Empowering agency through learner-orchestrated self-generated feedback

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Wood and Pitt, 2024 (forthcoming)

Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education<onbehalfof@manuscriptcentral.com>
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04-Jun-2024

Dear Dr Wood:

Ref: Empowering agency through learner orchestrated self-generated feedback.

Thank you for your revised paper which I am pleased to accept.

Please could you now send me a complete – i.e. including title page, author and contact details, details of any references to your own publications – and clean (no coloured text, underlining or track changes) copy of the final version of your article.

Backdrop of Increasing workload in HE

https://twitter.com/RikiScanlan/status/1531467721057001473

Jennifer Park
@Jen_iferPark

Replying to @Dr_JamesWood and @AheConference

20 mins for 5000 words. Should provide constructive and individual fb by tasks. And add marks on the spreadsheet by each task. All in 20mins....We are super human! 💪

1:13 AM · Jun 2, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

Riki Scanlan

A big claim! You should assert this in your introduction, since it's a key part of your thesis statement.

Note: I am allocated 27 minutes to mark a 2000 word paper according to the marking schedule of the University of Sydney. I have at this point hit my allocated time, and subsequent comments are therefore unpaid by the University.

Reply

Formative assessment failure:
50% of MA students didn't check feedback on assignment 1 before doing assignment 2

Paper ID	Uploaded	Viewed	Grade	Similarity	Flags	Options
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Recent integrity problems in the HE sector:

A wide gap between the knowledge and abilities of the candidates and the academic standards being upheld

Students joining courses without skills/concepts needed

Students not eligible for visas that cover pre-sessional courses

Attempts to learn – initially performative – use of AI for knowledge & references – to contract cheating.

Rising to the challenge of feedback and integrity in modern higher Education

Feedback and feedback literacy

- Developments over past decade in response to problem of **'feedback graveyards'** (Price, Handley & Millar; Evans, 2013) and digital feedback graveyards (Winstone et al. 2020).

- Feedback literacy (Carless & Boud, 2018; Boud & Dawson, 2021): focus on **'enabling uptake of feedback'**

- Students positioned as proactive in a dialogic feedback process but dependent on others' feedback

- Results in bottlenecks in the learning process & unsustainable for workload

(Background from Naomi Winstone)

Shifting conceptualisations of feedback

Focal shift from teacher action – to centrality of student in feedback process

From: 'enabling uptake of feedback' (Carless & Boud, 2018).

To Self-generated (inner) feedback: Students acquire information from a variety of resources & compare to own knowledge or completed work (Nicol, 2020; Ajjawi et al. 2023).

Feedback: iterative meaning-making process: students self-generate, or are exposed to relevant information (Jensen, Bearman, & Boud, 2022)

