

**The impact of teacher communication on students interpretation of feedback within a
Secondary English Classroom**

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The supervisory committee met with the candidate for a final evaluation in which all aspects of the candidate's program were reviewed. The committee's assessment and recommendations are:

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- ✓ Degree should be awarded

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Abstract

This Action Research Project examined how teacher communication can influence students' understanding of feedback and their abilities as students in a secondary English classroom. This study is grounded in Paula Freire's theory of dialogic communication. This study explored the roles of communication that is clear, supportive, and intentional from a teacher to their students. These all impact students' perceptions on how they see themselves as learners. This study and research was done in a ninth grade English classroom at a public high school in Eugene, Oregon. This study utilized qualitative action research.

Data was collected through multiple sources including exit tickets, five-minute essay journals, classroom observations, and reflective teaching practices. Patterns were able to be seen through open coding and analysis of themes. The two patterns were: (1) the importance of clear and specific feedback, and (2) positive students' responses to clear and supportive communication. Students showed an increase in engagement, participation, and confidence when they were communicated with clear feedback with the opportunity to have clarification. unclear communication resulted in confusion and a misunderstanding of teacher feedback

All of these findings show that the way educators communicate is now just about stating information but is instructional practice that directly influences students' belonging, voice, and their understanding of themselves within the classroom. This study will highlight the need for intentional feedback practices, dialogue, and positive communication within a supportive classroom environment. Educators should have increased opportunities for students dialogue, feedback clarification, and communication that builds students interpretation of feedback in the classroom.

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To my parents, Trevor and Sarah, Mom and Dad, thank you so much. I know having your son, his wife, and now two kids move back in for a one year masters program is a lot. I am

grateful for your sacrifice while I have been able to pursue my dreams of becoming a teacher. Thank you for helping me support my family not only financially during this time, but thank you for the emotional help and regulation when things may have been rough and hard at times. I could not have completed this journey through my masters without you. I want to thank any of my fellow educators, and friends and family. The support and encouragement I have received throughout this process has been incredible. I am so blessed to have so many wonderful people in my life who have helped guide me and gave me wisdom and encouragement. I believe that all of these people stated the reason that I was able to strive and persevere through this degree. I am honored to have met so many people throughout this process and have had the privilege to have made new friends in my cohort who are not only future colleagues of mine, but have been wonderful people to go through this process of writing an Action Research Paper. I could not have chosen a better group of individuals to go along this journey with.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

For a long time, I thought my teachers understood me and how I saw myself. I didn't realize until years later that their words were subconsciously shaping how I saw myself. Effective communication is something that is a learned skill, but it allows students to be understood and not just take in words or say words for no apparent reason. I found that when teachers are the ones holding power and authority, the weight of what they say can be difficult for a student or young person to both understand and filter. What an educator says can often be what the student believes about themselves. I was the type of student who felt more comfortable talking to adults than my peers. This would bleed into school, and I would always have really good conversations with my teachers. I would also be incredibly helpful. This would continue until I got into high school. This all changed when I entered my sophomore year of band, and we got a new band director. He would not choose me for a certain part or say that I am not good enough. The tricky part was that he put me in positions of authority, including one of the Drum Majors. I felt very misunderstood when he would tell me that I was not good enough for the college band, for example, or that I needed to do better on my instrument. There was one day in high school when I was speaking with a friend, and they had told me that they had talked with the band director about me. He was asking how I was as a musician, and my band director said, "Isaac is an excellent musician and is one of the best in the school". When I was told that he said this, I was completely taken aback and could not understand how this was true. I felt misunderstood by him at this point even more, and I had to address the situation because the negative comments had torn my self-confidence down for years.

This event affected me because I had felt bad about myself and that I was less than, but ultimately, I was mainly upset by mixed messages. I had always been good at my craft, and all of a sudden, I was being told that I was not even close to being good enough. As a future teacher, I learned that my words can have a great impact and cause confusion. Clarity is key in these situations because they allow us as educators to make sure what we are saying best impacts our students and does not negatively impact them. I would have handled this conversation with a much more positive tone by stating the good things I did and how we could even take it to the next level, because I am capable. The term capable shows students that they can do what is being asked of them in full confidence.

I addressed it with my band director, and he told me he used this tactic as a way to make me even better and that I really was a great musician. He told me it was the tactics of negging, as well as motivation through negative comments, to push myself even further. This situation, to this day, I think about and reflect on how I was misunderstood in the thing I love most, which is music. This was one of those that I felt misunderstood and not heard by my band director or even myself in my confidence, until I could discern that what I was being told was not what was being relayed to others. This solidified the idea that teachers are ultimately the ones who hold power and authority, and as a result of this, have an extreme weight on a student's ability to process information. This can affect a student's self-confidence and overall relationship with the teacher.

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Having this experience made me think about communication, especially in the classroom, in a unique way. When I look back at the story, my band director never intended to destroy my own confidence. That is ultimately what happened because of the way I interpreted his feedback. My interpretation was without clarity or context. The mixed messages I received during that time

weren't simply confusing, but they created a story in my mind about my own worth. This made me realize that teachers and educators are not meant to simply deliver content. Educators and teachers shape the identity of their students. We even shape a student's self-efficacy. We are able to influence what students say about themselves and how they feel about themselves.

This is why I believe, as an educator, that communication is not just a small, unimportant skill to have. Communication is a major pedagogical tool between teachers and students. It is powerful, and it can either create a sense of belonging or even affect a student's overall self-confidence. A student can walk away from an experience with a teacher, saying something confused, unseen, and without understanding, and all this leads to a shutdown in learning. The classroom should not be a space where students are repeatedly trying to understand what the teacher "really meant". The classroom environment should be a space that is honest and transparent. This creates success in the classroom. When I think of myself as a future English teacher, communication is key. If I personally do not have clear communication, I will have created the same cycle of misunderstanding and disconnection that I went through in high school.

I want my classroom to be a space where communication is used as a way to build confidence and not break it down. I am a full believer in the idea that if a student feels understood, genuinely, they are going to be more willing to ask questions. It will also make the classroom a place for students to share their ideas and have a deeper engagement in their learning. We must begin this with one student at a time, creating a stronger classroom community. If a student does not trust their teachers and feels like what they say is not valued or understood, they may not interact with the class or have limited instances of interaction. This may look like answering fewer questions. Writing will be shortened, and their confidence will be

nonexistent. Students will keep both their interactions and thinking limited because they will be afraid of feeling embarrassed or that their answer is not valued, even if it is not correct. These ideas remind me of the story I shared about the way my band teacher communicated ineffectively with me. It is a constant reminder and example of how students do not automatically know what a teacher thinks of a student simply based on limited interactions. Students simply know what a teacher says and what verbiage and tone were used by the teacher. I believe that communication needs to be intentional in all circumstances. It is a way to form equity with our students because of past experiences students have had within their schools, good and bad. Many students' confidence and even mine at times have been broken down by school, society, and even different systemic factors that are simply not in the students' control. These interactions are not simply with my experiences alone. Freire's banking model demonstrates a structure that exists in many American school classrooms. Authority is centered around the teacher, and the students are expected to be passive stakeholders. Unclear or emotionally harmful feedback is common in these systems that do not prioritize relationships. This gives emphasis on miscommunication and how feedback can shape one's identity and is created through these educational practices.

This situation aligns with my ARP because of the idea of communication as educators and how it can impact students' self-perception in strong ways. The goal of this project is to look into how honest, intentional, and clear communication from teachers can affect how students build confidence, engagement within the classroom, and help students own their own learning. My personal experience above is exactly why this issue matters to me most. I know I would have benefited from clear communication between my band director and me. This research project will help me better understand what practices in the classroom can create and support stronger

teacher-to-student communication. I will also be able to see how these continuous practices can shape a classroom's culture and how they create both voice and identity for the students.

When a teacher makes constant negative criticism, it can result in a sense of never being good enough in the student's mind. If an educator were to use their comments with kindness and to encourage the students to grow in what they are doing, this is where we see transformative work. Students can only be oppressed for so long before it ultimately kills their self-confidence. It is significantly easier to transform into something with positive reinforcement than to transform from negative reinforcement that was oppressive. It is up to us as educators to decide how we deal with our students and be uplifting and transformative toward them, and not oppressive.

Freire critiques what he calls the *Banking Model of Education*, where teachers are seen as those who are the knowledge holders and the students are seen as passive recipients who hold and store information. Students in this model are not invited into dialogue or meaning-making. This gives power to unequal relationships, which denies students the ability to develop their voice and their own agency. Freire asserts that communication is not simply about talking. Freire explains, "Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of a profound love... it is an act of creation" (Freire, 2014, p.89). Dialogue is something that requires listening, humility, reflection, and being willing to change your own understanding based on what the other person states. I believe this is essential in my research because there is validity in how they interpret what a teacher says to them. Oftentimes, interpretation can reveal something important about how their teacher communicates. When looking at Freire's theory, it is important to realize that teachers should not assume that the misunderstanding is simply the student's fault. A teacher needs to understand that they will need to have self-reflection and revise the way they communicate

within their dialogue. In my ARP, it will be an example in which our teachers can build reflective communication practices in their classrooms. This is where both a student and a teacher can adjust, clarify, and create meaning together to protect the student's confidence in the classroom.

Freire's theory is essential for the study because it makes communication be seen as something that is humanizing. My goal is not to research communication to simply improve academic outcomes in the classroom. I am going to be studying communication to understand the dialogue between teachers and students and how it impacts who the students believe they are. Freire is a supporter of the idea that the classroom is a place where students learn how to speak, how to listen, and change the narrative that they hold about themselves. This is why Freire is the correct theory for my ARP. The framework that he provides gives a philosophical foundation for building communication practices. These practices build confidence, strengthen students' identity, and simply create a classroom culture where every student feels heard and seen.

Connection to InTASC Standards

The instructional goals align with the following InTASC standards. InTASC stands for Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium. It is a framework that outlines what effective teaching looks like in practice. These skills give perspective on the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of teachers and how they should demonstrate them to support students' learning as well as their development and engagement while id

The Acton Research process serves as a solid foundation for all three InTASC standards addressed within this study. Throughout the process of planning, observing, and reflecting, I have been able to see how communication practices can influence students' understanding, and interpretations of feedback. The purpose of this study was to not only improve my own practices in the classroom, but it is also a structured way to collect and analyze students' voice and

experience through communication and how it applies to the classroom learning environment.

Due to all of this, the goal of this Action Research Project aligns well with the InTASC standards one, three, and six. The focus will be to focus on students growth, participation, and a meaningful experience in the classroom.

- **Standard One: Learner Development**

This standard is used to focus on how students grow in their emotional, cognitive, and academic abilities. It requires teachers to support this developmental growth.

