FROM FAST FOOD TO A WELL BALANCED DIET: TOWARD A PROGRAMME LEVEL APPROACH TO FEEDBACK

KIMBERLY WILDER[A], DAVID CARLESS[B], MARK HUXHAM[A], VELDA MCCUNE[C], JOAN MCLATCHIE[A], TANSY JESSOP[D] & HAZEL MARZETTI[C]

[A]DEPARTMENT OF LEARNING AND TEACHING ENHANCEMENT, EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY, EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND; [B]DIVISION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG, HONG KONG, CHINA;

[C]INSTITUTE FOR ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT, UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH, EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND; [D], SOUTHAMPTON SOLENT UNIVERSITY

FEEDBACK? BUT WHAT IS FEEDBACK?

- For the purpose of this presentation feedback is described as:

  A process whereby learners obtain information about their work … in order to generate improved work (Boud and Molloy 2013, 6).
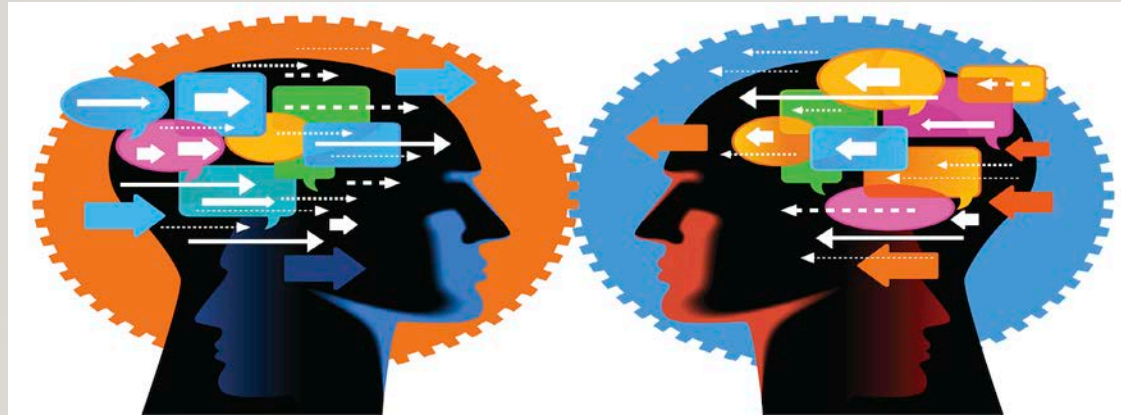
- Boud, David, Elizabeth Malloy, and Linda Carey. 2013. "Review of Feedback in Higher and Professional Education: Understanding It and Doing It Well. Edited by David Boud and Elizabeth Malloy." *AISHE-J* 5 (3): 1451–56. doi:10.4324/9780203074336.
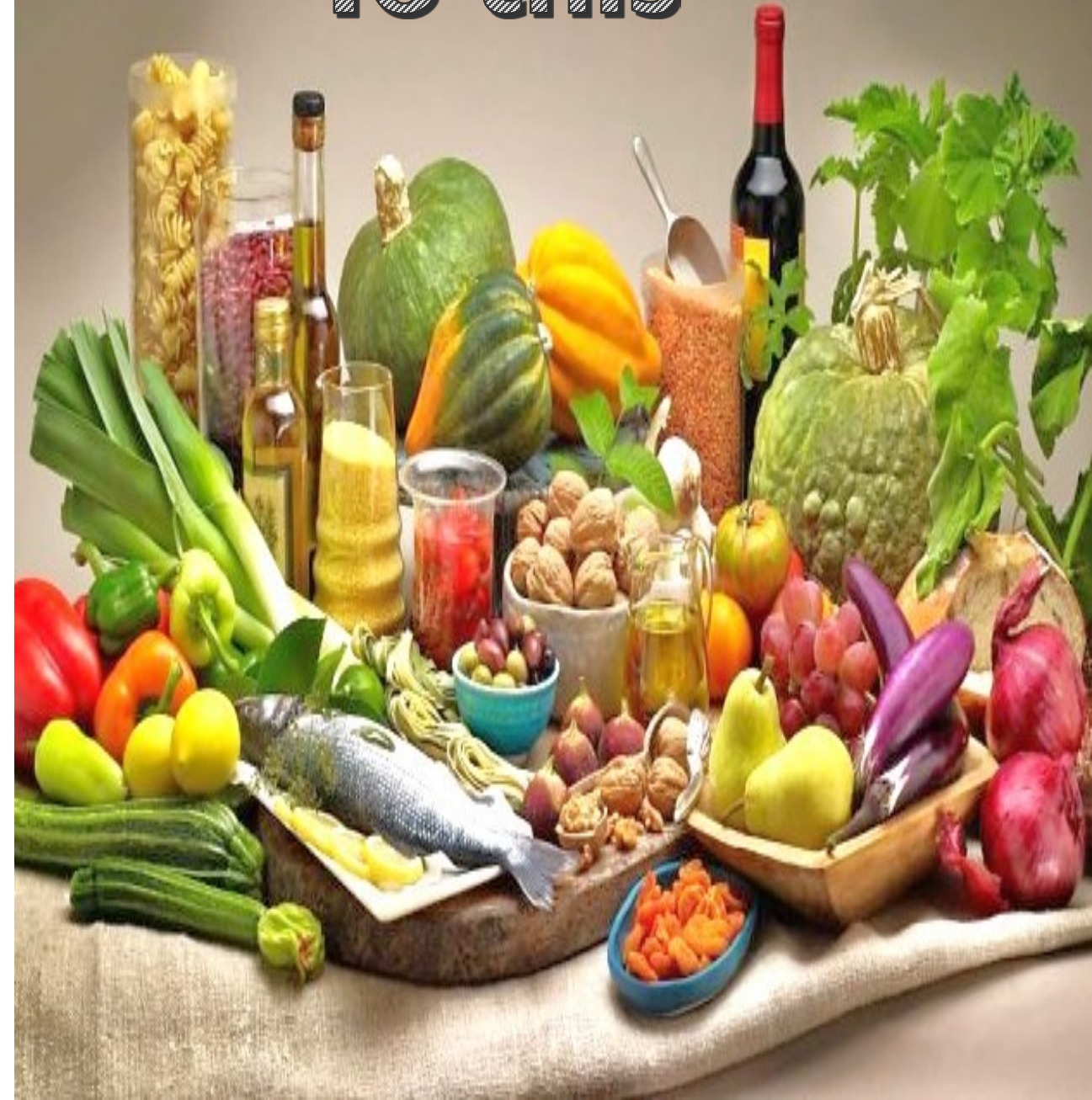
SO…WHAT'S FAST FOOD FEEDBACK?

