Hidson, Elizabeth and Elliott, Ian (2019) Spanning the grade boundaries: The impact of formative feedback on summative outcomes in a distance learning PGCE course. In: First Annual Faculty of Education and Society Research Institute Staff Research Conference, 04 June 2019, Sunderland, UK.

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# Spanning the grade boundaries:

# The impact of formative feedback on summative outcomes in a distance learning PGCE course

*Elizabeth Hidson & Ian Elliott*

University of Sunderland

# The International PGCE context

- British teachers' standards course: awards PGCE (not QTS)
- International school market: 60 countries
- 5000th trainee in 2019-2020
- Target: 650 trainees per year; multiple cohorts
- Team of about 20 tutors
- One assessed teaching practice module (two placements)
- One professional studies modules
- Two MA-level modules

# Team Research

- Goal: supporting students
- Process: 100% online
- MA modules:
  - Proposal (10%) – 1000 words
  - Final report (90%) – 4000 words
- Focal area: feedback
  - Written feedback
- Multi-stage research

Education Endowment Foundation

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# Teaching and Learning Toolkit

An accessible summary of the international evidence on teaching 5-16 year-olds

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| Toolkit Strand | Cost | Evidence Strength | Impact (months) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Feedback**<br>High impact for very low cost, based on moderate evidence. | £ | 3 | +8 |
| **Metacognition and self-regulation**<br>High impact for very low cost, based on extensive evidence. | £ | 4 | +7 |
| **Reading comprehension strategies**<br>High impact for very low cost, based on extensive evidence. | £ | 4 | +6 |
| **Homework (Secondary)**<br>Moderate impact for very low cost, based on limited evidence. | £ | 2 | +5 |
| **Mastery learning**<br>Moderate impact for very low cost, based on moderate evidence. | £ | 3 | +5 |
| **Collaborative learning**<br>Moderate impact for very low cost, based on extensive evidence. | £ | 4 | +5 |
| **Early years interventions**<br>Moderate impact for very high cost, based on extensive evidence. | £££££ | 4 | +5 |
| **One to one tuition**<br>Moderate impact for high cost, based on extensive evidence. | ££££ | 4 | +5 |

# Why is this important…for us?…for you?

**We are the 'experts'**

- Expert teachers;
- Expert teacher educators;
- Expert academics;
- Expert distance learning tutors;
- Expert at giving feedback;

**AREN'T WE?**

# Back to the literature…

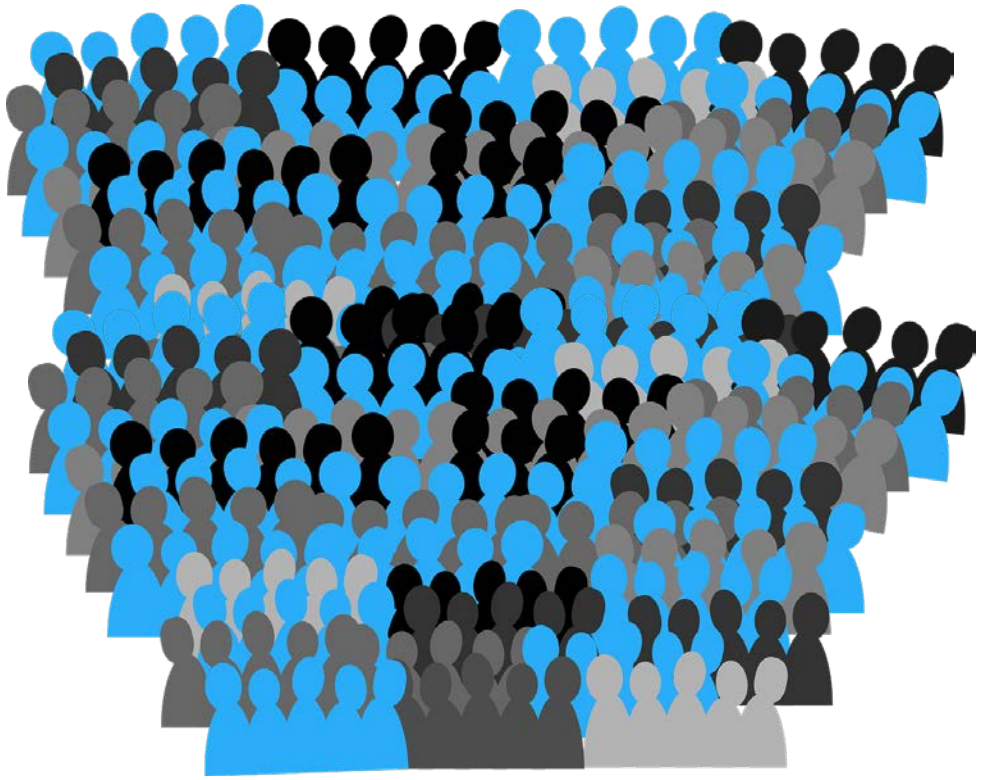
**Hattie and Timperley (2007):**

1. Power of feedback – **differentially effective** – considerable variability
2. Most powerful when it addresses **faulty interpretations** and when it aims to **move students up** to the next level (e.g. task to processing; specific to general)
3. Can be accepted, modified or rejected (**ignored or not understood?**)
4. Influenced by **difficulty of goals** or tasks: most impact when goals are specific and challenging but task complexity is low
5. H&T's questions: Where am I going? How am I going? Where next?
6. Must **target feedback** at students at the correct level
7. **Inefficient learners** need **elaboration**

# Todays' presentation: Stage 1 of the research

**What does the data say?**

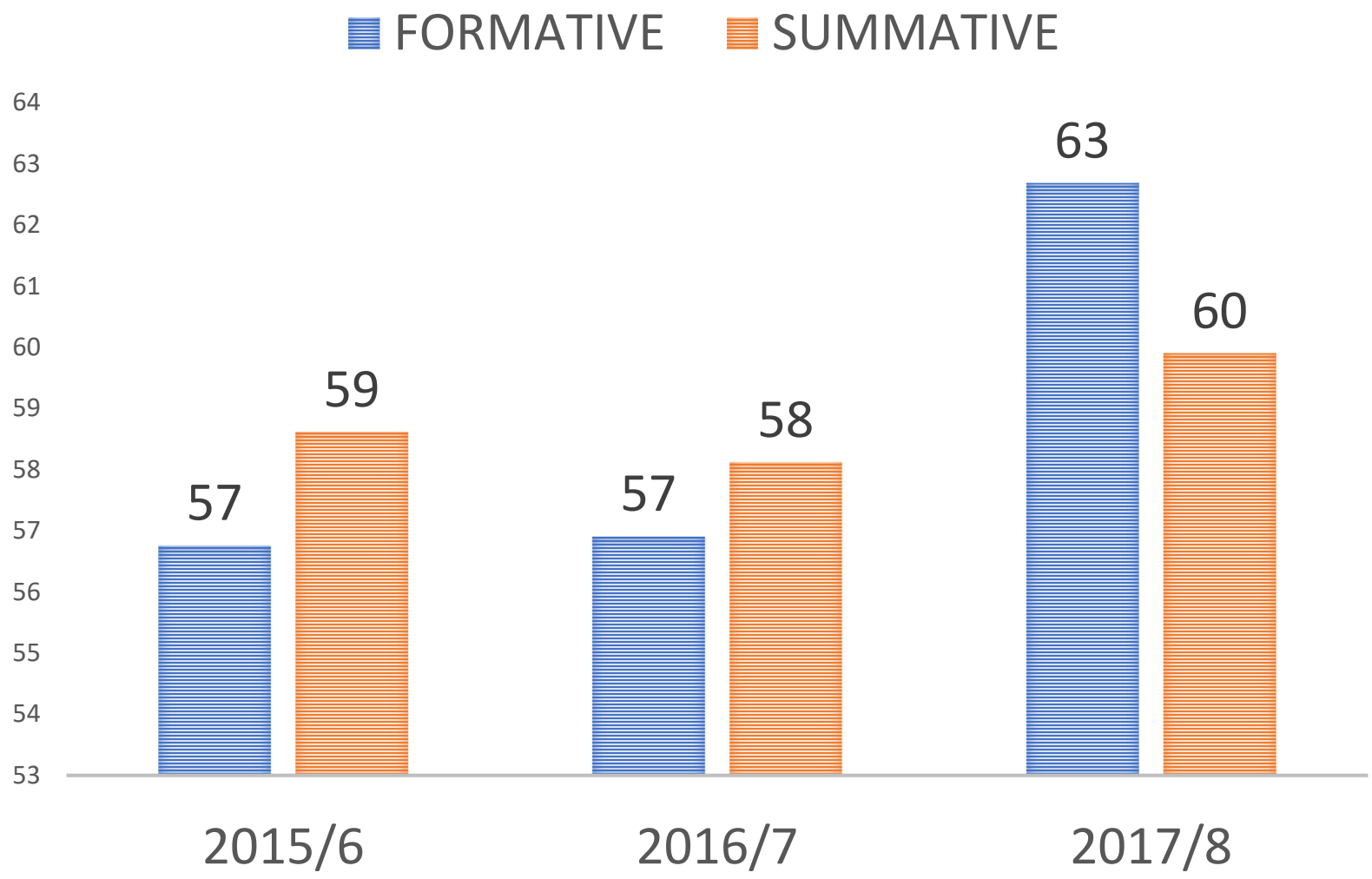
- Three years of assessment data
- Approximately 1000 students
- Assumptions:
  - Only data from students with at least 35% in formative assessment
  - Working hypothesis is that formative feedback leads to improvements in summative outcomes – is that true? Always?



