

DANCING WITH FEEDBACK:
INQUIRY-BASED FEEDBACK AND TEACHER LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

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The challenges of giving and receiving feedback are regular topics in the popular and business press. This widespread interest in and use of feedback is based upon an assumption that receiving feedback will result in improved performance. A review of the literature indicates that the reality is more complex and that while some feedback does improve performance, much does not. This study explored the use of a feedback protocol, adapted from the world of dance, used by students and faculty in a Master of Arts in Teaching program to provide feedback on student practice teaching sessions. Through focus groups, document review and in-depth interviews with ten of the faculty and students involved, this study sought to understand how participants experienced learning the protocol, in what ways they perceived it to be different from previous experiences of feedback, and how they described the impact of this feedback process on their teaching practice.

In analyzing the data resulted in three prominent themes emerged: well qualified and experienced teacher-educators underwent significant learning through engaging with

the inquiry-based protocol, the teachers and students in this study found the protocol to be fundamentally different from even the most well-intentioned approaches they had experienced in the past, and the protocol alleviated many of the problems of unequal power present in other feedback experiences described by the participants.

Keywords: feedback, teacher education, teacher supervision, performance review

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DEDICATION

To Iain and Amelia, who I am so proud of, and who I missed my time with while I was engaged in this. I learn so much from you and you are woven into many aspects of what I've learned over the course of this project.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Before you tell me how to do it better, before you lay out your big plans for changing, fixing, and improving me, before you teach me how to pick myself up and dust myself off so that I can be shiny and successful—*know this*: I've heard it before. I've been graded, rated, and ranked. Coached, screened, and scored. I've been picked first, picked last, and not picked at all. And that was just kindergarten. (Stone & Heen, 2015, p.1)

Background and Context

This research study explored the experiences of a group of students and faculty in a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program that adopted a feedback protocol from the world of dance, called Inquiry-Based Feedback (IBF) protocol, and used it for giving and receiving feedback, from both peers and faculty observers, on students' practice teaching sessions. The primary focus of this study was to understand how these educators learned the protocol and how having learned it has influenced their teaching practice.

The Problem of Feedback

The challenges of giving and receiving feedback are regular topics in the popular and business press (Herrera, 2018). The widespread interest in and use of feedback are built upon an assumption that receiving feedback will result in improved performance.

Kluger and DeNisi (1996), in a meta-analysis of studies on feedback, traced this widely held assumption that feedback results in improvement to a 1956 article by Ammons, in which he provided uncritical support for the notion of feedback resulting in improved performance. Ammons' work reinforced earlier work by Thorndike in 1913 and 1927 (Kluger and DeNisi, 1996), in which the behaviorist terms of positive and negative reinforcement were equated with positive and negative feedback.

This widespread belief that feedback leads to improved performance informs one of the most common experiences of feedback: the annual performance review typical in most workplaces. These reviews are designed to provide employees with feedback on their work performance over the previous year. However, Sheila Heen and Douglas Stone (2014) wrote in the *Harvard Business Review* that

...in many organizations, feedback doesn't work. A glance at the stats tells the story: Only 36% of managers complete appraisals thoroughly and on time. In one recent survey, 55% of employees said their most recent performance review had been unfair or inaccurate, and one in four said they dread such evaluations more than anything else in their working lives. (para. 2)

If 55% of employees find these experiences of feedback unfair and 25% of employees dread feedback more than anything else, then even though performance reviews are a well-researched topic in business literature, the experience of giving and receiving feedback remains unclear and problematic.

One challenge regarding feedback in the form of performance reviews is that these reviews are typically given by those in power to those under their power or control. However, research has suggested that this power differential itself influences how giving and receiving feedback is experienced. Batista (2014) described the problem this way:

When we encounter people of higher status, when we experience uncertainty, when we feel less autonomy or freedom of choice, when we feel less connected to those around us, and when we believe that something is unfair we are more likely to experience a social threat. It's no wonder that feedback can be so stressful! (para. 6)

Receiving feedback from someone of higher status, when there is uncertainty about the content and possibly a sense that it may be unfair, leads to an experience psychologists refer to as "social threat" that can activate our "threat response," which includes physiological, emotional, and cognitive reactions to the perception of conflict. Willis (2007) described what happens in the brain under these conditions: "when stress activates the brain's affective filters, information flow to the higher cognitive networks is limited and the learning process grinds to a halt" (para. 6). In other words, the experience of receiving feedback from a superior may undermine the central purpose of giving feedback, which is to promote learning or change.

Even receiving feedback, particularly negative feedback, from peers has unintended consequences, according to research by Paul Green at Harvard Business School (Berinato, 2018):

The idea behind performance appraisals, and feedback in general, is that to grow and improve, we must have a light shined on the things we can't see about ourselves. We need the brutal truth. There's an assumption that what motivates people to improve is the realization that they're not as good as they think they are. But in fact, it just makes them go find people who will not shine that light on them. It may not be having the intended effect at all. (para. 6)

The study found that recipients of negative feedback from peers simply arranged to change teams or in other ways found peers who would be less critical.

Corporations are beginning to recognize that performance reviews as currently designed fail to result in improvements and do so at a significant cost of time and effort.

Deloitte, in 2014, did away with the entire system for all of their 250,000 employees around the globe (Buckingham & Goodall, 2015). According to Graham Kenny (2016) in the *Harvard Business Review*, “Adobe,...Accenture, Cargill, ConAgra, Gap, Intel, Juniper Networks, Medtronic, Microsoft, and Sears” (para. 4) have also either done away with performance reviews or were in the midst of doing so.

Feedback in Education

This is not the case in education. While institutions and teacher preparation programs in the United States have been influenced by the application of industrial and corporate solutions to educational challenges for many years, this trend has intensified in the 21st century, with a focus on competencies, sub-competencies, and observable behaviors that serve as indicators of the competencies (Hanauer & Newman, 2005). This trend results in a behavioristic approach to teacher supervision and feedback, with the experience often being designed around the checking off of observable behaviors. This approach serves bureaucratic purposes, but there is little evidence to show that this supports teacher learning (Marshall, 2005). These trends have been critiqued as a “de-professionalization” of the teaching profession (Hanauer & Newman, 2005).

Providing and receiving feedback, even when not in the form of a superior checking off a list of observable behaviors, can still be distressing. Peer feedback can also be challenging; in one study, students described their experience of peer feedback as “competitive, challenging, nerve-wracking, stressful, intimidating, tedious, and unsafe” (Dannels, Housley Gaffney, & Martin, 2011, p. 103). For students, peer feedback was less a helpful tool than it was “something they needed to survive” (p. 103). In contrast,

other peer feedback situations tend to avoid critique and result in the sort of “safely non-critical comments” that are unlikely to serve learning (Marshall, 2005).

Even indirect feedback can take an emotional toll, as adult educator Stephen Brookfield (1995) captured in his description of reading student feedback: “I still die a hundred small deaths each semester” (p. 139). As with performance reviews in the corporate world, so too in teaching—arranging to receive feedback at all can be challenging. According to Drago-Severson and Blum-DeStefano (2016), “74% of teachers...reported that they received virtually *no* feedback or suggestions on their summative evaluations” (ch. 1, para. 13).

In addition to business and education, the arts are another place where feedback in the form of critique is common. A veteran choreographer noticed that feedback to dancers, rather than encouraging new or creative changes, often was demotivating and destructive. In response, she began developing a facilitated protocol for giving and receiving feedback with the goal that the outcome would be the “artist being eager to get back to work on their art.” This seems to capture the real goal of giving feedback, a goal that is not being met in the formal feedback processes of the corporate world, or in the field of teacher education, as researchers Drago-Severson and Blum-DeStefano (2016) said: “Throughout the education world, there remains a growing sense that we need to do something *different* in terms of feedback, not just something *more*” (ch. 1, p. 11).

This study explored the experiences of a group of students and faculty who learned and used the IBF protocol for giving and receiving feedback, and the influence that learning the protocol had on their practice.

Problem Statement

Feedback on performance is a common experience happening continually in multiple domains. However, it is not clear that current approaches to giving feedback lead to changes in performance. Research has indicated that employees frequently dread such feedback and often perceive it to be unfair. Research has also indicated that many managers avoid giving such feedback. In the world of education, similar problems with feedback on performance are also present, and there is a need for different approaches. One alternative approach, used in the world of dance and the arts, claims to demonstrate positive results in giving and receiving feedback. Therefore, further research is warranted to investigate this alternative approach to feedback, as applied in a teacher education program, and assess the extent to which this approach might be applicable to the training and development of teachers. For this research, the approach is referred to by the pseudonym Inquiry-Based Feedback (IBF).

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore, with four teacher-learners (graduate students of teaching) and six faculty members—all of whom were trained in IBF—their perceptions of the benefits and uses of the IBF approach in their teaching practice in general and in their approach to giving and receiving feedback in particular. To carry out this purpose, the following research questions were addressed:

- How do participants, trained in IBF, describe their experience of learning this alternative approach?

- In what ways do participants perceive IBF to be useful in ways different from other approaches to giving and receiving feedback?
- How do participants describe the impact of having learned IBF on their practice?

Approach

This study, which focused on the individual experiences and perspectives of a small group of participants, took a qualitative approach and used the case study. Data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted with a total of 10 students and faculty who participated in learning and using IBF as a feedback protocol during a cohort-based Master of Arts in Teaching program. The interview questions were designed to capture the participants' experience of learning IBF and how having learned and experienced it had influenced their current teaching practice. In addition, the researcher undertook a document review of the students' final learning statements. The final learning statements, produced at the end of the students' Master of Arts in Teaching program, were examined for references to the use or impact of IBF on student perspectives at that point in their learning. Also, tape recordings of two focus groups about the use of IBF—one made up of the students and the other made up of the faculty—were conducted at the end of the first year of the 2-year program and were examined for descriptions of how IBF was perceived and understood at that early point in the program after the participants had experienced it over the first 8-week period of coursework.

The researcher worked with Teachers College, Columbia University, and its Institutional Review Board (IRB) to meet all requirements for conducting the interviews, including obtaining informed consent from all participants. Participants' rights and confidentiality were fully acknowledged and protected in accordance with IRB regulations and the highest ethical standards. The researcher communicated to participants the reasons for the study and the anticipated benefits of the research.

The interviews were planned as 60- to 90-minute conversations during which participants described their experiences with IBF in response to open-ended inquiries. Because the participants did not share a common location, the researcher arranged for video-conferencing sessions to allow for technology-mediated face-to-face interviews. Details about all aspects of the approach are described in Chapter III, Methodology.

Anticipated Outcomes

In conducting this study, the researcher hoped to better understand the complexities of giving and receiving feedback and the usefulness and influence of the IBF protocol in particular as a tool for feedback. By understanding how the participants learned IBF, and in what ways they had been influenced by or used IBF in their teaching practice, the researcher aimed to gain insight into the applicability of this protocol, borrowed from the performing arts, to the field of teacher education and of teaching.

Assumptions of the Study

This study was based on the following assumptions held by the researcher:

- Feedback is an important element of learning.

- Current practices in feedback are lacking.
- Feedback is complicated by many factors, including the power dynamics of those engaged in giving and receiving feedback.
- Students who participated in the cohort that experimented with the use of IBF will share their experience and perspectives in interviews.
- The faculty who experimented with the application of IBF in their teacher education program will share their experience and perspectives in interviews.
- For students who found IBF useful, the protocol or its influence will be present in their current teaching practice.
- For the faculty who experimented for a summer with IBF as their primary approach to giving and receiving feedback, the protocol or its influence will be present in their current teaching practice.
- Understanding better the experience of students and faculty in the use of IBF will benefit and inform the fields of teacher education and adult learning, as well as the use of feedback in the corporate world and elsewhere.

Rationale and Significance

The rationale for this study was to broaden the understanding of the dynamics of feedback by examining the experience of student teachers and their professors in the use of the IBF protocol. The phenomenon of feedback has been examined from many perspectives. However, little scholarly attention has been paid to the IBF protocol for feedback, an approach that has gained widespread use in the arts world. Study of this approach outside of the arts world is particularly slim.

The significance of this research is to understand the potential for the IBF protocol as a tool for giving and receiving feedback in teacher education. It will benefit teacher educators by expanding the understanding of the dynamics of giving and receiving feedback and may be an additional tool to support that process. Beyond this, the study's findings may inform educators, teacher educators, and others of the potential application of the protocol in education and beyond.

The Researcher

The researcher brought to this study more than 20 years of experience in teacher education in colleges and educational organizations in the United States, Japan, and Latin America. He is familiar with the challenges of providing student teachers with feedback on their performance in ways that support their confidence and their growth. His work as an educational administrator responsible for the similar process involved in performance reviews as part of staff supervision added to his interest in the dynamics of feedback and provided experience with several current approaches.

The researcher has a Master's degree in teaching and (as of the writing of this dissertation) is a certified doctoral candidate in the area of Adult Learning and Leadership. His interest in this field reflects his mix of experience in educating adults, managing people, and leading departments and organizations—all endeavors that rely on feedback to serve individual and organizational growth and learning. He hopes to use the insights gained from this study in his own practice and as a contribution to the field.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to explore, with four student teachers and six faculty members—all of whom were trained in Inquiry-Based Feedback (IBF), the participants' perceptions of the benefits and uses of this protocol in their teaching practice in general and in their approach to giving and receiving feedback in particular. The study focused on how the students and faculty learned from their experience of learning and using IBF as a protocol for giving and receiving feedback.

The research questions that guided the study are:

- How do participants trained in IBF describe their experience of learning this alternative approach?
- In what ways do participants perceive IBF to be useful in ways different from those of other approaches to giving and receiving feedback?
- How do participants describe the impact of having learned IBF on their practice?

The literature reviewed in this chapter provided the background information framing the research problem. The literature review process continued as needed as the data were collected and analyzed.

The researcher made extensive use of online databases, such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, and EBSCO, which were accessed through the Teachers College Gottesman Libraries. Articles were retrieved and reviewed in a range of academic journals and publications, including *American Psychologist*, *Psychological Bulletin*, *Psychological Review*, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, *Journal of Teacher Education*, *Studies in Higher Education*, *ELT Journal*, *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *Continuing Higher Education Review*, *Studies in Higher Education*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, and *Journal of Management*.

Bibliographies drawn from the journal articles served as resources for locating additional articles and sources. Keywords used to identify articles on feedback included “feedback,” “feedback + higher education,” “feedback + clinical education,” “feedback + adult learning,” “formative assessment + feedback,” and “performance appraisal.” The following keywords were used to locate articles on feedback and adult learning: “experiential learning,” “situated learning,” and “cohorts and communities of practice.”

Rationale for Topics

A selected review of the literature on feedback and on adult learning is relevant because these are the primary foci of the study. Each of these topics is addressed and each concludes with a summary.

To explore **Topic I: Feedback**, a specific protocol for giving and receiving feedback and the influence that learning and using this protocol has on educators, the idea of “feedback” must be explored and defined and specific approaches and related theories

understood. This section presents an overview of the concept of feedback including: (a) the history of the term, with definitions; (b) examples from feedback in the workplace; (c) feedback in higher and professional education; and (d) approaches to giving and receiving feedback, including (e) protocols used for providing feedback.

To explore **Topic II: Adult Learning Theory**, the researcher reviewed adult learning literature, including (a) formal learning, (b) informal learning, (c) experiential learning, (d) situated learning, and (e) cohorts as communities of practice.

This chapter concludes with a description of the Conceptual Framework developed for this study. The Conceptual Framework was informed by the literature and directly aligned with the research problem and, as such, guided the analysis and interpretation of the data emanating from this research.

Topic I: Feedback

Feedback: The History of a Term

The word *feedback* has come into common usage today, but the idea of feedback has a long history. Hippocrates and other prominent Greek physicians described feedback as a feature of medical teaching in the ancient world (Van De Ridder, Stokking, McGaghie, & Cate, 2008). Contemporary use of the word *feedback* began during the Industrial Revolution in reference to regulating steam engines. “The concept of feedback used then was that an engine, or indeed any mechanical system, could be regulated through monitoring its output and feeding this information back into the system to control it” (Boud & Molloy, 2013, p. 17). In the 1920s, feedback was used to describe “the return of a fraction of the output signal from one stage of a circuit...to the input of the same or a

preceding stage...tending to increase or decrease the amplification” (Richardson, 1999, p. 17). In 1943, use of the term *feedback* expanded from the technical to the social sciences where it was understood as follows: “the behaviour of an object is controlled by the margin of error at which the object stands at a given time with reference to a relatively specific goal” (Rosenblueth, 1943, cited in Richardson, 1999, p. 17).

Around the same time, feedback became a central concept within cybernetics. Norbert Wiener, in 1948, defined cybernetics as the scientific study of “control and communication in the animal and the machine” (Wiener, 1961, p. 1). Gregory Bateson, an early proponent of cybernetics, described feedback as something that generates information and innovates novelty. “Through the recursive operation of negative and positive feedback, elements within a system, be they cells in a body or members of a society, become informed and differentiated. Hence, they are able to grow and evolve” (Bateson, in Bale, 1995, p. 16).

In cybernetics and in systems thinking, the definition of feedback is specific and technical:

Negative feedback signals the absence of deviation, or the absence of any perceived mismatch, between the system’s actual behavior and its targeted goal(s). In effect, the negative message of “no problem” is reported back to the system’s central regulatory apparatus (servomechanism, computer, autonomic nervous system, brain, etc.), signaling that no change in the system’s output is necessary. Thus, negative feedback stabilizes the system, allowing it to remain steady or constant within its prevailing course of trajectory. Conversely, positive feedback signals a mismatch between the system’s actual behavior and its intended performance. Positive feedback messages initiate modifications in the system’s operation, until the feedback is again negative and the system is on target. In fact, within highly complex systems, positive feedback can actually modify the goal(s), and hence the aim(s), of the overall system, itself. (Bale, 1995, p. 15)

Contemporary Confusion About the Term

The term *feedback* is now used and interpreted in many different ways, and there is little consensus on its definition (Richardson, 1999). In current usage, “the term *feedback* is often used to describe all kinds of comments made after the fact, including advice, praise, and evaluation. But none of these are feedback, strictly speaking” (Wiggins, 2012, para. 3). Grant (2015) pointed out that the term *feedback* is popularly used “as code for giving advice or criticism, well intended or not” (location 289). As a result, when people are told that they will receive feedback, they assume that “they must have done something wrong” and that they are “about to be criticized” (location 687).

In the corporate world, the term *feedback* is closely associated with performance appraisals. In fact, in one piece of advice, managers are encouraged to

eliminate the term ‘appraisal’ in favour of the word ‘feedback.’ The former implies one-way communication, and never entirely escapes the judgmental connotations of a courtroom. The latter term suggests dialogue, partnership and participation. It also emphasizes the importance of continual feedback, rather than on one formal occasion. (Hargie, Dickson, & Tourish, 1999, p. 261)

This quote illustrates the argument that in popular usage, “feedback” has, in many cases, become code for having done something wrong, a stand-in for appraisal, that is, a form of evaluation or judgment. However, in its earlier meanings, feedback was strictly understood to be information, not judgment. In addition, as Boud and Molloy (2013) pointed out, in the original concept of feedback from the applied sciences, “for feedback to be said to occur there must be some identifiable influence on the system that is the recipient of the feedback” (p. 2). In other words, information without action is merely, as Boud and Molloy called it, “dangling data” (p. 2).

Another challenge presented by the wide adoption of the term *feedback* is confusion over the meanings of positive or negative feedback. As is seen in the examples above, in the technical use of the terms, “positive feedback” indicates to a system that a change is needed, while “negative feedback” simply indicates that everything is fine. However, in popular usage, positive and negative feedback have become confused with ideas from behaviorist psychology of positive and negative reinforcement.

Kluger and DeNisi (1998) identified the cause of this confusion in the work of Thorndike and later Ammons. Thorndike’s work in 1927 equated “a positive feedback intervention with reinforcement and a negative feedback intervention with punishment” and indicated that both would “improve performance” (p. 67). Ammons, in 1956, summarizing the results of research into knowledge performance experiments, indicated that learning is “almost universally enhanced” (p. 283) in response to positive or negative feedback interventions, and this finding was widely cited in the literature (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). However, Kluger and DeNisi’s (1996) meta-analysis of thousands of studies on feedback interventions indicated that most interventions resulted in only moderate improvement or no improvement at all, while in more than one third of cases, performance actually became worse as a result of the intervention.

More recent research (McDowall, Freemann, & Marshall, 2014; Roberts, Dutton, Spreitzer, Heaphy, & Quinn, 2005) seems to be consistent with Kluger and DeNisi’s findings, further questioning the common assumption that performance appraisal and the practice of providing “constructive” feedback is the best way to motivate individuals toward improved performance. Why it is that feedback so often leads to unhelpful results is more fully explained through Feedback Intervention Theory.

Feedback Intervention Theory and Self-Discrepancy Theory

Feedback Intervention Theory (FIT) was developed as an outcome of Kluger and DeNisi's (1996) seminal meta-analysis of more than 2,500 papers and 500 technical reports on feedback interventions. They wrote:

Since the beginning of the century, feedback interventions (FIs) produced negative—but largely ignored—effects on performance...[which] has been historically disregarded by most FI researchers. This disregard has led to a widely shared assumption that FIs consistently improve performance. (p. 254)

Their research indicated that the impact of a feedback intervention is dependent on “the locus of attention among 3 general and hierarchically organized processes” (p. 254). The three levels, from low to high, are: (1) the task at hand, (2) the details of the task at hand, and (3) the self.

At the lowest level of the task at hand, “if the FI provided for a familiar task, containing cues that support learning, attracting attention to feedback-standard discrepancies at the task level, and is void of cues to the meta-task level (e.g., cues that direct attention to the self) is likely to yield impressive gains in performance” (p. 278). This means that if the feedback is specific to a unique task that the learner is seeking to learn, and gives very specific data on the gap between the current performance and the performance goal, this feedback will be effective. However, this is only true if the feedback has no cues that elicit a shift of attention from a focus on the task to a focus on the self.

To achieve this is challenging. This is because “FIs command, and often receive, considerable attention. FIs are unlikely to be ignored because any FI has potentially serious implications for the self” (p. 267). This means that the act of providing an FI may

itself shift the learner's attention from addressing the task they are learning to considering the implications of the FI on the self. For example, there may be a shift from *How do I do this better?*—with a focus on the task—to *Am I able to do this? Am I good enough to do this? Should I even be trying to learn this?*—with a focus on the self.

Kluger and DeNisi (1996) found four coping strategies learners use to eliminate a gap identified by feedback that indicates that their performance is not at or above the target. The first strategy is to “increase their effort”—in other words, to try harder to meet the target. The second strategy is to “abandon the standard.” If the feedback is consistent and indicates that the learner is not meeting the standard, the learner may simply give up on trying to meet that standard. A third strategy is “changing the standard.” Instead of giving up and abandoning the standard, the learner may simply reduce the goal to make it more achievable. The fourth and final strategy is to reject the feedback. The example is offered that “a satisfactory, as opposed to high, performance appraisal was perceived (at least among managers) as a negative FI, which was also perceived as unfair and lowered organizational commitment” (p. 260). Kluger and DeNisi concluded that “the assumption that behavior is regulated through feedback...is too simple. FIs induce strong affective reactions which in turn...have...effects on performance even on tasks other than the one that induced the affect” (p. 260).

To better understand the role of the self in how people react to feedback, Kluger and DeNisi (1996) used Higgins' (1987) Self-Discrepancy Theory. The theory presents three elements of the self—actual, ideal, and ought—and two perspectives on the self—one's own and that of a significant other. The combinations of these present “different types of self-discrepancies [that] represent different types of negative psychological

situations...associated with different kinds of discomfort” (p. 319). The Actual Self is the self-concept, the self a person believes he or she is. The Ideal Self is the self a person aspires to be, a person’s hopes and dreams for himself or herself. The Ought Self is the self a person believes he or she *should* be. This is the socially prescribed self, the self of obligation. Discrepancies that one identifies, or believes a significant other sees, between the Actual Self and the Ideal Self can result in emotions of dejection. Discrepancies between the Actual Self and the Ought Self represent beliefs about the individual and their duties, responsibilities, and obligations. These discrepancies can result in emotions of agitation, fear, threat, and restlessness (Higgins, 1987). This theory makes clear why a shift to focus on the self within Kluger and DeNisi’s (1998) model leads to negative outcomes. Certainly teachers, and others in authority, would fit in Higgins’ role of significant other. To think that a teacher believes there are significant gaps between who one is and who one could or should be may understandably lead to distress rather than growth and trigger some of the strategies for addressing the gap, such as changing or abandoning the standard one is receiving feedback about, or rejecting the feedback altogether.