- Fast food feedback is designed for rapid consumption and to satisfy basic rather than sophisticated needs; whilst this might sometimes be appropriate too much will lead to serious problems. This kind of feedback can be unbalanced in that it contains only 'empty calories'; by analogy summative marks and simple directions in feedback (Adams and McNab 2012).
- Fast food can be cooked and eaten quickly; it is usually standardised and mass produced, eaten alone and quickly forgotten, rich in calories but poor in nutrition.

Adams, Joelle, and Nicole McNab. 2012. "Understanding Arts and Humanities Students' Experiences of Assessment and Feedback." *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education* 12 (1): 36–52. doi:10.1177/1474022212460743.

From this

To this

HOW DO WE BALANCE THE FEEDBACK DIET?

- A well-balanced feedback diet does not mean giving up fast food feedback. That can be useful for quick comments and easy corrections.

BUT

- It does mean that we need to stop thinking of our modules as entirely isolable and use feedback practices that do not align between modules (Carless 2006)

AND

- Instead focus on the cohesion and connectedness of a programme-focused approach to the way in which students receive feedback.

Carless, David. 2006. "Differing Perceptions in the Feedback Process." *Studies in Higher Education* 31 (2): 219–33. doi:10.1080/03075070600572132.

BUT….WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY PROGRAMME FOCUSED APPROACH TO FEEDBACK?

- PFAF is integrative in nature, assessing the knowledge, understanding and skills that represent key programme aims. Do your students experience their programme as a whole or do they see it as 'ticking off' modules and the marks attained?

- It is not a one size fits all directive on how assessment and feedback should be used in each module, but rather a chance for the programme to think about how and when they assess and provide feedback to students, and how the different module options not only connect and relate to programme learning outcomes, but to each other

WHY THE PROGRAMME FOCUSED APPROACH?

- This alternative approach to feedback will help students to achieve a healthy diet as they progress through their given programme of study, eventually becoming connoisseurs of feedback.

- A first step is for lecturers to know what is taught in other modules and to refer to the relevance of current feedback for future work.

- This approach includes structuring feedback practices so that students can make connections between current feedback and tasks in subsequent modules, and teaching students how to use the feedback they are given in useful and meaningful ways.

- In addition to staff understanding of other modules, it is important to build a relationship with the students. Genuine partnerships with students to change and improve teaching can lead to mutual learning and a much more sophisticated and challenging menu – for example students may demand more difficult and authentic assessment tasks once they understand that the feedback they receive will assist with future learning (Huxham et al. 2015).

Huxham, Mark, Megan Hunter, Angela McIntyre, Robin Shilland, and Jan McArthur. 2015. "Student and Teacher Co-Navigation of a Course: Following the *Natural Lines* of Academic Enquiry." *Teaching in Higher Education* 20 (5). Routledge: 530–41. doi:10.1080/13562517.2015.1036730.

DIALOGUE IS IMPORTANT

- Research shows that many students will acknowledge the usefulness of using different types of feedback provided to them. 'Yet they also highlighted that knowing about these strategies and opportunities is not the same as knowing how to use them effectively' (Winstone et al. 2016, 13). Part of the ongoing dialogue between lecturer and student would need to include the strategies for not only understanding the type of feedback they are receiving, but how to use it as a learning tool.