# The big picture

- Paired samples data allowed *t*Test in SPSS to confirm statistical correlation.
- We can confirm that formative and summative marks are **positively correlated** to varying degrees depending on the granularity of the paired samples.
- Taken as 2000 pairs, the correlation is weaker, but drilling down shows stronger correlation and more interesting patterns.

# EDPM01 MEAN AVERAGE PER YEAR

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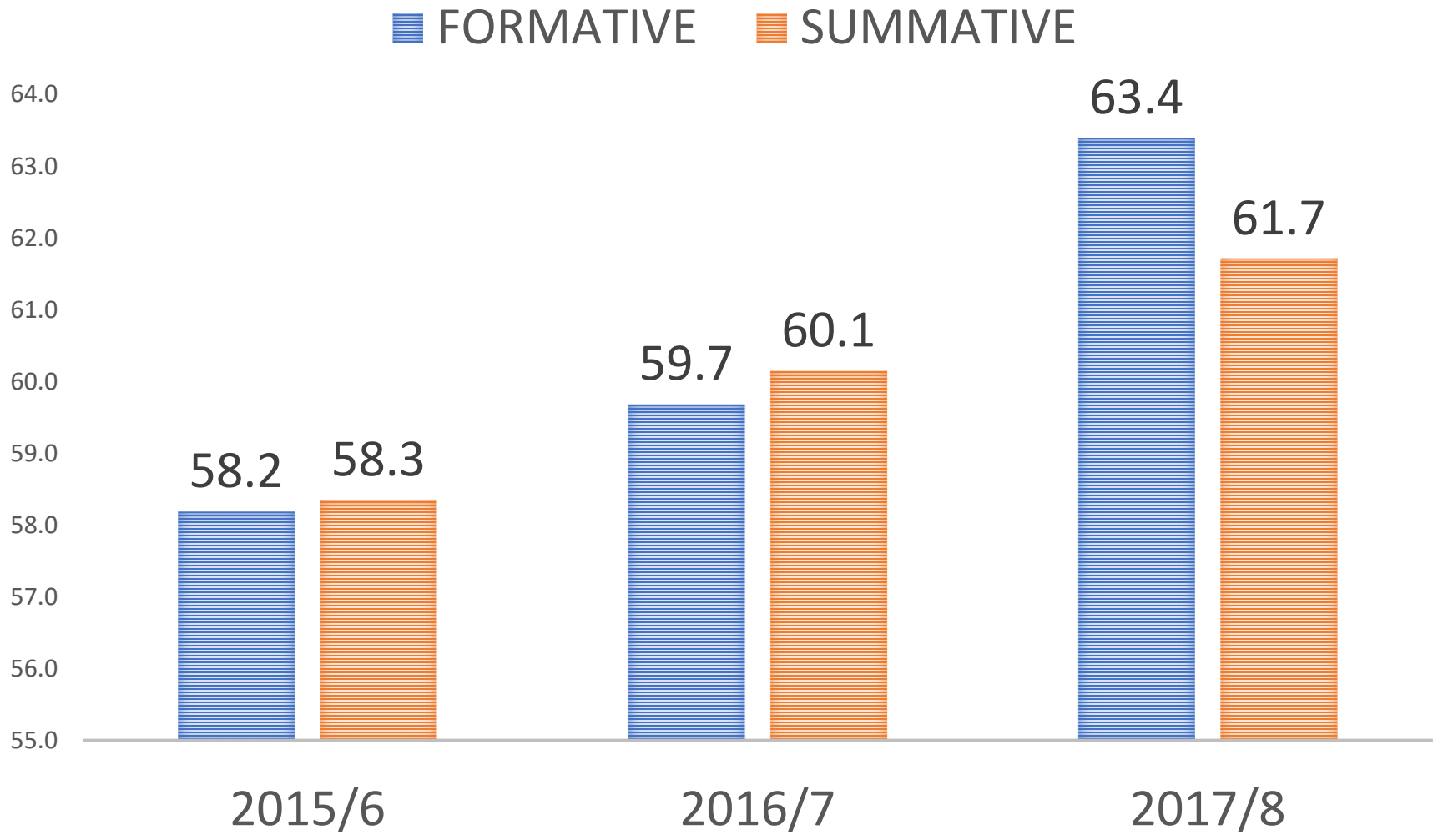
# EDPM97 MEAN AVERAGE PER YEAR

