

Practice Based Research

Through the Looking Glass

Students' Perception of Received Feedback

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Summary

This research aims to explore bilingual students' perception of *feedgeneral* - an umbrella term that refers to all dimensions and levels of 'feedback' – in relation to the students' learning disposition. The central question of this research is: what dimensions of written feedgeneral (feed back; feed up, feed forward) and which levels (task level; process level; self-regulation level; self level) do bilingual students find most useful (i.e. the feeling that it helps them), taking into account their learning disposition (motivation, stress level, and prior experience)? Research methods employed are questionnaires, interviews, and recordings of students' evaluations of feedgeneral received on an assignment. The results suggest that bilingual students perceive feed forward as most useful. The article includes a discussion and suggestions for further research.

1. Introduction

Most, if not all, teachers provide their students with *feedgeneral*; an umbrella term that refers to all dimensions and levels of ‘feedback’. An understanding of how students perceive *feedgeneral* is necessary to gain an understanding of the effectiveness of *feedgeneral*. This research explores students’ perception of received *feedgeneral* in relation to their learning disposition.

1.1 Research context and relevance

The research was conducted at a bilingual secondary school in The Netherlands.¹ The school is part of Pro-Feed, a collaborative three-year research project by Utrecht University and five secondary schools, which focuses on ways to improve the quality and quantity of *feedgeneral* at the participating schools. This article is our contribution to Pro-Feed as it explores bilingual students’ perception of *feedgeneral*. Our research complies with previous recommendations to take into account the students’ learning disposition, i.e. their motivation, stress level and (prior) experience (DeVincent et al. 2013, p.19). As such, the article provides input for Pro-Feed to consider students’ learning dispositions in their understanding of *feedgeneral*.

Moreover, the article adds to the body of existing literature on *feedgeneral*. A lot of research has been done on *feedgeneral* (e.g. Bruno & Leonor, 2010; Butler & Winne, 1995; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Kulhavy, 1989; Merrill, 1987), yet little is known about how bilingual students perceive *feedgeneral* (see De Kleijn et al., 2006; Hovardas et al., 2014). Even less is known about how the students’ learning disposition relates to their perception of *feedgeneral*. This research seeks to offer insights into this relationship.

¹ At request, the school remains anonymous in this article.

Finally, this article offers theoretical and empirical arguments for teachers to provide their students with specific dimensions or levels of feedgeneral and it shows a concrete way to do so, i.e. by using a feedgeneral model (Appendix A).

1.2 Theoretical framework

This paragraph firstly discusses the distinction between the various dimensions and levels of feedgeneral as made by Hattie and Timperley (2007). Secondly, it discusses existing literature on motivation and stress level (Cohen et al., 1983; Deci & Ryan, 2011; Holmes & Rahe, 1967; Vansteenkiste et al., 2007); as this has offered a way to comply with the suggestion of DeVincent et al. (2013, p.19) to include the learning disposition of the students in research on feedgeneral.

1.3.1 Dimensions and levels of feedgeneral

Hattie and Timperley define feedgeneral as “information provided by an agent [...] regarding aspects of one’s performance or understanding” (2007, p. 81).² They distinguish between three different dimensions of feedgeneral by asking three questions: where am I going?; how am I going?; and where to next?, also referred to as *feed up*, *feed back*, and *feed forward* (2007, p. 86).

Feed up provides comments on whether the task or performance matches the success criteria; *feed back* requires a teacher to provide comments that relate to “some expected standard, to prior performance, and/or to success or failure on a specific part of the task”; and *feed forward* focuses on enhancing challenges, encouraging self-regulation, a deeper understanding of the subject, and knowledge of goals that have or have not been reached and, foremost, how to reach them (Hattie and Timperley, 2007, p. 88-90).

² Hattie & Timperley (2007) use the term *feedback* to refer to all dimensions of feedback and *feed back* to refer to one particular dimension that is based upon the question ‘how am I going?’ For the purpose of this article, however, we have coined the term *feedgeneral* to refer to all dimensions, as to clearly distinguish from feed back which denotes one dimension.

Within the three dimensions, Hattie and Timperley identify four levels of feedgeneral: about the task (FT), about the processing of the task (FP), about self-regulation (FR), and about the self as a person (FS) (2007, p. 90) (Figure 1.1).

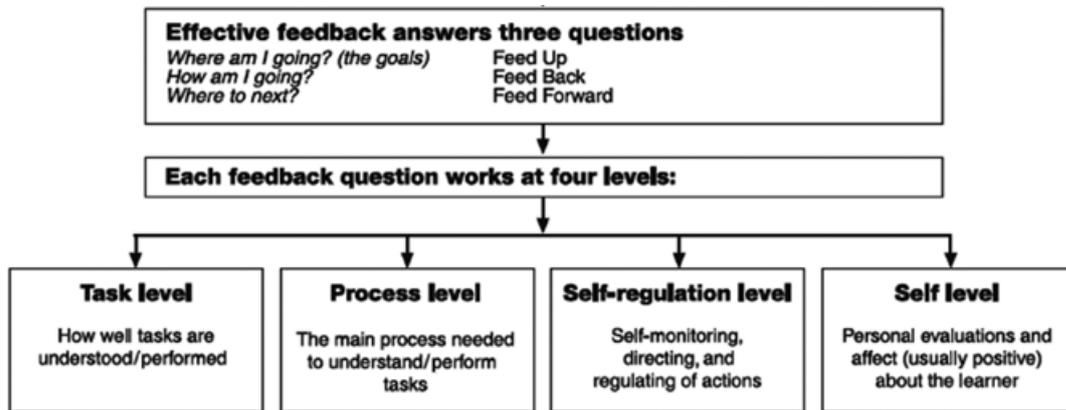


Figure 1.1: Dimensions and levels of feedgeneral (Hattie & Timperley 2007, p.87)

In our research, we have used a simplified feedgeneral model based on Hattie and Timperley (Figure 1.2). Appendix A includes a version of this model with concrete feedgeneral comments that teachers may give to their students.

Simplified version Feedgeneral Model	FT	FP	FR	FS
Feed Up	What is your goal?	How are you going to achieve this goal?	What methods and strategies are you going to apply to successfully achieve this goal?	Did you come up with smart goals? Why?
Feed Back	Did you achieve your goal/were you correct?	Were the process/steps you took, helpful in achieving the goal?	Were the methods and strategies you applied, helpful to achieve the goal?	What personal qualities were responsible for achieving/not achieving the goal?
Feed Forward	What would you do in the future to be even more successful in fulfilling this kind of assignment?	What could you change about your process to help you achieve your goals in the future more effectively?	What methods and strategies, could you inform/use the next time you do a similar assignment?	Do you want the student to keep up with what he/she is doing?