Formative Assessment in Higher Education

Many of these dynamics regarding feedback are likely to be present in the dynamics of feedback within higher education. Recent thinking in higher education distinguishes between two forms or approaches to feedback or assessment: formative assessment and summative assessment. Grant (2015), in differentiating formative from summative assessment, suggests we imagine asking our high school teachers for a

synonym for “assessment.” He suggested that we would probably hear the word “test.” He went on to say that “our longest-standing experience with assessment comes from tests, quizzes, and exams. Lots of them. And all of those experiences placed an assumption deep in our bones: Assessment comes at the end, and it judges how we did” (p. 27). This is a good definition of summative assessment, an assessment that “sums up” what has been done and evaluates it against some standard, often resulting in a grade. An alternative assumption that Wiggins (1998, 1999, 2012) invited us to consider about assessment is that its primary purpose is to improve performance. Sandler (1998, cited in Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006) expanded on this, pointing out that formative assessment “refers to assessment that is specifically intended to generate feedback on performance to improve and accelerate learning” (p. 199). This ongoing support of learning is the key to formative assessment and sets it apart from the more familiar summative assessment that Taras (2005) defined as “a judgement which encapsulates all the evidence up to a given point” (p. 468).

Boud and Molloy: Feedback Mark 1 and Feedback Mark 2. Boud and Molloy, in their review of assessment in higher education, proposed a model of feedback that falls into one of two forms: Feedback Mark 1, which seeks to return to the original notion of feedback as a cycle of information that is reintroduced to the system in order to influence it, resulting in a new output providing new feedback, and so on; and Feedback Mark 2, which actively positions the learner as the elicitor of knowledge for improvement.

Mark 1 feedback is influenced by Ramaprasad’s (2007) definition: “feedback is information about the gap between the actual level and the reference level of a system

parameter which is used to alter the gap in some way” (p. 4). This mechanistic approach requires three conditions to be true. Below are each of Ramaprasad’s conditions with an example in italics following:

- Availability of data on the reference level of the system parameter. *In other words, how was the task supposed to have been done?*
- Availability of data on the actual level of the system parameter. *How the task was actually done by the student?*
- Availability of a mechanism for comparing the data on the reference level with that on the actual level to generate information about the gap between the levels. *A way to compare the two in order to identify the difference.*

Critically, the Mark 1 model acknowledges that feedback is feedback only if the student is able to take the data about the gap and make a change in performance that reduces the gap.

Hattie and Timperley’s (2007) review of the empirical literature produced this definition: “feedback is conceptualized as information provided by an agent (e.g., teacher, peer, book, parent, self, experience) regarding aspects of one’s performance or understanding” (p. 103). This definition keeps feedback in the form of something *provided to* the learner in a directive one-way approach.

Mark 1 feedback remains, in the words of Boud and Molloy (2013), “within a paradigm of telling” (p. 9). Mark 1 feedback is information that is directed to the student from the teacher. However, it is expanded to require a feedback loop, present in the technical definition, and is further clarified by the three conditions identified by Ramaprasad (2007). Mark 1 feedback is limited by the assumptions it makes about

learners. Learners, in this model, have limited status and agency. They are dependent on teachers or teaching systems to provide the information needed to improve (Boud & Molloy, 2013).

The Mark 2 model of feedback addresses this limitation by moving from a mechanistic approach to a responsive one. Boud and Molloy's (2013) concept of Mark 2 feedback assumes that learners play an active role and are able to facilitate their own learning. The concept of Mark 2 feedback builds on Askew and Lodge's (2000, cited in Boud & Molloy, 2013) definition that "feedback is all dialogue to support learning in both formal and informal situations" (p. 10). Askew and Lodge (2000, cited in Boud & Molloy, 2013) identified four characteristics of what they call "sustainable feedback" (p. 10-11):

- Involving students in dialogues about learning which raise their awareness of quality performance;
- Facilitating feedback processes through which students are stimulated to develop capacities in monitoring and evaluating their own learning;
- Enhancing student capacities for ongoing lifelong learning by supporting student development of skills for goal setting and planning their learning;
- Designing assessment tasks to facilitate student engagement over time in which feedback from varied sources is generated, processed and used to enhance performance on multiple stages of assignments (p. 11).

This approach to feedback shifts from a "telling" approach to a developmental approach in which the learner's own skills at "identifying and using feedback" are developed (Boud & Molloy, 2013). It assumes that students (a) are active learners who

seek to do whatever they need to do to understand what is required of them, and (b) can make their own informed judgements. It is a dialogical approach that engages the learner as part of a system in which feedback is “done with” students rather than “done to” them. This is an iterative and ongoing approach to formative feedback that is also “fostering self-regulation” (p. 21). Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) argued that “in higher education, formative assessment and feedback should be used to empower students as self-regulated learners...[in] a process whereby students actively construct their knowledge and skills” (Barr & Tagg, 1995, cited in Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006, p. 200). Figure 1, below, presents a visual model of the Feedback Theories discussed above.

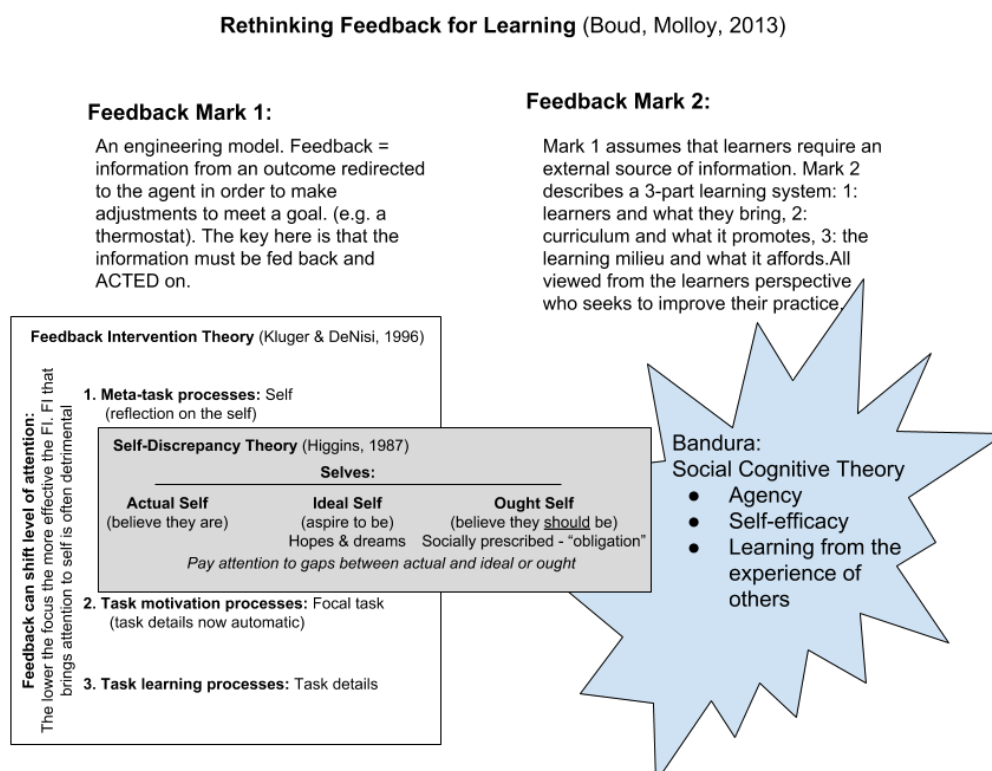


Figure 1. Visual model of feedback theories presented

Approaches to Giving Feedback

Having examined feedback as a concept and theories regarding effectiveness, we now turn to how feedback is done. When “feedback is given,” what actually happens? A common example of giving feedback in education would be giving a grade. However, grades are typically a summative approach to feedback. Here we focus on what might be considered approaches to formative feedback. Several separate approaches have been identified in the literature and appear here, though this is certainly not an exhaustive list.

Four elements emerge in the identified approaches to feedback. The first is the *focus* of the feedback. For example, is the feedback meant to evaluate good and bad, or what worked and what did not work? Is it meant to share observational data; is it meant to share opinions regarding the topic; or is it meant to inquire into the focus of the feedback? The second element is *control*. Who controls the feedback conversation? Is the feedback flowing from an authority to a subordinate? In Table 1 below, the recipient is the receiver of feedback and the responder is the person responding to the performance of the recipient. The third element is the *source or example* of the particular approach to the feedback. What person or organization uses or recommends the approach? Finally, the *gist* of the approach or the tool is identified.

Six approaches have been identified that are different enough to each represent a style of feedback:

1. *Evaluative*: This approach is the most common or traditional approach, with a focus on good or bad generally presented by a responder who is in authority to the recipient.

2. *Effectiveness*: This approach focuses on what worked or did not work, or what helped or hindered. Examples of this approach are found in the book *Understanding by Design* (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).
3. *Standards-Driven*: This has become a common approach that typically uses a rubric describing what meeting, approaching, or not meeting the standard might look like. Professional organizations such as NCATE and TESOL have developed these for teaching/teachers.
4. *Elicited Experience*: Brookfield's (2011) Critical Incident is an example of this approach, in which the recipient of the feedback controls the process. The recipient elicits from the responders their answers to a series of questions and then interprets the answers and shares the interpretation with the responders.
5. *Observational*: In this approach, the responder focuses on gathering data through observation and sharing it with the recipient. Rodgers' (2006) work includes examples of this.
6. *Indirect*: This approach invites responders to respond to a problem presented by the recipient; the responders then discuss the issue in the presence of the recipient but without the recipient's input. Drago-Severson and Blum-DeStefano (2016) suggested this approach.

Of the approaches described above, the first three represent a more traditional, evaluative approach, while the final three reflect a focus on describing, eliciting, and exploring. It is these final three approaches that best align with and inform Inquiry-based Feedback, the protocol explored in this study.

Table 1. *Six Approaches to Feedback*

Style	Focus	Who Controls Conversation	Represented by	Approach
Evaluative	Good/Bad	Responder to Recipient	Traditional/ Common	Liked/Didn't like
Effectiveness	Worked/Did not work	Responder(s) to Recipient	Understanding by Design (Wiggins)	What worked? What didn't work? Or Helped/ Hindered?
Standards Driven	Did you meet the standard? Yes/No	Responder/ Evaluator or self in relation to rubric	NCATE/ TESOL	Rubric
Elicited Experience	Tell me a time when...	Recipient elicits from responders, interprets and responds to responders	Brookfield	Critical Incident
Observational	What I see is...	Responder to Recipient	Rodgers, Dewey	Observation notes
Indirect	What we think is...	Responders in dialogue with one another about Recipient's work	Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, The Annenberg Institute for School Reform	Convening, Critical Friends

Summary of Topic I

In this section, we considered the history and usage of the term *feedback*. We examined research on the idea, including Feedback Intervention Theory (FIT), and how that explains some of the dynamics of feedback and its effectiveness. We also considered how feedback is understood within higher education and differentiated between formative and summative assessment or feedback. Finally, we examined some of the approaches to giving feedback that have been found in the literature. While there is disagreement and uncertainty about what kind of feedback works and how, there is general agreement that feedback plays an important role in learning. In the next section on Topic II, we explore the literature on Adult Learning Theory.

Topic II: Adult Learning

“Theorists do not all agree about what learning is or how it happens. Psychologists, anthropologists, linguists, neurophysiologists, philosophers and others are still trying to understand how people learn” (Phillips & Soltis, 2004, p. 1). Although a shared agreement does not exist, Campbell, Draper, and Huffington (1992) suggested that “learning involves an oscillating dynamism between experience and observation of that experience” and that “you cannot *not* learn...you are learning all the time” (p. 5). This perspective supports the notion that learning is a process rather than a product (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgarten, 2007). The field of Adult Learning seeks to understand that process and the elements associated with it as they relate to learning for adults rather than children.

Malcolm Knowles' work is often identified as foundational to the separation of pedagogy (teaching children) from andragogy (teaching adults). Knowles presented six assumptions about the characteristics of adult learners that may be different from assumptions about child learners:

- The Need to Know: Adults want to know why they need to learn something before they undertake learning it.
- The Learner's Self-concept: As a person matures, his/her self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward one of being a self-directed human being.
- The Role of the Learner's Experiences: As a person matures, he/she accumulates a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning.
- Readiness to Learn: As a person matures, his/her readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks in his/her life and social roles.
- Orientation to Learning: As a person matures, his/her time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application. As a result, his/her orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centeredness to one of problem-centeredness.
- Motivation: As a person matures, the motivation to learn is internal (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005).

Knowles saw the difference between pedagogy and andragogy less in learners' abilities and more in institutional systems and ideology. He thus considered pedagogy as "a systematic body of beliefs that requires loyalty and conformity by its adherents. Consequently, teachers often feel pressure from the educational system to adhere to the pedagogical mode" (p. 69). Knowles pointed out that teachers of children who apply the principles listed above often find them useful and effective with their students as well (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 69). Knowles went on to draw from the work of Eduard C. Lindeman, author of the 1926 book *The Meaning of Adult Education*, who differentiated between authoritarian or conventional education (pedagogy, in Knowles' terms) and adult education, which he viewed as "a cooperative venture in nonauthoritarian, informal learning, the chief purpose of which is to discover the meaning of experience" (Lindeman, quoted in Knowles et al., 2005, p. 39). In the literature, this difference is somewhat similar to the categories of formal and informal learning that are considered below.

Formal Learning

Formal learning is understood as the kind of learning that happens at schools and in classrooms, usually under the auspices of an institution and resulting in a diploma or certification (English, 2016). A key element of formal learning is that "the control and initiative are mostly in the hands of the institutions" (p. 310) rather than the learner. In addition, "formal learning is generally age-graded, hierarchically organized, and delivered through a formally constituted system that requires compulsory attendance and provides credentialing programs to certify knowledge or competence" (Livingstone,

2004, cited in English, 2016, p. 310). However, English pointed out that “despite the many controls in these institutions and besides planned formal learning, a great deal of informal, unplanned learning happens, in the schoolyard, for example” (p. 310).

Informal Learning

Informal learning, in contrast to formal learning, refers to acquiring new knowledge, understanding, skills, or attitudes on one’s own in ways that have not been planned or organized in formal settings such as schools, colleges, and universities (Rothwell & Kazanas, 1990, cited in English, 2016). Marsick and Volpe (1999) provided a working definition of informal learning as “learning that is predominantly unstructured, experiential, and non-institutional. Informal learning takes place as people go about their daily activities at work in or in other spheres of life. It is driven by people’s choices, preferences, and intentions” (p. 4). Following on English’s statement above that informal learning happens in the schoolyard—in terms of graduate education, the schoolyard could be thought of as the conversations that happen between and about classes, other informal encounters where students may extend the formal learning through informal means, and the other informal learning they do. This leads us to the notion of experiential learning.

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning assumes that the learner’s individual experience is central to learning and is often understood in contrast to the passive role learners have in more traditional, often classroom-based approaches to learning (Beard, 2010). The idea of learning from experience is not, of course, a new one. In Greece in the 3rd century BCE, Aristotle (1911) suggested that learning without experience would be “profitless,” an idea

close to what, in early 20th-century England, the philosopher Alfred, Lord Whitehead (1967), meant when he spoke critically of traditional education as producing “inert ideas”—a kind of learning that is separate from experience or application.

In this study, the researcher expected that experiential learning theory would likely illuminate some of the reported experiences of the participants in the study. In part, this is due to the direct citation by the program under consideration that it is designed around an experiential learning approach, suggesting that even classroom-based learning may have experiential elements. Beyond this, the informal learning inherent in the participants’ experiences of a cohort-based program, which are likely to take place in shared time and activities outside the formal learning happening in classrooms, may be better understood through the lens of experiential learning.

John Dewey. John Dewey, an American contemporary of Whitehead, expanded on the argument for the centrality of experience, the senses, and social interaction in learning. “Dewey...asserts that *the child has a body and he brings it to school along with his brain*” (Scarfe, 2009, p. 143). This quote echoed the recent TED Talk by Sir Ken Robinson (2007) entitled “Do Schools Kill Creativity?” in which he critiqued formal education systems and how they encourage us to think of our bodies as “the thing we use to bring our brains to meetings”. For Dewey (1929), experience at the level of the senses and the body were as central to his thinking about experience as the cognitive and the social. Dewey advocated the freedom of what he called “*outward action* because human experience, especially including education, is ultimately social” (Scarfe, 2009, p. 143).

Many consider Dewey’s (1938) work as foundational to experiential learning (Merriam & Bierema, 2013). Dewey argued that for learning from experience to happen,

the learner must connect what he or she has learned from current experiences to experiences in the past and also see possible future implications. This approach provides a “continuity” of experience, framing an individual experience within the broader ongoing life experience of the learner. In addition to this continuity, Dewey argued that the experience must be grounded in the learner’s interaction with his or her environment. As Dewey stated, “all genuine education comes about through experience” (p. 13). However, this “does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative” (p. 13). In fact, some experiences “mis-educate” in that they actually “distort growth... narrow the field of experiences...[and leave people] in a groove or rut” (p. 13).

While Dewey’s thinking laid the groundwork for experiential learning, others followed with more explicit models that describe the process. David Kolb’s (2015) work is perhaps the best known as his model of experiential learning has been widely used. A Google search of “Kolb’s Learning Cycle” returned more than 270,000 results.

David Kolb. Kolb’s (2015) research in experiential learning built on the work of John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, and Jean Piaget. Kolb defined learning as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping experience and transforming it” (p. 67). The grasping and transforming take place with a series of steps on the part of the learner. Kolb proposed a model of learning from experience with four stages: (1) concrete experience, (2) reflective observation, (3) abstract conceptualization, and (4) active experimentation. These four stages are usually understood to take place in that order as part of what Kolb described as an experiential learning cycle (p. 50), with the outcome of active experimentation leading to a new concrete experience that starts the cycle again.

As a result, “knowledge is continuously derived and tested out in the experiences of the learner” (p. 38). Tennant (2007) pointed out that “the model provides an excellent framework for planning teaching and learning activities and it can be usefully employed as a guide for understanding learning difficulties, vocational counseling, academic advising and so on” (p. 91). It is likely that when the program under study describes itself as “an experiential program,” it is referring in part to an application of Kolb’s model to the design and delivery of the formal learning program, as Tennant suggested, even though experiential learning is more commonly associated with informal learning.

Kolb’s model, though widely used and embraced, is limited. Fenwick (cited in Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2012, p. 164) pointed out that “experience and reflection seem to exist in a vacuum,” and Kolb did not “account for issues of power in his model” (p. 164). Seaman (2008) expanded on these concerns, arguing that “stepwise models inadequately explain the holistic learning processes that are central to learning from experience” (p. 2), suggesting that a more holistic and less linear approach is more reflective of the experiential learning process. Seaman also pointed out that the emotions are “seen as suspect rather than as crucial insights into the world” (p. 12) and identified in Kolb’s cycle a bias toward the individual rather than the social nature of learning. John Heron’s model of experiential learning, though less known than Kolb’s, addressed many of these concerns.

John Heron. John Heron, a British psychologist, approached experiential learning from a different perspective. He took a radical and holistic approach to education that valued what he called “whole person learning” (Heron, 1999, p. 4). His view of the teacher was also different; he saw the role of a “teacher” as a facilitator of what is

ultimately self-directed learning. What he meant by this was that the teacher's role is not to impart knowledge. Instead, it is to facilitate a process that supports the learner's own self-directed learning. The student instead of the teacher is principally responsible for student learning, while the facilitator is secondarily responsible. Heron's model includes four interdependent forms of learning that complement and support each other:

- *Practical learning*. This is learning how to do something. It involves the acquisition of a skill, and it is expressed in the competent practice of that skill. This is the will, including the physical, level of learning.
- *Conceptual learning*. This is learning about some subject matter, learning that something is the case, and it is expressed in statements and propositions. This is the intellectual, verbal-conceptual level of learning.
- *Imaginal learning*. This is learning configurations of form and process. It involves an intuitive grasp of a whole, as shape or sequence. It is expressed in the symbolism of line, shape, color, proportion, succession, sound, rhythm, and movement, and toward the interface with conceptual learning, in the metaphorical, evocative, and narrative use of language, as in the work of the poet, novelist, and dramatist. This the imaginative, intuitive level of learning.
- *Experiential learning*. This kind of learning is by encounter, by direct acquaintance, by entering into some state of being. It is manifest through the process of being there, face-to-face, with the person, at the event, in the experience. This is the feeling, resonance level of learning.

Heron (1999) saw these four forms of learning as distinct but connected: they inform, support, and enhance each other. They make up what Heron referred to as “an

up-hierarchy” (p. 3), with the ones higher in this list grounded by those that are lower. Heron wrote that “we encounter the world (experiential learning); identify patterns of form and process in it (imaginal learning); these become the basis for the development of language and knowledge (conceptual learning) which is applied in a wide range of skills (practical learning)” (p. 4). He used the term *experiential learning* to refer to the whole hierarchy. However, he also suggested that the four forms can be understood as a cycle..

Reflective Practice

As noted above, Dewey, Kolb, and Heron all understood reflection to be central to their models of experiential learning. David Boud (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 2015) described reflection as “an important human activity in which people recapture their experience, think about it, mull it over and evaluate it. It is this working with experience that is important in learning” (p. 33). Dewey (in Zeichner & Liston, 2013) defined reflection as “that which involves active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or practice in light of the reasons that support it and the further consequences to which it leads” (Zeichner & Liston, 2013). Of course, reflection is not a new concept. Socrates identified reflection as the lynchpin of learning and as indispensable to living well (Stonehouse, Allison, & Carr, 2011). As such a central element to learning, reflective practice, on its own, warrants further examination.

Donald Schön’s (1984) work focused on the role of reflective practice in the way professionals, such as teachers, think. Schön’s theoretical framework built on Dewey’s (1916) work, in which reflection involves an integrating of attitudes and skills in methods of inquiry; neither attitudes nor skills alone will suffice (Boud et al., 2015). Schön’s

(1984) concept of reflection-in-action was grounded in Michael Polanyi's (2009) concept of "tacit knowing," the idea that "we know more than we can tell." Tacit knowing, which is not easily expressed but is present in activities like riding a bike, is proposed in contrast to explicit knowing, which can be easily codified and articulated; an example is knowing the capitals of countries (Schön, 1984). Schön's "reflection-in-action" seeks to understand how professionals draw on their tacit knowledge, in the moment, to make decisions. Schön contrasted reflection-in-action with reflection-on-action, in which the professional looks back on an event and considers it in terms of his or her explicit knowledge.

Schön (1987) described reflection-in-action as shaping "what we are doing while we are doing it" (p. 26). Reflection-in-action is triggered by surprise. What we have been thinking and doing all along as professionals no longer works. "We think critically about the thinking that got us into this fix or this opportunity; and we may, in the process, restructure strategies of action, understanding of phenomena, or ways of framing problems.... Reflection gives rise to on-the-spot experiment" (p. 28).

Reflection-on-action, in contrast, describes the kind of reflection that takes place after the event. In this kind of reflection, practitioners reconsider their actions in terms of their explicit knowledge (Schön, 1987).

Sometimes in the relative tranquility of a post-mortem, they think back on a project they have undertaken, a situation they have lived through, and they explore the understandings they have brought to their handling of the case. They may do this in a mood of idle speculation, or in a deliberate effort to prepare themselves for future cases. (p. 61)

Reflection-on-action may focus simply on what worked well and what did not and why. This kind of reflection may identify critical incidents when something different

could have happened. It might summarize lessons learned and incorporate them into a new approach to practice. In reflection-on-action, the practitioner reviews an experience and evaluates it. This selecting and considering of data, analyzing data, and evaluating data can lead to new knowledge that provides the basis for new experiments and creates the context for more reflection-in-action (Schön, 1987).

Engaging in reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action can help practitioners develop a critical perspective on their own practices. However, such a perspective also requires, as Dewey pointed out, dispositions of “openmindedness, responsibility, and wholeheartness” (Zeichner & Liston, 2013, p. 15). Schön’s (2013) model has been critiqued as being a “largely solitary process” (p. 19). More recent work on reflective practice has stressed the idea that reflection is also a social practice, and that “without a social forum for the discussion of their ideas [a practitioner’s] development is inhibited.” Instead, reflective practice is seen as not merely solitary, but also as “a social practice taking place within a “learning community” (p. 19). This point brings us to the next topic of interest for this study: Learning Communities.

Learning Communities

Because the program that is the subject of this study is a cohort program explicitly designed to integrate an experiential learning approach and to create and support an intentional learning community, the topic of learning communities is important to include in this review. The concept of learning communities falls within the broad category of Social Learning Theory. Developed by Albert Bandura (1977), Social Learning Theory stresses the importance of learning through observation in social contexts. Bandura

pointed out “the weaknesses of learning approaches that discount the influence of social variables” (Bandura & Walters, 1963, p. 1).

Situated Learning Theory expands on this perspective. Developed by Lave and Wenger (1991), situated learning also questions the view that learning involves only individuals engaged in cognitive processes. Lave and Wenger viewed learning as participation in a social world, and they saw learning as an integral and inseparable aspect of social practice, in what they called “communities of practice” (CoPs). Situated learning considers how new members to a CoP learn to become members. Lave and Wenger described this as “legitimate peripheral participation” (p. 29). Their research focused on existing CoPs and the role of apprenticeship or mentoring in bringing new participants into a CoP. In this sense, CoPs represent a social learning form of informal learning. CoPs are not designed to promote learning. Rather, the CoP model helps to explain how informal learning happens within a social environment in relation to an existing set of practices.

Like situated learning and CoPs, learning communities also recognize the importance of the social elements of learning, but rather than being informal or existing groups, learning communities are typically intentionally designed and exist within formal learning institutions. A cohort program is an example of a learning community.