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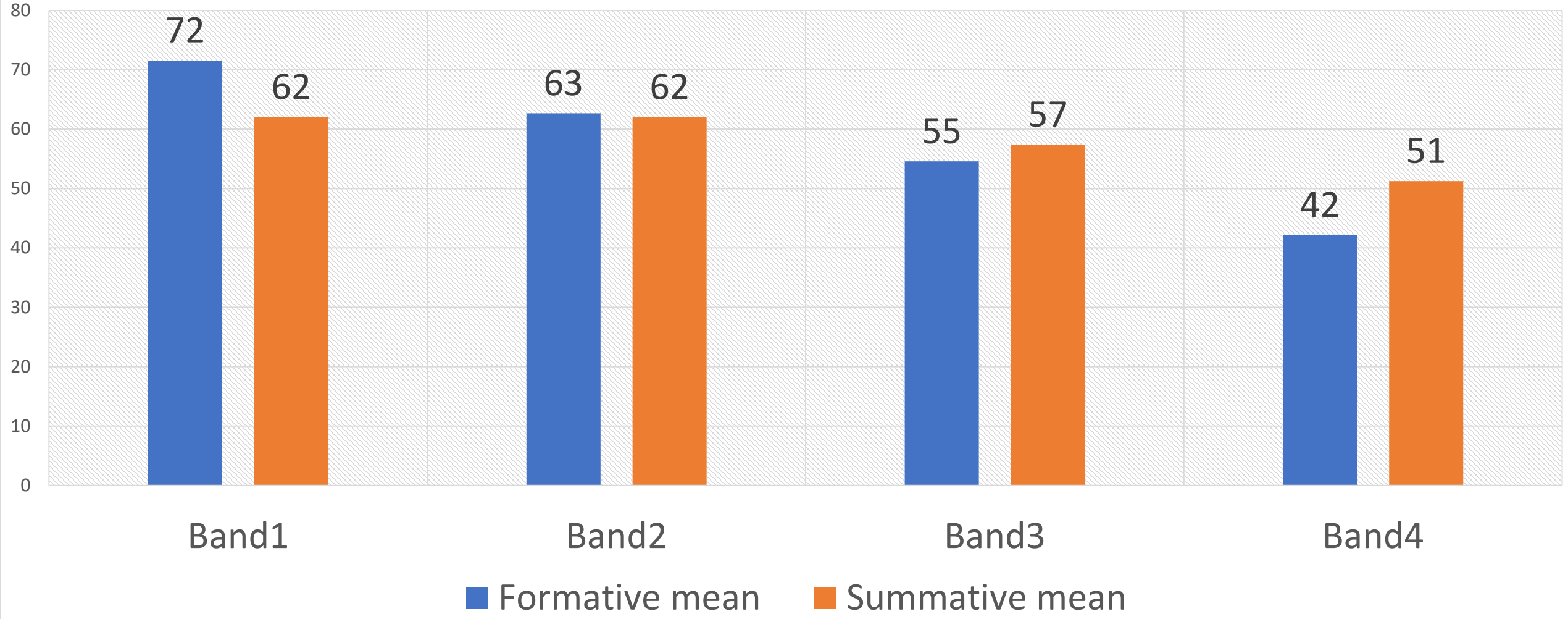
# 2015-2016 BAND COMPARISON ACROSS BOTH MODULES

