

Teachers' Feedback: Influence on First Year Social Studies Students' Motivation towards New Normal Learning in Leyte Normal University



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ABSTRACT: Motivation serves as an integral part of a student's learning process. It is considered as the driving force of students in achieving good quality performances and results from the academic tasks brought by the school as it gives students the opportunity to learn efficiently and effectively. One great factor that could influence students' motivation is through the feedback that teachers give to their students. Teachers' feedback is vital as it lets students adjust to their best learning by reflecting on their progress and strategies. However, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, new normal learning has been implemented which became a great challenge to the teaching and learning process and imposed issues on feedback and motivation. This qualitative research is a descriptive case study which aims to know what feedback teachers provide to students and describe how this feedback influences their motivation to learn in the new educational setting. Results have indicated that teachers' feedback, specifically positive feedback, enhances student motivation to learn in the new normal. On the contrary, when there is a negative or no feedback at all given, students feel demotivated and would resort to self-motivation. These findings suggest that teachers' feedback has a direct influence on students' motivation to learn depending on the quality of the feedback given. With this premise, teachers and the institution must develop effective ways to improve teachers' skills in delivering efficient feedback practices as it would help in enhancing students' academic performance and improves students' motivation to learn.

KEYWORDS: teachers' feedback, student motivation, learning motivation, new normal learning, influence

INTRODUCTION

In the educational process, student motivation is highly regarded as an essential factor in achieving optimal learning in the classroom. When students are highly motivated, their persistence to learn makes them more productive (Hulleman & Hulleman, 2018). One importance of motivation is that it gets students to be involved in academic activities. With motivation, it helps in determining how much learners will be able to learn from the activities that they will be exposed to or perform (Filgona et al., 2020).

Feedback is a crucial part of students' education, which is likewise a key in achieving success in the holistic and later aspect of life. It has been acknowledged to contribute not only to student success but also in their retention at school, especially in the higher education (Edgar et al., 2019) as motivation, according to Borah (2021), is said to be the 'heart of learning,' 'golden road to learning' and 'potent factor in learning'. These positive outcomes make motivation one of the most important elements of a student's learning (Carl Wieman Science Education, 2013).

Nevertheless, students' learning does not rely solely on their personal motivation. Teachers who serve as facilitators of learning in the classroom setting also play an essential role in teaching and learning by providing motivational support through different feedback practices (Schuitema, Peetsma, &

Oort, 2016; Theobald, 2006; Thoonen, Slegers, Peetsma, & Oort, 2011).

In the field of higher education, feedback is seen as a challenging topic even though there is a considerable and expanding corpus of research in higher education contexts on feedback and its worth and efficacy in student learning (Bashir et al., 2016). Teachers' feedback is vital as it lets the students adjust to their best learning by reflecting on their progress and strategies. Giving feedback is an essential ability for professors in higher education since it has a significant impact on the quality of the students' learning experience. Bashir et al., (2016) explained that it has been attempted, using the guidelines offered in the article, to contribute to a widespread recognition of various feedback techniques as key learning aids in higher education. It is apparent that it is past time for lecturers to reconsider the feedback process to increase students' learning (Basher et al., 2016).

The technical and interpersonal parts of feedback delivery are both critically important. In terms of technical aspects, this suggests that teachers must acquire some feedback delivery abilities in order to motivate students. Interpersonally, the relationship between

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teachers and students, as well as how students view their teachers, might influence how students interpret feedback (Muho and Roseni, 2012).

The teacher's ability to develop students' competence, interest in the subject taught, and perception of self-efficacy are all important factors that influence students' motivation to learn (Johnson, 2021). Students modify their kind of study motivation type as well as increase self-efficacy because of the help of teaching professionals who provide feedback such as corrective, criterion-related, direct, immediate, and positive feedback (Turda et al., 2021). The drive to learn of the students are also most likely being influenced by teachers who build positive relationships with them (Ferralazzo, 2015). Teachers influence students to learn by giving them positive feedback. This helps them gain competence. Students gain responsibility and control on their own learning and a sense of confidence in their abilities when they receive feedback (Bain, 2004; Ferralazzo, 2015). As feedback affects students' motivation and self-perception in learning, it declines whenever the feedback they receive is inappropriate and inaccurate (Fong, 2014). Although feedback has no extrinsic value, it can produce subjective feelings similar to "rewards" and "punishments." Therefore, feedback can play both an informative and a motivational role (Tricomi & DePasque, 2016).