Saltiel and Reynolds (2001) defined a cohort program as one “in which [a] group of individuals enter a program at the same time, proceed through all classes and academic requirements together, completing together, thus creating an atmosphere for learning in which a synergy is present and the learners’ effectiveness is increased” (p. ____). Cohorts in education represent a specific type of intentional and designed learning community

intended to foster collaboration that helps “propel members toward clarifying and attaining their goals” (Yerkes, 1995, as cited in Saltiel & Reynolds, 2001, p. 13).

Such a cohort form of learning community reflects adult education concepts such as self-directed and experiential learning, and it provides to the learners what Kegan (2009; Kegan & Lahey, 2001) and Drago-Severson (2004a, 2004b) called a “holding environment.” Drago-Severson (2004a) described a holding environment as having three functions. First, it “recognizes and confirms who the person is and how the person is currently making meaning.” Second, a holding environment says “let’s go,” “permitting and stimulating a person to move beyond his or her existing understandings.” Third, it provides “continuity, stability and availability to the person who is in the process of growth” (p. 35).

Reynolds and Hebert (cited in Saltiel & Reynolds, 2001) reported of cohort programs that there were greater levels of task and social cohesiveness among cohort students who arranged themselves into study groups and socialized after class. They also observed “a spirit of willingness to take part and participate...more student follow-up on points made by other students and more attempts to be certain they understood one another’ views” (p. 12).

In the program under study, the learning community comes together to explore the multiple meanings made of their shared experience through the structure provided by Inquiry-Based Feedback (IBF). The focus of their shared inquiry is often the teaching experience of an individual teacher and the learning experience of the rest of the group as learners in the classroom of that teacher. In this way, the group participates in something

similar to what Kasl and Yorks (2002) called collaborative inquiry, which they defined as:

a systematic structure for learning from experience [in which] participants organize themselves in small groups to address a compelling question that brings the group together. In order to construct new meaning related to their question, collaborative inquirers engage in cycles of reflection and action, [and] evoke multiple ways of knowing.... They balance exploration of inner experience with action in the world. (Kasl & Yorks, 2002, p. 3)

Teaching is an inherently complex activity. McDonald (1992) wrote that teaching “happens inside a wild triangle of relations—among teacher, students, subject—and the points of this triangle shift continuously” (p. 1). As a cohort of teachers inquire individually and collectively into their teaching practice, they are learning from themselves and their experience as well as that of others, while also coming to understand more deeply the uncertainty in what McDonald (1992) described as an “uncertain craft” (p. 1). In doing so, they engage as a group in what Yorks and Nicolaides (2013) described as “generative learning,” in which one is “learning through inquiry, [by] having an immediate awareness of how one is in relationship with the ambiguity and uncertain challenges of one’s environment while maintaining and continually testing one’s actions with one’s intentionality” (p. 5). The cohort, as a learning community, provides a space for this kind of learning to happen.

Summary

In this chapter, the literature on feedback was examined. The history, misconceptions about the meaning of the term, and the application of the term were reviewed. Common assumptions about the effectiveness of feedback were called into

question, and theories regarding the effectiveness of feedback interventions were presented. While it is clear that feedback is generally considered essential in a learning experience, much feedback may be ineffectual or even damaging (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996, 1998). While suggestions have been put forward regarding what traits may be true of effective feedback, there is no clarity on this. Nevertheless, several ways of giving feedback, found in the literature, were identified and compared as current examples of practice. Drago-Severson and Blum-DeStefano's (2016) observation that, "throughout the education world, there remains a growing sense that we need to do something *different* in terms of feedback, not just something *more*" (ch.1, para. 12) illustrates the need for further research in this area.

In learning, including adult learning, feedback is an important element. While feedback may come in the forms typical of that between teachers and students in formal settings, in informal learning the feedback is likely to be driven by the learner's own observations or evaluation of their work or performance. This element of informal learning echoes the concern in the feedback literature that more be done in formal learning to encourage self-regulated learning (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

The literature on learning from experience highlighted the central role that experience plays in the learning of adults. It clarified the importance for adults of new learning being grounded in experience. Experience alone does not ensure learning. Reflection on that experience seems to be the source of learning from experience. The cyclical nature of this learning, with roles for experience, reflection, planning, and action, was shared in the literature, though the role of emotions is minimized in some approaches (Kolb, 1983) while central to the thinking of others (Heron, 1992, 1999).

Learning from the experience of others is also a resource in adult learning.

Educational cohorts, such as those in the program from which this study's participants were drawn, are a specific type of learning community. Cohort programs, as an approach to formal learning, provide a learning community in which learning from one another can happen (Saltiel & Reynolds, 2001). While this was not explicit in the literature, because the cohort form benefits from the role of learning from one another, an approach to feedback supports learning from one another may benefit from and also contribute to the strength of a learning community. This question was considered in this study of the use of feedback within a cohort program.

In reviewing the literature in the areas of feedback and adult learning that were applicable to this study, the researcher identified and explored the work of theorists and scholars who have provided an essential frame in which to place and orient this inquiry and its conceptual framework. Through examining the contributions and limitations of their research, the researcher prepared to explore the learning experiences of the study's participants in terms of their experience in learning and using the inquiry-based feedback protocol, and to understand how that experience influenced their practice as teachers.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a way to explain the key factors and concepts to be examined in a research study and their relationship to each other (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The conceptual framework for this study served to organize the findings, as well as the analysis, interpretation, and synthesis of the findings. It gave the researcher the means to sort and gather relevant data constructs into initial categories for coding and

consideration (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). It was informed by the research questions that guided the study as well as the literature reviewed in this chapter and the researcher's own experiences and insights. The questions for this study are reviewed below and structured to reflect the research "problem" and the researcher's assumptions about the phenomenon under study.

Feedback on performance is a common experience happening continually in multiple domains. However, it is not clear that current approaches to giving feedback lead to changes in performance. In the business world, research has indicated that such feedback is frequently dreaded by employees and often perceived to be unfair, and that many managers avoid giving it. In the world of education, similar problems with feedback on performance are also present, and there is a need for different approaches. One alternative approach, used in the world of dance and the arts, claims to demonstrate positive results in giving and receiving feedback. Therefore, further research is warranted to investigate this alternative approach to feedback, as applied in a teacher education program, to assess the extent to which this approach might be applicable to the training and development of teachers. For this research, the approach is referred to by the pseudonym Inquiry-Based Feedback (IBF).

The purpose of this study was to explore, with four teacher-learners and six faculty members—all of whom were trained in IBF—their perceptions of the benefits and uses of this approach in their teaching practice in general and in their approach to giving and receiving feedback in particular. To carry out this purpose, the following research questions were addressed:

- How do participants, trained in IBF, describe their experience of learning this alternative approach?
- In what ways do participants perceive IBF to be useful in ways different from other approaches to giving and receiving feedback?
- How do participants describe the impact of having learned IBF on their practice?

The following conceptual framework captures possible responses that study participants were considered likely to use to describe their experiences. These formed a starting point for engaging with the interview material and were be adapted and updated in response to the interview data.

The following is a graphic depiction of the framework. A fuller description of the framework can be found in Appendix E.

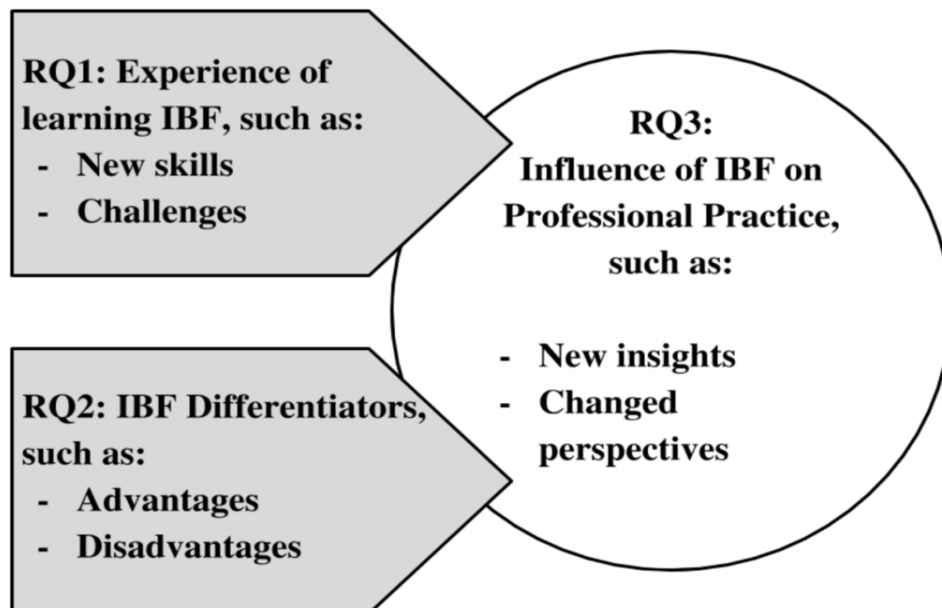


Figure 2. Conceptual framework

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction and Overview

The purpose of this study was to explore, with four teacher-learners and six faculty members—all of whom were trained in Inquiry-Based Feedback (IBF)—their perceptions of the benefits and uses of this approach in their teaching practice in general and in their approach to giving and receiving feedback in particular. The study focused on how the students and faculty learned from their experience of learning and using IBF as a protocol for giving and receiving feedback.

The research questions that guide the study are:

- How do participants, trained in IBF, describe their experience of learning this alternative approach?
- In what ways do participants perceive IBF to be useful in ways different from other approaches to giving and receiving feedback?
- How do participants describe the impact of having learned IBF on their practice?

This chapter describes the methodology that was used to explore these questions. It also includes a rationale for using a qualitative research approach, a description of the research sample, an overview of information needed, an overview of the research design,

a description of the methods of data collection, a description of how data were analyzed and synthesized, a review of ethical considerations, an examination of issues of trustworthiness, a description of the limitations of the study, and a chapter summary.

Rationale for Qualitative Research Approach

This study focused on the individual subjective experience and perspectives of the participants. For that reason, a qualitative approach using the case study method and interview data and an analysis of those data was appropriate. Creswell (2008) described qualitative research as “a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 4). He went on to describe qualitative research as an approach that is situated within a world view of social constructivism in which “individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and...develop subjective meanings of their experiences...that are varied and multiple” (p. 8). Qualitative research uses broad, open-ended inquiry, which seeks to understand how individual participants construct meaning. The goal of the research is to “rely as much as possible on the participants’ views of the situation being studied” (p. 8).

Creswell (2008) identified five qualitative approaches for inquiry, including the case study method. A case is a bounded system made up of a complex of interrelated elements or characteristics that have clearly identified limits. A case may be an individual person, a group, a program, or an activity (Stake, 2010). Yin (2008) identified case study as appropriate for studies in which “how” or “why” questions are being posed, in which the investigator has little control over events (in this case, participants’ experiences), and where the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon. For this study, the researcher worked

with participants who were all members, as students or as faculty, of a single cohort of a degree program. As such, a single or holistic case study is indicated (Yin, 2008). This approach allowed the researcher to explore the case; consider each individual's experience, perspectives, and learning; and derive broader insights from patterns occurring across data from the individuals who comprise the study's sample. The study is supported by analysis and interpretation of accounts using an interview protocol, coding, and analytic procedures.

The case study approach, within the constructivist paradigm, seeks to develop what Geertz (2017) called a "thick description" (p. 1) of settings, participants, and/or themes. Such descriptions help readers to perceive and understand the credibility of the accounts and their possible applicability to other settings or contexts (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This study of the experience of professors and students learning and using a new protocol for giving and receiving feedback, and how having learned it has influenced their teaching practice, has produced the kind of dense, detailed reports that are obtained through case study research.

Description of the Research Sample

The research sample was a group of student-learners and faculty members who participated in an intensive Master of Arts in Teaching program during which IBF was used as the primary protocol for giving and receiving feedback. The entire population of the cohort was invited to participate with the assumption that most students and professors would agree. Difficulty reaching students and arranging for interviews resulted in only four of the student-learners and six faculty members participating in the study.

The researcher had access to and connections with the program, which is a degree program that consists of two intensive 8-week in-person summer terms with an interim teaching internship. Through the program administrators, the researcher collected names and contact information for the participants, who had completed the program at the time this research was conducted, and invited them to participate in this study.

Along with an emailed invitation to participate in the study, an informed consent form was sent to each potential participant for review in advance of the interview (see Appendix B). Each participant was asked to sign the form before his or her interview began, and the researcher communicated in writing the voluntary and confidential nature of participation and the fact that interview transcripts and all other data collected would be used for research purposes only. The researcher gathered a résumé from each participant as well as a demographic inventory prior to each participant's interview.

Because participants were based in a variety of locations in the United States and abroad, the researcher conducted the interviews via video-conferencing at times locally convenient to each of the participants. Each interview was planned to last approximately 60 to 90 minutes and was audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. These interviews were conducted during the summer and autumn of 2018.

Information Needed to Conduct the Study and Sources of the Data

This case study consisted of a total of 10 students and teachers in an Master of Arts in Teaching program in which IBF was taught and used as a protocol for giving and receiving feedback. The research questions that were used in this study were intended to elicit the perceptions that these participants hold regarding the influence of learning and

using IBF on their teaching practice. The researcher sought the following information:

(a) contextual, (b) perceptual, and (c) demographic; each of these categories are described in further detail below.

Contextual Data

The common context for study participants was the Master of Arts in Teaching program that they attended or taught in. In order to better understand each individual's history and account of their experiences, the researcher reviewed participants' résumés. In addition, the researcher reviewed materials describing the institution hosting the Master of Arts in Teaching program of which the cohort was a part, the institution's educational philosophy, and the design and educational intentions of the Master of Arts in Teaching program.

Demographic Data

A demographic inventory was the means by which the researcher collected relevant, factual data from each participant, including gender, age, nationality, ethnicity, postsecondary education, professional employment as a teacher, the kinds of institutions and students the participant had taught, and what professional roles they had outside their role in the program. Each participant was given the demographic inventory at the start of his or her interview session. The information obtained helped to identify similarities or differences in participants' profiles which, in turn, helped to explain patterns or variations in their perceptions. The demographic inventory can be found in Appendix D.

Perceptual Data

The needed perceptual information, gathered largely through one-on-one interviews, included participants' descriptions of:

- their experience encountering IBF and their initial responses to it;
- how they experienced participating in IBF as a recipient of feedback;
- how they experienced participating in IBF as a giver of feedback;
- the challenges they faced in learning the IBF protocol;
- the value they did or did not find in the ongoing use of IBF during the program;
- how the experience of IBF influenced their feedback practices when they returned to their classrooms;
- what they learned formally or informally about giving and receiving feedback, such as the knowledge, skills, attitudes, or awareness that changed or shifted as a result of experiencing the IBF protocol;
- how their feedback practices changed as a result of their encounter with IBF; and
- how return to their home institutions and institutional environments supported or challenged changes they made to their feedback practices.

Theoretical Information

The theoretical information obtained for the study included scholarly research and reviews from the published literature in areas related to the research questions. These

areas included: (a) the giving and receiving of feedback, and (b) adult learning theory.

Reviewing what is already known served to clarify and frame the focus of this inquiry.

Research Design Overview

The following steps were taken to conduct and complete this study on how learning the IBF protocol for feedback influenced educators' teaching and feedback practices (see Table 2).

Table 2. *Steps in Research Design*

Step 1	<i>Research Topic Identification:</i> The researcher's experience as a teacher educator informed the selection of a research topic related to the challenge that giving and receiving feedback has on performance and learning.
Step 2	<i>Literature Review:</i> This included a thorough review of the work of researchers and scholars in the area of giving and receiving feedback on performance and the area of adult learning. The literature review is intended to assess the existing bodies of information and to frame and inform this study.
Step 3	<i>Preliminary Identification of Sample Participants:</i> The researcher met with the chair of the Master of Arts in Teaching program to be studied to identify potential interviewees. The researcher provided the chair with an overview of the research objectives of the study, anticipated level of involvement, and methodologies used in the study. This initial meeting confirmed the interest of the chair in supporting this study and her willingness to develop a list of potential study participants. Additionally, securing the chair's commitment to the study allowed the data collection to commence immediately following IRB approval.
Step 4	<i>Proposal Hearing:</i> The researcher sought a proposal hearing in May 2018. Any revisions, suggested by the researcher's advisor and second reader, were addressed in the submission of a revised proposal.
Step 5	<i>IRB Approval:</i> The researcher submitted the required documents to the Teachers College IRB for approval to proceed with data collection.

Table 2 (continued)

Step 6	<i>Letter of Invitation and Consent Form:</i> Following IRB approval, the researcher contacted all potential interviewees by email or phone to determine their willingness to participate. The researcher then disseminated the following documents to all study participants: Letter of Invitation describing the purpose of the research, length of the interview, and interview details (location, date, time). Informed Consent Form explaining the purpose of the study, participants' rights, confidentiality, and data collection methods.
Step 7	<i>Demographic Inventory:</i> Confirmed participants completed a demographic inventory prior to beginning the interview.
Step 8	<i>Interviews:</i> In-depth interviews were conducted with 10 participants in order to understand the influence of having learned the IBF protocol on their teaching and feedback practices. The interviews were expected to be approximately 1 hour in duration.
Step 9	<i>Interview Transcription and Coding:</i> Interviews, which were audio-recorded, were transcribed verbatim and coded by the researcher.
Step 10	<i>Inter-Rater Reliability:</i> The researcher elicited the assistance of two colleagues to code two interviews in order to ensure inter-rater reliability.
Step 11	<i>Document Review:</i> The researcher reviewed existing program data in the form of (a) transcriptions of focus groups done separately with both students and faculty in the Master of Arts in Teaching cohort at the end of the first year of using IBF, and (b) students' final learning statement documents (similar to theses) for earlier indications of each participant's experience of IBF and indications of the impact of IBF at these earlier stages in their experience with it in the program. These sources were used, in addition to the interviews above, to triangulate the findings.
Step 12	<i>Data Analysis:</i> Data collected from the demographic inventory, interviews, focus groups, and learning statements were analyzed both individually and collectively. Data gathered from the focus groups and learning statements were compared to interview data. All data were coded, analyzed, interpreted, and synthesized according to the conceptual framework.

Methods of Data Collection

Yin (2008) makes clear that multiple collection methods are needed to enhance data credibility and this is a hallmark of case study research. The purpose of seeking triangulation is to avoid errors to which a study using a single approach might be vulnerable. Triangulation serves, as Stake (2010) pointed out, to “make us more confident that we have the meaning right, or...more confident that we need to examine differences to see important multiple meanings” (p. 124).

For this study, triangulation was achieved by using multiple methods and sources in order to collect a sufficient variety of evidence. These sources included: (a) in-depth interviews with 10 participant educators, completed in Autumn 2018; (b) review of existing data from a focus group with the participants conducted by the program in 2016 upon the completion of the participants’ first 15 months of experience with IBF; and (c) document review of cohort students’ final learning statements (theses), completed after the students completed their coursework in 2017.

In-depth Interviews

In-depth, one-on-one interviews with the 10 participants were the primary method of capturing each individual story, rich with descriptions of the participants’ experiences and perspectives, and served as the primary form of data collection in this research study. The method is appropriate for this study because it enabled the researcher to gather in-depth information particular to the people interviewed and allowed learning about individual opinions and attitudes regarding events (Yin, 2008).

The researcher developed an interview protocol made up of 12 open-ended questions designed to elicit participants' perspective on the experience and use of IBF on their practices of teaching and feedback. The protocol supported a semi-structured approach to the interviews that Seidman (2005) recommended in order to “ask participants to reconstruct their experience and to explore their meaning” (p. 94).

According to Vygotsky (1987, as cited in Seidman, 2005), “Every word that people use in telling their stories is a microcosm of their consciousness” (p. 7). To understand these stories and the meaning-making within them, qualitative research uses interviews as a primary method for gathering case study data. These interviews aim to elicit facts and, just as important, the meanings made of them (Yin, 2008). Seidman (2005), using language from Schutz (1967), framed the relationship of the interviewer and interviewee as an “I-Thou” relationship. Schutz explained this as

when I am Thou-oriented, I apprehend the other person's experiences within their setting in his [sic] stream of consciousness. I apprehend them as existing within a subjective context of meaning, as being the unique experiences of a particular person. (p. 183)

Seidman saw the role of the qualitative interviewer as someone who engages with the interviewee in an I-Thou relationship in order to understand deeply and empathetically their unique and individual experience.

Interviews were conducted via video conference at a time that was mutually convenient for both the participant and the researcher. Each interview was planned to be approximately 60 to 90 minutes in length. All interviews, with participants' permission, were digitally recorded for transcription. The researcher transcribed the digital recordings immediately following each interview.

Focus Groups

The program conducted focus groups with all participants in the cohort under study, including the future study participants, at the end of their second summer of coursework together in 2016. These recorded sessions explored the students' and, separately, the faculty's experiences with learning and using IBF. The researcher was offered access to these recordings, which provided a window into the group's collective thinking about their experience with IBF at that point. Those data served as an important resource for understanding the impact of IBF on the participants over time. Changes between how they understand IBF's influence on their practice now, as described in interviews, was compared and contrasted with their earlier view, as captured in the focus group data.

Focus groups, or group interviews, are an "in-depth method in high-involvement topics" that benefit from the group's dynamics, allowing comments to build on one another and stimulate further comments while also distinguishing between commonly held views and those that are more extreme (Robson, 2011). One of the disadvantages of focus groups, identified by Robson, is that it can be challenging to do follow-up interviews. However, in this study, reviewing the focus group data informed the one-on-one interviews that followed. These focus group data served in the needed triangulation across the data methods (Creswell, 2008).

Document Review

The third point of data collection was document review. Two categories of document review were important to this study. The first was a review of program

documents in order to develop a “thick” description of the context in which the participants encountered IBF, including the goals or intentions of the Master of Arts in Teaching program in which IBF was introduced and the philosophy of education that guided that program. The researcher reviewed online descriptions of the program and also promotional and descriptive materials prepared for faculty, enrollees, applicants, and/or potential applicants, provided by program administrators at the researcher’s request.

The second form of document review was review of the student participants’ final learning statements, the thesis-like documents that the program requires as the final stage in completing the degree. The student participants submitted these documents in 2017 after completing all coursework and returning to their jobs as teachers. The documents are designed to allow the participants to illustrate their teaching practices using real examples from their classroom practice. These documents were important resources for understanding whether and how IBF appears in the participants’ thinking and actions as teachers. The review of these and other documents were completed prior to the one-on-one interviews and informed the design of those interviews, which sought to understand the role and influence of IBF in each participant’s current practice.

Like other approaches to gathering data, document review has advantages and disadvantages. The materials reviewed can supplement or give context to data from interviews, adding to the study’s knowledge base. Marshall and Rossman (2010) described document review and analysis as “potentially quite rich in portraying the values and beliefs of the participants and the setting” (p.164). Potential disadvantages include issues of availability and insufficiency, as well as the biases of the researcher in

document selection or interpretation (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). To address the disadvantages, the researcher was careful to identify and gather complete and up-to-date versions of the documents and consulted with the program chair and the participants themselves in determining that he had identified the appropriate sources of evidence.

Data Analysis and Synthesis

Marshall and Rossman (2010) argued that “the process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation to a mass of collected data is messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, and fascinating. It does not proceed in a linear fashion; it is not neat” (p. 207). They went on to describe qualitative data analysis as “a search for general statements about relationships and underlying themes” (p. 207). In the following section, the plan and steps for reviewing, organizing, and interpreting the data gathered in this study are reviewed.

For this study, focus group transcripts, document analysis, and interview transcripts served as the documents from which patterns were identified, coded, and categorized. Once the data are coded, Marshall and Rossman (2010) encouraged qualitative researchers to read and reread to discover patterns, themes, and categories. Similar advice from Maxwell (2004) suggested that the researcher begin “data analysis immediately after finishing the first interview or observation, and continue to analyze the data as long as he or she is working on the research” (p. 95).

Maxwell (2004) noted that coding serves as the primary categorizing strategy in qualitative research. Therefore, after gathering and compiling data, the researcher distilled the data through a process that included questioning the data, identifying and

noting common patterns in the data, creating codes that describe data patterns, and assigning these coded pieces of information to the categories of the conceptual framework (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). In addition, the conceptual framework presented at the end of Chapter II served as the organizing structure for the data collection and as the foundation for various iterations of the coding scheme.

The researcher began analyzing the data by reading through the 2016 focus group transcripts in order to identify words and phrases that related to his research questions. The researcher coded the data electronically, using different colors to highlight words, phrases, and statements that aligned with his research questions. After the two focus group transcripts (one with faculty and the other with students) had been electronically coded, the researcher began extracting excerpts that answered each research question.

Next, the researcher examined the 2017 learning statement (thesis) documents that each of the students in the study created to complete their degree. These too were coded in a manner similar to that described above. Together, the focus group and document data informed the final step, in which the researcher interviewed the participants regarding their current perspective on the influence that having learned and used IBF in their Master's program had on their teaching and feedback practices. The coding and excerpt extraction from these in-depth interviews enabled the researcher to distill the volume of data contained within each transcript.

