**Using Pecha Kucha as formative assessment in two undergraduate modules.
(Re) conceptualising 'the right lines'**

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Abstract

The discourses around feedback and assessment within higher education are often proliferated as critical to student learning, and attention to student (dis) *satisfaction* is often high on the agenda. As academics spend extensive time and effort on the production of summative feedback, this paper draws on the initial findings from a small -scale study of the use of *Pecha Kucha* as a methodology for formative assessment within two undergraduate modules. The dominant themes suggest some disparity between staff and students regarding the *purpose* of formative assessment and the paper argues that Pecha Kucha can be used as a platform to develop assessment dialogues, with the subsequent development of a pedagogic literacy around feedback practices. Furthermore, the value of listening to different narratives from research studies, students and tutors supports the reframing of assessment as a supportive mechanism beyond the elicitation of *proof* of learning.

Keywords
Feedback; dialogue; formative; Pecha Kucha; pedagogy; power.

Introduction

This research meanders down a well -trodden path where 'the student' is a recognisable *object* of scrutiny within the literature around feedback in higher education. The antithesis of the good student is the lazy or poorly regulated student waiting for feedback to be done to them, waiting for a biological and environmental 'readiness' to enable them to comprehend or accept feedback (Dowden, Pittaway, Yost & McCarthy, 2011), or the tacitly threatening 'consumer' wanting to 'have' a degree, with little concept of the pedagogical implications of their demands (Molesworth, Nixon & Scullion, 2009). This research is the result of a pilot project where Pecha Kucha was embedded into the module design within two undergraduate modules in order to offer students the opportunity to present and share their initial ideas before a summative group presentation. The subsequent research aimed to develop a shared understanding of the student as *subject* and the analysis aims to confront constructions of 'tutor' and 'lecturer' (lecturer, academic, student) within higher education to further support authentic feedback practices.

Why Pecha Kucha?

Pecha Kucha (Japanese pronunciation 'petca kutca') is literally translated as 'chit chat'. Despite its growing popularity within various disciplines, the introduction of this presentation style was a new and interesting phenomenon as part of the assessment process within two undergraduate modules at LJMU. The format (20 slides are shown for 20 seconds resulting in a 6 minute and 40

second presentation), facilitates concise and fast paced presentations, and was devised by Astrid Klein and Mark Dytham of Klein Dytham architecture to help presenters to 'tell a story, rather than trying to describe the slides'. The slides developed by the students offered the opportunity to present a group narrative using visual imagery, and whilst there are clear constraints in terms of time, the visual impact of the slides mean that the images themselves can do a lot of the *talking* and the methodology is an intriguing recognition of the needs of an audience. Within the two undergraduate modules, the Pecha Kucha was purposely embedded as a formative opportunity within the assessment design, thus, there was an explicit attempt to engineer some focus on assessment as a generative process *for* learning (Wiliam and Black, 2009). Whilst the method itself could result in a superficial, surface exploration of a subject, the slides can be visually interesting, the pace concise and the intertextuality experienced by both the presenters and the audience can transform student presenters into learning resources for one another (Wiliam and Black, 2009). The assessment period in many universities results in a swathe of group presentations and Reynolds (2007) suggests that the Pecha Kucha can be a liberating methodology and a better indication of 'knowledge'. With this in mind, students presented their initial ideas with a strictly timed Pecha Kucha, followed by a peer and tutor discussion (collaborative inquiry) to democratize the process of constructing knowledge (Bray et al, 2000:19).

Methodological Tools

The research was carried out in the faculty of Community, Leisure and Education at LJMU and the methodological approach of Action research involved reflection and consideration regarding the usefulness of the Pecha Kucha. The research study contributed to the development of a shared understanding regarding the purpose of Pecha Kucha as a pedagogical tool in the feedback process, and the exploration of respondents' narratives invited the use of critical discourse and Phenomenographic analysis (Sin, 2010) keeping it 'methodologically and theoretically alive' (Silverman, 2011:5).

The inclusion of Pecha Kucha was explicitly noted in the module handbook with guidance related to a practical application, and the impetus for the research came from initial confusion from students related to the inclusion of the methodology as formative assessment. Ethical approval was granted through the LJMU ethics committee and the juxtaposition of institutional policy and ethical considerations meant that students would not be part of the research process until they had completed the module, and this included receipt of their summative feedback and grade.