The study conducted by Mehregan & Seresht (2014) found out that teachers' feedbacking practices is crucial in the improvement of teaching, learning, assessment, and most importantly in learner motivation. When teachers make the most of using feedback within the entire process of teaching and learning, students' motivation can be strengthened in a rather effective way. Also, the study of Muho & Roseni (2012) supports this notion as it shows that the use of feedback during the learning process evidently motivated students to learn. In contrast, the study of Haughney et al. (2020) indicates that some studies such as [Lunt & Curran, 2010; Wilkins et al., 2009] do not bear sufficient evidence to describe how specific feedback in higher education can be linked to having a causal relationship with positive results.

However, with the sudden shift from traditional education to the new normal educational setup brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, students and teachers alike have been physically divided and must adapt with the current educational scheme through remote learning in order to continue students' education. Thus, the lack of direct interaction between the teachers and students became one of the greatest challenges brought by the new normal educational setup (Selveraj et al., 2021).

A lot of researchers in the past have already conducted studies regarding teachers' feedback, students' motivation, and students' academic progress, but there are still issues on this aspect in education that remains to arise as motivation in particular has been overlooked in the national push to improve schools (Usher & Kober, 2012), and feedback, on one hand, has been difficult to accept and incorporate at the students' end (Ghazal et al., 2014). Nielsen (2015) asserts that while there is a considerable amount of research in the field of education that discusses the impact of feedback on student achievement, there is still indeed a lack of evident research that would clearly indicate what the influences of teachers' feedback are to the students' motivation. In fact, the study of Wettergren (2012) included feedback as one of the most important factors alongside a functioning LMS and highquality course materials that motivates student during distance education but determined that such factors are ideally existing to function for students to be motivated, yet do not necessarily and significantly add to their level of motivation. Thus, this setup led to constraints and changes in the entire instruction, specifically on the way teachers deliver and administer the lessons, assessment, and feedback to their learners and how students actively and engagingly approach their learning at the same time. Moreover, motivation is important to investigate in an online course since students are less likely to engage (Kyewski & Krämer, 2018) and high attrition rates raise motivating concerns for instructional designers and teachers in distance education.

With the clear gaps found between and among the previous literatures and studies, the researchers find it relevant to conduct the study on the influence of teachers' feedback to students' motivation to learn in the new normal setting in order to contribute to the already existing knowledge and to address current problems in the educational arena, specifically on the aspects of feedbacking and motivation.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study was aimed to identify the feedback that teachers provide to first year BSED Social Studies students and describe its influences on students' learning motivation in the new normal educational setting. Thus, qualitative type of research was utilized, specifically the descriptive case study design. It is defined by Young (1996) as the "comprehensive study of a social unit – be that unit a person, a social institution, a group, a district, or community" (as cited in Calderon & Gonzales, 2017; Labrague et al., 2022).

According to Yin (2003), a descriptive case study describes a particular intervention or phenomenon and the real-life context in which it occurred. It is best used when the study tries to answer the questions "how" and "why", the behavior of the subject involved cannot be manipulated, and the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clear.

Research Locale

The researchers conducted the study at Leyte Normal University, which is situated in Tacloban City, Philippines. Since the researchers are enrolled in the same university, choosing this as the locale of the study made it more convenient in terms of mobility and accessibility of participants.

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Research Participant

The participants of this study were the first year Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in Social Studies students from Leyte Normal University who are currently enrolled in the Academic Year 2021 - 2022.