The researcher created a repository for each research question in order to facilitate the process of comparing codes across interviewee responses. The repository for each research question was then used to capture interviewee responses that provided answers to that question. The "coding process fragments the interview into separate categories,

forcing one to look at each detail, whereas the synthesis involves piecing these fragments together to reconstruct a holistic and integrated explanation” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 85). By engaging in this process, the researcher identified patterns that existed in the data, leading to the development of frequency charts.

Literature on Methods

The literature on qualitative methods indicated that they are used for research that is exploratory or descriptive in and that recognizes the relevance of context and setting (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). Creswell (2008) identified five approaches to qualitative research, including case study methodology, the approach that was used for this study. Yin (2008) identified the strength of case studies as their ability to examine “how” or “why” questions, as this study did.

In qualitative research, triangulation is described as critical. Creswell (2008) described triangulation as a way of providing corroborative evidence of the collected data. Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) explained that triangulation is necessary in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomena being studied. Maxwell (2004) further clarified that using this strategy enables the researcher to gain a broader and more secure understanding of the issues under investigation.

This study used three data collection methods: focus groups, document analysis, and one-on-one interviews. The strengths and weaknesses of these approaches to data collection are described in the following section.

Focus Groups

Focus group data were the first source used to frame, understand, and answer the research questions. In focus groups, “people often need to listen to others’ opinions and understandings in order to form their own” (Marshall & Rossman, 2010, p. 84). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) described focus group interviews as non-directive with a goal of encouraging a variety of viewpoints. They went on to highlight that focus groups often elicit spontaneous expressive and emotional views more than individual interviews do. Overall, the advantages of focus group interviews are, according to Marshall and Rossman (2010), “that this method is socially oriented, studying participants in an atmosphere more natural than artificial experimental circumstances and more relaxed than a one-to-one interview” (p. 114). The essential characteristics of a focus group, according to Vaughn, Schumm, and Sinagub (1996), are:

- a relatively homogeneous target population,
- an assembly of target persons to address a selected topic,
- a facilitator with prepared questions and probes, and
- the elicitation of participants’ perceptions and feelings.

Focus groups, like all methodologies, also have disadvantages. One of these is that power dynamics might emerge between members of the group that may interfere with individual expression (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). Group think is another challenge in focus groups; group members may feel the need to agree with one another (Merriam, 1997). To address these challenges, the researcher must exercise the control needed to ensure that all participants are provided with an opportunity to express their opinions (Vaughn et al., 1996).

Document Review

The second source of data for this study was document analysis. Among the advantages of document analysis is that the researcher's presence does not alter what is being studied (Merriam, 1997). Marshall and Rossman (in Beard, 2010, p. 108) added that documents are "unobtrusive," "non-reactive," and unaffected by the research process. Yin (2008) pointed out that documents can provide broad coverage and may cover a long time span, many events, and multiple settings. In addition, the inclusion of exact names, references, and details of events makes documents advantageous in the research process (Yin, 2008).

Document analysis can also have limitations, such as insufficient detail and low retrievability. Yin (2008) pointed out that access to documents may be deliberately blocked, making the ability to retrieve critical documents problematic, and because documents are created independent of a research agenda, they may not provide sufficient detail to answer a research question.

Interviews

The third source of data for the study came from in-depth interviews that were shaped by prior investigation of the historical data provided by the focus group transcripts and the review of documents. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) cited the interview as a fundamental tool in qualitative research.

Some advantages to interviews are that they "yield data in quantity quickly" and offer "immediate follow-up and clarification" (Marshall & Rossman, 2010, p. 101). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) stated that "the semi-structured life world interview seeks

to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena” (p. 124). Yin (2008) stated that well-informed respondents can provide important insights into as well as shortcuts to the history of a situation.

While interviews are a preferred tool in qualitative research, like all methods, they have limitations. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) pointed out the challenge of asymmetrical power relationships, in which the researcher initiates and defines the interview situation by determining the topic, posing the questions, and deciding on the probes and follow-up questions. The quality of an interview, therefore, is largely dependent on the skills of the interviewer, including the ability to create a level of comfort and openness with the interviewee (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). Seidman (2005) drew on Schutz’s (1967) use of the philosopher Martin Buber’s description of “I and thou.” In adapting this idea to address the experience of interviewing, Seidman (2005) wrote that “implicit in such an ‘I-Thou’ relationship is a shift from the interviewer’s seeing the participant as an object or a type, which he or she would normally describe syntactically in the third person” (p. 95) to seeing their “thou-ness.” However, the interviewer must take care that she or he “keeps enough distance to allow the participant to fashion his or her responses as independently as possible” (p. 96).

Inter-Rater Reliability

The researcher conducted an inter-rater reliability (Miles & Huberman, 1994) exercise with two of his colleagues to understand whether the coding scheme would produce consistent results. This exercise resulted in general overlap, although some items

were coded in different, or more than one, code. The differences were addressed through discussions between the researcher and his colleagues, resulting in some revisions of the coding scheme. The researcher maintained an audit trail (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) documenting the iterative changes in his thinking during the analysis process.

Ethical Considerations

In any type of research, and at all stages in the research process, research must be done in a manner that minimizes any possible harm to the participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Creswell, 2008). In keeping with this, the researcher submitted a detailed application to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Teachers College, Columbia University, and gained approval for the study before initiating any contact with participants. This process ensured that both the research subjects and the university were protected.

After receiving IRB approval, the researcher took steps to protect the confidentiality and rights of the participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). The researcher contacted identified candidates by email and included a copy of the informed consent form (see Appendix B) and the participants' rights form (see Appendix C) so that they were fully informed before choosing whether to participate in the study. In communicating with participants, the researcher emphasized the voluntary nature of the participation, including the option of withdrawing at any time.

In addition, the researcher outlined the possible benefits and risks of involvement in the research. Potential participants were assured of confidentiality regarding their identity, as well as that of the organization in which they work and the institution in

which they studied. Pseudonyms were substituted for names, and worksites were not characterized by specific locations or other distinguishing descriptors. In addition, potential participants were provided with a contact name should they have any questions (Creswell, 2008).

The researcher was aware that there is a power difference in the relationship between the researcher and participants, and he sought to offset that by building rapport with the interviewees and taking time to explain to each that their participation was voluntary, as was their signature on the consent form (Creswell, 2008). In engaging with participants, the researcher was sensitive to any concerns about personal or emotional boundaries that may arise in the pursuit of a thick, authentic narrative. In reporting results, he sought, as much as possible, to check and validate findings with the participants and to make transparent the process for drawing conclusions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Issues of Trustworthiness

As with all research, qualitative inquiry requires specific criteria for evaluating the trustworthiness of the findings and for demonstrating that “the researcher has provided evidence that...descriptions and analysis represent the reality of the situations and persons studied” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 77). To establish the trustworthiness of this study, the researcher followed standards for credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability, as described in Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Credibility

Credibility refers to “whether the participants’ perceptions match up with the researcher’s portrayal of them” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 77). To achieve credibility, the researcher sought to identify his own biases as they related to the research subject (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). The researcher documented these self-reflections in a researcher journal that was maintained throughout the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Key insights that surfaced in relation to this self-reflection are documented in this dissertation.

Yin (2008) wrote about the importance of collecting data from multiple sources in order to provide triangulation, a preferred qualitative research practice that serves as another means of achieving credibility (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Yin, 2008). Triangulation involves different data sources as well as different means of data collection and analysis (Yin, 2008).

In addition to ensuring triangulation, the researcher sought to present both converging and diverging participant viewpoints, providing a balanced view of the findings (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Yin, 2008). The researcher also engaged in “peer debriefing,” in which colleagues were asked to review field notes with the intention of identifying and challenging the researcher’s assumptions or encouraging alternative ways of understanding the data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Marshall & Rossman, 2010). Finally, the researcher provided readers with detailed descriptions of settings, participants, and data collection and analysis procedures in order to demonstrate credibility and commitment to transparency and thoroughness.

Dependability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) described dependability as a “means for taking into account both factors of instability and factors of phenomenal or design induced changes” (p. 299) and suggested that credibility factors support such dependability. In addition to what is described above in support of dependability, the researcher maintained detailed procedures, which included a careful recording of decisions made in analyzing and synthesizing the data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). This served as an “audit trail” that the researcher could make available to members of the dissertation committee or others in order to confirm the accuracy of the research conclusions (p. 113).

Transferability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) described transferability as the extent to which research findings may be applied meaningfully in other settings or used in future studies or practice. Qualitative studies often use a relatively small group of participants who have experienced the phenomenon that is of interest to the researcher, making transferability questionable. Maxwell (2004) inquired whether transferability is a necessary component of qualitative research, while Marshall and Rossman (2010) argued that “the burden of demonstrating that a set of findings applies to another context rests more with the researcher who would make that transfer than with the original researcher” (p. 252). However, there is general agreement that full details about the participant sample and the study’s context should be given.

For this study, the researcher sought transferability by presenting a thorough narrative on the context of the study as well as a rich, descriptive narrative of the findings

and conclusions, including relevant quotes from the research participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008).

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the described research design and the findings to be derived through this study must be acknowledged. They include restrictions based on researcher bias, participant reactivity, reliance on retrospective recall, and the sampling strategy. The implications of each are described briefly.

Researcher Bias

Maxwell (2004) explained that in qualitative research, eliminating the influence of the researcher is not a goal. Rather, the thoughts and interpretations of the researcher are an important and essential part of the analysis and synthesis of the data. Therefore, the goal in qualitative research is to be open about potential researcher bias and how this can impact the research. Bias can be understood as a “lack of appropriate subjectivity” (Stake, 2010, p. 166). Stake went on to explain that “we rely on experience, advice, our own biases, to weigh the subjective information available to us. We should not be too swayed by objectivity’s reputation,” but that we must train ourselves “to minimize the effects that those biases will have on our research” (p. 166).

In this study, the researcher’s own biases may come into play, given his interest in teacher education and in feedback and his opinions about both. The researcher’s interest in this study was grounded in extensive experience, in both corporate and educational

settings, with the challenges of feedback and the role of feedback in staff review and in teacher development.

Bias can affect the validity of one's research and can call into question the forthrightness of one's arguments and the rigor in one's research. In order to address and guard against researcher bias, Stake (2010) suggest/ed that bias be considered in the design and addressed through triangulation. In addition, by documenting these biases initially in the research proposal and maintaining a researcher journal throughout the study, one can recognize and address this challenge (Maxwell, 2004).

For this study, the researcher remained alert to his role as both researcher and instrument of research. In an ongoing way, he sought to identify his biases and document them. He also journaled about them throughout the study and remained alert to their potential impact (Marshall & Rossman, 2010).

Participant Reactivity

Maxwell (2004) described participant reactivity as a limitation that emerges when interviewees have difficulty adjusting to the researcher taking on the role of interviewer. The concern is that participants may try to provide what they may consider the "correct" answers to the interview questions. In this study, there was a danger that the IBF protocol, because it was used by the program from which the students graduated, might be assumed by interviewees to be a "correct" or "good" approach, even if they did not experience it as such. In an attempt to decrease the likelihood of participant reactivity, the researcher began with questions about participants' experiences with feedback in general, probed for both positive and negative elements in their experience of IBF, and sought to

“clarify and extend” the meanings and interpretations offered (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Reliance on Retrospective Recall

Some of the interview questions required participants to recollect specific elements of their experiences with IBF. The researcher recognized that the quality of these data depended upon a participant’s ability to recall accurately and explain these experiences from memory. To address this limitation, the researcher explored the statements made in the 2016 focus group transcripts as well as the 2017 final learning statement documents for confirmation of the participants’ recollections. However, the primary focus of the study was on the impact of IBF on the participants’ current practice, and the associated research questions did not require a reliance on recall.

In addition to this element, which was built into the design of the study, the researcher also notified respondents in advance of their interview and let them know that they would be asked about their initial experiences with learning IBF. This advance notice of the topic may have aided participants in recalling specific events and supported an in-depth discussion of the role that learning and using IBF has had on their practice.

Sampling Strategy

Merriam (1997) suggested that the transferability of research findings may be enhanced by sampling for maximum variation, either in sites selected or in participants interviewed. While this study’s participants were all alumni of the same cohort of an Master of Arts in Teaching program, they came from a variety of countries and teaching contexts and have returned to their home countries and classrooms to teach. Thus, they

were likely to bring a broad range of perspectives, in part influenced by the various cultural norms and local educational practices and expectations prevailing in their home contexts and cultures of origin.

The remarkable level of diversity present, despite the small sample, created an opportunity as well as a limitation. The researcher used triangulation of data sources and detailed descriptions of participants and their local contexts drawn from interviews, as well as the historical window that document review and focus group transcripts provided, to tell the story of this particular group accurately.

Summary

This chapter described the methodology followed by the researcher to conduct a qualitative study of 4 teachers in training and 6 professors who learned and used IBF as the protocol for giving and receiving feedback during an Master of Arts in Teaching degree program. Using, broad, open-ended inquiry as the principal means of drawing out participants' perceptions of that experience, the researcher sought to develop a clear understanding, from multiple perspectives, of what the participants learned, how they learned it, and how the experience has influenced their current practice as teachers.

In this qualitative study, the researcher has identified a participant sample from a specific cohort of an Master of Arts in Teaching program in which faculty and students learned and used IBF as a protocol for giving and receiving feedback. In-depth interviews with the participants shed light on the influence of this experience on their current practice, while historical data captured in learning statement documents and transcripts of

focus group discussions during participants' time in the program supplemented the interview data, for the purposes of corroboration or contrast, and triangulation.

The researcher followed a series of prescribed steps in conducting the study, beginning with identifying the research topic, then determining the problem and questions determination, and then reviewing the relevant scholarly literature, so that he could situate this study within the context of what is known. He identified, invited, and informed participants of their rights and protections, and he obtained approval for his proposal and research plan from his adviser, his second reader, and the Teacher's College IRB board. After gathering and reviewing relevant documents, he conducted in-depth interviews and analyzed the data with regard to the study's conceptual framework.

Throughout the processes of that analysis – reviewing, coding, sorting and comparing data, and categorizing and organizing that data according to themes – he considered what he had discovered and how it supports, challenges, or furthers existing theories and previous findings, as well as his own assumptions and lived experiences. When he felt that the categories and patterns sufficiently fit with the data, and he had identified and considered alternative explanations, he formulated conclusions and described the implications for future research.

In order to demonstrate that the “descriptions and analysis represent the reality of the situations and persons studied” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 77) , the researcher took steps to establish the rigor or trustworthiness of his study and its findings in terms of its credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. He has acknowledged the limitations of his research methods and described the actions and precautions taken to mitigate their impacts.

Chapter IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of this interpretative case study was to explore with a group of faculty and students in a Master of Arts in Teaching program their perceptions of how learning and using the Inquiry-Based Feedback (IBF) protocol for feedback on teaching performance influenced their teaching practice.

To carry out this purpose, the following research questions were addressed:

- How do participants, trained in IBF, describe their experience of learning this alternative approach?
- In what ways do participants perceive IBF to be useful in ways different from other approaches to giving and receiving feedback?
- How do participants describe the impact of having learned IBF on their practice?

This chapter provides a discussion of the three major findings that emerged from the participants' responses to the research questions. Participants in this study, identified by pseudonyms, shared their perceptions of and experiences with having learned and used IBF as a feedback protocol. Supporting evidence from the document review was embedded in the chapter to further support the research findings. The major findings uncovered through these data collection methods are as follows:

- All participants (100%) described learning the IBF protocol as new and interesting and found that the individual steps in the protocol were important.

- A significant majority of participants (90%) described the primary difference in this approach as one that shifted power in the feedback dynamic from the giver of feedback to the receiver.
- All participants (100%) described a change in their teaching practice resulting from their experience of having learned and used IBF.

In a qualitative study such as this, the findings make sense only when understood within the context from which the data were gathered. Therefore, a description of the Master of Arts in Teaching program is presented below to provide an understanding of the environment in which the participants learned IBF. Also included are profiles of the 10 participants in this study, including both faculty teaching in the Master of Arts in Teaching program and Master's degree students (teacher-learners) in that program. These profiles give a sense of the experiences the participants brought to their learning of IBF and the contexts of their work lives in which IBF could appear as a part of their teaching practice. In addition, a brief description of the stages of the IBF protocol itself is provided to understand participants' descriptions of their experience of and with the protocol.

The major findings identified from the interview data follow the presentation of the site, the participant profiles, and the protocol description.

Program Description

This study focused on the experiences of faculty and students in a Master of Arts in Teaching program for experienced teachers. The program is offered by a small liberal arts college in rural New England and includes two summers of coursework with an interim year in which students return to their teaching positions. The program lists on its

website several key elements including “A focus on learning in community, critical reflection, and cross-cultural communication” and is designed around an “experiential learning” approach. The program runs with cohorts of students who spend the 15 months learning together. The college is referred to in this study as Ethan Allen College.

Because the program is aimed at experienced teachers, two of the four teacher-learners (students in the program) are also professionally involved in the teaching of teachers in teacher development or certificate programs. Among the faculty interviewed, only one is a full-time employee of Ethan Allen College. The others are adjunct instructors who teach in the program during the summer but are engaged in other work during the year. One element that sets the program apart is that, according to the chair, “We all share the same principles—humanistic principles of valuing the whole learner and being focused not on teaching but on student learning.”

Some of the program’s founding principles regarding learning are drawn from the work of Caleb Gattegno, the developer of the Silent Way methodology in the 1970s. In particular, the notions that “only awareness is educable” and it is important that “teaching is subordinated to learning” were highlighted by the program’s chair as two of the guiding principles the faculty share about learning and teaching. The chair also described an intentional use of Kolb’s Experiential Learning Cycle as an organizing and guiding tool for designing learning experiences in the program.

As an example of this, all student-learners in the program participate in learning a language that is unfamiliar to any of them—for example, Georgian or Thai. That shared experience becomes a source of learning about core concepts and principles in language learning that are explored in more formal ways elsewhere in the curriculum. The chair

describes the role this plays in the program: “The experience of participating in language classes as a student becomes a shared experience to be explored.” Students are encouraged to reflect on the experience, reviewing and considering the activities involved in the lesson, what feelings these steps bring up in the student, as well as how the activities in the lesson as well as the feelings evoked either help or hinder the students’ learning. Following this step, students are encouraged to make meaning of the experience, to interpret it and seek to come to an understanding of the meaning of the experience or identify principles that they can apply to future experience as a learner or teacher. The final step in the process is to apply that learning to their next encounter in specific ways. In the case of language learning, students might explore their experience as a student, identify places when they felt uncomfortable or challenged, and then identify ways to engage differently in the next lesson.

This same approach was used in teacher observation of practice teaching sessions. In this case, the focus was on the teacher learning the craft of teaching. Following a lesson that a teacher-learner taught, the teacher-learner was guided through a process of making objective observations about what had happened during the lesson; identify moments or actions that “helped or hindered” student learning; make interpretations or identify principles from that reflection on the lesson; and finally apply those new insights to the planning of their next lesson.

This shared grounding in Kolb’s model of experiential learning came through in the interviews of faculty as something that was challenged or expanded through the experience of learning IBF. The program collectively adopted IBF in the summer of 2016. This study sought to understand the faculty’s and students’ experience in learning

IBF, how the IBF experience differed from other experiences of feedback, and to what degree having learned IBF influenced their teaching practice. To understand the impact of having learned IBF on participants' ongoing teaching practice, interviews were conducted one year after the student cohort had completed the program.

Participant Profiles

Barbara

Barbara is the chair of the Master of Arts in Teaching program at Ethan Allen College. She is a South African woman who has 38 years of teaching experience and has taught at a variety of universities both there and in the United States. Barbara teaches Second Language Acquisition in the program as well as leads it and identifies and hires faculty to serve in it. She is the heart of the program and has gathered together a faculty that, while adjunct in status, describe themselves as being very committed to and engaged in the program. This is confirmed in part by the fact that all the faculty have been involved in the program for at least 5 years, returning each summer to participate and engage in meetings that Barbara leads between summers on program planning. It was a part of this process that led Barbara to recommend that the program experiment with learning and implementing IBF as an element of their shared practice.

Bellona

Bellona is in her early 60s and is a member of the faculty. Raised in Lebanon, she is a dual citizen of the United Kingdom and the United States. Bellona taught at International House in London for many years where she was a trainer for Cambridge's 4-week entry-level training for ESL teachers as well as a trainer of trainers. In addition to teaching in the program, Bellona has been active in teacher supervision during the teacher-learners interim year when they are teaching in their classrooms between summers of graduate work. She has also been active in evaluating the final portfolios that students are required to submit in order to complete the program.

Balen

Balen is in his early 50s and is an adjunct faculty member of the program. He has 30 years of teaching experience, much of it in international contexts. In addition to teaching in the program, Balen is active as an ESL teacher and also trains preservice English language instructors as a teacher trainer in a TESOL Certificate program. He is based in the United States, although he often works on projects internationally.

Jake

Jake is in his early 50s. He is an adjunct faculty member with 28 years of experience. Jake also owns a consulting firm that focuses on language teacher training, and works with labor union training funds on developing the teaching skills of labor union trainers providing skills training to their members on topics like pipe laying and dealing with hazardous materials. He also regularly trains in, and trains trainers for, a

4-week intensive TESOL Certificate training program that provides entry-level qualification for ESL teachers in northern California.

Miska

Miska is in her early 50s. She is a dual citizen of the United States and Costa Rica. She has 31 years of teaching experience and, though based in Costa Rica, she works throughout Latin America as a language teaching and teacher training consultant, working on national-level policy issues as well as directing teacher development. She owns a training center in Costa Rica that serves teachers from throughout the region. She serves as an adjunct faculty member of the program.

Sachiko

Sachiko is a Japanese American from Hawaii who is a professor of education at a college in the Northwest where she teaches in a preservice degree and certification program for K-12 teachers seeking public school certification. She looks forward to her summers teaching as an adjunct faculty member in the Ethan Allen Master of Arts in Teaching program. She is in her early 50s and has 32 years of teaching experience.

Gamal

Gamal was a student in the program. He completed his undergraduate degree at Ethan Allen College's undergraduate program and had spent time teaching English in Japan before returning to Ethan Allen to complete a Master's degree. Gamal is a serious and thoughtful young man. He is also a writer who is currently looking for a publisher for his first manuscript. He has 5 years of teaching and tutoring experience.

Loles

Loles is in her 30s. Originally from Argentina, she has lived and worked in Costa Rica and Mozambique teaching English teacher and training English teachers. She has 14 years of teaching experience, and as a student in the program, she was experiencing the program from the perspective not only of a student but also of a teacher educator, watching how teacher education was carried out in this program. She is a licensed trainer for a 4-week TESOL certificate program for preservice teachers.

Naamah

Naamah is a Taiwanese national. She is in her late 40s, and worked in Japan for several years as a translator before moving to the United States to teach Chinese in a local high school. She has 6 years of teaching experience and was the only student in the teaching program who was not primarily focused on the teaching of English.

Nacio

Nacio is a Chilean national who is based in Costa Rica. In addition to teaching English, he is also actively involved in regional language teacher development projects as well as serving as a licensed trainer in a TESOL Certificate program. He also brought this dual lens of being a student in the program learning about teaching, but as a teacher trainer, he also paid attention to how teacher training was done in the program. He has 12 years of teaching experience.

The IBF Protocol

The protocol that the program adopted to provide teacher-learners feedback on their practice teaching sessions is, for the purpose of this study, was called Inquiry-Based Feedback (IBF). It was adapted by the program from a similar protocol used to provide feedback to dancers and artists. The protocol has four stages:

1. In this stage, *statements of meaning*, the participants in a lesson share with the teacher of the lesson what was meaningful to them, what connected for them, or was interesting to them. These statements of meaning do not include “what I liked/what I didn’t like.”
2. The receiver of feedback, the teacher-learner, asks the participants *questions about their experience of the lesson*. These are questions the teacher-learner crafts to better understand what the experience of being in the class he or she just taught was like for the learners.
3. *Participant questions* for the teacher-learner must be crafted as “Neutral Questions,” though several of the participants in this study developed alternative terms such as “Genuine Questions.” The idea of the neutral question is that it does not have an agenda, opinion, or critique embedded in the question. It must be something that the asker is genuinely curious about.
4. *Permissioned opinions* are comments, suggestions, or ideas that the participants would like to offer to the teacher-learner. They are structured in such a way that the teacher-learner is told what the general leaning of the offering is, such as “I have a suggestion about how you ended the lesson, do

you want to hear it.” In this way, the recipient of the comment knows the gist of what will be shared and has the option of saying no.

Finding #1

All participants in the study (100%) described learning the IBF protocol as being something new and interesting, in particular finding the individual steps in the protocol to provide new elements to the experience of giving and receiving feedback.

Based on Research Question 1, the diverse group of experienced educators were asked to describe their initial encounter with IBF as well as what it was like for them to learn to use IBF as a receiver of feedback, a giver of feedback, and a facilitator of the protocol itself (see Table 4.1 and Appendix F: Distribution Table Finding #1).