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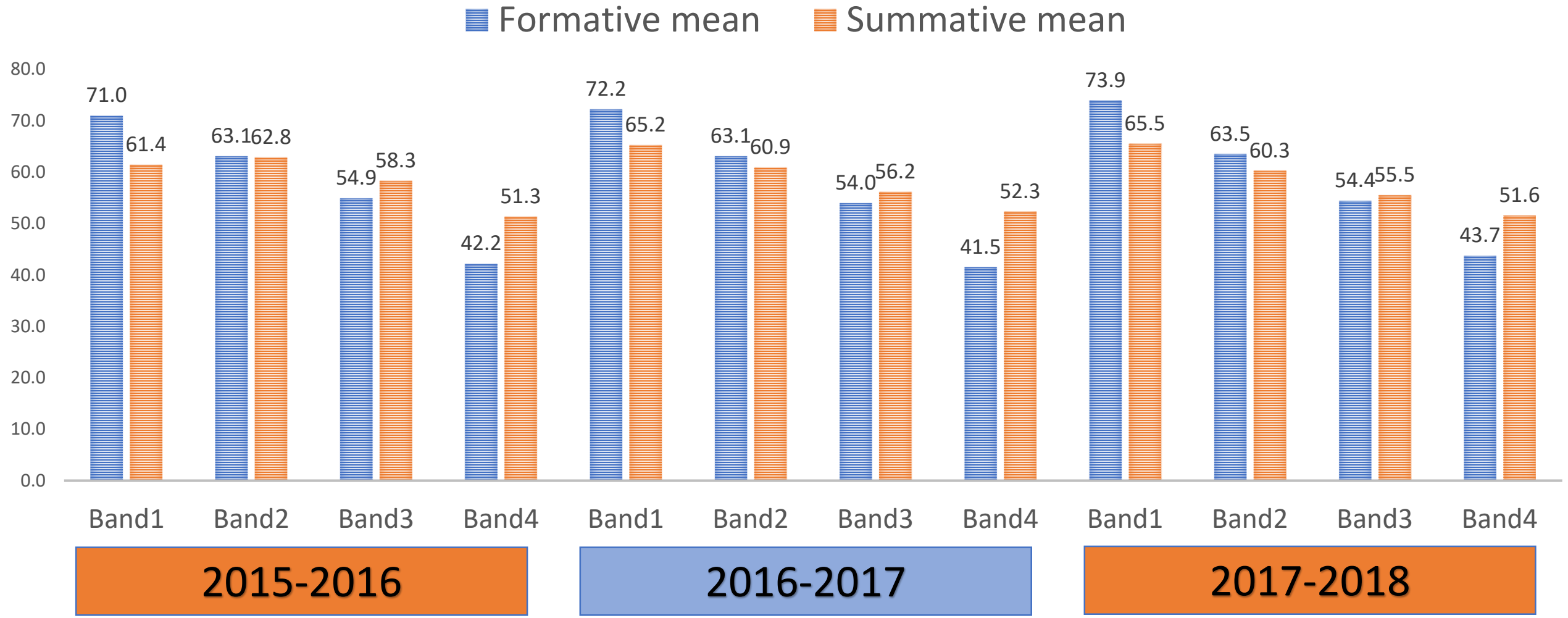
# EDPM01 3-YEAR COMPARISON BY GRADE BAND

