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Effective Feedback in teaching practice observations

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- To evaluate purposes and processes of feedback
- Raise questions for discussion/development about feedback to teachers

My assumptions in what we already teach to our trainees...

Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam
1998 *Inside the Black Box* London: King's College



Assessment **of** learning

Assessment **for** learning

Assessment **as** learning

- Feedback has more effect on achievement than any other factor. (Hattie cited in Petty)
- Black and Wiliam of Kings College London spent four years studying and reviewing research into feedback which is closely linked to 'formative assessment', assessment for learning
- Agreement with Professor Hattie that formative assessment has a huge effect on learning quality.
- Can add the equivalent of two grades to students' achievement if done very well

Medals and Mission

Medals:



Information about what a student has done well

'Your paragraphs and punctuation are good'

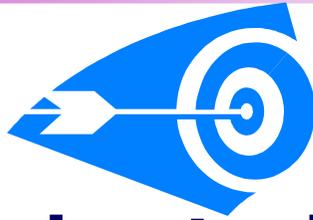
'That's good evidence'

Examples of comments written in the margin next to a well made point by the student.

Grades and marks are measurements not medals.

Medals are *information* about what exactly was done well.

Missions



Information about what the student needs to improve, correct, or work on.

Forward looking and positive.

'try to give more evidence for your views'

'Use more paragraphs to show the structure of your writing'.

Measurements such as grades do not usually give this information.

Clear goals

The medals and missions need to be given in relation to clear goals usually best given in advance.

Goals might include assessment criteria such as

'use paragraphing to show the structure of your writing'

'give evidence, illustrations for the points of view you express'.

So for this session....

- How do we use feedback as teacher educators?
- Why do we use feedback as teacher educators?
- What do trainee teachers make of our feedback?

Contexts for feedback

- **Observation**
- **Assignment marking**



Observation?



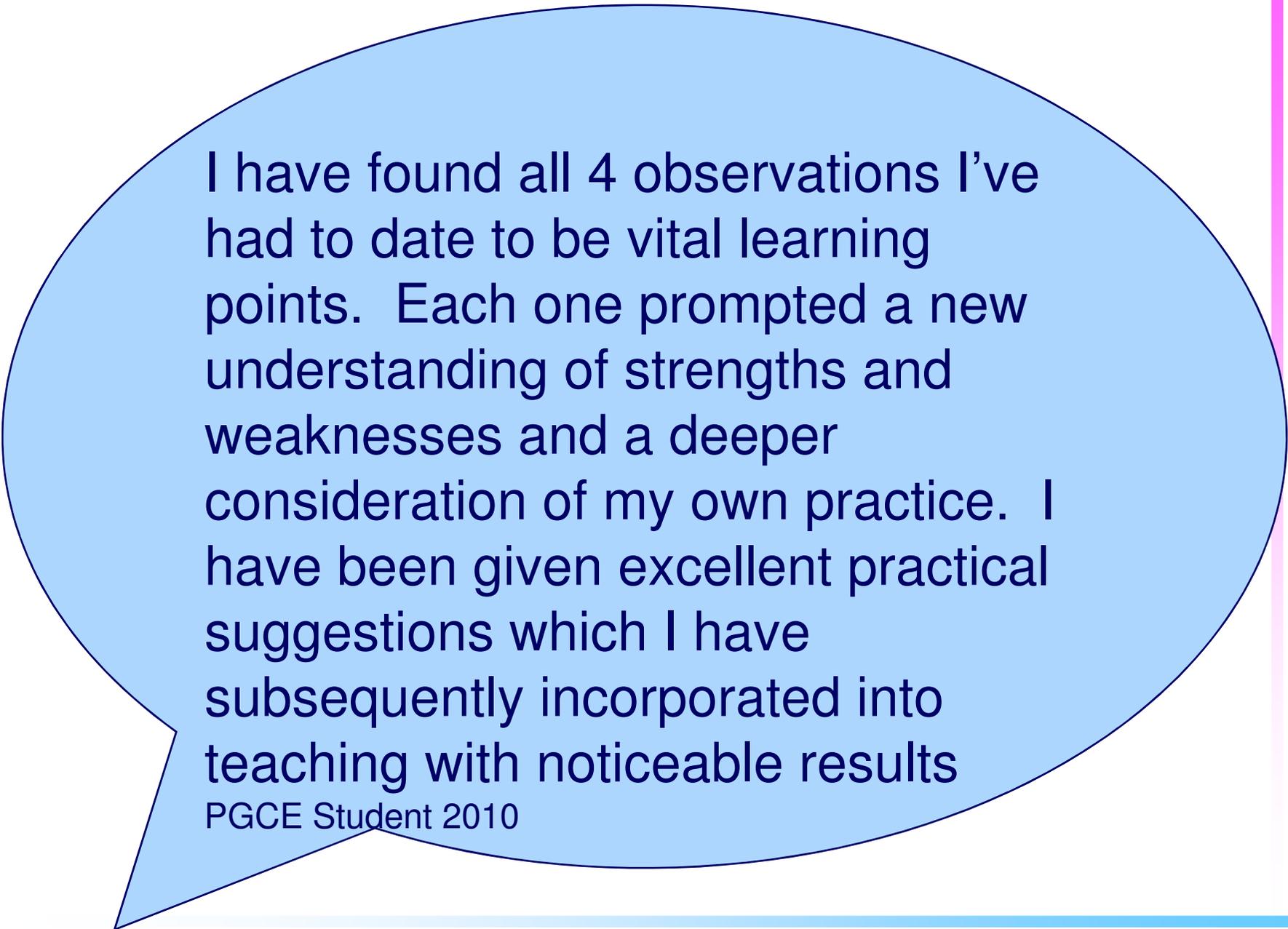
Feedback?