1(d) The teacher understands how learning occurs--how learners construct knowledge, acquire skills, and develop disciplined thinking processes--and knows how to use instructional strategies that promote student learning. (p.16)

- **Standard Three: Learning Environments**

This standard prompts teachers to build a classroom environment and culture that supports safety, collaboration, positive interactions, and motivated students. 3(i) The teacher understands the relationship between motivation and engagement and knows how to design learning experiences using strategies that build learner self-direction and ownership of learning. (p.21)

- **Standard Six: Assessment**

This standard is focused on using assessment as a way to show growth, reflection, and understanding, and not simply measurement. 6(n) The teacher understands the positive impact of effective descriptive feedback for learners and knows a variety of strategies for communicating this feedback. (p. 30)

I plan on using InTASC Standard One by creating communication practices that protect our students' identities and confidence. My ARP is all focused on how unclear feedback can damage students' own self-belief. With all this being said, I will implement different classroom routines for students who can clarify meaning and ask questions about their feedback. This is all done before they are able to internalize it. An example of this would be after major assignments. Students could have a short conference or written reflection where they are able to explain what the feedback means to them to make sure they interpreted it correctly. This supports their development because it's going to prevent misunderstandings from becoming identity. It also acknowledges that students are constantly creating their own beliefs about themselves. Communication has a large amount of power in that development. When using communication or routines that help protect my sense of confidence, I can promote academic growth as healthy, which all align with Standard One.

Standard three is achievable by creating an environment in the classroom where communication is a back-and-forth movement where students feel safe to ask clarifying questions. My classroom will have structured dialogue practices. Some of these could include whole-class debriefs of an assignment after general feedback or even peer groups for clarification. Students in these moments will be able to explain how they interpreted feedback. When these practices are used, a community is built through shared understanding and meaning. The goal is for students to know that asking questions and clarifying are not weaknesses, but they are strengths and even a form of engagement. If a student feels free to communicate about a confusion or misunderstanding, they are an active participant in the idea of meaning in the classroom. This is the main idea of a collaborative environment within Standard Three.

Standard six will be met by using assessment as a way to show reflection and dialogue, and not measurement of skill. I want my students to be able to interpret feedback in a healthy way that is not just about passively receiving grades. After an assessment such as a test or essay, students will be able to write a one-paragraph response to what the teacher's comments were and if they had any questions within them. I will then, as the teacher, respond to the students to clarify any misunderstanding that may have occurred. This will create a two-way communication system. Students will set up different personal communication goals for each of our units. An example may be “ask at least one question to clarify if I do not understand my feedback.” This practice helps students evaluate their own growth and engagement with assessments as a shared process between the teacher and the student. Standard Six is seen here because it uses feedback and assessment as a tool to engage students in their own learning development. It also supports the core of my ARP, which is to build communication that is clear and direct, that does not hurt the students.

Summary

My own experiences in education shaped me to be a teacher who values clear communication that can be used to build students' confidence. My personal experience in high school band taught me the true power that a teacher's feedback can hold. It showed me how it truly can shape the way a student sees themselves. I understand that communication is not just about information, but it is about identity. With all this being said, I plan to have a classroom structure where a dialogue is to be reciprocated, clarified, and honest.

Freire's writing on dialogue and the shared understanding of meaning provides a strong theoretical foundation for my study. It aligned with my goal and desire to create teaching routines that protect and support my students' confidence. The InTASC standards I used

emphasize learner development, collaborative, classroom rapport, and using assessment as a way for communication and not simply right or wrong. When combined, these ideas and frameworks guide my action research project in ways that strengthen students' identities in an intentional way.

My overall goal is to create an English classroom where all my students feel safe to ask questions. They should feel safe to clarify the meaning of my feedback and interpret my feedback healthily. This will be done through constant opportunities to reflect, dialogue, and communicate through conversation. I am a strong believer that students can experience increased confidence in both themselves and their own learning. My chapter 2 will move into current research literature to look at how teachers' communication practices can impact confidence, identity, and engagement within their own classroom learning.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

The main focus of my action research project is how teacher communication influences students' own self-perception, confidence, and willingness to engage in their own learning. In Chapter 1, I talked about how unclear communication can lead students to internalize harmful assumptions about their own abilities in the classroom. Intentional and supportive communication can, on the other hand, create a strong sense of belonging and academic ownership. The main purpose I have for my actual research project is to look into classroom communication practices that not only build trust, but also clarify meaning and make sure students feel confident in who they are as students.

To begin my research on this topic, I reviewed literature that examines the role of communication within teaching and learning. I searched for peer-reviewed studies through the Western Oregon University online library. I use this so my research will be credible and relevant. I filtered out all different types of articles, so I would only see peer-reviewed articles. My search terms were *communication, educational, teacher, student dialogue, feedback, and student feedback*. I decided to use these terms because I felt that they directly aligned with the main purpose of my action research project. This is that communication is used as a relational tool and feedback as a way to influence students and the impact they have with their writing. I chose articles that address communication methods, dialogue-based instruction, and the effects of feedback on both students' confidence and engagement. All of these articles combined helped me build a better understanding of how communication not only shapes learning outcomes, but also how different classroom practices can grow a student's confidence in their own learning.

Albalawi, Hanan, and Muhammad Nadeem. "Exploring the Impact of Ineffective Formal Communication between Teachers and Students: A Case Study of Mustaqbal University and Jubail University College, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia." *English Language Teaching (Toronto)*, vol. 13, no. 3, 2020b, p. 68, doi:10.5539/elt.v13n3p68.

This article looks at common barriers to effective communication between teachers and students at two different Saudi Arabian Universities. The two different universities were Jubail University and Mustaqbal University. They used a qualitative research method using questionnaires and online focus groups from 84 students and 10 different faculty members. The data shows that 39% of those who responded said that ineffective communication was the main barrier to harmful communication. In the study, 44% of those also said that the issues with communication resulted in lower student performance. Finally, 17% of the students saw it lead to weaker engagement. The study concluded that

ineffective communication disrupted the learning process within the students' environments. Researchers suggested having improved teaching methods and stronger motivation. Researchers in the study also suggested professional development for the instructors to create stronger communication in the classroom. This article impacted my own understanding of teacher-to-student communication because it reinforced the idea of how clear, supportive, and responsive communication leads to student success. As a future English teacher, I need to be intentional in the ways I give instruction and check for understanding. The study shows that communication is not simply about what is being spoken, but how it involves motivation in the environment. I felt that the strengths of the article were between students and faculty. The data offered a balanced view of communication within the school setting. The study could have provided more details of different classroom interventions and clearer guidance for how teachers can improve communication in different practical ways. The author doesn't mention strategies such as group work, activities, and support structures; they omit details to fully explain how these approaches can be used when students face specific barriers within communication. I wanted the directions that could be used for future research, would be exploring how these strategies function within the classroom context, and see how teachers can adapt these to meet students' diverse needs. There could also be a further investigation into the role of technology. Within the idea of a modern instructional tool, technology allows for things such as targeted feedback, annotations, and continuous communication. These all build students' confidence and reduce miscommunication over time.

and Jubail University College, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.” *English Language Teaching (Toronto)*, vol. 13, no. 3, 2020a, p. 68, doi:10.5539/elt.v13n3p68.

This article looks at cultural transitional challenges that are experienced by international students, specifically within higher education settings. It looked at how there are adjustment difficulties and how they can affect students, economic success, and emotional well-being. The authors look at how students from different cultural backgrounds struggle, often in inner school settings or universities with little to no institutional support around them. The researchers collected data for this qualitative research study through qualitative interviews. This was done with a select group of international students who were asked about communication barriers, cultural shock, and difficulties connecting with their professors and peers. The study analyzed how the stories create a comment team about what makes a student transition successful or if it's going to be stressful. It was clear that language barriers, lack of social connection, and being unfamiliar with the new academic expectations were major causes of the students' struggle. Researchers found that strong communication amongst faculty and being connected with peers would reduce student anxiety and help them adjust to the new setting. Researchers recommended that universities increase their cultural awareness by training their educators in how to communicate with their international students. Students in a way that supports them. This article impacted me because it helped me understand culture, identity, and belonging, and how these factors influence the way students participate in communicating with their instructor about assignments. This study gives me a greater understanding that my communication style, tone, and expectations are either going to strengthen or discourage my students. It is important that my classroom feels like a safe space where students can take risks and learn from each other. The

biggest strength of this article is that it includes authentic student voices. One limitation of the article is that it does not include detailed examples of specific instructional strategies that could be used in the classroom lessons. Due to this, a direction for my own learning would be to explore different implementation models, such as sentence stems and culturally responsive grouping practices. The article does strengthen my understanding of communication and does impact my students as well as those entering a new learning environment. I will need to research more to better understand how to translate these insights into my daily instruction.

Rathel, Jeanna M., et al. "Increasing Induction-Level Teachers' Positive-to-Negative Communication Ratio and Use of Behavior-Specific Praise Through E-Mailed Performance Feedback and Its Effect on Students' Task Engagement." *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, vol. 16, no. 4, 2014, pp. 219–33, doi:10.1177/1098300713492856.

The article also looks at how Weather improves communication, leading to a student's academic success and engagement in the classroom. This is for students with disabilities. The main focus of this article was whether email performance feedback can increase teachers' negative communication ratio, and how they use behavior-specific communication. The negative communication ratio is how much negative communication someone received before they received positive communication. The researchers in the article used a multiple baseline design. The research was dynamic, with special educational teachers who work with students who have emotional and behavioral disorders, intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities with their development, and different learning disabilities. The teachers in the study were observed four times a week, and the intervention was done with email performance feedback given by those who were

doing the research. The teachers were in charge of creating the data for the researchers for feedback. Within this feedback, educators were given corrective notes, graphs, and examples of specific praise they could give to students, for example. This would analyze their negative feedback and positive feedback. How students receive the feedback, about what they have been learning in class,s and their on-task behavior, was also recorded during this time. After receiving emailed performance feedback, three out of four teachers had immediate and drastic improvements with their positive communication behaviors. There was a large decrease in negative behaviors and the communication that comes with it. Researchers have a recommendation of a positive-to-negative communication ratio of five to one. Three out of four teachers exceeded this goal and were able to sustain it for a significant amount of time afterwards. There was also an increase in behavior-specific praise within both academic and social behaviors. The engagement from students within their tasks also increased and was more stable during different interventions. All of these results combined showed that emailed performance feedback to teachers was effective. A major strength of this article is that it uses real classroom materials that practitioners can deploy immediately. This would be done with emailed feedback and self-reflection journals that I am modifying, so that, in return, I can do this part independently. The approach that the article took was realistic and attainable. The article included visual graphs, which made the data easier to understand. One limitation of the article is that it does not fully explore how teacher-to-student trust can influence how effective student praise is. A direction for future research could possibly be examining how relational trust can interact with behavior-specific praise and how it may or may not strengthen the impact on positive communication. The article does speak

to the fact that small communication shifts can improve student engagement. As I continue to think about my practice, I want to be intentional about how I use positive reinforcement as well as behavior-specific praise in my classroom. It would be impactful to look at how trust and classroom communication can influence a student's learning.

