

Feedback Learning In Faculty of Hotel & Tourism, UiTM Terengganu: A millennial's Perspectives

Harnizam Zahari

Faculty of Hotel & Tourism, Universiti Teknologi MARA,
Cawangan Terengganu, 23000, Dungun, Terengganu

Razlan Adli Zain

Faculty of Hotel & Tourism, Universiti Teknologi MARA,
Cawangan Terengganu, 23000, Dungun, Terengganu

Rahman Abdullah

Faculty of Hotel & Tourism, Universiti Teknologi MARA,
Cawangan Terengganu, 23000, Dungun, Terengganu

Nazarudin Derani

Faculty of Hotel & Tourism, Universiti Teknologi MARA,
Cawangan Terengganu, 23000, Dungun, Terengganu

Mohamed Muneer Samsudin

Faculty of Hotel & Tourism, Universiti Teknologi MARA,
Cawangan Terengganu, 23000, Dungun, Terengganu

Radzuan Noor Armia

Faculty of Hotel & Tourism, Universiti Teknologi MARA,
Cawangan Terengganu, 23000, Dungun, Terengganu

ABSTRACT

Feedback learning in practical classes is seen as an important tool to gain input for improvisation, however, due to inconsistency of rubrics, assessment and the nature of formative feedback among lecturers, it is difficult to be conducted. Feedback learning with the help of technology (helps in standardizing assessment rubrics and timing of quality feedbacks, enable this information to be delivered to the students and lecturers gain knowledge in the process. The millennials seems to place high importance in feedback learning through technology since this functions as a medium for them to improvise in many aspects.

Keywords: feedback learning, rubrics assessment, millennial students

INTRODUCTION

Feedback learning has been around in the academic structure for a long time. However, only until recently, this element is being designed quite cohesively in order to benefit totally from it, both for the students and the academicians.

Although there are many arguments surrounding feedback learning mechanisms and its nature, it is a mutual agreement among academicians, parents and the millennials students that feedback learning is a very useful tool to enable each stakeholder understand their job,

their children's progress and the student's understanding about their subject. The main focus would be the millennials students (Born 1982 - 2000)

LITERATURE REVIEW

An individual going through an active learning process usually constructs their own interpretation and understanding of the learned subject. This is further supported by Vygotsky (1978) that indicate an individual's knowledge construction can be much enhanced and improvised under proper tutelage of an adults or peers. In higher learning institutions, lecturers are shouldering this responsibility to students through means of feedback in formative assessments. Several studies have shown and highlight the importance of well-planned feedback that enables student improvisation (Sadler, 1998; Falchikov, 1995; Stefani, 1998; Weaver, 2006).

Abundance definitions and characterizations exist in defining feedback and feedback learning process. Feedback is defined as "all dialogue to support learning in both formal and informal situations" (Askew & Lodge, 2000). In addition to that, according to Ramaprasad (1983), "feedback is information about the gap between the actual level and the reference level of a system parameter which is used to alter the gap in some way". It is important to clarify the many definition of feedback that exists in the literature. In this paper, the definition stands as "feedback as a process that guides students to close the gap between their current and desired performance".

In terms of formative assessment, there are studies that have shown learning and feedbacks are positively interrelated (Orsmond, Merry, & Reiling, 2000) and that feedback provided through formative assessments do motivate students and enhance their learning (Yorke, 2003). Positive feedback can have significant impact on student learning (Young, 2000; Nicol & MacFarlane Dick, 2006). Some studies show increased levels of motivation through feedback, as it helps them in two ways: reinforcing and recognizing their efforts in the learning process (Hyland, 2000; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001). While positive feedback is noted for its enhancing effects, while negative feedback on the contrary does diminish students' engagement and motivation (Alton Lee, 2003). On the other hand, It is also highlighted by some authors (E.G., Orsmond, Merry, & Reiling, 2002) that providing positive and negative feedback should lead students to a deeper understanding of the topic/ subject matter.

In terms of timely feedback, a good deal of discussion exists in the literature on enhanced student learning (Tshibalo, 2005; Trotter, 2006; Hattie & Timperley, 2007). The core aim of feedback is to increase students' understanding of their knowledge or skill in a specific or general area of content that is part of the learning objectives and outcomes (Retna & Cavana, 2013). One important consideration is when to give students their feedback and what is a good timeframe for it. One view strongly advocates that feedback is only useful to students if it is given in a timely fashion (Weaver, 2006). This is to avoid students making further incorrect assumptions, confusions or errors as feedback is conceptualized as reinforcement (Paige, 1966; Sullivan, Schutz, & Baker, 1971; Gibbs, 2002). In comparison, there are studies that claim that delayed feedback is more useful than immediate feedback for learning and retention of knowledge and skills for students (Butler, Karpicke, & Roediger, 2007). On the other hand (e.g., Butler & Henry, 2008) suggest that the correct timing of giving feedback, both immediate and delayed, has positive learning impacts for students. The importance of giving feedbacks in the right time frame is still a cause for concern in higher education, as in some instances students only get their feedback after completion of their courses (Gibbs, 2006). To overcome this issue, formative assessment needs to be planned in such a manner where students can get their feedback and use it for improving their