Figure 1.2: Feedgeneral model (simplified version) based on Hattie and Timperley (2007)

FT is the level of feedgeneral most often used by teachers (Airasian 1997). According to Hattie and Timperley, FT is only useful in learning when it supports other levels of feedgeneral; i.e. when students are able to use FT to build processing strategies and to increase self-regulation (2007, p.91). Nonetheless, FT can be helpful to improve students' self-efficacy and confidence (2007, p.93).

FP enhances a deeper understanding of learning than FT as it involves the construction of meaning (understanding) and is therefore considered more powerful than FT (2007, p.90-93). FR helps students to actively monitor and evaluate their own learning processes and is therefore effective in terms of mastery of tasks and deep processing (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Butler and Winne even state that feedgeneral serves as an inherent catalyst within the self-regulatory process (1995, p.246). FP and FR are thus considered most powerful by Hattie and Timperley (2007, p.90-91). Furthermore, they argue that FS in itself does not enhance student achievement, even though it is frequently used by teachers (2007, p.96). The main concern is that FS steers students' attention away from the task (Hattie and Timperley, 2007, p.96). Nonetheless, they do recognize that FS may affect self-efficacy, and that FS as a praise may be desirable for students (2007, p.97).

In short, Hattie and Timperley (2007) argue that some dimensions and levels of feedgeneral have more impact on minimizing the gap between understanding and a lack of understanding than others (Figure 1.3).

	On task (FT)	On processing (FP)	On self-regulation (FR)	On self (FS)
Feed up				
Feed back				
Feed forward				

= reasonable to great impact
 = some impact
 = zero to limited impact

Figure 1.3: Usefulness of feedgeneral according to Hattie and Timperley (2007)

1.3.2 Learning disposition

The first aspect of students' learning disposition mentioned by DeVincent (2013, p.19) is motivation. Woolfolk et al. define motivation as 'an internal state that arouses, directs and

maintains behaviour' (2013, p.466). A lot of research has been done on student motivation (e.g. Darnon et al., 2007; Deci & Ryan, 2011; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Vansteenkiste et al., 2007). According to Deci and Ryan (2011), motivation can be measured by looking at school engagement, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, autonomy, self-regulation and goal motivation. Goal motivation may be further divided into performance-approach goals, performance-avoidance goals, and task goals. Students who set performance-approach goals are focused on performing better than others; students emphasizing performance-avoidance goals want to avoid performing worse than others (Darnon et al., 2007, p.813; Vansteenkiste et al., 2007, p.141). Students that are task-goal-oriented put effort in the subject-matter; they care whether they are mastering the content and use this as their end-goal (Vansteenkiste et al. 2007, p.140). The taxonomy below further demonstrates the various types of motivation (Figure 1.4).

Regulatory styles	Amotivation	Extrinsic motivation				Intrinsic Motivation
		External Regulation	Introjection	Identification	Integration	
Behavior	Not Determined					Self-Determined
Quantity of motivation	Low	High	High	High	High	High
Incentive of motivation	Low expectation	Expectation, rewards, punishment	Guilt, shame, fear, internal pressure	Personal value & usefulness	Personal self-evaluation & personal needs	Pleasure, interest, fascination
Associated Process	Perceived non-contingency, Low perceived competence, Non-relevance, Non-intentionality	Salience of extrinsic rewards or punishments, Compliance/Reactance	Ego involvement, Focus on approval from self or others	Conscious valuing of activity, Self-endorsement of goals	Hierarchical synthesis of goals, Congruence	Interest/ Enjoyment Inherent satisfaction
Underlying emotions	Helplessness, Apathy	Stress, pressure	Stress, Pressure	Goodwill, Freedom	Goodwill, Freedom	Goodwill, Freedom
Perceived Locus of Causality	Impersonal	External	Somewhat external	Somewhat internal	Internal	Internal
Internalization	None	None	Partial	Full	Full	Not necessary
Type of motivation	Amotivation "Can vs cannot"	Controlled motivation "Having to"		Autonomous motivation "Want to"		

Figure 1.4: Taxonomy of students' motivation (adapted from Vansteenkiste, 2007; Ryan and Deci, 2000)

The second aspect of learning disposition mentioned by DeVincent et al. (2013, p.19) is students' stress levels. According to Cohen and Janicki-Deverts, stress levels refer to the degree to which situations are perceived as unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloading, and therefore as socially undesirable (2012, p.1323). Finally, DeVincent et al. (2013, p.19) mention prior experience with feedgeneral as part of the learning disposition; prior experience is indeed highly constitutive of any learning process (Woolfolk 2013).

1.3 Research questions and expectations

The main research question was:

What dimension of written feedgeneral (*feed up; feed back; feed forward*) at which level (*on the self; on task; on processing; on self-regulation*) do bilingual students find most useful (i.e. the feeling that it helps them), taking into account their learning disposition (prior knowledge, stress level and motivation)?

This question was divided into three subquestions:

1. *What is students' prior experience with the different dimensions of feedgeneral?*

This question aimed at identifying what dimensions students are familiar with and what dimensions of previously received feedgeneral they experienced as useful/useless. Based on our practical teaching experiences at the school, we expected that students' prior experience with feedgeneral would be primarily with the dimension of feed back. This expectation is supported by Hattie and Timperley (2007, p.100,103).

2. *Which dimension and level of feedgeneral do students find most useful and why is this the case?*

Our expectation was that students' perception of the usefulness of received feedgeneral would be congruent with Hattie and Timperley's views (see Figure 1.3);

i.e. that they appreciate FP and FR most, FS least, and that they have no specific preference for any dimension.

3. How does the student learning disposition (motivation, stress level and prior experience) relate to his or her perception of the usefulness of feedgeneral?

Based on our personal teaching experiences, we expected that students' perception of feedgeneral would be to some extent related to their learning disposition. That is, we expected students to find those dimensions and levels of feedgeneral that they have positive prior experiences with, most useful. Highly motivated students may find all dimensions and levels of feedgeneral useful whereas amotivated students may have a preference for a specific dimension or level of feedgeneral, for example feed forward on processing. Students with a high stress level may prefer feed back or feed forward on task, as this is often hands-on and concrete; whereas students with a low stress level may find all dimensions and levels of feedgeneral useful.