- Within this ongoing dialogue, helping students understand academic terminology and creating a sense of cohesion between markers when grading and providing feedback will make it easier for students to actively engage with their feedback (Winstone et al. 2016). One of the purposes of a programme focused approach to feedback is to foster this environment by creating links not only between assessment and learning objectives, but between modules and future learning; this requires colleagues in programme teams to work together on the feedback menu (Harland et al. 2014).

- Harland, Tony, Angela McLean, Rob Wass, Ellen Miller, and Kwong Nui Sim. 2014. "An Assessment Arms Race and Its Fallout: High-Stakes Grading and the Case for Slow Scholarship." *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, no. July 2014: 1–14. doi:10.1080/02602938.2014.931927.

- Winstone, Naomi E., Robert A. Nash, Michael Parker, and James Rowntree. 2016. "Supporting Learners' Agentic Engagement With Feedback: A Systematic Review and a Taxonomy of Recipience Processes." *Educational Psychologist*, September. Routledge, 1–21. doi:10.1080/00461520.2016.1207538.

THE WELL-BALANCED FEEDBACK DIET

1.We need a 'slow food' approach; cooking up good guidance and feedback takes time and energy

- We should expect lecturers to be spending a considerable amount of time across a programme providing feedback for students, and should be suspicious of the promises of 'quick fixes'.

- Feedback is a process that takes time to marinate, and should be allowed the time and space to do so (Claxton 1998).

- Claxton, Guy. 1998. *Hare Brain, Tortoise Mind : Why Intelligence Increases When You Think Less*. Fourth Estate.

THE WELL-BALANCED FEEDBACK DIET

2. We need to plan our menu to flow from one course to the next

- To be useful to students, programme level conversations around assessment need to provide strong and clear opportunities to be directly relevant to future tasks.

- Staged assignments, blogs and projects which can all allow dialogue about ongoing work are better ways forward (Carless et al. 2011). In a programme level approach attention should also be given to supporting students to carry forward learning from feedback to future modules.

- Carless, D. 2011. *From Testing to Productive Student Learning: Implementing Formative Assessment in Confucian-Heritage Settings*. Vol. 52. London: Taylor & Francis Ltd.

THE WELL-BALANCED FEEDBACK DIET

3. Students need to taste different flavours of assessment and feedback, although a few ingredients will predominate

- It is important that students are exposed to a range of assessment and feedback styles that are appropriate to the programme and discipline of study, and that fit with the Learning Outcomes (Biggs 1999; Habeshaw, Gibbs, and Habeshaw 1993).

- Biggs, John. 2007. "Teaching for Quality Learning at University Third Edition Teaching for Quality Learning at University." *Higher Education* 9: 165–203. doi:10.1016/j.ctcp.2007.09.003.

THE WELL-BALANCED FEEDBACK DIET

4. Students may need to be taught to make use of the ingredients of feedback

- Many students in higher education may never have received explicit advice about how to use the feedback they receive; they need to be supported to learn to use this more effectively (Burke 2009)

- Over time, students should become connoisseurs of feedback, able to appreciate the flavours without the aid of the lecturers.

Burke, D. 2009. "Strategies for using feedback students bring to higher education". *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education,* 34, 41–50. doi:10.1080/02602930801895711

THE WELL-BALANCED FEEDBACK DIET

5. Students need the chance to develop more sophisticated palates over time

- Programme-level feedback processes need to take into account the students' starting points and build gradually over time toward students being able to independently evaluate and enhance their own and others' work

THE WELL-BALANCED FEEDBACK DIET

6. Meals are a chance for conversation

- Programme level feedback needs to be part of an ongoing dialogue between students, their peers and teachers about what makes for high quality work (Anderson and McCune 2013)

- Anderson, Charles, and Velda McCune. 2013. "Fostering Meaning: Fostering Community." *Higher Education* 66 (3). Springer Netherlands: 283–96. doi:10.1007/s10734-012-9604-6.

THE WELL-BALANCED FEEDBACK DIET

7. We need to help students take ownership of the cooking process

- Students need to understand what feedback is, and the purpose it serves in their learning. Students need to understand that no-one produces perfect work, and that constructive feedback is an opportunity for learning, rather than an indication that students are in some way not good enough (O'Donovan, Rust, and Price 2015)

O'Donovan, Berry, Chris Rust, and Margaret Price. 2016. "A Scholarly Approach to Solving the Feedback Dilemma in Practice." *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* 41 (6). Routledge: 938–49. doi:10.1080/02602938.2015.1052774.

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O'Donovan, Berry, Chris Rust, and Margaret Price. 2016. "A Scholarly Approach to Solving the Feedback Dilemma in Practice." *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* 41 (6). Routledge: 938–49. doi:10.1080/02602938.2015.1052774.

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