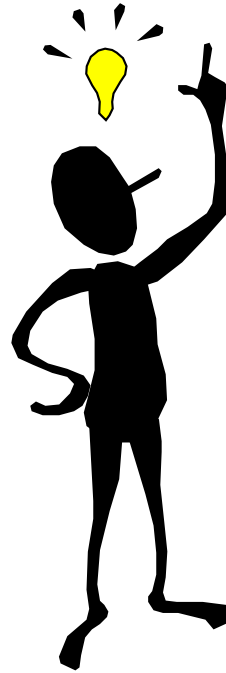
Summary of the case

- Dialogic feedback: students exposed to critique; honing their self-evaluative capacities; developing a sense of quality in architectural design.
- The public nature of the design studio and the on-display assignments are a site for spontaneous peer feedback.



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Implications





Feedback issues

- Feedback is more than about feedback per se
- It concerns assessment task design: e.g. cumulative tasks; interactive tasks.
- It is about relationships and trust (Carless, 2013);
- Course and disciplinary climates



Effective Feedback

- Is dialogic rather than uni-directional
- Is often within class rather than end-loaded
- Raises awareness of quality and standards
- Involves a judicious combination of peers, self and teachers
- Encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning