Working with students:
Communication, assessment & feedback

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Plan for this session

- Engaging with students effectively in a classroom
- Assessing students and giving feedback

Engaging with students effectively

- There are some common concerns that GTAs hold as they begin to teach students for the first time

- Let's examine these now, share experiences, and draw up some strategies to survive and flourish

- We will then progress by looking at methods of inviting and giving feedback to students

Working with students - How can I?

1. How can I deal with a question I don't know the answer to?

2. How do I deal with someone being too dominant or disruptive?

3. What do I do if a discussion goes off the point and becomes irrelevant?

4. What to I do if some students have not done the required prep for my session?

5. What can I do if sub-groups of students start having private conversations?

6. One of the students I worked with/tutored failed an assessment and blames me - how do I respond?
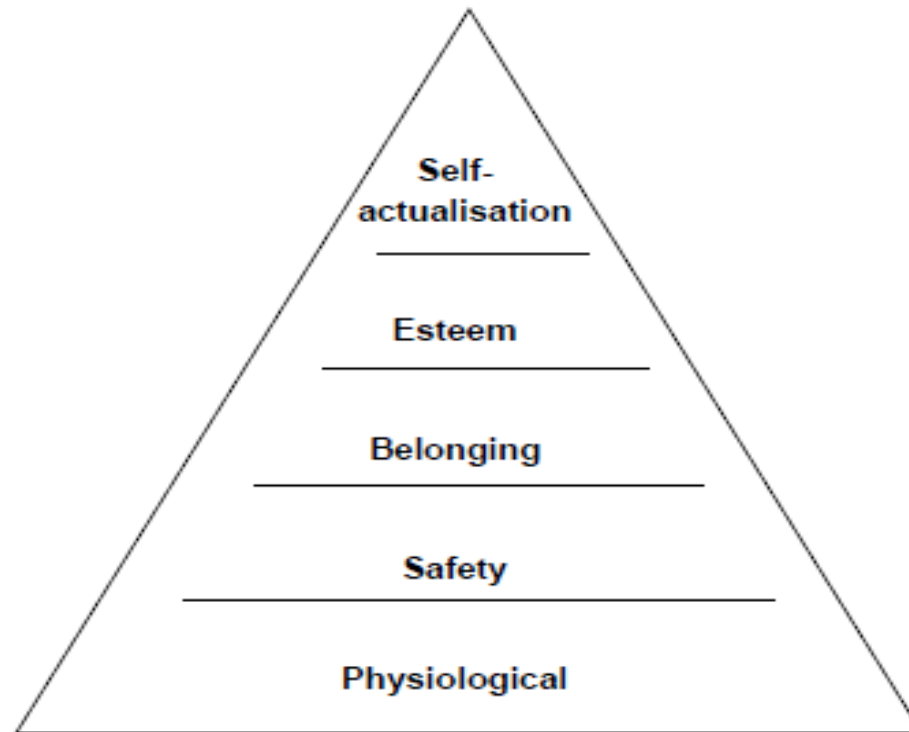
7. What do I do if no-one will answer my questions?

What do I do if no-one will answer my questions?

Tuckman's stages of group development

- ***Stage 1:*** *Forming*. In this stage the group members are new to each other, and there is likely to be a measure of wariness and uncertainty. Group members are likely to be polite but slightly distant from each other.

- ***Stage 2:*** *Storming*. As group members get to know each other better tensions start to emerge and there may be a degree of conflict.

- ***Stage 3:*** *Norming*. The group starts to develop ways of working together. This may be done explicitly, through the agreement of ground rules or particular processes.

- ***Stage 4:*** *Performing*. Only once the first three stages are complete can the group work most effectively together.

What do I do if no-one will answer my questions?

Maslow's hierarchy of needs

What do I do if no-one will answer my questions?

Simon and Lynda's tips:

- Arrive early and chat to the class as they arrive.

- Chatting off-topic at the start is OK to break the ice. Do you have a 'hook'?

- Use names where you can.

- Importance of light and shade / fun.

- Respect v empathy.