The Pecha Kucha was based on a pedagogically sound premise that dialogue and conversation can play a major part in learning, for, as Bruner (1985:23) notes, 'language is a way of sorting out one's own thoughts about things'. The Pecha Kucha was to be delivered by each group following the format of 20 slides for 20 seconds each, culminating in a short presentation, using visual imagery as a stimulus, and post presentation opportunities for discussion with tutors and peers. Within the literature around feedback practices in higher education, the assimilation of messages appears to suggest that whilst feedback is clearly central to the development of student learning (Hattie and Timperley 2007, Hounsell 2003 cited in Carless et al 2011), it is still deemed to be problematic, and tutors are hampered in their efforts when they make the assumption that their feedback is indeed much more useful than students perceive it to be. The assertion that students are 'seldom trained or supported in how to use feedback' (Weaver, 2006 cited in Carless et al., 2011), coexists with the warning of the need for 'more supportive feedback practices' due to 'crowding of assignments and modularized courses' (Carless et al., 2011:395). From an educational, psychological and Vygotskian perspective (1972), dialogic learning is viewed as a higher mental function, thus, the engagement in ideas through dialogue (following

the Pecha Kucha), externalises ideas in a social context. In this context, students can legitimately explore the emergence of new perspectives or alternative ways of considering an issue. The focus on dialogue was key to the rationale for the Pecha Kucha, and the view that feedback and 'all good teaching is interactive and dialogic' was compounded by the equal belief that 'much student learning is driven by the assessment tasks they undertake' (Carless et al 2011:396). Self - regulation is ambiguously conceptualised in much of the literature, however, for this purpose I assumed the definition of 'an active, constructive process whereby learners set goals for their learning and then attempt to monitor, regulate and control their cognition' (Pintrich and Zusho 2002:250). To illustrate the potential value of the visual imagery, one group of students chose to include a visual representation of the Rose review (related to the teaching of phonics) and the audience simply saw a picture of a rose, juxtaposed with a 20 second snapshot of dialogue from students. This dialogue captured the students' perceptions regarding the relevance of the Rose review for the final module assessment. The post presentation dialogue with peers and tutors was intentionally embedded to extend cognition, and borrowing from Kress (1995), 'this makes the learner active and agentive in relation to this formation of their own subjectivity' (42). The relevance of the choice of signs and symbols to represent ideas (the visual imagery in the Pecha Kucha slides), become relatively 'well recoverable' (44) with the justification for inclusion clearly articulated by group members.

Data derived from students within two undergraduate modules (one second year -level 5 and one third year- level 6), and subsequent interviews with tutors based on their perceptions of student responses. The aims of the research were primarily to explore relationships between the Pecha Kucha as a formative opportunity to inform the final summative assessment, and to identify student opinion regarding the value of the post Pecha Kucha feedback. A qualitative methodology was used with open -ended questionnaires and there was a 54% response rate from level 5 and a 65% response rate from level 6. Analysis of the primary data, (questionnaires completed by students), was then used to promote a discussion with colleagues about their perceptions of feedback practices, including the relevance of the Pecha Kucha.

From questionnaires to *chit chat* with tutors
Three members of the Programme team reviewed the primary data from the questionnaires and were invited to discuss their perspective of the student orientated data in open -ended interviews. Tutors were interviewed individually and each interview was audio recorded and subsequently transcribed. The interplay between the collection of data and analysis was characteristic of qualitative research, where data analysis is often carried out concurrently with data collection (Walliman, 2011), therefore the writing itself was a process of discovery, ultimately resulting in continuous analysis. The transcription process assumed particular relevance when viewed in the context of 'authenticity' (Mentor, Elliot, Hulme, Lewin & Lowden, 2011:63) 'as the interface between oral and written data' (Sin, 2010:314). The transcripts were a key feature of the data collection and were more than 'a technical detail' (Silverman, 2011:282) thus, text analysis is 'only part of discourse analysis, which also includes analysis of productive and interpretative processes' (Fairclough, 2001:20). Conversations between colleagues are everyday occurrences and are always 'situated' (Silverman, 2011:292), however whilst these conversations assumed a sense of formality, often absent from the everyday conversations held in corridors, they were also imbued with a sense of familiarity, exemplified through the use of humour and informal language. Records of the conversations with colleagues were analysed and as discourse analysis featured heavily within the research literature (Fairclough, 2001, Silverman, 2011, Cohen Manion & Morrison, 2011), it also appeared to be a methodological bedfellow for the phenomenographic method, where the purpose of the (audio recorded) interview was to 'explore the lived experiences of interviewees' (Sin, 2010:313). This methodological adaptation

changed the original structure of the interviews, where instead of a researcher lead interview, an 'intentional expressive approach' was adopted (Anderberg, 2000 cited in Sin 2010:313).

 Colleagues were asked to consider the data gleaned from the student questionnaires then follow up questions were asked to 'encourage interviewees to reflect on the conceptual meanings of the terms or phrases in the expressions that they had used' (Sin 2010:313). The rationale for the presentation of collective data was both ethically and methodologically driven as the transcripts were anonymised and analysed collectively thus, 'they collectively constitute the overall data where the meanings are interpreted in relation with the others' (Sin, 2010:315). The open ended (ness) of the questions was important, thus data were viewed with some similarities and clustering without being 'aggregated too tightly' (Flick, 2011:56).