Purposive sampling technique was specifically used to select the participants of the study. It is defined as a selective or subjective sampling, indicating a group of sampling techniques that rely on the judgment of the researcher when it comes to selecting the units (Sharma, 2017; Munandar & Sukria, 2021). It is also identified as “the intentional selection of samples which possess certain characteristics or qualities in accordance with the research objectives” (Coyne, 1997; Koerber & McMichael, 2008; Dwee et al., 2016).

The following inclusion criteria were considered in selecting the participants: (1) male or female, (2) Filipino citizen, (3) a first year Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in Social Studies student from Leyte Normal University, (4) enrolled in the Academic Year 2021 – 2022, and (5) willing to participate.

Research Instrument

The qualitative tools utilized to gather the data from the participants were a semi- structured interview guide containing a set of open-ended interview questions based on the major research questions of this study, as well as observations. To ensure validity, the instrument underwent content expert validation wherein some experts in the field were asked to check its accuracy, relevance, and quality prior to its implementation.

A pilot testing was also conducted to the first year Bachelor of Arts in Political Science (BAPOS) students from Leyte Normal University who met the selection criteria of the research participants in order to measure the reliability and feasibility of the study in a small group of participants, as well as to check the comprehensiveness of the questions on the topic and to make some modifications on the breadth and depth of the research instrument used.

Data Collection Method

To collect and gather the data needed for the study, the researchers conducted an in-depth virtual semi- structured interview using the participant's chosen video conferencing platforms, specifically Google Meet and Messenger. Prior to the interview, the participants were asked to affix their signature on the provided informed consent form to signify their willingness to participate in the study. All interviews with the participants were recorded through an external recording software to ensure the accuracy of the responses upon transcribing the oral interview into a written form. A semi-structured interview guide was used in this study to provide “privilege for the researchers to explore particular responses further” (Ray, 2021). The researchers raised some follow-up questions to clarify the participants' responses while observing and taking notes with their setting and behavior during the interview.

Apart from the individual virtual interviews, the researchers also conducted a focus group discussion with all the participants to collect data and test the consistency of their responses. From these interviews and through the responses of the participants, emerging themes were identified.

Data Analysis

This study made use of thematic analysis in analyzing the data gathered from the participants' responses. Thematic analysis is defined as a method for identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting patterns that are found within a given data set (Braun and Clark, 2006, as cited by Nowell et. al., 2017). By using this method, it allows the researchers to examine the different perspectives of each participant, emphasizing and drawing out similarities and differences. Thematic analysis helped in coding the data or text from the participants' responses on the interview and in identifying key words, concepts, ideas, and perceptions from it. It helps in handling data with a well-structured approach and produces organized and clear results by deriving and defining themes from the various codes made on the comprehensive overview of the gathered data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings gathered from the interview transcripts had generated relevant and emerging themes that were in line with the objective of the research. The various identified themes provided in-depth results on teachers' feedback and revealed how these influence students' motivation to learn in the new normal education.

Teachers' Feedback to Students

In the teaching and learning process, teachers are the core pillars in delivering knowledge and quality instructions to their students. But as they supply quality teaching, they are also expected to provide effective and meaningful feedback. The participants of this study identified varied feedback that they usually receive from their teachers during the new normal education. These are *praises*, *words of encouragement*, and *constructive criticisms*.

The feedback that teachers give to their students, either positive or negative, can be brought or constructed in different ways. One way for teachers to give feedback to their students is through conveying praises and words of encouragement. The participants considered these as one of the positive feedback items that their teachers commonly provide whenever a task is completed, or an

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activity is submitted with good output/presentation quality. A common response from the participants is that these praises often include statements such as “*great job!*”, “*keep it up!*”, “*you did well!*”, “*good analysis*”, and “*the content of your outputs is good*”. While words of encouragement include statements like “*you have the potential to be a great speaker*” and “*I would be glad to personally hear you deliver a speech*”.

