Implementing Feedback Activities in a Curriculum Planning Course to Foster Preservice Teachers' Feedback Literacy: A Critical Reflection

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Abstract *In the feedback literature, attention has been paid to digital literacy, feedback literacy, and digital feedback methods (DFMs). However, it is also substantial to investigate how to incorporate DFMs into lesson plans for English language teaching (ELT). Given that DFMs are advantageous for multifaceted reasons (see Schluer, 2022), it would be salient to guide preservice teachers (Pts) in applying them when planning ELT lessons. This involves their skills for designing and facilitating the feedback process from "ecological and sociomaterial perspectives" (Chan & Luo, 2021, p. 2). Because teacher feedback literacy is still in its infancy (O'Donovan, Rust, & Price, 2015), practical guidance for training Pts in that regard is rare. Bearing this gap in mind, this paper first reconceptualizes teacher feedback literacy by applying a transdisciplinary approach (Schluer, Rütti-Joy, & Unger, 2023) and experiential learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2012). Second, it critically reflects on feedback activities for guiding Pts in incorporating DFMs into the design of course and lesson plans. Building upon the reconceptualized framework of teacher feedback literacy and the teaching experiences, the chapter closes with suggestions for future feedback practices.*

Keywords *teacher feedback literacy; digital feedback methods; teacher training; curriculum planning; digital tools*

1. Introduction

The debate over feedback has reached a consensus on viewing it as a process (e.g., Chan & Luo, 2021). This conceptualization of feedback rejects "a one-way transmission of information" (Winstone, Nash, Parker, & Rowntree, 2017, p. 18) from teachers to learners. Effective feedback exchanges require teachers' capacity to raise learners' agentive awareness for active participation. Hence, a closer inspection of teacher feedback literacy is crucial. While a large body of this research exists, the literature on teacher training to foster teacher feedback literacy remains scarce (cf. Schluer, Rütti-Joy, & Unger, 2023, p. 161). Moreover, the conceptualization of teacher feedback literacy from a reductionist view no

longer aligns with the burgeoning feedback theories (cf. Schluer et al., 2023, p. 158). In addressing the gaps, this chapter critically reflects on feedback activities for guiding preservice teachers (Pts) in incorporating digital feedback methods (DFMs) into the design of course and lesson plans. In addition, it applies a transdisciplinary approach (Schluer et al., 2023) and experiential learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2011) to revisit teacher feedback literacy and provide pedagogical guidance for future feedback practices.

2. Teacher Feedback Literacy

Although feedback literacy has been long researched with a shift towards learner-centered feedback practices (Zhan, 2023, p. 687), the conceptualization of teacher feedback literacy is still in its infancy (O'Donovan, Rust, & Price, 2015). For example, Carless and Winstone (2022) distinguished teacher feedback literacy from student feedback literacy. They emphasized that feedback-literate teachers should be able to create learning environments which foster students' "feedback literacy capabilities" (Carless & Winstone, 2020, pp. 2–4), i.e. seeking, making sense of, and using feedback (Malecka, Boud, & Carless, 2020). Teacher feedback literacy places emphasis on the role of a teacher in designing and managing the feedback process (Carless & Winstone, 2020, p. 2). It defines teachers' responsibility in guiding learners to recognize the value of feedback (Heron, Medland, Winstone, & Pitt, 2021, p. 3) for the purpose of self-regulated learning (Carless & Winstone, 2020; Xu & Carless, 2017; Zhan, 2022, 2023), including developing self-monitoring and self-evaluation skills (Xu & Carless, 2017, p. 1).