Further review of the literature
There is a wealth of literature surrounding the value of dialogic feedback practices to support student understanding (Burke, 2009, MacLellan, 2010, Carless et al., 2011, Mutch, 2003, Duncan, 2007, Yorke, 2001, Dowden et al., 2011, Nichol & McFarlane-Dick, 2006, Black & Wiliam, 2009, Sadler, 2010). Amongst the swath of literature surrounding feedback per se, MacLellan (2010) considers how students often perceive formative assessment to primarily be about 'judging levels of achievement, rather than about enabling learning' (316) and disquietingly, staff and student perceptions are often 'at odds', with students often viewing assessment as 'ubiquitous' (MacLellan, 2010:316 & Higgins et al., 2002:59).

Black and Wiliam (2009:22) consider what they term, the 'tyranny of statistical data' which promote models of teaching and feedback practices that are highly instrumental, and this resonates with much of the research around feedback, where assessment practices are seen to notably dominate the culture of learning in higher education. This is often associated with the intention to listen to the 'student voice', which Curtis and Pettigrew (2009) refer to as a commonplace term used to 'define practices that encourage learner participation' (50). However, feedback practices are sometimes seen as strategic rather than pedagogically driven, and Newman et al. (2008 cited in Curtis and Pettigrew, 2009) highlight concerns that universities are engaged in 'disingenuous and manipulative activities' with the National Student Survey, treating it as 'a marketing tool, rather than a means for students to express their true perspectives, thus, students need to be trained to understand and respond to feedback practices (97-98). The idea of training students is complex, with Molesworth, Nixon and Scullion (2009) drawing on the marketization of higher education and the changing role of the tutor, which they see as diminished from 'transformative' guidance to help students to think critically, to 'confirmation' of the student as consumer who simply wants to have a degree 'rather than be a learner' (277). Higgins et al. (2002) assert that as long as there is constructive alignment (Biggs, 1999), students don't need to be spoon fed with 'correct answers' (54), and formative assessment feedback is essential to encourage the kind of 'deep learning' (Biggs, 1999) needed for meta cognition and subsequent transformative change.

MacLellan (2010) notes that a conception of formative assessment that focuses on the teacher's role without considering the learners position, (that is the part they have to play in their own learning), is 'increasingly being seen as incomplete' (316), and she highlights that even when learners are explicitly told what they need to do, and are given reliable information about the quality of their work (Sadler, 2010), there is often no improvement in the submission. She further insists that feedback can only have a formative influence if learners are actually involved in the process, and this is reiterated by Mutch (2003 cited in Rae & Cochrane, 2008:222) who notes that feedback itself 'should be seen as a social practice, that places emphasis not only on

the comments, but also on the means by which the feedback is produced, distributed and received'. Curtis and Pettigrew (2009) consider how psychologists have contributed to a current educational culture that perceives learning as individualised and multiple as well as socially situated and what Farrell (2001) refers to as 'knowledge as negotiation' (202).

MacLellan (2010) further considers the differing perceptions of feedback practices from different vantage points (student/tutor) and she claims that, 'In not recognising their own role in formative assessment, students see staff as having the power to determine either the veracity of student performance per se, or the validity of the evidence from which performance is inferred' (316). However, Carless (2006) considers how 'assessment dialogues are a way forward to mitigate some of the mistrust or misconceptions that may be unwanted outcomes of the assessment process' (219). Studies by Ramsden (1992, 1998 cited in Poulos & Mahony, 2008) appear to illuminate a desire for individual, rather than general feedback which was contrary to the view by Knight and Yorke (2003) regarding the superior power of general feedback. However, according to Poulos and Mahony (2008), they were referring to feedback that could be used for future assessments.

Constructions of students as vulnerable resonate within the guidance literature, and the premise that feedback should 'appropriately engender a sense of achievement' (Higgins et al. 2002:58) and 'should be different for different levels' (Knight & Yorke 2003 cited in Poulos & Mahony 2008:152), reflects a developmental approach to feedback practices. Drawing on the feedback literature, Poulos and Mahony ((2008) suggest that most of the research around feedback to students focuses on the 'input side of the equation' (144) in terms of what is provided *for* students. However, scrutiny of the literature suggests that it is also important to consider how students interpret and deal with feedback, as this is critical to the success of formative assessment and involves 'both psychological state and disposition' (144). Indeed, the human desire for reassurance is captured by Ferguson (2011:57) who notes how learners naturally experience a 'fragility of confidence' (cited in Dowden et al 2011:3).

