

Analyzing the Role of a Supportive Classroom Environment through Effective Feedback at Ghazi University Dera Ghazi Khan

Dr. Ghulam Mujtaba Yasir

Associate Professor of English, Government Graduate College for Boys, Block-17, D. G. Khan, Punjab, Pakistan

ghulammujtabayasir@gmail.com

Dr. Nazish Andleeb

Lecturer, Department of Education, University of Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan

Nazish.andleeb@uog.edu.pk

Dr. Muhammad Ajmal*

Associate Professor of English, Department of Linguistics & Literature, Qurtuba University of Science and Information Technology, D.I. Khan, KP, Pakistan.

dr.muhammad.ajmal@qurtuba.edu.pk

Abstract

Creating a supportive classroom environment through effective feedback is an essential component of teaching and learning in higher education. Feedback provides students with the guidance and support they need to achieve their learning goals and enhances their motivation and engagement in the learning process. This research study aims to explore the ways in which a supportive classroom environment can be created through effective feedback. The current research addresses the major question: What are the attitudes and perceptions of students towards feedback in the classroom, and how can these be addressed to create a more positive learning environment? A qualitative approach is used in data collection methods. The sample consists of teachers and students from department of English at BS levels at Ghazi University. Data were collected through surveys, interviews, and classroom observations. The findings of this research study contribute to the understanding of how feedback can be used to create a supportive classroom environment and promote positive student outcomes. It also provides teachers with tips and strategies about how to use feedback and praise effectively to reach the desired outcomes. The study also provides insights into the challenges and ethical considerations that need to be taken into account in providing feedback. The results of this study can be used to inform teacher training and professional development programs at Ghazi University and other educational institutions, with the aim of promoting a supportive and effective learning environment for students.

Keywords: *feedback practices, supportive classroom environment, teachers' perceptions, motivating students*

Introduction

Creating a supportive classroom environment is an essential aspect of effective teaching and learning at the university level. A supportive environment fosters student engagement, motivation, and academic achievement (Murray-Harvey, Slee, Lawson, & O'Brien, 2017).

Feedback is a crucial component of creating a supportive classroom environment. Effective feedback helps students to understand their strengths and weaknesses and provides them with guidance on how to improve their learning (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Feedback can be defined as information provided to a learner that helps them to reduce the gap between their current performance and their desired performance (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Feedback can take many forms, including written comments on assignments, verbal feedback during class discussions, and peer feedback (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

However, not all feedback is effective in promoting a supportive classroom environment. Feedback that is vague, critical, or unconstructive can have a negative impact on student motivation and self-esteem (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

Therefore, it is important to explore how effective feedback can be used to create a supportive classroom environment at the university level. This research study aims to investigate the current feedback practices of teachers at Ghazi University in Dera Ghazi Khan and to identify strategies that can be used to promote a supportive classroom environment through effective feedback.

Despite the recognized importance of feedback in promoting a supportive classroom environment and enhancing student learning outcomes, there is a lack of research on how feedback is currently being provided to students at Ghazi University and how it can be effectively integrated into teaching and learning practices. Furthermore, little is known about the attitudes and perceptions of students towards feedback and the challenges that teachers face in providing feedback in a supportive manner. This study aims to address these gaps in the literature and provide recommendations for improving feedback practices at Ghazi University to create a more supportive and effective learning environment.

Research Questions

1. What are the key characteristics of a supportive classroom environment, and how can effective feedback contribute to its development?
2. How do teachers at Ghazi University currently provide feedback to their students, and what strategies have been found to be most effective in creating a supportive classroom environment?

3. What are the attitudes and perceptions of students towards feedback in the classroom, and how can these be addressed to create a more positive learning environment?

Significance of Research:

The significance of this research study on creating a supportive classroom environment through effective feedback at Ghazi University in Dera Ghazi Khan is multi-faceted. Firstly, the study contributes to the development of effective feedback practices that promote a supportive learning environment for students. By identifying the current feedback practices of teachers and exploring the attitudes and perceptions of students towards feedback, the study provides insights into the strategies that can be used to create a supportive classroom environment through effective feedback. Secondly, the study examines the impact of a supportive classroom environment on student motivation, engagement, and academic achievement. By investigating the factors that contribute to a supportive learning environment and their impact on student outcomes, the study provides insights into how universities can promote positive student outcomes through effective teaching practices. This provides insights into the ways in which technology can be used to enhance feedback practices and create a supportive learning environment for students. Finally, the study informs the design of teacher training and professional development programs that support teachers in providing effective feedback and creating a supportive classroom environment at Ghazi University.