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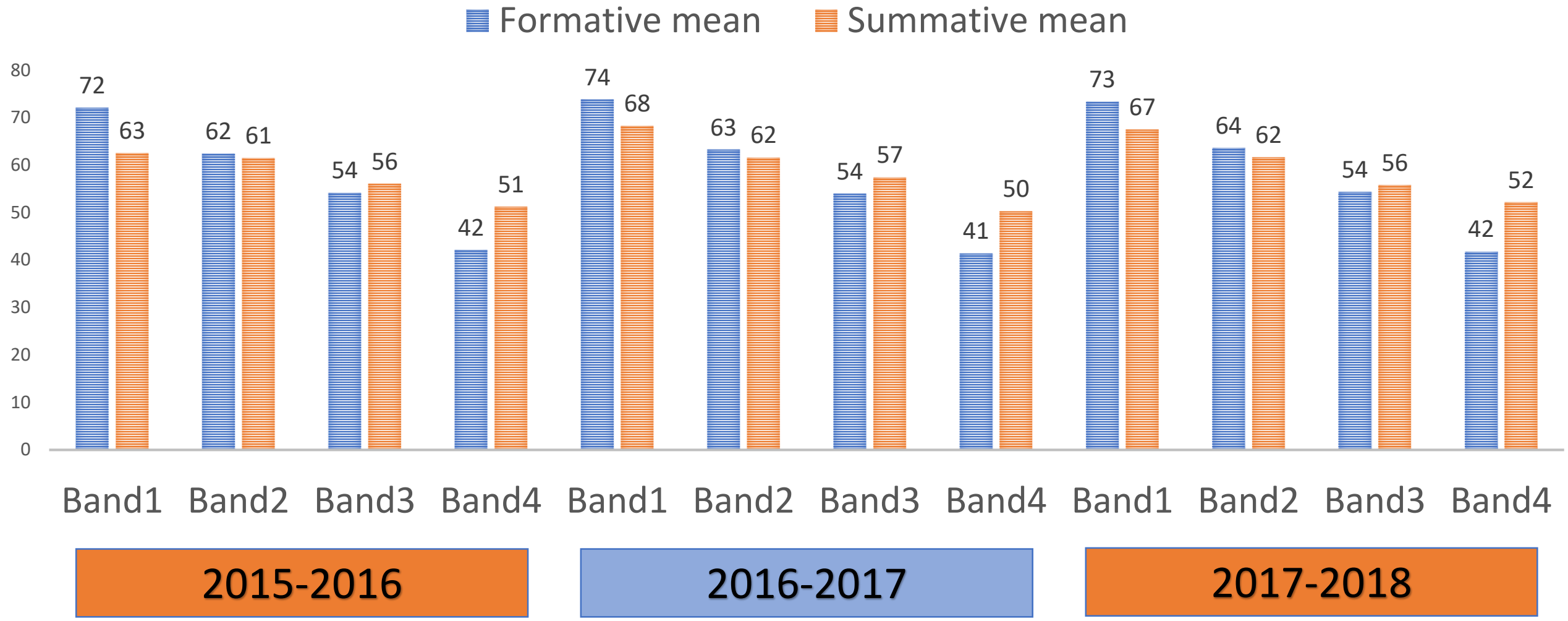
# EDPM97 3-YEAR COMPARISON BY GRADE BAND

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# Answers or more questions?

- We know that internal issues such as scale, staffing, CPD and moderation have impacts on grades;
- We know that formative feedback in the 40-49 band (band 4) has the biggest impact on summative outcomes;
- We know that the impact seems to shift to one of grade maintenance rather than extension on middle- to higher-ability students
- What does this mean? Why does this happen? What have we learned?