Dixon (2011:12) discusses arguments presented by Ecclestone & Hayes (2010) and considers 'the essence of the argument is that education at all levels in the UK, from primary schools to universities, and beyond into the workplace has become perniciously dominated by a therapeutic ethos'. He explores Ecclestone & Hayes' (2010) idea of a culturally protective discourse and notes how they attribute blame for 'this therapeutic educational trend for the creation of a generation of inward looking people, taught to think more about their own feelings than about academic attainment, and to operate passively rather than actively, as patients rather than agents' (p12). Dowden et al. (2011:3) pursue the developmental discourse with their reference to a need for 'continuum of growth in academic confidence'.

Exploring the scientific foundations of effective teaching, Stewart (2012) considers examples of teaching interventions using Rotter (1966) and Weiner's (1976) locus of control and attribution theory. Carless (2006) cites Yorkes' (2001) assertion, that as well as the content of feedback, an awareness of the psychology of giving and receiving feedback is vitally important to student learning and 'emotional barriers' (Carless, 2006:220) are represented as possible 'barriers that distort the potential for learning' (220). Stewart (2012) argues that feedback should be motivating and emotionally engaging to develop the internal locus of control and accentuating the positive aspects of students' work maintains well being and serotonin levels.

The discourse around feedback and the use of related terminology is broadly considered within the literature, however, this is captured by Taras (2008) who cites unfamiliar research associated

with feedback practices, with a focus on tutor misconceptions and uncertainties. The dominant messages appear to situate students as constantly in need, however, much of the literature considers feedback in the written form and deals with concerns related to the need to ensure clarity, for example, that feedback is written in clear and accessible language rather than in 'academic' discourse. Zukas and Malcolm (1999) insist that 'the standard cultural capital of universities is often opaque and alienating' (1) and much of the research around feedback practices identify how academic discourse can hamper, rather than support students understanding and ability to interpret what they hear (Burke 2009, Rae & Cochrane 2008, Weaver, 2007, Higgins et al. 2002, Carless, 2006). MacLellan ((2001) articulates the lack of clarity with some assessment processes and notes the need for the 'rules' of the game to provide clarity for all parties (308), and Black and Wiliam (2009) analyse classroom discourse and the role of formative feedback to support learners to make decisions and develop a sense of agency. They discuss the need to 'capitalize on moments of contingency' which helps to distinguish a theory of formative assessment from an overall theory of teaching and learning' (10).

Presentation & Analysis of Findings
The data from students were thematically grouped and the analysis was a process where themes that emerged in one dataset, for example the student questionnaires, required 'constant comparison' (Johnson and Christenson, 2008:67) both between year groups, and to the data eventually derived from tutors. Whilst analysis of all data is acknowledged as a subjective undertaking, Cohen et al (2011) also note that it is also 'incumbent on the researcher to be highly reflexive in the accounts given and to regard (my) own interpretation as itself a discourse' (589).

Student autonomy; Am I on 'the right track' or 'the right lines'?
Data from students at level 5 were littered with language associated with linear development and a desire for affirmation that they were on the 'right track' or the 'right lines'. The Pecha Kucha formative presentations were equally viewed as both burdensome (for example, as additional work) and as a supportive, but regulatory surveillance of measurement, relating to how much work groups had done, for example, when asked about the purpose of the Pecha Kucha, student responses noted:

> 'to see where we were at', 'where we were up to' or 'to prove we had done something'
> (student responses).

Discussions following the Pecha Kucha were included as dialogic opportunities to make sense of group learning (Burke, 2009, MacLellan, 2010, Carless et al., 2011, Mutch, 2003, Duncan, 2007, Yorke, 2001, Dowden et al., 2011, Nichol & McFarlane-Dick, 2006, Black & Wiliam, 2009, Sadler, 2010). This desire for discussion is tacitly woven into the student data, however, there was a dominant sense of angst associated with the perception that the Pecha Kucha was simply 'more' or 'additional' assessment (student responses). In the micro setting of the university classroom, this practice appeared to be contextualised by many of the students as 'just another assessment' rather than a formative opportunity *for* learning, and this resonates with the accusation of 'ubiquitous' assessment noted by MacLellan (2010:316) and Higgins et al. (2002:59). Responses suggested some frustration, for example:

> 'it felt like we were being assessed twice' and 'we had to be ready two weeks before.'
> (Student responses).