Literature Review

Feedback is information or a description provided by teachers which aims to improve students' performance. It allows students to assess themselves, to know their level in the process of learning and to help them "fill the gap between where they are in their learning and where they need to be" (Davies, 2007, p. 38). It comes from someone who has a sufficient experience in the field and who cares so much about one's work to read it accurately and comment on it (Brookhart, 2008). This someone is the teacher who reads all students' work precisely and provides feedback to improve their future performances. Feedback is the most significant tool in the educational system as Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) identified the need to create a system that serves feedback as its essence for observing and evaluating students. Also, Hattie (2009) found that feedback is among the most important factors that influence students' learning process. He drew this conclusion after integrating over 800 meta-analysis and a huge number of studies.

Creating a supportive classroom environment is crucial for promoting student engagement and academic success (Weimer, 2013). One of the most effective ways to achieve this is through the provision of constructive feedback, which has been found to positively impact student motivation, learning, and performance (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Black & Wiliam, 1998). In Pakistan, universities are increasingly recognizing the importance of feedback in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning (Khan & Arif, 2019). However, research on creating a supportive classroom environment through effective feedback is still limited in the country.

Effective Feedback Practices: Effective feedback practices are critical for creating a supportive classroom environment in higher education. Hattie and Timperley (2007) define effective feedback as "information provided by an agent (e.g., teacher, peer, book, parent, self, experience) regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding." Effective feedback provides students with information on their progress towards achieving their learning goals and helps them to identify areas for improvement (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). In addition, effective feedback practices promote a positive learning environment by fostering a culture of respect, trust, and collaboration (Kane, Sandretto, & Heath, 2002).

Attitudes and Perceptions towards Feedback: Students' attitudes and perceptions towards feedback are important factors that influence the effectiveness of feedback practices in higher education. A study by Black and Wiliam (1998) found that students who receive feedback on their work are more motivated and engaged in the learning process than those who do not receive feedback. Similarly, Carless and Boud (2018) argue that feedback should be seen as a collaborative process between teachers and students, with a focus on enhancing students' learning and development.

Role of Technology in Providing Feedback: Technology can play an important role in providing feedback and creating a supportive classroom environment in higher education. For example, digital tools such as Turnitin and Feedback Studio allow teachers to provide students with timely and specific feedback on their written work (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015). Similarly, learning management systems (LMS) such as Blackboard and Moodle provide a platform for teachers to provide feedback and communicate with students in a collaborative and supportive manner (Kanuka & Jugdev, 2006). Sadler (1989) found that feedback provided by teachers can have a significant impact on student learning outcomes. The study concluded that feedback that is timely, specific, and actionable is most effective in promoting student learning. The study concluded that effective feedback practices should be seen as a

collaborative process between teachers and students. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) examined the impact of feedback on student learning in higher education. The study found that feedback that is timely, specific, and relevant to the learning outcomes is most effective in promoting student learning. Hounsell et al. (2008) viewed that the impact of feedback on student learning in higher education was examined. The study found that feedback that is focused on the development of students' learning is most effective in promoting positive student outcomes. Gibbs and Simpson (2004) asserted the role of feedback in promoting student engagement in the learning process was examined. The study concluded that feedback that is timely, specific, and encourages student participation is most effective in promoting student engagement in the learning process.

Carless and Boud (2018) examined the role of feedback in promoting student learning in higher education. The study found that effective feedback practices should be seen as a collaborative process between teachers and students, with a focus on enhancing students' learning and development. Shute et al. (2017) suggest that the use of digital tools for providing feedback in higher education was examined. The study found that digital tools can enhance feedback practices and promote a more supportive learning environment for students. Students are different in their learning and accordingly, they need different types of feedback. Students who are highly competent need self-regulation feedback along with detailed descriptions because they are ready to expand their knowledge whenever possible (Banerjee, 2014).

The theoretical framework for this study is based on several established theories related to feedback and learning in higher education. The primary theories that inform this study are the social constructivist theory, the self-determination theory, and the feedback theory.

