

March 1, 2010

# *The 8<sup>th</sup> Symposium: Standards Based Assessment and Honours Classification*

## Parallel Discussion Session

### **The Enhancement of Feedback Processes: the Role of the Student**

Chairperson: **Dr. Scott T. Smith**

The University of Hong Kong

Discussants: **Dr. David Carless**

The University of Hong Kong

**Professor Tony Hung**

Hong Kong Baptist University

**Professor Robert K.Y. Li**

City University of Hong Kong

**Professor Keith Thomas**

The Chinese University of Hong Kong



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# Developing student dispositions for sustainable feedback

David Carless

University of Hong Kong

dcarless@hku.hk

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## Feedback and lifelong learning

- To what extent are we developing student dispositions needed for the world of work and learning beyond the academy?

Feedback:

Not too bad, could do better



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## Effective teaching and the promotion of self-evaluation

- The most effective teaching eventually makes the teacher unnecessary ... students will succeed to the extent that they become independent lifelong learners who have learned from us but no longer depend on us to learn ... a key element is to actively engage them in self-assessment throughout their studies (Riordan & Loacker, 2009, p. 181).



## Feedback and self-evaluation

- Providing more timely or more detailed feedback is good, but not a sustainable solution
- For students to be able to make productive use of our feedback, they need to be developing self-evaluative capacities
- “The possession of evaluative expertise is a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for improvement” (Sadler, 1989 p. 138).



## Good feedback

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



## Sustainable feedback

- “Dialogic processes and activities which can support and inform the student on the current task, whilst also developing the ability to self-regulate performance on future tasks”.

(Carless, Salter, Yang & Lam, *Studies in Higher Education*, 2011)



## Sustainable feedback activities

- Using exemplars or previous assignments to develop notions of quality work
- Students providing peer feedback on work in progress
- Videoed OPs: students reflect on performance; peers also provide comments
- Posting work in progress on a blog as a stimulus for interactive discussion



## Features of sustainable feedback

- Involving students in dialogues about learning which raise their awareness of quality performance;
- Facilitating feedback processes through which students develop capacities in monitoring and evaluating their own learning;
- Task design involving two-stage assignments in which feedback from varied sources is generated, processed and used to enhance performance.



## Sustainability in feedback

- Sustainability lies in the ability of students to improve the quality of their work independently of the tutor
- The most effective feedback eventually makes the feedback provider unnecessary (Carless et al, 2011)



## The challenge

- Delivering content is necessary and relatively straightforward
- Developing student capacities to learn are more challenging, more time-consuming and **MORE PRODUCTIVE**
- Are you up for the challenge?



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# *Student Feedback*

Prof. Tony T.N. Hung  
HKBU

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## Online Teaching Evaluation

- The existing TE questionnaire [at HKBU] focuses only on the teacher's performance, e.g.:
  1. The lecturer has been well-prepared for the class.
  2. The lecturer has provided clear explanations of important issues/principles in the subject.
  3. The lecturer has been responsive to students' views and comments.
  4. The lecturer has presented the subject in a well-organised manner.
  5. The lecturer has shown thorough/in-depth knowledge of the subject.
  6. The lecturer has made an effort to enhance student learning.
  7. The lecturer has made an effort to stimulate students' interest in the subject.



## Written comments

- Students' written comments often provide better indicators of actual learning outcomes:
- E.g. "The issues raised in the lectures helped us think critically about how different people view the language.... I started to learn about the characteristics of different varieties of English in a global perspective."
- "I used to hate Phonetics, but now I find it interesting".



## Teacher's response to feedback

- Student: “I hope the answers for the assignments can be provided after grading”
- Teacher: “I think what's valuable about most of these questions is that they have no fixed answers -- if they did, the assignments would be no more than exercises in looking up answers. Rather, the questions are supposed to make you think and find your own rationale for making a conscious decision about some issue in language, and your answer is only as good as the strength of your arguments and evidence in support of it.”



## Problems in designing generic TE questionnaires

- How can a *generic* questionnaire tell us anything about course-specific outcomes?
- Perhaps not, but it can still tell us about important generic learning outcomes, e.g.:

Q.4 “The lecturer has stimulated me to think critically and creatively”

Q.5 “The lecturer has helped me to learn how to learn and to take responsibility for my own learning”





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## Questions about the course itself

Q.6 “The course has helped me achieve the major learning outcomes stated in the syllabus”

Q.7 “The course has succeeded in stimulating my interest in the subject”



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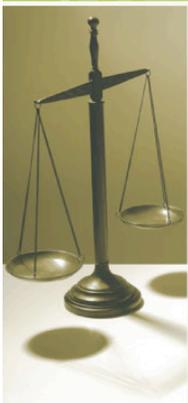
## Graduate Attributes

- Graduate Attributes are generic outcomes of a university education, e.g.:
- “Be able to think critically and creatively”;
- “Be independent, lifelong learners with an open mind and an inquiring spirit”;
- “Be responsible citizens with an international outlook and a sense of ethics and civility”; etc.