The idea that the dialogue following the presentations would be wholly supportive, perhaps failed to recognise the environmental constraints of assessment, thus, whilst Vygotsky's (1978) 'Zone of proximal development' (86) plays an important role in the learning process, the guidance and collaboration through dialogue was limited by an interpretation that 'others would copy' their ideas (student response). Many of the responses failed to acknowledge the value of sharing ideas, and in line with studies by Ramsden (1992, 1998 cited in Poulos & Mahony, 2008), questionnaire data appeared to illuminate a desire for individual (in this case individual groups), rather than general feedback to all groups. This way, each group would be sharing their initial plans with limited concern regarding others 'stealing' their ideas. The perception of tutor status was captured here with a misconception that the Pecha Kucha was a measure of how much work had been done and the fear of sharing with peers in case unique ideas were 'copied':

> 'I presume that it was to see what we had done as a group/we were worried that others would get ideas from ours so we felt a bit restricted like we couldn't really show all the ideas'.

> (Student response).

Although the sharing of ideas and peer support as a learning resource (Wiliam and Black, 2009) was also highlighted as positive:

> 'It enabled us as a group to listen to other people's opinions and ideas as well as identify their strengths and weaknesses'.

> (Student responses).

What the tutor wants (or When Harry met Sally)
Students at level 5 expressed an explicit desire to please the tutor marking the work, with remarks suggesting that tutor comments were considered with hierarchical status. Students noted a perception that acknowledging tutor foci or interests equated to a higher probability of a satisfying summative grade.

Brookfield (2011) considers his student experience in discussion forums as an occasion for a 'Darwinian-style survival of the loquaciously fittest' where 'my participation was framed by the need to speak as often and intelligently as I could, thereby impressing the teacher with how smart I was. The idea that I might be involved in a group creation of knowledge never occurred to me' (119). Whilst this resonates with many learners, an autobiographical account from one colleague noted that we (tutors) often assess work with a 'When Harry Met Sally' vigour when we find compelling evidence of 'student attentiveness to our personal or pet interests' (tutor comment). Much of the literature around feedback also discusses the lack of relevant or timely feedback (also powerfully noted in the data), thus, the Pecha Kucha and the explicit reference to formative assessment/feedback serves to support the idea of the 'structure agency' debate (Bourdieu 1991), where the student is either 'ready' or 'unprepared' for feedback. This suggests a deficit model of 'perceived readiness' and some student responses suggest a distinct ability to 'play the game' (Bourdieu 1991), with the application and inclusion of 'what the tutor wants'. The Pecha Kucha was offered to all students as a formal opportunity for formative feedback so that they could develop their ideas for the summative group presentation within the following two weeks. This opportunity allowed for a more discursive and collaborative approach and involvement in the process supported the formation of group knowledge (Bray et al, 2000). The formative influence required students to buy in to the process (MacLellan 2010) and inferences from the tutor interview narratives suggested a deficit view of some student involvement as 'ill prepared' with an unwillingness to engage with the Pecha Kucha due to possible absenteeism and/or lack of commitment:

'were they (the students) who were nervous because they were the ones who hadn't done anything, hadn't come to sessions and therefore it was going to highlight the fact?'

(Tutor response).

Whilst the interviews were not designed to search for idealised conceptions of the tutor role or indeed to find flaws with individual practice, the responses indicated the ability to skilfully 'operate with two repertoires' (Silverman, 2011:306), for example, the interpretative repertoire of tutor responsibility to:

'guide and support' to 'develop critical thinking skills', to the desire for 'student responsibility', and in equal measure, 'we should add the word 'work' into the strap line (of the institution) as some students think they can literally dream and plan and they will achieve without the blood sweat and tears'.

(Tutor response).

One interpretation of colleague narratives suggests pressures exerted upon faculties (and individual tutors) to achieve, and the increasingly focused attention on results and favourable statistics almost prompted an audit mentality, where tutors sought to satisfy students as stakeholders. Competing discourses appear to collide in the narratives with the 'tyranny of statistical data' (Black and Wiliam, 2009:25) promoting models of teaching and feedback practices that are highly instrumental:

'Its such a big thing that they understand that we are giving them feedback so that they can use it, and on a more cynical note, that they can respond to surveys and say 'yes' they did give lots of feedback!'

(Tutor response).

'The timing for turn around can be detrimental to offering good feedback, don't you agree?'

(Tutor response).

'Does satisfaction mean more than being happy with the grade?'

(Tutor response).

The pedagogical rationale for the Pecha Kucha was that learning is a generative process, however, some students appeared to want a formula for success and this is exemplified in the response below:

'As it was a small presentation we took an 'evaluation' type approach where we evaluated what we had done and where our arguments lay. This was very much our own take on it and I am otherwise unsure what the processes of preparing for the Pecha Kucha are'!!

(Student response).

Despite the democratic aim of the Pecha Kucha methodology, student responses highlighted the positionality of 'the lecturer/tutor' as the font of all knowledge, with particular regard being given to tutor feedback and 'what is wanted' in terms of summative content. Responses suggested a reliance on the lecturer and a keen desire to include content that would please the tutor:

'To see what needed doing and what the tutor wanted. If it was said that we needed to look at 'A' then we added 'A' to our final presentation'.

