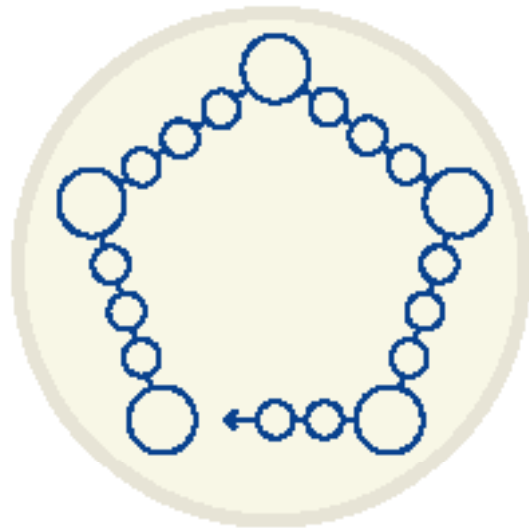


TEXT FEEDBACK

A Process-Facilitating Game



GAME AND RULEBOOK

TEXT FEEDBACK

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Thank you for your feedback to: Lone Koefoed Hansen, Sofie Horskjær Madsen, Signe Skov, Emil Staugaard Boye, Jacob Buris Andersen, Lasse Lindekilde, Lotte Rienecker, Peter Stray Jørgensen and colleagues at the Centre for Educational Development.

Thank you to the test groups and to Anni Pedersen and Anja Hønerup Nielsen for your assistance in testing the game.

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1. INTRODUCTION TO THE GAME

This game is designed to give structure, support and qualification to the feedback university students give each other in association with their own academic writing, for example during the process of writing draft examination assignments. The game can be used as part of classroom teaching, as a study group method or as an aid in forming a Master's thesis study group.

1.1 WHY FEEDBACK?

Giving and receiving feedback on academic texts makes it possible to raise the standard of the final written product whilst improving one's own writing competency for future use (Dysthe et al, 2001).

Feedback between students (peer feedback) therefore has a large potential for supporting the writing process and ensuring a better final product.

1.2 WHY FEEDBACK AS A GAME?

This process-facilitating game is based theoretically upon a model for structured peer feedback (Elbow, 1998; Dysthe et al, 2009; Rienecker, 1996 and others). This structured feedback model helps to ensure that participants get detailed, specific and systematic feedback on their work, rather than simple, general discussion of its subject matter. The model also ensures that time is used optimally, with all participants getting enough time to both give and receive feedback.

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This game is designed to support this highly structured approach. The game sets up the feedback situation in a visual manner different to other methods such as study group meetings. Elements from board games, such as taking turns, keeping time and bringing different processes into focus at different stages of the game are key in giving structured feedback. The board itself acts as a visual aid, making the overall feedback process more visible and giving an overview of exactly where in the process the group is at any given moment.

Once the group has used the game a few times, it may become superfluous, with the group able to apply the feedback model without playing the game.

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1.3 BEFORE PLAYING FOR THE FIRST TIME

Prior to playing for the first time, the group should read the accompanying material and complete a number of preparatory activities. This is only done once and should be carried out at least a couple of days before the actual game is played:

0. All players read the rulebook.
1. Introduction of all players with regard to course, semester, text to be worked on, etc.
2. Completion of the contract sheet. The game contents include contract sheet, which should be completed with the individual rules and conditions agreed on by the group. The contract sheet includes a series of possible scenarios and sanctions. If the group does not wish to make use of any of the suggested sanctions, alternatives can be suggested here.
3. Selection of a game master for the first game, and arrangement of time of next meeting and deadline for sending texts.

Once these three activities have been completed, and everyone has read the relevant texts and prepared feedback, the group is ready to play.

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2. RULES

2.1 CONTENTS

- 1 Board
- 1 Playing piece
- 16 Penalty cards
- 12 Information cards
- 4 Meta-feedback cards
- 4 Playing pads
- 1 Contract sheet
- 1 Overview sheet

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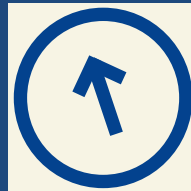
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2.2 PREPARING TO PLAY

If you are playing for the first time, be sure to have read '1.3 BEFORE PLAYING FOR THE FIRST TIME'.

Before the game begins, the game master must decide how much time may be used at each space – i.e., how much time each player has to give feedback for each text. It is recommended that a stopwatch (a mobile telephone can be used) is set to ring at the end of the agreed time for each feedback.