An increasingly prevalent approach to comprehending feedback takes "ecological and sociomaterial perspectives" (Chan & Luo, 2021, p. 2) into account. This involves textual, interpersonal, instructional, and sociocultural factors (Chong, 2021, pp. 8–9; cf. Schluer & Liu, 2024). In response to this, Carless and Winstone (2020) coined a three-layered model of teacher feedback literacy: design dimension (designing activities to support learners in becoming familiar with feedback and appreciating feedback), relational dimension (overcoming emotional barriers raised by sociocultural and interpersonal factors), and pragmatic dimension (considering teachers' and students' identities when using norms in feedback dialogues) (pp. 5–9). The model is built on the principle of responsibility-sharing but takes fixed roles for teachers and learners as its premise. Consequently, it fails to fulfill its promise of deconstructing the hegemonic power of teachers (cf. Schluer et al., 2023), because the fixed roles retain a convention of unequal power between teachers and learners. As Tai, Bearman, Gravett, and Molloy (2021) corroborated, Carless and Winstone's (2020) framework suggests teachers' unilateral decisions about when and how feedback should take place and what should be included in feedback (pp. 2, 6). Rather than regarding learners as inherent agents in the feedback process, Carless and Winstone's (2020) model relegates learners to passive roles, i.e. "less knowledgeable" (Tai et al., 2023, p. 206; cf. Gravett, 2022, p. 3) learners. It contrasts with the purpose of inverting the status quo to enable learner-centered feedback interactions (Tai et al., 2023, p. 209; cf. Schluer et al., 2023).

"Feedback as a social process" (Tai et al., 2023, p. 202) requires a conceptual reframing of teacher feedback literacy. The pathway to going beyond "a binary understanding"

(Schluer et al., 2023, p. 158) of teachers' and learners' responsibilities is acknowledging the continually changing nature of feedback contexts (Gravett, 2022; Tai et al., 2023). In doing so, teachers and learners are both situated in learning positions where the teachers' prior knowledge in feedback might not be operable (cf. Gravett, 2022; Tai et al., 2023). Therefore, all agents (teachers and learners) ought to become proactive, cooperative, and responsible of the feedback process (cf. Schluer et al., 2023, p. 155). In their efforts to facilitate this transformation, teachers need to partake in negotiating knowledge resources on individual, institutional, and interpersonal levels in the feedback process (Schluer et al., 2023, pp. 157–158; cf. Malecka et al., 2020; cf. Tai et al., 2023). In that regard, teacher feedback literacy should be associated with experiential learning (Tai et al., 2023; Zhan et al., 2022). Empirical evidence has shown that schoolteachers found experiential learning beneficial in enhancing their feedback literacy, such as writing reflective journals or conducting self-assessments (Zhan, 2022, p. 118). Experiential learning resides in "the learning situation" (Kolb & Kolb, 2011, p. 44), which might motivate not only teachers but also learners to reflect, think, and act upon influential actors that facilitate effective feedback interactions.

Supported by digital technologies, feedback can be conducted in manifold modes (e.g. written, audio, visual, multimodal), directions (e.g. teacher-student, peer-to-peer), with varying timing (e.g. synchronous, asynchronous), as well as methods and tools (e.g. Wiki feedback) (Schluer, 2022). Crucially, the use of technology and tools is not neutral (Gravett, 2022; Schluer et al., 2023; Tai et al., 2023). Teachers' ability to facilitate discussions about "material-economic" (Tai et al., 2023, p. 205) and "socio-political" (Tai et al., 2023, p. 206) power and structures with learners before, during, and after the feedback practices becomes requisite (Schluer et al., 2023; Schluer & Liu, 2024). The multiplicity of factors surrounding feedback urges us to rethink a more comprehensible approach to developing teacher feedback literacy. Schluer et al. (2023) posited "a multimodal, transdisciplinary, and critical-transformative approach" (p. 159) to reach a pluralistic all-agent engagement. It expands to feedback strategies for fostering openness, mindfulness, and criticality (Tai et al., 2023, p. 210) in negotiating the interdepending and interplaying actors, including tools and sociolinguistic norms (Schluer et al., 2023, p. 161; Schluer & Liu, 2024).

