Developing oral feedback in art and design

Following the training in the generic unit *Oral feedback*, it is important to consider how the key messages of the training apply to art and design. As part of the whole-school focus on this, the following subject development material is intended to help you consider the key messages of the training unit and identify any areas requiring development in your department.

The following is a brief summary of the training unit.

**Objectives**

- To highlight how effective oral feedback develops pupils’ learning.
- To consider a range of strategies for giving effective oral feedback that can be both formal and informal.
- To help teachers plan for giving effective oral feedback.
- To help schools develop a whole-school policy clarifying the relationship between oral and written feedback.

**Key messages**

- Oral feedback is the most regular and interactive form of feedback. It should be constructive and informative in order to help pupils take the next steps in their learning.
- It is both direct (targeted to individuals or groups) and indirect (others listen and reflect on what has been said). At times it will be spontaneous and at other times it should be planned.
- In offering oral feedback, the teacher is modelling the language that pupils can use in giving feedback to their teacher and peers.
- Oral feedback should be developmental. It should recognise pupils’ efforts and achievements, and offer specific details of ways forward in relation to the shared learning objectives.
- Oral feedback about pupils’ learning occurs in a range of situations on a continuum from the instant informal reply to more formally planned reviews.
- While focusing on specific areas of a response it is important to say when an answer is wrong to avoid confusion or reinforcing misconceptions.
- ‘Wait-time’ before and after questions or responses encourages pupils to consider and expand on their responses.
The following material builds on the tasks outlined in the ‘Ready for more?’ section of the *Oral feedback* training unit and it is intended for all those who teach art and design.

**Reviewing existing practice in oral feedback**

The table on page 3 provides a tool for a department to self-review current practice and to help identify an appropriate starting point.

As a department, agree and highlight the statements that best reflect the practice of the whole department. At the bottom of each column is a reference to the tasks that will support your current practice and provide the appropriate material to develop from this point.

Having completed this review you should read ‘Making effective use of the subject development material’ on page 4.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focusing</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Establishing</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Teachers</strong></td>
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<td>There is no clear school or department policy on oral feedback. The subject leader has identified where teacher oral feedback: • is informal, ad hoc and unplanned • tends to be teacher-led question-and-answer sessions or generalised comments to the class • does not target individual pupils • is unrelated to the learning objectives. Teachers sometimes provide opportunities for pupils to discuss each other’s work, but without reference to learning outcomes.</td>
<td>Departmental planning for oral feedback is becoming more focused on learning objectives and outcomes. Teachers are beginning to consider the role of different types of oral feedback. Teachers are beginning to use questions to probe progress against the learning objectives and outcomes to help pupils improve their work. Teachers are beginning to target specific individuals and groups of pupils for feedback in lessons. Teachers provide opportunities in lessons for pupils to provide feedback to their peers and for teachers to provide feedback to the pupils (in relation to learning outcomes).</td>
<td>The school is reviewing its marking policy to include oral feedback and departmental policy reflects this. Oral feedback is a focus of departmental planning and relates directly to the learning objectives and outcomes and helps clarify the next steps for pupils. Oral feedback opportunities are integral to medium- and short-term planning. Teachers use a varied repertoire of types of oral feedback. The teacher structures and models pupil oral feedback in relation to learning outcomes.</td>
<td>The school and department have a fully integrated assessment policy which values equally the importance of written and oral feedback. Planning for oral feedback at all levels, from full reviews to individual teachers’ lessons, is an integral feature of departmental work across the school. Departments ensure that oral feedback from pupil to teacher, teacher to pupil and pupil to pupil forms part of a dialogue that relates directly to learning objectives and outcomes. The feedback provided is constructive and informative and enables pupils to take the next steps in their learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pupils</strong></td>
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<td>The subject leader has identified lessons in which pupils: • expect teacher feedback in the form of supportive encouragement • do not view oral feedback as an essential part of learning • judge oral feedback to be secondary to written feedback • offer comments on each other’s work, but these lack clear focus and are usually unchallenging.</td>
<td>Most pupils expect feedback to relate to their learning and listen to and respond to what is said. Most pupils know when to expect specific oral feedback as a class, individually or in a small-group setting. Pupils are beginning to see oral feedback as having a distinct value. Most pupils are able to provide useful feedback to other pupils and similarly respond to feedback from their peers.</td>
<td>Pupils recognise fully the value of oral feedback and know it is related to their learning. They listen carefully and respond appropriately. Pupils recognise the strategies for different types of oral feedback. Pupils will readily engage in focused peer feedback, in relation to learning outcomes, and are beginning to develop a vocabulary to do this. Pupil work shows evidence of a response to oral feedback.</td>
<td>All pupils recognise that oral feedback is focused on their learning and is as important as written feedback. Pupils know that feedback is valuable and listen carefully to each other and their teachers. They respond to feedback to engage in dialogue about their learning. Pupils understand well-established strategies for group and guided work that involve feedback. Pupils give regular detailed oral feedback related to learning objectives and outcomes to peers and teachers. Pupils are clear where in their work they have improved in response to feedback.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Start with Task 4.1A | Start with Task 4.1A | Start with Task 4.1B | Start with Task 4.1B |
Making effective use of the subject development material