Khojasteh, Laleh, et al. "Comparing Teacher E-Feedback, AI Feedback, and Hybrid Feedback in Enhancing EFL Writing Skills." *Technology in Language Teaching & Learning*, vol. 7, no. 3, 2025, p. 102626, doi:10.29140/tltl.v7n3.102626.

This article looked at the effectiveness of three different types of feedback on improving our English language learners' writing skills. Researchers looked at teachers' feedback, AI-based feedback, and hybrid feedback, which uses both AI and teacher feedback. The purpose of the study was to look at and determine which of these feedback methods supported writing performance the most for intermediate English language learners. This study was a randomized controlled trial. This was done with both Pre and post-test. It involved 88 adult intermediate-level ELL learners enrolled in writing courses. Students were randomly assigned to one of three different groups. These groups were teacher feedback, AI feedback, or a hybrid of both. Researchers evaluated students' writing using rubrics that assessed task achievement, grammar accuracy, and lexical resources. When looking at the results, there were significant differences among the groups in the students' overall writing involvement. The hybrid feedback group outperformed both the AI-only and teacher-only groups. The students who received AI feedback improved in their vocab. The hybrid model led to the greatest increase in the achievement of tasks, coherence, and accuracy with grammar. Since students were also in the hybrid group, they said that they had less anxiety and more confidence in their own writing. Overall, the study demonstrates that combining human and AI feedback provided the most

comprehensive support for students' writing and their development in it. Feedback in this area focuses on what the right and wrong answer is, as well as communication being the real human explanation for how to grow that AI cannot achieve. This article gave me a new perspective as a future teacher with the increase of AI tools that can meaningfully assist with different writing instructions. It is clear to me that they work best when paired with meaningful human interaction. Personally, I know that even the curriculum provided by my school district uses initial AI for feedback, but allows for additional feedback from the teachers themselves. This all shows me that feedback is less about correcting errors and more about increasing students' confidence and their own independence. This article offered direct evidence that technology can be used to support teachers if used correctly. When I think about this critically, there should be more exploration on how AI can be used ethically and effectively, while teachers can maintain their role in building relationships within the classroom, they can also deepen the students' learning.

Iaconelli, Ryan, and Eric M. Anderman. "Classroom Goal Structures and Communication Style: The Role of Teacher Immediacy and Relevance-Making in Students' Perceptions of the Classroom." *Social Psychology of Education*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2021, pp. 37–58, doi:10.1007/s11218-021-09609-y.

This article looked at teachers' communication styles of both verbal and nonverbal behaviors. It looked at how it influenced students' perceptions of the goals of feedback and instruction within high school health classrooms. The overall purpose was to figure out whether teachers who make learning relevant personally or communicate quickly promote greater academic performance with a stronger focus and higher motivation. Researchers collected data from high school students enrolled in their required health classes. Students would analyze and measure their teachers' verbal and nonverbal urgency

within lessons and feedback. They also look at the relevance of lessons and how they were perceived within the classroom goals. This study uses multilevel modeling techniques to examine relationships among the different variables. The main finding of the study was that when teachers used high verbal urgency, students had a stronger mastery goal. When urgency was low, even if the relevance of the topic was high, students were more likely to avoid the actual goal within the classroom. This means they were motivated to avoid failure and not pursue their own learning. Researchers concluded that teacher communication styles play a large role in shaping students' motivation in the classroom climate. This is done by either encouraging engagement or increasing avoidance, which ultimately lowers learning in the classroom. This article showed how motivation is not only about content, but also about how teachers connect with their students. If I, as a teacher, communicate with warmth and make the curriculum meaningful, students should be more eager to learn. These are especially relevant in mandatory classes, such as health or English. I felt like a major strength of this article was that it had a great focus on students' perceptions. This helps me see through a lens that is from the students' perspective. It also looks at both verbal and non-verbal communication and how that can affect a student's motivation. The limitation of this article is that it lacks solid examples of how teachers can implement these ideas in secondary classrooms. This can be especially pertinent for teachers who may feel uncomfortable or unfamiliar with the idea that the article is promoting. My overall goal is for my students to be eager to learn and not simply avoid failing.

Spilles, Markus, et al. "Negative Teacher Feedback toward Students Decreases the Probability of Empathic Classmates Making a Sociometric Choice." *Social Psychology of Education*, vol. 28, no. 1, 19, 2025, doi:10.1007/s11218-024-09977-1.

This article looked at how teacher feedback can influence social acceptance of students within the classroom. Specifically, the study focused on how classmates would choose who they would want to sit by. The main purpose of this was to determine whether positive or negative feedback from the teacher could affect how students socially chose to sit by or avoid sitting by another student. There is also a look at whether ongoing empathy would play a role in that process. We see that the author also pulls from social referencing theory. The study states that children use teachers' emotional reactions to decide how to feel about other students and when interacting with other students. The study was both cross-sectional and multilevel. It included 800 second through fourth-grade students. The study was conducted in 41 different primary school classrooms in Germany. Initially, students wrote about how each classmate received positive praise or negative blame from the teacher in the classroom. They were also asked to complete a self-assessment about their affective empathy. An example of this would be "I feel bad when others are sad". To measure their social choices, students would select whether they would want to sit next to one of their peers. Researchers used logistic regression to analyze more than 16,000 student ratings. When students were praised publicly in the classroom by teachers more often, they were chosen more frequently by their peers. On the other hand, soon to receive blanket or overall criticism from their teachers were less likely to be placed next to their preferred peers or chosen socially. The more empathetic classmates were more negatively influenced by seeing one of their peers receive negative teacher feedback. This means that the more empathetic students would avoid a classmate more if the teacher frequently criticized them. Overall, teacher feedback did shape peers' acceptance in some way. Empathy, in some cases, would

increase social exclusion when the teacher provides negative feedback. This article showed how teachers can unintentionally shape social hierarchy through how they communicate in the classroom. Even if a teacher is only giving corrective feedback for classroom behavior, students with high empathy may still see the instances of negativity and distance themselves from those classmates. Feedback isn't something that was just instructional, it affects who students think is likable or simply safe to sit by in the classroom. This reminds me that I need to be aware of how public my feedback is, especially regarding negative comments. One strength I found in the article was that researchers examined both positive and negative feedback. They also looked at how empathy was seen differently in each of those cases. This helps me better support my students who need more redirection with how I communicate with them, so they are not socially isolated. This article does prompt me to think deeper about ideas of peer inclusion and belonging in the classroom and how my communication can affect that.

Karasova, Jirina, and Gabriela Kleckova. "Supporting Learners Through Effective Communication: Student Teachers' Communication Strategies to Address Learner Behaviour." *The Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, vol. 48, no. 3, 2023, doi:10.14221/1835-517X.5910.

This article explored how student teachers communicate in response to disruptive classroom behaviors. Researchers analyzed how effective communication strategies support not only learner autonomy but also motivation, self-regulation, and student engagement. The researchers looked at how effective communication is central to classroom management and teacher success. The goal of the study was to determine what type of communication strategies student teachers were using, as well as whether they could notice and recognize different forms of effective communication when given

multiple choices. And finally, how they were able to use and identify different identification strategies. The authors emphasized that communication skills generally are not developed in teacher preparation programs, which ultimately leaves teachers unprepared to handle misbehaviors. This study involved eight graduate-level student teachers in the Czech Republic. All of these graduate students were preparing to teach English and one other secondary subject. All of the student teachers were asked to complete two different tasks over a 60-minute online research session. The first task was to respond verbally to five real-world classroom behavior scenarios. The second task was to choose the most appropriate response among four different options within nine different scenarios. There was also a brief feedback interview from the faculty at the university after both tasks were completed. Researchers categorized responses as effective or ineffective. Due to this study being conducted in the Czech Republic, the findings may reflect the structure of a teacher preparation program in their context. It is not clear whether these results are generalized to teacher preparation programs in other countries, such as in the United States, where classroom management classes focus on direct instruction on communication. The data showed that student teachers often used ineffective communication strategies. Only six out of the 40 possible responses for task one were considered effective. Most of the responses were seen as a form of ordering or interrogating. When the student teachers were given multiple choices, on the other hand, they would choose between 7 strategies correctly. Many still chose reassuring or interrogating strategies that showed little to no empathy. It was very common to see teachers dismissively listening and acknowledging students' feelings, which they saw as "inappropriate". Many of the students openly stated they had a lack of training and

behavioral management,t and how to communicate with students. Many stated that they wish they had learned these skills before they had ever entered a classroom. This article highlights how daily teacher communication can directly influence a student's behavior and their own sense of belonging in the classroom. The article separated identifying strategy from actually using it in the classroom. It explains how teacher candidates may understand appropriate communication strategies but struggle to apply them in real-time classroom interactions. This suggests that the issues may not simply be a lack of instruction but a lack of practice opportunities that allow candidates to practice and receive feedback to strengthen their communication skills. This article motivates me to develop stronger communication skills.

Charalampous, Angelos, and Maria Darra. "The Effect of Teacher's Feedback on Student Academic Achievement: A Literature Review." *Journal of Education and Learning*, vol. 14, no. 1, 2024, p. 42, doi:10.5539/jel.v14n1p42.

This article looks at how teacher feedback can influence students' academic performance across all levels of education. The purpose of the study was to identify which types of feedback were most effective and how they might contribute to improvements in a student's learning. The researchers found that feedback guided students towards meeting learning goals and allowed students to revisit their work to improve their future work. Researchers establish a link between teacher feedback, revision behaviors, and academic performance outcomes, which hasn't been extensively examined before. To conduct their study, researchers used a systematic literature review that follows PRISMA 2020 methodology. Researchers examined 18 studies published between 2013 and 2023. All of the studies examine the impact of teacher feedback and learner achievement. The primary focus of the study was on the English language and academic writing. The study used a

mix of action research, qualitative, and quantitative methods. The participant numbers did vary, ranging from six students to 4,000 students. Throughout all of the studies, there was consistent improvement in academic performance with strong teacher feedback. This includes improvements among grades, tests, scores, and learning outcomes, which were 17 of the 19 different studies. Students demonstrated significant progress in language, learning, and academic writing abilities, specifically when feedback was specific and measurable. The four strongest types of feedback were corrective feedback, oral feedback, electronic feedback, and summative feedback, but not timely feedback. Researchers found a large amount of improvement when students were able to revise their work after feedback, which showed growth in their assignments. This article confirms that feedback isn't just commentary; it affects learning results when used correctly. One limitation of the study is that it focuses primarily on a teacher's delivery of feedback and doesn't examine how to actively interpret this feedback and apply it to their own work over time. The research within this article also does not explore in depth. The differences in how individual students respond to feedback based on factors of prior achievement, confidence, and learning style. The findings also may be influenced by the specific context in which the feedback was given. This could limit how broadly the results that are stated can be used across different grade levels. In the future, research could look at how students are taught feedback in an effective manner and how being literate with feedback can develop over time.

