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Precedents to Feedback Literacy: Uncoupling Feedback from Assessment Using an Evidence-Based Approach to Reflect on and Validate the Feedback Talk Framework

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Abstract: Feedback talk as part of naturally occurring classroom dialogic interactions forms the most rich and abundant source of feedback that students are exposed to. Whilst conceptualisations of feedback literacy are evolving rapidly, there is little consideration of what feedback looks like and how it can be identified, particularly in relation to feedback talk. A pilot study adopting a linguistic lens to explicate what feedback talk looks like identified ten codes (i.e. Feedback Talk Framework). This presentation focuses on validation of the Feedback Talk Framework through mixed methods using a survey (n = 136) and data-led reflective interviews with staff (n=7). Findings indicated that the original ten codes could be collapsed into three key feedback talk moves: i. Informing; ii. Confirming and Validating, and; iii. Questioning. These moves provide a first step in recognising and reflecting upon feedback talk that has the potential to support the development of teacher feedback literacy.

Paper: The concept of feedback literacy has served to operationalise what Carless (2015) describes as a shift from old to new paradigm feedback. The old paradigm is characterised by the one-way transmission of feedback from teacher to student, whereas the new paradigm is committed to student engagement in the feedback process that acknowledges the affective impact (Carless & Boud, 2018), requires a sharing of responsibility (Carless & Winstone, 2020), and entails '…a situated, culturally embedded, socially mediated practice' (Chong, 2021: 93). Whilst this evolution in understanding feedback literacy is undoubtedly providing insight into the nuances and application of the concept to practice, what is currently missing is a consideration of what feedback looks like and how it can be identified (Heron et al., forthcoming). In other words, in order to be feedback literate, one must first be able to recognise feedback.

Whilst certain forms of feedback are easily identifiable (e.g. written feedback on an assessed task), other forms are more troublesome due to their heterogeneity (e.g. verbal feedback) and require support in 'how to recognise feedback as feedback' (Poulos & Mahony, 2008: 145). This is perhaps why the majority of feedback research has focused on post-assessment written feedback to date. Feedback talk as part of naturally occurring classroom dialogic interactions forms the most rich and abundant source of feedback that students are exposed to and is distinct from verbal feedback that is primarily associated with assessment tasks. However, feedback talk has been largely neglected, is under-conceptualised (Heron et al., forthcoming) and often not perceived as feedback, but rather part of the dialogue of learning and teaching (Medland, 2019). Given the

wider pedagogic context (Gravett, 2020), there is an important role within student feedback literacy for recognising the multitude of forms of feedback interactions, and an important role within teacher feedback literacy for creating opportunities for students to use feedback information within supportive environments that maximise the impact of feedback.

In a pilot study, Heron et al. (forthcoming), analysed six one-hour seminars from a range of disciplines using a linguistic lens to explicate what feedback talk looks like within longer classroom conversations. The coding framework was initially based on Hardman's (2016) coding, premised on the final move in the tri-part classroom exchange that is ubiquitous across all educational sectors; Initiation (I) – Response (R) – Feedback (F) (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). To date, no frameworks have been developed that focus primarily on the Feedback move. Through iterative coding and standardisation, Heron et al. (ibid) agreed on a final set of ten codes. This presentation focuses on the next stage of research that aimed to validate and develop the Feedback Talk Framework (FTF) using a mixed methods approach to data collection.

The FTF was put to work through a survey of 136 participants and interviews with seven teachers who had agreed to have a taught session recorded and analysed. The survey comprised closed and open-ended questions based on Carless & Winstone's (2020) framework for teacher feedback literacy. Participants were asked to code three extracts from taught sessions using the ten codes of feedback talk. Interviews with seven teachers involved reflection on the feedback exchanges identified within their session transcript, with reference to the FTF. The interviews were analysed iteratively using a thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and Krippendoff's alpha analysis was performed to assess the reliability of the participant judgements in the survey (Hayes and Krippendorff 2007).

Results suggested that the framework could be validated by collapsing the original ten codes identified within the pilot study, into three key feedback talk moves: i. Informing; ii. Confirming and Validating, and; iii. Questioning. Whilst it might seem reductive to isolate feedback talk to a set of codes, potentially losing the moment-by-moment nuances of meaning in talk, we argue that a coding scheme allows a first step in reflecting on feedback talk. It also has the potential to support the development of teacher and student feedback literacy (Carless & Winstone, 2020) via student recognition of the multitude of forms of feedback interactions, and the creation of opportunities for students to use feedback information within supportive environments that maximise the impact of feedback. Thus, we argue that using an empirically derived FTF can support an evidence-based approach to teacher reflection and thus contribute to the development of teacher (and student) feedback literacy. In this session participants will have the opportunity to use the framework to analyse authentic classroom data and discuss the potential of using such a framework for supporting teacher and student feedback literacy.

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