

## Key principles of marking practice

In addition to those principles mentioned in *A Guide to Teaching Practice*, we would advise that marking is also:

- be individually targeted to students, avoiding comparisons with other students;
- combine evaluation with advice;
- be timely, relevant and rapid;
- not be overwhelming with negative points, and, indeed may have to overlook some minor errors;
- diagnose strengths and weaknesses;
- indicate students' misconceptions;
- be focused and prioritised (e.g. content, focus, marking schemes, frequency);
- be constructively critical;
- be integral to teaching and learning;
- be recorded and reported in line with school policies;
- offer manageable advice on how to improve (action points);
- be linked to target setting;
- be linked to transparent and understood criteria in a marking scheme;
- involve students in self-assessment, where relevant;
- move beyond grades and marks to rich feedback (not necessarily only written, though this is a primary means);
- should focus on quality as well as quantity, on structure as well as presentation;
- be linked to learning intentions/objectives, intended learning outcomes and goals which, themselves, have been made explicit to students;
- indicate successes and achievements as well as areas for improvement;
- stimulate students to reflect on their learning;
- be largely formative, enabling students to close the gap between present and possible performance;
- provide students with time to read comments and feedback, and to respond to them and act on them, if possible;
- make it clear how to follow-up the work, e.g. to complete it, to rewrite parts, to make corrections and amendments, to extend and develop the work;
- make it clear what grades and marks mean, and the criteria to be used in awarding them;
- provide comment, where relevant, on improvements since the previous pieces of work (i.e. ipsative assessment, where the student is being compared with his/her own previous performance);
- make a difference to teachers' subsequent planning for learning (e.g. if a child only scores 50 per cent then this should tell the teacher that perhaps there is a need to re-teach half the work);
- be consistent with the school's marking policy (a copy of which the student teacher could request);
- promote students' self-assessment;
- be part of ongoing dialogue and discussion between teachers, learners and parents, both formal and informal.