

# Challenges and Tips from A Word In Your Ear 2009

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## Challenge Cards

### Use of technology

1. The data protection act (as fine is now £500,000)
2. How do we provide audio feedback to online learners in low connectivity areas?
3. What is the best way of delivering audio feedback?
4. How do students 'curate' their copies for digital feedback?
5. How should academic staff be guided and supported as to what technology to use (easily and quickly) amongst the plethora of available technologies?
6. How can we make audio feedback technically easy for staff *and* students?
7. If I use the Audio Comment feature in Word, how do I send it to students? They become too big for email attachments. What are the other options?
8. Planning transport of electronic submitted work.
9. How can audio feedback be turned into a conversation in a distance learning environment?
10. What is the best way to administer the audio feedback process and organise the files?
11. What methods are being used to deliver audio feedback through VLEs so that the files remain secure?
12. How much has been done on the use of audio-visual feedback (e.g. screencast feedback)?
13. How can we make audio feedback scalable? What infrastructure does it need?
14. How can we deal with the 'paper flow' of submitted work so that it is easily divided up between markers on a large cohort?

### Pedagogy

1. How can audio feedback be turned into a conversation in a distance learning environment?
2. What are the needs of distance learners and how can those be met by the use of audio feedback?
3. How to monitor the quality of audio feedback and train colleagues to do this well?
4. Incentives that ensure students listen to the audio;
5. [What do we need to do about ] moderation and external examiners? (If moderated then withhold the mark and when agreed then release the feedback?);
6. Will students pay more attention to audio feedback, will they listen again, will they improve on their work as a consequence of audio feedback?
7. If there any proforma available to help lecturers to provide effective feedback?
8. Getting staff to give feedback at all - no comeback if they don't
9. How can we use audio feedback to move from a monologue to a more effective dialogue?
10. Staff are reluctant to engage because of the amount of work (other)

### Student use of feedback

1. How can audio feedback be turned into a conversation in a distance learning environment?

2. How can we make audio feedback technically easy for staff *and* students?
3. How can staff prevent audio feedback appearing on YouTube?
4. How can we guard against the repurposing of [recorded] voice?
5. How does it become a dialogic discussion?
6. How do you capture the student response
7. Must it always be personal and private - can it be shared and public?
8. Do students prefer it?
9. Has it actually improved grades / outcomes?
10. What is the best format for all students to use ?
11. Can the perception and role of feedback affect the response (use) of student feedback?
12. How you avoid the courtroom situation where a student says - but you said and here is the quote?

## Tip Cards

- Ensure you systematically name your files and manage your files;
- Use a structure such as: name of student, work assessed, your name, date;
- Ensure the audio format is a format your students can play;
- Don't record long prolongs – students get bored;
- Use a VLE to integrate the delivery of audio feedback with the submission of work. This solves problems relating to the dissemination of the feedback, its separation from student work, and archiving;
- Ensure you have a 'pause' facility on your recorder to allow 'thinking' time when recording your feedback;
- Choose a quiet environment;
- Give grades and marks amongst the feedback, not at the end of the beginning to ensure students listen to the feedback;
- Stand up when you record. It brings the voice alive (How many lectures have you delivered sitting down?);
- Adopt a staged approach to using audio feedback. Begin with generic feedback to the class first and get comfortable with it. Then move on and try individual feedback;
- Involve the students in designing effective audio feedback. Ask them what they want and what will work for them;
- Provide some training for tutors on your module/course. It doesn't have to be complex, just a simple guide to the process, a suggestion for suitable formats, and a reminder about the characteristics of good feedback;
- Keep it informal to maintain dialogue in a meaningful way;
- Use it for boosting students' confidence, especially when they are weak;
- Recognise the need for different 'best' practices for students studying at different levels;
- Follow normal principles for effective feedback practice – audio should not replace but enhance the feedback procedure;
- Keep it short: 3 – 5 minutes at most;
- Use a 'cue card' to keep you on track when you are talking;

- Recognise the strengths of the audio medium: personal connectivity, clarity of the spoken word and its meaning, motivational capacity.
- Audio feedback used in combination with an assessment grid can be quick, detailed, engaging and meaningful;
- Keep your tone upbeat and criticise gently. Students like the personal aspect of audio feedback, but criticisms also sound more personal!
- Action the learner: the feedback should require a learner response and this should be clearly stated. They should not be left hanging.
- Set a reflection task and have the students record their reflections as a final task in the course. Provide them with guidelines and/or a rubric, e.g. suggested structure or questions to address, and guidance on tone, pace and language;
- Think about the type of assessment you are giving feedback on. It is especially quick and effective for practical exams;
- Begin with a positive statement or comment;
- Ensure the student is looking at a copy of their work while listening;
- Ask students to switch on line numbering when submitting written assignments so that you can refer to line numbers in your feedback. Otherwise, return electronic copies of work with line numbers turned on or label key points in their text using commenting tools;
- Keep it simple and keep it personal.