New definition of Feedback literacy: capacities & dispositions to **generate**, **seek** & **use** feedback (Leenknecht & Carless, 2023)
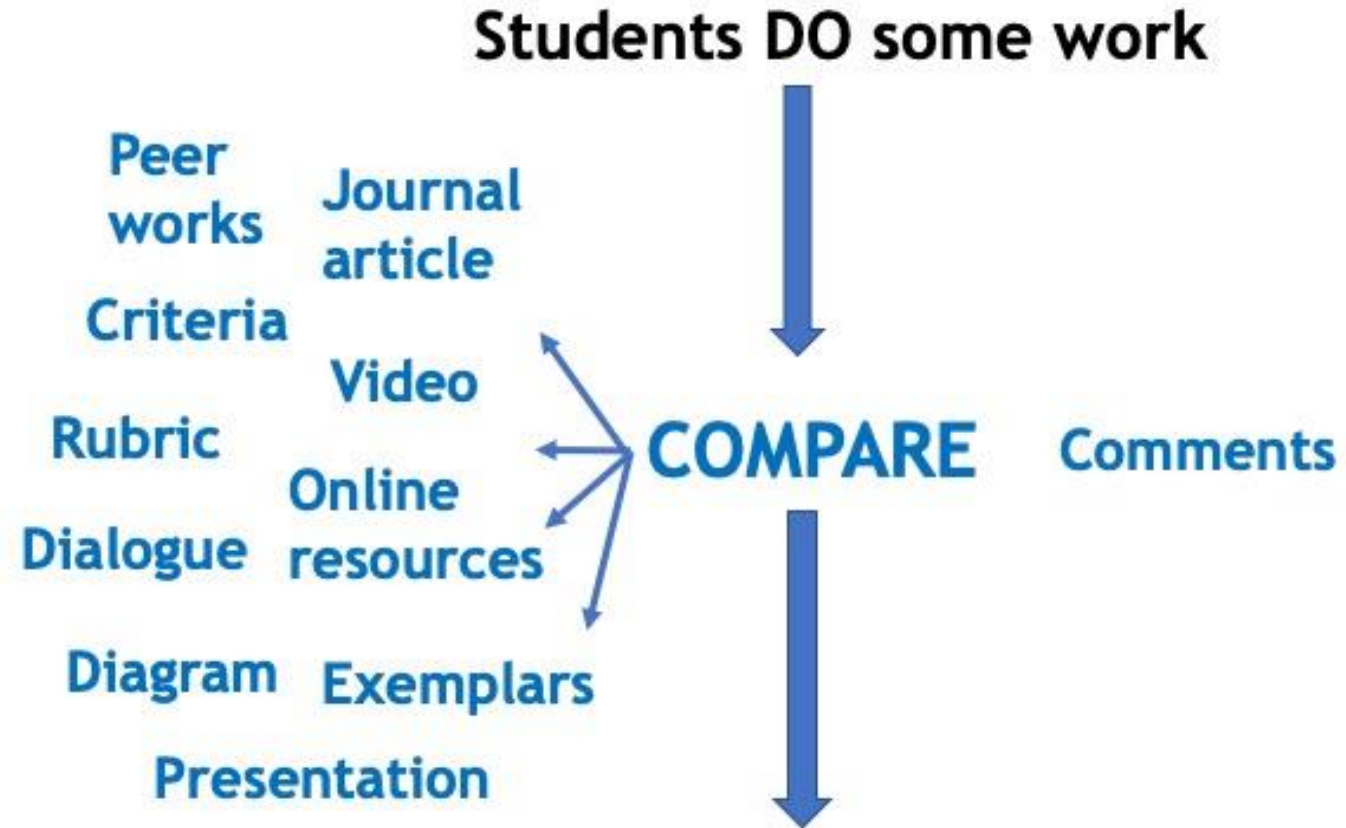
Concept of teacher feedback literacies also shift.

Provocation for academic integrity minded colleagues:

Are agentic learners capable of self-orchestrating learning from self-generated feedback as part of holistic AFL – more or less likely to cheat?

New Feedback Thinking

Students DO some work

Peer works
Journal article
Criteria
Video
Rubric
Online
Dialogue resources

COMPARE   Comments

Diagram Exemplars

Presentation

Write down or discuss what they learn

David Nicol's (2021) work on inner feedback

Have an opportunity to apply inner feedback/self-assessment to work before hand in

Harnessing student orchestrated self-generated feedback for sustainable AFL

- Self-generated (inner) feedback: Students acquire information from a variety of resources & compare to own knowledge or completed work (Nicol, 2020; Ajjawi et al. 2023).

- Nicol claims teacher instructions 'key' to 'having' learners produce their own feedback.

- However: students already learn from self-generated feedback (Jensen et al. 2023) - 31% of feedback encounters traditional vs 50% elicited

- **More frequent** & higher **in learner control** and **relevance** than 'formal' feedback opportunity (Jensen et al. 2023).

- How can we harness this?

Harnessing the power of self-orchestrated learning from self-generated feedback

Role of technology: workload sustainable access to an expanded range of level-appropriate comparators. Students compare their work and understanding against '**any other information…in the learning environment** that will them achieve those **goals'** (Nicol and Selvaretnam, 2021, 2).

This study looked at: '**Open access'** to **peers developing work**, **peers' teacher feedback**, and **dialogic peer feedback community** (Wood, 2022) **Students self-orchestrate** their learning from self-generated feedback (Wood and Pitt, 2024 forthcoming) engaging their reflective agency (Nieminen and Yang, 2023).

Gap and contribution

- Previous work on self-generated/inner feedback has relied on **teacher orchestration** of learning through comparison i.e. '**having them** produce their own feedback' (Nicol & Kushwah, 2023) denying them a **critical aspect of agency to determine own learning** (cost-benefit analysis)

- no studies have **qualitatively explored** workload and budget sustainable **self-orchestrated** learning from comparison processes focused on **learner agency to engage or not engage** as savy individuals who make reflective cost-value calculations (Race 2019).