Such uplifting statements allowed students to feel appreciated, inspired, and validated in class, which in return stimulated their performance. According to Putri (2015); Mahmud and Sofyan (2018); and Lestari et. al. (2021), teachers' support to students in daily classes can be reflected through giving praises, compliments, and encouragement toward their valuable works, and these can trigger students' motivation and interest towards class or group discussion (Díaz-Ducca, 2014). These feedback also allows teachers to create a positive classroom environment where learning and interaction is promoted and encouraged as students are informed about their progress in terms of performance and activities. Bashir et. al (2016) and Shute (2008) both claimed that good feedback practice provides helpful information to students in enhancing their own learning, and teachers can improve students' learning environment by providing feedback in a positive way.

However, criticisms are also an inevitable part of teacher feedback. As teachers evaluate students' outputs or performances, specific comments on the merits and faults of the presentation and/or written works should be evident. Majority of the participants of this study affirmed that some teachers would provide them constructive criticisms at times following the initial feedback of teachers which are in the form of praises. One participant highlighted that teachers' criticism towards their presentation started off with a compliment before finally giving them a heads up on the parts that are deemed necessary to be corrected and improved. On the other hand, the other participant pointed out that the criticism given toward the output was succeeded with advice from the teacher. This means that regardless of the criticisms given, teachers are still able to incorporate significant and suggestive statements indicating the areas that students need to enhance, as well as the measures they have to undertake to ascertain improvement. According to Al-Hattami (2019) and Fong et al. (2016) it is important for teachers to accompany criticisms with suggestions in imparting feedback toward students' work in order to help close the gap between the current and desired students' performance and enhance student learning achievement. Moreover, it is essential for teachers to use the appropriate and right words when delivering criticisms to students, and that they should always be aimed at an observable behavioral performance that is clearly connected to course behavioral objectives (Oermann and Heinrich, 2005). In other words, criticisms should be delivered in a way that would be perceived as constructive.

In this case, the constructive criticisms taken by the participants from their teachers became an instrumentality for them to reflect on their current performance. Instead of taking the constructive criticism the hard way, participants assert that they chose to manifest optimism towards the criticism given by persisting to achieve the desired outcome in the subsequent course tasks/activities. This result could be explained through the study of Fong et. al (2016), which posits that students who possess optimistic views on what constitute constructive criticism endorse a higher level of pleased satisfaction than those who find it disapproving.

Teachers' Manner of Giving Feedback

Verbal and written manners are the common ways participants of this study experienced receiving feedback from their teachers. But since physical interaction between educators and learners are hampered by the presence of the global pandemic, verbal feedback or oral feedback which constitutes spoken comments or suggestions from teachers towards students' oral recitations, presentations, and performances, had to be delivered through video- conferencing platforms such as Google Meet and Zoom instead of personal. Meanwhile, written feedback is often given by teachers not on the submitted output itself, but on the private comment section feature of Google Classroom. However, a common response from the participants showed that most of the comments that teachers posted in the Google Classroom's private comment are often just an acknowledgement of their submission, and not entirely an individual feedback. Furthermore, some participants articulated that oftentimes, rather than receiving detailed written feedback from teachers regarding their written outputs or performance videos submitted in Google Classroom, what they get is just a numerical grade/mark along with the attached rubric.

Teachers' approach upon the delivery of feedback also had varying responses from the participants. All of them described their teacher's way of expressing the feedback, especially those that are verbally stated, as friendly, positive, and well-mannered, which they deem helpful in stimulating their confidence. But while participants described the manner by which teachers give feedback as uplifting and encouraging, others admitted difficulty in understanding and absorbing them, particularly when given in a written manner. One of the participants reasoned that few of the feedback provided by teachers in the Google Classroom, if not composed as criticisms, are given in a tone that is authoritative, which was confusing at her end since it did not clearly provide a comment towards the output nor was there a suggestion for improvement. This result agreed to Agricola et al. (2019), which found out that students who received verbal feedback during the feedback dialogue perceived the quality of feedback, the use of feedback, the quantity and timing of feedback, and the usefulness of feedback to be higher than students who received written feedback.