1.4 Variables

The above theoretical framework has determined our research variables (Figure 1.5). The dependent variable in our research is students' perception of received feedgeneral. The independent variables consist of *students' disposition* and *given feedgeneral*. *Students' disposition* refers to the individual dispositions of the research participants, which consist of motivation, stress levels and prior experience in particular. Students' motivation was

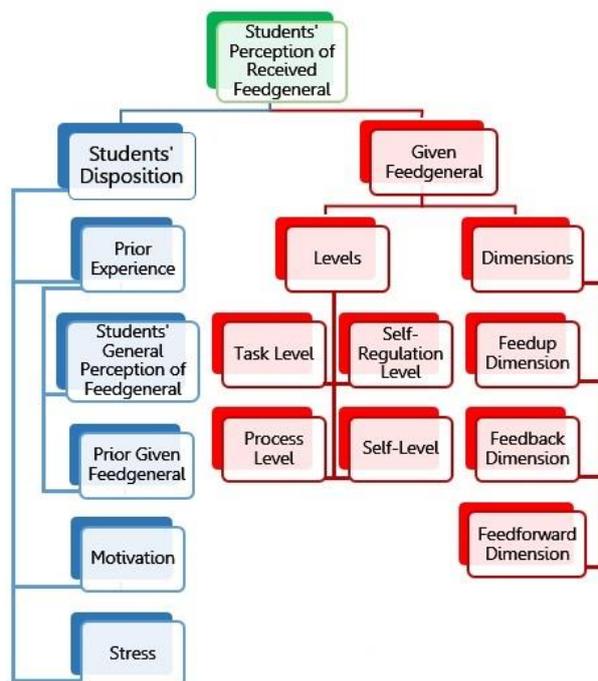


Figure 1.5: Research variables

defined by school engagement; intrinsic and extrinsic motivation; autonomy; self-regulation; and goal motivation. These constructs are strengthened by the above taxonomy of student motivation as shown above. In terms of stress level we have focused on increasing workloads, changing social relationships, and new environments (Holmes & Rahe, 1967). The second independent variable, *given feedgeneral*, was divided into the various dimensions and levels of feedgeneral.

2. Method

Due to the inherent subjective nature of students’ perception of feedgeneral, the methods employed were qualitative rather than quantitative. An in-depth case study was conducted with six bilingual students. The research methods and instruments were tested during a six hour pilot with two test students. Consequently, some items were adapted as to ensure the best possible results.

2.1 Research participants

The school provided us with a convenience sample of six male students in the bilingual stream of 3VWO, of which all but one were held back a year. The students’ age ranged from 13 to 16 years old and all were either first, second or third generation immigrants. The students are not entirely a representation of 3VWO in terms of age and experience, yet this does not decrease the validity of our research as it is not aimed to offer generalizations on 3VWO students. Diversity in learning dispositions is of more consequence.

2.2 Instruments

Data was collected by using two questionnaires, recordings of students’ evaluations of feedgeneral, and interviews. These instruments were linked to the three subquestions (Figure 2.1).

	Subquestion one	Subquestion two	Subquestion three
Questionnaire I			√
Questionnaire II	√	√	
Recordings of student evaluations (highlights)		√	
Interviews	√	√	√

Figure 2.1: Instruments and subquestions

2.2.1 Questionnaire I

Questionnaire I was used to collect data on the students' motivation and stress levels. This questionnaire consisted of 44 closed questions that together combined the motivation goals test (Vansteenkiste et al., 2007), the Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS) (Holmes and Rahe, 1967) and the Perceived Stress Scale-10 (PSS-10) (Cohen et al., 1983).

The motivation goals questions were based on the taxonomy of student motivation (Figure 1.4) and included built-in control questions as to increase validity. The SRRS has been used since 1967 to test the factors in people's lives that can lead to stress and has been proven reliable and valid in various studies among different cultures (e.g. Bieliauskas & Webb, 1974; Donche et al., 2007; Gerst et al., 1978; Gupta & Gupta 2004; Harmon et al., 1969; Masuda & Holmes, 1967; Mendels et al., 1972). We adapted the SRRS version of Olpin and Hesson (2009, p.20,23) as to suit the questionnaire to high school students.

The PSS-10 questions were kept similar to the model of Cohen et al. (1983), as these could easily be applied to students' lives. The PSS-10 has been proven to be a reliable and valid instrument (e.g. Cohen & Williamson, 1988; Remor, 2006; Roberti et al., 2006). For the PSS-10, the internal scale reliability is ensured by a coefficient alpha of .78 (Cohen & Williamson, 1988, p.55). The scores of the scale were related to other measures of stress, ensuring its construct validity (1988, p. 55). The discriminant validity is not ensured as perception is not equated to the factors and events that an individual may experience. This is why the PSS-10 has been added to the questionnaire.

After the pilot, some changes in language use were made as to increase the clarity of the questions.

2.2.2 Questionnaire II

Questionnaire II focused on the students' prior experiences with feedgeneral. It included 8 closed questions and 6 open questions. The students' answers were further discussed in the interviews as to ensure triangulation and thus to increase the reliability. No changes were made after the pilot.

2.2.3 Recordings of students' evaluations

Students received feedgeneral on a writing assignment. For the assignment students read a blog about a topic (i.e. 'selfies'). After reading the text, students first wrote down sub-headings for each paragraph as to show their understanding of the text. Secondly, students wrote a 150-words comment, answering three questions about the text. The assignment contained a glossary and clear instructions, which enabled students to do the assignment with as little assistance possible, in order not to influence motivation and self-regulation. In addition to the assignment, the students were given a rubric. The rubric was used as feed up on task and on self-regulation in this research.

To ensure the construct validity, we gave the students an authentic assignment that was previously used in an English class at the school. Our pilot proved the reliability of the text; only the instructions were adjusted afterwards. The task of giving feedgeneral was divided over the researchers. We used pre-set comments according to the feedgeneral model (Appendix A). During the pilot it became clear that we needed to ensure reliability of the feedgeneral given. As such we aimed to use each level and dimension at least once and checked this by coding the feedgeneral.

The students were then asked to highlight the feedgeneral with different colors according to perceived usefulness (useful, neither useful nor useless, and useless). The recordings of these evaluations were processed as data on the second subquestion.

2.2.4 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were held based on the data from questionnaire I, questionnaire II, the assignment and recordings. These interviews were semi-structured as to ensure that all research participants answered the same questions and to leave room for research participants to add (sub)topics. The interviews were recorded as to increase reliability. After the pilot, some changes were made in the interview questions and structure.