## The Moodle platform

- An interactive platform not only for disseminating course materials and information, but for discussion and feedback
- A good indicator of the learning experience that has taken place, and a forum for the exchange of ideas among students and teachers and for further learning



## Examples from the Moodle Forum page for “English through Current Events”

- “When I first read about Liu Xiaobo I was really angry with the Chinese government. When I was a student in school, we always learned ‘We are free, we have the freedom of speech and belief. We have the human rights and our country is a democratic country’ in the textbooks and political lessons in class. But now I gradually realize the limitations in China...”
- “I am quite unable to calm down myself after reading the Charter 08 proposed by Liu Xiaobo. As a citizen living under the governing of PRC, first I am ashamed for not paying any attention to this incident when it occurred...”



## Example of student essays posted on Moodle

[Topic: 'Patriotism']

- “....I must say that it is Tan’s [Tan Zuoren] patriotism that sent him to prison. Tan even said that it was an honor to be imprisoned for his homeland. The sentence is both shameful and absurd. It is not out of mind if you have the knowledge of the officialdom, but it is out of imagination if you have the basic sense of right and wrong. I was reminded of a famous line in Laoshe’s play: “I do love our country, but who will love me?” This was, and sadly still is, the tragedy and shame of our nation, the nation is not able to protect her child who loves her!....”





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# The Enhancement of Feedback Processes: The Role of the Student

Professor Robert K.Y. LI

Department of Physics and Materials Science  
College of Science and Engineering, City University of  
Hong Kong



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Student feedback from:

- JSSCC
- TFQ

Feedback should be a 2-way process

- To improve student's learning



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Engineering programs must demonstrate that their students attain :

- (a) an ability to apply knowledge of mathematics, science, and engineering
- (b) an ability to design and conduct experiments, as well as to analyze and interpret data
- (c) an ability to design a system, component, or process to meet desired needs within realistic constraints such as economic, environmental, social, political, ethical, health and safety, manufacturability, and sustainability
- (d) an ability to function on multi-disciplinary teams
- (e) an ability to identify, formulate, and solve engineering problems
- (f) an understanding of professional and ethical responsibility
- (g) an ability to communicate effectively
- (h) the broad education necessary to understand the impact of engineering solutions in a global, economic, environmental, and societal context
- (i) a recognition of the need for, and an ability to engage in life-long learning
- (j) knowledge of contemporary issues
- (k) an ability to use the techniques, skills and modern engineering tools necessary for engineering practice.



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## Example from 2 course – Polymer Engineering & Composite Materials

- Group project & presentation
  - Assessment of contributions
- Students' feedback on their achievement of LOs
  - In middle and end of semester
- *Students APPRECIATED ... adopted an interactive approach for teaching. ... Students considered such learning method useful and RECOMMENDED that more presentation trainings and projects-related activities be arranged for students in other courses.*



## Challenges:

- Changes in student profile
- Methods of communication
- Students may feel burdened with too many evaluations
- Evaluation on success of process
- Understanding and support from upper management





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# (effective) Dialogic Feedback

**Keith Thomas**

Centre for Learning Enhancement And Research  
CUHK



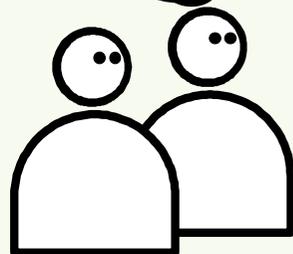
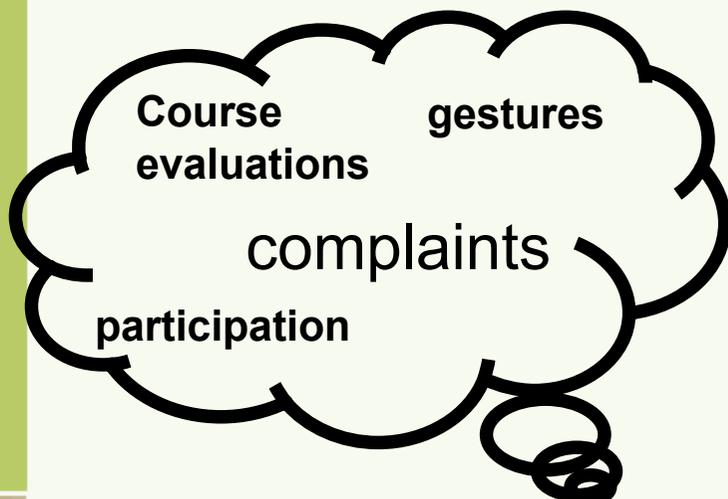
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# Feedback is apparent everywhere