Feedback as a social and discursive process (Schluer et al., 2023; Tai et al., 2023) requires continuous learning from teachers. More specifically, feedback-literate teachers should flexibly cope with sustainable changes in the feedback interactions to maintain equity between themselves and their learners (i.e. knowing when and how to intervene) so that learners will not refrain from active participation. Building on Carless and Winstone's (2020) framework, strategies proffered by Schluer et al. (2023), and principles in experiential learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2011), the conceptualization of teacher feedback literacy can be supplemented with more features: 1) facilitating open and honest discussion of the envisaged learning outcome between teachers and learners when designing feedback activities; 2) negotiating meanings (e.g. sociolinguistic norms and perceptions of using tools) and co-constructing knowledge and skills with learners for adjusting the feedback process; 3) reflecting on and acting on what has been experienced for modifying feedback design and developing strategies for dynamic feedback contexts.

3. Designing Feedback Activities

Feedback activities were designed for a curriculum planning and materials development course for master's students of *Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages* (TESOL) in the winter term 2022/23 at a German university. In total, 11 students were enrolled and gave consent at the beginning of the course. The course provided the students with various teaching scenarios (e.g. improving writing skills via e-tandem learning; see chapter 2 on course re-design by Schluer in this volume). They were required to choose a scenario to design course and lesson plans collaboratively and learning activities individually. By the end of the course, the students should submit a paper to critically reflect on relevant theoretical frameworks (teaching methods/ approaches) and the activities that they had created. The implementation of DFMs in this course (15 sessions) was considered from three aspects: theoretical instructions, feedback practices, and students' own applications of DFMs in their course and lesson plans. The feedback activities were conducted in sessions 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 12 (see Table 1). Hence, not only the students incorporated feedback in their course design, but they likewise engaged in a variety of feedback activities during the curriculum planning seminar. To support Pts in accumulating experiences in feedback practices, the course activities were designed with specific learning contexts in mind where feedback timing, directions, methods, and tools varied.

Table 1: Digital Feedback Activities in the Curriculum Planning Course

Sessions	**Activities**	**Digital feedback methods**	**Digital tools**
4	Feedback on literature (Canagarajah, 2012; Guardado & Shi, 2007; Martin, 2015) Peer-to-peer; teacher-student Synchronous	Feedback in cloud editors	Google Docs
6	Feedback on literature (Malecka, Boud, & Carless, 2022) Peer-to-peer (Role play); teacher-student Synchronous; Asynchronous	Forum feedback	Wakelet
7	Feedback on literature (Erdemir & Yeşilçınar, 2021; He, & Yan, 2011; Pham, 2022) Teacher-student Synchronous	Poll feedback	Google Forms
8	Feedback on peers' group work progress Peer-to-peer; teacher-student Synchronous	Poll feedback	Mentimeter
10	Feedback on peers' presentations Peer-to-peer; teacher-student Asynchronous	Feedback in cloud editors	Padlet

Sessions	Activities	Digital feedback methods	Digital tools
12	Feedback on pros and cons of DFMs and digital tools Peer-to-peer; teacher-student Synchronous	Poll feedback	Mentimeter

The theoretical instructions were meant to raise Pts' awareness of the factors that are influential on the feedback process (e.g. sociocultural influences on online peer feedback by Guardado & Shi, 2007). Furthermore, they invited the Pts to discuss the literature on feedback literacy (e.g. Malecka et al., 2022) in order to gain theoretical knowledge of feedback principles and to incorporate feedback into course design. In line with the dimensions of feedback literacy, the activities were constructed in a stepwise manner: seeking, receiving, and using feedback. Additionally, the activities incorporated three DFMs, including feedback in cloud editors, forum feedback, and poll feedback. They were concerned with in- and outside-of-class possibilities (synchronous and asynchronous modes) and the learning contents (i.e. critical reflection on literature, groups' presentations). To implement them, various digital tools were utilized, such as Google Docs, Google Forms, Mentimeter, Padlet, and Wakelet. The use of the digital tools attempted to elicit a joint discussion of their affordances and limitations (DFMs and the tools) as a part of the reflection on the feedback process.