Research questions:

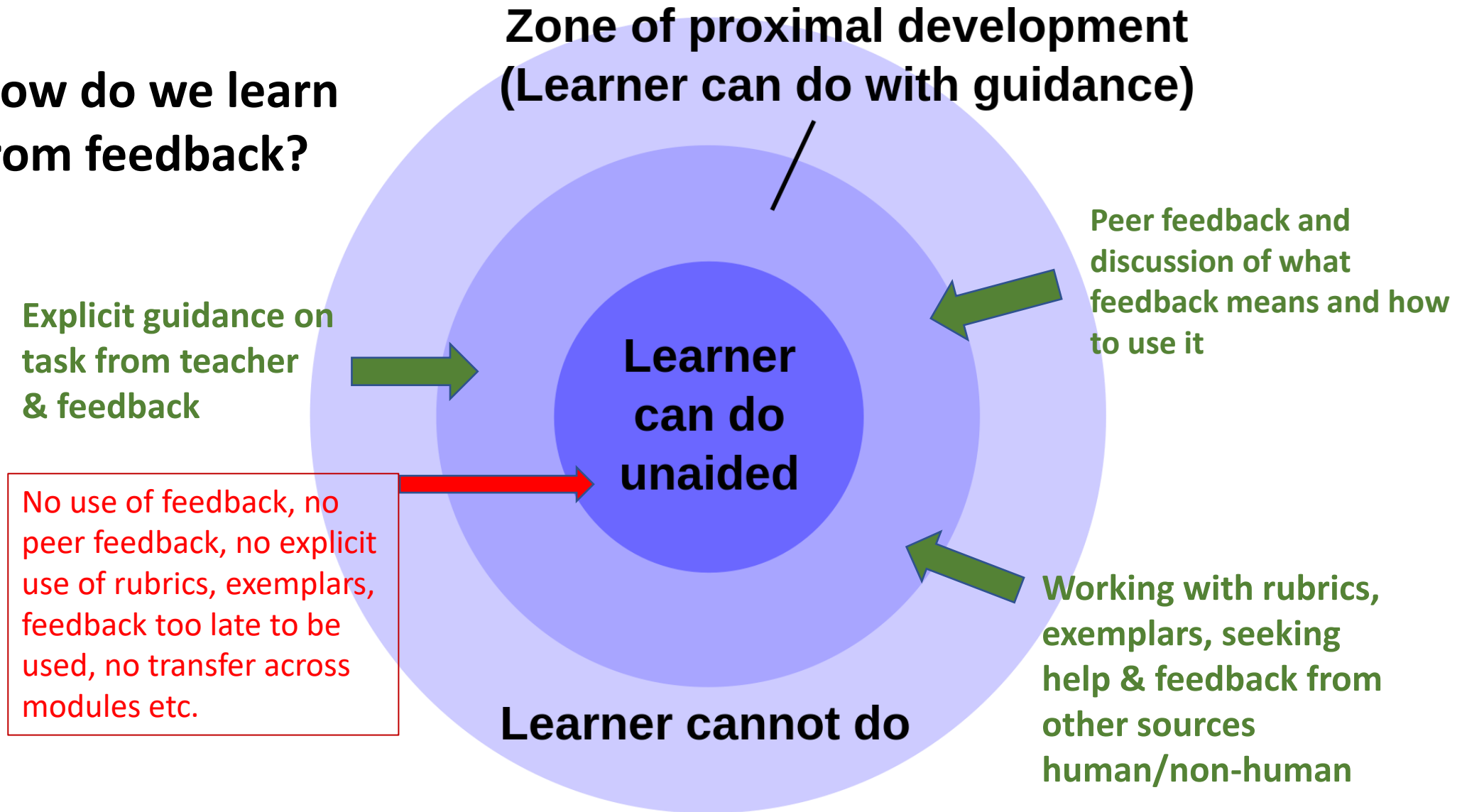**How did learners account for the experience of learning within an open feedback environment?**

