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The Relationship between Student Engagement with Feedback and Lecturer and Student views of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

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Abstract

Feedback is widely acknowledged to be a key component of quality teaching and important for effective learning and yet the extent to which it meets its potential in improving learning outcomes for students has been questioned in the literature. Whilst many explanations for this failing have been proffered, one area that would seem to have been neglected is the relationship between feedback and perspectives of teaching and learning. A case study approach was adopted to explore the relationship between student engagement with feedback and lecturer’s and students’ perceptions of teaching, learning and assessment. The case consisted of: a lecturer at a large, urban Institute of Technology in New Zealand; students enrolled in two of his courses; and some of the interactions between them, particularly in relation to specific assignment. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis of feedback on an early assignment in each course.

Findings indicated that there were disparities between lecturer’s and students’ views about the nature of knowledge and learning and that when views are misaligned, students can struggle to interpret assessment requirements. Tensions exist between requirements for a quick marking turnaround and provision of detailed feedback and the resulting tendency to provide only brief feedback comments. Student engagement with feedback was not always aligned with their perceptions of learning and assessment, suggesting that other factors influence engagement. This finding supports previous research in acknowledging feedback as a complex process.
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Chapter Three: Methodology and Methods ................................................................. 27
  3.1 Introduction ........................................................................................................... 27
  3.2 Research Paradigm ............................................................................................... 27
  3.3 Methodology ......................................................................................................... 30
    3.3.1 Case selection ................................................................................................. 32
  3.4 Context .................................................................................................................. 33
    3.4.1 The Courses ..................................................................................................... 33
    3.4.2 The Lecturer .................................................................................................... 34
    3.4.3 The Researcher ............................................................................................... 34
  3.5 Ethical Considerations .......................................................................................... 35
  3.6 Methods ................................................................................................................ 37
    3.6.1 Data Collection ............................................................................................... 37
    3.6.2 Data Analysis: Written Feedback ................................................................. 38
      Amount of Feedback .............................................................................................. 39
      Depth of Feedback ................................................................................................. 39
      Type of Feedback ................................................................................................. 41
      Style of Feedback ................................................................................................. 44
    3.6.3 Data Analysis: Interviews ............................................................................... 44
  3.7 Criteria for Evaluating the Research ................................................................. 46
    3.7.1 Generalizability .............................................................................................. 46
    3.7.2 Credibility ...................................................................................................... 47
  3.8 Conclusion ............................................................................................................ 48

Chapter Four: Results ................................................................................................. 49
  4.1 Introduction ........................................................................................................... 49
  4.2 Description of the Case ....................................................................................... 49
  4.3 Approaches to Teaching, Learning and Assessment ........................................ 50
    4.3.1 Lecturer’s Perspective ..................................................................................... 51
    4.3.2 Student Perspectives ...................................................................................... 53
    4.3.3 Relationship Between Approach to Learning and Learning Focus ............. 64
  4.4 Purpose of Feedback ............................................................................................ 67
    4.4.1 Lecturer’s Perspective ..................................................................................... 67
    4.4.2 Student Perspectives ...................................................................................... 67
  4.5 Use of Feedback ................................................................................................... 70
    4.5.1 Lecturer’s Perspective ..................................................................................... 70
4.5.2 Students’ Perspective ..................................................................................................... 75

4.6 Summary ................................................................................................................................ 82

Chapter Five: Discussion .............................................................................................................. 84

5.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................................... 84

5.2 There are Disparities between Lecturer and Student Perceptions of Teaching, Learning and Assessment .............................................................................................................. 84

