A SHIFT IN FOCUS

Due to an inability to gain ethical approval in time to present the research proposal submitted to the HEA conference, we would like to share with you the theoretical rational and survey findings gathered for phase one of the research project. The planned research will now take place in phase two.
AIMS OF THIS SESSION

• Outline the Contemporary Context of Feedback Provision in Higher Education

• Embed the Use of Audio Technology for Feedback Provision within a Dialogic Approach to Pedagogy

• Discuss the Key Findings of a Preliminary Survey Focusing on Students Use of Audio Feedback in Light of Dialogic Pedagogy

• Identify Future Directions In Research Focusing Upon Audio Feedback
Feedback is central to the development of successful student learning (Race, 2001; Race, 2008).

The role of formative and summative feedback (Race, 2008).

The written (text) form of feedback is a common method of providing feedback in higher education (Nicol, 2010).

(See Handley et al 2007; Taras 2002; Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Race, 2001; Race, 2008)
• Research (e.g. Hounsell, 2008) outlines problems with current feedback practice:
  ○ Few students read or engage with their feedback (Lunt & Corran, 2010)
  ○ Students find feedback difficult to implement in their future work (feed-forward) (Weaver, 2006)
  ○ Students consider comments too short or written in a way that is difficult to understand (Gibbs, 2006)
  ○ Students find comments Impersonal and lacking in relevance to their submitted assignment (Nicol, 2010)
FEEDBACK AND THE EMERGING PEDAGOGICAL RATIONALE

• Many of these problems are heightened by the conclusiveness of one-way written feedback comments (Carless et al, 2011).

• We take a broad definition of feedback as:

  “All dialogue to support learning in both formal and informal situations”

  (Askew & Lodge, 2000, p. 1)

• See feedback as being part of a dialogic pedagogy, whereby all good assessment feedback is interactive and socially constructed (e.g. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Beumont, O’Doherty, & Shannon, 2008; Price, Handly & Millar, 2011; Carless et al, 2011; Nical, 2010).
INTRODUCING DIALOGIC PEDAGOGY

• Linked to contributions from various disciplines, dialogic pedagogy has been developed in reference to works as diverse as Freire, Bakhtin and Vygotsky (Sarid, 2012).

• Dialogic education is now seen as a distinctive socio-cultural field within educational thought (Alexander, 2005).

• Protagonists of this field all hold the fundamental acknowledgment that social dialogue underpins the foundations of learning, knowledge and the self (Sarid, 2012).
THE IMPORTANCE OF DIALOGUE

• Yakubinsky and Eskin (1997 [1923]) stressed the naturalness of dialogue in contrast the artificialness of monologue.

• They argued monologue is allied to power and authority, which hinders the learner’s cognitive development by restraining their ability and confidence to respond.

“Monologism is closely connected to written texts” (Kvernbekk, 2012, p. 967)

• Social dialogue is characterised by language, prosody, non-verbal utterances, and interaction.

• The visual and auditory channels of social dialogue enable the speaker to convey an extra dimension of meaning beyond that articulated by language or words alone (Yakubinsky & Eskin, 1997 [1923]; Skidmore & Murakami, 2016).
We can distinguish between the extremes of monologue, represented by a written text, and dialogue, represented by natural face-to-face conversation (Yakubinsky & Eskin, 1997 [1923]).

Between these two extremes lies a range of intermediate forms of utterance, that contain varying degrees of non-verbal bodily movements and prosody emulating from the intensity, intonation and timbre of the speaker’s voice, which are crucial to the exchange of meaning between participants (Yakubinsky & Eskin, 1997 [1923]).
DIALOGUE AND THOUGHT

• Major interest from the socio-cultural perspective is how individual consciousness and social dialogue are interconnected (Skidmore & Murakami, 2016).

“The true direction of the development of thinking is not from the individual to the socialised, but from the social to the individual” (Vygotsky 1962, pp.19-20).