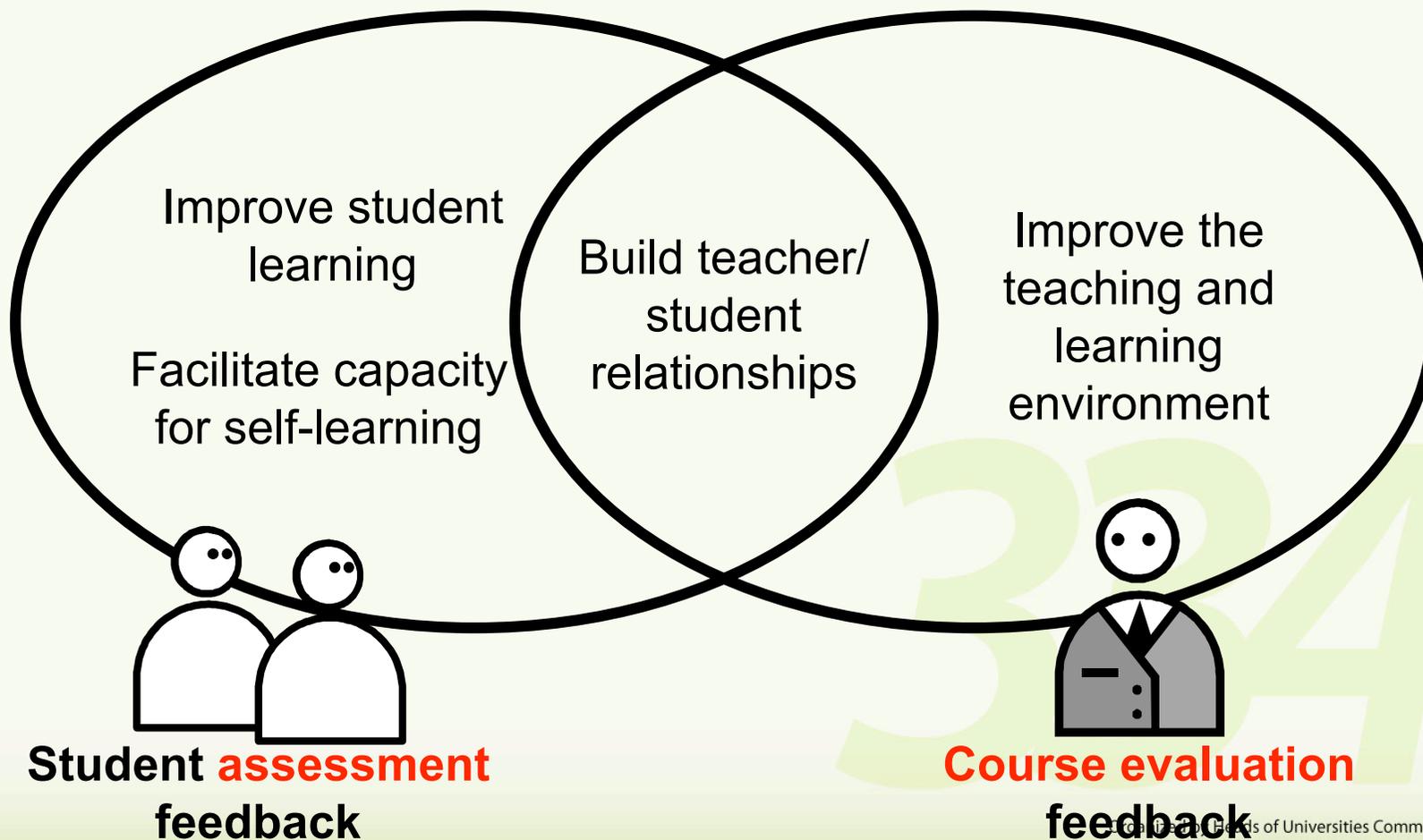
**Course evaluation  
feedback**



**Student assessment  
feedback**

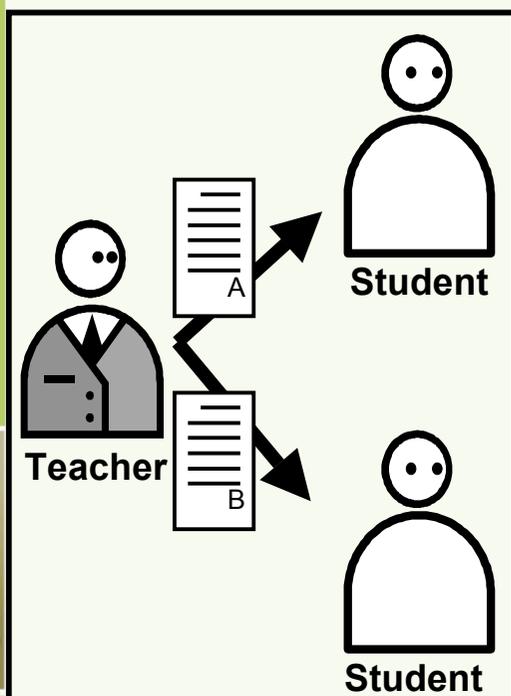


## Purpose of feedback?



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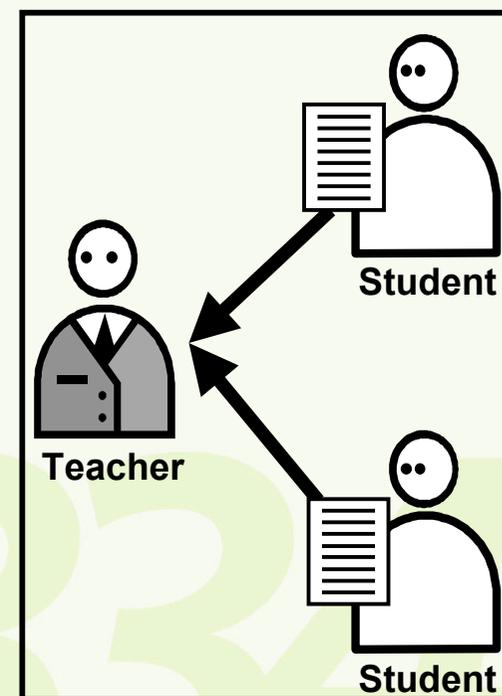
# One-way feedback



Student **assessment** feedback

## Characteristics

- Occasionally
- Passive
- (Poor) quality information
- Recipient not able to respond (to feedback)
