

USING A SIMPLE FEEDBACK STAMP TO PROVIDE INCREMENTAL FEEDBACK ON WORK-IN-PROGRESS IN THE ART DESIGN CONTEXT

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Within the context of the Creative Industries students don't always recognise when feedback is being given, because it is embedded in ongoing conversations about their work-in-progress. This is often reflected in students' responses to the NSS. In addition, pedagogic approaches in the Creative Industries need to address:

- + a diverse and rich cultural mix of deliverables (drawn, written, verbal, made, filmed, acted);
- + the diversity of the staff and students' approaches to learning;
- + lengthy assessment times, with students working for extended periods on tasks and briefs, often characterised by creative and 'messy' processes;
- + the challenge of anchoring and negotiating shared understandings of sometimes abstract, conceptual and subjective feedback (Orr & Shreeve, 2018).

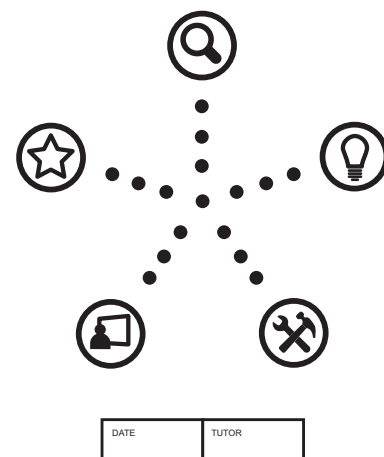
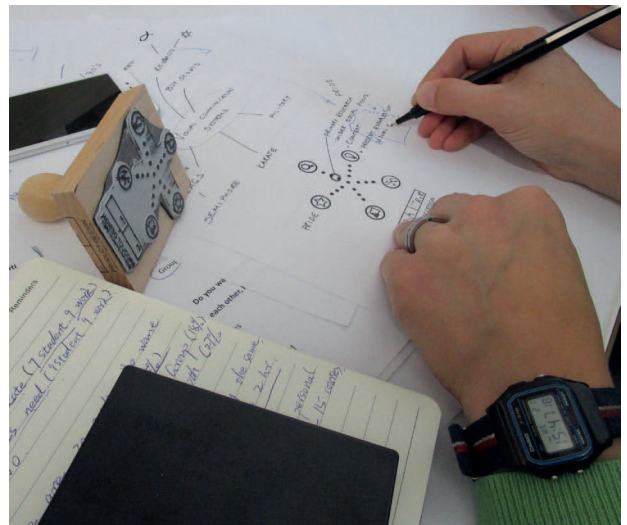
WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Given this complex context, we need to help students recognise that our feedback isn't just a matter of going through the motions (rubber-stamping), but is deliberately and purposefully designed to focus on their own individual improvement. We are keen to engage our students proactively in meaningful feedback dialogues (Carless, Salter, Yang, & Lam, 2011) which help them get to grips with the tacit assumptions underpinning the discipline, and better understand fruitful next steps. Opening up dialogue about the quality of work and current skills helps strengthen their capacities to self-regulate their own work (Nicol & McFarlane-Dick, 2006), which are key to their future professional practice in the creative industries.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Firth and Cochrane's approach involves the use of an actual rubber stamp that can be used to 'anchor' a diverse range of tutor formative feedback on, for example, sketching, note-making and the use of visual diagrams. The stamp is used frequently as the module unfolds, to comment purposefully on student sketch books, presentation boards and 3D prototype models.

The stamp is used to print directly onto student sketchbooks or similar. It comprises **five axes** covering the essential indicative elements of the design process, which are often seen by designers as a cycle. In the example of Product Design these comprise:



- 1. Research:** the background work the student has undertaken in preparation. This can include primary and secondary research drawing on theoretical framework from other modules.
- 2. Initial ideas:** this covers the cogency and coherence of the students' first stab at achieving solutions. This is likely to include an evaluation of the quantity, diversity and innovative nature of those ideas.
- 3. Proto (typing) and testing:** the endeavours the student has made to try out provisional solutions and see if they work. This could include user testing, development, infrastructure and route to market.

4. **Presentation:** an evaluation of how effective the student has been in putting across their ideas or solutions in a variety of formats, including via 2D; 3D; virtual, and moving images.
5. **Pride:** a reflective review of the students' professional identity as exemplified in the outcome in progress. Indicators might include punctuality, organisation, care and engagement.

As students use their sketchbooks (or similar) iteratively to try out ideas and demonstrate work in progress, the tutor sitting beside them can use the rubberstamp directly into their pages as a trigger for the feedback dialogue. On each of the axes the tutor can make a mark indicating how far along each axis the student has travelled from novice (low i.e. towards the centre of the stamp-print) to expert (high i.e. towards the periphery). Ensuing discussions enable tutors' tacit understandings to become explicit for the student, so they can be translated into improved performance/outcomes (Sadler, 2010).

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

The visual build-up of the stamp's presence during a student's documented work-flow helps everyone see the links between formative and summative assessments, so that feed-forward from the former to the latter is clear. This is much more productive than writing extensive written feedback after the work has been submitted: it is feedforward rather than feedback.

This regular dialogic review enables rapid feedback at each stage of the design process in a format that is familiar to both design tutors and students working in the creative field. It thereby avoids awkward and problematic misapprehensions about desired outcomes and the level of work required: meaning no shocks or nasty surprises when it comes to the summative assessment! It also builds over time and across programme levels, helping to develop a sense of a coherent, integrated and incremental feedback strategy that builds developmentally throughout the programme.

Transferability: The feedback stamp could be used in other disciplines flexibly by changing the icons, wording and details to suit different disciplinary contexts. For example, it could be used to provide quick and dirty updates on students' lab reports in scientific disciplines.

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