i.e. (did they use peers' work? Peers' teacher feedback? How?)
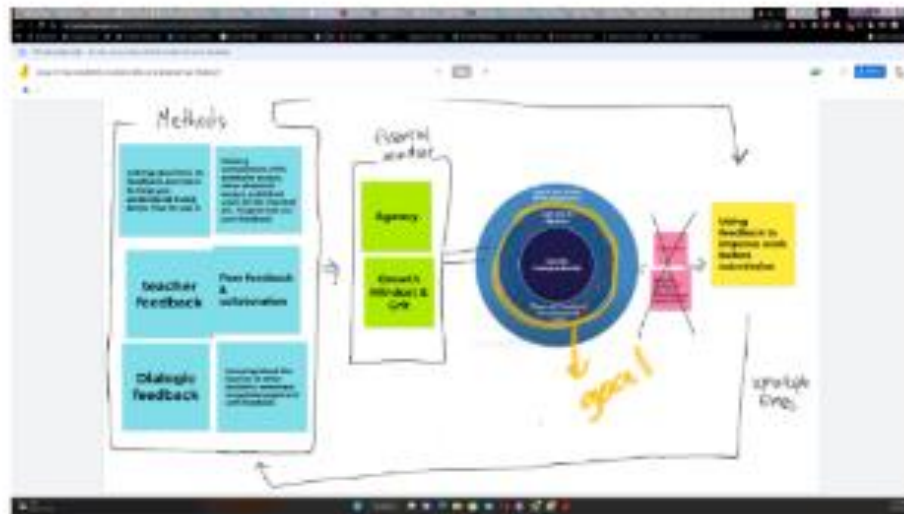
How do we learn from feedback?

Zone of proximal development (Learner can do with guidance)

Learner can do unaided

Learner cannot do

Explicit guidance on task from teacher & feedback

Peer feedback and discussion of what feedback means and how to use it

Working with rubrics, exemplars, seeking help & feedback from other sources human/non-human

No use of feedback, no peer feedback, no explicit use of rubrics, exemplars, feedback too late to be used, no transfer across modules etc.

Vygotsky, (1978) (from Wikipedia)

Set up: Students can see peer's drafts, submissions, reflections & teacher feedback

Please attach your first draft for teacher feedback

0 Turned in   **1** Assigned   **11** Graded

Nov 8, 2022

https://docs.google.com/document/d/13JD1tKh_u1YpsPkMPL5p9iBICACpjJpNjlOvRBaOUZs/edit

1 reply

Nov 8, 2022

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Iss3mTd966ntbk_Q4t-cT_fuRwZGZUmQ4q4biqqQJX8/edit?usp=sharing

1 reply

Nov 8, 2022

https://docs.google.com/document/d/11MHHQceQX0ietARWpOtCPUamOPvk1OQrYmW8lyOdV2w/edit?usp=sharing

4 replies

RK Dec 6, 2022

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cver4CPVpnOqppL_sSbzn-rueEyNv42ODOXS6Cj6QLg/edit?usp=sharing

3 replies

James Wood Dec 8, 2022

I'm very impressed with this reflection Jeong Hyeon. It was really great that you thought not only about the intellectual process, but also your emotions in the process. This is really important for future success because as you noticed you might have missed a couple of classes if you hadn't become more familiar with your own and others emotions. It's noteworthy that you delayed the process because you wanted it to be perfect. This is very common, and it's worth digging into a bit more. Perfectionism can cause procrastination, so think about how you can deal with this in the future (same for everyone). Well done!

RK Dec 8, 2022

@JamesWood
Thank you James, your well-organized and well-structured class was one of the best classes that I took in SNU.
When we talked about agentic learner at the beginning of our class, I was certain that I was definitely an agentic learner and almost everyone in the class was agentic learner too. So, at the time, I didn't understand why you taught us agentic learner, ZPD, how to deal with emotions, using many classes. But I could deeply understand why you did that later. I think most of Korean, including SNU students, have few chances to learner about feedback. So it was useful, meaningful process. And, of course, sharing the feeling was important process. I think, generally, teachers would just tell them 'it's a normal feeling' and that would be all. But spending time on talking with peers was great.

One more thing I wanted to say is that, thanks to your class teaching me that grading without feedback is likely to give students misunderstanding about their learning by just focusing on the score, I tried to get a feedback in another English class. I sent an email to a professor and asked the feedback about my answer as well as score about the midterm. And the professor gave me a feedback and I could get a confidence. It was not only because I got a better score than I expected, but also I could understand what I did well and what was not enough in my answer.