- Invites a weak relationship
- Students' may be reluctant to provide detailed responses to open questions



Course **evaluation** feedback

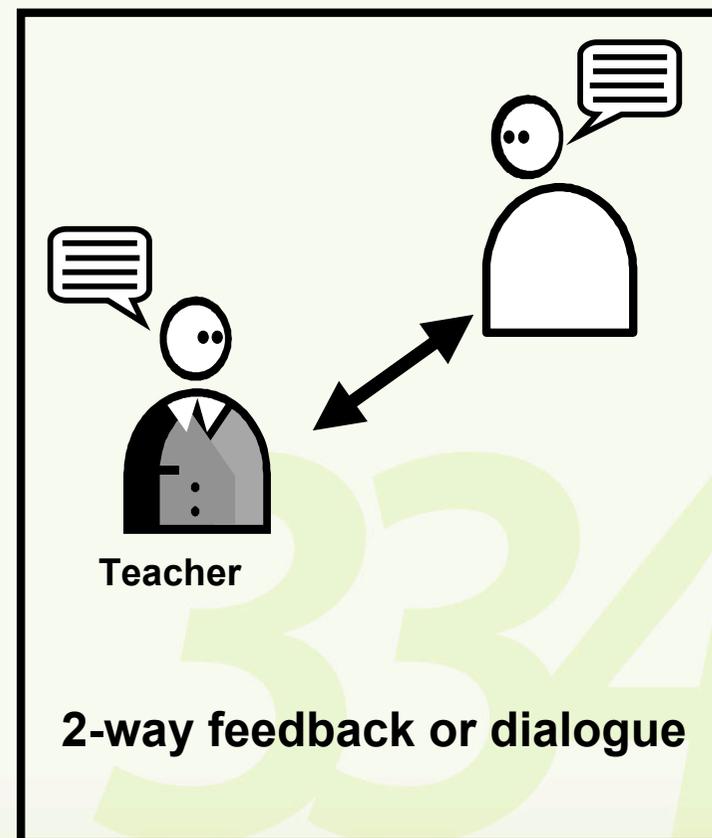
## Dialogic Feedback (2-way) – a definition

Feedback as dialogue means:

- the student receives initial feedback
- and
- has the opportunity to engage the teacher in discussion about that feedback

(Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006)