• Bakhtin (1984 [1929]: 74) notion of ‘micro-dialogue’ — consciousness seen as an inner-conversation between the student and the tutor.

• It is this inner exchange in the mind, spurred by a social dialogue with a tutor, which promotes self-reflection and enables the student to develop new understandings in their cognitive activity (Skidmore & Murakami, 2016).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning as a Dialogic Process</th>
<th>Learning as Information Transmission</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Learning seen as a ongoing process occurring on both social and individual planes <em>(Mercer &amp; Howe, 2012)</em></td>
<td>• Freire (2000) - The banking concept of teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Contains different degrees of dialogic exchanges <em>(Yakubinsky &amp; Eskin, 1997 [1923]</em>)</td>
<td>• Emphasis on monological modes of speech – ‘The ultimate word’ <em>(Bakhtin, 1984, p. 292-293)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Student as active participant <em>(Carless et al, 2011)</em></td>
<td>• Students absorb, replicate and apply basic information and skills <em>(Alexander, 2005).</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Value of student tutor relations <em>(Buber, 1992)</em></td>
<td>• Tutor allied to power and authority <em>(Yakubinsky, 1997 [1923]</em>)</td>
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THE PROBLEM WITH MONOLOGIC WRITTEN MODES OF FEEDBACK

• Problem with adjusting different elements of written modes of feedback (e.g. timeliness)
• Extreme form of monologism - Lower quality of utterance
• Relative complexity of written texts due to meaning only expressed through words alone
• Open to misinterpretation
• Reduces understanding via ‘inner dialogue’
• Embeds power and authority of the Tutor
• Reduces confidence to visit tutor to clarify feedback

Written feedback represented as information transmission provided by the tutor to the student

(Carless et al, 2011; Nicol, 2010; Skidmore & Murakami, 2016; Yakubinsky & Eskin, 1997 [1923])
ENHANCING ASSIGNMENT FEEDBACK THROUGH DIALOGUE

- What is required is a fundamental reconceptualization of the feedback process as more of an ongoing student-tutor dialogue, rather than purely information transmission (Carless et al., 2011; Nicol & Milligan, 2006).


- Aim to encourage the development of active student participation and self-regulation (Carless et al., 2011).

Feedback represented as a dialogic process between the tutor and the student.
This central framework suggests a feedback triangle containing three dimensions, which interplay to encourage/prohibit dialogic feedback in the discipline.

Technology enhanced feedback as a hopeful structural direction, which may allow for flexible, yet dialogic, feedback practice.
TECHNOLOGY ENHANCED FEEDBACK: AUDIO FEEDBACK

- Audio Technology on Turnitin allows the tutor to voice record their feedback comments rather than write them.
- We are interested in audio feedback as a potential way to practically and feasibly facilitate dialogic feedback.
- Audio feedback a form of ‘monologic dialogue’?
- Audio feedback may be seen as an intermediate form of utterance - containing prosody of the tutor and a naturalness of the utterance.
- Possibility of ‘monologic dialogue’ encouraging ‘pure dialogue’?

(Yakubinsky & Eskin, 1997 [1923])
APPLYING AUDIO FEEDBACK RESEARCH TO THE DIALOGIC FEEDBACK TRIANGLE

Research suggests audio feedback may better facilitate those elements of dialogic feedback originating from cognitive and structural dimensions...

Cognitive Dimension
- Tutors’ voice adds meaning and clearer to understand (McFarlane & Wakeman, 2010; Roberts, 2008)
- More likely to provide strategies for solving issues (Rotherham, 2008)
- Students more likely to feed-forward audio comments (Ice et al, 2007)
- Students are more likely to open their audio feedback (Lunt & Corran, 2010)

Structural Dimension
- Audio feedback is significantly quicker for tutors to produce (Lunt & Corran, 2010).
- Ease of distribution (Merry & Orsmond, 2008)
- Student satisfaction with audio mode of feedback (Voelkel & Mello, 2014)

Social-affective Dimension
- Students find audio feedback more personalised (Merry & Orsmond, 2008)
- Teaching presence?
- Help tutors show emotion and interest in feedback?
- Impact on student confidence to visit tutor for further feedback?