Participants were asked to describe their experience of first encountering the IBF protocol for offering feedback and what it was like to participate in the process as a receiver of feedback, a giver of feedback, and a facilitator of the protocol. Though the participants had significant previous experience in giving feedback to teachers or receiving feedback on their teaching, all participants indicated that the learning of IBF protocol for giving feedback was new and of interest. They described being “intrigued,” being drawn to learning it because they sensed “energy” in the process and it “melded well” with elements of their existing practice.

Table 3. *Outline of Finding #1*

FINDING #1
<p>All participants (100%) described learning the IBF protocol as new and interesting, and found that the individual steps in the protocol were important. Examples of descriptions of their experience of novelty in IBF are followed by quotes regarding individual steps in the protocol and example quotes of why that step was important in the learning of the protocol. Participant descriptions of what they found to be important in the individual steps are captured under the following step labels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statements of meaning • Teacher's questions to the participants and observers • Neutral questions for the teacher • Permissioned opinions and suggestions <p>In addition to interest in the protocol and identifying elements in each step that contributed to the value of the protocol, participants also identified the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns (70%) Within this finding, while all indicated interest in the protocol, a significant majority also voiced concern that "students may not get what they need" due to the absence of a step in the protocol in which the expert observer could give direct evaluative feedback on what they perceived to have worked or not worked in the observed lesson. • Safety (40%) Four participants also explicitly highlighted the sense of safety they felt when receiving feedback on their performance using IBF. • Complexity (30%) Three of the 10 participants reported that the complexity of the protocol was a challenge to their learning to facilitate it, but also an important to how the process works.

New and Interesting

Barbara, the program chair, described her first encounter: “I was immediately intrigued by it, what I liked right from the start was the fact that it puts the feedback [process] entirely into the artist’s [teacher-learner’s] hands.” Faculty member Balen described the sense of surprise he experienced in his initial learning of the IBF protocol, as well as the surprise that there was room for change in his feedback practice: “Amazing! I thought. This is amazing because of the energy that it created.”

Similarly, Jake, another faculty member, identified in IBF a sense of connection to what his current teaching practices were as well as something more that was attracting him, something new. He said, “I felt like it really melded well or blended well with DIGPA [an experiential learning framework used in the program].... There was something there that I really liked...there is something there that I really like.”

Mishka, another faculty member, said of her encounter with IBF, “I thought it was totally cool. Yeah, I was definitely looking, I wasn’t actively looking, but I was hoping for something different and more than what I had been doing for a long time [in giving feedback].”

Students in the program also found their experience of the IBF protocol to be new to them. As the primary recipients of feedback using the model, their comments focused more on the experience of receiving feedback using the protocol.

Loles said of her first experiences, “[This] feedback is different from anything that I had done before...[as] a recipient of feedback with IBF, it felt engaging.” Similarly, Nacio, another student, described his surprise with his first encounter: “My initial

reaction was wow: This is fascinating! It was very interesting for me that instead of giving us [direct] feedback, [there were] a lot of questions.”

The Steps Are Important

Gamal, the student, described the importance of the steps in his learning to participate in the IBF protocol and the value of having a facilitator, or having the group itself, be clear and focused on the purpose of each step.

...I noticed that it's like, it really requires either like a mediator who pays attention to the process full-time, or like you have to have everyone who's doing it really, *really* aware and make it a priority to follow the process, because it's very easy to just break down into like responding when you shouldn't respond, or like giving non-neutral questions.... It's like this stuff [the steps] is important to do, and complete,...so that the next step will be more effective.

Others spoke more to the importance of different elements of the individual steps in their learning of the protocol.

Step one: Statements of meaning. The protocol begins with the faculty observers, and the peers who participated as students in the practice lesson, sharing what they found meaningful in the experience. At this stage, the facilitator of the protocol helped participants make statements of meaning rather than praise.

Faculty member Jake described the importance of this step in setting a tone of warmth and community: “I think that the [statements of meaning] part is really sweet. I think there's a kind of human warmth there. And sort of creating community and trust which I think are really valuable.” Similarly, Nacio, a student in the program, said of this step that the sharing of meaning was joyful and set a tone of community: “I feel that joy. It's about what you perceived and about what was significant, but I feel that everybody sharing something that was actually meaningful for them helps create, like, a little bit of a

sense of community.” Another view on this step came from Barbara, who reported that she added a few moments of free-writing first and this helped her focus in on the core of her observation experience and what was meaningful in it.

I think about what’s meaningful and I find when I’m engaged in that part that I just do stream of consciousness.... I get into the writing I find myself kind of calming down and focusing and that’s when I think that the really meaningful bits stand out for me.

Step two: Questions from the teacher. In the second step in the protocol, the teacher whose lesson was observed had the opportunity to ask the participants or observers questions about their experience of the lesson. The facilitator focused on keeping answers focused on the teacher’s question and did not let them shift to critique or suggestion.

Jake described how he saw this step as an important shift that allowed the teacher to focus the feedback session on what was of concern to them, rather than bracing for unexpected feedback:

Giving the teacher choices and letting them take control particularly with the questions, you know, what do you want feedback on?... That just shifts everything. The big thing is that the teacher feeling like they’re *asking* for feedback and not bracing for feedback.

Satchiko commented similarly that this stage offered some security for the teacher to focus attention where they wanted it, and saw that as serving to support them to focus on the uncomfortable:

I think I feel like the teacher can gain confidence. They get to focus on what they feel they want to focus on.... CRP allows them [space] to build up courage.... They can [focus] first [on what they] feel more confident in before they delve into some of the more vulnerable risky areas.

Step three: Neutral questions for the teacher. The third step in the protocol invited participants or observers to ask the teacher questions; however, these questions must be crafted as “neutral questions” without embedded critique or advice. At this stage, the facilitator focused on helping to rephrase any questions participants asked that were not neutral.

The challenge of learning to be able to do this and to help others do it stood out to many participants. Jake said of learning this step, “The neutral questions [were] definitely challenging, at first. Now not as much. Like now I actually really enjoy those.” Bellona described the challenge of crafting, and helping others craft, truly neutral questions.

The first several times that I was the facilitator, it [neutral questions] created a lot of anxiety for me in part because I was really mindful of the wording of a neutral question and I really wanted to get it right...interpreting what other people were saying to figure out if they were being neutral or not. Yeah, and then offering an alternative and making sure that I was being neutral [in the alternative wording that I offered]... Out of all of this, that is still an area of challenge for me.

Gamal described his experience of learning this stage in terms of paying greater attention to whether his wording was neutral, but also whether his intent was neutral.

It’s the difference between what you want to ask and what you want to say.... I found myself kind of like stopping myself—you know what, I’m not going to ask this question because I don’t think what I want to ask is really neutral or helpful.

Step four: Permissioned opinions and suggestions. At this stage, participants or observers were invited to offer opinions or suggestions but must first be specific about what the comments would be aimed at, and then ask whether the teacher wanted to hear them. An example of the formulation might be: “I have an opinion about the activity you used at the beginning of the class. Would you like to hear it?”

Bellona said of this stage that initially it felt redundant, but she came to appreciate the way the structure of this step helped a feedback recipient engage with, rather than be “blindsided” by, the feedback.

I felt that [permissioned opinions] was redundant...but it's a really important feature. It gives the recipient [of feedback] knowledge about the focus of the opinion, and that allows the recipient to get to that area and to think about it and to pull it back up [in their mind]. As opposed to just being blindsided...(it) offers the potential for a conversation about it as opposed to the blunt bludgeon with blunt stick.

Similarly, Nacio said of this stage that asking whether someone want/ed to hear the comment or suggestion one wanted to give them can help create “space” to hear it, or the opportunity to choose not to, and this can be helpful in emotionally charged feedback sessions:

Asking the teacher if they have space to receive a comment, it's actually so appropriate. In some cases, some feedback sessions are very emotionally charged and teachers are not really in a condition to receive feedback about certain things. [So] telling the recipient what [your comment] is about so, you know, “I have an opinion about the way you used the colored flags. Would you like to hear it?” I think that's enough for them to be able to say, you know, what area of the lesson it was on and then [consider] whether they want to hear it or not.

Looking back on her learning IBF, Sachiko spoke to the challenge of learning neutral questions and permissioned, and highlighted that they have been the most useful steps for her: “I find that I use those two aspects [steps] more [than the others].... And those were the two hardest aspects of IBF for me to really internalize and to feel like I acquired [and] knew how to use.”

Concerns

Though all agreed that IBF was interesting, a significant majority (70%) of participants, in initially encountering IBF, described concern that the IBF protocol might be insufficient to provide adequate feedback to practicing teachers.

Barbara described her mix of excitement about the protocol and uncertainty over whether such a protocol would serve the needs of their teacher-learners. She wondered whether they would miss things that need to be brought to their attention, and worried whether the feedback that came out would be pertinent and relevant:

...so excitement, but at the same time a kind of hesitation. I think, like all faculty, I thought...how is this going to work with teachers [teacher-learners]? Will there not be things that that teacher is oblivious to?... That we need to bring to their attention? And how you do this?... Can I sit back and trust this? Do I know that it's going to get us where we need to get? Are they going to be able to think of all the questions? [Will their questions] be pertinent and relevant ones? Is it what we really want to give them feedback on?

Satchiko held similar concerns. She wondered how teachers would know when they did something wrong if she could not point it out directly.

How will the teachers know that they got something wrong? Yeah, you know we could be going through a lesson and I'd be like, oh my gosh, they didn't, you know, maybe instructions weren't delivered in order or something to that effect. I feel a little anxious like, well, they know they didn't get it, right? But, you know, they [might] walk away feeling..."this was a great lesson." In my head I'm like, "Oh, no, you know, it's not that great of a lesson." So there was a lot of dissonance for me when I first started [using the protocol].

Jake, in particular, was concerned about using the protocol with less experienced teacher-learners. In these cases, he felt the protocol may interfere with what he felt was a need for direct feedback from him.

With less-experienced teachers, as a trainer, I felt like I needed to be very direct in my feedback with them. And I felt that the IBF model initially, as I understood it, sort of interfered with that. I felt like I was hamstrung a little bit to give direct feedback and I was like, where am I going to give this feedback?

Safety

Four participants (40%) also explicitly highlighted the sense of safety they felt when receiving feedback on their performance.

Gamal, the student, shared a sense that the IBF process helped to protect his feelings, saying “The steps are what help you, kind of, isolate your feelings.” Loles said of her encounter with IBF that “I felt the opposite of threatened. I felt safe about feedback and it felt good....” From a faculty perspective, Sachiko added that she believed students felt more secure as a result of having control of the process:

I think there’s a sense of security that goes with that, right? If they know that they’re in control, they won’t be attacked, or you know under scrutiny on seventeen different items [on a checklist] or an item [in their teaching] that they’re not ready to work on just yet.

Complexity

Three of the ten participants (30%) reported that the complexity of the protocol was a challenge to their learning to facilitate it.

Barbara described her experience of the complexity of the process as she learned to facilitate the IBF protocol with her students: “So, facilitating for the first time, I did have to think about it [the steps in the protocol]. I had to have notes in front of me. Obviously, the steps of the process. But it becomes second nature in the end.”

Sachiko described the complexity in the IBF protocol as being in part due to how different it is from more traditional approaches. “I think my first reaction to it was it felt

complicated and I think it's complicated because it did everything backwards, or what I thought was backwards from how I have learned to give feedback.”

Another faculty member, Bellona, agreed. However, she highlighted that the steps of the protocol, while challenging to learn to facilitate, offered structure that supported focusing on inquiry in a way she found helpful.

I've been in situations in the past where I was encouraged to frame feedback with my own questions. So I was dabbling in this particular direction, but those sessions lacked the rigor of structure. And so what happens is...what happened in the past, and this happened mainly when I was at International House, was that there would be a shift at some point in the feedback and it would go back to a more traditional model. So one of the things that I really appreciated was the idea that I could be in control and that there was a structure to support that.

Finding #2

Nearly all participants (90%) described the IBF protocol to result in a positive shift of power to the learner. This section describes the important ways in which participants found their experience of the IBF protocol to differ from previous experiences of giving and receiving feedback.

Based on Research Question 2, the researcher asked a series of questions about how the experience with IBF was different from other experiences with feedback that participants had experienced. The primary differentiator identified was a positive shift in the power dynamics of the feedback experience from those who were giving feedback instead empowering the recipient of the feedback. Other elements also identified as important were the support for inquiry rather than evaluation, a sense that the process was non-judgmental, and the protocol encouraged an attitude of curiosity (see Table 4 and Appendix G: Distribution Table Finding #2).

Table 4. *Outline of Finding #2*

FINDING #2
<p>Nearly all (90%) participants described the difference in between IBF and other approaches to giving and receiving feedback, as the shift of power or control from the giver of feedback to the recipient.</p> <p>Other differences identified by the participants between common experiences of giving and receiving feedback and the experience of participating in a feedback process guided by the IBF protocol included that it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages and supports inquiry rather than evaluation (80%) <p>A majority of 80% described how the protocol was different in how it encourages inquiry rather than evaluation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is non-judgmental (60%) <p>Six participants cited the lack of judgment as an important differentiator.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostered curiosity (60%) <p>Six participants described increases in curiosity.</p>

A Positive Shift of Power to the Learner

The majority of participants (90%) indicated that a significant differentiator between IBF and the many other forms of feedback they had experienced was that IBF provides a shift of power from the givers of feedback to the receiver of the feedback, and that this shift of power is helpful.

Barbara captures the challenge this shift of power represents for teachers used to offering their opinions and observations. She also shared that her willingness to let go of that power was to bring her feedback practice in line with some of her guiding principles about teaching that included the importance of starting with what is meaningful for the learner, and what it is that the learner is aware of, rather than starting with the opinion or observation of the expert.

I did find that part of me wanted to kind of step in and say okay, this is what's working well...because I'd come from that background. Let's see what's working well here, but also what could be hindering learning.... I still felt that...I had to learn to trust the process. I kept coming back to the notion that "only awareness is educable." So, with the students, we work from what was meaningful for them, and if there were questions that *they* were pondering. Then, what we spoke about [in using IBF] was what they were ready to hear, what they want you to know, [what they] wanted to know about.

Faculty member Jake described his sense that the shift in power that the protocol requires leads to the teacher-learners' feeling that they are asking for feedback rather than having to brace for the feedback that will be given.

[Tthe change to IBF has] been really great, really phenomenal because, I think, the biggest thing is that whole power shift I think the genius behind IBF has to do with creating a sequence of feedback that switches around the power dynamics.... I think [it] makes the teacher [teacher-learner] feel much more in control and much more curious about the feedback and receptive to the feedback.

Miska, a faculty member based in Costa Rica, described a sense of being freed from the role of expert and able to engage with the teacher-learners in a way that was supportive of their agency. She saw this as a result of the shift of power from the givers of feedback to the recipient of feedback that is embedded in the steps of the protocol.

The whole sense of agency...it empowers teachers to really guide their own learning. [When] I think of the previous forms of feedback that I've used, the observer is more or less the expert and knower. With IBF, I can be the expert in the know about my own experience, but I don't know about the others' experiences,... It definitely feels more like a dialogue...and I'm always excited and curious about what questions will come up... It's very freeing.... [I'm] eager to go into feedback session with it [IBF].

Satchiko added her sense that students, when they understand they are in control of the feedback they are receiving, are likely to take greater risks. "When they realize that oh, this process really is about me controlling the situation and then I think once that sinks in, there's probably more risk-taking."

Students also identified this shift of power as important. Loles described her past experiences of having to give feedback as being focused on her giving her opinion. This she saw in contrast to IBF, for which she described her role as keeping herself fully focused not on her opinions and preparing to share them, but on the recipient of the feedback, the moment in question, or the question the recipient has posed. She experienced this leveling of power as liberating.

I think training your mind to just be with the person or just be with the moment you're talking about or be with a question. Most of the feedback session styles that I had done before were about giving my opinion on something.... But then after doing IBF I feel like this was more level, I wasn't over anybody, and nobody was over anybody.... That's such a change [in the] responsibility as the teacher [expert observer] but also the position of power, that you're opening up...and then collaborating...is so much more liberating.

Naamah, the student from Taiwan, described her Confucian upbringing and experiences with power in that construct as being in contrast to the approach of IBF. Instead of following the social rules that determine when she might offer her thoughts, she experienced IBF as shift from following strict power structures to engaging in what she described as mutual respect.

[From] many years ago in China education [is about] the school rules: Students, your role is obey teachers.... Parents, of course, is the same thing. Most of this is Confucius' idea. So in the family the father is the top, all right everybody obey! So my father, I don't think [he wants to know if] I have some opinion or idea. They don't see [it] that way. It's just, Do This! Do this! And in Japan it's the same thing too "sempai/kohai" it is very, very clear who is the top or the bottom. So [IBF] was very new for me. Using this way [IBF] actually feels like we respect each other.... I feel that this made a difference for me. [That's why] I was so excited about this.

Nacio saw an important reminder of this power shift in the dynamic of protocol step 4: permissioned opinions. In these he described having initially thought of them as

unimportant and just following the protocol, but in experiencing IBF over time, he came to see this step as an important reminder of the shift in power dynamics.

I thought it [permissioned opinions] was just going through the motions.... [But] that's the important part. It reminds both of us who has the control in this process. Yeah, it reminds me [when I'm using IBF as a trainer] that I don't have the control [and] reminds the recipient that he or she has the control and that they have to kind of open the gate before I can say anything.

The IBF protocol, which one faculty member described as “doing everything backward,” creates a fundamental shift of power from givers of feedback offering opinions, even expert opinions, to the person receiving the feedback guiding the process. This shift puts faculty, peers, and student-learners in the same space of engaging in questions—the questions of the feedback recipient, or the neutral questions of the givers of feedback. This power shift was identified as the most significant differentiator between the participants' previous experiences of giving and receiving feedback and their experience of IBF. Nearly as many emphasized the focus on questions, on inquiry rather than opinion, and on evaluation as a significant differentiator.

Encourages and Supports Inquiry Rather Than Evaluation

Eight of the 10 participants (80%) described the IBF protocol's focus on inquiry rather than evaluation as a significant differentiator. Participants described an increased focus on inquiry and curiosity, of asking questions and holding back or becoming more aware of the role of their assumptions in the process of giving and receiving feedback.

Loles described this aspect of IBF as being like a science lab in which everyone is engaging in a shared effort to come to understand something better.

[In using IBF] we're trying to figure something out. Like a science lab, like we were all trying to find out what happened, why it happened...how people were feeling why they were feeling that way. I feel more like we are investigating something here. There was a completely different intention in it.

Satchiko described realizing that, having worked with teachers for more than 30 years, she often assumed that she knew what the teachers she supervised were doing or what they were thinking about what they were doing. In working with IBF, she reported discovering that sometimes those assumptions were wrong and got in the way.

I think sometimes when you have thirty years of teaching experience, if you're working with a teacher who has five [years of experience], sometimes it's hard to get out of that head space of, "Oh, I know where this is going," you know and then realizing, Oh, I really didn't know where that was going.... I've begun to realize that what I assumed they were doing wasn't what they were doing. And that, to me, has been the big lesson. I think that's why I carry neutral questions with me and permissioned questions and opinions with me into new situations because I am now aware of how my assumptions get in the way.

Nacio shared his sense of the power of questions versus evaluations; what is important, he said, "is the concept of curiosity. I come from a very judgmental way of being or a very judgmental atmosphere. So I'm practicing. This concept of curiosity is very present in my practice."

For Barbara, a new focus on "genuine" questions unleashed curiosity and added a reflective element of looking at her own curiosity through a lens of intention, asking herself if her curiosity was grounded in the students' growth.

[What's important is] neutral questions, or what we've come to call "neutral straight genuine questions." What were we curious about? And if our curiosity really stemmed from a place of "I want to enable the students to grow and develop in their teaching." Then there really was a point of curiosity there.

Loles also reported that shifting to a posture of curiosity seemed to make room for new discoveries.

It strikes me that I usually find myself learning something that hadn't thought before, either from a question that I made and the answers that I got or from what another teacher said or a comment another teacher made and I'm like, oh, yeah. I haven't thought about that and then listening to all those things made not just the teacher who taught more knowledgeable about the class, but I think everyone even myself, that I found very interesting. Like, I knew that when I walk in the feedback session, I will walk out of it knowing something that I didn't know.

Is Non-judgmental

Six participants (60%) described that an important difference in their experience of the IBF protocol, as opposed to other experiences of feedback, was that it avoided criticism or judgment.

Gamal, the student, described what he thought of as a typical or natural process of feedback consisting of a criticism or attack and a response of personalizing the criticism and defensiveness. In IBF, the difference he found was that, rather than a dynamic of criticism and defensiveness, there was a shared sense of looking at the work together to make it better.

Having someone be critical of [my work] is just a...very natural process. And suddenly being defensive about that like, oh you're criticizing my work [means] you're criticizing me. I think now [with IBF] it's really good. I think that the process...is very careful. It's like, it isn't about you. This is about the thing you have created and we're trying to work make that better. We're not trying to like attack you.

Satchiko also experienced the IBF protocol as non-judgmental and described how this shifted her approach to giving feedback. She said, "An outcome of [learning] IBF [for me] is that I am sensitive about wording in a way that is not judging what the teacher was doing, or trying to do. I've learned now to frame things differently when I work with teachers."

Nacio acknowledged that his experience with feedback and his own tendency were to start with identifying what was wrong in order to fix it and offering advice. But he also realized that as a recipient of feedback, that may not be what he wants to hear. In IBF, he found a contrast in which he trusted his peers to provide meaningful feedback.

In my experience [of feedback] as a teacher [and] as a coach is that people always want to fix things, people always want to give you advice. Yeah. and sometimes I also want to give advice...that's the first thing that I want to do. But as a recipient of that feedback, sometimes I don't want to hear that first necessarily, me personally, right? In [IBF] I trusted that my peers had something meaningful to tell me.

Balen expanded on this observation that, unlike IBF, feedback experiences often focus on what is perceived to be wrong. He said, "What I like about [IBF is that] it goes against the grain of normal feedback, which is usually focused on fixing problems.... I think we're conditioned to not even be able to see what went well."

Fosters Curiosity

Six of the 10 participants (60%) reported that the protocol was different from other experiences they had with feedback, especially in how it fostered curiosity.

Miska pointed out how she experienced this difference when working with teachers, saying, "One thing that is beautiful to me [in IBF] is when the teacher asks the exploratory questions, I feel like I can genuinely serve their curiosity."

Nacio saw the focus on curiosity not as an add-on, but as something that is a required element of the IBF process, and also as something that freed him in his role as a facilitator of feedback from having to always be the expert and instead engage with his own curiosity. He said:

It's not like curiosity is just, like, a plus. Curiosity is something that's needed and...required in this process. It's hard to have a neutral question if you're not serious about something that happened something that you didn't understand something that you don't know the answer to. And to me to me personally, using IBF is a way to acknowledge that sometimes don't know the answers to things even if I'm the one observing, even if I'm the facilitator or the trainer or I'm supposed to know what's going on.

The protocol's focus on genuine curiosity was a point of reflection for Barbara, a reminder that she as a faculty member must pay attention to how curiosity shows up in her participation. She said, "[In IBF] I must be truly curious. Is [the question I want to ask] a proper question, or am I simply framing an opinion?"

Loles, who has incorporated the IBF process into her approach to her work training preservice teachers, saw the power of curiosity in how they engage in feedback. She said of this, "I see, as a trainer, most participants...look forward to the [IBF] feedback session and they bring their questions, and they have their questions, feel like what they really want to know about [how people experienced] their classes."

Finding #2 explored participants' descriptions of how they found using the IBF protocol to result in a useful shift of power in the feedback relationship from those offering the feedback to the person receiving it. In this finding, two other less commonly cited differentiators were considered: how IBF was experienced as non-judgmental, and how it focused participants' attention on curiosity.

Finding #3

All of the participants (100%) in this study described their learning of IBF as having influenced their teaching practice.

Based on an alignment with Research Question 3 of this study, participants were asked in their interviews to reflect on their current teaching practice to identify ways that their encounter with and learning of IBF might be present in their practice now.

Participants' responses clustered around four elements of change in practice. For some, IBF's influence on their practice was described in terms of how it fit with their values. Others described the learning of IBF as having fostered reflection on their purpose when offering feedback and on a recipient's readiness to hear the feedback. A third theme was reflection on and reconsideration of the role of the giver of feedback and on the purpose of a feedback exchange. The fourth theme that emerged was the influence of having learned IBF on their life outside their professional practice (see Table 5 and Appendix H: Distribution Table Finding #3).

Table 5. *Outline of Finding #3*

FINDING #3
<p>All (100%) participants described having learned IBF as having resulted in a change in their teaching practice in how they approach feedback. These responses clustered around three themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of IBF is a tool for feedback that matches the participants' values. • Reflection on why one is giving feedback, questioning what the feedback recipient's readiness is to hear what one wants to offer. • Reconsidering one's role and purpose in the feedback exchange. <p>In addition to the above, participants also described the following specific influences of IBF on their teaching practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased focus on inquiry or curiosity in my practice (80%) A majority of (80%) described how the protocol was different in how it encouraged inquiry rather than evaluation. • Awareness of the role of IBF in fostering a sense of safety (60%) Some of the participants (60%) specifically connected the use of IBF to the fostering of a sense of safety when engaging in feedback.