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Teacher Feedback Opportunities

With the mode of education shifting from traditional to flexible learning, teachers for the most part give feedback to their students depending on the opportunities set forth by the available and preferred educational tools for virtual and distance learning. In this case, participants identified various instances where teacher feedback opportunities are evident and the breadth of time it took for the occurrence to happen.

All the participants shared that opportunities for feedback are more observable during online sessions/classes in Google Meet, where there is highly interaction between them and the teachers. Specifically, these feedback are communicated with them after every recitation, group presentations, live reporting, and group discussions. And since teachers had more opportunities for verbal feedback deliverance, participants acquired them with immediacy, leaving more room for clarifications and elaborations.

In contrary, all participants expressed that opportunities for feedbacking is much less in asynchronous classes (i.e. learning offline) since not only does it not happen real time, but due to the reason that Google Classrooms are almost just a platform for announcements, posting of materials, and submissions of outputs. Nevertheless, and although rare, some participants indicated that feedback opportunities could also be present in Google Classroom and/or in Facebook Messenger, where comments and suggestions regarding written essays, case studies, results of exams, and other accomplished activities are submitted. Nonetheless, participants shared dismally that feedback takes longer time to be given in these specific instances, if there is any, regardless of the deadline of submission of each work because of the time constraints at the teachers' end.

Although feedback opportunities are evident both in synchronous and asynchronous classes, participants of this study revealed that most teachers had never given any comments, suggestions, or points of improvement in any period of teaching and learning, resulting in a lack of feedback. According to Kirschner and Neelen (2018), no feedback from teachers could also mean no learning being received by the students.

Students' Response to Feedback

There are different feedbacks that students gain from their teachers. As feedback can vary among each other, students could react or respond differently. In this case, participants explicitly expressed what they feel about and how they deal with the teachers' feedback.

When participants receive positive feedback from their teachers, they feel good and happy about themselves. It gives them the idea that their efforts in that particular task or performance have been appreciated and that they are validated. It gives them the encouragement they need in order to do well and perform better on the next activities and tasks they will do. Additionally, it also opened the door of opportunities for them to evaluate themselves and to know what aspects they must need to maintain, continue, or change their behavior.

Moreover, when negative feedback is being received by the students, they feel disappointment and sadness among themselves. One participant feels unmotivated which also causes a decline in one's self-esteem. This then leads to doubting one's capabilities as they think that they have not done their best. Another participant, although not entirely affected when the feedback given is negative, somehow longs to encounter teachers who would give wholesome feedback despite not being completely impressed with the output they have submitted.

In contrast, out of all the participants, one of them does not feel sad or dissatisfied when receiving negative feedback. He would only get shocked because he thinks and assumes that his submitted works are already substantive and good enough to deserve positive feedback from teachers.

Students want to receive feedback from their teachers even when it's negative or positive to know what areas they should improve. However, there are times where there is no feedback at all that is being given by their teachers. With this, students feel like their own effort, time, and the sacrifices that they have invested are not acknowledged or were taken for granted by their teachers. They seek validation as it helps them to do good in the future activities. However, one participant does not mind if there is no feedback being received as long as his final rating justified the efforts he had given in the activity. Nevertheless, it would be deeply appreciated by them if there is teachers' feedback.

Although feedback could come in different forms and sometimes approached negatively, participants ensure that they deal with the feedback in a way that it will become a means for them to boost and motivate themselves to strive harder and perform better on the next activities.

Teachers' Feedback Influences on Student Motivation

One of the important aspects that influences student motivation in learning is the feedback they receive from their teachers. These feedbacks are a way for learners to know what things they need to adjust, do, and improve to continue learning.

