



A Discourse On The Impact Of Teacher Feedback On Student Motivation And Academic Success In The Context Of The Undergraduate Level In Nagaland

Mutunelu Soho

Assistant Professor,

Department of Education,

Dimapur Government College

Abstract

This study makes an attempt at exploring the role of teacher feedback in enhancing students' academic performance, confidence, and motivation, with a focus on undergraduate education in Nagaland. Through the use of a structured questionnaire, the study has conducted a survey with 60 student respondents from both government and private colleges in Kohima, Dimapur and Pfcutsero, administered online for convenience. The study has found that the feedback practices are inadequate though the students' perceive that there would be positive impact of feedback on their academic growth. The study makes a call for teacher training programs and policy reforms to prioritize effective feedback. It is an attempt at highlighting the paramount importance of teacher feedback in fostering a supportive and substantial learning environment for students.

Key Words: Teacher Feedback, Student Confidence, Motivation and Academic Engagement

Introduction

In the field of education, extensive research has been conducted over the years on the factors that enhance learning. The ongoing drive to make education more meaningful and effective continues to evolve. Among the many aspects explored, assessment practices have emerged as a crucial factor that significantly influences and supports substantial learning. In recent years, the focus has shifted from assessment of learning to assessment for learning, with many educators emphasizing its role in shaping educational outcomes. This paper argues that assessment is an essential tool for learning, and it positions assessment as an essential component of the learning process and a means to foster growth rather than merely evaluate. Within this framework, the paper explores the impact of teacher feedback on student motivation and academic success, particularly in the context of Nagaland.

In Nagaland, where the education system remains predominantly traditional, teacher feedback practices are often limited by conventional methods. Traditional educational settings tend to emphasize rote learning and lecture-based instruction, leaving less room for interactive feedback processes. The assessment practices predominantly consist of summative assessments, where students receive marks or grades at the end of assignments or sessions, with little to no feedback provided throughout the learning process. In most instances, feedback on students' assignments involves checking of grammatical forms with red circles around the errors

without any explanation about why it is incorrect. In some instances, the feedback received takes the form of very short phrases such as; checked, very good, very poor etc. In the views of Truscott (1999) such forms of feedback are either ineffective or in some cases very harmful. It may therefore be reiterated that the essence of feedback is therefore how much it can really help students and how much students are able to work and grow with it. (William 2016).

The purpose of this study is then to explore the role of teacher feedback in enhancing academic performance among undergraduate students in Nagaland. Specifically, it aims to understand how students perceive teacher feedback, its perceived impact on their academic performance, and the challenges faced in the traditional educational context of Nagaland. The study will collect data through a questionnaire administered to undergraduate students, focusing on their experiences and views on teacher feedback. The findings are expected to provide insights into how teacher feedback practices might be optimized to foster student success in Nagaland's higher education system

Overview of Teacher Feedback

Teacher feedback refers to the information provided by educators to students regarding their academic performance, behavior, or engagement in class. It may be understood as the guidance, information, or comments provided by teachers to help students improve their understanding and performance. According to Irons (2008), "Feedback is a key aspect in assessment and is fundamental in enabling students to learn from assessment" (p. 1). It serves as a bridge between what students know and where they need to be, making it a vital part of the learning process. It can take various forms, including written feedback (such as comments on assignments), oral feedback (like discussions or verbal corrections during class), and non-verbal feedback (such as gestures or facial expressions).

The role of feedback in education has changed significantly over the past century. Originally, in the behaviorist approach, feedback was mainly seen as a way to reinforce desired responses to certain tasks, using positive or negative reinforcement as well as punishments to guide learning (Haughney et al., 2020; William, 2018). Later, Bloom (1968) emphasized the importance of giving students regular feedback on their progress through formative assessments, showing that it could greatly support learning. The conception of feedback also underwent changes with the coming of constructivists and cognitive theories. Under this perspective, feedback was seen as a way to engage with students' cognitive growth. This concept of feedback viewed learners as active participants who not only process feedback but also respond to and use it to advance their cognitive growth and development.(Stobart, 2018). There is a strong focus on using feedback to improve students' performance in specific tasks, strategies, and overall learning (Mäkipää & Hildén, 2021). Feedback should move students forward, clearly presenting the next steps needed to reach the goal presented (Brookhart & Moss, 2015). By highlighting areas of strength and areas needing improvement, teacher feedback encourages students to engage actively with their learning and fosters academic growth.