The urge to tell teacher education students to teach according to current theories is balanced by a sense that student teachers can best learn to teach through reflection on their own experience. We suspect that the widespread use of observation and critique of individual lessons by teacher educators and teachers is motivated more by the former urge

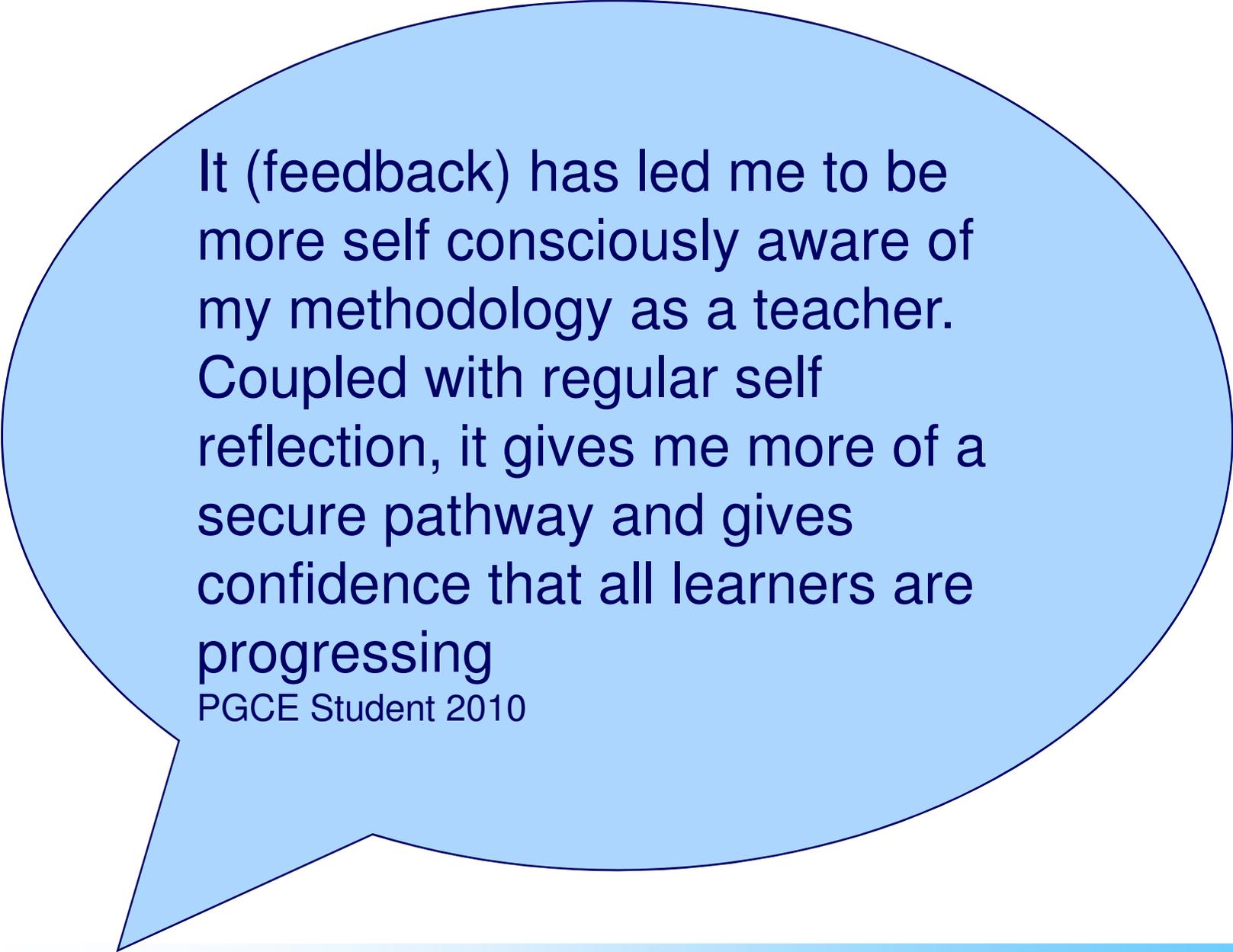
Sullivan et al 2000 Caution: Classroom Under Observation