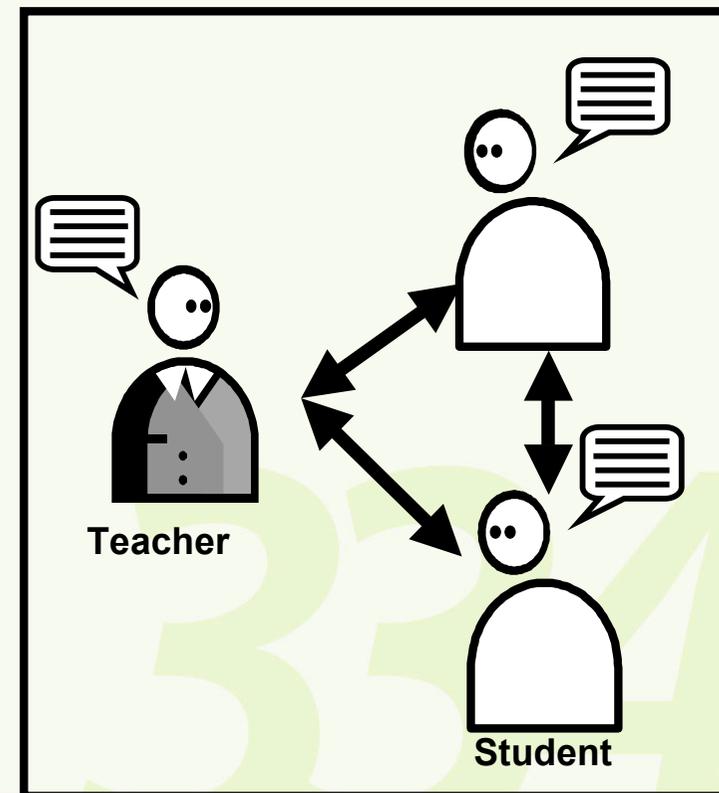
Context: Student **assessment**



## Dialogic Feedback – extend the idea

Dialogue, where the student(s) receive initial feedback (individually), and (generic) feedback is shared and discussed across the wider student body – **in class and/ or online**

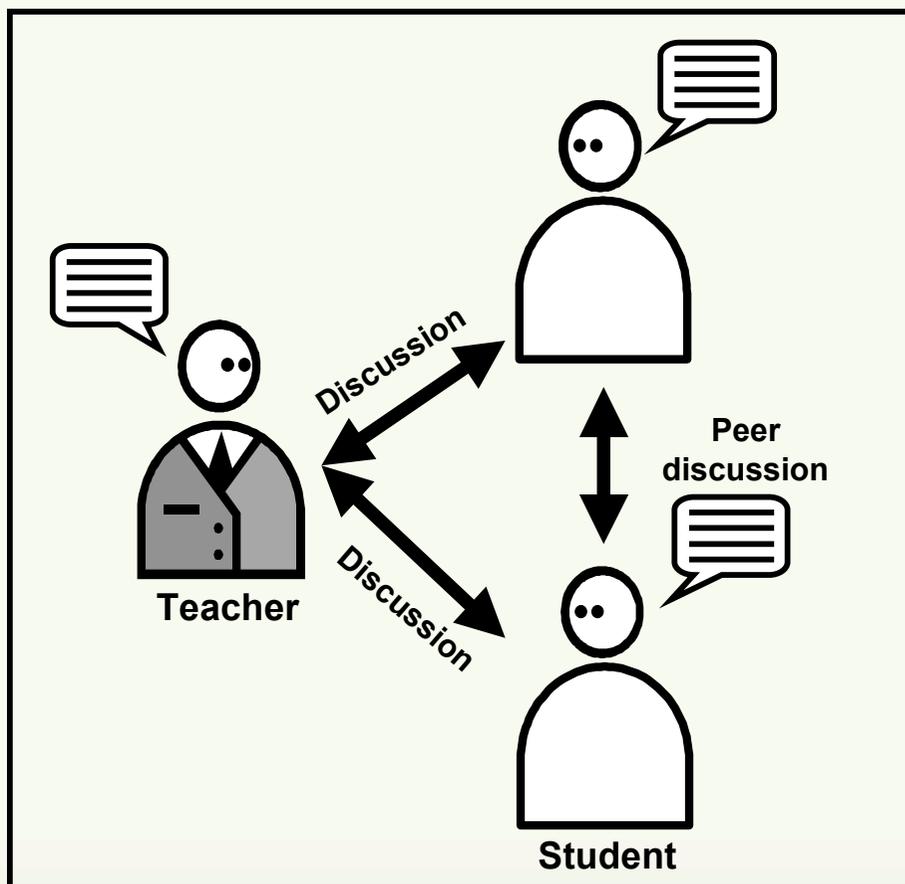
- Each student has the opportunity to engage the teacher in discussion about that feedback,
- Generic insights (& common fallacies) are shared, corrected & discussed in the wider group



**Context: active learning**



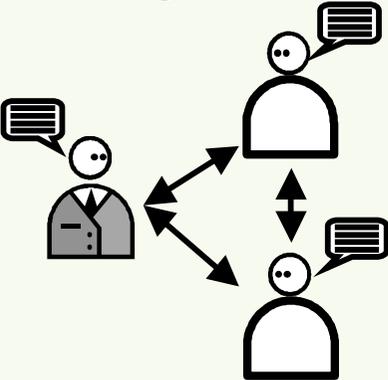
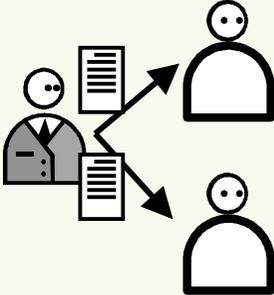
## Dialogic feedback



