

## #mathscpdchat 21 September 2021

**Marking and feedback: what do you do, and how does it support learning and teaching?**

Hosted by [Alice Ward-Gow](#)

*This is a brief summary of the discussion – to see all the tweets, follow the hashtag #mathscpdchat in Twitter*



#mathscpdchat

Today  
Tuesday, 21 September, 7-8pm

Ongoing assessment as an integral part of teaching

Marking and feedback:  
what do you do,  
and how does it support  
learning and teaching?

Hosted by Alice Ward-Gow @mcwardgow  
ncetm.org.uk/mathscpdchat

Among the links shared during the discussion were:

[Teacher Feedback to Improve Pupil Learning: Guidance Report](#) which is a guidance report from the [Education Endowment Foundation \(EEF\)](#) written by Joe Colin and [Alex Quigley](#). Six recommendations (of which the first is 'Lay the foundations for effective feedback') are clearly presented and discussed. It was shared by [Mary Pardoe](#)

[Dirty Work](#) which is a blog (2013) by [Alex Quigley](#) in which the author explains and discusses what he believes the phrase 'Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time' (DIRT) ought to describe. That is, he believes that a true understanding of what it refers to enables teachers to

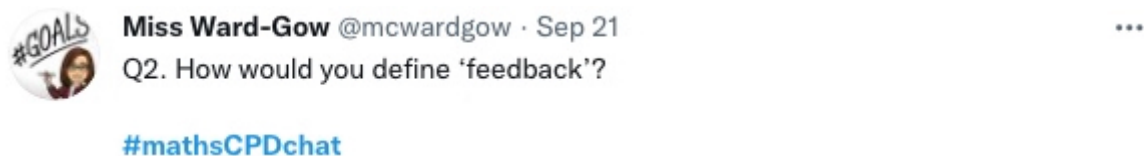
spend time getting their students to enhance the standard of their work and themselves to provide high quality feedback. It was shared by [MathsLP](#)

[Questioning Marking?](#) which is a blogpost from the Director of the NCETM, Charlie Stripp, in which he questions the value of doing huge amounts of marking. He explains how his own maths-teaching experience has helped to lead him to this thinking. It was shared by [Mary Pardoe](#)

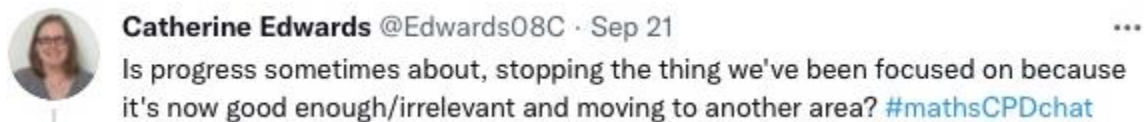
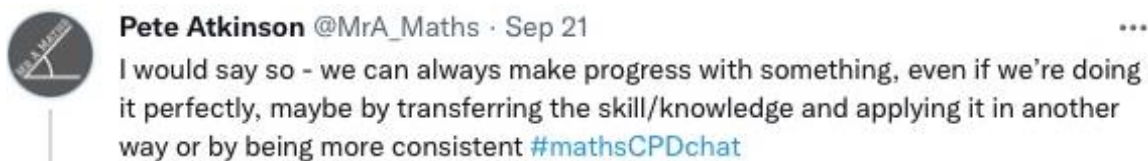
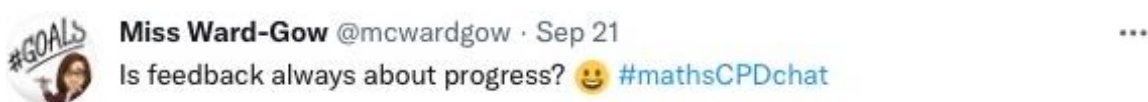
[Pinpoint Learning](#) which is a website providing 'individually targetted GCSE and KS2 resources with real maths and real results'. It was shared by [Peter Atkinson](#)

The screenshots below, of chains of tweets posted during the chat, show parts of two conversations about what teachers believe 'feedback' in maths teaching is, some things teachers do, and whether the allocation of grades is relevant. **Click on any of these screenshots-of-a-tweet to go to that actual tweet on Twitter.**

The conversations were generated by this tweet from [Alice Ward-Gow](#):



and included these from [Peter Atkinson](#), [Alice Ward-Gow](#) and [Catherine Edwards](#):





**Catherine Edwards** @Edwards08C · Sep 21

...

I'd really like to work on (when I find the magic time creator) is bringing the feedback from a previous unit/term/year forward into the new unit we're doing. I do some for me in my planning with QLA, but want to think how to share effectively with students [#mathscpdchat](#)

**Question Level Analysis**

It breaks the results of an assessment down into simpler parts – focusing in on successes and highlighting areas to focus on.