2.3 Set-up

Data was collected by three researchers during five hours on one particular day. The procedure was prepared by using a time schedule and a script. The students started with filling out the two questionnaires in silence. Whilst the students continued with the assignment, one researcher checked the outcomes of the questionnaires and identified what answers needed to be clarified during the interview. Once the assignment was finished, the students had a break whilst each researcher wrote down feedback for two students. After this the students were asked to highlight the feedback. Lastly, the interviews were divided over two rounds, during which each researcher interviewed a student in a separate classroom.

2.4 Data analysis

2.4.1 Questionnaire I

Data from Questionnaire I was analyzed through the regular scoring of the SRSS, the PSS-10, and the methods of Vansteenkiste (2007). In the SRSS, the total amount of stress factors is represented by a score (Figure 2.2).

Score	Implications
0 – 149	He/she is prone to have a below average number of stress factors and has about a 30 percent chance of serious health change.
150 – 299	He/she is prone to have a moderate number of stress factors and has a 50-50 chance of experiencing a serious health change within two years.
300 - above	He/she is statistically prone to have a high number of stress factors and stands an almost 80 percent chance of getting sick in the near future.

Figure 2.2: SRRS scores and implications (Holmes & Rahe, 1967)

In the PSS-10, the perception of stress factors is rated on a scale (Figure 2.3).

Total Score	Stress level
00-07	Much lower than average.
08-11	Slightly lower than average.
12-15	Average.
16-20	Slightly higher than average.
21-40	Much higher than average.

Figure 2.3: Perception of stress scores and interpretations (Cohen et al. 1983)

As such the scores on the SRRS and PSS-10 questions offer a way to assess and interpret the students' stress levels.

The answers to the motivation questions were coded and analyzed according to the taxonomy of student motivation (Figure 1.4). Figure 2.4 and 2.5 show examples of such coding.

I usually listen to my teacher...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
AM 10. ...but I'm not sure why. I don't think it makes any difference.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
EX 11. ...because others expect me to do so.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
IN 12. ...because I feel bad, guilty or ashamed if I don't listen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ID 13. ...because I choose to do so.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
IM 14.because I like doing so.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

AM = Amotivation; EX= External Regulation; IN= Introjection; ID= Identification; IM= Intrinsic Motivation.

Figure 2.4: Motivation coding in Questionnaire I

Please indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements:

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
PEAP	25. It is important for me to perform better than others at school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TASK	26. It is important for me to understand the content of what I am learning the best I can.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PEAV	27. I want to avoid performing worse than others at school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PEAP	28. The urge to perform better than others at school is what motivates me to try harder.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PEAV	29. The fear to not perform well compared to others motivates me to do the best I can.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PEAP= Performance approach goals; TASK= Task goals; PEAV= Performance avoidance goals.

Figure 2.5: Goal orientation coding in Questionnaire I

The agree/disagree continuum was assigned scores from 1 to 5; the highest scores for the specific kinds of motivation and goal orientation determined the students' motivation.

2.4.2 Questionnaire II and recordings of student evaluations

The data of Questionnaire II and the recordings of student evaluations have been copied ad verbatim and coded with the feedgeneral model (appendix A). The data was categorized in a data table (see 2.4.4).

2.4.3 Interviews

The interviews have been transcribed by the researchers. Parts that had little to no value were condensed and summarized. The transcriptions were subsequently coded according to the feedgeneral model (Appendix A). All coded data was then inserted in the same data table as the data collected through Questionnaire II and the recordings of student evaluations (see 2.4.4). The option for ad-hoc categories based on the interview was left open; yet none arose outside of our predefined categories.

2.4.4 Data analysis table

The data was categorized in a data table according to the research questions (see Kvale, 1996, p.192). These questions were further divided into different categories based on the various dimensions and levels of feedgeneral. Consequently, the extensive data could be structured

according to students' perception. The coding in the table was checked by one of the researchers as to increase reliability. The table was then used to compare results and to look for trends per research question and per student.

3. Results

This section presents the outcomes of the data analysis per subquestion.

3.1 Subquestion one: What is students' prior experience with the different dimensions of feedgeneral?

This question aimed at identifying what dimensions students are familiar with and what dimensions of previously received feedgeneral they experienced as useful/useless.

Figure 3.1 shows how many events the six students referred to in which they received a particular dimension of feedgeneral. However, the questions in Questionnaire II and the interviews were not aimed at a particular dimension, e.g. 'Can you give an example of a situation in which you got feedback (i.e. feedgeneral) from a teacher?' The results presented in Figure 3.1 are thus to some extent coincidental as the students may have thought of other events when asked at other times.

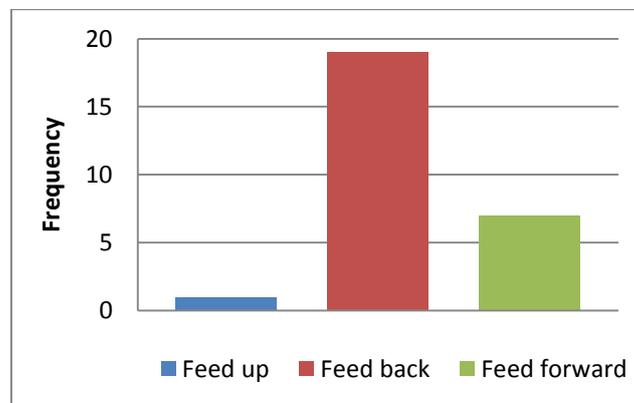


Figure 3.1: Frequency of dimensions referred to by students

The answers on the question in Questionnaire II 'what do you think of feedback (i.e. feedgeneral)?' are presented in Figure 3.2.

<i>Student</i>	<i>Very useful / useful / not useful?</i>	<i>Because...</i>
Student S.	Very useful	You know what mistakes you have made. And you will get corrected so then you can do it better next time.
Student J.	Useful	Because then you can improve better
Student B.	Useful	Because being judged by your work is useful and you'll be able to perhaps improve it
Student Ta.	Useful	It's only useful if you show them how to improve learning
Student Tb.	Useful	It can help you getting a better grade next time
Student H.	Useful	It differs per individual one might be stubborn

Figure 3.2: Student responses

The results for subquestion one can be further divided into results on prior experience with feed up; feed back; and feed forward.

3.1.1 Feed up

Only one of the students, Student B., experienced a situation in which he set personal goals together with his math teacher because he was having difficulties with the specific topic; in this case he received feed up on the task. All students stated that they do not receive rubrics for their assignments in advance: “the teacher just tells us what we have to make” (Student Ta).