Gu, Jiahe, et al. "Empower Students With Internal Feedback: Unpack the Process of Internal Feedback in Language Classrooms." *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, vol. 34, no. 5, 2025, pp. 1795–805, doi:10.1007/s40299-025-00993-z.

This article examined the internal feedback process that students have in university language classrooms. This focused on how students can generate, refine, and work through their own self-generated feedback as they work through assessments in their learning activities. We see the authors highlight the idea that external feedback does not promote learning unless students can understand it and process it internally. This gives strength to the idea that feedback is a form of communication, and how effective it is depends on how clearly it is delivered. It also shows how well students can interpret and respond to the communication they receive. Using a qualitative approach, researchers identified different stages of internal feedback and explored how different classroom activities can help students build their own literacy through their own feedback and take ownership of their own learning. The study took place in an English and academic purposes course at the University of China and included 21 undergraduate students from multiple majors. Students would complete five rounds of peer review on both research writing and engage in their own self-reflection tasks on their own presentations. Researchers collected data through 40-60 minute structured interviews that focused on how students evaluate their own work, where they would create internal feedback and revise their papers based on this feedback. The study found three stages in the students' internal feedback process. The first was that students were able to generate internal feedback. This was done by a comparison of comments, rubrics, worksheets, or other previous work. This helped students realize where their weaknesses and strengths were in their writing. The second stage was calibrating their own internal feedback. This was done by discussing the work with peers and reviewing different teaching materials and rubrics. It was common in the study for students to want teacher confirmation when they were perplexed about how to

move forward with the feedback received. Finally, the last stage was responding to and acting upon the internal feedback. Students were able to apply this feedback to their own writing, presentations, and their own logic. This also heightened the students' internal standards of the quality of their own work. The key aspect amongst all three stages was comparison and understanding where a student's work compared to others. This article greatly emphasized that students won't be able to use my feedback unless they understand how to process it. I liked how the author talks about internal feedback as something that needs to be active and not passive. It's all about doing something with the feedback and not just receiving it. The biggest takeaways for me are that feedback should be frequent, have some comparison, be written or verbal, and be connected directly to different revision opportunities.

Eremeeva, Guzel Rinatovna, and Ismaeva, Farida Khamisovna. "Dialogic Communication between Teachers and Students as a Condition for Interaction of Subjects of the Higher School Educational Process." *International Journal of Higher Education*, vol. 9, no. 8, 2020, p. 46, doi:10.5430/ijhe.v9n8p46.

This article focuses on dialogic communication in higher education. Dialogic communication is communication based on cooperation, mutual respect, and equality between both the teacher and the student. The main purpose of this research study was to show that dialogue-based communication improves educational interactions. Dialogic communication enables students to become active participants and helps them grow into participating in interactive learning environments. The researchers argue that dialogic communication is mandatory if teachers want students to be able to cooperate more strongly with their teachers. This will result in creating strong communication skills and shared responsibility within the

learning process of the teacher and the student. All students were from non-pedagogical majors who were enrolled in a pedagogy course that uses both active and interactive teaching methods. Some of these were discussions, seminars, educational games, and simulated real-world professional tasks. Teachers systematically monitored the process of learning through testing and ratio systems. This allows students to show their knowledge and communication skills. The goal of the course was to provide a learning environment where the students could work through joint activities and show subject position, which is independent thinking and responsibility. Researchers found that dialogic communication increased student engagement, supported communication skills in their development, improved cooperation as well as responsibility, and finally made the learning process more effective and enjoyable for the students. Students were able to be more active in their discussions and ask questions as they collaborated with one another. There was also an acceptance between the teacher and the classmates as partners, which is where the idea of mutual respect comes into play, creating trust. When is a classroom structured within a dialogic? communication, students have a higher ownership of learning, and when feedback is given, they can process it in a mutual way. The article emphasized communication that honors the students' voice and identity. It is clear that students become more motivated and responsible when they see this equality in the learning process, and there's a sign of mutual respect. I learned from this article that I must allow students to feel heard and create dialogue, and not simply just have information delivered to them.

Saban, Kathryn, et al. "Showcasing Street Law: The Importance of Students and Staff Working in Partnership to Provide and Receive Formative Feedback." *International Journal for Students as Partners*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2025, pp. 251–60, doi:10.15173/ijsap.v9i1.5939.

This final case study focuses on staff and student partnerships and creating an approach to formative feedback within a higher education law program. The purpose of the study was to introduce and evaluate student-led formative feedback meetings. This is all done in a "street law module". The author of the study argues that when students are given more control over the feedback process, there is an increase in their autonomy, learning, and communication. The main goal of this was to strengthen the students' voice and how feedback is both designed and received. This is to support both skilled development and the students' academic successes. This practical case study was conducted within a Street Law for Context module at Lancaster University Law School with 20 law students. The students were third-year undergraduate and postgraduate along with one supervising tutor. The researchers used the street law module as the research setting to examine how formative feedback functions within its structure. Street Law for Context is a public legal education module where students are able to design and deliver interactive legal presentations for different schools and community organizations. A key feature of the formative feedback method was weekly student-led term meetings. There has also been a rotation amongst student leader roles in managing the agenda and discussions. Students submitted their work ahead of the meeting time to be reviewed by the tutor. The tutor would act as a mediator and provide clarification in additional feedback. Researchers found multiple benefits from student-led feedback. The first is increased autonomy in deep end learning. Student-led feedback also results in strong, skilled development, such as leadership, communication, and problem-solving, which allows students to understand feedback on a deeper level and be able to act on it quickly. It also creates a positive

learning environment, where trust, motivation, and collaboration exist between both the students and the tutor. This article showed how shifting responsibility to the students can change feedback into a conversation that is collaborative. It also reminds me that a form of feedback is best for students when they are able to apply feedback in real time and be led in the learning process. A limitation of this article is that it emphasizes the impact of feedback and does not fully explore how teachers are able to structure their feedback as an ongoing process and dialogue. The study omits to examine how feedback practices can differ among different grade levels. It also does not address how teachers can grow a student's independence in applying feedback over a period of time. In the future, research could look at how constant feedback as dialogue can influence a student's long-term skills development and their own autonomy.

Summary

When looking at all of the different articles and research reviewed, a common theme I saw was that communication is not simply about giving or transferring information, but it is all about relation and how that shapes students' confidence, identity, and engagement in the classroom. When teachers use feedback that is specific, dialogic, supportive, and timely, students are more likely to feel a sense of belonging in the classroom. Communication practices such as positive teacher language, student dialogue, and the opportunity to simply have a better understanding strengthen the student and their willingness to learn. If communication and feedback are unclear, negative, or one-sided, it can damage the student's confidence, reduce acceptance by peers, and result in students not participating in the class activity.

The second thread I saw throughout is that students must be active participants in their own feedback and communication. This promotes growth as students can interpret, discuss, and finally respond to the feedback they receive. This strengthens their own self-awareness and develops internal feedback systems. Communication is something that has a foundation in partnership and mutual respect, which helps students take ownership of their own learning and understand the expectations of the teacher. All of these ideas strengthen the validity of my action research project - to explore communication and see how it can build clarity and trust as well as student confidence, where students feel as if their voice has been heard and they belong.

Chapter 3: Methods Guideline

Introduction

Action research is a systematic and reflective practice that allows teachers and educators to take a look at their own practices to improve student learning and the classroom experience. Action research is done by those in the field in their own classrooms. Sagor (2000) defines action research as a disciplined process of inquiry conducted by and for those taking the action (Sagor). In simpler terms, it allows teachers to make informed improvements through investigating their own practices within their teaching. This is a process that empowers teachers and educators to use instances from their own classrooms to inform their own decisions and not rely simply on outside sources and on intuition.

Sagor explains that action research should follow a structured cycle that includes seven central steps. The first step is that the teacher should select a focus by finding a meaningful problem or area of concern within their own classroom. Secondly, the teacher examines their

own insights and has conversations with students and faculty about the issue that they are finding. Thirdly, they must have specific research questions that are developed to guide their questioning. Fourthly, the teacher doing the research would have data from multiple different sources, which could include surveys, student work, observations, and reflections, both by the teacher and the students. Fifthly, the data that is collected is analyzed to find patterns or trends within the information it gives. Sixthly, the teacher is able to report their own findings and inform themselves on how to apply these results in their own teaching. Finally, you are then able to take all of this data and apply it to make a positive change in your classroom or school community. This structure allows a teacher to reflect and improve on a continuous cycle. Action research is not a one-time occurrence, but is an ongoing process of both refining and responding to our students' needs and how we teach.

To follow the cycle, I first recognized the need for improved communication and feedback. I would be able to see how this affected my students and how it was interpreted by them. I also then looked at my own teaching practices and thought about how students were responding to different types of feedback. I was able to identify patterns of confusion or resistance when the feedback I gave my students was unclear. It's allowed me to create specific research questions that helped me guide my study. They were focused on feedback, how I communicated, and student engagement. I would then collect data from multiple sources, including student work, such as with "five-minute essays". I also used exit tickets, as well as informal observations of the host. Students begin to interact during prompting in instruction time. After collecting all this data, I was able to look at patterns across all three of these data points. This showed me how students would respond differently due to different communication approaches. Allowing me to reflect on my data and adjust how I teach my students. Making my

communication intentions allow me to better support my students within their own understanding and engagement.

Action research is the appropriate method for my study because my focus is on examining and improving my own classroom and communication practices. In chapter 1, I wrote about dialogic communication as laid out within Freire's research. This emphasized that classroom dialogue shapes students' identity, agency, and their own confidence. In chapter 2, I looked at different literature focused on teacher feedback, communication styles, and positive-to-negative communication ratios that influence student engagement, motivation, and a sense of belonging. The issue of communication and how it is taken also has emerged on a personal level from my own classroom experience and practices as an educator, which allows me to realize that communication should be focused on improvement and reflection, and not simply generalization.

This method also closely aligns with Freire's concept of praxis, which is the focus of reflection through action. Through the action research cycle stated above, I looked at current communication practices, created structured dialogue and feedback clarification procedures, collected data on students' perceptions and engagement, and adjusted my own instruction based on these findings. In my chapter 2, there was an emphasis that feedback is only effective when students can both interpret and internalize it. Systematically collecting and analyzing classroom data is imperative for me to determine how intentional communication practices can influence a student's self-perception and their own academic confidence. My research questions that will guide my action research project are:

- 1) How does implementing feedback clarification routines affect students' interpretation and the use of the teacher's feedback?
- 2) How do intentional shifts in positive to negative communication ratios affect students' engagement and participation in the classroom?
- 3) How do students describe their own sense of belonging and voice when dialogic structures are being used constantly?