It should be noted that the feedback activities were designed before teacher feedback literacy was reconceptualized as stated above (section 2). The design of the curriculum planning course was therefore inconsistent with the literature review. The activities were intended to guide Pts in practicing feedback from both teachers' and learners' perspectives so that they can develop strategies for coping with barriers when implementing the DFMs. However, the design turned out to be problematic when the activities were implemented, which will be critically reflected in the following section.

4. Critical Reflection

The critical reflection draws on the instructor's own observations about students' participation in the feedback activities. Specifically, it aims to provide practical insights into Pts' attitudes towards DFMs and the use of digital tools. The following subsections will reconsider the feedback activities by responding to an updated literature review and applying the transdisciplinary approach in order to suggest some adaptive possibilities for future teaching practices.

4.1. Implementing the Feedback Activities

Session 4 combined collaborative and individual work on feedback in cloud editors. The instructor created a Google document for the students to synchronously answer literature-related questions in groups (see Table 1). Based on their answers, they should seek oral feedback from their peers and the instructor. The synchronous written electronic feedback was advantageous because the Pts could see who had contributed to the Google Docs. If they did not actively participate in it, the spotlight could easily be shined on them. It therefore seemed to increase their feedback engagement. Moreover, the written feedback activity left Pts ample time to thoroughly consider their arguments for the subsequent oral discussion, where they actively provided oral feedback to the instructor. However, the students did not interact with their peers during the discussion as anticipated, because they relied on the instructor's expertise to provide correct answers.

In session 6, the PTs were assigned to play the roles of teachers in a forum feedback activity. They should respond to their learners' quotes (e.g. feedback experience and attitudes towards peer feedback) on Wakelet (see Figure 1). Meanwhile, they needed to give feedback on their peers' comments both synchronously and asynchronously (for those who did not attend the class). This activity intended to train the Pts' skills to help their learners recognize the value of feedback, especially peer feedback. Because Wakelet allows the use of pseudonyms, the Pts actively participated in peer feedback exchanges without the fear of making mistakes or hurting peer relationships (see also Guardado & Shi, 2007, p. 446). They shared multilayered strategies for designing more learner-centered feedback activities and responded to their peers' posts. Through their feedback dialogue, the Pts became aware of the importance of teacher feedback literacy ("It is important to foster your students' feedback literacy as well as your own, instructor feedback literacy", Pt 3). At the same time, they could reflect on the literature and provide specific instructions for increasing learners' active engagement (see Figure 1). Apart from introducing the commenting function on Wakelet, the instructor did not illustrate other multimedia functions, such as inserting images or YouTube links, which could afford multimodal learning.

Session 7 used Google Forms to conduct a poll feedback activity. This activity employed the multiple-choice question function in Google Forms because it granted the possibility of giving answers from diverse perspectives (see Figure 2). The assigned questions were based on the literature (see Table 1) and students were allowed to select answers according to their own perceptions. The activity encouraged them to use their own words to demonstrate their comprehension of the literature. Moreover, because there were discrepancies in the answers, students showed more interest in seeking and providing peer feedback to argue for their positions.