Most of all, the purpose of taking this class was to prepare exchanging to America. And I believe that, without a doubt, I achieved my goal thanks to this class. Without this class, I must have gone to America and had a hard time to adapt to write English essays.

James Wood Dec 9, 2022

I'm so happy to hear that JeongHyeon, I'd love to hear more about why that made a difference to you and the difference between the beginning when you thought what I was saying was obvious, and later on when you found you could deeply understand it!

Open access feedback environment: Set up

1. **Set up**: use exemplars, criteria, standards & expectations dialogically (Carless & Chan, 2017)/ Unpack 'personal feedback baggage', discuss mindset, agency, how feedback mediates learning – 'priming for receptivity' (Wood, 2021)

2. **explicit exemplar comparison task**: students submit first draft, teacher **generates guiding questions (only for last group)**, students compare in class and discuss learning in groups. Write up reflections online. (open access)

3. **Dialogic peer feedback:** Over 1 week. Students can view all drafts/dialogues of peers. (**Open access** to peers' work – different tasks)

4. **Technology mediated open access teacher feedback:** Formative and summative teacher feedback short comments on doc, students receives a dialogic screencast feedback video (Wood, 2023).

Methods

Qualitative approach: Longitudinal rounds of reflective writing, interactive reflective survey N=40 and interviews N=30 (ethically approved)

- Undergraduate research writing classes (Koreans and small numbers of internationals student) before, during & after COVID (design research orientation)

- Productive learning assumed if participants believe it occurred (Jensen et al. 2023)

Five Inductively derived themes:
1. Making comparisons with peers developing work & importance of relationality.
2. Modelling peer's feedback uptake strategies & process
3. Complimentary benefits of peer fb & self-generated fb
4. Learning from peers' teacher feedback & calibration
5. Ability to learn from self-generated feedback emergent & needs calibration

Theme 1: Making comparisons with peers' work & importance of relationality

"Opportunities for extended learning that are there if you want to use them".
(Kylie interview)

Learning from Open access comparisons with peers' work

When I look at someone's draft that is a bit better than me, I can also compare with mine and try to get some idea to improve my work. Judy and Juno...I felt like they have deeper thinking or criticality than mine, so I tried to look at their work. (Nahyun interview)

By seeing each other's work and reflecting into my work and revising it again, I think that is feedback... (Kevin interview)

It's similar to you giving us an exemplar essay (Grace interview)