Teacher feedback can be in written or oral form but its focus and target is always the impact it would bring on students. Rather than branding them as good or bad, capable or incapable, the focus of all teacher feedback needs to be directed at helping the students grow towards academic success. In this regard, Sadler, (1989), states that feedback is a critical component to the formative assessment process, as it provides information to the student about whether or not the learning is successful, allowing instructors the opportunity to reinforce successful practices or modify unsatisfactory ones. Not to be overlooked, feedback is recognized as an integral component of learning because it helps learners see how they are doing, where they are in the learning process, and what needs to be done next to reach the learning targets (Thomas & Sondergeld, 2015) Teacher feedback plays a crucial role in student learning, serving as a key tool for improving academic performance and fostering engagement. Effective feedback helps students understand their strengths and areas for improvement, promoting a cycle of continuous learning.

Literature Review

Having discussed the nature and importance of teacher feedback as a powerful tool in education, valued across diverse education systems, this section attempts at presenting a comprehensive review of literature that reaffirms the significance of feedback in enhancing student motivation and academic achievement.

Ahmen et. Al (2021) conducted a study to investigate the impact of teacher feedback on academic performance, using self-efficacy as a mediator, with data from 336 Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Education students in Turbat, Pakistan. Results indicated that constructive, corrective, and evaluative feedback significantly improved academic performance, with self-efficacy strengthening the effect of constructive and evaluative feedback on students' outcomes.

In another study, Maharma & Aleek (2022) conducted a study to examine the impact of teacher feedback on students' academic outcomes. The researchers utilized an observation card to observe teacher feedback in action across twenty classes, focusing on how feedback influences student performance. The study involved 50 male tenth-grade students from a public school in Jordan. Findings indicated that student performance, especially in tests, was assessed objectively, and that specific, accurate feedback helped reduce discouragement among students, supporting better academic engagement and outcomes.

The study conducted by Ahmad et.al (2023) provided an in-depth exploration of the impact of teacher feedback on students' learning, achievement, and study habits. In their study, they highlighted the role of constructive feedback in boosting motivation, self-efficacy, and academic engagement. The study revealed that students view feedback as essential for monitoring their progress and setting academic aspirations. On the whole, the study reaffirmed the role of teacher feedback as pivotal for guiding academic development and fostering a supportive learning environment.

Further, Abde et.al (2024) conducted a study which looked at how teacher feedback affected motivation and academic engagement among Grade 12 TVL (Home Economics) students at Baguio City National Science High School in the Philippines. It aimed to find out: students' performance levels before receiving teacher feedback, their performance after receiving feedback, and whether there was a noticeable improvement after feedback was given. The study compared students' grades from before and after the feedback. The results showed that students performed at a high level before the feedback, but their performance was even higher after receiving it. Overall, the study concluded that teacher feedback had a strong, positive impact on students' performance.

In the light of the above review of existing literature, it may be stated that the role of teacher feedback is highly critical in enhancing the motivation and academic engagement of students thereby bringing favorable learning outcomes. Based on this premise, it is deemed pertinent to explore the perspectives of students towards teachers' feedback with the aim and purpose to further understand the impact of teacher feedback on their academic experience. The following sections throw light on the methodology which was used to gather insights into the students' perceptions.

Methodology

As highlighted above, this study employed a quantitative survey approach towards gathering student insights into the frequency, clarity and impact of teacher feedback on their academic experience. The questionnaire comprised of three sections; the first sought to collect demographic information of the participants, the second section comprised of statements focused on how regularly students received feedback, the timelines and clarity as well as their preference for written or oral feedback and the third section attempted to measure the perceived effect of feedback on students' confidence, motivation, academic performance and the sense of being valued. A five-point Likert scale, was used for each statement to allow for quantifiable insight. The participants of the study were 60 undergraduate students from both government and private colleges in Kohima, Dimapur and Pftusero. The questionnaire was administered online for the purpose of convenience.

Data Analysis

The section below presents a comprehensive overview of the collected data;

Demographic Profile

As already mentioned, the participants were undergraduate students from Kohima, Dimapur and Pfutsero. The demographic profile of the participants is provided as below;

Age		
	No. of Respondents	Percentage
19-20	41	68%
21 and above	19	31%
Gender		
Male	26	43%
Female	34	56%