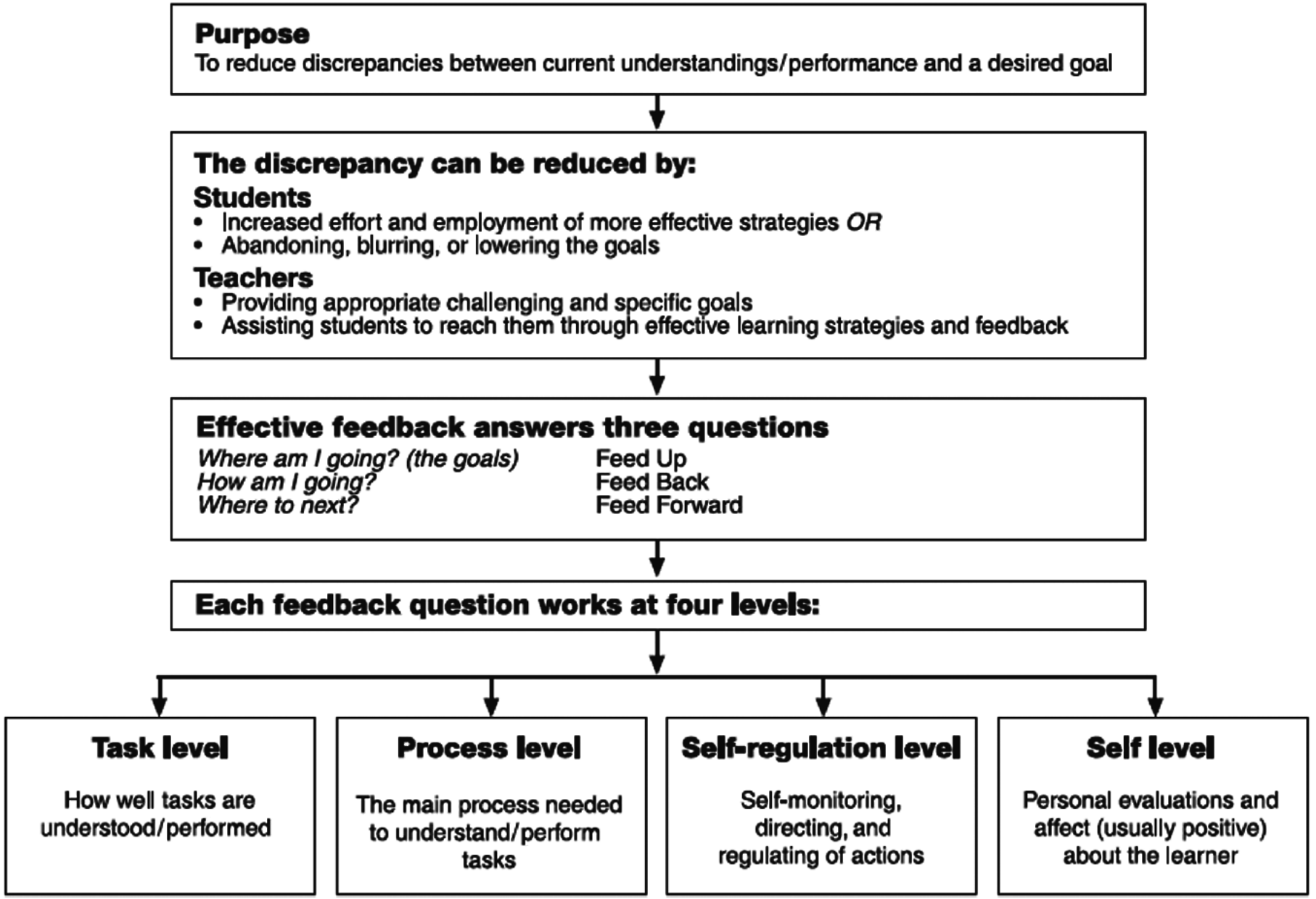


FIGURE 1. *A model of feedback to enhance learning.*

Hattie & Timperley (2007)

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# In summary

- Our data shows that we need to dig more deeply to understand
  - the nature of the students at each band – what variables can we control for? What is the ‘diagnosis’?
  - the type and purpose of feedback we give – exploring feedback as a continuum – what is the correct ‘treatment’?

- Institutional impacts need to be controlled for:
  - better CPD for staff in relation to the type of feedback required – less ‘gut feeling’ and more ‘expertise’?

# Next steps

- Stage 2 of our research will be undertaken at the qualitative level – analysis of formative feedback and resulting comments on summative work.
- Stage 3 involves researching the impact of the feedback-feed-forward model, where staff give three bullet points for improvement and students must reflect in the next assignment and show how they have responded to the feedback.

# Thank you

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# References/links


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