helpful for me knowing my direction to refer other's output. (reflection 12)
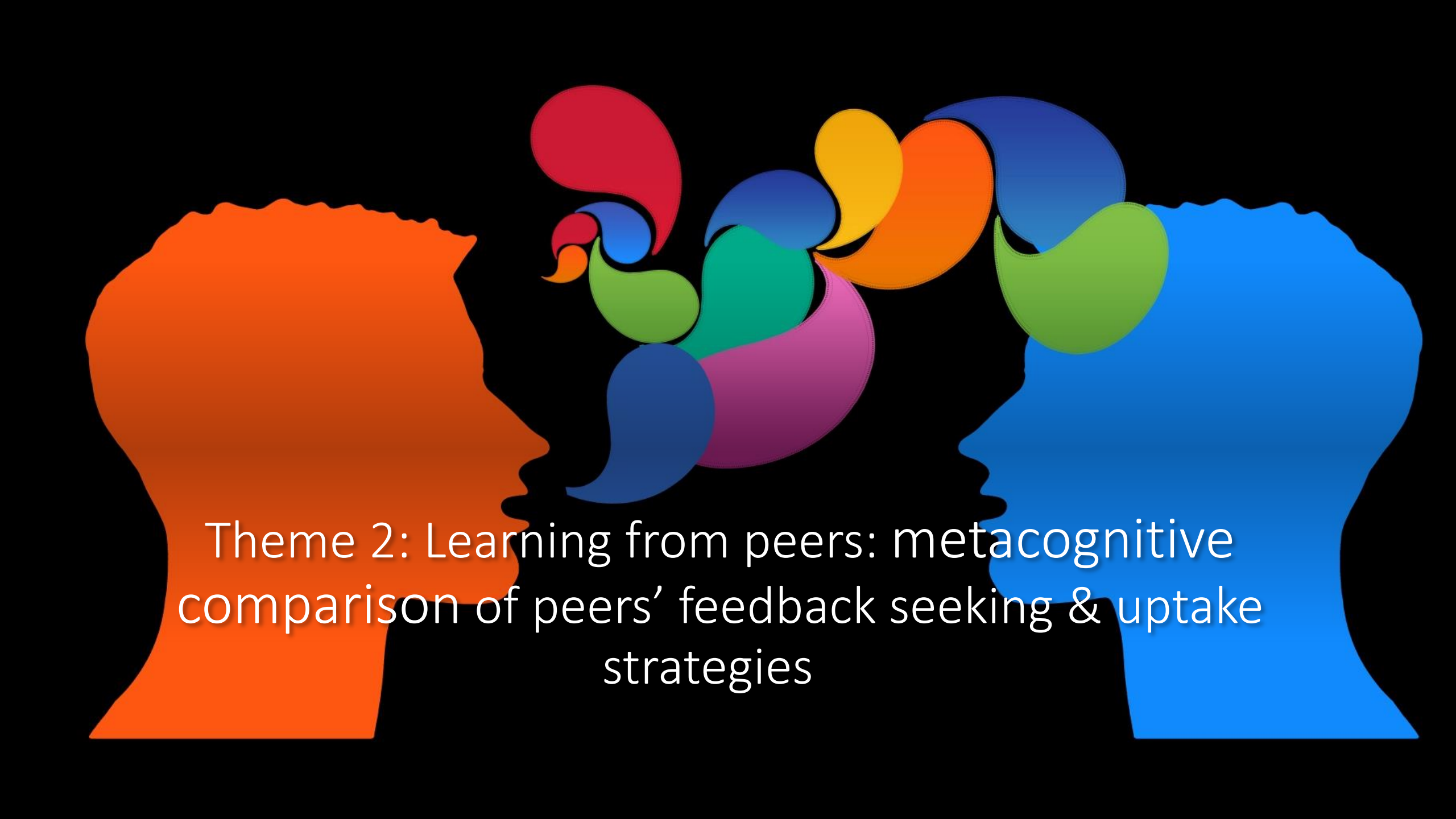
Relationality in comparisons: peer's 'live' work vs exemplars

I didn't do comparisons and the outcome was bad – so after feedback I learned that Daria had a good essay and compared my work with her's (Yeji interview)

I could learn from others' work, and you suggest which paper is good and which can be the example essay I could learn from...the good examples help me to get the content of the lecture more specifically. (Jenny interview)

I mostly looked into other students' essays. Honestly, I did not look into the example essays as much as you have expected. They kind of felt less engaging to me because they come from total strangers. (Yejoon reflection)

Theme 2: Learning from peers: metacognitive comparison of peers' feedback seeking & uptake strategies

Learning from peers: metacognitive comparison of peers' feedback seeking & uptake strategies