The tasks you have been referred to are intended to support the development or extension of oral feedback in art and design and provide guidance on how to embed this into regular practice in art and design lessons.

The results of the self-review will have suggested the appropriate task(s) that will support your department’s development needs.

To make best use of the supporting material the following sequence will be helpful.

1 Read the task and the supporting exemplification.
This describes how a department has approached the task and worked through each of its stages. It is given as an example of how the task might be addressed. It is not intended that you follow this approach, which is given as a guide to the process that will support improvements in your subject.

2 Identify what the department did and the impact it had on pupils.
Discuss as a team the example provided and establish the key areas that helped to develop this practice and the impact it had on pupils. It will be helpful to identify the changes in teachers’ practice and how these impacted on pupils’ learning.

3 Agree and plan the actions that will develop your practice.
As a department, agree how you intend to approach this task. Clarify what you are focusing on and why. The example given will act as a guide, but be specific about which classes, which lessons and which aspects of the curriculum will be your points of focus.

4 Identify when and how you will evaluate its impact on pupils.
The purpose of focusing on this is to improve pupils’ achievement and attainment in art and design. You will need to be clear on what has helped pupils to learn more effectively in your subject. Part of this will be how your practice has adapted to allow this. You should jointly identify what has worked well and which areas require further attention.

5 Having evaluated these strategies, consider what steps are required to embed this practice.
You will need to undertake an honest evaluation of what you have tried and the impact it has had on your teaching and on pupils’ learning. One outcome might be that you need to spend longer on improving this area or you may be in a position to consider the next task.

Other departments in the school will have been focusing on this area and you should find out about the progress they have made.

You may find that some teachers in the department will require further time to develop and consolidate new practice, while others will be ready to progress further through the tasks in this area (while continuing to support their colleagues). Practice across a department will need to be consolidated before focusing on a new area of Assessment for learning.
The subject development tasks

**Task 4.1A**

With a colleague, observe each other teaching and, ideally, record (video/audio) the lessons. Use handout 4.1.4 and slide 4.1.5 in the generic unit (see appendix 4.1A.1) to record how specific and positive individual pieces of feedback are perceived to be. You should mark a cross in the relevant quadrant to record how positive/negative and specific/non-specific each example of oral feedback is during the lessons.

The scatter of the plotted points will give an overall impression of the nature of the oral feedback and highlight particular development needs for the teacher observed.

Capture specific examples of oral feedback recorded in each quadrant to inform your joint review of the lesson. It is important to focus on the effective practice of the teacher observed before agreeing areas for improvement and how to go about doing this.

**Task 4.1B**

Refer to handout 4.1.4 in the generic unit (see appendix 4.1A.1) and, as a department, “traffic light” the types of oral feedback described, e.g.:

- green = frequently used across the department
- amber = occasionally used by individuals
- red = rarely used.

Select an area highlighted amber or red that the department agrees is most likely to impact on learning outcomes.