**Miss Ward-Gow** @mcwardgow · Sep 21

...

Great idea - QLA could be such a valuable asset if we had more time/better ways to make use of it 😞 maybe someone on here has some great ideas on this? [#whodoesntloveaspreadsheet](#) [#mathsCPDchat](#)



**Catherine Edwards** @Edwards08C · Sep 21

...

[#IfFlippingLoveASpreadsheet](#) we've created some GCSE paper ones that pull files straight into a revision booklet for printing.

I'm wondering about something along those lines to pull a personalised prior learning task.

It's on my future board on my planner 😊

[#mathsCPDchat](#)



**Miss Ward-Gow** @mcwardgow · Sep 21

...

That sounds AMAZING!! Is that with mail merge on Word? Sounds like you're going to be busy 😊 [#mathsCPDchat](#)



**Catherine Edwards** @Edwards08C · Sep 21

...

So you can mailmerge comments but not images of questions. It's a piece of VBA that looks up a filename linked to a particular topic, collects the files in a folder and then prints to pdf.

[#mathsCPDchat](#)

What VBA is used for?

Visual Basic for Applications is a computer programming language developed and owned by Microsoft. With VBA you can **create macros to automate repetitive word- and data-processing functions**, and generate custom forms, graphs, and reports. VBA functions within MS Office applications; it is not a stand-alone product.





**Pete Atkinson** @MrA\_Maths · Sep 21

...


Replying to [@mcwardgow](#) [@Edwards08C](#) and [@PardoeMary](#)

We use a similar thing on Pinpoint [pinpointlearning.co.uk/index.php](http://pinpointlearning.co.uk/index.php) upload our QLAs and it generates a booklet of gap topics for us [#mathsCPDchat](#)



and these from [Gemma Scott](#) and [Alice Ward-Gow](#):

-  **Director of Maths** @DirectorMaths · Sep 21 ...  
Replying to @mcwardgow  
Feedback is something designed to make a process more efficient or to help something progress to a higher level. If we are talking about giving students feedback it meets them where they are currently at and takes them to the next level #mathscpdchat
-  **Miss Ward-Gow** @mcwardgow · Sep 21 ...  
Absolutely! 😊 Here's a question for you - when we let students know where they're at, should we make reference to grades? 🤔 #mathsCPDchat
-  **Director of Maths** @DirectorMaths · Sep 21 ...  
For me, no! Grades aren't relevant (or really applicable) in the day to day. Feedback is about what you can do now and how you will be able to do more in the future. Grades are more of a measuring tool than a feedback tool. Question level analysis is more helpful #mathscpdchat
-  **Miss Ward-Gow** @mcwardgow · Sep 21 ...  
Totally stealing that quote "grades are more of a measuring tool than a feedback tool" - couldn't agree more! 🥰 #mathsCPDchat

The following screenshots show parts of seven conversations about 'marking' students' written work. Again, click on any of these screenshots-of-a-tweet to go to that actual tweet on Twitter. These conversations were generated by this tweet from [Alice Ward-Gow](#):

-  **Miss Ward-Gow** @mcwardgow · Sep 21 ...  
Q4. Do you mark books? (and don't just say "no" because you haven't marked any yet 😊) If so, how often do you mark books?  
  
#mathsCPDchat

and included these from [Catherine Edwards](#) and [Alice Ward-Gow](#):

-  **Catherine Edwards** @Edwards08C · Sep 21 ...  
Replying to @mcwardgow  
Define mark?  
I write in some books every lesson as I circulate.  
I either give students the answers or take in work to mark myself for every task undertaken.  
I usually formally mark something around once a fortnight per class.  
#mathsCPDchat
-  **Miss Ward-Gow** @mcwardgow · Sep 21 ...  
'Mark' meaning a full book mark rather than a comment when you're circulating the room - although I do appreciate that this can be a great way to give instant feedback 😊 how many lessons do you see each class per fortnight?  
#mathsCPDchat



**Catherine Edwards** @Edwards08C · Sep 21

...

10 for KS4 , 8 for KS3.

It's really dependent on the class.

One class might be really effective at self marking and another really poor. Some topics are easier for students to understand errors than others. The fortnight is a minimum rule of thumb I apply to myself [#mathsCPDchat](#)



**Miss Ward-Gow** @mcwardgow · Sep 21

...

Ah yes! And if it's a topic with a lot of misconceptions, then checking the books could help to resolve these [#mathsCPDchat](#)

these from [Gemma Scott](#) and [Alice Ward-Gow](#):



**Director of Maths** @DirectorMaths · Sep 21

...