Nevertheless,
students find value in
it



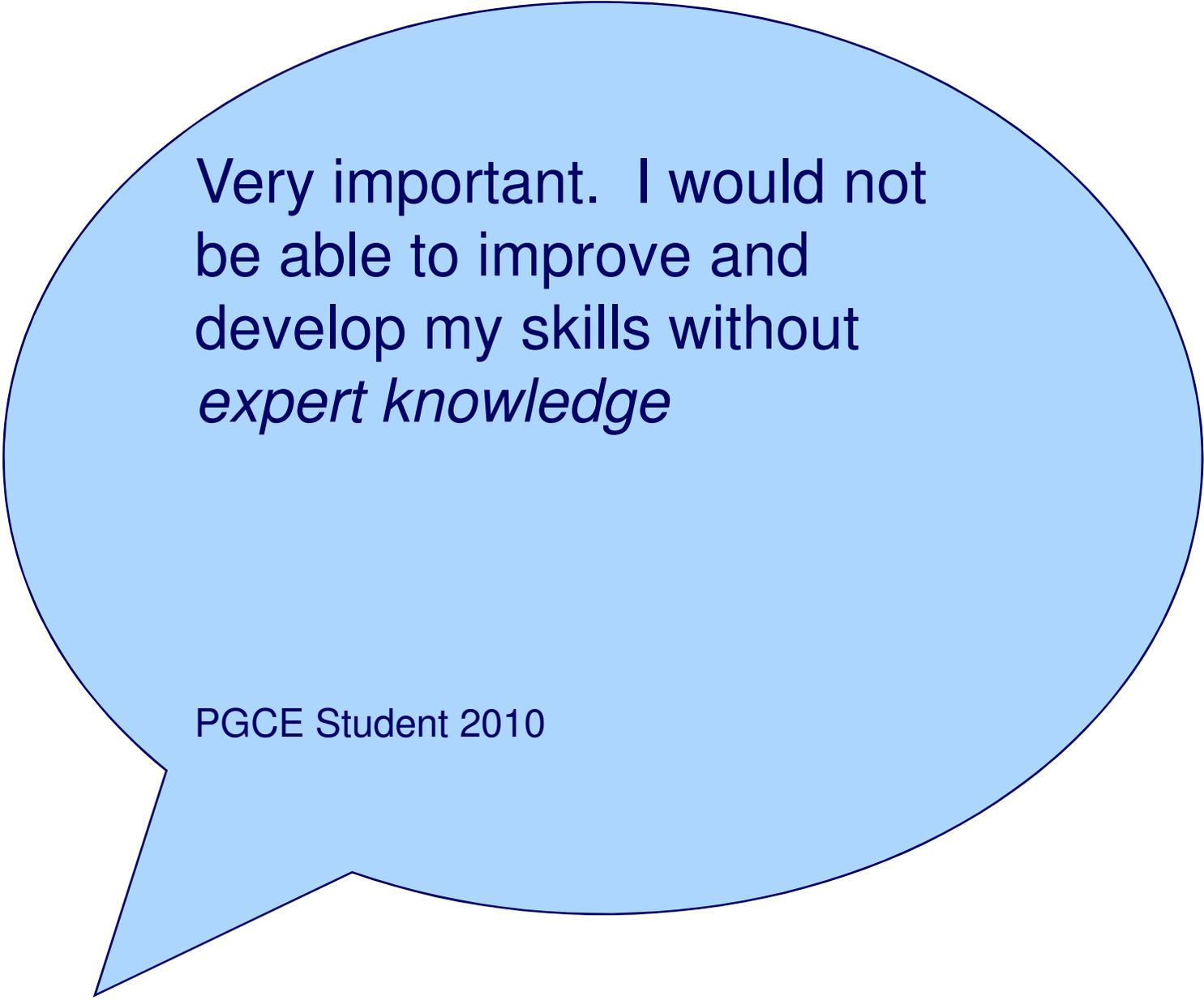
I have found all 4 observations I've had to date to be vital learning points. Each one prompted a new understanding of strengths and weaknesses and a deeper consideration of my own practice. I have been given excellent practical suggestions which I have subsequently incorporated into teaching with noticeable results