- Be aware of dominant voices

- Change the layout of the room to suit your lesson plan

- Think about where you stand in the room – not behind a desk!

- Open body language and smile!

Plan for this session

- Engaging effectively with students in a classroom
- **Assessing students and giving feedback**

The purpose of assessment

1. To pass or fail a student
2. To grade or rank a student
3. To diagnose a student's strengths and weaknesses
4. To provide feedback to students
5. To provide feedback to lecturers
6. To motivate students
7. To provide a profile of what a student has learnt

The purpose of assessment

8. To predict success in future courses
9. To predict success in employment
10. To select for future course
11. To select for future employment
12. To give credence to the course
13. To tell students what they have achieved
14. To tell students how to improve their performance

Types of assessment

- Formative assessment provides students the opportunity to check how they are doing

- Summative assessment provides teachers (and others) the opportunity to confirm how students are doing

- In other words…..

 Assessment for learning   OR   Assessment of learning

Effective feedback

- Seen as fair and considered

- Comments are linked to the grade given

- Timely enough to allow students to reflect upon it.

- Legible (... and **avoid red pen**)

- Informative / helpful:
  - clear message concerning specific issues of the performance eg gaps, errors
  - information on *how* to bridge the gap (goals and strategies - don't overwhelm);
  - positive (encouraging) comments made before negative (feedback sandwich).
  - recognise effort & acknowledge achievement

- Not confusing/contradictory

Why can it be difficult for students to use feedback?

1. The language can be difficult to understand
2. It can be difficult to know <u>how</u> to use it
3. It can be difficult to feel in control
4. It can be difficult to feel motivated to use feedback

Mike Parker & Georgina Mathlin, University of Surrey
HEA Project GEN1024 to Winstone and Nash

Language
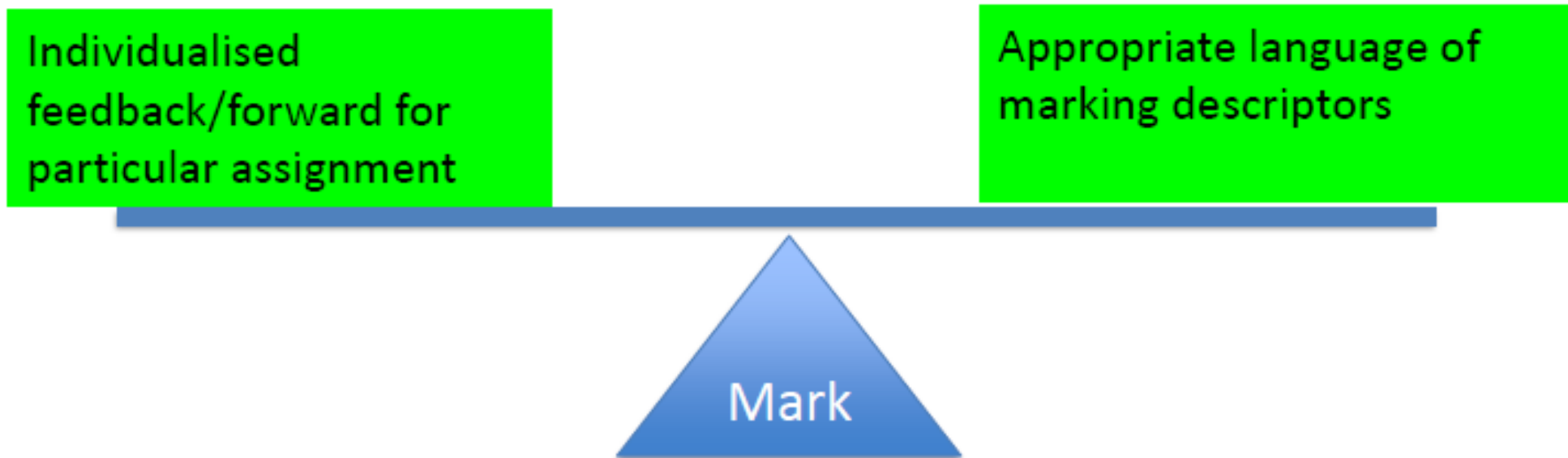
Language

... but students need individual feedback, so must be tailored to their needs

Language

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Hard to recognise why the assignment received the grade it did