Figure 1: Forum Feedback Activity on Wakelet

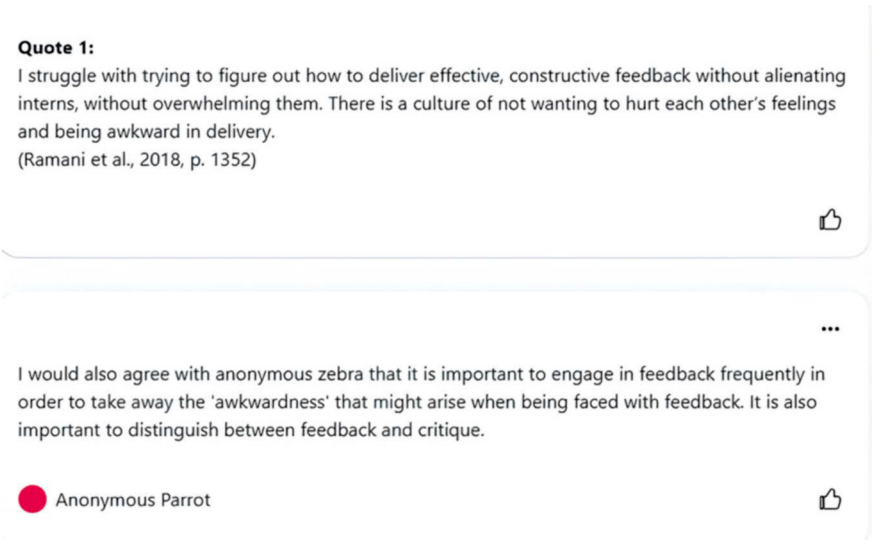
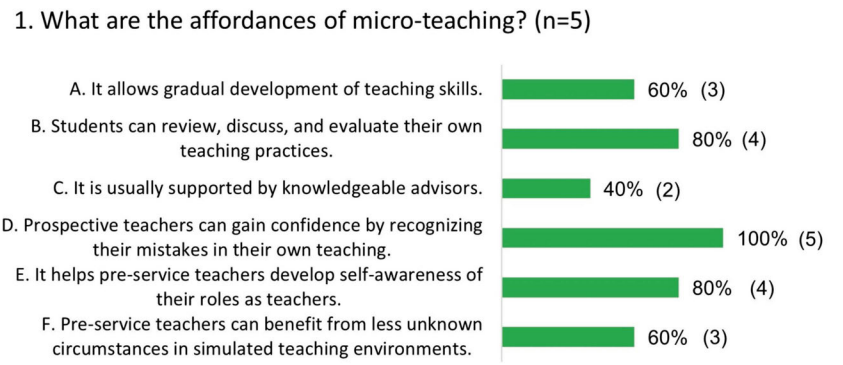
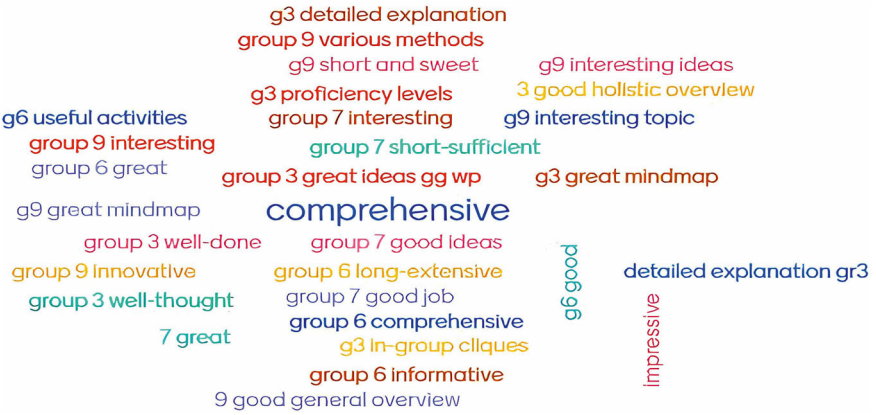


Figure 2: Poll Feedback Activity on Google Forms



Session 8 involved peer feedback on the group work progress. To provide peer feedback, the Pts needed to take notes while listening to their peers' presentations. The feedback activity was conducted through polling in Mentimeter, followed by verbal explanations. The word cloud function in Mentimeter allowed participants to write one or more key words when providing feedback, without great efforts. Using the word cloud as prompts (see Figure 3), the Pts were more motivated to give additional verbal feedback. They engaged in the oral feedback exchange as if they were introducing their visual product. As compared to the previous feedback activities, the peer interactions were much more frequent in this session. As a follow-up, the instructor invited the Pts to reflect on the impact that DFMs, digital tools and their features have on their motivations by comparing their learning experiences in the current session and in the previous sessions.