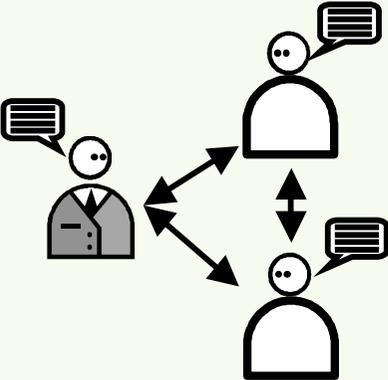
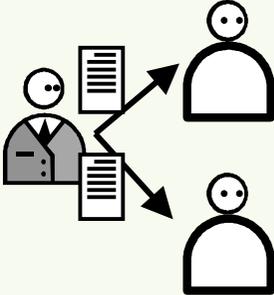
### Characteristics

- Continuous
- Interactive (1:1, 1: many, many : many)
- Requires openness
- Requires confidence
- Builds engagement
- Can support active learning & capacity to self-assess



	<b>Dialogic feedback</b>	<b>One way feedback</b>
		
Context: <b>getting</b> course feedback (or <b>giving</b> feedback on assignments)		
<b>Attitude</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constructivist</li> <li>• Actively give/seek feedback</li> <li>• Voluntary</li> <li>• Timing – immediate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructivist</li> <li>• Passive</li> <li>• Give feedback as part of a mandatory process</li> <li>• Timing – later on</li> </ul>
<b>Objective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss content &amp; process of learning</li> <li>• Review and improve future classes and future courses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback on content</li> <li>• Review and improve <u>only</u> future courses</li> </ul>



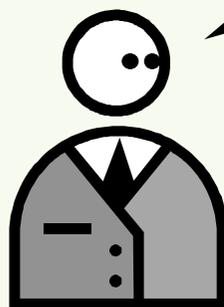
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Dialogic feedback</b></p> 	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>One way feedback</b></p> 
<p><b>Ways for collecting Feedback</b></p>	<p>Actively seeking for multiple sources of feedback such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct conversations</li> <li>• Post-it-notes</li> <li>• Information from Teaching Assistants</li> <li>• Observe students behavior in the class</li> <li>• Internet, email discussion</li> <li>• Course &amp; teaching evaluations</li> </ul>	<p>Rely on a fixed source such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment marking scheme</li> <li>• Results from course evaluations</li> </ul>



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# To What End?

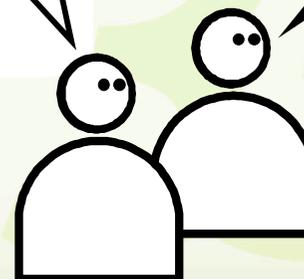


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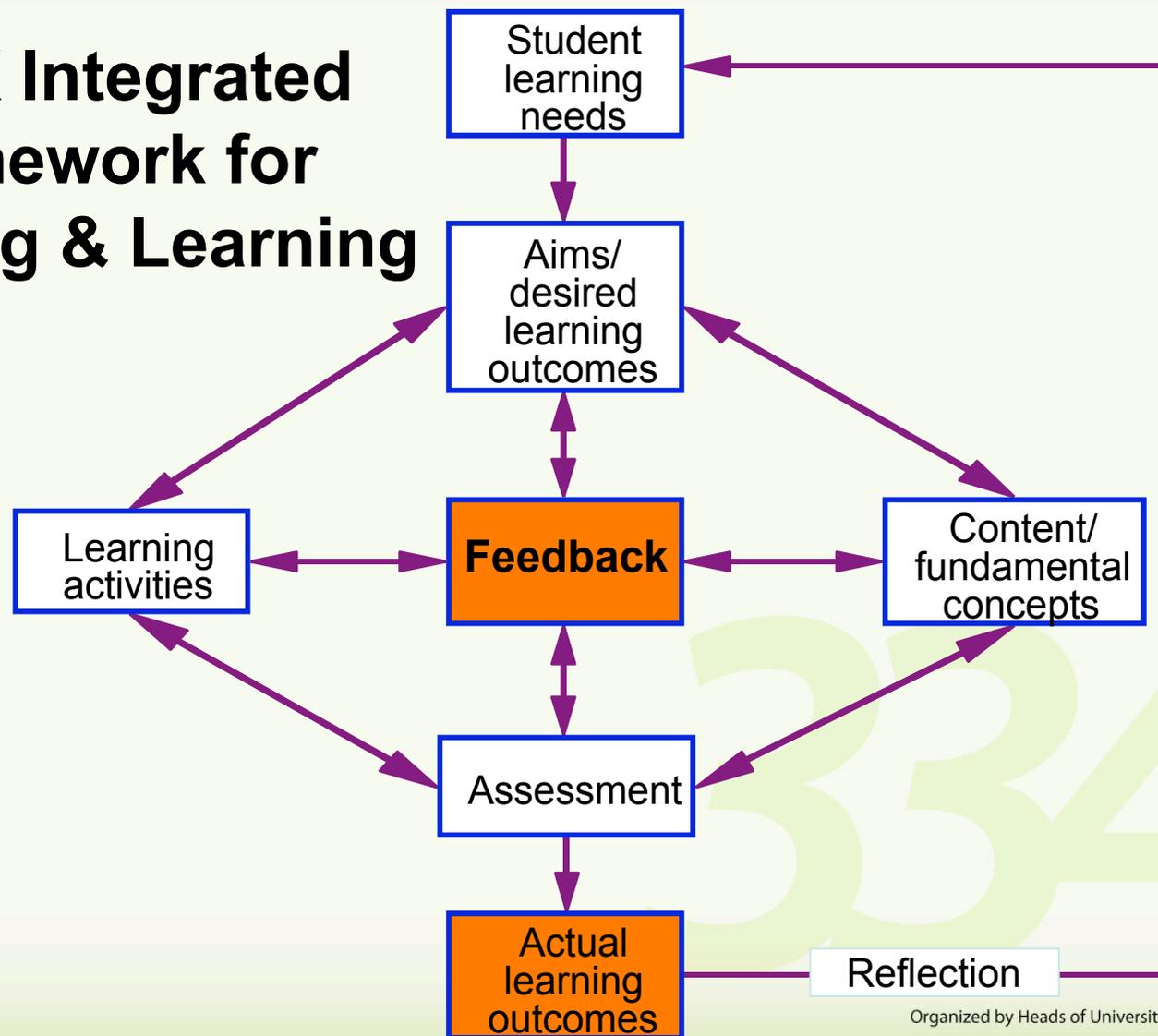
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Graduate  
Capabilities

