




## **Chapter 1 The many dimensions of student engagement with instructional feedback**

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Numerous books have already delved into the intricacies of feedback and its impact on various academic outcomes. However, we believe that our volume holds a distinctive position within this body of work. What sets this volume apart is its foundation on an extensive program of study, providing a comprehensive understanding of feedback from diverse perspectives. Moreover, the unique context in which this research has been conducted—centered around the exam-based culture in Singapore—offers valuable insights into the complexities and nuances of feedback within this specific educational landscape. By exploring these distinct characteristics, we hope to engage readers and provide them with fresh perspectives and practical implications for feedback practices.

### **The examination-orientation of Singapore education and its implications for feedback**

The Singapore educational system has been described as examination-oriented (Tan, 2022), and admission to each level of education is determined solely by large scale high stakes examinations for the majority of students. These high stakes in the national examinations wash

back into stressful school-based examinations and produce great pressures on students and teachers to perform in school and national examinations. Attempts to shift assessment purposes to be more formative in the form of Assessment for Learning (AfL) have met with mixed responses. From surveying 1054 secondary teachers on their perceptions and practices of assessment, it was found that teachers value AfL but perceive a lack of assessment literacy and opportunities to practice it (Deneen et al., 2019). In contrast, teachers seemed to value summative assessment less than formative assessment, teachers claimed to be more proficient in it and use it more than formative assessment. It would seem that Singaporean teachers are still struggling to prioritise formative uses of assessment in schools, and preparation for high-stakes summative assessment remains the primary preoccupation with assessment in Singapore schools. In another large study that involved 114 primary and secondary schools, teachers' responses on assessment indicated that teachers largely used feedback in highly limited ways: to correct or highlight mistakes and students' weaknesses, re-teaching, giving students suggestions on improvements, using good performance tasks for students to model after, and giving students praise (Hogan, et al. 2013).

### **The empirical study on students' engagement with feedback**

In addition to teachers limiting their feedback advice to highlighting and correcting mistakes, it was also observed that much of the focus on feedback in Singapore schools on was improving the quality of feedback advice, notably by providing process-level feedback instead of (merely) task level feedback. However, it was observed that students may not respond to teachers' feedback as intended, and some students may not even read teachers' feedback. This results in one way feedback – from the teacher to the student, and the effort of teachers in writing feedback is not reciprocated. To address such inefficiency, a research project was conducted to explore how

students respond to teachers' feedback and suggest ways for enhancing students' receptiveness to feedback.

This study on "Secondary Teachers' and Students' Experiences of Assessment Feedback" examined links among instructional feedback, academic emotions, and other variables that have been assumed to relate to feedback and students' academic attainment. It investigated students' engagement in feedback in affective, behavioural and cognitive dimensions, examined how feedback affected students' performance and identified teachers' conceptions and students' conceptions of feedback. Altogether 5 schools were involved, and in each school three teachers teaching English and three classes of students (taught by these teachers) participated. In total, 15 teachers and 315 students participated.

Students were first asked to complete a baseline survey on assessment feedback. Then, the RIF instrument (see Lipnevich et al., 2021) was adapted for the Singapore context to assess students' affective, behavioral, and cognitive responses to feedback. Students then wrote an essay, which was part of their regular instructional activities. Teachers would mark the essays and provide feedback that they typically provide, which can include grades, numeric scores, descriptive comments, etc. When the marked and commented essays were returned to the students, they were asked to do a post feedback survey using the RIF instrument. The cycle of writing, teacher feedback and post feedback survey was repeated three times. The empirical results and findings of this study provide the foundation for this book. By describing diverse methodological approaches, this volume offers a comprehensive and well-rounded view of feedback, making it a valuable resource for educators, researchers, and anyone interested in enhancing feedback practices in various educational settings.

### **The structure of the book**

In this section, we provide a concise overview of the chapters included in this volume, offering brief descriptions of their content and contributions. These chapters collectively draw from different aspects of our research project, encompassing diverse perspectives and exploring various dimensions of feedback in educational settings. Each chapter delves into specific topics, examining the roles of teachers, students, and contextual factors in feedback processes. Through these diverse lenses, we aim to provide readers with a comprehensive glimpse into the multifaceted nature of feedback and its implications for educational practice.