(Student response).

The Pursuit of Happiness

Many of the questionnaires produced responses couched in emotive vocabulary where the focus appeared to be how the Pecha Kucha and feedback in general, made students feel. Responses from tutors reflected the juxtaposition of a culturally protective (defined as parental), and developmental discourse (defined in terms of levels):

'It is a leap though to use the feedback, and I don't know; I think sometimes they find it difficult and only some students at level 6 are able to do this with a level of independent thinking'.

(Tutor response).

'I find it quite amazing that even in level 6 I have to say over and over again this is formative feedback'.

(Tutor response).

'Its kind of a parental role isn't it? I feel responsible for them especially when they first come in and seem so young, although more mature students seem to be motivated to succeed. Parents are meant to give boundaries and support and are meant to build self - esteem etc but they also have to give responsibility to their children and help them to be intrinsically motivated? I wonder if we are responsible for so much, including the pastoral care and we are worried that students need to feel happy with what we do for them – but is it unrealistic?'

(Tutor response).

Analysing the responses (including my own nuanced interpretations of the scripts), I was able to attempt to consider 'micro practices of power' in what Foucault referred to as the 'care of the self' (Foucault, 1984b cited in Mac Naughton 2005:39). Adopting Foucauldian ideas, Mac Naughton (2005) insists that through 'care of the self' people remind themselves how to act and think 'normally', so behaviour as a tutor/lecturer in higher education is a choice subsumed in our 'thoughts actions and acts within the regime of truth that holds the care of self in place' (2005:39).

However, whilst there are multiple ways to unpick any narrative, alternative interpretations help to consider the implied messages with discourse as social practice. Much of the received 'scripts' (Silverman 2011) arguably disrupt regimes of truth and 'care of the self' (Foucault 1984b cited in Mac Naughton 2005), and rather than positing the absence of (student) accountability (and thus a withdrawal of the warrant of the charge of poor practice), tutor accounts also reflect elements of uncertainty and self depreciating commentary. Whilst they could be read simply as a script appropriate to the tutor/student relationship, the reflections can be used to consider how providing feedback itself 'should be seen as a social practice, that places emphasis not only on the comments but also on the means by which the feedback is produced, distributed and received' (Mutch 2003 cited in Rae & Cochrane, 2008:222):

'Mantz Yorke talks about the feedback sandwich – the idea of starting and ending with a positive note. The more pieces of work that you mark the more you get … a lot of my feedback starts with 'I really like the way…. But…' and its always a 'but' you've got to consider this…

> I think that maybe they perhaps need more positive reinforcement about what they are doing well, especially in the early stages, that actually they want some recognition of what they have done well? I think the more I mark, the more I get to 'this is how to improve for next time' and I actually add…'do this, do this and do this' and even for the best students this may have a negative effect'?
>
> (Tutor response).

The metaphorical use of medical terminology used by (Ecclestone & Hayes' 2010), where students are perceived to be operating 'passively rather than actively, as patients, rather than agents' (p12), posits the idea of student passivity as a deficit attribute. Informed by the work of Foucault (1975), where his claim that individuals can add to the subjugation of the self and others without being unequivocally compelled, the overwhelming response to the idea that the Pecha Kucha was merely 'additional work' and 'burdensome assessment' 'to comply with the demands of the module' (Student responses) could be evaluated.

In opposition to the oppressed student who lacks any power, this reaction, juxtaposed with a perception of 'compliance' appears to be situated away from the idea of the 'continuum of growth in academic confidence' (Dowden et al 2011: 3). It could be argued that the responses from level 6 students were markedly more sophisticated, with references related to satisfaction around feedback, however, this was equated to the ambiguous notion of 'happiness' with limited dialogue regarding what would make them 'happy' other than a 'good mark' or 'the expected' mark. Some mature reflections committed to acknowledgements of accountability and ownership in terms of responsibility for using feedback to move forward, for example:

> 'On a personal level I am satisfied if it is constructive and of course if I get the mark I wanted but maybe that is not really a fair interpretation of satisfied'
>
> (Student response).

Whilst the students all engaged in the process, that is, all groups took up the formalised opportunity to present their ideas in 6 minutes, 40 seconds, their compliance could be indicative of students' cultural understandings and reproduction of discourses in higher education, not merely the need to commit to assessment practices, but also of the relationships between tutor and student, typified by many educational institutions. The Pecha Kucha presentations were formative, and as such they did not form a compulsory element for student participation, although the idea was sold as beneficial and explicitly noted within the teaching schedule as a formative opportunity. Responses from colleague interviews suggest slippage into, what Silverman (2011) terms 'interpretative repertoires' (303) where participants define 'their identities' (that is not a student) and their associated 'moral status' (303), also referred to by Zukas and Malcolm (1999:25) as 'masks or identities' used to define the lecturer in higher education. Silverman (2011) refers to the idea of 'stake' where phrases within discourse, for example within the tutor interviews, assume 'a predictability of shared knowledge' (309), for example 'we' know that students behave in a particular way. Whilst sections of the narratives provided by tutors assume a contradictory tone, the concept of 'script, like that of stake, helps us to understand the ways in which participants attend to normative character in their actions' (Silverman 2011:309).

