# Peer Feedback –
# Exploring Student Experiences

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# Purpose

➢ The study was conducted on two groups of L2 students to explore their experiences of peer and teacher feedback.

➢ **Research questions:**

1) Did the students find it more useful to receive than to give feedback?

2) Did the students find the teacher feedback useful?

3) How did the students experience the type of feedback they had engaged in (online feedback vs face-to-face feedback)?

# What does the research say?

➢ L2 writing students do not have sufficient linguistic, content, and rhetorical knowledge to provide constructive feedback (Liu & Sadler, 2003).

➢ L2 writing students are unable to modify their texts based on peers' comments (Liu & Sadler, 2003).

➢ Students' cultural backgrounds can influence their classroom behaviour and amount of participation in feedback situations (Guardado & Shi, 2007).

➢ The process of giving feedback is highly beneficial to students' own writing. They become better able to critically self-evaluate and revise their own writing (Lundstrom & Baker, 2009).

➢ Important to guide and control the feedback process (Rollinson, 2005; Min, 2006).

➢ Electronic vs face-to-face:
  ➢ Electronic feedback produces more balanced, elaborate and critical comments (Guardado & Shi, 2007).
  ➢ Face-to-face feedback allows students to discuss and negotiate meaning (Ho & Savignon, 2007).

# Participants

1) An undergraduate English class (Group 1):

   ➢ 26 Danish students enrolled in a second-semester required bachelor-level English class.

2) A mixed-level academic writing class (Group 2):

   ➢ Twelve students (3 Danish and 9 international).
   ➢ Four MA students and five BA.
   ➢ Humanities (8 students), Social Sciences (3), and Health Sciences (1).

# COURSE REQUIREMENTS

## The undergraduate class (Group 1)

- Students submit three types of assignments: Clause of the week (6), Comment of the week (2), and an Essay (2).

- Students provide online feedback on each other's assignments.

- Feedback is guided by teacher.

- Students not required to rewrite their assignment.

- Assignments discussed in class.

- Students receive individual teacher feedback on their essays.

- Teacher feedback includes sentence-level comments as well as a global evaluative statement.

## The academic writing class (Group 2)

- Students submit three assignments: an extended definition, a literature review and an introduction.

- Multiple drafts → Draft 1 peer reviewed in class.

- Feedback is guided by teacher.

- Draft 2 reviewed by teacher and returned to students.

- Problem areas covered in class.

- Students receive individual face-to-face feedback on draft 2.

- Language issues highlighted by means of an error correction code and comments.

- Draft 3 submitted for a grade.

# The questionnaire

➢ The questionnaire consisted of three main parts: giving versus receiving feedback, teacher feedback, and feedback types.

➢ Parts one and two consisted of one or two closed questions followed by one or more open-ended questions. For example:

**1. Giving and receiving peer feedback**

**a) Generally, did you find your classmates' feedback on your assignments useful?**
*Please choose only one answer.*

_____Yes, very useful.

_____Yes, useful.

_____Hmm, no, not particularly useful.

_____No, not useful at all.

Q1b: Please explain why you found/did not find the feedback from your classmates useful?

➢ Part three (feedback types) consisted of a closed question followed by two open questions:

**3. Feedback types**
**a) Please check the statement that best expresses your opinion about receiving feedback**
*Please choose only one answer.*

_____I prefer to receive only teacher feedback.

_____I prefer to receive only peer feedback.

_____I prefer to receive both teacher and peer feedback.

_____I prefer to receive no feedback.

Q3b: On this course, peer feedback has been done face-to-face in class/online, written and anonymous. What are the benefits/problems of doing feedback this way?

Q3c: On some courses, peer feedback is done face-to-face in class/online, written and anonymous. What are the benefits/potential problems of doing feedback this way?

# Results

➢ We received a total of 33 responses: 21 from the undergraduate English class, and 12 from the writing class.

➢ We detected general tendencies in the responses across the two groups of students.

| Q1a. **Generally, did you find your classmates' feedback on your assignments useful?** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Response options** | **Responses Group 1** | **Responses Group 2** |
| Yes, very useful | 4 (19%) | 0 |
| Yes, useful | 11 (52.4%) | 10 (83.3%) |
| Hmm, no not particularly useful | 5 (23.8%) | 2 (16.6%) |
| No, not useful at all | 1 (4.8%) | 0 |

## Please explain why you found/did not find the feedback from your classmates useful (Q1b):

➤ Useful to have assignments assessed by a "second pair of eyes". (Group 1)
➤ "Interesting to hear others' point of view". (Group 2)
➤ "Students see things different than the teacher". (Group 2)