Each player then chooses a colour (red, yellow, green or blue) and receives one feedback card in that colour along with 3 information cards. Finally, the punishment card deck is placed on the board, and the pieces are placed on the 'start' space.



Suggested timing:

- 4 players, 1 hour: 3 minutes per feedback square
- 4 players, 1½ hours: 4½ minutes per feedback square
- 3 players, 1 hour: 4 minutes per feedback square
- 3 players, 1½ hours: 6 minutes per feedback square

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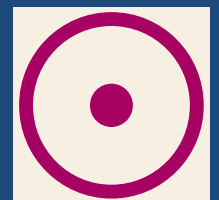
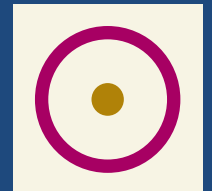
2.3 HOW TO PLAY

The game is split into five smaller stages, each of which has its own colour and forms one side of the board's pentagon shape: Four feedback sections, where feedback is given for each of the four texts, as well as one final section where meta-feedback is given and arrangements for the next meeting can be made. A picture of the playing board can be found on page 23.

Feedback

Firstly, feedback is given to the red player's text. The playing piece is moved into the first space on the red side of the pentagon. The spaces should be read as follows: A red ring means that feedback should be given to the red player's text. The spot is yellow, so feedback should be given by the yellow player. In the next space, the green player gives feedback, etc. On the red side of the board, the red player controls the playing piece; on the yellow side, the yellow player, etc.

The red section is completed on the space with the red spot. This is the follow-up space, where the red player is able to ask questions relating to the feedback, explain the context of the text and clarify any unclear elements. At the follow-up space, the feedback-receiver may also speak, but may not defend his/her text or argue – this results in the issuing of a penalty card.

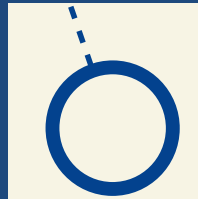


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Meta-feedback

When feedback has been given for all texts, the playing piece is moved to the penultimate space: the meta-feedback space. Here, each player makes a note of three aspects of the feedback which they thought worked well, and three things they think could be improved. Players take turns in laying their feedback cards on the board and putting forward their observations. See section 3.6 for further detail.



Arranging next meeting/ending game

On the final space, players arrange a time and date for the next meeting if this is necessary.



Timeout

The timeout space can be found in the centre of the board. If, during the game, something is not working, or if there are any general themes which require explanation in order to proceed, the group can move the playing piece into the timeout space.



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Penalty card

If a player breaks the rules for giving or receiving structured feedback, he/she receives a penalty card. All players have the right to issue penalty cards. Whether or not a penalty card is issued comes down to assessment of the situation in question, however, penalty cards should generally always be issued if:

- A player interrupts the player whose turn it is to speak
- A player starts arguing at any time during the game
- The feedback-giver makes excuses for their own feedback (e.g. by saying, "I don't know that much about this subject..." or "Perhaps it's just because I don't understand...", etc.)
- The feedback-receiver interrupts without using an information card
- The feedback-receiver uses an information card or the follow-up space to defend their text.



Information card

Each player is given three information cards, which can be used whilst that player is receiving feedback. The information card allows that player to make a short interruption if they feel the need to give some useful information about their text or ask the feedback-giver a question which cannot



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wait until the follow-up space is reached. The information card can be used if the feedback receiver needs to e.g.:

- Ask which part of the text the feedback-giver is referring to
- Ask for a specific example from the text
- Have elements of the feedback or concepts used by the feedback-giver explained
- Correct a fundamental misunderstanding about the text that is significant for the feedback (e.g. with regard to the type of text, how far in the writing process the writer is, or the specific criteria that apply for the text)

The information card does not give the right to begin a discussion.

Feedback card

Each player starts the game with a feedback card which states the player's colour. Once all feedback has been received, meta-feedback must be given. Finally, the players take turns to place their card on the board and present their observations – see 'meta-feedback', p. 10. It is recommended that observations are not written on the card – this way the card can be re-used.



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3. GUIDE TO FEEDBACK

The text feedback game can be used with all types of academic text at all stages of the writing process: brainstorm, initial writing, rough drafts, and work you consider to be finished.

It is important that group members let each other know what type of text they are submitting so that feedback can be adapted accordingly. Feedback should be suitable for the stage the text is at – for example, linguistic correction is not appropriate for a very early draft.