learning before their final examination or at the end of the course (Trotter, 2006). The use of technology can aid in the provision of timely feedback (Ribchester, France, & Wakefield, 2008).

According to William (2007), feedback must enable students to act on current or future learning outcomes (William & Black, 1996). He further highlighted that it is imperative for lecturers to ensure students take necessary action in order to close the feedback gap loop (Sadler, 1989). The inability to close the gap either by students or lecturers may results in feedback being irrelevant. Although there's a lot of time and intellectuals thinking being spent in order to provide feedback, it is a worthy effort in enhancing learning in higher learning institution (Hattie & Timperley, 2007), and the failure of taking any action, makes it a huge waste.

Although feedback is important for the learning process, the quality of feedback should not be understated. (Retna & Cavana, 2013). Comprehensibility, poor handwriting (Race, 2001), inadequate information (Carless, 2006), judgmental comments (James, McInnis, & Devlin, 2002) and grading without any written comments (Swann & Arthur, 1998) are a few examples that affect the quality of feedback to students. The main objectives of feedback is to enable learning in a manner that students are able to understand their current ability of a particular module, and to further improve and close the gap between their actual and required performances (Retna & Cavana, 2013). The discussion above shows that feedback and its quality are equally important in order to allow improvisation of the learning process and the increment of the teaching quality. Thus, providing feedbacks in any subjects learning outcomes should be taken seriously and cohesively.

DISCUSSIONS OF FEEDBACK LEARNING IMPORTANCE: MILLENNIAL'S STUDENTS

Having grown up in an era of global, direct communication and media saturation, the millennials have become much more selective with the messages they choose to pay attention to (Powers and Valentine, 2013), thus these messages (promotional or not) need to be as customized and personal as possible (Talbot, 2012). As a result, feedback learning for them should be delivered to them each individually so that they understand their path towards better understanding.

Millennials specific attitude towards education is also considered a very interesting topic in the literature. As their specific traits influence to a great extent the way they perceive and relate to education in general and higher education in particular (Nimon, 2007). In this context the first specific characteristic of generation Y is that its representatives are much more educated and they follow more education cycles during their lifetime than the representatives of the previous, X, generation for instance (Novak, 2012). Thus, their understanding towards academics content should be much more delineated than their predecessors, so that they have close or similar understanding with Gen x, that gets their understanding much from their experience in the workforce. Consequently, academician should strive to deliver better feedback learning so that each millennials are not being left out of their improvisation process.

Their education phases will move from undergraduate to postgraduate in the hospitality industry without any intervals in the working environment, which differ from Gen x, take will take time to gain experience in the industry before pursuing postgraduate studies.

The technological revolution of the last century has also fundamentally changed the way millennial students learn and access information. If for previous generations these actions took a long time and used to involve visits to the library or gathering information from peers and groups, the millennials cherish the speed of accessing information using the Internet (websites

like Wikipedia) as the main tool for information gathering (Nimon, 2007). On the other hand, the usage of the Internet as a primary source of information, coupled with a certain lack of substance in the area of educational ethics can create top-level issues often materialized in the form of plagiarism cases (Beard, 2003). Therefore another concept arises in close correlation with how they relate to higher education, namely the so-called "academic integrity", defined briefly as intellectual honesty, based on five values: honesty, trust, justice, respect and responsibility (Cole and Schwartz, 2013).

CONCLUSION

The discussion above indicates that in order for universities to improvise on their respective modules and programs, teaching and learning processes, attention should be placed and exercised in feedbacks of each subjects. Although there are differing opinions in many aspects, timing being the main area of disagreement, there is a large agreement of the importance and value of feedback either for the students or the programs itself. An effective feedback is something that is still argued, in terms of its timing, formative or summative, quality of the feedback, the approach and much more. On the other hand, it is also agreed consensually that technology helps a lot nowadays in providing feedback and the ability to enhance it to the next level. The Millennial's on the other hand, is a group of students that appreciate feedback, especially through technology, since it is a medium they are very comfortable with. The timing of feedback for the Millennial's should be soon and not later in the semester, since they value feedback that they can use to improvise.

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