Replying to [@mcwardgow](#)

I don't necessarily think marking books is wrong or right. I think the issue comes from having a "marking policy" without a clear rationale and one that's not tied in with the assessment policy [#mathscpdchat](#)



**Miss Ward-Gow** @mcwardgow · Sep 21

...

And this brings us back to ensuring that feedback is purposeful and actionable. If the book-marking we do isn't purposeful or actionable or going to help the learners to move forwards, then why are we doing it? (rhetorical question 😊)

[#mathsCPDchat](#)



**Director of Maths** @DirectorMaths · Sep 21

...

Exactly! Teachers/ faculties should start with

1. What feedback is useful (for students and staff)
2. When in the learning/ assessment cycle should it be given
3. How should it be given

[#mathscpdchat](#)

these from [RHMaths](#), [Alice Ward-Gow](#), [Mary Pardoe](#) and [Catherine Edwards](#):



**RHMaths** @MathsRh · Sep 21

...

Replying to [@mcwardgow](#)

We don't mark books, just assessments. I do find it useful to look over books but it's nice to not have the pressure of marking them.



**Miss Ward-Gow** @mcwardgow · Sep 21

...

Do you find that you enjoy looking at the books more, when you don't have the pressure to mark them? [#mathsCPDchat](#)



**RHMaths** @MathsRh · Sep 21

...

Definitely!



**Mary Pardoe** @PardoeMary · Sep 21 ...  
What an interesting question! [#mathsCPDchat](#)



**Miss Ward-Gow** @mcwardgow · Sep 21

Replying to @MathsRh

Do you find that you enjoy looking at the books more, when you don't have the pressure to mark them? [#mathsCPDchat](#)



**Catherine Edwards** @Edwards08C · Sep 21 ...

Replying to @PardoeMary

I certainly enjoy marking more when I can respond to what is there rather than feel I have to demonstrate to some external viewer I'm following a policy.

[#mathsCPDchat](#)



**Mary Pardoe** @PardoeMary · Sep 21 ...

... or having to demonstrate through the marking that you're doing your job!

[#mathsCPDchat](#)



**Catherine Edwards** @Edwards08C · Sep 21 ...

At least the fashion for verbal feedback stamps, multi coloured pens and pages of proforma comments seems to mostly be a thing of the past. Although I do still harbor a fondness for APP, I think it could have been great it was just implemented poorly. [#mathsCPDchat](#)

Produced in 2009-2010, Assessing Pupils Progress (APP) was produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and is a **structured approach to periodic assessment**, written to enable teachers to use diagnostic information about students' strengths and weaknesses and to track students' progress.

these from [MathsLP](#):



**MathsLP** @MathsRSmith · Sep 21 ...

Replying to @mcwardgow

I marked a class set (30 book) in an hour today. All work is purple panned (self or peer marked) and I pick out a www and ebi from what I can see. Hw is four sections from previous years, and I pick one of the four for a dirt task. I have been setting Dr Frost for dirt.



**MathsLP** @MathsRSmith · Sep 21 ...

But I could do it quicker if I just used numbers to state which task they have to do. I will add, we have 1to1 chromebooks so Dr Frost is in lessons (to be finished for HW!). In a previous school we didn't have to write anything in books at all!



**MathsLP** @MathsRSmith · Sep 21 ...

But did have to do DiRT work every 2 weeks.


DIRT stands for '**Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time**'.

these from [Peter Williams](#) and [Alice Ward-Gow](#):

 **Peter Williams** @MathsImpact · Sep 21 ...  
Replying to @mcwardgow

No, we only do written marking on homework, everything else is verbal or live marking.

The expectation from the school is written feedback once per fortnight, so that's what we do.

 **Miss Ward-Gow** @mcwardgow · Sep 21 ...  
What sort of tasks do you set for homework? #mathsCPDchat


 **Peter Williams** @MathsImpact · Sep 21 ...  
A mixture of retrieval from previous topics and current work to practice/reinforce in class learning.


Personally I keep it to a single side of A4 to minimise my marking and their time spent on homework.


For A level it's exam questions on recent topics.