3.1.2 Feed back

In the interviews, the students described feed back as ‘being judged by your work’, ‘criticism that is not negative’, ‘comments on or an opinion about something you worked on’, ‘when a teacher tells you what went wrong’, ‘how you did on a task’ or ‘what I did good or bad’. In the interviews, the students spoke of comments they got on their report card, scores they received on various parts of an assignment, and comments they got from a teacher after a presentation.

Three out of six students stated they use previous feed back on task if they need to do another similar assignment. Three students experienced situations in which they considered

feed back on task as useless, because they did not understand the feed back or because they did not agree with it. Furthermore, two students described situations of receiving positive feed back on the self: “sometimes they write good job or something like that”, or “they give you a compliment”.

3.1.3 Feed forward

On the question what feedback (i.e. feedgeneral) is, the six students not only referred to feed back but also to feed forward: “tips”, “advice for the next time”, “ways to improve your work” (Figure 3.2). Student J. and Student Tb. both argued that teachers should give comments on the students’ work only if this helps them to improve. Student J. was the only one who seemed to have received feed forward on self-regulation as he described a situation in which the teacher gave him tips on how to work on his articulation.

3.2 Subquestion two: Which dimension and level of feedgeneral do students find most useful and why is this the case?

The recordings of the highlights show that all three dimensions were at least once been considered useful, neither useful nor useless, and useless. Figure 3.1 shows the highlights; each subsquare represents one received comment as highlighted by a student.

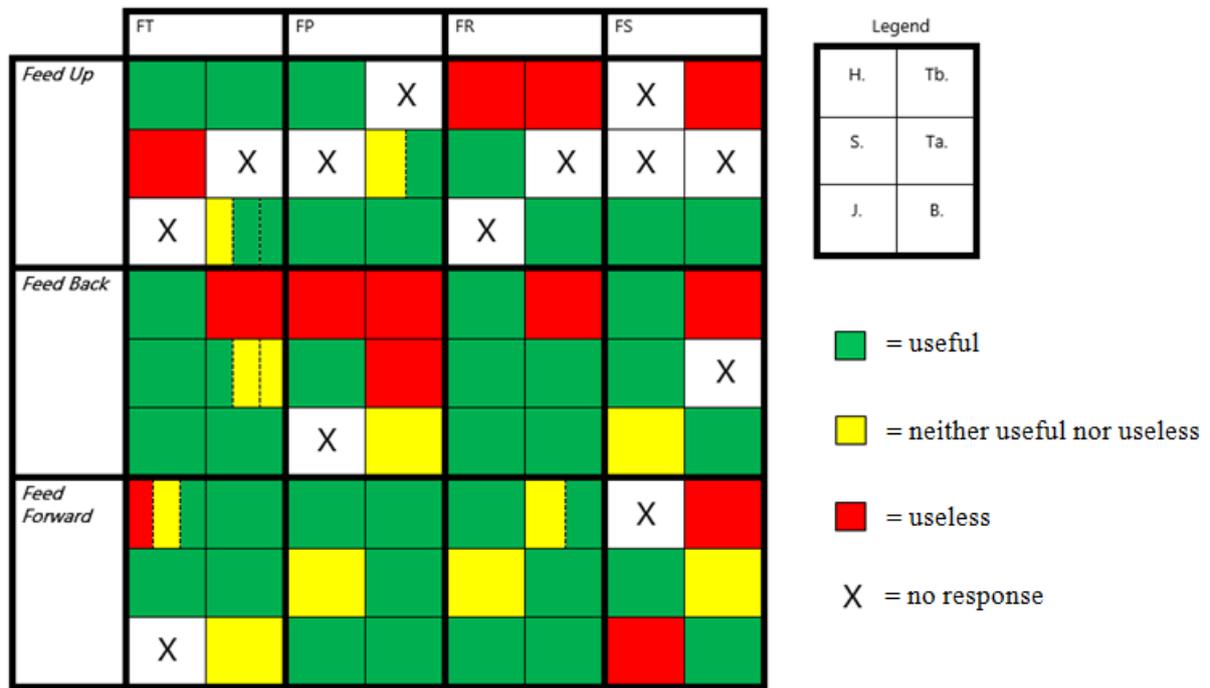


Figure 3.1: Highlights of received feedgeneral

Figure 3.2 shows how often a dimension or level was highlighted as useful (the rubric was not included in the highlights).

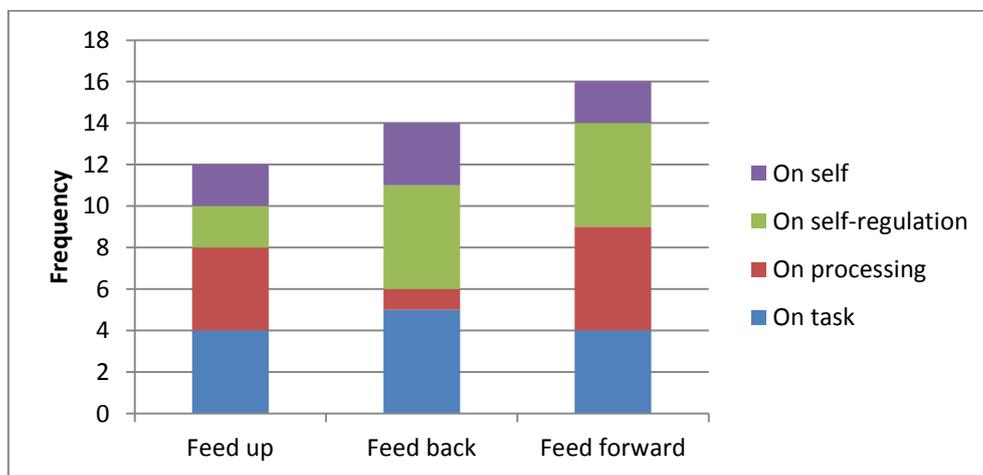


Figure 3.2: Frequency of dimensions and levels highlighted as useful

In the interviews, the students explained why they considered the various dimensions and levels useful, neither useful nor useless, or useless. The most interesting results are included below and divided over the dimensions and levels.

3.2.1 Feed up

Feed up on task: All six students said that they found the rubric very useful; four students stated in the interviews that they looked at the rubric beforehand and during the assignment and aimed to get the highest points.

Student Tb. and Student B. even said they preferred the rubric over written comments.