Responses from student questionnaires reflected the association of happiness and satisfaction with a final 'satisfactory' or 'expected' grade and some tutor narratives acknowledged 'low self esteem' 'motivation' and perceptions of attitudinal obstacles such as a lack of attendance, preparation and perceptions of motivation:

'We really took the Pecha Kucha seriously because we all wanted to do well and felt that level 6 was so high stakes /lots of big reasons why we needed to do well like PGCE and further study'.

(Student response).

'We used it constructively because it was given constructively so taking on board areas for improvement. It allowed us to gauge an understanding of our chosen topic, highlighting the areas of our knowledge that were weaker than others. We used this knowledge to 'tighten up' and ensure that we were able to deliver our presentation confidently with a full understanding of the content'.

(Student response).

Carless (2006) cites Yorke's (2001) assertion that as well as the content of feedback, an awareness of the psychology of giving and receiving feedback is vitally important to student learning and 'emotional barriers' (Carless, 2006:220) are represented as possible 'barriers that distort the potential for learning' (220). Stewart (2012) argues that feedback should be motivating and emotionally engaging to develop the internal locus of control and increase self esteem and this recognition resonates in colleague responses:

'Some students have low self esteem when it comes to writing so I say I don't want you to even consider writing at this stage – this is about engaging with the reading and even as an adult learner myself I need to read until I understand key themes- there is your structure…I think if you read a paragraph then write a sentence then that is a study skill and a critical thinking skill? We talk about critical writing all the time but isn't it about critical reading and thinking first? If students embed themselves in reading, we are all kind of plagiarists in a way aren't we? If I read 100 Mills and Boon books or 100 journal articles I know the kind of language they use, the kind of structure they have, so for me if we can get them reading and talking it will improve their writing, and your formative presentations are part of this dialogue. I think its something that is said a lot here- 'on the right lines', I hear it a lot from both tutors and students but I suppose its just a human need- tell me I'm ok and doing something right? Trouble is we want them to be creative and less needy but they need to feel safe'?

(Tutor response).

The discourse of feedback
Confusion around the terminology of formative and summative assessment is overtly captured within the student questionnaires, and this confusion is picked up within the interviews with tutors. Feedback following the group Pecha Kucha resulted in verbal feedback and discursive discussion, however, the possibility of alienating students with academic discourse could also be acknowledged. Some students questioned the need to attend the session and asked strategic questions such as 'will we be marked down if we don't do the Pecha Kucha?' and clarification regarding the 'rules of the game' (MacLellan, 2001:308) were significantly influential in their decision to participate.

Whilst discussions related to social systems and grouped identity (that of 'a student') are important, from a sociological perspective these social structures (both real and perceived) exert influence upon individual's lives, however, some responses from students appeared to suggest that they saw themselves as an important part of the feedback process and the 'unpredictability' of the 'usual' feedback process, characterised as 'written and on time' played a major role in determining responses to the alternative Pecha Kucha assessment. Interpretation of the social

situation, the Pecha Kucha as formative assessment, appeared to support the development of
'agency' (Bourdieu (1991), where responses illuminated a desire to link the micro scale
interactions in the classroom with more explicit reference to feedback practices. The confusion
over language associated with assessment processes was stark with responses within the
questionnaires highlighting ambiguity and confusion with the terms 'formative' and 'summative'.
The frustration felt by staff was captured in the following responses, which were infused with
some degree of resignation with the emerging pattern of responses:

> 'I am quite shocked that you are talking about level 6 students because I feel that we have
> drummed it home by that point, what is what…but evidently not.'
>
> (Tutor response).

Tutors offered many interesting reflections and closer examination of the perception that
students want 'spoon feeding' (Biggs, 1999) was tempered with suggestions that there is often
an over reliance of instructive elements within the feedback process:

> 'I'm not surprised at all that they were confused but in my experience of formative
> assessment they do see it as 'a practice' and the feedback that you give them is just like,
> 'well she said to use the word 'at' rather than 'the' so they literally do what you say
> without looking at it within a global context so they don't see the importance'
>
> (Tutor response).