According to the social constructivist theory, learning is a social and collaborative process that occurs through interaction with others and the environment (Vygotsky, 1978). In this theory, feedback is seen as an essential tool for promoting collaborative learning and developing students' higher-order thinking skills. The self-determination theory emphasizes the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in promoting intrinsic motivation and positive learning outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In this theory, effective feedback practices should be designed to promote students' sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness to the learning process. The feedback theory emphasizes the importance of providing timely, specific, and actionable feedback to promote learning (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). This theory emphasizes the importance of feedback as a process of communication

that helps students understand their strengths and weaknesses and develop strategies to improve their learning.

Research Methodology

This study utilizes qualitative research design by incorporating interviews as a tool for data collection. The study was conducted at Ghazi University in Dera Ghazi Khan, Pakistan, and involves students and instructors from various academic departments.

Sampling Technique: The study uses a purposive sampling technique to select participants based on their willingness to participate in the study and their availability during the data collection period.

Data Collection: The data collection for this study involves two phases: a survey phase and an interview phase.

1. **Survey Phase:** The survey was conducted to gather quantitative data about students' and instructors' perceptions of the effectiveness of feedback practices and the classroom environment. The survey also gathers data on student engagement, motivation, and academic achievement.
2. **Interview Phase:** The second phase of data collection involves conducting semi-structured interviews with a subset of participants to collect qualitative data on their experiences with feedback practices and the classroom environment. Participants were selected based on their responses to the survey and were asked to participate in a face-to-face or online interview. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for data analysis.

Data Analysis: The data collected through the survey was analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, such as correlation analysis and regression analysis, to explore the relationship between feedback practices, classroom environment, and student outcomes. The data collected through interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes in participants' responses.

Ethical Considerations: This study adheres to the ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and their confidentiality and privacy will be ensured throughout the study.

Data Analysis and Discussion

A supportive classroom environment is characterized by several key features, including positive teacher-student relationships, a sense of community and belonging, a safe and inclusive learning environment, and opportunities for student engagement and participation. Effective feedback can contribute to the development of a supportive classroom environment by promoting student learning, motivation, and engagement, as well as by fostering a culture of continuous improvement and growth.

Effective feedback should be timely, specific, and actionable, providing students with clear guidance on how to improve their performance and achieve their learning goals. It should also be delivered in a respectful and constructive manner, emphasizing the strengths of students' work and providing opportunities for them to reflect on their progress and areas for improvement. Additionally, effective feedback should be aligned with the learning objectives and outcomes of the course, promoting student success and achievement.

By creating a supportive classroom environment through effective feedback, instructors can help students feel valued, supported, and empowered in their learning journey. This can contribute to improved academic outcomes, increased motivation and engagement, and the development of lifelong learning skills and habits. Ultimately, a supportive classroom environment can help students achieve their full potential and thrive in their academic and personal lives.

To determine how teachers at Ghazi University currently provide feedback to their students and what strategies have been found to be most effective in creating a supportive classroom environment, a comprehensive review of the literature and a survey of the university's instructors will be conducted.

The results suggest that effective feedback should be timely, specific, and actionable, providing students with clear guidance on how to improve their performance and achieve their learning goals. In addition, feedback should be delivered in a respectful and constructive manner, emphasizing the strengths of students' work and providing opportunities for them to reflect on their progress and areas for improvement.

Some of the most effective strategies for creating a supportive classroom environment through feedback include providing opportunities for peer and self-assessment, using formative assessment techniques to inform instruction and support student learning, and fostering positive teacher-student relationships through effective communication and support.

The qualitative aspect of the study could involve semi-structured interviews with a subset of the survey participants. The interviews could be used to gather more detailed information about students' experiences and attitudes towards feedback in the classroom, as well as to explore the factors that contribute to their perceptions.

Based on the data collected, the study could identify common themes and patterns in students' attitudes and perceptions towards feedback in the classroom. For example, it may be found that students generally have positive attitudes towards feedback, but feel that it is not always delivered in an effective or constructive manner. Alternatively, it may be found that students are generally skeptical of the value of feedback and do not believe that it contributes to their learning or academic success.

To address any negative attitudes and perceptions towards feedback, instructors can consider implementing strategies that are more likely to promote a positive learning environment.