PGCE Student 2010



It (feedback) has led me to be more self consciously aware of my methodology as a teacher. Coupled with regular self reflection, it gives me more of a secure pathway and gives confidence that all learners are progressing

PGCE Student 2010



Very important. I would not
be able to improve and
develop my skills without
expert knowledge

PGCE Student 2010

The Expert Teacher

“It is important to become a keen observer of our own behaviours, as well as the behaviours of others, in order to consciously develop strategies and approaches to teaching that will be conducive to high quality learning”

Loughran 2010

- Learning as a journey
- Ideas as plants (growing flourishing)
- Education as participation (engagement, involvement)
- Teaching as support (facilitation, care, help)
- Education as a resource, product or commodity
- Teaching as transmission

It is a system of metaphor that structures our everyday conceptual system, including most abstract concepts and that lies behind much of everyday language

Lakoff and Johnson 1980:3

IDEAS ARE FOOD

Raw facts, half baked ideas. I can't swallow that. You can get your teeth into it. Spoon feed. The meaty part of the paper

IDEAS ARE PEOPLE

The *father* of modern thought. *Brainchild. Breathed new life into* the idea. Ideas have *spawned*

IDEAS ARE PLANTS

Budding theory . Come to fruition. Branches of the subject. The seed of an idea. A fertile imagination

IDEAS ARE COMMODITIES

A worthless idea; valuable; That thought won't sell. A wealth of ideas.

UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING

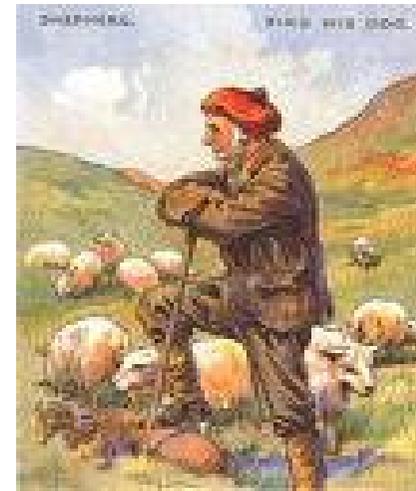
It looks different. The whole picture; an insightful idea; A transparent argument

Acquisition and Participation metaphors (Sfard 1998)

- Student as recipient, facts and skills as products which can be possessed by individuals and delivered or transmitted by providers or teachers
- Participation – social process of learning, communities of practice, creating meaning from our experiences