As a department, plan and teach lessons that incorporate the selected type of oral feedback.

Jointly review the impact of this on pupils’ learning.

The following pages provide exemplification of each task.
Task 4.1A

With a colleague, observe each other teaching and, ideally, record (video/audio) the lessons. Use handout 4.1.4 and slide 4.1.5 in the generic unit (see appendix 4.1A.1) to record how specific and positive individual pieces of feedback are perceived to be. You should mark a cross in the relevant quadrant to record how positive/negative and specific/non-specific each example of oral feedback is during the lessons.

The scatter of the plotted points will give an overall impression of the nature of the oral feedback and highlight particular development needs for the teacher observed.

Capture specific examples of oral feedback recorded in each quadrant to inform your joint review of the lesson. It is important to focus on the effective practice of the teacher observed before agreeing areas for improvement and how to go about doing this.

Context

Last term, the members of the art and design team at School B gave consideration to the effectiveness of their use of oral feedback to pupils within lessons. Observations by senior managers had previously highlighted the need for improvements in the use of oral feedback across the curriculum, in particular to address how teachers planned their use of formal and informal oral feedback to develop pupils’ learning. The use of oral feedback has since been adopted as a strategy within the school improvement plan in addition to written feedback.

The department devised this activity to determine the understanding necessary to carry out the observation as stated in Task 4.1A. In brief, it provided them with a worked example (neutral stimulus) that encouraged discussion in the department before they observed each other’s practice as described in Task 4.1A.

Process

As a department, they read the 12 statements for art and design given, which had been prepared on card. These statements were a range of teacher comments made in relation to a lesson on painting in Year 8. They were intended to provide the teachers with an understanding of the style of language used and intention behind the comments made.

The teachers worked in pairs for 10 minutes, discussing each of the 12 statements and agreeing where they should be placed in the quadrants on handout 4.1.4 from the generic unit, which was copied onto A3-sized paper. The whole department then discussed the placing of the statements.

The department found the activity very useful, as it fostered group discussion and raised their understanding of the specific use of language within each of the quadrants, while they accepted that there were no simple, correct answers.
Statements for the activity outlined in Task 4.1A

The following statements A–L relate to a lesson on painting in Year 8, within the QCA Unit 8 in which pupils were developing their painting skills and expressive use of colour and mark.

Statement A
‘Your use of colour is expressive, but you should now consider how you can apply paint in thinner layers to explore qualities of translucency.’

Statement B
‘Your use of impasto technique conveys a good sense of the surface. To achieve stronger impact you could explore the use of colour contrast.’

Statement C
‘Well done. You are developing a very expressive painting style in the way you represent movement. You should try and apply this in some other areas of the painting.’

Statement D
‘You have mixed colour to match well. Now look at mixing light and dark colours.’

Statement E
‘Your control of the paintbrush is good. Now try making your use of colour more vivid.’

Statement F
‘Your painting has really come on and your picture should go on display.’

Statement G
‘You seem to be having problems applying paint. Look again at your sketchbook studies.’

Statement H
‘There is some progress in your control of mark and application of paint, but you will need to work a lot harder to improve.’

Statement I
‘You just don’t seem to understand what you have been asked to do. You must improve your painting style if you want your picture to communicate meaning.’

Statement J
‘You have made no improvement this lesson. You must concentrate on the way you use colour to show depth.’

Statement K
‘You started with too few ideas for the composition and now need to go back to your sketchbook and revisit your development to investigate better ways to use paint to describe movement.’
Statement L

‘You are starting to make better use of different brushes, but there is still much to do if you are going to use these brush marks to describe the dynamic movement of these shapes.’

Answers

- Statements A, B and C are ‘Specific positive’ and go in the upper right-hand corner of the chart.
- Statements D, E and F are ‘Non-specific positive’ and go in the lower right-hand corner.
- Statements G, H and I are ‘Non-specific negative’ and go in the lower left-hand corner.
- Statements J, K and L are ‘Specific negative’ and go in the upper left-hand corner.

