

Case Study 1: Audio Feedback

Abstract

The introduction of audio feedback into a third year advanced option enhanced opportunities for dialogue in subsequent one-to-one sessions between tutor and student. The provision of audio feedback did not take any more time than providing written feedback on essays but there was over a three-fold increase in the amount of feedback given. The style of feedback was also considered by students to be more direct, explicit and accessible than written feedback.

Key words: audio feedback, dialogue

Context	Project rationale (link to pedagogic research)
Subject: History	Encouraging dialogue
Level: 3	Meaningful feedback
Number of students: 10	Manageable staff workload
Format: (e.g. seminar) Advanced Option The Victorian City	Research On feedback On academic literacy On audio feedback

Initiative outline

The audio feedback was introduced for level 3 students to enhance formative assessment. Students submit essays electronically in pdf (or other) format and the tutor uses Adobe Acrobat Professional to annotate essays with short audio comments and short written 'post-it' style annotations on ways the essay could be improved.

The essays are returned electronically to the students without the mark, so encouraging the students to listen to/read the feedback in advance of a face-to-face session.

In individual tutorial sessions the students are provided with a mark and encouraged to comment on and further explore the feedback in more detail: discussing the next steps and ways to go forward noted in the audio feedback.

Implementation advice (including resources)

Adobe Acrobat Professional

Computer with microphone (or digital microphone)
Screenshot of essay

classes, specifically in social histories. This has often led to an over simplified vision of class and resulting conflict¹. This essay will aim to show that the Victorian cities were not a site of class struggle but were instead a place in which class identity was formed and although conflicts arose they did not characterise the city. The class structure in this era changed considerably due to the industrial revolution. It is important however to remember that although there were changes in the structure, the power still lay in the hands of the landed aristocracy. With the growth of the factory there was a creation of both a new bourgeoisie and a manufacturing working class, however conflict that arose between these two classes was mainly focused around the 1832 Reform Act which only enfranchised the people who had property worth over £10. Thompson convincingly argues that this created a boundary that defined the middle classes as separate from the working classes². The bitterness caused by the lack of enfranchisement was however expressed in ideas of nation a theme that will be explored later. Furthermore the Victorian city did not see its self in terms of class but in other forms of identity, and classes would often come together in order to tackle a specific problem such as the anti-corn laws.  

During the Victorian period the growth of the factory and manufacturing also meant that co-operation was more important than class conflict. Furthermore this kind of growth was specific to certain areas, Manchester was dominated by the cotton trade and Bradford by the textiles industry. The growth then of specific trades and process in cities meant that class formation and their identity depended upon where they lived. As previously mentioned it is important to not oversimplify or to cover the Victorian city with nostalgia. The city was a site of change especially with the industrial revolution, the Reform Acts and the growth of transport links throughout the country. However, the people living in these areas were not all working classes crammed into factories which were controlled by the all powerful bourgeoisie owner. There were many different types of workers, there were groups of artisans, petty bourgeoisie as well as new upper classes who have come from the city who contrasted to the older landed aristocracy. Hopefully this essay will demonstrate that the class structure of the Victorian city is too complex for such a broad statement to be made.

I will first explore the middle class in the Victorian city as I believe it is within the expansion and the changes within class boundaries which created the most conflict within the cities. Dennis Smith makes the excellent point that during the Victorian city more emphasis was placed upon more skilled and specific occupations such as being a doctor or being a lawyer. The people who were employed in such jobs became the new petty bourgeoisie, a class within the middle classes³. This increased the separation between manual working classes and the more academic and skilled middle classes. This is further shown in the decline of the artisan class whose numbers reduced due to the growth of the use of machinery. They had little capital behind them and a simple division of labour, at the same time as their living declined

¹ A. Kidd, 'City, class and culture : studies of social policy and cultural production in Victorian Manchester' (Manchester, 1985) p.2 

² F.M.L. Thompson 'The Rise of Respectability in Victorian Britain 1830-1900', (London, 1988) p.16 

³ D. Smith, 'Conflict and Compromise: Class and Social Change in Victorian Society 1830-1914. A comparative study of Birmingham and Sheffield' (London, 1982) p.14 



Benefits for teaching and learning

Feedback is more personal and accessible and by giving audio feedback in advance of a face-to-face meeting a dialogue is begun between tutor and student.

The technique gives the tutor an opportunity to provide more verbal feedback than written feedback in the same amount of marking time (see below for time analysis completed).

Task	Written feedback	Audio feedback
Reading essay	10 minutes	10 minutes
Reflecting on essay	5 minutes	5 minutes
Providing feedback	5 minutes	5 minutes
Amount of feedback	400 words	1320 words
Essay tutorial	15 minutes	15 minutes

The length of time and number of words are on **average** and are based on the same marker with the same essays.

Handwriting speed – 20 words per minute (for composition)

Typing speed – 19 words per minute (for composition)

Speaking speed – 125 words per minute (for presentations)

Tutorials were found to be more productive (previously students often did not understand written feedback and tutorial was spent explaining comments. The verbal feedback is more direct and informal, therefore more dialogue takes place in tutorials)

Students were very positive about the verbal feedback because they were able to review it at any stage.

It has proved an efficient use of the tutors marking, assessment and tutorial time.

Troubleshooting tips

There may be accessibility issues and therefore this system may not be applicable for every tutor or student. However, in addition to Adobe Acrobat Professional pc software, it is available on ipads.

The technique is effective if used with a variety of strategies that students/tutors can choose from for different assignments at different stages of academic study.