5.2.1 Students at the Higher Level Exhibit a Stronger Focus on Concepts and Scholarship .... 84

5.2.2 Students Hold Different Views of Learning as an Active or a Passive Process ............. 86

5.2.3 Students Perceive Multiple Purposes of Assessment ..................................................... 87

5.2.4 Perceptions of Teaching and Learning do not Always Align with Approach to Learning 87

5.3 Students Perceive Different Purposes of Feedback ............................................................... 89

5.4 There are Multiple Tensions in the Use of Feedback ............................................................ 90

5.4.1 Grade can Impact on Student Engagement with Feedback ............................................ 91

5.4.2 Affective Influences can Impact on Student Engagement with Feedback ..................... 92

5.4.3 Perceived Utility of Feedback on Summative Work Varies ............................................ 93

5.4.4 There is Tension between Feedback Directed at the Current Task and Feed Forward .. 94

5.4.5 Time Creates Tensions in the Use of Feedback .............................................................. 95

5.4.6 There are Tensions Regarding the Tone of Feedback ..................................................... 95

5.4.7 There are Tensions Regarding the Depth of Feedback ................................................... 97

5.4.8 There is a Tension in the Perceived Value of Individual and Class Feedback ................. 98

5.5 The Degree of Alignment between Lecturer and Student Views about Teaching, Learning and Assessment Influences Student Engagement with Feedback ............................................... 99

5.5.1 A Case of Misalignment .................................................................................................. 99

5.5.2 A Case of Alignment ...................................................................................................... 101

5.6 Summary ...................................................................................................................................... 103

Chapter Six: Conclusion ............................................................................................................. 105

6.1 Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 105

6.2 Conclusions .......................................................................................................................... 105

6.2.1 When Perceptions of Knowledge and Learning are Misaligned, Students May Struggle to Interpret Assessment Requirements and Feedback .......................................................... 105

6.2.2 Engagement with Feedback can be Problematic even when Perceptions of Knowledge and Learning are Aligned ............................................................................................................. 106

6.2.3 Student Engagement with Feedback does not Relate to their Approach to Learning 106

6.2.4 Lack of Time is the Most Significant Influence on Lecturer’s Use of Feedback and this can Impact on the Clarity of Feedback Comments ................................................................................. 107
6.2.5 The Tone of Feedback Comments has a Variable Impact on Student Engagement ..... 107
6.2.6 Implicit Developmental Feedback may not be Recognised by Students as being Helpful for Future Learning ................................................................. 108
6.2.7 Overall Conclusion: Multiple Factors Impact on how Students Engage with Feedback 108
6.3 Recommendations ............................................................................................................... 109
  6.3.1 Embedding Discussion about the Nature of Knowledge and Learning ..................... 109
  6.3.2 Awareness of the Impact of Feedback Tone .................................................................. 109
  6.3.3 Feedback as Dialogue ................................................................................................... 110
  6.3.4 Making Feed Forward Explicit ....................................................................................... 110
6.4 Limitations ............................................................................................................................ 111
6.5 Future Research ................................................................................................................... 112
6.6 Concluding Remarks ............................................................................................................. 113
Appendix One: Participant Information Sheets ......................................................................... 115
Appendix Two: Participant Consent Form ................................................................................. 119
Appendix Three: Participant Interview Schedules ..................................................................... 120
Appendix Four: Perceptions of Learning: Students ................................................................. 122
Appendix Five: Analysis of Engagement with Feedback ......................................................... 127
References ................................................................................................................................. 132
List of Figures

3.1: Overview of the Case 32
4.1: Perceptions of Learning: James 51
4.2: Purpose of Assessment 55
4.3: Learning Focus 57
4.4: Motivation 57
4.5: Approach to Learning 64
4.6: Amount of Feedback 71
4.7: Depth of Feedback 72
4.8: Tone of Feedback 73
4.9: Type of Feedback 74
4.10: Analysis of Student Engagement with Feedback: S1 77

List of Tables

3.1: Mapping the research questions against the data sources 37
3.2: Comparison of feedback analysis in the literature 40
3.3: Coding system for classifying type and style of feedback 43
4.1: Relationship between learning focus and approach to learning 65
4.2 Summary of findings 83