

## provide high-quality AUDIO FEEDBACK?

### What is Audio Feedback?

Audio feedback is the recording and distribution of verbal feedback to students' learning. Unlike face-to-face verbal feedback, audio feedback is often provided in the form of digital audio files.

### What are the benefits of Audio Feedback?

- **Personalized learning:** audio feedback is more personal and caring than written feedback. Students can also learn at their own pace; revisit the feedback as often as they wish.
- **Enabling detailed nuanced feedback:** audio feedback is valuable to explain complicated concepts, and allows teachers to easily highlight important points by adjusting their tones/volumes. Tones and inflections add to the depth of feedback.
- **Efficiency:** teachers spend less time on audio feedback than written feedback, which contributes to the prompt return of feedback.
- **Student uptake:** research shows students are more likely to open and listen to audio feedback than written texts.

### What are the potential limitations of Audio Feedback?

- **Structure:** audio feedback is often less structured than written feedback. Students may find it more difficult to locate and revisit information they need in an audio file.
- **Separation:** audio feedback is often separated from students' work instead of written in the margins or at the end.
- **Technical issues:** some teachers may encounter different technical issues when trying to record and edit their audio feedback.

### How can we provide high-quality Audio Feedback?

The provision of meaningful feedback has long been a thorny issue in higher education. Although the delivery mode is different, audio feedback still needs to fulfil common guidelines/standards of feedback provision (See [Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006](#) for advice on good feedback practices). In what follows, we highlight some elements specific to audio feedback to enhance its quality.

### A. Equipment

There are a number of tools available for audio feedback. You can always try the built-in recorder in your smart phone, send audio messages directly via social media tools (e.g., Whatsapp/ Wechat), or see if the Learning Management System at your university provides such function. Platforms such as Audacity, YOCLÉ, Vocaroo, and Kaizena are also available (fees may apply). The recording function on Evernote (<http://joanvinalcox.ca/evernote-for-student-audio-feedback/>) and GoogleDoc (<https://techforlearning.sd61.bc.ca/provide-feedback-with-voice-notes-in-google-docs/>) is helpful as well.

### B. Planning

- **Plan ahead:** it would be beneficial if you plan in advance (1) the audience (one-on-one / group / entire class), (2) frequency (once a week / daily), (3) duration (10 seconds / 1min), (4) target (on specific assignments / class performance), and (5) type (summative / formative) of audio feedback. Make sure you communicate the plan clearly to your students.
- **Prepare a script:** you do not need to write down every word you will say, but a structure, or at least a main idea, is needed to help you stay focused.

### C. Production

- **Focus:** focus on the feedback content instead of minor speaking errors.
- **Stay positive:** adopt an encouraging tone while providing feedback, especially when the comments are negative (e.g., *You did a good job on...but I am wondering if this could be further improved by...*).
- **Practical advice:** make sure you provide actionable suggestions for students to respond to your feedback (e.g., *To solve this problem, I advise you to add a topic sentence at the start of...*). Avoid vague comments (e.g., *This part is unclear; this project can be done better*). Be clear and specific!
- **Quiet place and clear voice:** find a quiet place to record. Make sure your voice is clear and enunciate important points.
- **Timing:** it would be good to break down your comments into small audio clips (no longer than 5mins, 1-2mins is advisable). Shorter clips prevent students from getting distracted.

## D. Publish

- **Briefing:** students need to be briefed and guided as to the purpose of audio feedback, how to access and make use of audio feedback in advance.
- **Review:** listen to your feedback and double check the content and voice.
- **Keep track:** keep track of your audio files and name them with students' IDs and names. Record which files have been sent to students.

See [Resource Practice tips on using digital audio for assessment feedback](#) for more detailed advice.

## Good Practice Case Study

Below show some cases of how audio feedback is used in practice to enhance student learning:

- **Oxford, Cambridge and RSA: Audio feedback**  
In this English project, students received one-to-one audio feedback from their teacher. A toolkit is also provided to inform future practices.  
<https://www.ocr.org.uk/about/what-we-do/supporting-education/shireland-collegiate-academy/audio-feedback/>
- **Staffordshire University: Audio feedback for students: JISC audio mini-project case study**  
This project introduces students' use of audio feedback. Engineering students received both formative and summative audio feedback via MP3 files.  
<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/audio-feedback-students-jisc-audio-mini-project-case-study>
- **Sounds Good project**  
Four universities joint to implement audio feedback practices in their universities. In total, 38 lecturers gave audio feedback to over 1,200 students at all levels (from freshman to doctoral students). The website provides plentiful free resources (report plan; audio feedback samples; tips) to download.  
<https://sites.google.com/site/soundsgooduk/Home>

## Resources and Further Reading

- Ice, P., Curtis, R., Phillips, P., & Wells, J. (2007). Using asynchronous audio feedback to enhance teaching presence and students' sense of community. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 11(2), 3-25.
- Lunt, T., & Curran, J. (2010). 'Are you listening please?' The advantages of electronic audio feedback compared to written feedback. *Assessment & evaluation in higher education*, 35(7), 759-769.
- Nicol, D. J., & Macfarlane-Dick, D. (2006). Formative assessment and self-regulated learning: A model and seven principles of good feedback practice. *Studies in higher education*, 31(2), 199-218.
- Practice tips on using digital audio for assessment feedback:  
<https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=ZGVmYXVs-dGRvbWFpbnxz3VuZHNnb29kdWt8Z3g6M2ZhNTYxZDU5MjM5ZmZiOQ>
- Audio feedback toolkit:  
[https://melsig.shu.ac.uk/melsig/resources/audio-feedback-toolkit/?doing\\_wp\\_cron=1581306287.5320560932159423828125](https://melsig.shu.ac.uk/melsig/resources/audio-feedback-toolkit/?doing_wp_cron=1581306287.5320560932159423828125)

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