Evaluation

Having completed this activity, the department felt more confident in investigating the use of oral feedback in their own lessons and undertook Task 4.1A as described above. The department also decided to record oral feedback using audio and video techniques. They identified the following as helpful in their planning for this activity:

- Do not attempt to record all examples of formal/informal feedback within a lesson. Be selective and use a tripod-mounted camera or position the camera operator to be inconspicuous, but focus the camera on a group of pupils or section of a room.
- Try to pre-plan the layout of the room and seating/movement of the pupils to minimise awareness of the camera and avoid playing up.
- Avoid following the teacher around the room with the camera. Record what comes into the frame in the context of informal discussion/feedback.
- Plan the positioning of the camera to record formal feedback to the group or select lessons where group or class discussion are planned, including the presentation of pupils’ work.
- Use a wireless lapel mike or directional microphone if one is available.
Task 4.1B

Refer to handout 4.1.4 in the generic unit (see appendix 4.1A.1) and, as a department, ‘traffic light’ the types of oral feedback described, e.g.:

- green = frequently used across the department
- amber = occasionally used by individuals
- red = rarely used.

Select an area highlighted amber or red that the department agrees is most likely to impact on learning outcomes.

As a department, plan and teach lessons that incorporate the selected type of oral feedback.

Jointly review the impact of this on pupils’ learning.

Context

During the previous term, observations by senior managers had highlighted the continuing need for improvements in the use of oral feedback across the curriculum through better planning by teachers to make it more effective in developing pupils’ learning. The art and design team at School B decided to give further consideration to the effectiveness of their use of oral feedback to pupils within lessons. They worked on various types of oral feedback to develop their understanding and use of this assessment for learning strategy with different groups of children.

The art and design department made use of the QCA scheme of work units to inform long-term planning. For the purposes of developing oral feedback, they chose and adapted, to suit their pupils and situation, Unit 9C, Site specific sculpture. They then structured this unit as a half term project (one lesson per week over seven weeks) for a Year 9 mixed-ability class.

Process

Lesson objective

- Pupils learn how to research and investigate the work of 20th-century sculptors in order to help them develop their own ideas, draw conclusions about what influences artists’ ideas and materials when they create works for specific sites and understand the requirements guiding the commissioning of site-specific sculpture.

Learning outcome

- Pupils learn how to use their sketchbook to record the evidence of their research using books, CD-ROM and web-based investigations. They select, print and annotate artists’ work whose site-specific sculpture clearly conveys both the links between the site and the work itself. They learn how to use this information to inform the development of their own ideas and attempt to identify what criteria were set through the commissioning process. They learn how to make a maquette and how to photograph this and their selected site, before using their image manipulation program to learn how to paste in layers in order to produce a digital visualisation of their maquette in situ.
Pupils selected and recorded a site in the local community, making use of digital cameras, producing A4 prints and enlarging these on the photocopier. They carried out a series of investigations making maquettes as they learned to use a range of sculptural materials including card, wire, found materials and modelling clay/plaster impregnated bandage.

Having completed these maquettes and preparatory studies in their sketchbooks, the pupils went on to look at the work of 20th-century sculptors who produced sculptures in urban and rural outdoor settings.

By the end of the unit, they had produced more maquettes in response to the artists’ work they had selected and studied. From these maquettes, they again made use of digital photography and image manipulation software to select, copy, insert and scale their photographic images of their sculptural ideas into the photographs of the site. The more-able pupils manipulated these images to make them look like real photographs of a full-sized sculpture ‘in situ’, i.e. visualisations.

In that lesson, the pupils began to look at the work of 20th-century sculptors and to consider subject matter and the relations with the public space. Pupils analysed the contextual information to inform the connections they made between their subject design and the space they selected. Then they developed their ideas in drawing and annotated form in their sketchbooks and engaged in a mix of activities during which they were encouraged to share their ideas and reflect on their intentions.