Figure 3: Word Cloud of the Poll Feedback on Peers' Presentations



In Session 10, the Pts were asked to provide asynchronous feedback on their peers' presentations via Padlet. However, only one student provided feedback on Padlet by the deadline. A likely reason is that the session was conducted shortly before the Christmas break. The instructor sent a reminder to the participants to request completion of the activity, but it only attracted a few more comments before session 11. Some examples are shown below:

> "Very informative framework and thoughtful lesson plan! I really enjoyed how the curriculum is not focused too much on language, and that the activities are varied. Some questions: How long have they (the participants) been in Germany? How does it affect their understanding of culture, thereby their contribution to the discussions? What are [sic] the use of digital tools? How are you going to tackle different proficiency levels? Will there be an incorporation of feedback?" (Pt 1)

> "Great outline of pre- & post-task, as well as input section. Love the vocabulary mindmap as well as the mid- & end-term revision. Some questions: Will it save more time to have the video as an asynchronous activity? How are you going to scaffold different language proficiencies? Apart from feedback via group chat, are there other possibilities for students to provide feedback? How does the test format look like?" (Pt 2)

Although the comments were constructive and provided the peers with some ideas for modifying their course designs, the Pts did not act upon the feedback, neither on Padlet nor in class. It seemed that they needed more time to reflect on their work by referring to the feedback they received. As a result, the activity did not succeed in the step of utilizing feedback as planned.

Session 12 discussed the advantages and disadvantages of DFMs. Based on the previous teaching experiences, the session applied the poll feedback method with an intention to pique the Pts' interest in partaking in the discussion. One of the objectives of this activity was to guide them in recalling their own learning experiences with various DFMs. Moreover, it aimed to deepen the Pts' knowledge of selecting DFMs for their own

teaching activities and enhance their abilities to apply the methods in different contexts. To achieve these aims, the session used two types of features in Mentimeter to conduct the poll activity: a word cloud and multiple-choice questions. In addition, a Likert-scale question in Google Forms was employed. The activity was conducted by asking questions (e.g. do you think there are more advantages than disadvantages to poll feedback activities?), polling, and discussing. To conduct the activity, the lecturer picked the key words from the word cloud to ask for further explanations. Not only did the student who wrote the key word gave oral feedback, but other students also participated in the discussion. Comparatively, the multiple-choice questions provided more materials to scaffold oral feedback production. Likewise, the Likert-scale questions visually presented diverse perceptions through the rating scale and thereby helped raise participants' interests in discussing the discrepancies.

Since the original course design did not yet follow a reformed understanding of teacher feedback literacy as advanced above in section 2, the implementation merely guided the Pts in experiencing and exploring the affordances and limitations of DFMs and digital tools. During the activities, the Pts needed to shift between teacher and learner roles. This was meant to help the Pts comprehend the tension caused by the power distance between teachers and learners as a prerequisite to becoming literate in designing and facilitating feedback dialogues. However, the implementation turned out to be constrained by the fixed roles of teachers and learners. Pts were either assigned to act out their expertise as teachers in providing feedback to their learners or played as learners to complete the feedback tasks assigned by the instructor. As learners, they were not encouraged to challenge the instructor's design of the feedback activities, even though they were at times reluctant to complete the tasks (see Sessions 4 and 10). The design did not create a chance for Pts to co-modify the feedback activities with the instructor. It failed to create modeling effects for Pts to observe how to design feedback process that are based on responsibility-sharing (Tai et al., 2023).