Appropriate language of marking descriptors

Individualised feedback/forward for particular assignment

Mark
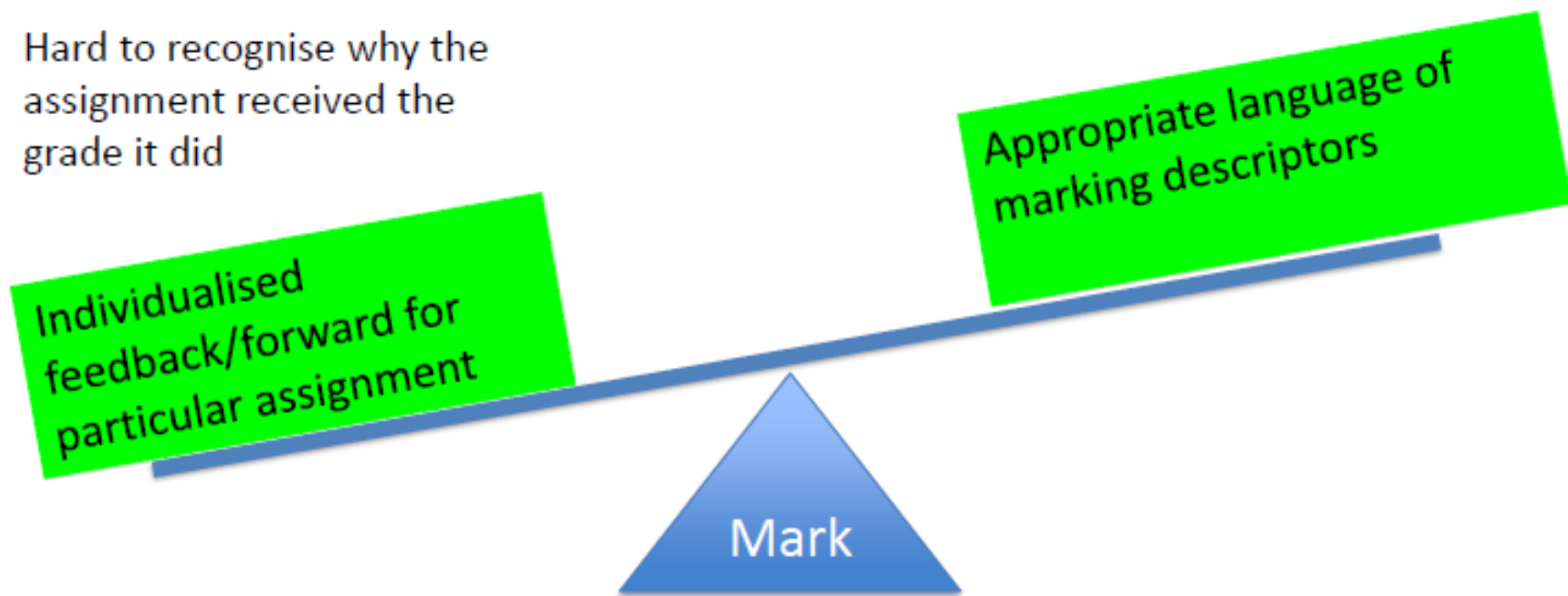
Feedback or feedforward?

Feed-forward is a strategy that aims to
"increase the value of feedback to the students by focusing comments no only on the past and present ... but also on the future – what the student might aim to do, or do differently in the next assignment or assessment if they are to continue to do well or to do better"

Hounsell, 2008, p.5

Simon and Lynda's top tips for feedback

- Try to give feedback relatively quickly (4 weeks max)
- Link feedback to learning outcomes and criteria
- Include feedback as an integral part of your classes
- Ensure feedback includes feed-forward
- Give students practice in understanding and using feedback
- Encourage the application of feedback.