

FEEDBACK AND MOTIVATION

First Considerations

During our first TESOL EVO programme last year, I set participants a task on teacher feedback. There are different kinds of teacher feedback which can be used for enhancing student reflection and engagement. Students are usually more aware of immediate and explicit (corrective) feedback. But there are less obvious ones such as delayed feedback too. All have their relevance and are appropriate at a given point in a session or course.

I asked the participants to give three kinds of feedback and state why they could be relevant to teaching. One of the most interesting contributions was from Anna Chaikina, who was teaching EAP to young students in Moscow. Anna has kindly allowed me to use her input for our new task. Here are her ideas on teacher feedback:

Hot feedback is immediate in the process of speech. A teacher should be careful because it can discourage lower-level students. I usually use gestures.

Warm feedback comes right at the end of the task, when you can discuss the activity with students and highlight some mistakes in order to try to avoid them in future.

Cold feedback usually comes after the class and can take oral or written forms.



Anna Chaikina, Moscow

I immediately took to the analogy that Anna used to illustrate how teachers give feedback. Anna clearly gives attention to how she gives feedback in the heat of classroom interaction, and is careful as to how she offers immediate feedback to her students. This could be seen as a good example of her being attuned to didactical concerns that may arise with, for example, mixed-level groups. It's also in my view a clear example of Schon's reflection-in-action at work in the classroom.

The warm feedback is a form of delayed feedback. How this is done is highly relevant as students often prefer immediate feedback. If the protocol that the teacher adopts here is not clear, some students may see the delaying of feedback as indicative of lack of control or direction,

Anna's cold feedback in its written form can take many forms ranging from teacher comments to appraisal of student performance and may be seen as examples of formal feedback. Once again, how this is done is relevant. The feedback we give as teachers in the cool light of post-classroom reflection is very different in nature to the immediate feedback that we give during an activity.

Student Feedback and Teacher Motivation

How teachers give feedback is a key component of our teaching practice. It is often considered as a factor which significantly contributes to student motivation, even when students and teacher are faced with a classroom environment that is less stimulating for learning. But how do things stand with student feedback and the response they give to teacher performance? And how is this connected with teacher motivation?

Clearly, there is continuity between teacher and student feedback, especially if we consider the dynamics of classroom interaction when an activity is in full flow. But they are different in that the teacher feedback is often reflected, deliberate and goal-oriented, and this may not be the case for the feedback that students give. Student feedback and our handling of it is an indicator of our professional performance, so we can see this as an important driver for teacher motivation.

Some Questions

You may want to comment on Anna's model for giving feedback. Can you for example see parallels with how we receive student feedback?

I would also like you to consider the handling of student feedback in the classroom, and also consider how this affects your motivation as a teacher.

In your response, please also consider the following questions or points. Some are open-ended, and they are in random order.

1. As a teacher I prefer immediate forms of student feedback.
2. I park or delay my response whenever there is a lot of immediate student feedback during a session.
3. I try to respond to the different forms of student feedback as they arise during classroom activities.
4. I prefer to discuss sensitive points that arise during student feedback at the end or after a classroom session.
5. I respond immediately and positively when students give positive feedback.
6. Whenever I receive negative student feedback I try to adjust my teaching role, regardless of the 'quality' of the feedback.
7. If I receive positive feedback from students I tend to...
8. If I receive negative feedback from students I tend to...
9. Student feedback (positive or negative) has an (immediate) effect on my motivation as a teacher.
10. The effect student feedback has on my motivation also depends on the manner in which it is given.
11. The effect that feedback has on my motivation also depends on how often it occurs during a programme.
12. I am aware that student response and engagement can differ from one session to the next, and consider that when handling student feedback.

You may want to consider all of these points in your response, or focus on just a few. Of course, there are other points or features of feedback that you may want to address when stating your response. Feel free to raise other points that you find relevant.