## But:

➤ The feedback received was wrong, confusing, too superficial, or not specific or constructive enough. (Group 1)
➤ Classmates lack competence to provide constructive feedback. (Group 2)
➤ Feedback suffered because reviewers differed too much in academic level. (Group 2)

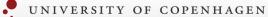| Q1c. Generally, did you find it useful to read and comment on your classmates' assignments? | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Response options** | **Responses Group 1** | **Responses Group 2** |
| Yes, very useful | 6 (28.6%) | 1 (8.3%) |
| Yes, useful | 10 (47.6%) | 8 (66.6%) |
| Hmm, no not particularly useful | 4 (19%) | 3 (25%) |
| No, not useful at all | 1 (4.8%) | 0 |

## Please explain why you found/did not find the process of giving feedback useful (Q1d):

➢ It was "good practice giving constructive feedback". (Group 1)

➢ "Putting your understanding of a subject into thought can help you to further understand the topic in question". (Group 1)

➢ Useful to see how others had solved the task. (Group 2)

➢ Students enjoyed the challenge of giving helpful feedback. (Group 2)

## But:

➢ "Giving feedback is difficult so some of my feedback may have been not elaborate enough, at the same time not that useful for me". (Group 2)

➢ The feedback "did not really help me to reflect/gain a new perspective on my own texts" as classmates were struggling with very different issues. (Group 2)

| Q2a. **Generally, did you find the teacher's feedback on your assignments useful?** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Response options** | **Responses Group 1** | **Responses Group 2** |
| Yes, very useful | 12 (57.1%) | 9 (75%) |
| Yes, useful | 7 (33.3%) | 3 (25%) |
| Hmm, no not particularly useful | 2 (9.5%) | 0 |
| No, not useful at all | 0 | 0 |

**Please explain why you found/did not find the feedback from your teacher useful (Q2b):**

➢ The "teacher is the expert" and "knows what he's doing". (Group 1)

➢ Teacher feedback "detailed", "thorough", "clear", "concise", "real feedback" and "incredibly useful". (Both groups)

➢ It made students aware of mistakes they made routinely. (Group 2)

➢ Teacher feedback was "indeed the only way to improve my assignments". (Group 2)

➢ The oral, individual feedback was the most useful. (Group 2)

| Q3a. **Please check the statement that best expresses your opinion about receiving feedback** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Response options** | **Responses Group 1** | **Responses Group 2** |
| I prefer to receive only teacher feedback | 5 (23.8%) | 2 (16.6%) |
| I prefer to receive only peer feedback | 0 | 0 |
| I prefer to receive both teacher and peer feedback | 16 (76.2%) | 10 (83.3%) |
| I prefer to receive no feedback | 0 | 0 |

# RESULTS FOR QUESTION 3B:

# ON THIS COURSE, PEER FEEDBACK HAS BEEN DONE FACE-TO-FACE IN CLASS/ONLINE, WRITTEN AND ANONYMOUS. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS/PROBLEMS OF DOING FEEDBACK THIS WAY?

## What are the benefits/problems of face-to-face feedback?

➢ Face-to-face feedback is personal, polite and diplomatic because it is delivered orally and in person. (Group 2)

➢ It is interactive as you can "pose questions and explain yourself", exchange opinions and generally engage in a discussion about the written text. (Group 2)

➢ It is clear and effective as it facilitates communication and thus understanding. (Group 2)

**But:**

➢ "The time is kind of not enough" to provide sufficiently thorough feedback. (Group 2)

➢ The diversity in fields of study and topics is a problem. (Group 2)

➢ Criticizing a classmate's work can be awkward and compromise the feedback. (Group 2)

## What are the benefits/problems of online feedback?

➢ Online feedback is anonymous so more "precise", honest and less intimidating. (Group 1)

➢ The anonymity "because I often feel a little unsure of my assignments and would not like for everyone to know it was me who made it". (Group 1)

➢ Beneficial to receive feedback from more than one person. (Group 1)

## But:

➢ The anonymity of online feedback may encourage insensitive comments from classmates and compromise the thoroughness of the feedback. (Group 1)

➢ The feedback "can be completely wrong" and online feedback does not give students the opportunity to ask clarifying questions. (Group 1)

# Conclusion

➢ The students in both contexts found giving feedback as useful as receiving it.

➢ But they found the teacher feedback particularly useful.

➢ And they were generally happy with the kind of feedback they had engaged in (online vs face-to-face).

➢ Students need and want feedback.

# Thank you for listening!

## Any questions?

# References

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