Changed My Approach to Giving and Receiving Feedback

All of the participants (100%) described having learned the IBF protocol for feedback as having resulted in a change to their approach to feedback. The ways in which their approaches changed clustered around four categories. Each category is listed below, illustrated with examples from the data.

- Recognition of IBF as a tool for feedback that matches the participants' values.

Participants in this category described their experience with IBF as being in alignment with their values or beliefs as educators. These participants described having adopted or adapted the IBF protocol for use in their teaching because of this alignment.

Barbara described the IBF protocol as something that matched some of her most deeply held beliefs about how teaching and learning work. She described two beliefs in particular: that *teaching should be subordinated to learning*, and that *only awareness is educable*—both drawn from the work of Caleb Gattegno (1987)—as being in line with her understanding of and experience with IBF. She also found an alignment between the protocol and an effort in the Master of Arts in Teaching program she leads to develop mindfulness or being present as elements of developing a reflective practice. She said:

I keep on coming back to Caleb Gattegno. And the subordination of teaching to learning and only awareness is educable. This [IBF] for me epitomizes that. Just seeing the energy come out of it and the joy actually, and [students] being excited and wanted to get back to work, right?...To me, it lines up so much with being mindful and being present...in terms of what we're trying to do with reflective practice in the course.... [We] look at being present and being mindful, being able to describe objectively and then being able to interpret and trying to hold back judgment.

Balen identified his belief in taking a participatory approach as something with which IBF fit well. Having integrated IBF into his approach to feedback, he described the discomfort he experienced when he finds himself in teaching situations in which he is required to use a more evaluative approach. He said, “I’m very participatory in my belief systems. For me CRP really fits in with that...I have visceral feelings when faced with having to do the old approach to feedback and asking what helped and what hindered.”

Similarly, Jake reiterated the connection he felt between IBF and something he called DIGPA, a model of experiential learning that is central to his beliefs about teaching and learning:

I found that, and we spoke about this before, but I felt like it really melded well or blended well [for me] with DIGPA.... [So] I feel super congruent with it now.... It’s become second nature to me.... I have a different way of doing feedback.

Reflecting on why one is giving feedback and questioning what the feedback recipient’s readiness are to hear what one wants to offer.

Miska, reflecting on the ways IBF has influenced her practice, identified getting clear about her what her agenda or intention was for giving feedback before deciding whether or how to offer it. She said, “I think that a big question is like, what’s my agenda? What’s my intention? [This] is huge! I think that a challenge for me sometimes [is] to really identify with what’s my deep intention.”

Barbara saw a relationship between the concept of input in the area of second language acquisition, a course she teaches, and the role of feedback given to a teacher. A language learner, in this theory, might be provided with an enormous amount of input, but if the learner is not at a stage to use it, the added input is not internalized or useful.

Barbara's experience of IBF has led her to see the giving of feedback to teachers as being similar: if they are not at a place to hear what is offered, then it is not of use to them. This realization has allowed her to shift to a more listening-focused approach. She said:

In Second Language Acquisition, you can put as much input there as you like, but if the learner isn't at the stage where they're open to it...it's not intake and it's not going to become internalized.... Once you truly accept that [this is also true of feedback], then there's kind of liberation. I can observe more fully what's going on [and listen to the] teacher-learner...and the other participants [say] things [that] I as a supervisor mightn't have thought of.

Bellona also found herself as shifted in her approach to feedback from a place of telling to a place of listening as an outcome of her experience with IBF. She described it this way: "I'm continually having to do the hard work of giving people space and support in silence and in not telling."

Balen described a similar shift that now guides his practice, which is being less focused on what he thinks the recipient needs to hear, and more attuned to what the recipient may be ready and able to hear:

People can't hear things that they're not ready to hear...because [it] just [won't] make sense. [Now] I just trust that the teacher knows what they need. And that they will get what they need and then they will be able to act on it. Before [I'd say] this is what I think you need. [But] are you going to be able to hear it? And are you actually going to be able to do what I'm telling you [that] you need to do? I think that's where the breakdown is, if just because I show somebody doesn't mean that they're in a place to be able to actually absorb it and do it.

Sachiko described having developed a more open, broadened, listening-focused approach to engaging in feedback with the teachers she works with. She said:

I've learned to kind of open up the question. So it's a wider swath. I feel like I'm not being judgmental. When I hear the explanation like, oh, I see what the point was, right? And really it's revelatory for me as I am the participant and try to understand what was going on.

Reconsidering One's Role and Purpose in the Feedback Exchange

Reflecting on one's own role and purpose as a giver of feedback was a theme that several participants described. In Bellona's case, she reflected on her role as expert and the power that role gives her, and how she found the use of IBF to have shifted the power dynamic in a helpful way. She said:

If I'm a teacher trainer and I'm giving feedback. I'm the one in power. I'm the one who has the knowledge. I understand what a good lesson should look like. These are people who are learning. So there's always that power differential and my experience in the last two years [of using IBF] has been that...the playing field has equalized and that same power differential that informs normal feedback, hasn't existed. And that was [a] really powerful [change] for me.

Miska also described a significant shift in how she thought about her role as a giver of feedback, away from a focus on sharing expertise.

I think in the world of feedback the way I grew up and the way I was thinking of it. It was kind of a chance for the feedback giver to show what they know. And success would be when I give feedback, and somebody gets excited about it. And that just feels so gross to me now, so self-centered. [With the shift to IBF], learning becomes mutual in a very organic natural way.

Increased Focus on Inquiry or Curiosity

Eight of the participants (80%) expressed increased focus on inquiry or curiosity as a result. Loles described herself as more curious and noticed in her teaching practice a shift in her approach to teacher observations as being driven by questions. She said:

[I'm] more curious and reflecting at a deeper... [When I returned to teacher training], I didn't want to be the same [and] tell what I think was helpful, or wasn't helpful. I wanted to [ask] questions.... Before I wouldn't have many questions in my observation notes...like part of my thinking process somehow [was] jumping into a conclusion. [Now] I have a question and then I observe and see if I would find the answer to the question and if not, the next day [in] the feedback session I [ask] that question before giving my opinion.

Sachiko identified the elements of IBF and, in particular, the use of neutral or genuine questions as something that she appreciated not only in her teaching practice but outside of that as well.

I am delighted by how I think I've been able to internalize the process and how it's become part of how I engage with other people outside of being in a teaching [or] feedback situation or even in class. I find that I ask more neutral questions when engaging with people. So if my nephew says something like "Aunt Suz, you know, we went to Disneyland," I'd be like, "Oh well, tell me more." To me that's a genuine neutral question [and]. I find that I tend to use those questions more because [they] invite more conversation.

Jake said an outcome of having learned IBF is an increase in letting curiosity guide his teaching. He described a training experience in which a teacher used a dance in her lesson and he chose to engage with that through questions. He say:

I really became curious...all these curiosity questions came out and [were] very natural for me. So [I asked] why did you pick this dance? It was really funny to me, and it was interesting [and I asked] where did that come from? Did you dance a lot as a kid? What does dancing mean to you?

Awareness of the Role of IBF in Fostering a Sense of Safety

Six of the 10 participants (60%) indicated their awareness of the role that IBF played in fostering a sense of safety. Barbara described gathering feedback from students at the end of the program and them describing how they valued the way the program provided space for imperfection and exploration, which she ascribed in part to the use of IBF.

[This is the] second year we've done this and going on the third year and it was so interesting hearing from the students that what they appreciated, what was really meaningful about the program was the space it created for them to be less than perfect and to experiment and explore. It came up particularly in their peer teaching...it didn't feel pressured I think the format [IBF] enabled it.

Loles connected the sense of safety she had during the IBF feedback process with feeling engaged and enjoying the thinking that came out of it. “I felt safe about feedback...when I was a recipient of feedback with IBF, I felt engaged...[and] I really like that thinking process.”

Bellona commented on how the IBF approach was really a different paradigm for feedback that created enough safety for learning to emerge: “Most people do not walk in this paradigm, right? What is the difference?... We support people and give them enough time, we create enough safety and they have a chance to find [what’s important] on their own.”

Balen warned that if the process is not authentic and the feedback recipient is not truly in control of the process, it will not work.

If it’s true, if a teacher is truly in control of the process. Then it’s an extreme advantage...you can see the faces relax...and the stuff that comes out is great. If it’s fake, if they’re not really in the process then it risks being insincere and then it’s yeah, bullshit.... I don’t think it’ll work. So don’t use it unless you really and truly intend for them to be in control of the process because then it’s not going to work.

Summary

chapter chapter presented the three major findings that were uncovered by this study. The findings were organized and presented in relation to the research questions. Data from individual interviews revealed the challenges and advantages that learning the IBF protocol presented to participants, the differences they experienced in the use of this protocol for feedback in comparison to other approaches they have used, and the changes in teaching practice that resulted from the encounter with and use of IBF. To represent

the experience of the people in the study accurately, the research included extensive quotations from participants.

Finding #1 of this study revealed that an experienced group of educators who learned the IBF feedback protocol all found it to be new and intriguing, and that the structure of the protocol, the individual steps, were of importance. This finding was aligned with Research Question 1, in which participants were asked to describe their experience of learning the IBF protocol. To ensure that participants provided in-depth descriptions of their learning experience, they were asked to describe how they experienced their initial encounter with IBF as well as what their experience was in receiving feedback, giving feedback, and facilitating a feedback process using the IBF protocol.

Finding #2 established that all of the participants (100%) experienced IBF as different from other approaches to feedback with which they were familiar in the way that it shifts power in the feedback dynamic from the giver of feedback to the receiver. This finding aligned with Research Question 2, in which the educators in the study were asked to share the ways they found their experience of the IBF protocol different from other experiences they had with giving and receiving feedback. To ensure that the participants were sharing experienced differences, they were asked to describe how they experienced IBF as different, what advantages and disadvantages they felt IBF had in comparison to other approaches, and in what circumstances would they choose to use or not use the IBF approach.

Finding #3 revealed that 100% of the participants described a change in their teaching practice as a consequence of having learned and participated in the IBF

feedback protocol, including recognizing in IBF is a tool for feedback that matched their values, engaging in new reflection on their own motives and intentions in giving feedback, newly considering that the role of the feedback recipient's readiness is to hear the feedback, and reconsidering their personal role when in a position to offer feedback and their purpose when doing so. This finding aligned with Research Question 3, in which the educators in the study were asked to describe what the impact of having learned IBF has been on their teaching practice. Specifically, they were asked how it had influenced their teaching practice, what challenges they experienced with the protocol if they had incorporated it into their practice, and an open-ended inquiry asking how else their experience with IBF had influenced them.

The goal was to better understand the study's findings and gain insight into the research problem—that current approaches to feedback on performance are problematic for both the givers and the receivers in both the business sector in terms of performance reviews and the education sector in providing feedback to teachers on performance. The researcher aligned each research question with the major finding statement in order to answer the central question of the study: How do educators who learn the IBF protocol for giving and receiving feedback experience learning it and how does having learned it influence their teaching practice? The answers to the central question became the analytic categories that were used to frame the findings for analysis and interpretation. The findings revealed that power dynamics were a central element of experiences of feedback, and making these dynamics explicit and shifting the power from the giver of feedback to the receiver through the structure of a protocol like IBF can make a significant difference in the experience of receiving feedback (Analytic Category #1).

Experiencing and adopting an approach that acknowledges power dynamics in feedback and places control for the process in the hands of the recipient may open new avenues of insight for both the giver and receiver of feedback (Analytic Category #2).

Table 4.1: Relationship between Research Questions and Findings leading to

Analytic

Categories

Analytic categories for the effects of learning IBF on teacher learning		
Research Question	Finding Statement	Analytic Categories
How do participants, trained in IBF, describe their experience of learning this alternative approach?	All participants (100%) described learning the IBF protocol as something new and interesting and found that the individual steps in the protocol, as critically important.	Shifting power from the giver of feedback to the receiver can change the dynamic of giving and receiving feedback ways that support receiver learning.
In what ways do participants perceive IBF to be useful in ways different from other approaches to giving and receiving feedback?	All (100%) of participants described the IBF approach to feedback as one that shifted power/control from the giver of feedback to the recipient.	
How do participants describe the impact of having learned IBF on their practice?	All participants (100%) described a shift in their perspective on the purpose of giving feedback and the role they play in giving it.	Shifting from feedback as evaluation or opinion to shared inquiry can open new avenues of insight for both the giver and receiver of feedback.

Chapter V

ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION, AND SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore with a group of faculty and students in a Master of Arts in Teaching program their perceptions of how learning and using the Inquiry-Based Feedback (IBF) protocol for giving and receiving feedback, an approach borrowed from the world of dance and choreography, impacted their teaching practice. By better understanding the influence that learning this protocol had, the researcher hoped to uncover the ways in which teachers understand the dynamics and outcomes of feedback interactions, and what elements of a feedback experience might support learning in new ways for recipients of feedback. It was hoped that this study would yield new insights into how to provide feedback in a way that the receiver of that feedback would experience as supportive of learning.

The following three research questions guided this study:

- How do participants, trained in IBF, describe their experience of learning this alternative approach?
- In what ways do participants perceive IBF to be useful in ways different from other approaches to giving and receiving feedback?
- How do participants describe the impact of having learned IBF on their practice?

These research questions were largely satisfied by the findings presented in Chapter IV.

The three major findings uncovered through the interviews were as follows:

- All participants (100%) described learning the IBF protocol as new and interesting and found that the individual steps in the protocol were important.
- A significant majority of participants (90%) described the primary difference in this approach as one that shifted power in the feedback dynamic from the giver of feedback to the receiver.
- All participants (100%) described a change in their teaching practice resulting from their experience of having learned and used IBF.

This chapter attempts to provide analytical and interpretive insights into the findings that were presented in Chapter IV. The researcher is aware that the data captured during the interviews were limited in scope and represent the participants' retrospective view of their experience of having learned IBF, as well as a subjective report on how it has influenced their teaching practice. As a result, the researcher used the participants' collective data to suggest possible categorizations for additional research, which may influence the emergence of theoretical and practical developments.

While the findings chapter provided objective data in small narrative segments as they related to the respective research questions, this chapter integrates the individual parts into a whole in order to shed light on the research topic. The following analytic categories, which were introduced at the conclusion of the previous chapter, guided this process:

- Shifting power from the giver of feedback to the receiver can change the dynamic of giving and receiving feedback in ways that support receiver learning.
- Shifting from feedback as evaluation or opinion to shared inquiry can open new avenues of insight for both the giver and receiver of feedback.

These analytic categories serve to enable the researcher to identify more significant meanings from his findings.

Following the discussion of the interpretation of the findings, the researcher (a) revisits the assumptions underlying this study that were presented in Chapter I, (b) presents contributions to the literature, and (c) offers researcher reflections.

Categorical Groupings

As described in Chapter I, experiences of giving and receiving feedback are both common and problematic. Throughout the interview process, the participants spoke about challenging episodes of feedback that they had experienced as “blindsiding,” and of feedback as something one must “brace for.” They discussed ways in which they had been trained in the past to provide feedback that was not entirely satisfying. The variety of responses among the participants to the encounter with, learning of, and use of the IBF protocol indicated several different ways in which they processed and integrated the experience. Taking into account participants’ descriptions of their experiences, the researcher was able to identify three qualitatively different responses among the group studied: Instant Converts (4), Intrigued Skeptics (4), and Willing Participants (2). Table 6 provides a summary of these categories:

Table 6. *Categorical Groupings*

Category	Participant
Instant Converts	Mishka
	Bellona
	Loles
	Nacio
Intrigued Skeptics	Barbara
	Balen
	Jake
	Sachiko
Willing Participants	Gamal
	Naamah

These categories are based on the participants' response to the experience of encountering and learning the IBF protocol, and their descriptions of the ways that experience influenced their teaching practice. The researcher acknowledges that the limitations of the collected data make it impossible to determine whether other faculty or students might not respond differently if an alternative method of data collection was used over time. Each group—Instant Converts, Interested Skeptics, and Willing Participants—is described below and used to analyze the participants' responses to learning and using IBF.

Instant Converts

Instant Converts were aware of some disjuncture between their beliefs and intentions as educators and their experience of feedback practices. While thoughtful about how they went about offering feedback, and often trained in methods in which they had faith, the participants found that some dissatisfaction remained with this element of their practice. This discomfort was expressed through some of the negative descriptions they had for experiences of feedback, suggesting that recipients had to “brace for”

feedback or that feedback could be experienced as a “blunt instrument” or even “a bloodbath.”

For these participants, the experience of IBF was immediately seen as an approach that seemed to address some of the discomfort with their current practice. Instant Converts delighted in the way the shift of power changed the dynamics of feedback sessions. This led to reflection on and reconsideration of what they desired in a feedback session; what their role was as experts; and how they experienced the role of listening, careful questioning, and seeking understanding as laying the ground for new ways that feedback could support learning that differed from the evaluative and opinion-driven modes—often described as a “helped/hindered” model—that had been central to their feedback practice.

Intrigued Skeptics

Intrigued Skeptics, like the Instant Converts, regarded the experience of giving and receiving feedback to be problematic. However, the Intrigued Skeptics’ response to encountering IBF held a tension between an attraction to an approach that seemed to address the problem of negative or damaging feedback experiences, and concern that, without offering direct feedback on shortcomings in a teacher’s performance, the teacher may not receive the feedback needed to learn or improve. This was especially true for those whose teacher education contexts included preservice teachers either in TESOL Certificate courses or a K-12 public school licensure program, or training teachers for labor unions.

Similar to the Instant Converts, the Intrigued Skeptics saw enough potential in the approach to be willing to adopt it for an experimental period. The initial concerns expressed upon first encountering the protocol shifted for each of these participants over time, with all of them coming to include IBF in their teaching practice in some form. The initial concerns this group expressed about IBF were addressed in several different ways. Many found that, like the Instant Converts, in using the protocol they became more aware of the effect of power and position on how they approached feedback sessions. This prompted reflection on assumptions they held about the role of direct feedback in the form of expert opinion in teacher learning. One example of this is a shift from a focus on what “teachers needed to hear,” towards what “teachers were ready to hear.” Others found that the protocol was a good match for some of their supervision contexts, particularly where there was sufficient time and teacher sophistication, but not in others where time was very limited or outside evaluation requirements required a more directive approach. Some made adaptations to the elements of the protocol they found troubling, and they made use of their adapted version.

Willing Participants

Willing Participants accepted feedback as something to be expected in a graduate program on teaching, and were pleasantly surprised by their experience receiving feedback using the IBF protocol. IBF stood out for them primarily because it resulted in much less emotional distress than they expected to experience as a part of getting feedback on their teaching. Willing Participants accepted learning about IBF without particular concerns or critical enthusiasm. IBF was just one of a mix of new experiences

that they were having as Master's degree students, and it blended into this larger experience. They identified elements that they liked, but they neither fully endorsed it nor critically analyzed it apart from feeling positive about the experience of receiving feedback through the protocol and experimenting with or adopting some parts of some of the steps.

Analysis

Demographic Factors

A number of demographic factors were examined in an attempt to identify elements that may have influenced the way in which participants responded to their experience with IBF. Three factors stood out as having some alignment with these groupings: (a) years of teaching experience, (b) the participants' professional role in and out of the program, and (c) ethnicity/nationality stood out as possible items of influence.

Years of teaching experience. In terms of correlation of teaching experience and grouping, the Intrigued Skeptics all had roughly 30 or more years of teaching experience. The Willing Participants were the least experienced of the participants, with both having fewer than 10 years of experience. This was in contrast to the Instant Converts, who had a mix of experience—half having roughly 10 years of experience and half having roughly 30. Clearly, fewer years of experience align with a less critical evaluation of the IBF protocol, while greater experience in teaching and with feedback aligned with the more engaged attitudes of the Instant Converts and Intrigued Skeptics.

Participants' professional roles. Participants' professional roles also showed alignment in the groupings. Again, the two Willing Participants had a single role in the

program—that of graduate student referred to in this study as teacher-learners. Among the Intrigued Sceptics, all four held the professional role of faculty in the program, but three also had external professional roles that involved teaching and giving feedback in highly managed or controlled teacher education contexts, such as training trainers for labor unions and preparing undergraduate students for initial K-12 licensure. In these environments, observable behaviors, often in the form of checklists, play an important role in preparing students to pass an external evaluation. The one member of this category who did not list this as a role did have this kind of context in her previous experience. This suggests that consideration for working with novice teachers and needing to meet external evaluation standards was an influence for this group of educators as well as an additional lens through which these participants viewed their experience of IBF.

Among the Instant Converts were two participants whose sole role was as faculty in the Master's degree program, a program specifically designed for experienced teachers. Working in this context, there were no external evaluations for which they needed to prepare their students and thus were viewing the IBF protocol primarily for use within a program in which they had both responsibility for and control of how evaluation was done. The other two Instant Converts were graduate students in the program (teacher-learners) who in their professional lives also work as teacher educators, training for a TESOL Certificate program. However, the context in which they provide TESOL Certificate Training primarily serves experienced Latin American teachers. Although they do have externally defined criteria those teachers need to meet, this topic did not

come up for them as a concern about adapting or using IBF in that context; instead, both highlighted the value they felt in implementing it there.

Ethnicity/Nationality. The researcher noted that both Latinx participants as well as the dual Costa Rican/American national appeared in the same group of Instant Converts. However, no data in the interviews linked their Latin American ethnicity to this result, so it is unlikely that ethnicity or nationality specifically plays a role here. However, these three also share an experience of working in the same teacher training center in Costa Rica and it is likely that this shared experience, and the culture of that center, may have influenced their similar responses. There are insufficient data, however, to draw a clear line indicating this.

Apart from the factors listed above, the researcher could find no evidence of any other relationships between demographic factors and the study's findings. Table 7 provides a summary of the categories and demographic data.

Analytic Category 1: Shift of power from feedback giver to receiver

This analytic category was used to analyze each of the three research questions:

- How do participants, trained in IBF, describe their experience of learning this alternative approach? (Research Question 1)
- In what ways do participants perceive IBF to be useful in ways different from other approaches to giving and receiving feedback? (Research Question 2)
- How do participants describe the impact of having learned IBF on their practice? (Research Question 3)

Table 7. *Participant Categories and Demographic Data*

Category	Participants	Nationality	Years of Teaching Experience	Professional Roles
Instant Convert	Bellona	Anglo-American	35	Faculty
Instant Convert	Loles	Argentinian	14	Teacher-Learner & TESOL Cert. Trainer
Instant Convert	Miska	Costa Rican/U.S.	31	Faculty
Instant Convert	Nacio	Chilean	12	Teacher-Learner & TESOL Cert. Trainer
Intrigued Skeptic	Barbara	White South African	38	Faculty
Intrigued Skeptic	Balen	Anglo American	30	Faculty & TESOL Cert. Trainer, Labor Trainer
Intrigued Skeptic	Jake	Anglo American	28	Faculty & TESOL Cert. Trainer, Labor Trainer
Intrigued Skeptic	Sachiko	Japanese American	32	Faculty & k-12 Teacher Educator
Willing Participant	Gamal	Anglo American	5	Teacher-Learner
Willing Participant	Naamah	Taiwanese/U.S.	6	Teacher-Learner

Instant Converts. For Instant Converts, the dramatic shift of power and control from observers or experts to the person receiving feedback was met with immediate appreciation both in their experience of giving and receiving feedback using the protocol. As was made clear in the demographic analysis, though two of the Instant Converts were students in the program, they had in common with the two faculty members that all four were experienced teacher educators who regularly engaged in giving teachers feedback, and did so within contexts in which they were working primarily with experienced teachers.

The shift of power, in which the teacher receiving feedback on their teaching guides the process and asks questions related to their interests or concerns about the lesson taught, may be especially valuable for a group working with experienced teachers. The Instant Converts described their enthusiasm and even relief about how the protocol empowers learners to focus on what is important to them, even when it may not be the first concern of the observers. Mishka, like several of the participants, has worked with an approach in which the feedback experience begins with descriptions of what the observers consider key moments in the lesson. Reflecting on how she might feel if put in the same position of listening to others describe her teaching, she said, “You know, it’s like [what if] I don’t want to fucking talk about that?”

This recognition of the importance of making space for the agency of the learner and empowering the learner sounds like an example of what Boud and Molloy (2013) termed a Mark 2 model of feedback, which assumes that learners play an active role and are able to facilitate their own learning.

Intrigued Skeptics. For Intrigued Skeptics, the shift of power and control from observers or experts to the person receiving feedback was a cause for both interest and concern. As was made clear in the demographic analysis, all but one of the Intrigued Skeptics were professionally engaged in contexts within which helping students to succeed on outside evaluations was important. This need to prepare students to meet standards outside the faculty members' control was a theme in the concerns initially raised by Intrigued Skeptics. Another factor was that the students they engaged in these other professional roles were typically not experienced teachers and in need of very specific feedback on a skill level. These teachers were new to teaching and learning what Jake described as the *craft* of teaching and not the *art*.

The difference in initial response to IBF between the Instant Converts and the Intrigued Skeptics may be captured in that difference between an open-ended engagement with an experienced teacher's "art" of teaching and a feeling that more control needed to be maintained when working with inexperienced teachers who were just learning individual skills in the "craft" of teaching.