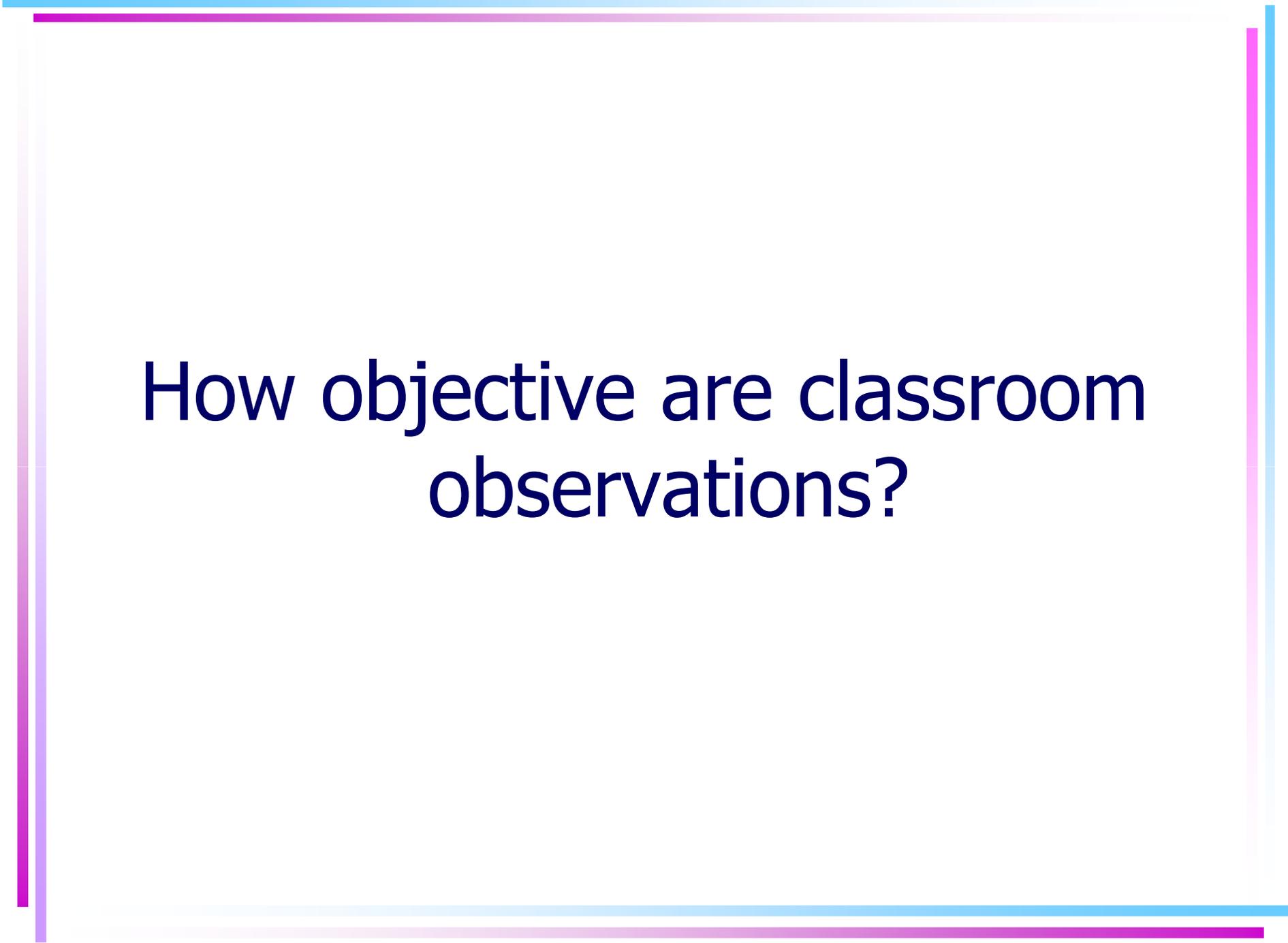
Recognising the model of teaching you
have

Recognising the model of teaching you
see



Attempts to reconstruct and interpret competence statements sequentially are likely to be seized upon by some as the final word on the route to effective teaching, rather than scaffolding for supporting learning. Yet progress in teaching is more akin to incoming waves breaking on the shore, sometimes moving forward relentlessly, sometimes finishing so far back that to a casual onlooker it appears that the tide has turned...common experience suggests that the prospect of every competence being fully maintained, regardless of school and classroom context is really only in the minds of those who do not do the job

Hayes 2004:172



How objective are classroom observations?

“lack of clarity of clear definition of goals of teaching, partly due to the lack of constructs used to describe teaching, and partly a result of lack of definition in the terms that we use to communicate with each other about teaching”

Sullivan et al 2000

“A function of the method of observation, that no one view of reality is more valid than any other”

Evertson and Green 1986

Prepare teachers for different points of view?

Given their relative inexperience, student teachers may not have the background to interpret such comments into an appropriate broader framework of ideas about teaching and learning. They may feel that they are the subject of confusing, conflicting advice from various observers. In these circumstances, they are not likely to find teacher education helpful and reject much of what it offers...