Participants & Setting

This study will take place at Riverbend High School (a pseudonym), a public high school located in an urban area in the Willamette Valley. Riverbend High School serves roughly 1400 students in grades nine through 12. The student population of Riverbend High School is both racially and culturally diverse. 67% of students identify as white, 18% of students identify as Hispanic/Latin, 9% as multiracial, 3% Asian, 2% is Black/African-American, and one percent as American Indian/Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. 8% of students speak a language other than the ones stated above. In total, there are 27 languages spoken across the high school community. 9% of students receive special education services, and 23% of students are identified as experiencing poverty. The average class size within core subjects is 22 students. Riverbend High School offers many different academic programs, such as advanced placement, IB courses, career technical education (CTE), pathways, unified special education courses, and extracurricular opportunities.

For this project, I collected data from a class of 22 ninth-grade students in freshman English. Of these 20 students, 14 are male, and eight are identified as female. Out of the 22 students, seven have IEPs, which are individualized education plans, and five have 504 plans. One of the students is an English language learner. Based on the middle of the year? growth data,

approximately 60% students are reading at grade level, and 40% are reading below grade level. Multiple students are reading above grade level within that 60% group. This class is a reflection of the broader cultural and linguistic diversity present in the high school. There is also a range of different economic experiences within the classroom.

When looking at the class, all of my students bring a strong academic and cultural foundation of knowledge. Many students demonstrate their strengths through verbal discussions, collaborative assignments, and being digitally literate with our digital textbook. Multiple students are involved in athletics, music, and career technical training. Students are able to learn teamwork, skills, real-world application of knowledge, and discipline. I have been fortunate to work with this group of students for the current academic term as their preservice teacher, in collaboration with my cooperating teacher. As I have taught these students during this term, I have developed strong relationships with many of my students, especially through structured discussions and daily routines. One of my biggest strengths as an educator is being able to build rapport and create a classroom environment where students feel comfortable explaining their thoughts and asking questions. Many of my students engage in dialogue during whole-class and small group discussions regularly. Many are willing to share their own personal experiences and reflections when connecting to text.

One area of growth for me would be to investigate how I communicate feedback to my students. This is especially apparent within my own written comments and redirection on assignments. I strive to be clear and supportive, and I recognize that tone, phrasing, and corrected feedback significantly influence how students interpret what I'm saying. When taking diverse academic abilities into account, it is clear to me that the communication practices that I use need to be intentional, structured, and reflective.

Data Collection & Analysis

I collected multiple forms of data to make sure that my findings are grounded in systematic evidence rather than perception. Sagor emphasizes triangulation. Triangulation is the use of multiple sources of data to understand a concept or idea more fully through data and research. Triangulation allows me to identify patterns and areas for instructional improvements. My data collection included instructional artifacts, student data, observations, and professional feedback throughout the unit.

Initially, I used the requirements of the unit as a foundation for my data source. Sagor explained that actual research begins by clarifying the focus and grounding a theory. These requirements are a way to show how communication structures and routines of feedback are used within my instruction and are required by all freshmen across my school district. Secondly, I also used our district's adopted curriculum through HMH as a guide. This will allow me to take the structure of some of the aids from the curriculum and apply it to how feedback can be perceived. It is important that I look at how context can be a variable that will ultimately influence my teaching. Reviewing both these forms of curriculum will allow me to look at both institutional and relational structures, and how that shapes a student's interpretation of my own feedback. A third form of data will be my detailed lesson plan to document how communication strategies are being implemented within my lessons. According to Sagor, documenting instructional action gives strength to a teacher's reflective analysis. My lesson plans showed how my own structured dialogue and feedback can be effective for students' learning outcomes. Clarifications are shown within my own teaching practices. Fourthly, I created teaching reflection journals for myself. This will allow me to capture my own insights in understanding as I collected data. I was able to record observations about tone, clarity, and student responses for myself. Lastly, I gathered

different exit tickets and analyzed assessments, including both drafts and revisions. Student work will provide me with examples of growth and change over time. This will also help me understand how communication practices are able to influence students' performance and confidence.

Once I was able to collect data from these three Sources, I was able to look deeper into the information using a qualitative approach. This allowed me to look at patterns between student engagement, interpretation of feedback, and how clear my communication was. Once I followed the traditional qualitative analysis features, I was able to organize my data into categories by type. This included exit tickets, five-minute essays, informal observations of student interaction, and intentionality within lesson plans. I was able to look at interview data both independently and in relation to one another through this system.

When looking at all the data, I was able to use open coding as the main method to understand the data. Open coding is the ability to look at data closely and look for ideas that occur often, such as different behaviors or patterns. I was then able to use all my data and break it down into different labels. Some of the initial codes that I had were confusion from feedback, students' resistance to feedback, and a decrease or increase in their confidence in their responses. This allows me to break down a significant amount of classroom data into a few strong categories. This overall reflected how students respond simply to different approaches within communication.

Once I was able to break down these initial codes, I was able to create broader themes that focused more on my research question. An example would be using the codes related to confusion and resistance and grouping them into a theme called "misinterpretation of feedback". Codes that were related to engagement in participation would also be called "positive

responses to clear communication. The third and final theme that I found was "students' confidence voice". This was a connection two times when students showed an increased ability to participate in their communication. The communication was intentional. To give the strengths of my findings, I use triangulation by comparing these two patterns to different types of data sources. An example of this is if I saw a theme of increased engagement within the exit tickets, I may see if there are similar patterns within the students' five-minute essays or simply my own observations. This allowed me to make sure that what I am noticing is not just single pieces of data but is supported throughout all of my evidence. Sagor gives emphasis that Triangulation gives credibility to research by allowing the researcher to simply understand patterns through more than one perspective.

Even though I did not document every instance of feedback within conversations, I was able to reflect on my own instructional decisions and some of my informal interactions throughout my teaching. I was able to use these observations, as well as feedback from my mentor teacher and field supervisor, to help me better understand how to interpret the data. This all gives me another layer of understanding of how communication strategies can be perceived and how they can impact how my students learn. By doing this process of organizing, coding, finding themes, and finally, completely understanding the data, has given me a deeper understanding of how communication can affect students engagement, interpretation of feedback, and students participation in the classroom.

Researcher Positionality

When thinking about my layered identity, I am a white, male educator who is from a working-class background. This shapes both the grounding of my study and how I interpret classroom communication. In my chapter one, I grounded my framework within Freire's concept of dialogic communication, which gives weight to power, voice, and humanizing relational

dialogue. I personally have experienced both affirming and discouraging communication from my teachers. These experiences have shaped my interest in understanding how communication can influence students' confidence and engagement in the classroom. This allows me to understand how authority and tone used by teachers can shape how a student sees themselves and their identity. These experiences have influenced my belief that communication plays a large role in shaping a student's view of themselves as learners. As a result, I began this study with a special interest in understanding how engagement affects students' confidence and engagement.

As a white male teacher, I understand that I have institutional privilege within the spaces of education. Some students may see my authority differently based on both race and gender dynamics. This reminds me that I need to remain aware that my communication can carry unattended weight. Due to my social positioning, I must also create space for students' voices, especially those whose identities have historically been marginalized within the education setting. My understanding and awareness of power help guide my focus on communication practices that promote clarification and not simply assume conformity.

My layered identity will also influence how I both collect and interpret my data throughout the study. Due to my evaluation of dialogue and clarity within communication, I will especially be attentive to different moments when students feel uncertain or withdrawn from instruction. This will be especially apparent if I see tone authority being seen as the main factor of this response. While all this is happening, I need to be careful not to put my own experiences onto the student responses. To protect the study from bias, as I said earlier, I will use a triangulation method with multiple data sources. These data sources include exit tickets, assessments, reflections, and formal observations, and feedback from my mentor teacher and field supervisor. I will also make sure that I keep reflective journals to examine how my own

personal assumptions that are shaped by race, gender, and class may affect students' engagement in class. The goal is that I will validate my voices, and not my own assumptions that I create, which will overall guide the conclusions of my study.

Chapter 4. Findings

The main purpose of this research was to look at how communication can influence students' interpretation of feedback, engagement, and their confidence within the classroom. Data was collected from multiple sources, including exit tickets, “5 Minute” essays, and informal classroom observations. This allowed me to see triangulation patterns between students' responses and behaviour around communication. Through this process, I used open coding and analysis to find two major themes. When I began to look at the different themes within my data, there were two distinct themes that stood out to me surrounding the ideas of communication with students. The first theme was the misinterpretation of feedback due to unclear communication. The second theme was positive student responses to clear and supportive communication.. These two themes show how students respond to different levels of communication practices. Each of the themes will be discussed in detail before using data and evidence from multiple sources.

I went through the coding process by hand when reviewing each resource as qualitative data. As I read through all the exit tickets, essay journals, and classroom observations, I highlighted different repeated patterns and students' responses that were connected to communication and feedback. Initial open codes included confusion, clarification, confidence, participation, positive feedback, unclear expectations, and finally, engagement. After going over the data multiple times, I was able to see two major themes presented in this chapter. Being able

to triangulate data across multiple sources allowed me to compare students' responses, written work, and classroom behaviours that are consistent within this study.

The importance of specific and clear feedback

As I began analyzing my data, some of the most consistent findings was that students demonstrated stronger understanding of feedback when communication was clear, specific, and connected to what the students were doing. Evidence from the exit ticket, five minute essay's, and classroom observations showed me that students were more confident and better able to apply the feedback they receive when expectations and suggestions were clear and explicitly directed. I was able to see this theme emerge within my exit tickets, five-minute essays, and informal classroom observations. One specific example would be one of my students during this process asking me, "Mr. Means, what do you want me to do? I do not understand what you are trying to ask me or even how to start it". This told me that I needed to be more specific in what I was asking my students, especially in this situation. I responded with "I am simply trying to see how you responded to your CER (Claim, Evidence, Reasoning) and what feedback you received". The student still struggled with this response, which prompted me to ask, "What was one thing that could be better in your CER?" Originally, I gave unclear communication that did not direct back to an example or something to work through with the student. At this point, I was able to talk through this example with the student, and then they felt confident to move forward with their response. The more intentional communication was within feedback, the stronger the expectations of the feedback became, which showed me that having clarity in communication is crucial in how students interpret and apply the feedback they receive.

Figure 1.