Among Intrigued Skeptics, intrigue won out over skepticism, as all indicated that they had incorporated IBF into their teaching practices. By incorporating IBF, the Intrigued Skeptics used a number of methods, including reflecting on the nature of feedback and shifting beliefs, as Barbara described: "I'm learning to trust. What they're going to take from that [the feedback] is entirely up to them and I can't control that. I think supervisors always think that we do control it but we don't, [I'm] coming to sit comfortably with that." Over time, Balen found that he could trust the process to bring out what he needed: "using the process, just through the process, is something that I

thought was really interesting or was important didn't come out, there were other things that I feel are equally important that did come out." Jake made considerable adaptations to the protocol to address his concerns and still enjoys the advantages he felt were present in the shift of power.

Willing Participants. As pointed out in the analysis of demographics, the Willing Participants were unique among the participants in the study in that the only professional role they brought to the Master of Arts in Teaching experience was as graduate students in a program for experienced teachers; they brought some experience but significantly less than what the Instant Converts and Intrigued Skeptics brought.

Willing Participants met the shift of power and control with surprise. What stood out to them was the affective element, that they felt safe as recipients of feedback. They appreciated how this experience differed in this way from other feedback experiences they had encountered. They described the experience with words like safe, respectful, and kind. In using the protocol, for example, Gamal came to appreciate how each of the individual steps in the protocol served his learning by helping keep unhelpful emotions and defensiveness at bay.

Because the Willing Participants also do not bring the lens of teacher educator to their experience of IBF as the other groups do, the Willing Participants' perception of the protocol is a relatively passive one. Nonetheless, they do express interest in applying the protocol themselves. Gamal works as a writing tutor and is a writer himself. He saw value in using the protocol to work with writers on their work and wondered whether he could find a way to use it to get feedback on his own writing. Naamah described using the protocol as a way of shifting how she engages with students. She was taken by the

way asking for permission before offering an opinion shifts the power dynamic, and she described using this both to offer comments on student behavior and to teach Chinese pronunciation, when she asks students whether they would like to hear strategies that she has used in learning English. In both cases, she described students as being more open to hearing her comments.

Appendix I provides evidence of the variations across Instant Converts, Intrigued Skeptics, and Willing Participants to the shift of power from feedback giver to receiver.

Analytic Category 2: Shift of process from evaluation or opinion to shared inquiry

This analytic category was used to analyze three research questions:

- How do participants, trained in IBF, describe their experience of learning this alternative approach? (Research Question 1)
- In what ways do participants perceive IBF to be useful in ways different from other approaches to giving and receiving feedback? (Research Question 2)
- How do participants describe the impact of having learned IBF on their practice? (Research Question 3)

Instant Converts. For Instant Converts, the shift to inquiry prompted personal reflection, learning, and shifting beliefs. They embraced the focus on curiosity, becoming curious about themselves and their own agendas. They found that IBF gives space to understand the intentions behind the actions of the teachers they observe.

As givers of feedback, Instant Converts found the shift to inquiry requires moving from a stance of knower to one of curiosity. In particular, the process of crafting neutral

questions opened for them new insights into their own motivations. Mishka described this, saying CRP

encompasses a whole group of techniques that are more about curiosity, valuing curiosity and the underlying dynamic of a what's a truly neutral question. Right? So the whole process of figuring out what's my agenda? [What] am I really trying to accomplish when I say this and then teasing out the curiosity that's underneath.

Loles found that the shift from opinions to inquiry in her feedback created a more general a shift from judgment towards curiosity inside herself. She said she

likes this intention of raising curiosity and walking away from judgment and really thinking whether what you're saying is an opinion. I went from thinking about what helps and hinders to [framing] questions.... I find myself being curious more than judgmental and it really has changed me.

Instant Converts also experience a shift of beliefs in which they move from a position of concern about what they think a student needs to hear to wondering which students are ready and open to hear. Bellona captured this shift in her description of realizing that she

can be as effective as I can be, but people are only going to learn what they want or need to learn or they're open to learn at any particular time.... That core belief I have now [is] that they can frame the questions that they're ready to ask, that they're at the point of curiosity about, and then the challenge for me is to honor that.

The listening and asking that become the primary skills in IBF create space for hearing more deeply and understanding why teachers did what they did in their lessons. In contrast to a focus on offering evaluations, opinions, or suggestions, a stance of inquiry provides the opportunity to understand a teacher's intention behind his or her actions when teaching. Nacio said:

within neutral questions, and...the statements of meaning what I feel I have discovered is that people always have a reason why they do what they do, and in feedback...sometimes we do not take the time to explore that and I feel that it's super important because that's validating.

The Instant Converts learned through the shift to inquiry to embrace curiosity in themselves and in others. They incorporated this change in approaching feedback and, in doing so, gained deeper understanding of their own motives as well as the intentions of the teachers they supervised. They found that, by letting the teacher's questions and their own neutral questions define the dialogue, they came to better understand what teachers receiving feedback were ready to hear, to take in, and to act upon.

Intrigued Skeptics. From the demographic data, we know that both the Intrigued Skeptics and the Instant Converts have significant years of teaching and teacher education experience. In their role in the Master of Arts in Teaching program, Intrigued Skeptics are primarily working with experienced teachers rather than novice teachers, as they do in other professional roles and contexts. However, this difference in the professional lens through which they experience IBF seems to be key differentiator between the two groups. Intrigued Skeptics hold concerns about the application of the protocol with novice teachers or teachers facing external evaluation, even though when serving on the faculty of the Master of Arts in Teaching program, they are working with somewhat experienced teachers who do not face external evaluation.

Thus, in responding to the shift from sharing opinions or evaluations to engaging in shared inquiry, Intrigued Skeptics had to overcome their initial concerns about letting go of a telling mode in favor of an inquiring mode. Through repeated use of the protocol within the Master of Arts in Teaching program, Intrigued Skeptics overcome those initial

concerns in several ways. Like Instant Converts, engaging in IBF fosters for them a reconsideration of their own perspective or belief about feedback and their roles in it, and a reconsideration of what recipients of feedback are ready and able to hear.

Barbara shared a change in her self-awareness of offering opinions. She said that learning the protocol has “really made me sensitive to judgment and giving opinions. There are many times [now] when I want to say something and think, is this just me wanting to air my opinion?” Balen described his shift in focusing now on what feedback recipients are ready for: “[I] think [IBF is] a generative process, it allows the participants to ask questions and they’re able to hear, and they’re *actually* able to hear and see and act on things.”

As Intrigued Skeptics integrate the protocol into their practice, they adapt the protocol to address their concerns. For example, Jake described adding a written follow-up letter to a teacher-learner he observed in which he offered his observations, evaluation, or opinion about the class he observed; he created a hybrid model of an IBF feedback session followed with a personal letter. Intrigued Skeptics also described “learning to trust” the protocol over time. Barbara said, “I had to learn to learn to trust the process and...work from what was meaningful for them [students].” What is meaningful for students, or what they are “ready to hear,” comes up as another way of describing an outcome of shifting to inquiry. Balen said that “[CRP] kind of goes against the grain of normal feedback, which is usually focused on fixing problems...[but] in the process, what comes out, what needs to come out, will come out.”

Sachiko also saw the shift to inquiry offering greater insight into the teachers’ intentions and how to serve their learning. Satchiko said, “It’s through that questioning

process [that] you discover, Oh, my expertise didn't actually match with what she was *really* thinking or doing." Jake similarly described inquiry providing new insight: "I started to really understand the process that the teacher went through" and found that creating space to understand a teacher's intention and why the teacher did what he or she did stands out in contrast to "now I'm going to give you feedback on why your task was completely ineffective"—which might have been his approach had he not spent time to understand more deeply the teacher's intentions.

Willing Participants. Again, Willing Participants, when viewed through the shift from opinion to inquiry, still experience IBF primarily through the lens of their own feelings. Previous experiences of pain contrast with finding that feelings did not shut them down to engaging, and they were in fact encouraged through the experience. Gamal described "steeling himself for feedback" and contrasted that with his experience of engaging in inquiry, in asking questions about his performance, or in answering neutral questions about it. He found his feelings were "not as invasive" and he was able to engage: "Other times I've received criticism I was really having to like try and do the work of steeling myself for it. In CRP the process helps, you know, put those feelings in places where they will not be as invasive."

Naamah described her experience as getting "really positive feelings" from her classmates when they offered feedback on her lessons using IBF. She highlighted that this was "a different kind of feeling" from what she was used to in getting feedback.

Appendix J provides evidence of the variations across Instant Converts, Intrigued Skeptics, and Willing Participants to the shift of feedback process from evaluation or opinion to shared inquiry.

Summary of Analysis

Taking into account participants' descriptions of their experience of learning IBF and using it as a protocol for giving and receiving feedback and the influence having learned it has had on their teaching practice, the research identified three qualitatively different groups among the sample population: Instant Converts, Intrigued Skeptics, and Willing Participants. The findings, which were distilled into analytic categories, were examined through the lens of demographic factors, and then by the groupings of Instant Converts, Intrigued Skeptics, and Willing Participants.

Experiencing the shift of power in the IBF protocol that gives receivers of feedback control over the feedback process was met with different but overlapping responses by the three groups. Instant Converts were drawn to how the shift of power changed the dynamics of feedback. The change led to introspection as well, as Instant Converts reflected on their previous role as experts guiding a feedback process, now that they found themselves as fellow travelers in an unfolding dialogue that they were no longer in charge of. Instant Converts found themselves learning to trust that the feedback that came out through the protocol would be feedback that could be heard and used by the receiver, in part because the receiver was focusing the aim of the feedback on what they were already interested in. Instant Converts found themselves listening more and learning about the motivations behind teacher behaviors that they had observed. Instant Converts are motivated in part by some level of dissatisfaction with previous approaches to feedback and a fairly free teacher education context in which they feel comfortable engaging in this new approach.

The power shift for Intrigued Skeptics is appealing on one hand and concerning on the other. Intrigued Skeptics also have many years of teacher education experience, but they are often working in contexts that include external evaluations of or standards for the performance of the teachers with whom they work. They worry that letting the feedback recipient guide the process might mean that they would not hear what they need to hear, that the questions the recipient might ask of their own performance might not be relevant, or that the recipient's peers also might fail to inquire about important aspects of the performance. However, the Intrigued Skeptics did come to adopt the protocol and, in doing so, showed similar patterns of learning to the Instant Converts. Through experience with the protocol, some of their earlier concerns were addressed and they described generally coming to trust that what needed to come out would do so. In that process, they too reflected on their own roles as experts and the degree to which what they offered of their expertise was something teacher-learners could understand and make sense of when it was offered as opinion or evaluation, as opposed to being invited in a process of dialogue. Intrigued Skeptics made adaptations to the protocol, or in what instances they employed the protocol, but all found ways to use it in their practice.

Willing Participants came to the experience of learning IBF with limited teaching backgrounds and viewed it through the lens of graduate students rather than teacher educators. From this perspective, the experience of IBF blended into the many other new experiences they were having as graduate students. What stood out was primarily the difference between this approach to feedback and those approaches they were used to—approaches that brought up uncomfortable emotions and feelings of defensiveness that did not occur in their experience of IBF. They saw IBF through an affective lens and

described the influence on their teaching practice primarily in terms of being respectful and kind to their students.

Responses to the shift in IBF from feedback comprised of sharing opinions or evaluations to shared inquiry were also different among the three groups. Instant Converts were again immediately drawn to the change. They found themselves engaged by being able to focus on what they were curious about, in contrast to observing what they would need to comment on. They experienced a shift away from judgment and found that the increased opportunity to listen allowed for new discoveries about the thinking that the teachers they observed employed in their decision making.

Intrigued Skeptics felt similarly about the shift to inquiry as they felt in the shift of power. There was concern that the process would not result in eliciting the kind of feedback teacher-learners needed to hear, either based on their expert perspective or on external evaluations the teacher-learners would need to pass. With extended experience with IBF, the Intrigued Skeptics came to trust the protocol, often re-evaluated the role their own expertise played in the feedback process, and adapted the protocol for use in their practice.

Willing Participants, as with the change in power and control, experienced the shift to inquiry as one element among many that they were experiencing as graduate students. Again, their affective experience stood out to them—that is, being able to ask their own questions about their performance or engaging with the neutral questions of their supervisor or peers, which created a less emotional, less defensive experience of feedback that was appreciated.

Interpretation

The insights gained in analyzing interview data from the participants are explored in this interpretation section. The researcher presents opinions and possible explanations for each finding highlighted in the Analysis section. These explanations are supported by the literature and the researcher's experience. The interpretation is organized using the analytic categories introduced earlier in this chapter.

Analytic Category 1: Shift of power from feedback giver to receiver

Power and inquiry were introduced in the Analysis section as constructs that were helpful to analyzing the findings of this case study. In order to interpret the findings, the researcher again uses these two constructs. The interpretation for this analytic category is organized around the role of power or agency shifting from the giver to the receiver of feedback. The findings identified that the way the IBF protocol put control of the feedback process in the hands of the person receiving the feedback was an important distinction of the approach.

The participants in this study were all faculty or students in an Master of Arts in Teaching program that, as described in Chapter IV, is explicitly committed to an experiential approach to education. In addition, eight of the 10 participants were teacher educators who shared a familiarity with Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle or modifications of that cycle. One of Fenwick's (cited in Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2012) critiques of Kolb was that he did not "account for issues of power in his model" (p. 164). By being explicit about power and reversing the usual power dynamic, the introduction of IBF to this particular program and group of teacher-

educators may have found especially fertile ground. The strong interest in and willing adoption of IBF may have been a function of addressing this missing piece in their approach.

Instant Converts, Intrigued Skeptics, and Willing Participants all found that by engaging the feedback receiver's questions about their own performance, faculty and peers gained insights into the intentions behind different elements of the performance and could provide information that was in alignment with the learning interests and concerns of the feedback receiver. Both faculty and teacher-learners described in various ways a sense of freedom and openness that emerged as they inquired together into the shared experience of the lesson under review. This experience is in sharp contrast to the emotionally challenging experiences they had in the past with feedback.

When participants point/ed out how shared inquiry helped them to better understand the experience and intentions of those to whom they were giving feedback, and when faculty felt IBF focused them on what feedback receivers were ready to hear, they were describing an element in the shift of power that IBF creates. By changing the interests that drive the process, IBF shifts a passive experience of being told what others thought was good and bad about one's work into an active experience by the feedback receiver of asking and responding to questions. The learner's questions guide the session and the learner's responses to neutral questions that invite the reflection and new insights rather than defense that the participants described. In these ways, this group's experience of the protocol seemed to reinforce the importance of learner agency and self-direction that Knowles et al. (2005) identified as a core assumption that should be made about adult learners.

These insights are also in alignment with the differences Boud and Molloy (2013) proposed between what they call/ed Feedback Mark 1 and Feedback Mark 2. Mark 1 feedback remains “within a paradigm of telling”; it is information that is directed to the student from the teacher or peers. By contrast, Feedback Mark 2 actively positions the learner as the elicitor of knowledge for improvement. When faculty and students described their surprise by how different their experience of IBF was from “normal” feedback experiences, they seemed to be referring to a similar set of differences in which “normal” feedback reflects an experience of Feedback Mark 1 and the experience of IBF fits into the description of Feedback Mark 2.

The concerns of the Intrigued Skeptics can be understood in part as a reflection of the difference between Feedback Mark 1 and Feedback Mark 2. Their role as the expert who needs to tell the novice what they are doing well or not doing well, noticing or not noticing, is the focus of Mark 1 but absent in Mark 2. The struggle with this, and the reflection on the value of one’s expertise that emerged in response to that shift, can be understood as a faculty member reflecting on his or her role in Mark 1 versus Mark 2 feedback processes. Ramaprasad (2007) defined feedback as “information about the gap between the actual level and the reference level of a system parameter which is used to alter the gap in some way” (p. 4). This valid definition reflects the intention behind a Mark 1 approach, or as it was often described by the participants’ “normal” feedback. The challenge with this approach, as described by the participants, is that it often is derailed by the emotions and defensiveness that can arise in response.

Analytic Category 2: Shift of process from evaluation or opinion to shared inquiry

In their meta-analysis of thousands of studies on feedback interventions, Kluger and DeNisi (1996) indicated that most interventions resulted in only moderate or no improvement at all, while in more than one-third of cases, performance actually became worse as a result of the intervention. This study did not focus on whether IBF as a feedback intervention resulted in improved teaching skills. Rather, it focused on the experience of those learning IBF, how they described it as being different from other experiences, and how having learned it influenced their own approach to giving and receiving feedback. However, their finding that feedback interventions often reduce performance is certainly reflected in participants' descriptions of difficult and painful feedback experiences they had experienced, confirming the Boud and Molloy (2013) observation that "much feedback may be ineffectual or even damaging" (p. 115). In contrast to this, Instant Converts, Intrigued Skeptics, and Willing Participants all described their experience of IBF as a feedback dynamic that was less prone to being derailed by eliciting challenging emotions or defensive attitudes.

This seems to confirm Kluger and DeNisi's (1996) Feedback Intervention Theory (FIT) that described feedback interventions resulting in a shift of attention in the person receiving the feedback to one of three levels: (a) the task at hand, (b) the details of the task at hand, or (c) the self. For example, *How do I do this better?* shows a focus on the task. A feedback intervention might shift the focus to *Am I able to do this?* or *Am I good enough to do this?* Or even *Should I even be trying to learn this?* This kind of focus on the self can "induce strong affective reactions" (p. 261).

The consistent description by participants, especially the Willing Participants, regarding the positive emotional support they experienced engaging in the IBF protocol suggests that by empowering the feedback recipient with control over the process and focusing that process on the recipient's own questions and the neutral questions of those offering feedback, the focus paradoxically remains not on the self, but on the task at hand, or the details of the task at hand. Though this does not come easily, Instant Converts and Intrigued Skeptics both described the challenge of learning to crafting neutral questions and facilitating the crafting of neutral questions by others when introducing IBF.

The second way in which IBF may avoid the shift to the focus on self is by constraining how participants engage in each step of the protocol. In describing the concept of protocols, McDonald, Mohr, Dichter and MacDonald (2015) pointed out that “under the right circumstances constraints are liberating” (p. 1). Though the IBF protocol is strict and limiting, in interviews, the experience of participating in the protocol elicited words like “freeing” and “liberating,” confirming McDonald et al.'s point.

Participants in the study described the steps in the protocol as being important. Willing Participants, in particular, pointed out the value they found in each step. Instant Converts and Intrigued Skeptics also identified learning to “trust the process” as an element in their learning, and identified important elements from the steps, in particular the statements of meaning in step one, the questions from the feedback receiver in step two, and the neutral questions in step three as being vital in their experience of IBF and the ways that learning it have influenced their practice. These are descriptions of the value to learning a process that significantly constrains the ways one is allowed to engage

at each step. This seems to confirm the value of constraint at the core of how McDonald et al. (2015) described the protocols.

Finally, the ways in which Instant Converts as well as Intrigued Skeptics described shared inquiry, resulting in useful dialogue that provided new insights, aligns well with two of the four characteristics of what Askew and Lodge (2000, cited in Boud and Molloy, 2013) call “sustainable feedback”: (a) involving students in dialogues about learning which raise their awareness of quality performance, and (b) facilitating feedback processes through which students are stimulated to develop capacities in monitoring and evaluating their own learning.

Summary of Interpretation

When returning to the literature, the inter-connectedness of the categories of power and inquiry become very clear. Boud and Molloy (2013) described two modes of feedback they called Mark 1 and Mark 2. Mark 1, which consists primarily of telling, of giving one’s opinion or evaluation, matches what most participants considered “normal” feedback. This illustrates a mode in which the giver of feedback is empowered and the receiver plays a passive role. Mark 2, on the other hand, is focused on learner as the elicitor of knowledge, which is also what the shift in power to the feedback receiver accomplishes in the IBF protocol. But this shift from Mark 1 to Mark 2 is not just a shift in power; it is also a shift from “telling” to inquiry.

Similarly, Kluger and DeNisi’s (1996) FIT confirmed both the results regarding power and those regarding inquiry. FIT explains the emotional challenge that can undermine a feedback experience by shifting the focus from the task at hand to the self in

unhelpful ways. IBF supports remaining focused on the task at hand both by putting the control of the process in the hands of the person receiving feedback, and in shifting the process to a focus on the receiver's questions and the neutral questions of those offering feedback.

Summary of Analysis, Synthesis, and Interpretation

This study explored the effects of employing the IBF protocol in a Master of Arts in Teaching program and the experiences of the faculty and students involved. That giving and receiving feedback is a challenging process that is often experienced as undermining rather than supporting the learning it is intended to address.

The experience of using the IBF protocol was a significant shift for both students and teachers in the program. It led to faculty reflection on and re-evaluating the role of their expertise and how they share it as well as the nature of feedback and how or whether it is heard, engaged with, or understood. For faculty who also work in contexts that focus on novice teachers and have external standards to meet, interest in IBF was paired with concern about meeting those external standards. However, as they made use of IBF, they also engaged in similar reflection and began to both adopt and adapt the protocol to their needs. For students in the program, the experience of IBF was surprising in how their experience of feedback was not linked to pain but to interest and engagement.

IBF appears to fit well into the growing research on the limitations of common feedback practices as well as identifying new and better practices. The constraints imposed by the protocol are experienced as freeing, even liberating.

Revisiting Assumptions

As discussed in Chapter I, the researcher held eight assumptions related to this study. Following is a discussion of each of the assumptions in light of the findings that were presented in Chapter IV and the analysis presented in the current chapter.

The first assumption was that feedback is an important element to learning. This assumption was partially supported by the findings which identified feedback to be considered important but problematic by both teachers and learners in the study.

The second assumption was that current practices in feedback are lacking. This assumption was confirmed by the literature review.

The third assumption was that feedback is complicated by many factors, including the power dynamics of those engaged in giving and receiving feedback. This assumption was confirmed by the findings.

The fourth assumption was that students who participated in the cohort who experimented with the use of IBF would share their experience and perspectives in interviews. This assumption was partially confirmed as several of the students in the cohort were not able to be reached, but of the five who responded, four participated.

The fifth assumption was that the faculty who experimented with the application of IBF in their teacher education program would share their experience and perspectives in interviews. This was confirmed.

The sixth assumption was that for students who found IBF useful, the protocol or its influence will be present in their current teaching practice. This assumption was

generally confirmed, though those who are also teacher educators make more explicit use of the protocol.

The seventh assumption was that, for the faculty who experimented for a summer with IBF as their primary approach to giving and receiving feedback, the protocol or its influence will be present in their current teaching practice. This was confirmed by the study.

The eighth assumption was that, understanding better the experience of students and faculty in the use of IBF would benefit and inform the fields of teacher education and adult learning, as well as the use of feedback in the corporate world and elsewhere. This assumption was confirmed.

Contributions to the Literature

The current study has made three contributions to the existing literature.

The first contribution confirmed the insights described as Mark 1 and Mark 2 feedback, confirming the limitations of Mark 1 feedback and illustrating the advantages of Mark 2 feedback and suggesting a possible model for engaging in Mark 2 feedback.

The second contribution illustrated the dynamics of the current literature on Feedback Intervention Theory and offered one example of a possible model for supporting effective feedback.

The third contribution expanded the literature on educational protocols by offering and describing a new protocol.

Researcher Reflections

My own experience of engaging in this research and in the novel task of writing a dissertation provided many opportunities for me to experience the challenge of my own focus shifting from the task at hand, or the details of the task at hand (and there are so many!), to the self. While my feedback was self-inflicted, my experience of that shift of focus to the self, and the following questions—*Am I able to do this? Am I good enough to do this? Should I even be trying to learn this?*—made regular appearances.

Chapter VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore with a group of faculty and students in a Master of Arts in Teaching program their perceptions of how learning and using the Inquiry-Based Feedback (IBF) protocol for giving and receiving feedback, an approach borrowed from the world of dance and choreography, impacted their teaching practice. The research uncovered the ways in which faculty as well teacher-learners in the program experienced the protocol as givers and receivers of feedback, and how that experience influenced their understanding of and practices in giving and receiving feedback. This study yielded insights into how to address the role that power plays in the dynamics of feedback and how a shift from offering opinions to engaging in shared inquiry further changes the feedback dynamic and may help to avoid elements of feedback experiences that can be counterproductive.

Conclusions

The researcher has drawn three conclusions based on the findings of this case study.

Conclusion 1

The researcher concluded that adapting ideas and methods from non-traditional sources can spur new insights, learning, and productivity. In this study, well qualified and experienced teacher-educators underwent significant learning in response to their application of a technique from the world of dance to their work of preparing teachers. Reaching across disciplines and engaging in ideas outside our traditional domains can be a surprising source of learning and growth.

Conclusion 2

The researcher concluded that feedback is often not only unhelpful but also often detrimental. Wherever feedback occurs, whether it is from managers and employees in the corporate sector, supervisors and teachers in education, or other contexts, even well-intentioned feedback can be harmful. The experiences described in this study of people “bracing” for feedback, “dreading” it, and having feedback experiences feel like a “bloodbath” are common. The literature on feedback confirmed that feedback can be emotionally damaging and is often counterproductive.