Self learning  
ability



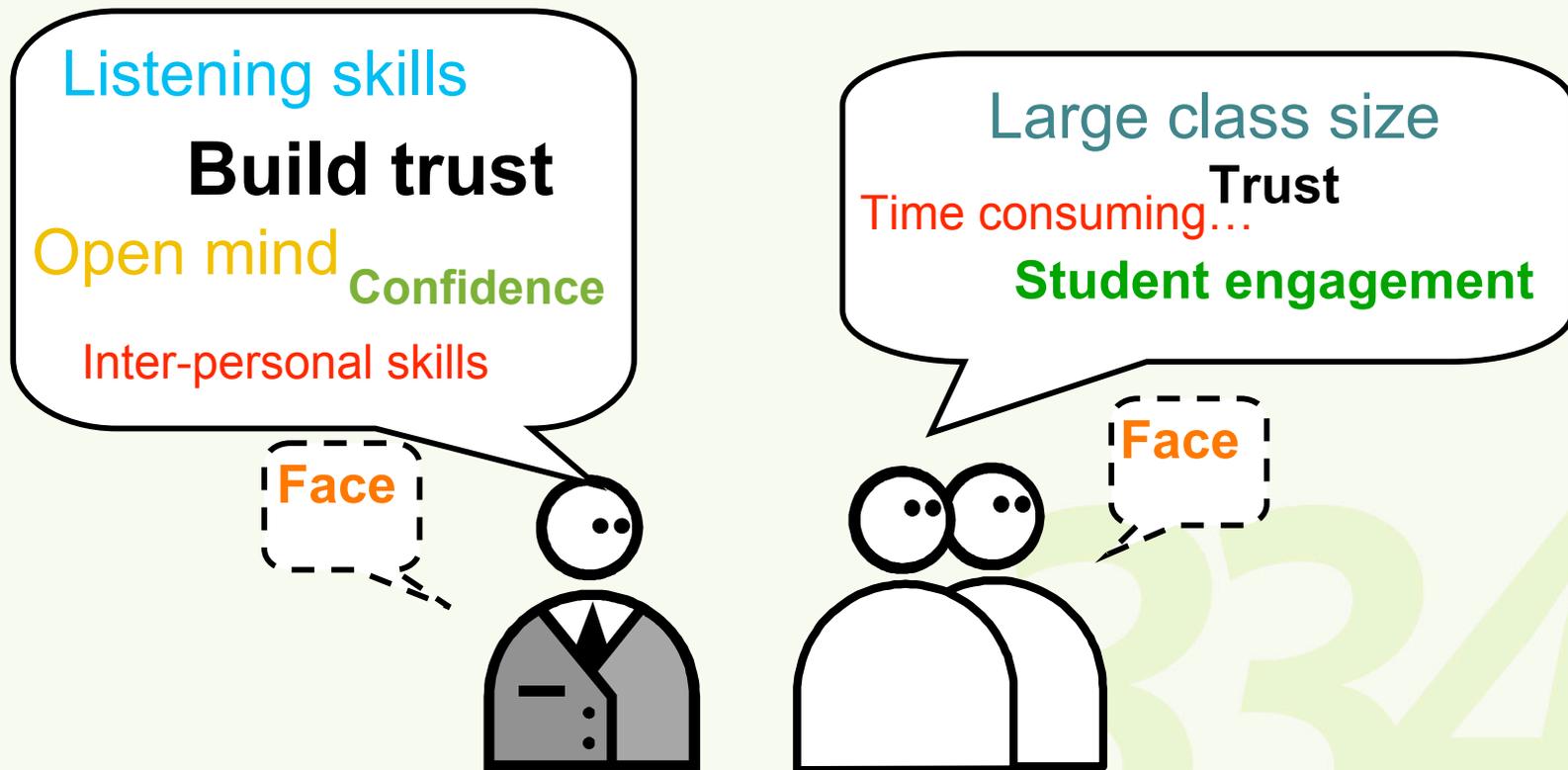
# CUHK Integrated Framework for Teaching & Learning



