

Chapter 5

The Role of Student Feedback in Building Reflexive Teachers

Kerri Pilling Burchill

Southern Illinois Healthcare, USA

David Anderson

Eastern Michigan University, USA

ABSTRACT

The contemporary demands of the education environment today require that teachers refine their reflective thinking skills and shift towards the deeper critical thinking skills inherent in reflexive thinking. Reflexivity is a deeper level of critical thinking that assumes a degree of metacognition and “knowing-in-action” (Schon, 1983, p. 50). Metacognition is a critical tool in helping individuals become more aware of their deeply seeded biases and tacit assumptions about the way the world works. Through a phenomenological analysis of four individual case studies, this study found that student feedback was a key catalyst for building reflexivity skills. Specifically, the study details the key ways by which feedback prompted novice teachers to metacognitively think through their knowing-in-action and ultimately improve their teaching practice. The research details important implications in three areas: 1) practice, 2) theory, and 3) future research.

INTRODUCTION: STUDENT FEEDBACK AS A CATALYST FOR REFLEXIVITY IN EDUCATION

There is a relationship between the quality of teaching and the quality of student learning (Angelo & Cross, n.d., p.1, Ramsden, 1992; Stark & Lowther, 1980). Teacher training programs emphasize student feedback as one means through which teachers can adjust their lessons to better meet the needs of learners (Hattie and Timperley, 2007). In the classroom, teachers generally receive student feedback in three ways: 1) conversations held directly with students; 2) written feedback from students; and, 3) assessments of the quality of the students’ work. These multiple forms of student feedback are “a key practice for lifelong learning in the workplace” (Boud & Molloy, 2013, p. 203).

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-7829-1.ch005

While the literature attests to the importance of student feedback in improving the quality of teaching, “the benefits of feedback in the classroom... are often diluted...” (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 101). Too often, teachers see feedback as a statement about the student’s performance rather than insights about their own teaching (Timperley & Wiseman, 2002) and miss insights about how feedback informs teaching practice. In short, “faculty and students need better ways to monitor learning throughout the semester” (Angelo & Cross, n.d., p. 1).

Bruno et al. (2011) highlight studies that traditionally explore reflection and learning “have been focused on children” (2011, p. 2), and less on how teachers reflect and learn to become more proficient. However, reflection does not bring us to the critical thinking that emerges from reflexivity. When teachers engage in reflexivity, critically analyzing their students’ feedback, they create professional knowledge and can adjust their teaching to better meet students’ learning needs.

This chapter contributes to the growing body of research describing how novice professors engage in reflexive thinking to make sense of student feedback and improve their delivery of quality education. More specifically, this chapter examines how teachers translate their tacit knowledge about their students’ feedback to explicit understanding, and ultimately make changes in their teaching practice.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Student Feedback

For the purposes of this chapter, student feedback is defined as “information provided by an agent (e.g., teacher, peer, book, parent, self, experience) regarding aspects of one’s performance or understanding” (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 82). Extending this definition, Hattie and Timperley observe that “feedback thus is a ‘consequence’ of performance” (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 81). In the classroom, feedback presents through three broad areas: 1) dialogue between teacher and student regarding the learning taking place; 2) written comments from students regarding the class or assignment; and, 3) students’ performance on assignments and exams, through formal student feedback. Teachers use student feedback; Angelo and Cross highlight a three-step process: 1) planning, which involves selecting an assessment tool; 2) implement the tool; and, 3) respond to students by “letting them know what you learned from the assessment and what difference that information will make” (Angelo & Cross, n.d., p. 3).

Feedback plays a critical role in the learning process as it influences one’s concept of self-efficacy related to learning, “which in turn leads to further learning” (Hattie and Timperley, 2007, p. 101). In addition to enhancing learning, student feedback is also a valuable tool for teachers in identifying how they can adjust the learning experience to improve learning. In a research project involving over 250 case studies, Black and William (1998) conclude that learning gains and effective feedback go hand-in-hand. Confirming the importance of feedback, Hattie and Timperley (2007) reference Hattie’s study of “over 500 meta-analyses which identified that the top three most influential types of feedback are cues, feedback and reinforcement” (p. 83). Less effective strategies broadly include “programmed instruction, praise, punishment, and extrinsic rewards” (p. 84).

Clearly feedback plays an essential role in the learning process. However, Hattie and Timperley (2007) argue, “Feedback by itself may not have the power to initiate further action” (p. 82). Reflecting on student feedback can initiate action, thus a deeper exploration of reflection is in the following section.

13 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/the-role-of-student-feedback-in-building-reflexive-teachers/226420

Related Content

Evaluating the Accessibility of Online University Education

Mark O. Pendergast (2017). *International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design* (pp. 1-14).

www.irma-international.org/article/evaluating-the-accessibility-of-online-university-education/164970

Piloting the Change: Migrating a Learning Management System while Discovering a Project Management Protocol

Autumm Caines (2013). *Cases on Educational Technology Planning, Design, and Implementation: A Project Management Perspective* (pp. 168-187).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/piloting-change-migrating-learning-management/78458

Importance of Active Breaks in Early Childhood Education: A Proposal Intervention

Juan Carlos Pastor Vicedo and Francisco Tomás González Fernández (2021). *Physical Education Initiatives for Early Childhood Learners* (pp. 87-100).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/importance-of-active-breaks-in-early-childhood-education/273431

Breakout of a Traditional Classroom Reality With Game-Based Learning Pedagogy

Kerri Brown Parker and Peter A. Hessling (2019). *Handbook of Research on Innovative Digital Practices to Engage Learners* (pp. 52-67).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/breakout-of-a-traditional-classroom-reality-with-game-based-learning-pedagogy/232121

Deepening Engagement: The Intimate Flow of Online Interactions

Anita Chadha (2019). *International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design* (pp. 32-47).

www.irma-international.org/article/deepening-engagement/228971