In Chapter 2, Goh and Tan discuss the complexity of how students engage with feedback in the affective, behavioural and cognitive (A-B-C) domains, suggesting that the mechanisms of feedback processing are often viewed as a mystery. Drawing an analogy to aviation black boxes, they argue for a shift in perspective, treating the feedback process as a valuable source of information about students' thoughts and emotions. By proposing a framework to support students' active involvement in feedback, they emphasize the significance of student agency in achieving desired learning outcomes.

Chapter 3 continues the discussion of feedback processing, focusing on one of the aspects – affect. In this chapter the authors explore the role of students' affective response to feedback in the improvement of academic performance. The complexity of students' affect in feedback processes and the need for effective affect management in a high-stakes assessment context are discussed. Drawing on data from secondary school students' experiences, To, Gutterman, and Lipnevich highlight the significance of students' emotional engagement and their coping strategies in the face of negative comments and disappointing results. Considering the sociocultural context and individual factors, they emphasize the importance of a comprehensive approach to fostering

students' emotional maturity and achievement-oriented mindset. Practical recommendations are provided to support students' emotion management during feedback processes.

In Chapter 4, Lipnevich, Lopera-Oquendo, and Park explore students' receptivity to feedback and present the validation process of the Receptivity to Feedback scale. They examine the relationships between the scale and meaningful student outcomes, such as grades, and explore gender differences in student receptivity to feedback. Based on these insights, they discuss potential feedback strategies for practitioners to consider, offering practical implications for optimizing the feedback process.

Chapter 5 presents a typology of feedback practices organized around 3 phases. In the first phase, teachers emotionally and cognitively prepare learners for feedback by sharing or co-constructing success criteria. In the second phase, teachers provide intentional and actionable feedback to support students' learning goals. Finally, in the third phase, teachers engage students in activities to process and act on feedback, such as class discussions or individual consultations. Lam and Tay contend that this feedback pedagogy promotes affective, behavioral, and cognitive engagement. The chapter showcases diverse examples across subjects and levels, stimulating reflection on how teachers, departments, and schools can adopt and sustain this feedback pedagogy.

Chapter 6 delves deeper into students' views on feedback. Students' perspectives on feedback are invaluable and deserve both the attention and response from teachers. By actively involving students in shaping their own education, opportunities for growth and improvement can be maximized. Understanding how students experience assessment feedback and viewing it through their lens is of paramount importance. Wong, Goh and Tan present the findings of a phenomenographic study that explores the various ways in which students experience assessment

feedback. The chapter concludes with recommendations on how teachers can incorporate students' insights to design and implement student-centered feedback pedagogy in schools.

Chapter 7 complements the previous one by exploring the teacher's perspective on feedback. Just as understanding how students engage with feedback is crucial, it is equally important to have a clear picture of how teachers experience and interpret instructional feedback. Drawing from a phenomenographic study, Goh and Tan identify three distinct ways in which teachers experience assessment feedback: directive (focused on pointing out mistakes), interactive (emphasizing communication during feedback exchange), and reflective (highlighting students' introspection for self-directed learning). Mapping these varying experiences against a learning-oriented approach like Assessment for Learning (AfL) reveals the need for a more profound, student-centered practice to support learning. The authors conclude with recommendations for identifying factors that influence the adoption of a more sophisticated assessment feedback experience and suggest pedagogical strategies to help teachers reflect on their beliefs and practices regarding assessment feedback.

In Chapter 8, To, Tan and Lim explore the development of a student-centered feedback pedagogy. By analyzing specific classroom cases, the chapter examines the key characteristics of student-centered feedback pedagogy and delineates the roles and responsibilities of both teachers and students in the feedback interaction. The authors argue that effective student-centered feedback pedagogy hinges upon cultivating a partnership relationship between students and teachers. The chapter concludes with implications for fostering feedback partnerships within school settings.

Finally, in Chapter 9 the editorial team summarizes our current understanding of students' engagement with feedback and discusses ideas for where the field may want to go from here. We also bring together the main messages about how to use feedback for maximum effect on learning.

In conclusion, this book offers a summary of findings and insights into students' engagement with feedback, serving as a valuable reference for scholars and practitioners seeking insights into the intricate dynamics of instructional feedback within their educational contexts. We humbly extend our hopes that this volume will be deemed beneficial by researchers, students, policy makers, and practitioners alike, as they navigate the realm of instructional feedback and make informed decisions in their respective fields.

## References

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