Sullivan et al 2000

The Reflective Practitioner

Respecting the intentions of the teacher

How might this affect feedback we give?

“There is not just one way of doing teaching. Because teaching comprises so many competing demands, these choices make teaching itself problematic...understanding teaching as problematic means that teaching is dilemma based, and because by definition, dilemmas are situations which need to be managed (not necessarily solved), it means we are continually making judgements about what we consider to be appropriate actions in a given situation at a given time”

Loughran 2010

Activity

Look at the set of comments on the handout. What are the good and bad features of the observation feedback

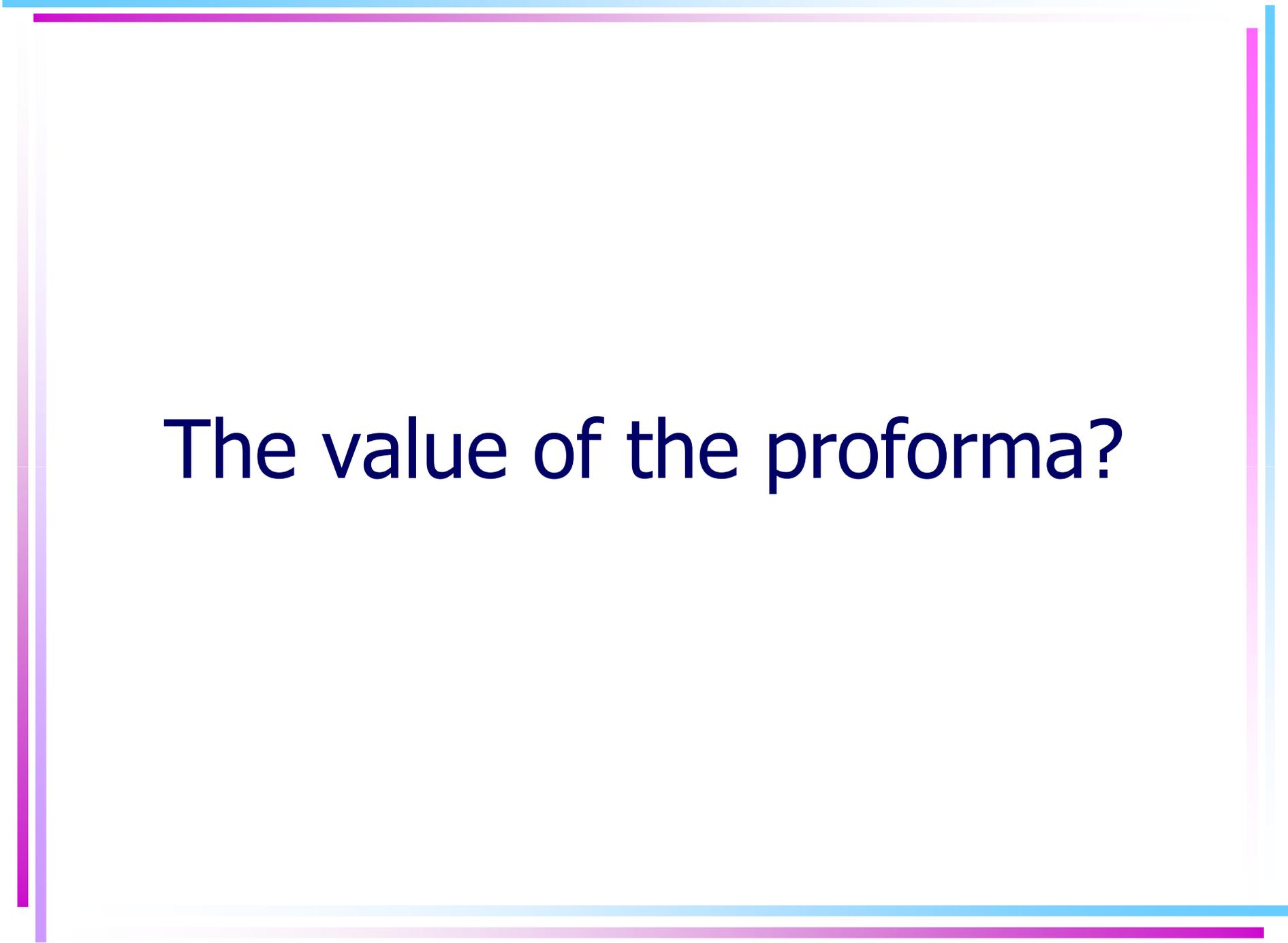
Are there any differences in the second example of feedback comments?