3.1 CRITERIA-BASED FEEDBACK

Feedback can be categorised into two main groups: criteria-based and reader-based feedback (Elbow, 1998). Both types are useful for the receiver of the feedback, and one type is not better than the other.

Criteria-based feedback is based on formal criteria for the specific type of text being dealt with:

- If the text is a draft for or part of an examination assignment, acquaint yourself with the academic regulations. What criteria are stated in the regulations? Does the text fulfil them or is it on the way towards doing so?
- Acquaint yourself with any further information which may be relevant from teachers/supervisors, such as specific criteria related to the academic texts you are working on, e.g. in association with a set assignment or written exercise.

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- Use the knowledge you already have in relation to academic texts, and, if necessary, acquaint yourself with standard requirements for assignments. The website www.studiemetro.au.dk can be referred to for information on such areas as argumentation, academic requirements, formal standards, criteria for assignments, etc.

3.2 READER-BASED FEEDBACK

Reader-based feedback is based upon the initial impressions the reader gains from the text, and what the reader gained from reading it. Key points in reader-based feedback can include:

- How has the reader understood the text? A retelling of the points made in the text can show whether the author has made his/her message clear.
- What impression has the text made on the reader? The reader's first impressions of the text can demonstrate how it is perceived by other readers.
- Which parts of the text did the reader like best?
- Were there places where the reader got stuck or was unable to follow?
- Is the tone/style of the text consistent all the way through?
- Does the structure of the chapters support the overall text?

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3.3 HOW TO GIVE FEEDBACK

Good advice for feedback-givers:

- Give positive feedback first.
- Always give specific examples of the things you talk about in your feedback.
- Do not apologise for your feedback – even though you may not have the same academic background as the author, your feedback is still valuable for them.
- Give your feedback in the form of a report, not as a presentation.

3.4 HOW TO RECEIVE FEEDBACK

The primary task of the feedback-receiver is to listen and take notes. Feedback is a service, and the final decision on whether or not to use the feedback always rests with the author. Remember, however, that if there is something the feedback-giver has misunderstood, other readers are also likely to misunderstand it. In other words, simply explaining what you meant to the feedback-giver does not solve the problem.

Good advice for feedback-receivers:

- Listen to the feedback, make notes on it, and do not rush into deciding whether or not to use it.
- Avoid entering into a dialogue with the feedback-giver in order to explain your text.
- Do not make apologies for your text – it is one stage in a long process, and no-one expects it to be perfect.

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3.5 META-FEEDBACK

Make a note of three things that worked well today and three things the group can improve on.

Possible considerations can include:

- Did the group stick to the rules?
- Was the feedback you received well-prepared?
- Were many penalty cards issued?
- Was the feedback you received useful?

Bear in mind that the meta-feedback should not be a defence of your own text.

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4. GAME MASTER'S GUIDE

4.1 BEFORE GETTING STARTED

- Agree who will be the game master next time you play.
- Make sure everyone has read the rules (if they have not, follow the instructions on your contract sheet).
- Deal the coloured feedback cards to each player.
- Decide how much time will be spent at each space (see section 2.2).
- Start the game.

4.2 DURING THE GAME:

- Ensure that time limits are observed (use of a stopwatch is recommended).
- Ensure that all rules on the information cards are kept to.
- Ensure that, when the game ends, everyone is given the opportunity to give meta-feedback.
- Finish by making sure that a deadline and time for the next meeting have been agreed upon (when you reach the last space on the board).

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5. CHECKLIST

You can use this list to ensure that you have completed all the necessary preparations prior to playing the game. You are ready to play if you have:

1. Read this booklet all the way through.
2. Completed the contract sheet and introduced yourselves to each other (if you have not played before) (see section 1.3).
3. Read each other's texts and prepared feedback (see chapter 3).
4. Chosen a game master.

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6. F.A.Q.s

How do we get started?

– See page 6: 'Before Playing for the First Time'; and page 9: 'How to Play'

Can the game only be played with 4 players?

– You can play the game with three players (just skip the light blue route). However, the game does not work with fewer than three or more than four.

Can the game be played in groups made up of students from different courses?

– Yes. It is not the academic content, but the written presentation of it, that the feedback should focus on.

Can all types of text be used?

– The game is designed for university assignment, but can be used for a number of different texts with academic content – such as initial thoughts on an assignment's content, drafts of sections in assignments, synopses, articles, reviews, etc. The important factor is that there are explicit criteria for the type of text being used.