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# Challenges in dialogic feedback



(Both must understand the purpose and support it)

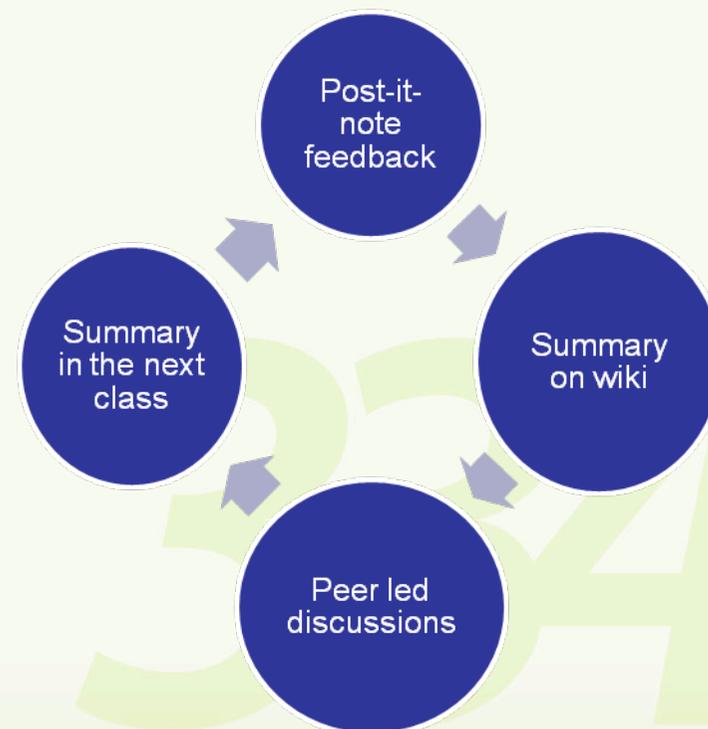


## Example (**weekly** in-class post-it-note)

- Teacher invites end-of-class feedback
  - Then posts summary results on wiki
  - Wiki based follow-up discussion
    - Student led conversations
  - Class summation in the following class

**Prof.**

Department of Information  
 Engineering, CUHK



## Effect of teaching practice

- Students:
  - appreciate the teacher's effort
  - Growth in trust & strong engagement
  - Increased participation (in and out of class)
  - Improved coverage of content
  - Better results (learning outcomes)
- Peer-learning activated
- Rich data to support T&L effort





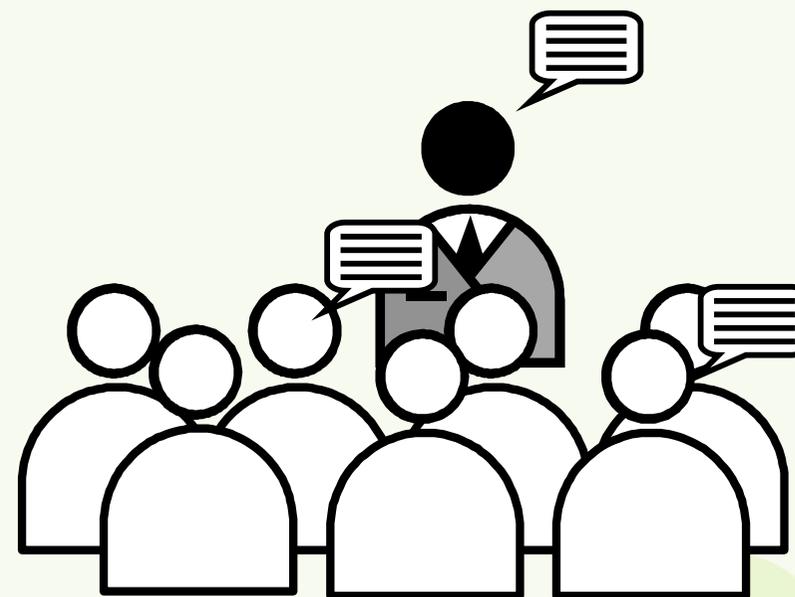
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