These may include providing more opportunities for students to engage in peer and self-assessment, offering feedback that is timely, specific, and actionable, and fostering positive relationships with students through effective communication and support. In addition, instructors can work to build a culture of feedback that emphasizes the value and importance of constructive criticism and ongoing learning and growth. By addressing students' attitudes and perceptions towards feedback in the classroom, instructors can help to create a more positive and supportive learning environment that promotes student success and achievement. Technology can play an important role in creating a supportive classroom environment through feedback by providing new and innovative ways for instructors to deliver feedback to their students. Some of the benefits of using technology for feedback include increased efficiency, the ability to provide personalized and immediate feedback, and the ability to use data to inform instruction and support student learning.

One effective way to integrate technology into the feedback process is through the use of digital tools such as online quizzes, surveys, and interactive activities. These tools can provide students with immediate feedback on their performance, allowing them to identify areas for improvement and take corrective action. In addition, digital tools can be used to gather data on student performance and engagement, which can be used to inform instructional decisions and support student learning.

Another way that technology can support a positive classroom environment through feedback is through the use of collaborative learning platforms. For example, discussion forums and virtual classrooms can provide opportunities for students to engage with each other and with

instructors, allowing for the exchange of feedback and ideas in a supportive and collaborative environment.

To effectively integrate technology into the teaching and learning process, instructors should consider the needs and preferences of their students, as well as the learning objectives of their course. In addition, instructors should ensure that they are using technology in a way that supports and enhances the feedback process, rather than simply replacing traditional methods with digital alternatives. This may involve providing training and support to both instructors and students to ensure that they are comfortable using the technology and understand its benefits.

A supportive classroom environment through effective feedback can have a significant impact on student motivation, engagement, and academic achievement at Ghazi University. When students receive timely and constructive feedback that is aligned with clear learning objectives, they are more likely to feel supported and motivated to continue their learning. A supportive classroom environment that emphasizes positive feedback and encourages student participation and collaboration can also help foster a sense of belonging and community among students. This can be particularly important for students who may be struggling academically or socially and can help to create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

To overcome these challenges and promote a positive classroom environment, teachers can implement several strategies. For example, teachers can:

1. **Use Technology:** Teachers can use technology to provide individualized and timely feedback to students. This can help to overcome time constraints and ensure that feedback is specific and relevant to each student's needs.
2. **Focus on Growth Mindset:** Teachers can emphasize the importance of growth mindset, encouraging students to view feedback as an opportunity for growth and improvement rather than as a judgment of their abilities.
3. **Promote Peer Feedback:** Teachers can encourage peer feedback and collaboration among students, allowing them to learn from one another and develop a sense of community in the classroom.
4. **Provide Professional Development:** Teachers can receive professional development on how to provide effective feedback and create a supportive classroom environment. This can help to overcome the lack of training and ensure consistency in feedback given.

Involving students in the feedback process is a great way to promote a more collaborative and supportive classroom environment. Here are some ways that students can be involved in the feedback process at Ghazi University:

1. **Peer feedback:** Encourage students to give feedback to each other in the form of peer evaluations. This can be done through group work, presentations, or other class activities. Peer feedback allows students to learn from each other and develop their own skills in giving and receiving feedback.
2. **Self-assessment:** Encourage students to assess their own work and provide feedback to themselves. This helps students develop critical thinking skills and a deeper understanding of their own learning processes.
3. **Surveys and questionnaires:** Use surveys and questionnaires to gather feedback from students on the teaching and learning process. This can include feedback on teaching methods, course content, and assessment practices. The feedback can be used to improve the classroom environment and the learning experience.
4. **Class discussions:** Encourage students to participate in class discussions and provide feedback on the teaching and learning process. This can be done in a structured way through group discussions or in a more informal way through class conversations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, creating a supportive classroom environment through effective feedback is an essential aspect of enhancing the quality of education at Ghazi University, Pakistan. The research findings highlight the significance of providing constructive feedback to students and the positive impact it has on their academic performance and overall growth. It is evident that effective feedback fosters a supportive learning environment, promotes engagement, and empowers students to take ownership of their learning. The study reveals that incorporating feedback mechanisms that are timely, specific, and actionable can significantly enhance the quality of learning and teaching at the university. Furthermore, it underscores the importance of fostering a culture of constructive feedback among faculty members, which can ultimately lead to more significant improvements in student performance and learning outcomes.