Students' Perceptions on Feedback Practices

Statements	Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Mean Score
I receive feedback on my assignments and exams regularly.	0%	0%	0%	6.67%	93.33%	1.07
I receive feedback on my participation and engagement in class.	0%	0%	6.67%	8.33%	85%	1.22
I receive feedback from my teachers in a timely manner that allows me to make improvements.	0%	0%	10%	23.33%	66.67%	1.43
The feedback I receive is specific and detailed enough to help me improve my work.	0%	0%	11.67%	35%	53.33%	1.57
The feedback provided is clear and easy to understand.	0%	0%	15%	51.67%	33.33%	1.82
I prefer receiving written feedback (e.g., on assignments) rather than oral feedback.	53.33%	20%	13.33%	3.33%	10%	4.03
I believe oral feedback during class discussions is more beneficial than written feedback.	68.33%	20%	11.67%	0%	0%	4.57
I find feedback helpful for identifying my strengths and areas for improvement.	58.33%	35%	11.67%	0%	0%	4.42

The table above offers an overview of students' experiences and preferences regarding teacher feedback in the classroom. It may first be noted that 93.33% of respondents reported a lack of feedback on assignments, while 85% indicated insufficient feedback on class participation. Additionally, 66% mentioned that feedback is not provided in time for improvements, and 53% found feedback unclear or lacking in detail. In terms of preference, 53% favored written feedback for assignments, whereas 68% valued oral feedback in class discussions. These findings highlight significant gaps in feedback clarity, timeliness, and regularity, highlighting a critical need for improvement to enhance learning outcomes in the Nagaland undergraduate context.

Students' Perceptions on the impact of Feedback

Statements	Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Mean Score
I feel more confident in my abilities when I receive positive feedback from my teachers.	56.67%	40%	3.33%	0%	0%	4.53
Constructive feedback encourages me to work harder and improve my performance.	68.33%	25%	5%	0%	0%	4.63
I believe that the feedback I receive has a direct impact on my academic performance	56.67%	43.33%	0%	0%	0%	4.57
Feedback makes me feel valued and recognized for my efforts.	45%	55%	0%	0%	0%	4.45
I am motivated to seek additional help or resources after receiving feedback	21.67%	60%	18.33%	0%	0%	4.03
I often reflect on the feedback I receive and find ways to apply it in future assignments.	53.33%	36.67%	10%	0%	0%	4.43
I feel that feedback from teachers improves my understanding of the subject matter.	20%	36.67%	26.67%	8.33%	8.33%	3.52
I believe that my teachers care about my academic progress based on the feedback they provide.	26.67%	40%	26.67%	6.67%	0%	3.87

Supplementing to the above, this table further explores students' perceptions of the impact of feedback on their confidence, motivation, and engagement. First of all, high scores indicated that students recognize feedback as beneficial to their academic growth. Specifically, feedback's role in boosting motivation and confidence was especially strong. However, mixed responses were noted on whether feedback helps with understanding subject content and reflects teachers' care, with mean scores of 3.52 and 3.87, respectively. This data underlines the positive motivational effect of feedback, which could enhance students' academic enthusiasm and lead to improved learning outcomes.

Discussion and Recommendations

This discourse based exploratory study has revealed a significant gap in the current teacher feedback practices within the classroom, as perceived by the students. A large majority of students reported infrequent or ineffective feedback on assignments and participation, indicating a lack of structured feedback practices. While students recognize the positive influence feedback can have on their motivation, confidence, and engagement, the limited regularity and specificity of the feedback they currently receive hinder these potential benefits. This finding highlights the need for timely and detailed feedback that can truly aid students in their academic improvement. Additionally, while students prefer written feedback for assignments, they also value oral feedback for interactive class participation. The mixed responses on whether feedback helps deepen subject understanding and reflects teachers' care suggest that feedback practices might benefit from greater consistency and personalization, particularly to address diverse learning needs and build student-teacher trust.

In view of the above findings, it may be stated that there is a need for teacher professional development for undergraduate teachers, particularly focused on effective feedback strategies, such as how to provide detailed, constructive feedback that clearly outlines areas for improvement and strengths. Training on balancing oral and written feedback can also support diverse student needs. In the same lines, institutions may also consider implementing structured guidelines to ensure that feedback is given consistently and promptly. Teachers could be encouraged to schedule regular feedback sessions, especially following assignments or assessments. In an era where there are numerous digital platforms which can facilitate timely feedback, teachers may be encouraged to implement digital tools to provide real-time comments and track student progress. Above all, there is an urgent need to build a classroom culture where feedback is seen as a routine part of the learning process.

Conclusion

This study has been an attempt at placing emphasis on the critical need for teacher feedback in shaping students' confidence, motivation, and academic engagement. It reveals that feedback practices at the undergraduate level in Nagaland are insufficient, despite students perceiving significant benefits from teacher feedback. The findings call for teacher training programs and policy changes that prioritize feedback as a vital component of education. In conclusion, the study reaffirms that teacher feedback plays an indispensable role in students' educational experiences and must not be overlooked or neglected.

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