Conclusion 3

When authentically conducted, an inquiry-based approach feedback can alleviate the problems of power and engage the power of curiosity. The teachers and students in this study were exposed to a feedback process that they found fundamentally different from even the most well-intentioned approaches they had experienced in the past. Through their use of the process, they described overcoming some of the disruptive

influences of power, and discovering that when givers and receivers of feedback engage together in inquiry, both learn and the learning is often unexpected.

Recommendations

General Recommendation

To all of us who engage in feedback, whether formal with subordinates or informal in our families, I recommend that we ask ourselves whether our offer of feedback is truly designed to serve the needs of the person on the receiving end. As I listened to experienced faculty reflect on their own long-practiced approaches to feedback and question what their deeper motives or agenda were behind seemingly helpful offers of advice and opinion, I was humbled by their honesty and troubled as I examined these questions for myself.

In a recent opinion piece in *The New York Times*, David Brooks (2019) argued that our culture is struggling with the “lack of healthy connection to each other, our inability to see the full dignity of each other, and the resulting culture of fear, distrust, tribalism, shaming and strife”. In identifying ways to address this, Brooks quoted an afterschool program director about the mindset that drives her program: “We don’t do things for people. We don’t do things to people. We do things with people.”

The parallel between those quotes and the difference between how participants in this study described past experiences with feedback being done *to* them compared to their IBF experiences of feedback done *with* them stood out to me. So, my general recommendation is to engage more in feedback *with* people and less in feedback *to* people.

Specific Recommendations

The findings of this study allow/ed the researcher to offer a set of recommendations to three groups: teacher-education institutions, administrators who supervise teachers, and human resources (HR) departments and professionals. The researcher also identified four opportunities for future research as a result of this study.

Recommendations for institutions of higher education teacher-education programs.

Encourage the exploration of IBF and similar approaches for engaging in feedback.

Anonymous student feedback at the end of a semester is often an excellent example of feedback that does not improve performance but can be emotionally challenging and professionally demotivating. Encourage faculty to see themselves as artists of the learning experiences they create, and to gather feedback from students on the student experience of the faculty member's class by using an IBF-style approach focused on shared inquiry.

Recommendations for administrators who supervise teachers.

Administrators are often distant from their own classroom experience and the cultural and classroom experiences of the teachers they supervise. Developing the shared inquiry skills found in IBF could create an engaging dialogue out of a teacher supervision task that is often dreaded by both parties.

Ask teachers what they would like you to observe for, and what in their classroom they would like to better understand and for which a second set of eyes would be

welcome. Have this conversation before the visit. Then let them guide the follow-up conversation.

Recommendations for HR departments on performance reviews and those responsible for performance evaluations.

For most positions that are complex and require a broad range of skills to enact, discontinue annual performance evaluations or base them only on objective, measurable data such as days missed, hours billed, and so on. Performance evaluations are, by name, evaluative. Evaluation is the making of a judgment about value—in this case, the value of a person. Such evaluation or perceived evaluation is at the heart of performance-lowering feedback experiences. Further complicating this, employees are often asked to self-evaluate, a challenging political exercise in itself, given the power structure involved and the highly individual way in which different members of management are likely to judge such self-evaluation.

Train management in the challenging skill of asking neutral questions with a goal of understanding performance from the perspective and intentions of the performers, and with the authentic goal of serving their needs. Feedback in this form should be ongoing, forming a dialogue between supervisor and supervisee. Much has been written about the value of being non-judgmental, but there is little in the way of supporting someone in learning such a complicated, non-intuitive skill. In this study, well educated and experienced faculty still struggled with learning how to craft neutral questions and discovered their own unconscious assumptions in the process. They also described having learned to do this as one of the most important aspects of their experience with IBF.

Recommendations for Further Study

Based on the limited sample size of this study, the researcher recommends a larger study sample be conducted to validate the findings that were identified in this study.

Ethan Allen College is a small private school and the Master of Arts in Teaching program examined was explicitly engaged in an experiential learning approach that willingly experimented with IBF as a new approach to feedback. There is an opportunity to look at a larger program and a program less explicitly experiential to see if the findings were consistent.

Lastly, the IBF protocol consists of four separate steps. It is not known to what degree each of the steps affects feedback dynamics. Two steps in particular stood out in this study as topics for further study: step two, in which the teacher who has just taught asks participants and observers questions about their experience in or observation of the class; and step three, in which the participants or observers ask neutral questions of the teacher.

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Appendix A

Interview Protocol

Each research question is bolded, with the related interview questions numbered below:

How do teachers, trained in IBF, describe their experience of learning this alternative approach?

1. Tell me about your initial reaction when you first encountered IBF?
2. What were your concerns or reservations about IBF?
3. What was most challenging for you initially in participating in IBF?
4. As you got used to participating in IBF, what did you notice about how it felt to be the recipient of feedback in this model?
5. As you got used to participating in IBF, what did you notice about how it felt to be the giver of feedback in this model?
6. Did you serve as a facilitator, and if so what did you notice about how it felt to facilitate this model?

In what ways do participants perceive IBF to be useful in ways different from other approaches to giving and receiving feedback?

7. How were your experiences of IBF different from other experiences of giving or receiving feedback?
8. What advantages or disadvantages do you see to using IBF?
9. What would lead you to use or avoid IBF as an approach to feedback?

How do participants describe the impact of having learned IBF on their practice?

10. In what ways has having learned IBF influenced your own approach to giving and receiving feedback?
11. If you have incorporated IBF or elements of it into your approach to feedback, what challenges or barriers have you found to using IBF in your own practice?
12. Are there other ways that having experienced IBF has influenced you as a teacher?

Appendix B

Informed Consent

Protocol Title: INQUIRY-BASED FEEDBACK AND TEACHER LEARNING

Interview Consent

Principal Investigator: Sean Conley, (802) 380-8213, spc2126@tc.columbia.edu

INTRODUCTION

You are being invited to participate in this research study called “Inquiry-based Feedback and Teacher Learning.” You may qualify to take part in this research study because you participated as either a faculty member or a student-teacher in an MA in Teaching program that used an Inquiry-based approach to feedback throughout the delivery of the program.

Approximately 12 people will participate in this study and it will take 90 minutes of your time to complete.

WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?

This study is being done to determine, with 6 teachers and 6 faculty members, all of whom were trained in IBF, their perceptions of the benefits and uses of this approach in their teaching practice in general and in their approach to giving and receiving feedback in particular.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO IF I AGREE TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

If you decide to participate, you will be interviewed by Sean Conley, the principal investigator. During the interview you will be asked to discuss your graduate education

experience and your experience as a classroom teacher, in particular in regard to your experience and use of IBF.

This interview will be audio-recorded. After the audio-recording is written down (transcribed) the audio-recording will be deleted. If you do not wish to be audio-recorded, you will still be able to participate. In this case the interviewer will rely only on the notes taken during the interview. The interview will take approximately 90 minutes. You will be given a pseudonym or false name in order to keep your identity confidential. In addition, the program you studied in and school where you studied will also be given pseudonyms.

This interview will be done at a time that is convenient to you using the Google Hangout video conference tool.

In addition, if you are a student who has completed their final portfolio document for graduation from the Master of Arts in Teaching program, you are asked for your permission to read that portfolio in order to gather additional evidence of the role of IBF in your experience as a student and your thinking as a teacher.

WHAT POSSIBLE RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

This is a minimal risk study, which means the harms or discomforts that you may experience are not greater than you would ordinarily encounter in daily life while taking routine physical or psychological examinations or tests. However, there are some risks to consider. You might feel embarrassed to discuss problems that you experienced in graduate school or while working in your school. However, you do not have to answer

any questions or divulge anything you don't want to talk about. You can stop participating in the study at any time without penalty.

The principal investigator is taking precautions to keep your information confidential and prevent anyone from discovering or guessing your identity, such as using a pseudonym instead of your name and keeping all information on a password protected computer and locked in a file drawer.

WHAT POSSIBLE BENEFITS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

There is no direct benefit to you for participating in this study. Participation may benefit the field of teacher education to better understand the best way to train language teachers.

WILL I BE PAID FOR BEING IN THIS STUDY?

You will not be paid to participate. There are no costs to you for taking part in this study.

WHEN IS THE STUDY OVER? CAN I LEAVE THE STUDY BEFORE IT ENDS?

The study is over when you have completed the interview. However, you can leave the study at any time even if you haven't finished.

PROTECTION OF YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY

The investigator will keep all written materials locked in a desk drawer in a locked office. Any electronic or digital information (including audio recordings) will be stored on a computer that is password protected. What is on the audio-recording will be written down and the audio-recording will then be destroyed. There will be no record matching your real name with your pseudonym.

For quality assurance, the study team, the study sponsor (grant agency), and/or members of the Teachers College Institutional Review Board (IRB) may review the data collected from you as part of this study. Otherwise, all information obtained from your participation in this study will be held strictly confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by U.S. or State law.

HOW WILL THE RESULTS BE USED?

The results of this study may be published in journals and presented at academic conferences. Your identity will be removed from any data you provide before publication or use for educational purposes. This study is being conducted as part of the dissertation of the principal investigator.

CONSENT FOR AUDIO AND OR VIDEO RECORDING

Audio recording is part of this research study. You can choose whether to give permission to be recorded. If you decide that you don't wish to be recorded, you will still be able to participate in this research study.

_____ I give my consent to be recorded

Signature

_____ I do not consent to be recorded

Signature

WHO MAY VIEW MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY

___I consent to allow written materials viewed at an educational setting or at a conference outside of Teachers College

Signature

___I do not consent to allow written materials viewed outside of Teachers College
Columbia University

Signature

OPTIONAL CONSENT FOR FUTURE CONTACT

The investigator may wish to contact you in the future. Please initial the appropriate statements to indicate whether or not you give permission for future contact.

I give permission to be contacted in the future for research purposes:

Yes _____ No _____

Initial _____ Initial _____

I give permission to be contacted in the future for information relating to this study:

Yes _____ No _____

Initial _____ Initial _____

WHO CAN ANSWER MY QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS STUDY?

If you have any questions about taking part in this research study, you should contact the principal investigator, Sean Conley, at 802-380-8213 or at

spc2126@tc.columbia.edu. You can also contact the faculty advisor, Dr. Volpe at 201-952-8485

If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you should contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (the human research ethics committee) at 212-678-4105 or email IRB@tc.edu. Or you can write to the IRB at Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 W. 120th Street, New York, NY 1002. The IRB is the committee that oversees human research protection for Teachers College, Columbia University.

Appendix C

Participants' Rights

Teachers College, Columbia University
525 West 120th Street
New York NY 10027
212 678 3000
www.tc.edu

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS

I have read and discussed the informed consent with the researcher. I have had ample opportunity to ask questions about the purposes, procedures, risks and benefits regarding this research study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw participation at any time without penalty to future student status, grades or services that I would otherwise receive.

The researcher may withdraw me from the research at his or her professional discretion.

If, during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available which may relate to my willingness to continue my participation, the investigator will provide this information to me.

Any information derived from the research study that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.

Your data will not be used in further research studies.

I should receive a copy of the Informed Consent document.

My signature means that I agree to participate in this study

Print name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Investigator's Verification of Explanation

I, Sean Conley, certify that I have carefully explained the purpose and nature of this research to _____ (participant's name). S/he has had the opportunity to discuss it with me in detail. I have answered all his/her questions and s/he provided the affirmative agreement (i.e. assent) to participate in this research.

Investigator's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D

Demographic Inventory

The information collected from this questionnaire is completely confidential and will only be used for the purposes of this research study.

Demographic Information

1. Gender:

2. Age: please indicate range (check one):

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25-30 | <input type="checkbox"/> 31-35 | <input type="checkbox"/> 36-40 | <input type="checkbox"/> 41-45 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 46-50 | <input type="checkbox"/> 51-55 | <input type="checkbox"/> 56-60 | <input type="checkbox"/> 61-65 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Over 65 | | | |

3. Nationality: _____

4. With which of the following races do you identify? (Check all that apply)

- | | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> African American | <input type="checkbox"/> Native American | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian | <input type="checkbox"/> Pacific Islander |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Latino | <input type="checkbox"/> White | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |

5. Education: Please list degrees and disciplines below:

(For example: BA in History, MA in Education)

6. Teaching: list the years, kinds of institutions, and kinds of students that you've worked with:

(For example: 2010-2015, U.S. Public High School, 11th and 12th grade ESL students. 2016 to present, Refugee Resettlement Agency, Adult ESL learners)

List any related professional work at the time of your participation in the MAT program.

Appendix E

Conceptual Framework

Experience of learning IBF

Weird, different, unlike anything I'd experienced before.

Confusing, expectation of looking for my mistakes, not for something productive or positive, at first I was confused.

Surprising. Expected "Feedback" to be focused on something negative for me. You feel that it's not a grade but that someone is invested in you becoming a better teacher. You feel safe, with the sense that people are actually out to help you.

Surprising. Expect "Feedback" to mean "evaluation."

I could hear people better. I didn't become defensive and shut down.

I was attracted by the focus on curiosity. This approach is about being really curious about what someone was thinking or intending when they did something—why they made the decisions they made.

It feels like a "two-way" conversation in which everyone is engaged.

I struggled to identify a neutral questions. I realized that I'm checking to see if it's really my opinion, so it's my learning as well but in service to the learning of the teacher getting feedback.

The structure of this process feels confining at first.

I had to let go of offering my opinions, which I realized were really judgments.

I realized that this is doing feedback WITH someone not TO someone.

Normally when I teach a lesson and I know it went badly I am already expecting to have to hear all about how it went badly—I already know that! This is different.

IBF Differentiators

I'm used to supervisors looking for my mistakes, not for something productive or positive.

Unlike other approaches, I actually learned something from the feedback.

This approach wasn't about making me feel bad.

I'm used to supervisors looking for my mistakes, not for something productive or positive.

It starts with the teachers ideas and builds from there.

"Feedback" has always been associated with something negative for me. This is different. I really look forward to it.

Unlike what I'm used to, this is not a grade. It's people invested in you becoming a better teacher.

You feel safe, with the sense that people are actually out to help you.

"Feed back" usually means "evaluation" in my experience. I had to actually experience this to understand it, but after that I was on board.

Actually I could hear people better. I didn't become defensive and shut down.

This is not about evaluation, it's about being really curious about what someone was thinking or intending when they did something.

This approach requires that I really ground my feedback in curiosity. This has really changed my approach and attitude and it's been very helpful, especially with nervous teachers.

This approach engages everyone in thinking and asking questions instead of showing what they know and what they thought was good or bad.

This approach stays focused on the teacher's learning, not the supervisors evaluation.

This doesn't focus on what the teacher might already feel bad about. It focuses on what the thinking was and how it might change.

Impact on Practice

I learned is that perfection is impossible. Instead I have learned to be open to possibility and change rather than seeking perfection. I'm dynamic rather than static.

It's built my curiosity. I start now with questions rather than answers.

I've learned to focus on the teacher's understanding rather than my understanding, and to start from there.

I've learned the importance of feeling safe and how to help create an environment that feels safe.

When people feel safe they can hear what I'm saying. When they're defensive they can't.

I feel like this process is so safe that I feel really open to learning.

Now I really try to ground my feedback in curiosity.

This has really changed my approach and attitude and it's been very helpful, especially with nervous teachers.

I try to make sure feedback is an engaging experience—a two-way street.

It looks like it's centered on the teacher receiving feedback, but it's not. It's really centered on the teachers learning. I think the feeling of safety comes from this.

I realized, through the structure of this process, that most of the time when we're giving "feedback" we're really offering judgements. Now I focus on doing it WITH someone not TO someone.

Appendix F

Distribution Table Finding #1

Distribution Chart– Finding #1

RQ1–How do participants, trained in IBF, describe their experience of learning this alternative approach? (N = 10)

Description of learning the process				
Participants	The process was new and unexpected, The individual steps of the process were important	Scepticism or concern about the feedback needed getting presented	Promoted a feeling of safety in receiving feedback.	Found the protocol complicated to learn to facilitate
Barbara	X	X		X
Bellona	X	X	X	X
Balen	X	X		
Gamal	X		X	
Jake	X	X		
Loles	X		X	
Miska	X	X		
Naamah	X			
Nacio	X			
Satchiko	X	X	X	X
Total	10	7	4	3
%	100%	70%	40%	30%

MAJOR FINDING: All participants (100%) described learning the process as something very new and unexpected, and that the individual steps in the protocol were important

Appendix G

Distribution Table Finding #2

Distribution Chart– Finding #2

RQ2–In what ways do participants perceive IBF to be useful in ways different from other approaches to giving and receiving feedback? (N = 10)

Description of how the process was different				
Participants	A positive shift of power to the learner	Encourages and supports inquiry and curiosity rather than evaluation	Non-judgmental	Fostered curiosity
Barbara	X	X	X	X
Bellona	X	X	X	
Balen	X	X		
Gamal	X	X		X
Jake	X	X	X	X
Loles	X	X		X
Miska	X	X		X
Naamah			X	
Nacio	X		X	X
Satchiko	X	X	X	
Total	9	8	6	6
%	90%	80%	60%	60%

MAJOR FINDING: All participants (100%) described the process as one that shifted power or control to the recipient in the feedback exchange, and found this shift as a positive.

Appendix H

Distribution Table Finding #3

Distribution Chart– Finding #3

RQ3–How do participants describe the impact of having learned IBF on their practice?

(N = 10)

Description of impact on teaching practice			
Participants	Changed my approach to giving feedback	Increased focus on inquiry or curiosity	Awareness of the role of IBF in fostering a sense of safety
Barbara	X	X	X
Bellona	X	X	
Balen	X	X	X
Gamal	X		X
Jake	X	X	X
Loles	X	X	
Miska	X	X	
Naamah	X		
Nacio	X	X	X
Satchiko	X	X	X
Total	10	8	6
%	100%	80%	60%

MAJOR FINDING: All participants (100%) described a significant change in their perspective on the role they play in and their purpose for giving and receiving feedback.

Appendix I

Responses to the Shift of Power From Feedback Giver to Receiver

Response to the shift of power from feedback giver to receiver		
Category	Name	Comments
Instant Converts Appreciated how the shift of structure changed the feedback experience.	Mishka	For Mishka, empowering teachers makes the feedback more relevant. “It [IBF empowers teachers to really guide their own learning, and that’s huge.... I feel like it’s got a lot more space to start wherever the teacher is and where all the participants are, as opposed to let’s say, ‘okay, let’s describe a key moment.’ You know, it’s like [what if] I don’t want to fucking talk about that?”
	Bellona	Bellona addressed her concern about unequal power in feedback situations. “One of the things that I have really valued about CRP [is] it suits my desire for things to be on a more level playing field. This was about people relating as people as opposed to there being a hierarchy in this, a power differential. That, as a teacher, [you] could be in control of the feedback was, really resonated for me. It’s very powerful.”
	Loles	Loles experienced a shift in power and responsibility. “[In] CRP I feel like this was more, like, level I wasn’t over anybody and nobody was over anybody at all.... That’s such a change of both the feeling of responsibility as the teacher but also the position of power. That you’re opening up both <i>both</i> of those and then collaborating. They [teachers] look forward to the feedback session and they bring their questions and they have their questions [about] what they really want to know about their classes.”
	Nacio	For Nacio, empowering the feedback recipient lets them focus on what’s productive for them. “For the teacher to be able to ask questions...I feel like that’s very empowering, because sometimes you teach a class and one part of the class sucked and...everybody’s [going to] come after you because of that part...but what about this other topic that I’m interested in? That’s the teacher...taking control of the boat a little bit and steering the boat in a certain direction that feels productive for them.”

<p>Intrigued Skeptics</p> <p>See advantages in shifting the power structure of a feedback encounter, but had/have some concerns.</p>	Barbara	Barbara was coming to trust in empowering the learner. “So coming to CRP, what was different was the fact that the student was leading the process, and I wasn’t.... Do I know that it’s going to get us where we need to get?... I’m learning to trust. What they’re going to take from that [the feedback] is entirely up to them and I can’t control that. I think supervisors always think that we do control it but we don’t, [I’m] coming to sit comfortably with that.”
	Balen	Balen found that the shift in power results in different outcomes. “One of the things [I was] wondering was well, how do they get what they need? [But in] using the process, just through the process, if something that I thought was really interesting or was important didn’t come out, there were other things that I feel are equally important that did come out.”
	Jake	Jake adapted CRP but kept the power shift. “The genius is a sequence of feedback that switches around the power dynamics....[but] I think being an artist and being a teacher are very different things...[and] there was a kind of ritualism in CRP which I personally found off-putting.... To come to terms with that and sort of distill down the essence of it that I think is really valuable and do it in a way that feels just very kind of common-sense.”
	Sachiko	Sachiko experienced a tension between handing over power and the need to meet standards. “They get to focus on what they feel they want to focus on and I think there’s a sense of security that goes with that, right? if they know that they’re in control... [but] I have an internal tension because I work in K-12, I have to think about what are the state standards? If they don’t meet state standards they can’t get their certification.”
<p>Willing Participants</p> <p>The affective nature of power shift was important</p>	Gamal	For Gamal, the power shift in the structure was supportive. “Participating in it I see what we’re doing each step, you know, it’s like each step as a very clear purpose and I [could] see this step is made to help us cope with feelings that might come up or like, you know cope with the defensiveness.”
	Naamah	Naamah found CRP primarily to be about speaking with respect and kindness. “This idea of a neutral question instead of a critical question. Yes. Yes. Yes! If you’re using a neutral question, that’s a kind of a respectful way, a kind way...”

Appendix J

Responses to Shift of Feedback Process

From Evaluation or Opinion to Shared Inquiry

Response to the shift of feedback process from evaluation or opinion to shared inquiry		
Category	Name	Comments
Instant Converts Find that shifting from giving opinions to engaging in shared inquiry fostered personal reflection and learning.	Mishka	Mishka said that in focusing on inquiry she had to question her own motives. “[CRP] encompasses a whole group of techniques that are more about curiosity, valuing curiosity and the underlying dynamic of a what’s a truly neutral question. Right? So the whole process of figuring out what’s my agenda? [What] am I really trying to accomplish when I say this and then teasing out the curiosity that’s underneath.”
	Bellona	For Bellona, the shift of focus to learner’s questions led to a shift in her beliefs. “I can be as effective as I can be, but people are only going to learn what they want or need to learn or they’re open to learn at any particular time...that core belief I have now [is] that they can frame the questions that they’re ready to ask, that they’re at the point of curiosity about, and then the challenge for me is to honor that.”
	Loles	Loles described a shift from opinions to inquiry in her feedback and a shift from judgement to curiosity in herself. “[I] like this intention of raising curiosity and walking away from judgment and really thinking whether what you’re saying is an opinion. I went from thinking about what helps and hinders to [framing] questions.... I find myself being curious more than judgmental and it really has changed me.”
	Nacio	Nacio learned to pay attention to exploring the ‘why’ behind what he’s offering feedback on. “Within neutral questions, and...the statements of meaning what I feel I have discovered is that people always have a reason why they do what they do and in feedback...sometimes we do not take the time to explore that and I feel that it’s super important because that’s validating.”

<p>Intrigued Skeptics</p> <p>Find the shift from opinion to inquiry opened them to new insights into the teachers they work with.</p>	Barbara	Barbara described new attention to her purpose in offering opinion. “It’s really made me sensitive to judgment and giving opinions. There are many times [now] when I want to say something and think, is this just me wanting to air my opinion? I had to learn to learn to trust the process and...work from what was meaningful for them [students].”
	Balen	For Balen, inquiry is generative and in service to what a feedback receiver is ready for. “I think it’s a generative process, it allows the participants to ask questions and they’re able to hear, and they’re actually able to hear and see and act on things.... [CRP] kind of goes against the grain of normal feedback, which is usually focused on fixing problems.... In the process, what comes out, what needs to come out, will come out.”
	Jake	Jake described inquiry providing new insight. “I started to really understand the process that the teacher went through. It’s really amazing, it helped me [to] see, ‘wow, Jesus you were thinking about all of this stuff.’ [It’s] another level of making the feedback meaningful, connecting with people about why they did what they did. [Instead of] ‘now I’m going to give you feedback on why your task was completely ineffective.’”
	Sachiko	Sachiko found inquiry offers insight into the teachers she works with. “I understand why [sometimes] my comments make no difference, you know. It’s not where [they] were, it’s not what [they’re] working on. So for me, then that’s really a learning experience. It’s through that questioning process [that] you discover, oh, my expertise didn’t actually match with what she was <i>really</i> thinking or doing.”
<p>Willing Participants</p> <p>Find in the inquiry-based approach affective support.</p>	Gamal	Gamal contrasted steeling himself for feedback in the past to the more supportive experience of IBF. “Other times I’ve received criticism I was really having to like try and do the work of stealing myself for it. In [CRP] the process helps, you know, put those feelings in places where they will not be as invasive.”
	Naamah	Naamah found IBF encouraging. “I got really positive feelings when my classmates, my peers gave me feedback that way [IBF]. It really makes it, is a different kind of feelings, like to encourage you.”