Activity

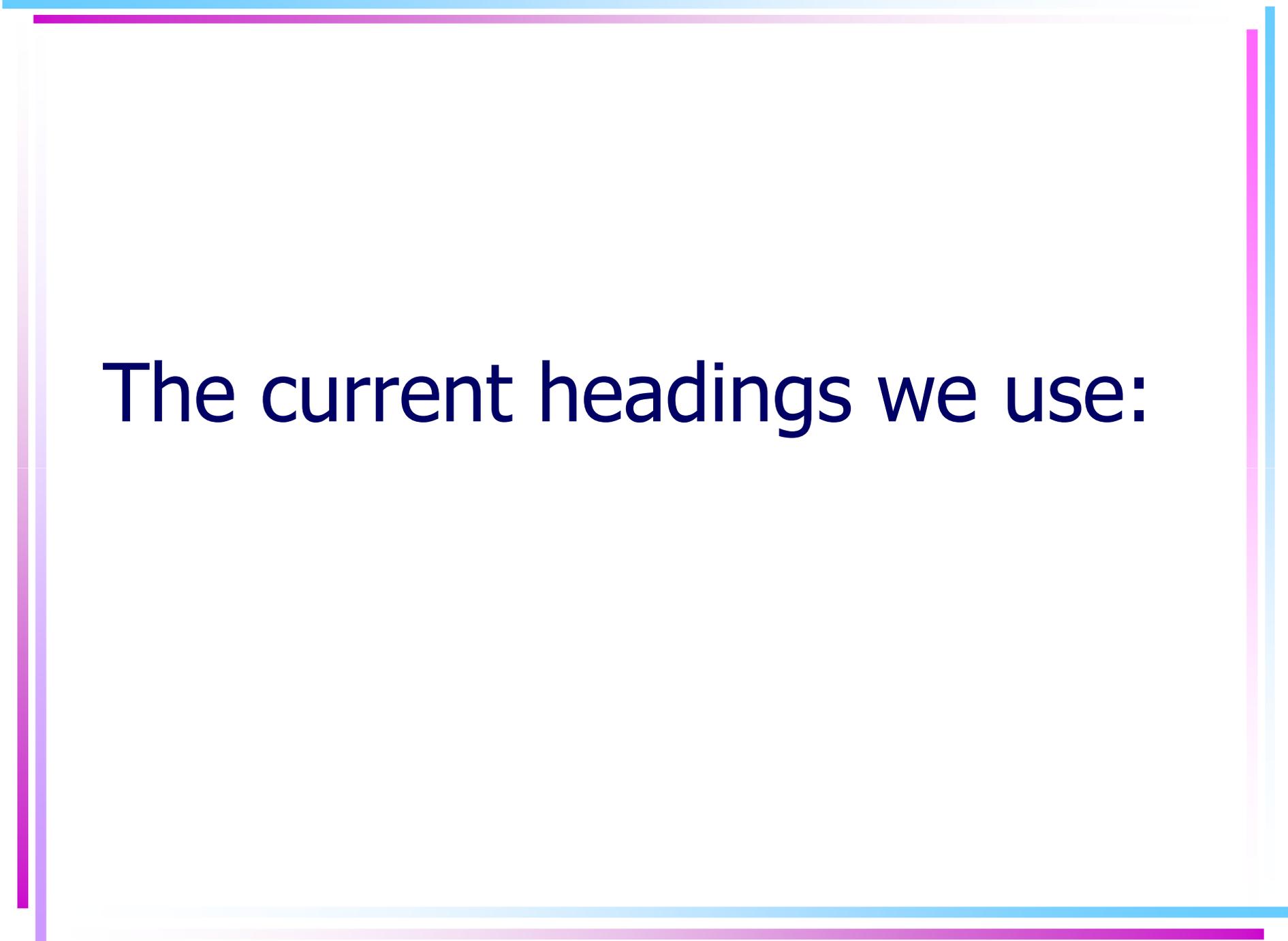
Consider the comments on the handout:

What is the balance of types of comments in relation to the following headings?