Students Understanding of Feedback Based on Exit Ticket Responses

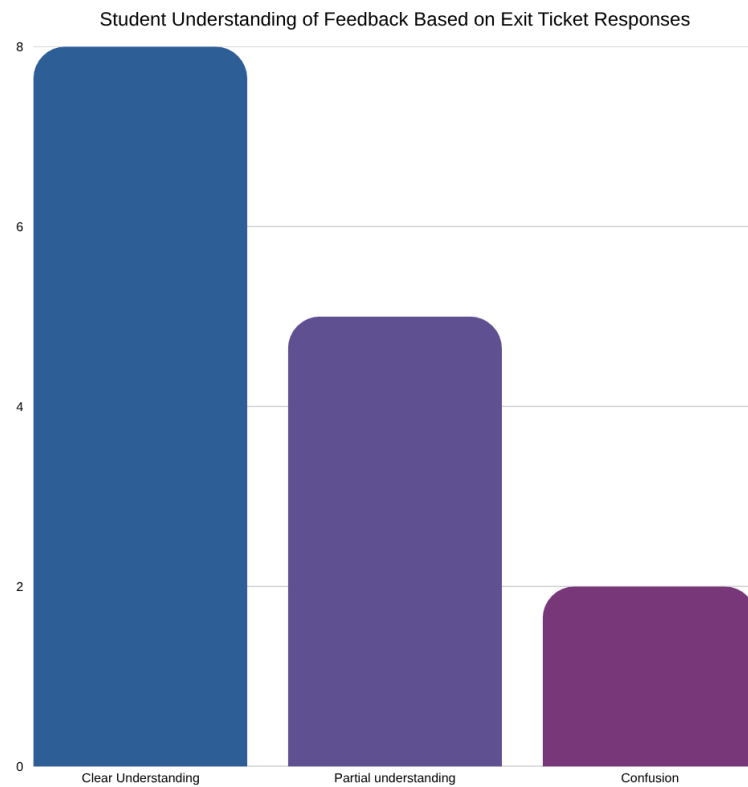


Figure 1 shows that eight out of 15 students demonstrated a clear understanding of feedback that they received in the exit tickets. Five other students demonstrated partial understanding and two students demonstrated confusion. More than half of the students who responded were able to clearly identify and explain feedback they receive and how it can be applied to their work. Students in the partial understanding category were generally able to

recognize the feedback but were less specific when they were explaining how they would use the feedback to adjust their arguments. The two students who showed confusion struggled to identify the purpose of the feedback they received or the actions needed in response to the feedback. This data suggest that students were more likely to understand and apply feedback when communication was clear and specific. These results show the importance of intentional communication and how it plays a role in how students understand feedback and in the end improving learning outcomes.

For the exit ticket, I received 15 student responses. When examining the data, I noticed that students who rated their confidence a four or a five were able to identify someone specific that they learned through their feedback and communication they received throughout this activity. These students often provided detailed and specific responses. For example, one student wrote, “I understand better what a graphic novel is and what things are used to make them.” The student then rated their confidence level as a four. One example of partial understanding that is evidence is with a score giving a rating of 3. This student responded with “ I’m still confused about some of the words.” This was referencing some of the unit and domain specific vocabulary within our Holocaust unit. Even though the student showed some understanding of the material, they were also able to identify an area where they still had partial confusion. This student would need clear and additional communication to help them fully understand the vocabulary being used. Another student showed a high level of confusion by giving a rating of negative five and struggled to identify feedback that they received or how it applies to their own learning. This response shows that the student was having difficulty understanding both the content and the purpose of feedback. When all three responses are viewed together, it represents a wide range of understanding that is present in the classroom.

Figure 2.

Exit ticket Response is showing variation with students, understanding and confidence due to differences in communicated feedback.

The figure shows two examples of student exit tickets. Each ticket has a header with a 'Name:' field (redacted with a black box), the title 'Exit Ticket', a circular logo with a cartoon face and the text 'Means Approved P.8', and three numbered questions. The first question asks for feedback that helped understand 'Night or Maus' better. The second question asks for parts that are still confusing. The third question asks for confidence on a scale of 1-5 for a test on Tuesday.

Exit Ticket 1 (Top):

- 1. What feedback or explanation from today helped you understand *Night or Maus* better?
Mr Means told me art was the kid author but its about his dad
- 2. What part of the reading or discussion is still confusing?
Honestly nothing
- 3. On a scale of 1-5, how confident do you feel about the test on Tuesday?
5!

Exit Ticket 2 (Bottom):

- 1. What feedback or explanation from today helped you understand *Night or Maus* better?
I figured out what Maus was,
- 2. What part of the reading or discussion is still confusing?
Mostly just how the dialog is set up.
- 3. On a scale of 1-5, how confident do you feel about the test on Tuesday?
Probably a 1, -

For the exit ticket, I received 15 different specific student responses. When examining the data, I noticed that students who scored themselves at a four or a five in confidence were typically able to identify something specific that they learned through feedback and the communication that they received during the activity. These students would often give more specific responses, as we can see in Figure 2.. For example, one student wrote, “I understand better what a graphic novel is and what things are used to make them”. The student then scored themselves at a 4 in their confidence level. This response suggests that clear and supportive feedback during the exit ticket process helped students feel more supportive of their understanding of the material. Overall, the exit ticket responses showed that students who received or understood feedback more specifically often showed higher understanding and confidence levels in their responses.

While students were working through their exit ticket, I was able to walk around the classroom and see how students were doing with their prompt. I was able to work with both students in Figure 2 during this time. The first student on top had the question, “Do you want a specific example in this section?” I was able to work with them and say, “Yes,” “What do you feel you need more confidence in?” The student was able to ask me a clarifying question about who Art was within the story of Maus. This allowed for there to be clear communication and, as a result, see that the student feels comfortable and ready to take their test for the next class. In the second example, I was able to speak with the student on what they felt comfortable in and not comfortable within this exit ticket. This was prompted by me as they said, “I have been gone from class often and have not been here for all the readings”. I was able to let them know “Maus is the story of Art Spiegelman narrating the story of Vladeck, Art's father, and his family's experience in the Holocaust”. Even with me quickly explaining what Maus was, the students still

showed a lack of understanding and being ready for their test, which is a reflection on my feedback being poor, even if it was quick; I should be clearer and more descriptive, especially when students are gone a lot.

Figure 3.

Exit Ticket and Feedback Process

Exit Ticket/Feedback Process

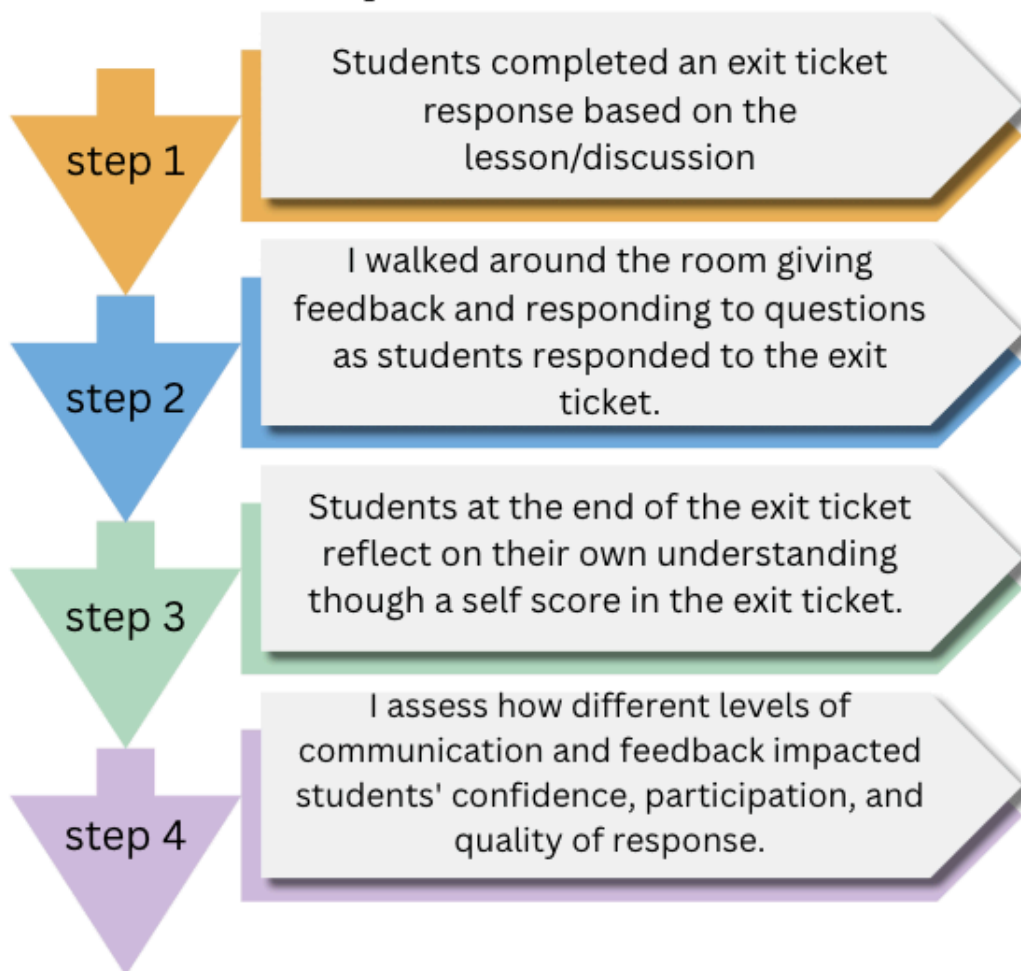


Figure 3 demonstrates the feedback and communication process that was used throughout the exit ticket activities within this study. Students were asked to first complete an exit ticket and a response

based on the lesson and/or classroom discussion. During this process, I walked around the room giving verbal feedback, clarification, and encouragement to students as they responded to the exit ticket (Figure 3). After students completed the exit ticket, they would also be reflecting on how well they understood the lesson, and preparing them for their test in the next class. They would be giving themselves a self-confidence score. After this was done, I looked at how different levels and styles of communication influence students' participation, confidence, and quality in response. This entire process allowed me to be supportive with dialogue and teacher feedback. These impacted students' engagement and understanding, and how it is perceived.

These findings within the exit tickets were relatively consistent among all of my scores of 4 to 5. There were a few outliers within my data that showed me that some students may feel confident based on no feedback or some that is very limited. One outlier within the exit ticket data was a student who left the first question, "What feedback or explanation from today helped you understand Night or Maus" blank. They did respond to the second question, asking what part of the reading or discussion was so confusing, and they simply stated "nothing". They would then score themselves a four or a three. This response is significant because the student reported a high level of confidence while providing very little evidence of how feedback contributed to their understanding. Even though the student showed that nothing was confusing, the lack of response to the first question made it difficult to determine what specific communication or feedback supported their learning. This suggests that their confidence alone does not always show a clear picture of how students understand and apply feedback.