Do the texts have to be in draught form – can a final text not be used?

– Many people feel that it is difficult to submit to the group something which is incomplete. But the benefits of feedback are greatest if it is possible to implement changes after receiving it. It can be difficult to receive feedback on a completed text, simply because you feel that it is already finished. It is however possible to use part of a previously submitted assignment for the game, if you would like to hear others' views on how it might have been improved.

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How many texts should each player give feedback for?

– All players give feedback on all the other players' texts.

Should I choose between criteria-based and reader-based feedback?

– No, the two types supplement each other, and both criteria-based and reader-based feedback is given for the same text.

Does the game have a winner?

– The aim of the game is to guide the players through a collaborative process, and there is therefore no individual winner. Some groups do however decide to choose a winner – e.g. the person who receives the fewest penalty cards during one or more games.

Why is discussion not allowed?

– It is the presentation that is in focus, rather than the content, so it is therefore not relevant to discuss the academic merits of the text – this can be done in a normal study group meeting. Neither should the feedback be discussed, as it is important that everyone gets the chance to contribute with their own viewpoint. If you do not agree with the feedback you have received, you can choose not to use it.

Why may I not apologise for not having a great knowledge of the subjects of the other players' texts?

– It is not necessary to be an expert on the topic to give useful feedback. In fact, it can be easier to concentrate on the presentation and form-related aspects of the text if you do not have prior knowledge of the academic content. By apologising for lack of expertise, you remove the group's focus from what the feedback should actually be about.

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Why may I not give an explanation for my text?

– Your text should be able to function without explanation. Giving an explanation to other members of the group does not solve the problem of having an unclear text.

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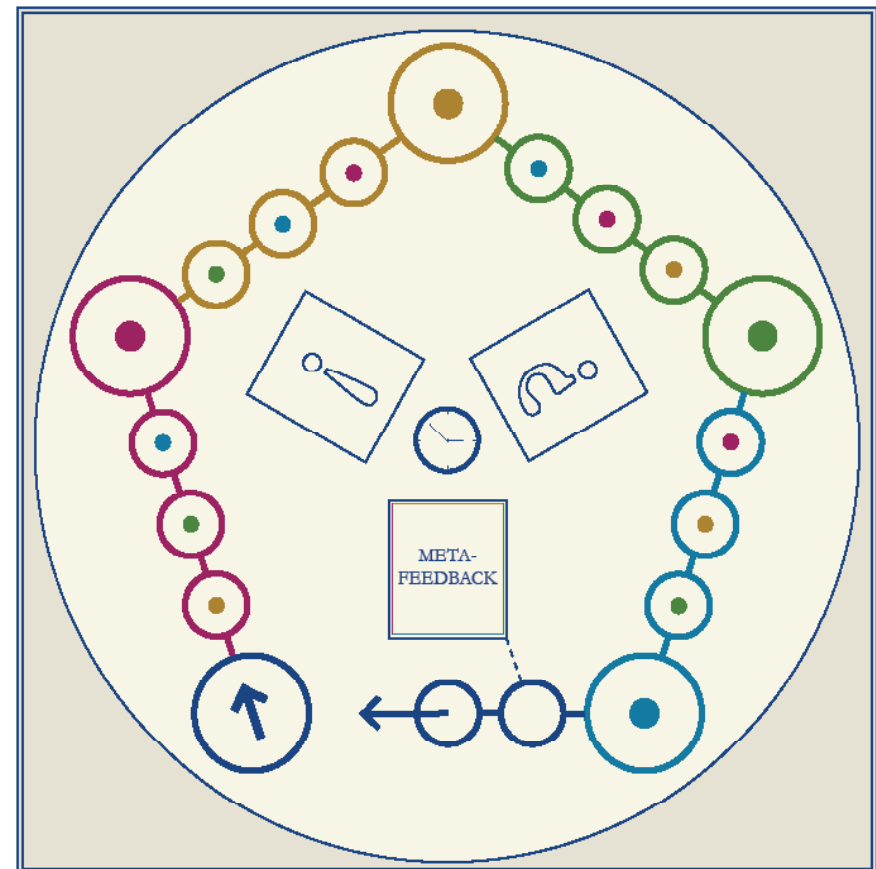
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If you need a helping hand with getting started on your written assignment, take a look at the pink route on the Study Metro: www.studiemetro.au.dk/en.



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PLAYING BOARD

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