Yet, more research is needed focusing upon the social-affective dimension and audio feedback.
THE DIALOGIC POTENTIAL OF AUDIO FEEDBACK

To fully understand the potential of audio feedback, further empirical data grounded in theory is needed to support and extend upon what previous studies have found, while providing a clear pedagogic rational.

We argue that providing students with audio feedback may provide a rich set of opportunities for multi-layer dialogic engagement through tutor audio feedback, self-reflective feedback, encouraging tutor face-to-face feedback, and re-listening to audio feedback.
SURVEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

• How do students use and interact with feedback provided in audio format to support their learning and how does this differ from their use of written feedback?

• To what degree do students believe audio files are an effective means of experiencing the relational (social-affective) elements of feedback provision, usually found in face-to-face classes?

• Between audio and written feedback, which do students believe better stimulates dialogue between themselves and their academic staff concerning learning outcomes?

Subsidiary research questions were:

• What relationship exists between the provision of audio feedback and student satisfaction and how does this differ from student satisfaction with written feedback?

• Between audio, written, and face-to-face feedback, what is the preferred form of feedback delivery?
PARTICIPANTS AND SURVEY DESIGN

Cross sectional design with comparisons being made between different approaches to providing feedback (audio and written types) within two institutions.

Audio feedback only modules and comparative modules given survey.

Two questionnaires were developed using the same question content.
KEY FINDINGS

Results gathered from survey questions focusing on structural and cognitive elements of audio feedback support previous research findings (see…).

Findings Relating to the Social-Affective Impact of Audio-Feedback

**Survey A Findings:**
- 67% ‘A’ or ‘SA’ - “My audio feedback feels more personalised, than written feedback”.
- 67% ‘A’ or ‘SA’ - “Audio feedback helped me to experience my tutor’s presence in my learning, more so than written feedback”.
- 63% ‘A’ or ‘SA’ - “Audio feedback helped me to experience my tutor’s interest in my learning, more so than written feedback”.
- 46% ‘A’ or ‘SA’ - “Audio feedback made me feel more confident to approach my tutor in the future for further face-to-face feedback”.

**Survey B Findings:**
- 75% audio feedback/40% written feedback ‘SA’ – “The feedback was personalised to my assignment”
- 25% audio feedback/ 0% written feedback ‘SA’ – “The feedback helped me to experience my tutors presence in my learning”
- 37% audio feedback/ 18% written feedback ‘SA’ – “The feedback helped me to experience my tutors interest in their learning”
- 38% audio feedback/18% written feedback ‘SA’ – “The feedback made me feel more confident to visit my tutor for further face-to-face feedback”
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS:
THE SOCIAL-AFFECTIVE IMPACT OF AUDIO-FEEDBACK

Management of relationships influences the way students’ engage with feedback

Audio feedback may help tutors to show emotion and bridge the social distance

Audio feedback may positively impact upon the perceived student-tutor power balance

Without further research we cannot claim substantially that audio feedback encourages further social dialogue...
CONCLUSION: POSSIBLE WAYS FORWARD

• In comparison to written feedback, audio feedback may be viewed as being an increasingly dialogic form of utterance which may help to facilitate some aspects constituting dialogic forms of feedback.

Yet, does this form of ‘monologic dialogue’ do enough to encourage and facilitate the reconceptualization of feedback as a dialogic process?

• This survey only provided preliminary investigation with students who received audio-feedback once on a summative assignment. Further research is needed which focuses on the long term effects of providing audio feedback on student tutor relations and student cognitive performance.
REFERENCES:


REFERENCES (CONTINUED):


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