*“If I had it [the rubric] for everything I make it would be easier to get a higher mark, because you know what to do, you know what to write down”
(Student Tb.)*

Feed up on processing: Interestingly, Student Ta. received two comments of feed up on processing of which he considered one useful and the other useless: ‘Perhaps you can think about what you did to tackle the assignment’ was highlighted as useful, according to Student Ta., “this is useful because it is another way of saying you have to think logically about how to tackle this assignment”. The other comment ‘You seemed to struggle a bit with the assignment’ was considered useless, “because you could have also said, you are struggling, but you could improve it in this or that manner”.

Feed up on self-regulation: Student Tb. thought it was useful to see the rubric while doing the assignment because “this is easier when you can see what you’ve done and what you haven’t done.”

Feed up on self: Feed up on self was not further discussed with the students.

3.2.2 Feed back

Feed back on task: All six students argued that feed back on task is useful because they find it helps them to understand what they do well and what they still need to improve.

Feed back on processing: On the question “You found ‘It’s good to see you have been working hard on this’ neither useful nor useless, why?” Student H. answered: “This might

motivate people, but for me not really. Because I always work hard to get the best out of myself”. In addition, positive comments such as ‘You clearly answered the question’ were considered useless in the highlights, but in the interviews Students Tb. and Student S. said they do want to receive positive comments and compliments.

Feed back on self-regulation: On the question: “why did you think ‘it was good that you asked questions when things weren’t completely clear to you!’ was useful?” Student H. answered: “because it makes me more confident and motivated to ask questions.”

Feed back on self: According to Student J., negative feed back on the self, such as ‘you are an awful writer’ can be considered challenging to do better, but ‘you are a great writer’ can also be encouraging to write more. Student B. said that negative comments can be encouraging if they include suggestions for improvement, but that positive comments are needed “otherwise you would get depressed”.

3.2.3 Feed forward

All six students indicated in the interviews that feed forward on all levels is the most useful; that is, they prefer to receive comments that help them to improve or to get a higher mark next time. Moreover, Student B. argued that feed back is only useful when interpreted as feed forward: “You need to change yourself instead of just listening to the comments. You should change something about it, only if you apply it [then it is useful].” The five other students expressed similar views. Student Tb. added in the interview that he likes compliments (feed back) combined with suggestions for improvement.

3.3 Subquestion three: How does the student learning disposition relate to his or her perception of the usefulness of feedgeneral?

Figure 3.3 shows the results on the students’ stress levels and motivation profiles.

Student	Motivation (goal orientation)	Motivation (listening to the teacher)	Motivation (homework)	SRRS score	PSS-10 score
S.	Performance approach goals & performance avoidance goals	Identification	External regulation	192	9
Ta.	Performance avoidance goals & task goals	<i>Inconclusive</i>	Amotivation	473	13
Tb.	Task goals	External regulation & Identification	Amotivation & External regulation	484	17
H.	Task goals	External regulation & Identification	Amotivation & Identification	230	8
J.	Performance goals, performance avoidance goals & task goals	External regulation & Identification	Identification & Intrinsic Motivation	356	13
B.	Task goals	Identification	Identification	207	23

■ = below average
■ = average
■ = above average

Figure 3.3: Student outcomes on motivation and stress level

3.3.1 Motivation in relation to perception of received feedgeneral

Some interesting results of the motivation profiles in relation to the students' perception of the feedgeneral are that:

- Student Tb., H. and B. are task goal oriented and rated respectively 1 out 4 (1/4); 2 out of 3 (2/3); and 3 out of 3 (3/3) of the FR comments as useful.
- Student Ta. is amotivated in terms of doing homework and rated 6 out of 11 (6/11) feedgeneral comments useful; of which 4 out 5 (4/5) feed forward comments were considered useful.
- Student J. is intrinsically motivated in terms of doing homework and rated 6 out of 8 (6/8) feedgeneral comments as useful.
- Student J. and B. both stated they prefer negative feedgeneral with suggestions for improvement; both have 'identification' as motivation.
- Student S. and Tb. both stated they like to receive positive feedgeneral even when this is not always useful; 'external regulation' is part of their motivation profiles.

3.3.2 Stress level in relation to perception of received feedback

Some interesting results of the stress levels in relation to the students' perception of the received feedback are that:

- Both stress scores of student T. are above average and higher than the other research participants. He rated 7 out of 11 (7/11) comments of feedback as useless; with 3 out of 3 (3/3) comments of FS and 4 out of 4 (4/4) feedback comments as useless.
- Students H. and S. both have average SRRS scores and below average PSS-10 scores. They rated 3 out of 13 (3/13) respectively 1 out of 12 (1/12) feedback comments as useless, and all received FS comments were considered useful.

3.3.3 Prior experience in relation to perception of received feedback

The students' prior experience with feedback has been discussed above (section 3.1). They have limited prior experience with feedback; however, all students stated in the interviews that they considered the rubric, i.e. received feedback (on task and on self-regulation), very useful.

Four students stated that they hope their teachers will start using the rubric at the school.

"The rubric is kind of a new thing and it helps"
(Student B.)

4. Conclusion and discussion

4.1 Conclusion

What dimension of written feedback (*feed up; feed back; feed forward*) at which level (*on the self; on task; on processing; on self-regulation*) do bilingual students find most useful (i.e. the feeling that it helps them), taking into account their learning disposition (prior knowledge, stress level and motivation)? Based on the research results, we can conclude that students perceive feed forward as the most useful dimension and that they do not have a clear preference for a specific level. Below are more specific conclusions drawn for each subquestion.

4.1.1 What is students' prior experience with the different dimensions of feedback?

Feed up: Our research participants have little experience with feed up. Feed up on the self, process, and self-regulation is virtually non-existent at the school. Neither do the students receive rubrics for their assignments in advance.

Feed back: Students primarily receive feed back on task. This is in line with our expectations and with theory as Hattie and Timperley state that feed back on task is used most frequently (2007, p.93). However, teachers do not always clarify their feed back; consequently, students considered feed back to be less useful when they did not agree with it or did not understand it. This strengthens the argument that FT is only useful when it is clear to students how to use it (Hattie & Timperley, 2007 p.93). The lack of understanding experienced by the students can be further explained as they hardly receive feed back on processing: as Hattie and Timperley explain, FT is most useful when it supports other levels of feedback and is least effective by itself. FP can clarify FT (2007, p.89).