Curtis and Pettigrew (2009) consider how academics and professionals decry an educational
system that does not allow time space and development of personal independent qualities
rather than the acquisition of facts, however the fear that students do not understand the
terminology associated with formative and summative feedback processes translated into
responses abbreviated as strategic rather than pedagogically driven:

> '…When I say drummed home I mean we say all the time 'this is formative feedback' even
> when we talk to them about things in sessions we say 'feedback, this is feedback'!
>
> (Tutor response).

Habermas (1981) considered communication as one of the basic tenets of the idea of
deliberative democracy, but he saw communication and public discussion, akin to the dialogue
following the Pecha Kucha process, where individual interests are sublimated in favour of the
common good, however, the tendency within any democracy, is for each individual to act
according to her/his own personal self interest, which Postman and Weingartner (1971) propose,
as oppositional to Deweys' progressive intentions. However, the Pecha Kucha was initiated as an
opportunity for formative dialogue with the aim of a deliberate democratic approach to
education with 'uncertainty' (Le Grange & Beets, 2005) at its core. The idea, to encourage
students to adopt an 'enlarged mentality', where priorities of the community override personal
gratification, was perhaps based on a rosy perspective of a community of learners (Lave and
Wenger, 1991) rather than the realities of a third year quest for personal attainment exemplified
through one student comment that:

> 'the presentations should have been individual because at the end of the day, it is my
> degree'
>
> (Student response).

The Pecha Kucha was an example of synchronous 'contingency' with the opportunity for students to make changes or develop ideas for the summative assessment. Black and Wiliam (2009:12) note how, 'Formative interaction is contingent. In such a mode the teacher's attention is focused on what she or he can learn about the students thinking from their response', and what Davies (1997:28) terms 'interpretive listening'. However, what the learner actually hears and interprets is not necessarily what the teacher intended to convey. In a genuinely dialogic process the teachers own thinking may come to be modified through the exchange, what Davies (1997:28) terms 'hermeneutic listening.' In relation to the Pecha Kucha process, it could be argued that contrary to the need to 'drum' it home, closer dialogue may support a move away from an ethnocentric view of the formative process.

Conclusions and implications for practice
The study set out to explore the perceptions of students and tutors regarding the value or purpose of the Pecha Kucha process, and whilst the findings were not ground breaking, 'perceptions' were often mediated by the minutiae of socio cultural practices and institutional demands. Student perceptions of the purpose of the Pecha Kucha formative assessment appeared to be skewed towards the notion of tutor surveillance rather than self -regulatory practices considered to be the hallmark of the autonomous and independent learner. Unpicking the data helped to distance the meta narratives (Lyotard, 1979) associated with feedback practices in the institution, and in place of these meta narratives (or Foucaudian 'regimes of truth'), feedback practices in higher education were possibly replaced by micro narratives (Lyotard, 1979), which were reflective of different 'communities' with different perceptions of the purpose of formative feedback. Tutors demonstrated insightful perspectives regarding student needs, however a deficit view related to student understanding of tutor practices often assumed the position of normal discourse. I argue that this should not compromise professional competence or supportive intentions, however the perpetuation of negative discourses may restrict the value of reflective practice, or what Foucault (1975) refers to as disciplinary power, where ideas are accepted uncritically.

It is a mistake to think of power in 'wholly negative terms, as only being exercised to keep people in line' (Brookfield, 2011:47). Indeed, student responses may indicate that they felt subject to 'a certain form of surveillance while superficially inhabiting a liberatory space' (Brookfield 2011:122), however, the original aim, to embed the Pecha Kucha to support empowerment, or what Follett (1924a 1924b cited in Brookfield 2011:47) notes as 'power with' rather than 'power over' was pedagogically relevant to the idea of formative feedback *for* learning. The idea that the tutor holds the power to make or break the student experience perhaps points to the need for more consistent and transparent dialogue related to feedback practices. There is so much research illustrating the value of including students in any formative assessment, therefore the Pecha Kucha could be negotiated with students as a key assessment dialogue to support the centrality of questioning to the learning culture. The idea that power is owned by anyone can be disputed (Foucault,1975), rather, it operates on a much more fluid basis making it possible for everyone to hold power, possibly through self regulation or policing of the self. Working *with* the students to develop the Pecha Kucha, could help students to feel a sense of ownership, where group members feel able to pursue new paths and seek new perspectives in a safe environment. Indeed, the Pecha Kucha itself could be a legitimate summative assessment with collaborative inquiry and disruption of knowledge at the core.

The narratives were at times contradictory, however, these contradictions were potently expressed and are useful for exploring what Silverman (2011:307) calls 'the double-binds' thus, although the relationship between practical and theoretical interpretations of 'good feedback

practices' seem to lead to the production of double-bind (Derrida, 1996) dilemma, the research (and continuous scrutiny of voices) maintains the need to keep pursuing the possibilities of 'better' practices in order to be politically and ethically conscious, even within the banality and frustration of everyday practices.

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