4.2. Suggestions for Future Feedback Practices

Applying the transdisciplinary approach (Schluer et al., 2023) and the experiential learning theory (Kolb & Kolb, 2011), future feedback practices and training programs that aim to foster teacher feedback literacy should adopt an open structure for modification. More importantly, the potential modification should be considered even before the implementation takes place. Thus, teachers can explain the contents and objectives of the feedback design to learners and ask for their learning goals as well as their motivation to participate. If teachers provide several feedback activity designs (various feedback directions, timing, methods, and tools instead of yes-or-no questions), learners might be more motivated to share their honest opinions. Moreover, learners might raise agentive awareness of feedback when being invited to co-design feedback activities. During the implementation, teachers need to remind learners of their learning objectives of the feedback activities. Learners should be intrinsically motivated to negotiate meanings and co-construct knowledge in order to adjust their feedback actions and roles in the feedback process. The responsibility is therefore shared intuitively, not given/ permitted by teachers.

In this vein, learners would also conceive themselves as responsible for reflecting on their feedback practices to become more strategic in their future feedback interactions.

Compared to asynchronous modes, synchronous feedback was found to be more motivating for learners to provide peer feedback. Because asynchronous feedback (e.g. audio feedback) merits multifaceted affordances (e.g. being easy to navigate) (Schluer, 2022, p. 63), strategies for increasing learners' participation in this mode should be recommended. When conducting asynchronous feedback activities, teachers can invite learners to select their group members (Myers, 2012, p. 58). Myers (2012) found out that because self-selected groups shared "trust, and relational satisfaction" (p. 58) among members, they contributed to "higher levels of commitment" (p. 58) than randomly assigned groups. In addition, clear labor division in group work might also help increase learners' motivation to participate (Lai, Lei, & Liu, 2016). For that, the instructor can remind learners to take on different roles in the group work: who takes notes during presentations or group discussions, who searches for literature to provide constructive suggestions, who formulates feedback, and who fine-tunes the language use in the feedback (see also Sauders, 1989, as cited in Lai et al., 2016, p. 81).

To improve efficiency during this process, group members can reach consensus on the deadlines of individual tasks, feedback methods, and digital tools in the first place (cf. Myres, 2012, p. 60). In creating a friendly climate in groups, these roles should not be fixed but negotiable (cf. Myres, 2012, p. 52), as members might need help from others. To instantiate, the negotiation of linguistic norms in the feedback needs diverse opinions (cf. Schluer & Liu, 2024). Overall, both joint and discrete efforts by each group member can be an invisible force among learners to complete their feedback production. If one of them is interested in completing the peer feedback task, other group members might follow because they had already shared equal work beforehand. It can create a monitoring effect among group members and across groups.

5. Conclusion

Teacher feedback literacy is not yet fully defined and intertwined with other disciplines. The implementation of the feedback activities presented in this chapter has revealed several limitations arising from the fixed roles of teachers and learners. Taking session 4 as an example for modification, the instructor could share responsibility with the Pts in the feedback process by asking them to formulate questions on their own to check their peers' comprehension. By that, learners would rather seek explanations (feedback) from their peers than from the instructor, because their peers are the producers of the questions. This way, learners' agentive awareness can be raised.

To facilitate learners' roles in co-designing feedback activities, teachers need to become more familiar with learners' affective and individual needs, learning goals, and sociocultural backgrounds (cf. Schluer & Liu, 2024). This can be realized by guiding learners in sharing their preferences for feedback contents, modes, methods, and digital tools before, during, and after feedback activities (cf. Schluer & Liu, 2024, p. 141). For a future-oriented feedback design (cf. Schluer et al., 2023, p. 159), the co-writing of reflective journals with learners would be necessary (cf. Kolb & Kolb, 2011; Zhan, 2022). Through reflec-

tive journals, learners can collaboratively reflect on the affordances and limitations of the feedback activities for a redesign. This can heighten learners' agentive awareness in the feedback process, because this step positions students as teacher colleagues, not as less knowledgeable learners.

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