Furthermore, students hardly receive feed back on self-regulation. Nonetheless, some do use previous feed back on task if they need to do another similar assignment. They thus

learn to use feed back on task for self-monitoring. Finally, Hattie and Timperley argue that feed back on the self is given very frequently (2007, p.96). However, our research participants indicated that this happens only occasionally at the school.

Feed forward: The students mostly use feedgeneral as feed forward: they apply it to get a higher grade next time, to improve their work and to make sure they do not make the same mistakes. In fact, the students often conflated feed back and feed forward. Feed forward seems to be given only on the task. The fact that students self-regulate their learning and use feedgeneral in order to improve their work or to avoid mistakes confirms theory by Butler and Winne who state that feedgeneral is an inherent catalyst in the process of self-regulation (1995, p.246).

4.1.2 Which level and dimension of feedgeneral do students find most useful and why is this the case?

All dimensions and levels have at least once been considered useful, neither useful nor useless, and useless (Figure 3.1). Nonetheless, feed forward was considered as most useful because the students like to know how they can improve. This coincides with Hattie and Timperley (2007) (Figure 1.3). In addition, the students find the rubric very useful as feed up on task because it clearly shows them what they need to do in order to succeed in completing an assignment. This supports the view that “success criteria” are crucial for students to reach their goals (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p.89); however, Hattie and Timperley considered feed up on task less useful (although not useless) than the other levels. Figure 4.1 shows our results in comparison with Hattie and Timperley (2007).

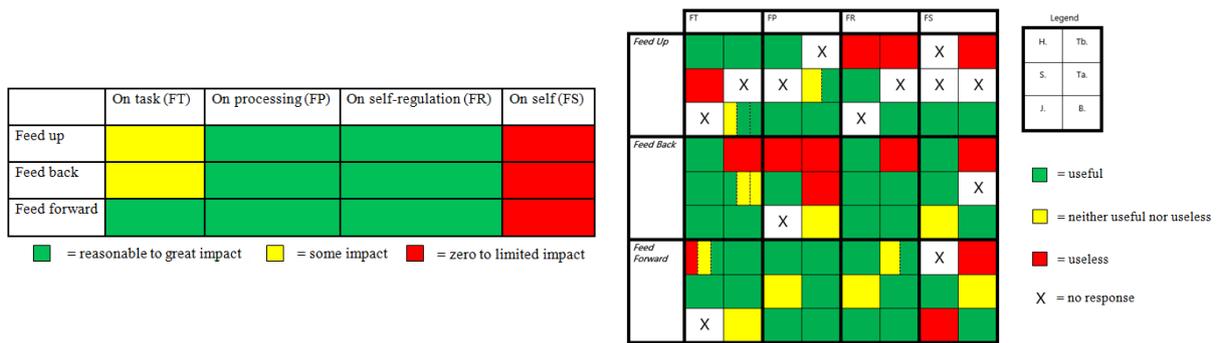


Figure 4.1: Hattie and Timperley (2007) (left) in comparison with our results (right).

Concerning the various levels, the students seem to find FT most, and FS least useful (Figure 3.2). They do, however, indicate there is value in being given FS and that they like this level of feedgeneral as it can be encouraging or challenging to perform better next time. This seems to undermine Hattie and Timperley’s main concern with FS that it would lead students’ attention away from the task (2007, p.96).

4.1.3. How does the student learning disposition relate to his or her perception of the usefulness of feedgeneral?

Based on the results, we cannot conclude that a direct relationship between learning disposition and the perception of the usefulness of feedgeneral exist. Yet some outcomes are worth to discuss.

4.1.3.1 Stress levels in relation to perception of usefulness

The most noteworthy finding is that the student with the highest stress level rated the majority of the feedgeneral as useless. This seems to suggest that high stress levels cause a negative perception of the usefulness of feedgeneral. Yet these results may be coincidental as other students had considerably high stress levels too whilst they rated most dimensions and levels of feedgeneral as useful. Moreover, this student rated feed back on task as useless, which was against our expectations that feed back or feed forward on task would be considered most useful by students with high stress levels. However, two students confirmed our expectation

that students with low stress levels would consider (almost) all dimensions and levels of feedgeneral.

4.1.3.2 Prior experience in relation to perception of usefulness

The rubric was considered to be very useful; however, in relation to the students' prior experience it is possible to argue that the perception of usefulness may have been positively influenced by the lack of prior experience with feed up. This was against our expectations.

4.1.3.3 Motivation in relation to perception of usefulness

In line with our expectations, amotivated students may have a specific preference for a level or dimension of feedgeneral (in this case feed forward). Furthermore, the one student who was intrinsically motivated was also the one who rated most feedgeneral comments as useful. According to Vansteenkiste et al. (2007, p.140), students who are task-goal-oriented focus on mastery of content. However, our research participants with task goal motivation did not value FR more than other levels of feedgeneral. Finally, students with autonomous motivation (identification) preferred negative feedgeneral with suggestions for improvement; whereas students with controlled motivation (external regulation) preferred positive feedgeneral.

4.2 Discussion and suggestions for further research

4.2.1 Discussion

The main issue we encountered was that the scope of the research was too broad given the resources and time available. The limited number of students made available to us influenced the reliability of our research; that is, the outcomes are neither statistically significant nor representative of the target group. Moreover, the conclusions for the third subquestion are not entirely valid as some of these conclusions are based on the learning disposition and perception of one or two students; hence the perceived relationship could also have been established by other factors such as their 'mood'. Furthermore, the reliability of these

outcomes is low as the outcomes could not be tested with another set of students with similar learning dispositions.

Additionally, the perception of the usefulness has possibly been influenced by the students' preferences for positive or negative feedback, which we did not take into account in our research. Another issue we did not include is that combining certain dimensions and levels of feedback can influence the effectiveness of feedback (Hattie & Timperley 2007, p.93). Although we believe that this was beyond the scope of our research, we do realize that this decreases the validity of our research. Moreover, although our research participants were bilingual students, this does not mean that the outcomes are representative of bilingual students only.

Nonetheless, we were able to answer all three subquestions and we did offer insights into the usefulness of feedback, of which some were supported by theory. The outcomes can be validated and made reliable in further research.

4.2.2 Suggestions for further research

- The first suggestion for repeating this type of research would be to limit its scope, for instance by focusing solely on the dimensions or levels of feedback. This way the usefulness of various feedback combinations may be included in the research.
- Secondly, the reliability of this research can be increased if it includes a bigger sample. Moreover, a higher proportion of interview questions may detect other factors influencing the student's perception of the usefulness of feedback.
- The third suggestion is to include the possibility that the usefulness of positive and negative feedback may be differently perceived.
- Fourthly, the students may be interviewed again after a certain period, for example after a week, to reduce the coincidence of the results on the first subquestion

referring to prior experience, and to eliminate ‘mood’ as a possible factor influencing motivation.