- Confirmation/affirmation
- Technical
- Constructive/Developmental
- Destructive



The value of the proforma?



The current headings we use:

Start of lesson

Lesson Planning and Preparation

Communication

Assessment

Interaction

Differentiation

Inclusion

Supporting Literacy and Numeracy

Share...

What changes might there be if we used different prompts?

Demonstrating a clear purpose

Encouraging students

Cooperative group work

Directing the lesson

Capturing the students' interest

Distributing interactions

How we give feedback

The structure of what we tell them

- Primacy and recency
- But/and
- Sandwich
- Three point

'It said "good start, well structured" blah blah "BUT". So all I could see was the "but", I couldn't see the "excellent" or the "well structured" or the "it's fluent" or anything. All I could see was "but obviously you've done this wrong you idiot", and it took one of my friends to say, "for god's sake don't be ridiculous".'

Young (2000)

But/And

'when you nodded and looked at the students I really felt you were interested . Another point I'd like to make is that I was confused when you asked if they had children as I couldn't see the relevance of the question. Perhaps you could have asked...'
Russell (1998)

Similar to BUT..

However, although, yet, nevertheless etc

Praise sandwich....what do you think?

“This formula has been in existence since primary school and had been experienced by most trainees countless time...there is a concern that it has become transparent as a pane of glass and that trainees will see right through it. They know that the first praise is designed to soften them up, the truth is in the middle part and the final praise is so they don't go away feeling too bad. It is possible that the reason that trainers have used this formula over the years is so that they do not feel too guilty in criticizing trainees. Learners who recognise the formula will feel insulted

Russell 1998

Feedback Formula

Russell 1994

- Balanced
- Specific
- Objective
- Appropriate
- Understandable
- Participative
- Comparable
- Actionable
- Sufficient/Not too much
- Hierarchical

Activity

From the following list what do you think are the most important qualities in observers?

What would you add/delete?

Qualities of observers in developing teachers

- Master/apprentice relationship
- Recognising the paradigm
- A reflective practitioner
- Knowing the learners
- Skilled in identifying what is important
- Recognising the intentions of the teacher
- Explicit awareness of own strategies
- Metacognition – the process of thinking
- Balancing feedback so it is meaningful
- Others?

How feedback is received



Young 2000

Self esteem and mature students' feelings about feedback on assignments

“ a tendency for students with low self esteem to take any comment as an indictment of themselves: high self-esteem students see the comments as bearing on their work only”

Weaver's Research 2006

- Do students understand written feedback?
- What are students perceptions of written feedback?
- What do students perceive as helpful versus unhelpful?
- How can the value of feedback be increased?

What messages are being conveyed by feedback given...?

- Shaped by tutors' values, beliefs and understanding' Weaver 2006
- Dependent on tutors' beliefs about their purpose in providing feedback Ivanic et al 2000

Affects comments on:

- Knowledge ` the `correctness of the work'
- Process (of writing/study)
- The balance of these

Interpreting the feedback

'evidence of **some** wider reading shown'

- Could have been more focussed
- You make some interesting points

What are your own favourites for baffling students?

Terminology

Students understood what was meant by...

- Logical and coherent structure
- Key concepts identified

But had difficulty with

- Too descriptive
- More critical reflection needed
- Lacks application of theory
- Underpinning theory needed
- Superficial analysis

What students didn't find helpful

- Too general or too vague to be of use
- Lack of guidance
- Focus on negative
- Unrelated to assessment criteria

'Improvement in learning occurs when students perceive feedback as enabling learning, not just as a judgement on their level of achievement' Weaver 2006

Share your thoughts on/practices in...

1. giving guidance to students on the purpose of feedback (*feedforward?*)
2. discussion of the values and beliefs which underlie it

Weaver (2006) concludes

‘the results from this study suggest that an important step towards making feedback more effective is through providing a better balance between positive and critical feedback. Tutors need to direct their energies towards providing appropriate guidance and motivation to students rather than simply diagnosing problems and justifying the mark”

Activity

A new and inexperienced teacher educator colleague has joined your teacher education team. What 5 key points does s/he need to know about giving feedback in:

- Observation
- Assignment marking?

Extension:

How might his/her development in giving feedback be followed up?

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