

# Reading the research

This session is based on '[A Marked Improvement](#)', a literature review of written feedback from the Department of Education and the University of Oxford together with the Education Endowment Foundation. This document was discussed in [Making feedback purposeful and manageable](#) of this module and this session will take an in-depth look at some of the recommendations.

The review has seven chapters each considering one area of written marking, based on a review of research studies conducted in England and overseas in a range of educational settings.

This stretch session will focus on chapters one to four. Below there are two to three questions per chapter that will draw your attention and thinking to the key findings. You can make notes using the [notes tab](#) in the navigation bar (or your own notebook).

## Grading

Read page 9 and 10 of the review which considers written feedback in the form of being assigned a grade. Whilst thinking about your own classroom approaches and your school's policy on marking, answer the following questions:

- How frequently do you assign grades or scores without comments?
- What are the two issues to be aware of when giving grades and comments?
- Are there other ways you could provide feedback other than grades that does not adversely affect your workload?

## Corrections

When marking it can be highly tempting to write the correct answer on every line. However, reading page 11 to 12, consider the following questions:

- Do you currently treat errors and mistakes in the same way?
- What does the research review suggest regarding coded marking?
- Does the report suggest there is strong research evidence for written marking in your subject/phase?

## Thoroughness

The 'tick and flick' marking approach, or 'acknowledgement marking', can contribute to significant workload but what is the impact on pupils' learning?

Read page 13 and 14 on the evidence around thoroughness of marking and consider the questions below. You may wish to discuss with your mentor your school's approach to the thoroughness of marking and associated issues such as marking frequency, and the focus of tasks.

- How selective are you in your current approach to written marking?
- When marking work, what is the balance you strike between marking Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar against subject-specific content?
- What strategies suggested in the report could you implement to 'mark less but mark better'?

## Pupil responses

Providing written feedback gives formative and summative information that pupils can use to support their learning. However, pupils may or may not engage with written feedback and there are many mechanisms of feedback. You may already incorporate 'Directed Improvement and Reflection Time' (DIRT) or 'Feedback and Response', but is it clear what pupils are expected to do with this time? Read page 15 & 16 on the evidence around pupils responses and consider the questions below, considering your approach to pupil responses:

- In your classroom, how often do you create opportunities for pupils to consider and respond to written comments? Is it every time you return written and or verbal feedback?
- Why do you think that, according to some researchers, pupils may not be able to engage with, or find it hard to act on written feedback?

## Summary

Read the Executive Summary on page 4 and 5 that summarise the main findings from the literature review and consider the final two questions below:

- How secure is the evidence surrounding written feedback?
- How has this review shaped your perspective on written marking?