[#mathscpdchat](#)

these from [Miss Franklin](#) and [Alice Ward-Gow](#):

 **miss franklin** @missfc\_maths · Sep 21 ...  
Replying to @mcwardgow  
we light touch mark 5 books per week per class and do 2 topic assessments per class per term. The class assessments are what students do responding to marking to. #mathscpdchat

 **Miss Ward-Gow** @mcwardgow · Sep 21 ...  
Do all classes in the same year do the same assessments? #mathsCPDchat

 **miss franklin** @missfc\_maths · Sep 21 ...  
Year 7 and 8 all do the same assessments. Years 9 - 11 currently do one of 3 papers. 1 x higher tier 2 x foundation paper in line with which SOW they follow. #mathscpdchat

and these from [Martyn Yeo](#) and [Alice Ward-Gow](#):

 **Martyn (He/Him)** @martynyeouk · Sep 21 ...  
Replying to @mcwardgow  
Everyday I mark books :( #mathscpdchat

 **Miss Ward-Gow** @mcwardgow · Sep 21 ...  
Do you (your school) have strategies in place to ensure that it's a good use of your time? 😊 #mathsCPDchat

-  **Martyn (He/Him)** @martynyeouk · Sep 21 ...  
We are discussing it as a staff to cut workload and the best way to feedback to pupils [#mathscpdchat](#)
-  **Miss Ward-Gow** @mcwardgow · Sep 21 ...  
That's great to hear 😊 hopefully someone on Twitter has some great ideas for Primary marking to share with you! [#mathsCPDchat](#)
-  **Martyn (He/Him)** @martynyeouk · Sep 21 ...  
[#mathscpdchat](#)



(to read the discussion-sequence generated by any tweet look at the 'replies' to that tweet)



In considering other areas where discussion focused it's clear that the host's first question ...

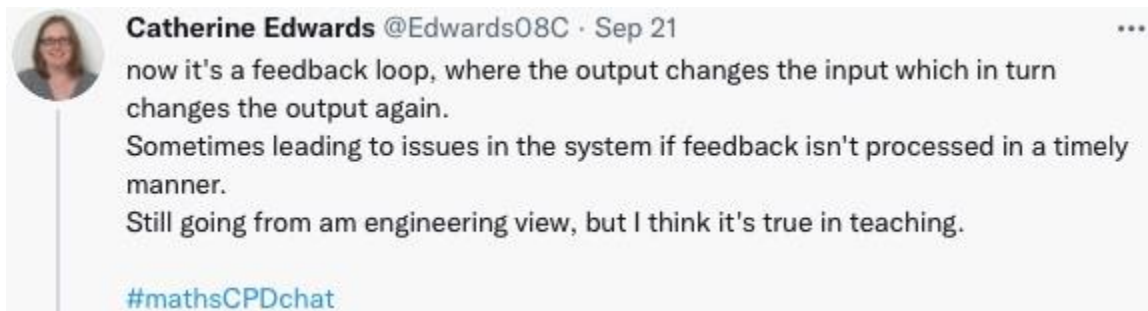
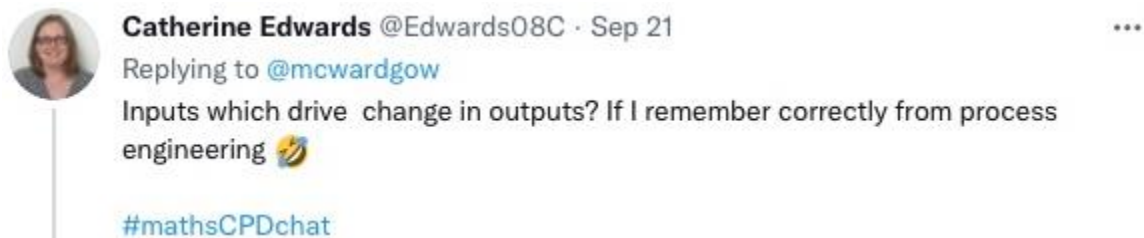


Q1. When someone mentions 'book-marking' what's your initial reaction? Reply with a GIF 🤓 [#mathsCPDchat](#)

... generated many responses, all of which indicated negative emotions of some kind, which are exemplified in tweeted images (GIFs) such as these:



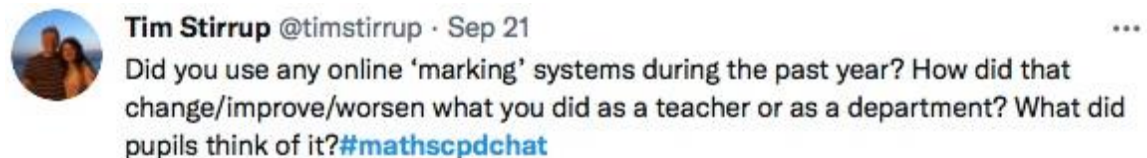
- although most of the replies to the host's second question are shown in the sequence of screenshots on pages 2 to 4 above, 'inputs and 'outputs' and 'feedback loops' were also mentioned:



- 'feedback' was also seen as 'something designed to improve a student's knowledge or skills following an assessment of some description, whether it be formal or informal';
- it was also pointed out that feedback may be communicated in various ways:



- there were no replies to this question:

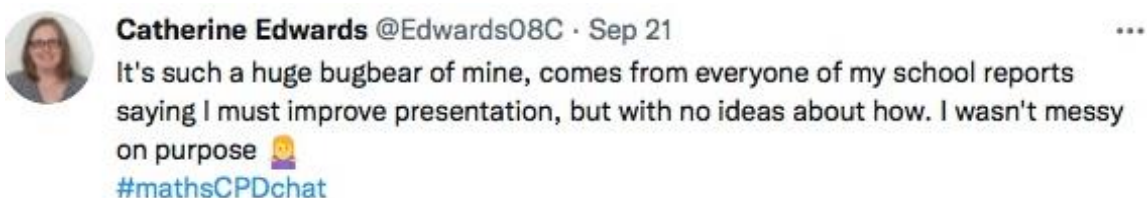


**the host's third question invited teachers to describe key features of 'good feedback':**

- the following characteristics were mentioned by several people ...







with agreement that **effective feedback needs to be 'actionable'**, for reasons exemplified in this tweet:



- teachers also described effective feedback as ... clear ... unambiguous ... in direct response to students' work ... appropriate for the recipient ... 'the method of communication, the layout, the timing should all be about the recipient rather than the giver';

many of the responses to the host's fourth question (which was about marking books) are shown in the sequence of screenshots on pages 4 to 8 above, but there were some other tweets describing teachers' practices, such as:

-  **Pete Atkinson** @MrA\_Maths · Sep 21 ...  
Replying to @mcwardgow and @PardoeMary  
Students peer mark Qs, I review their books every couple of weeks (ideally live feedback in-lesson though I find it really difficult to give good quality verbal feedback and write comments in books as I go), whole class feedback at the end of each block (2-3 weeks) #mathsCPDchat
-  **Director of Maths** @DirectorMaths · Sep 21 ...  
Replying to @mcwardgow  
The majority of work is marked by students, from modelled solutions under the visualiser. We mark a "key question" (exam style q) every three weeks and provided detailed feedback and a cumulative hwk task every three weeks #mathscpdchat
-  **Mathsninja** @mathninja3 · Sep 21 ...  
Replying to @mcwardgow  
I only mark assessments and papers and give detailed feedback on them. Books are self marked and I'll circulate and tick. I never take a set of books is or ask staff to mark books like that. I don't believe there is much impact vs time spent. I also want a life...
-  **Miss Bowkett** @MissBowkett · Sep 21 ...  
Replying to @mcwardgow  
No. Students self/peer assess all work. Teacher mark end of topic tests & termly assessments, then provide whole class feedback, close gaps/extend etc.

the host used her fifth question to ask whether online/remote teaching experiences had brought about any modifications to teachers' marking/providing-feedback practices:

- teachers reported that those experiences had prompted them to ... start using worked examples ... use Dr Frost Maths in lessons;

the four replies to Alice's last question ...

-  **Miss Ward-Gow** @mcwardgow · Sep 21 ...  
Q6. (Last question)  
How do you ensure that the feedback that you give has the impact that you plan for it to have? 😎  
  
#mathsCPDchat

... were thoughtful and thought-provoking:



**Pete Atkinson** @MrA\_Maths · Sep 21

...

Replying to @mcwardgow and @PardoeMary

Tough one... feedback specific to a Q is easily measurable by the subsequent answer; feedback specific to a topic may be measurable by formative & summative testing but can you be sure that it's your feedback that has had the impact rather than external factors? [#mathsCPDchat](#)



**Catherine Edwards** @Edwards08C · Sep 21

...

Replying to @mcwardgow

Well that's the million dollar question isn't it...  
I think going back to it being really specific and actionable at least lets you see if they are trying to do what you want/need. Whether it is internally making a difference?  
[#mathsCPDchat](#)



**Lou H-S FCCT** @LouiseHStaples · Sep 21

...

Replying to @mcwardgow

Participants only move on from the point of their own understanding. What I say, may not be what they hear. What I intend may not be what they perceive.  
Accessibility, research informed and demonstrative impact. The opportunity to experiment, then succeed or not. [#mathscpdchat](#)



**miss franklin** @missfc\_maths · Sep 21

...

Replying to @mcwardgow

Tough one and still one my dept is working on. Time is a big factor, its important to give studentals have enough time to process and respond properly to feedback in lesson and also that it is embedded through retrieval activities in lesson and homeworks [#mathscpdchat](#)