This is an interesting piece of data when talking about the misinterpretation of communication. Even though I was able to see that the student isn't confused about anything, and they felt relatively confident about their test, I still have no specific feedback on how they can better understand each of our texts. This is a deeper issue within many students, where they do

not apply the feedback that they are given. One student even said what they learned was “I figured out what Maus was.” They were still confused about how dialogue is set up within a graphic novel. In the end, they would score themselves at a 1. This showed me that, even though they were able to pinpoint something that they learned from the feedback, it ultimately did not help them feel more confident about the test they would be taking. This is the exact opposite of what we would hope for students in how they receive communication.

My second source of data would be “five-minute essay journals”. This is a task for students to come into class and write for five minutes on a given prompt. Figure 2 shows multiple examples of what feedback may look like within each day on a student's writing activity. I give students a score of one to four from beginning to excelling in whatever content area they are being asked. Mastery of material is scored as a three. They also receive written feedback, such as needing a clear topic sentence, needing more evidence, needing more explanation, needing more transitions, or needing more clarity within their main idea. This has led to an immense amount of miscommunication, not within what is being said about their scores, but in how to understand those scores and apply them as feedback.

It is on an individual basis, or students are just simply trying to master the skills they are being assessed each day and trying to improve their scores to a 3 to show mastery. During this unit, there was an instance when a student had received ours on their past three essays. The next essay journal that they received after that, they scored a three. Multiple students have asked why they scored a three with very limited to no feedback on their journal. This led to a chain reaction of students asking why they are fluctuating between a three and a four. This authorises the idea that students need to score fours to receive an “A”. This allows me to reflect on my grading practices with this assignment and explain that a three is where students need to be, and it is very

rare to receive a score of four, which is above and beyond the requirements. This made it evident that unless students receive clear feedback and expectations, they may not understand why they received a lower score than before. This overall hurts students' self-confidence and makes them struggle. What's your understanding of what the score actually means for them? This is guided towards myself and what students are receiving in the feedback they receive.

One goal for the five-minute essay journals is for students to write the entire time. One student in particular received a borderline score between a two and a three. The main thing that catches them up within their scoring would be simply not writing enough or showing that they wrote for five minutes. Even when I have written on their paper to continue writing, they still write the same amount. The main reason I reduce students' scores is when they do not write enough, and I do not have enough writing to understand the skill that is being assessed. They have plateaued at the score that they have been receiving. This shows me that my communication with him needs to be more direct and clear on what the expectation is, not because I want them to simply do the assignment, but I would like them to reach their full potential, which I have already seen in their limited work within these Journal assignments.

The third piece of evidence came from my observations of how communication and feedback impacted students as they began assignments. During one classroom activity within Figure 2,, students were asked to complete an exit ticket that required them to write a claim and support it with evidence and reasoning. Two students expressed confusion about the task asked of them, and I responded to each of them differently. With the first students, I responded in a clear way with direct guidance. I explained the expectations of the assignment and modelled how they may write their claim. I walked them through each step of the process of the assignment. The student was able to begin the assignment with confidence and finish it efficiently. When

responding to the second student, I gave a much more minimal response. Instead of giving specific guidance, I would respond to the student by saying that they “had it” and they should “give it a shot” because I believed in them. I intended to encourage their independence and confidence, but the student responded with frustration and struggled to begin the assignment. When reflecting on this interaction, I realised the communication in the moment was too vague and did not provide the students with feedback that was actionable. This type of feedback was needed for the student to feel supported.

This experience was important in helping me interpret my other sources of data. I observed that students were more likely to engage with confidence and persistence if they received communication that was clear, direct, and actionable. In contrast, when my communication was unclear or overgeneralized, students would likely become more frustrated, disengaged and not be willing to do the task. This observation showed the importance of intentional communication and comprehensive feedback. These things affect students' confidence and academic engagement within the classroom. Overall, this first theme connects well to the purpose of the study, which is to examine my communication and how it can influence students' interpretation of feedback, engagement, and confidence in the classroom. If feedback is misinterpreted, there will simply be no clarity within instruction, which overall would affect the effectiveness of the lesson or assignment that you were teaching.

Positive Responsivity to clear and supportive communication

When I go through my data a second time, I see a strong pattern for how students responded when I gave them clear, direct, and supportive communication. Opposite to my first theme, where communication that was unclear led to confusion and misinterpretation, this theme showed that if students understood the expectations that were given to them, they were more

likely to engage with their work and show growth. Once again, this was seen through exit tickets, five essay journals, and my own informal classroom observations. I found that students were more willing to engage with the assignment if they felt supported by clear communication. If I did not give clear expectations or understandings of what students were being asked to do, it could result in students not feeling supported in what is being asked of them. Some examples of this would be when I have very clear examples and guided, clear notes for students. When I first began to look at my five-minute essay journals, I was able to notice how clear and supportive feedback helped my students improve their work over time. This was especially pertinent as students write one journal entry every class period as their warm-up. I was able to take the feedback students gave me and apply it to their next piece of writing over and over again. This directly connects to the student's previous examples, as the positive feedback and encouragement received helped promote stronger participation and more success within the mastery of different targeted skills. Figure 4 shows that students' writing improved after receiving feedback that was clear and supportive. This shows how positive communication can grow into stronger engagement and students' overall performance.

Figure 4.

Students' "5-Minute Essay Journal" shows growth after receiving clear and supportive feedback.

The image displays two pages of a student's "5-Minute Essay Journal" with handwritten text and teacher feedback.

Page 6 (Left):
 Date: 04/16/19 (date)
 Skill Focus: Appositives
 Prompt: Write about a hero (real or fictional), and include an appositive (renames or explains a nearby noun) to describe them.
 Student writing: "My cap. there is god because he he will always come through and will have you your back even when time you don't know feel"
 Teacher feedback: "Great" (circled), "God, My Hero..." (underlined), "Expand" (with arrow), "Give more examples/extension" (with arrow).
 Teacher's Score: 4 3 (2) 1
 Feedback Codes: TS (EV) (EX) (TR) CL Other (see below)

Page 7 (Right):
 Date: 04/30/19 (date)
 Skill Focus: Explain Your Thinking
 Prompt: What kinds of people do people see as "heroes"? Why do people admire these heroes? Explain your reasoning.
 Student writing: "the types of people we see/consider as 'heroes' is a person who would be able to save someone type of person place, just things like that and could be saved, like mr. means he helped me bring my grade up by having me do a certain assignment that would be able to bring my grade up by a lot, as the in fast & furious... the guy don't his wife helped him escape jail so that they can be able to do things / save the world from it getting destroyed by some villains"
 Teacher feedback: "Good job!" (circled), "Approved" (with stamp), "Thanks for creating a happy villain brother of me." (with arrow).
 Teacher's Score: 4 3 2 1
 Feedback Codes: TS (EV) (EX) (TR) CL Other (see below)

One example I have of this is when students were working on appositives. One of my students historically has scored a three on every one of their essay journals. As this student has mastered skills each time, I have been able to give them positive feedback, such as "Good Job" and circling what they did right and stating things such as "nice". This has overall built the students' self-confidence and has allowed them to build on their writing each class period. This student in the first two scores a "2". After receiving my feedback, this student is consistent with 3's, which is the goal. This shows me that if I communicate with the students in a way that is

clear and positive, they can build on their skills and reach their goals. Now that this student has shifted from a 2 to a 3 score, I am able to move into using positive feedback to encourage the student to continue with their solid work. On other students working in that same class period, I was able to give specific targeted feedback and still give them a mastering score. This is an instance of me being able to continue to use positive feedback and still give them constructive things to work on. One journal prompt was “What kinds of people do people see as heroes?” In my written feedback to the student, I asked, “What are some of the traits?” When I look at the next class essay after this feedback, I can see the response to be more in-depth and more aligned with what the prompt is asking me to do. This directly relates to the previous student earlier in this theme, as they were given positive feedback that encouraged them and resulted in more solid work that met the expectations of the assignment.

This example is incredibly important because it shows how positive feedback alone does not lead to a student's growth. Student growth occurs via the combination of clear expectations and supportive communication. Through expectations and clear communication, students learn how to do well on the daily assignments. They also understand what they need to do to improve the grade to the mastery level. Due to feedback being specific and consistent day by day, the student is able to apply it directly to their writing in the next class.

My main informal observations were seen within notes in my teaching practices. When we were doing our Kahoot Review. Kahoot is a gamified quiz online where students can compete with their peers on multiple-choice questions. I began the Kahoot by telling the students, “Try your best to answer the questions correctly”. The Kahoot quiz questions were all reviewed and were an indicator of what students needed to work on to prepare for their test. As students participated in the Kahoot review, I used positive communication and supportive feedback to

encourage students' engagement and participation. When students answered correctly, I would respond with encouraging feedback such as "Great Job!" to help keep a positive classroom environment. When students would select an incorrect answer, I was able to use it as an opportunity to have more constructive feedback and clarify misunderstandings in a positive way that does not decrease engagement. This helped create a learning environment where students felt comfortable participating and learning from mistakes they made without being discouraged. At the end of the activity, I had a question on the board asking, "What is something that you would like to work on based on what still felt shaky within the Kahoot?" The students responded that they felt comfortable with the information they would be tested on and wanted to simply make sure that they fully understood what was expected of them. This showed how positive, clear communication asking how they would like to move forward with the review, also showed support. I was direct and clear, asking them what they would want to work on, and their confidence grew when I gave positive feedback, both when I got answers right and wrong, within the Kahoot. This affected the activity afterwards, as students were asked which they still wanted to take more time on, going over which was dependent on what they felt strong or not strong in.

One of my exit tickets stood out to me when thinking about a positive response to clear communication. I had one student who said, "Mr Means told me art was about the kid author, but it is about his dad". I was able to, through my lessons on Graphic Memoirs and the difference between *Night* and *Maus*, to show how the differences applied. The student discusses how *Maus* is written by Art Spiegelman, but it is about his father, Vladek, and his experience in the Holocaust. This student's response to being asked if there was still anything confusing was, "Honest Nothing." This makes it clear that if clear and positive communication is used, it will

make a clear difference in how information is perceived by the students and will improve their self-confidence within their school work. This student would respond to the last question with a strong 5 by adding an !. This showed me that they felt extremely confident in applying the feedback they received and are fully ready for their summation. We can see similar patterns where students who responded with a 4 or 5 would have been the most confident moving into their final summative assessments. As the students' response to their third question decreases, the amount of confusion would increase. This showed that positive and clear communication makes a difference in how students perceive information and their confidence in their coursework.

Communication in the classroom is not simply about giving students direction or feedback. The way communication is structured can affect a student's confidence, engagement, and their own willingness to participate in their own learning. As I have gone through this research process, I was able to see that students have become more confident and simply invested in their own learning and education. This was all done when communication was built on the dialogue between teachers and students. It was not something that was simply a one-way interaction. If a student felt that their voice mattered, they could respond, clarify, and interact with the feedback that they are receiving. All of these things allow students to have ownership in the learning process.