In this study, participants disclosed that feedback affects them both positively and negatively. With the presence of feedback, they become aware of themselves academically as their performance in class is evaluated. It increases their eagerness to learn and on what other things they should look forward to in class. One participant added that it makes him crave for good grades, good performance and do things with excellence, which also affects his own confidence towards learning and education. One participant

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also pointed out that depending on the feedback given, her social and mental health is likewise affected on top of her motivation. In the new normal learning context, teachers' feedback has become one of the avenues for learners to keep being motivated in this time of crisis. These feedbacks from teachers influences the motivation of the students as it gives them confidence to learn and helps them to attain self-awareness and adjust to the implemented learning scheme despite the challenges that is being brought by the pandemic in education. With positive feedback given, most participants become motivated as the latter becomes their driving force. It pushes them to perform better in class and improve their skills and acquisition of knowledge. This can be backed up by the metaanalysis study of Deci et al. (1999) which found out that positive feedback enhances intrinsic motivation among college students as well as their interest and persistence. Similarly, Kannappan et al. (2012) stated that students' desire to learn were improved as they received positive feedback. Contrastingly, negative feedback from teachers influences the participants in a way that it slightly decreases their motivation to learn. This can be supported by Fong (2014) which examined the effect of negative feedback on motivation and revealed that it decreases students' intrinsic motivation and perceived competence compared to positive feedback.

Despite the findings pointing out that the majority of the participants' responses imply an increase in learning motivation when there is a quality and positive feedback from teachers and consequently, a reduction to their level of motivation when negative feedback are rather given, there is a distinct response that provides a difference in result. One of the participants elaborated that regardless of whether there is a positive, negative, or no feedback at all from teachers, his motivation to learn in the new normal set up remained the same, which could be inferred that teachers' feedback have no direct influence to the participant's level of learning motivation. This could be explained through the responses of the participants indicating that their motivation is not solely dependent on the feedback provided by teachers, but also on some underlying factors which mainly include their support systems, aspirations, and goals in life.

CONCLUSIONS

It is safe to infer that while teachers could provide participants with positive feedback such as praises, words of encouragement, and constructive criticisms, there is evidence of failure on the teachers part in terms of consistency, quality, and timing of the feedback. This is due to the reason that even when opportunities for feedback are present, feedback from teachers would usually come at a delay, especially towards written outputs. However, it must be recognized that the results have also proven the significance of feedback on students' learning motivation. Students who received positive feedback from teachers manifested an increase in motivation, while those who received negative feedback expressed that there is a reduction of learning motivation. The varying response from one participant on the lack of influence of both positive and negative feedback on his learning motivation illustrates how ineffective the feedback was. Finally, clear evidence on the lack of feedback from teachers also poses a challenge on students' end.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results and findings of this study, the following recommendations are drawn:

1. Policy - makers and administrators should formulate relevant rules and regulations that would guide in improving the educational system in the country. There should be an implementation of new and enhanced policies and programs that would provide teachers with appropriate training and seminars that promote, encourage, and equip them with the ability to deliver not only quality teaching but also effective feedback, helping students become more motivated and academically progressive.
2. There should be a more definite description on the scope of responsibilities of teachers. Since the findings pose a time constraint as a challenge to teachers in terms of feedback opportunities, it is only deemed essential to unload the unnecessary responsibilities shouldered by teachers, so that they would have enough time to evaluate students' works and provide them feedback.
3. The institution should educate teachers about the lapses in terms of feedback deliverance to students and encourage them to continue cultivating a learning environment that will be most beneficial to students. Sufficient support should be given, so teachers can have more opportunities for growth.
4. Teachers should acknowledge that there is an existing problem. Similarly, they should improve and/or modify their current feedbacking practices and strategies to help increase students' motivation to learn despite huge adjustments in the structure of teaching and learning. They must continue seeking professional growth.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to express their heartfelt gratitude to the following:

The selected first year BSED Social Studies Major students who willingly and voluntarily participated in the conduct and fulfillment of this study.

Prof. Ryan G. Destura, Leyte Normal University's Social Sciences Unit Chair, for providing extensive guidance, knowledge, and encouragement which all helped in the success of this study.

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Ms. Michelle Torreros, the research adviser, for her time, undying support, and active involvement from beginning to the end of this research process.

To the authors' beloved parents for the strength and financial support they have given.

Above all, the researchers are eternally grateful to the Great Almighty, the author of wisdom and knowledge, for the ceaseless strength, courage, and love He has bestowed.

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