Many thanks for so much positive feedback on this course. It is very much appreciated, because the material is challenging, and I am well aware that many students find it difficult to get to grips with. In these circumstances I have often found it awkward to act on "suggestions for improvement", for one of (at least) four reasons:

1) what is suggested would sometimes involve returning to procedures that I used to follow, but changed in recent years because of previous students' requests

2) what is suggested requires changing procedures that other students clearly appreciate, and wish to keep as they are

3) what is suggested might make many students feel better about the course at the time, but would ultimately make it harder for them to achieve independent learning in mathematics.

4) some students may not have put in the miles required to take advantage of the resources on offer.

By way of examples:

1) splitting the board into fairly narrow columns is a result of criticism a few years ago that it was sometimes difficult to follow what I wrote when it spread across the entire board

2) making the lectures harder (again) would mean rolling back several years of incremental change to make them more straightforward

3) solving all the problems (or all past exam papers) on the board in feedback classes would certainly appear to make homework (or revision) easier, but would remove that crucial and valuable experience of wrestling with problems without knowing the solution - or even how to begin.

4) whatever is done in feedback classes, previous effort is required; they are not going to be of great help to those students who arrive without having attempted the problems, read their notes, or thought hard about the material beforehand.

So far as action is concerned:

* I will try to split the board into slightly (but not much) wider columns next year

* I will consider how I might make some of the "easy" problems harder and the "harder" problems easier

* I will continue to ask each support class how they wish me to conduct the activity (but that excludes simply writing all solutions on the board)
* I will continue to encourage proper preparation for every type of class in the course.

Somehow, students have to acquire the skill of facing up to unseen, and at first sight insoluble problems, and bringing ideas from other sources to bear on them. Such activity is a major component of mathematical thinking; and the ability to persevere -- and eventually succeed -- is of major importance to many employers.