When I begin to look at the three data sources together, I am able to see patterns in how students respond when communication is clear and supportive. I was able to see how students may have not only been completing their work or an “exit ticket” but are more likely to have confidence in what is being asked of them within their assignments. This is completely opposite to what I saw within my first theme, where unclear communication created hesitation and confusion. The goal with positive and clear feedback is for students to be able to apply it directly

to their own work. One pattern I did notice is that positive communication didn't mean that the feedback had less rigour. For example, one student was asked to add more evidence to support their claim and responded by expanding their paragraph with additional support from their text. Another student received feedback encouraging them to explain how their evidence connected to their own reasoning, this ultimately created a more detailed and complete response. A third student was encouraged to use more unit specific examples from our Holocaust unit and was able to incorporate different terms and ideas within their own writing. When speaking to another student, I was able to give more detail about how features of a graphic novel applied to their writing and the student was then able to respond with connections to dialogue and panels for example. These examples above show that students were able to receive varying rigorous feedback that required revision and improvement. The feedback students received was communicated in a clear and productive manner. By doing this, I was able to encourage students to continue working and writing and not ultimately discouraging them in the learning process. The main difference I can see is how the feedback I gave the student was different. His students received feedback that was clear and supportive; they would be more likely to respond to the assignment in a way that was productive to the class. I was able to see that the students would not shut down or be discouraged by this, but would continue. They are more open to making changes and improving their work.

Conclusion

The findings from the study demonstrate that communication plays a significant role in how students interpret feedback, engage in learning tasks, and develop confidence in the classroom. Between the exit tickets, five minute essay journals, and classroom observations, I was able to notice two clear patterns emerge. The first pattern was that “Students were more

successful when communication was clear, specific, and supportive. Secondly, there is a positive reaction from students to clear and supportive communication and feedback. When feedback was unclear or lacked specific direction, students would often struggle with understanding expectations, applying feedback, and engaging confidently with their own work. In comparison, when communication was provided with actionable steps and the opportunity to talk through it, students were more likely to participate. They would also be more likely to revise their own work and even demonstrate their own understanding.

The data also showed that supportive feedback communication did not reduce academic challenge. Students continued to receive constructive feedback and high expectations. However, students were more willing to engage with feedback when it was communicated in a clear and encouraging way. Whether students were responding to an exit ticket, writing in a five minute essay journal, or participating in classroom activities, they were more likely to apply feedback when they understood both what was being asked of them and why it truly mattered. There needs to be a reason and understanding to truly get understanding and buy in from students when it comes to applying feedback.

Overall, this study suggested that communication is more than simply delivering information or directions to students. Communication shaped how students interpret feedback and how willing they are to participate in their learning. It is also clear that students are more diligent in wanting to succeed and apply feedback in their own writing. By intentionally using clear, specific , and supportive communication and feedback, teachers are able to create classroom environments that are welcoming and supportive. It is a place where students feel supported and understand expectations which ultimately allows them to take more academic

ownership. These findings reinforce the importance of communication as something that is foundational within students' success and effective teaching all around.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of my action research project was to look at how teacher communication can influence students, how they interpret feedback, engage with the class, and how confident they are within the classroom. As I've worked through all five chapters now, I have found consistency within my findings that shows that communication plays some major role in how you didn't see yourself as a learner. Communication is not something that is simply about delivering information or correcting a wrong or mistake of the subject. Through my two themes in chapter 4, students seemed to respond more positively when communication was clear, supportive, intentional, and interpersonal through dialogue. The findings that they had through this aligned well with my Chapter 2, when talking about teacher feedback, how teachers communicate with their students, and student engagement. Analysis of data revealed that there were two major themes: (1) Misinterpretation of feedback due to unclear communication, and (2) Positive and supportive communication builds students' confidence and engagement. These themes demonstrate how communication influences students' interpretation of feedback, engagement, and confidence within the classroom.

The first major funny thing I had was that if there was unclear communication with students, they often would misinterpret the feedback they received. This would make them struggle with understanding the expectations of what is being asked of them. My findings were

strongly aligned with the work of Albalawi and Nadeem (2020). They found that ineffective communication between teachers and students had a negative impact on students. This was within their performance and engagement. I noticed similar patterns within my own findings. When my sense would be unsure of their expectations or did not understand what I meant in my feedback, they were hesitant, disengaged, and confused about their own ability to finish assignments. One time, this occurred during the "five-minute essay journals". This is when students would question me when they receive different scores, even with limited communication about their work. They would notice their scores as Something that's negative and viewed them as inconsistent and not something that shows them if they are in need of growth or mastery within a topic. Students interpret feedback based on how he communicated through emotions and personally.

These findings also have a strong connection to Freire's theory of dialogue, which I wrote about in Chapter 1. Freire (2014) gives emphasis to the idea that communication should be something that involves reflection, listening, and sharing meaning between individuals. It is not simply about a one-way authority between two people. During this time, my communication will improve with clarity, and my students will attempt to "fill in the gaps" by themselves. This led to a larger amount of misunderstanding and students feeling a lack of confidence in their work. Overall, these findings can extend this work into the main classroom. We can see it through exit tickets, warm-up journals, and simply communicating with our students 101. Dialogue is something that is not just for a large classroom discussion, but it is through daily interactions that assessors have with other students when talking about feedback and expectations. If a teacher fails in their communication, students can have an inaccurate understanding of their own abilities and performance within the classroom.

The second major finding I had was that students responded in a positive manner when communication was clear, intentional, and supportive. These findings align well with Rathel et al. (2014), Yulhendri et al. (2025), and Charalampous and Darra (2024). This finding relates to my second research question concerning students' engagement and confidence. Students appeared more willing to participate and revise work if feedback and communication was something that is supportive and specific. By using positive communication, expectations are not lowered but they help students understand how they can improve their work while keeping a solid feeling about their abilities. All of this research shows that positive feedback and supportive communication can improve engagement and overall performance. During my study, it was clear that students were more willing to engage with the assignment and advise what they had done if they felt supported through my communication. I especially saw this within the "five-minute essay journal". Students constantly would improve on specific parts of the writing after they received strong feedback that was encouraging.

Overall, the findings I had within my study reinforce the idea that communication is more than simply a pedagogical tool within the classroom. Having clear communication not only affects students' academic understanding but also addresses students' confidence, engagement, and participation. It became evident throughout my research that students respond to how a teacher communicates, not simply what is being communicated to them. Having clear and supportive communication in the classroom grew students' confidence and engagement. All of these findings, along with my chapters one and two, reinforce my belief that communication is detrimental to either building students up or breaking them down with their confidence.

Limitations

One limitation within my research was simply how short the research process was. The research was done over a limited instructional course. Where I was only able to observe communication patterns on a more surface level and not a deeper level that was set over a longer period of time. Even though I was able to find clear themes within feedback, Engagement, and confidence. If I had done a longer study, I would've been able to see long-term effects of students' self-confidence, growing, or decreasing alongside their academic growth within how I communicate with them. I believe the data would be a lot more concrete if I were able to do this over an entire academic school year. If it were done over an extended period of time, you could see how communication practices can look over multiple parts of the school year. This would also allow you to change and use different communication styles that show if there is one last thing to improve within students' confidence and engagement over a period of time.

Another limitation of my study was simply the type of data that I collected. The majority of my data came from qualitative sources. The sources were exit tickets, "5-minute essay journals," and informal classroom observations. The data I received gave me meaningful insight into perceptions and responses, but also relied heavily on my own interpretation of how feedback is affecting my students. Students may also not fully explain their thoughts through reflections alone. If I redo the study again, it could be strengthened by having student interviews, surveys, or more data points, such as tracking how students are participating. If I were to combine more diverse forms of data collection, I could have a more complete understanding of how communication can affect students and how they learn within the classroom, and simply boost their confidence.

A third limitation would simply be using Freire as my main framework for the study. Freire's focus on dialogue in humanizing education was my primary lens for leg communication, and how feedback is done. My study focused primarily on dialogue, confidence, and how a teacher can communicate with their students, and not on all aspects. Freire's theory. Freire also gives focus to systemic power structures, as well as social and economic inequalities within education, and how that can lead to the oppression of students. I did reference elements of power and authority, but my findings did not fully look into the full systemic structure within all of our schools. The next step, if I were to redo the study again, would be to look at how communication practices can intersect with different issues of equity. This will align with culturally responsive teaching and empowering students in different classroom environments.

My final limitation within my study was how practical it was to find different points of data through different classrooms and teaching styles. Communication to me is something that is very relational and can change depending on a teacher and their personality. It can also be based on how a teacher sets up their classroom culture. This would also be a parent within varying student populations, and the type of subject area that you teach. The students within my study already had a strong relationship with me as a teacher, which ultimately could have varied how they responded to communication and how they felt. If another teacher tried similar strategies with the same students, they may have a different result, depending on communication styles and the relationship to the students. My research may also struggle to transfer through all grade levels and subject areas. In the future, I could look at how communication practices can be different within multiple classroom contexts. It could be dependent on a different type of school or grade level. It would be interesting to look at how communication in the strategies they go with can be changed to meet the needs of a different learning environment.

Conclusion

The purpose of my action research project was to look at how teacher communication can influence how students interpret the feedback they receive, as well as their engagement and confidence in school. Throughout my short-term of research, I was able to consistently see that communication played a vital role in how students learn, and what that means for how they see themselves academically. If I gave clear support and communication, my students would be more willing to engage with different assignments as well as participate in discussions. This allowed them to take a stronger ownership of their own learning. If I gave you unclear communication, since I would often be confused as well as be hesitant, and how they understand the feedback they receive. My Research also aligned well with different theoretical frameworks and research around the topic of communication. Freire's Idea of dialogue was extremely clear, as students ended up having stronger confidence and participation when Communication was something that was back-and-forth and not one-directional. Having positive communication is not enough by itself. Students benefit most when communication is something that is supportive and also has clear and intentional expectations and feedback.

On a personal note, this research helped me reflect deeper on my own communication practices as an educator. Through my experience is discussed in chapter 1, I had a preconceived understanding of how powerful teacher communication can be. Throughout this process, I was able to see some of those same ideas reflected within my own classroom observations and interactions with students. Students often internalize how teachers communicate with them and

use those interactions to shape their own confidence and self-perception. Small changes and feedback can have a huge impact on students as learners.

Overall, this study has reinforced my internal belief that communication is not something that is simply about delivering instructions or correcting the mistakes that students make. Communication is something that builds trust as well as creates clarity. These things help students be capable within the classroom. If a student feels heard and supported. They will ultimately feel understood. This overall will help. Susan engages with what they are learning in a deeper way and takes more risks in their education. As I grow as an educator, it is my goal to create a classroom environment for communication that strengthens students' confidence. I also want to be something that supports students' growth and allows every student to feel as if they are valued learners within the classroom.

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