- Finally, research can be conducted to explore whether bilingual students and students in the regular stream perceive the usefulness of feedgeneral differently.

4.3 Practical suggestions

Based on our conclusions we can give several recommendations to teachers.

- Firstly, we would recommend to provide students with feed up, for instance by providing rubrics, as students find these very useful and because this is supported by theory (Hattie & Timperley 2007, p.89).
- Secondly, as feedgeneral encourages self-regulation and since all dimensions and levels have been at least once considered useful by the students, we recommend providing feedgeneral in a complete way by using all dimensions and levels.
- Thirdly, it is important that students are made clear how to use or interpret certain feed back, otherwise it is considered not useful.
- Fourthly, while theory argues that feedgeneral on the self may distract from learning, this research indicates that feedgeneral on the self may be considered useful by the students. A conscious decision therefore needs to be made about the merits of FS per individual.
- The research results suggest that each individual may have a preference for specific dimensions and levels of feedgeneral. This may depend on their individual learning disposition and therefore it is important to differentiate.
- Finally, the feedgeneral model (Appendix A) developed for this research can be used by teachers to ensure a variety of dimensions and levels of feedgeneral, and to help them choose a level and dimension that fits their aims. The model could also serve as a

tool to speed up the process of giving feedgeneral as many examples of different dimensions and levels are given.

4.4 Reflection

4.4.1 Reflection on process

Cooperation within our research group went well. Despite and maybe because of our different academic backgrounds we were able to divide tasks appropriately. We developed skills in qualitative research, interviewing, and data analysis. Cooperation with the school was poor. We did not have the feeling the school supported us as several of our research proposals were rejected because it would involve too much work for teachers. After, finally, a research proposal was approved we did not receive the representative group of students we asked for. When conducting research, it is therefore important to have a clear understanding of the expectations of the school, but also to communicate with the school concerning one's own expectations.

4.4.2 Reflection on product

All sub-questions were answered. However, the data collected on subquestion one was limited and perhaps not enough to give a complete presentation of students' prior experience of feedgeneral. Subquestion two was answered most fully although data was not collected for every level. Subquestion three was answered to some extent, but whether there is correlation or causation between students' learning disposition and the way they perceive feedgeneral is inconclusive from our results and demands further research, as the group of students studied is too small. The results of this research have added to a solution to the research problem as it has contributed to a more complete understanding of students' perception of feedgeneral and therefore its effectiveness. We believe this article can be a starting point for research on students' perception of feedgeneral on a larger scale.

4.4.3 Using the results in our own teaching practice

Conducting research has made us aware of the importance of being an investigative teacher. Researching topics such as feedgeneral can increase insight in how to make feedgeneral more effective and therefore increase the quality of education. More concretely, this research project has made us aware of the importance of giving several dimensions and levels of feedgeneral in order to give students the tools they need to improve. Furthermore, the differences in students' perception of feedgeneral have encouraged us to differentiate in giving feedgeneral in our own teaching practices.

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Appendix A: Feedgeneral model

Feedgeneral Model	Feedback on Task (FT) / Task level (How well tasks are understood/ performed) 'corrective feedback'	Feedback on Processing (FP) / Process level (The process needed to understand/ perform tasks)	Feedback on Self-Regulation (FR) / Self-regulation level (Self-monitoring, directing and regulating of actions)	Feedback on the Self (FS) / Self level (Personal evaluations and effect (usually positive) on the learner)
1 Feed Up (Where am I going?) (goals)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which goal did you/are you going pursue with your writing? - You were/weren't able to fulfil your goals / <u>what was/is your goal here?</u> - You set clear goals - What did you intend to do here? - Your aims are clear and well-structured - What did you mean with... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What did you do to tackle the assignment? - You came up with a creative/ interesting/<i>smart (IFS)</i> solution - You had a good approach to achieve ... (goal) - You had a hands-on approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It looks like you knew how to tackle the assignment - You started off right away with the task - Good to see that you used a dictionary/the internet/sources when you were in doubt, <i>wise decision (IFS)</i>! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>It was a wise thing of you to go for ...</u> / smart of you to do x . - These goals were/weren't smart/wise of you
2 Feed Back (How am I going?) (performance as measured against goals) (you did/you can/you are)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Good boy (2FS)</i>, this answer is correct - Your product/comment is of high-quality, <i>you are a very bright student (2FS)</i>. - You fulfilled all the requirements - You did not use the correct format for the assignment, <i>next time, use the ... format (3FT)</i>. - You answered the question(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good to see that you have been working hard on this. - You used the correct method to tackle the assignment/ problem. - You did not use multiple sources, <i>next time, try to look into x or x (3FP)</i>. - checked your work before handing it in (<i>error detection</i>). 	Good that you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - asked questions/ for help when things weren't completely clear; - showed initiative when it was needed and asked for early feedback; - were able to figure out what to do yourself, <i>you can be proud of yourself! (2FS)</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Great effort - Well done! - You are a great student/writer - You have a gift for this, I think you can be proud of yourself - You have great stamina because I <i>can see you have been working on this for several minutes (2FP)</i>.* - You have a great working attitude - You are really great <i>because you have applied x and x (2FP)</i>!*
3 Feed Forward (Where to next?) (future goals) (next time, try to)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You should stick to the word count next time, otherwise you might lose points for this. - Your sentences show a lack of flow, so you need to mind your interpunction / put a (semicolon) in this sentence). - You will want a transition between (x and x) in your comment - Next time, read the assignment thoroughly before starting to write. If things aren't clear, <i>ask the teacher for help (3FR)</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make sure your sentences have noun-verb agreement because it's going to make it easier for the reader to understand your argument. - Would you use this approach again next time? (Why?) - This is a bit (vague/not convincing). Try to use the ..-method/more ... to tackle this problem next time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Next time, try reading some of your sentences aloud so you can hear when you have and don't have noun-verb agreement - Try to proof read your paragraph, by yourself or by friends/parents for a fresh outlook on the flow and grammar of your sentences. - Next time, don't hesitate to ask (the teacher) for help / good that you asked for help, try to keep on doing this in the future. - You were very willing to use our feedback to adjust your x. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You are good at this, keep up the good work! - You are a talented student, continue like this and you will become even better at this! - You can do better than this