In the teaching of art and design, oral feedback is given within several different contexts to individuals and groups of pupils. Oral feedback is used in each part of the lesson with the whole class, both formally and informally, whereas group feedback tends only to be used formally within the main part of the lesson or informally within a starter or plenary. Paired and individual oral feedback is generally more informal during all parts of the lesson. Art and design teachers use oral feedback to comment on and direct pupils in their use of media and techniques, or in their interpretation of their study of the work of artists. They may also use oral feedback as part of the process of assessment and review of progress (see the table on next page).
**Evaluation**

In School B, the increased focus and developments in the use of oral feedback in lessons resulted in several key outcomes:

- The use of oral feedback enabled teachers to achieve the learning objectives through more carefully considered feedback at appropriate stages in the lesson and linked it to greater use of group and whole class activities.

- Pupils worked with greater confidence in the creation of their maquettes. When making decisions about the possible scale of their work, they used the feedback to inform their choices of materials and when making decisions about the development of ideas and placement of their work in situ.

- Pupils’ understanding of the work of particular artists, their reasons for using specific materials, selection of site and subject matter, including the criteria guiding the commissioning of the work, were all enhanced by the feedback received as a whole class and within groups, based on their research and development work in sketchbooks and on their verbal comments in discussion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composition of group</th>
<th>Types of oral feedback</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole class</td>
<td>As a starter activity, pupils received oral feedback on the suitability of their use of the materials in the previous lesson when constructing the maquettes. Oral feedback was given to individual pupils and the whole class, highlighting key aspects of structure and feasibility of scale. The teacher reflected on prior learning to set the context of the task for this particular lesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole class</td>
<td>The teacher identified the work of particular sculptors to exemplify and model suitable solutions for specific categories of public space. Following a period of work in sketchbooks, the teacher commented on and shared individual pupils’ ideas with the whole class and began a discussion about scale, surface, materials, the use of colour and structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole class</td>
<td>As part of the plenary, the teacher invited contributions from individual pupils to describe how they had used the sculptures they had studied to inform the development of their own work. The teacher gave instant feedback to focus on the effectiveness of their use of the artists’ work in relation to the objective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Part-way through the lesson, groups of pupils who selected the same sculptor were created to enable a more focused discussion about their work. The teacher responded to the discussions and gave instant, informal feedback with regard to the pupils’ comments on the distinctive qualities of the sculptor’s work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>The teacher organised group discussion to agree criteria for commissioning sculptures for a specific site. Each group was allocated a site. The teacher gave oral feedback to each group, on the criteria they produced, using previously prepared examples to model suitable criteria for a commission.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paired work</td>
<td>Pupils in pairs assessed the suitability of each other’s designs in relation to the commission criteria for the site. The teacher gave instant oral feedback to each pair to help them identify the next stage of their design work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paired work</td>
<td>In pairs, the pupils made presentations of their plans and intentions for their chosen site. The teacher sat with each pair in turn to give feedback at the end of each brief presentation, so that they could respond by further developing their ideas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>The teacher intervened regularly throughout the lesson to give feedback on the interpretation of the sculptors’ work and how pupils were using this information in the development of their design ideas. The focus for the feedback concentrated on the pupils’ understanding of the criteria for the choices they had made, their strategies for selecting media and self assessment of the design process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>The teacher gave oral feedback to individual pupils on their progress in relation to the objective, while the rest of the class were engaged in other learning activities.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
• Pupils progressed rapidly with the project, maintaining interest and motivation as the use of group and individual informal oral feedback built confidence through regular opportunities to share, discuss and review progress, in addition to providing purposeful guidance on their own practical work.
• Pupils benefited from the improved opportunity for structured peer activities that resulted in the sharing of their progress and understanding.

Subject-specific references
Taylor, Rod. *Understanding and investigating art* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1999)
*Guidelines for art education*, Key Stages 1–5, ‘Pupil/teacher – directional interaction’ (Hampshire LEA, Battersea Press, 1992), page 15
*Literacy in art and design, Key Stage 3 national strategy* (DfES 0054/2002)
Teacher, Veronica (ed.). *Classroom issues in assessment and evaluation in the arts* (Berkshire LEA, 1989)
*Pupils’ learning from teachers’ responses* (AAIA, 2000, www.teaching-resource.co.uk/teachers/afl.htm)
Handout 4.1.4

Oral feedback

Specific

Non-specific

- +