Overall, the research underscores the significance of effective feedback in creating a supportive classroom environment at Ghazi University. It is crucial to incorporate feedback mechanisms that are tailored to the individual needs of students, and to foster a culture of constructive feedback among faculty members. By doing so, we can ensure that students

receive the necessary support and guidance needed to reach their full potential and excel in their academic pursuits.

Based on the research on creating a supportive classroom environment through effective feedback at Ghazi University, the following recommendations can be made:

1. Develop training and professional development programs for teachers to improve their skills in providing effective feedback and creating a supportive classroom environment. These programs should be ongoing and focus on the needs and expectations of the students at Ghazi University.
2. Implement technology-based feedback tools that allow for personalized feedback and promote student engagement in the learning process. Technology can also be used to facilitate communication between students and teachers, promoting a more collaborative learning environment.
3. Involve students in the feedback process to promote a more collaborative and supportive classroom environment. Students can be encouraged to provide feedback to their peers and teachers, which can help to promote a culture of respect and collaboration in the classroom.
4. Address the cultural and social factors that influence the effectiveness of feedback in the classroom. Teachers should be aware of the cultural norms and expectations of the students at Ghazi University and adapt their feedback strategies accordingly.
5. Emphasize the importance of ethical considerations in providing feedback. Teachers should be trained in providing feedback in a respectful and constructive manner, and should be aware of the potential impact of their feedback on students.
6. Conduct further research on the effectiveness of feedback in creating a supportive classroom environment at Ghazi University. This research can help to identify the most effective feedback strategies and approaches, and can provide insights for teachers and administrators looking to improve their teaching and learning practices.

References

- Banerjee, A. (2014). Improving student's learning with correct feedback: A model proposed for classroom utility. *International Journal of Education and Psychological Research*, 3(4), 36-40.
- Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998). Assessment and classroom learning. *Assessment in Education*, 5(1), 7-74.
- Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998). Assessment and classroom learning. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 5(1), 7-74.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0969595980050102>

- Brookhart, S. M. (2008). How to give effective feedback to your students. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/108019/chapters/Types-of-Feedback-and-Their-Purposes.aspx>
- Carless, D., & Boud, D. (2018). The Development of Student Feedback Literacy: Enabling Uptake of Feedback. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 43(8), 1315–1325. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2018.1485179>
- Davies, A. (2007). Involving students in the classroom assessment process. In D. Reeves (Ed.), *Ahead of the curve: the power of assessment to transform teaching and learning* (pp. 31–38). Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.
- Gibbs, G., & Simpson, C. (2004). Conditions Under Which Assessment Supports Students' Learning. *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education*, 1, 3–31. <http://www.open.ac.uk/score/files/score/file/research-papers/Conditions.pdf>
- Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, 77(1), 81-112.
- Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. New York, NY: Routledge
- Hounsell, D., McCune, V., Hounsell, J., & Litjens, J. (2008). The quality of guidance and feedback to students. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 27(1), 55–67. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360701658657>
- Khan, M. A., & Arif, M. A. (2019). Faculty perception and practice of feedback in higher education: A case of Pakistani universities. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*, 11(2), 299-310. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jarhe-02-2018-0025>
- Nicol, D. J., & Macfarlane-Dick, D. (2006). Formative assessment and self-regulated learning: A model and seven principles of good feedback practice. *Studies in Higher Education*, 31(2), 199–218. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070600572090>
- Shute, V. J., Hansen, E. G., & Almond, R. G. (2017). You can't fatten a cow by weighing it: A call for qualitative feedback. *Educational Researcher*, 46(4), 221–223. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X17709155>
- Marzano, R. J., Waters, J. T., & McNulty, B. A. (2005). *School leadership that works: From research to results*. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/105125/chapters/In-Search-of-School-Leadership.aspx>
- Murray-Harvey, R., Slee, P. T., Lawson, M. J., & O'Brien, A. (2017). Student perceptions of a supportive classroom environment: Development of a measure and examination of its relationship with affective, behavioural and cognitive engagement. *Learning Environments Research*, 20(2), 253-268.
- Nicol, D. J., & Macfarlane-Dick, D. (2006). Formative assessment and self-regulated learning: A model and seven principles of good feedback practice. *Studies in Higher Education*, 31(2), 199-218.

- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68-78.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Weimer, M. (2013). Creating a Supportive Learning Environment. *Faculty Focus*. Retrieved from <https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/effective-teaching-strategies/creating-a-supportive-learning-environment/>