I like it when I see my peers work because we're discussing and giving feedback to each other every week so I can see the progress...I can see how your feedback is reflected, how other students integrate that feedback in their writing vs how I do it. (Grace interview)
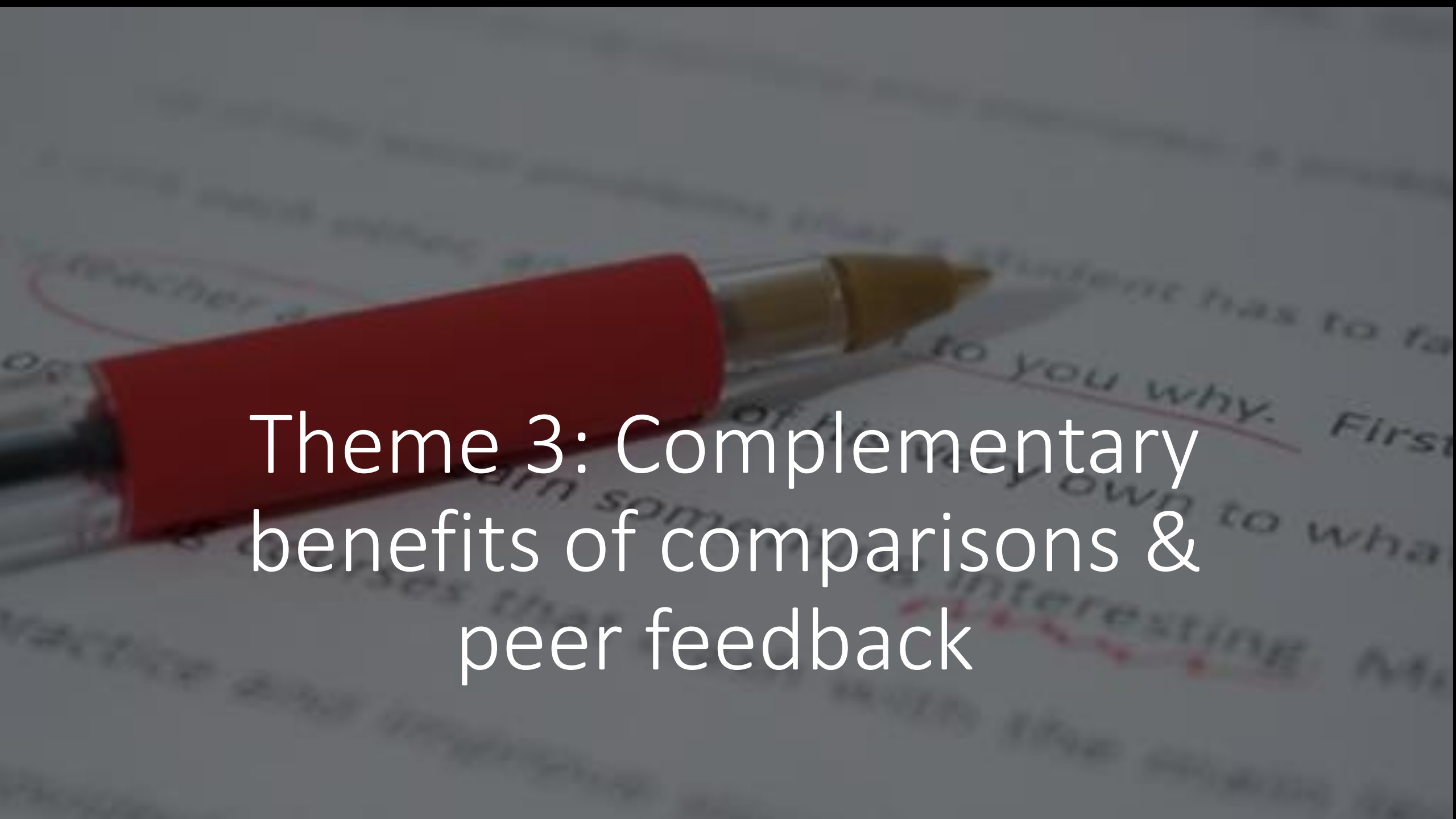
I checked their drafts from time to time, saw their feedback process and improvements in later drafts...in the end, I had learned some new things, saw others improve, and was able to apply this to improve myself as well. (Juno survey)

For example, I watched Juno's essay feedback, and I just learned you gave him feedback on like, 'make this clear', like his paragraphs at the beginning were very long and a bit disorganized so I just saw the process of how it became clear, which helped me (Judy interview)

After seeing others really getting better after putting the peer feedback into their essay...Judy, really actively, put the peer feedbacks in her essay by asking us question or those kinds of things, and she really redrafted well...and I just thought, if I also, utilized peer feedback well, I can get better (Holly Interview)

Winstone, N. E., Nash, R. A., Parker, M., & Rowntree, J. (2017). Supporting learners' agentic engagement with feedback: A systematic review and a taxonomy of recipience processes. *Educational psychologist*, *52*(1), 17-37.

Theme 3: Complementary benefits of comparisons & peer feedback

Theme 3: Different & complementary learning from comparisons and peer feedback

Comparisons helped the big picture/peer feedback the smaller details

Comparisons gave the **big picture**, and **peer feedback gave details**, for example when I read Daria's – I learned logic and structure, connecting words, the big picture, in peer feedback it was like, what do you mean by this word?

Comparisions are about **structure and language** while writing the essay, **peer feedback is more about how clear are your ideas for other people to understand**, they help different aspects, both are useful depending on if you want to improve technical skills or ability to explain yourself. (Yeji)

Both useful depending on where in the process – comparisons more helpful at first – peer feedback more important for fixing smaller problems that I couldn't notice.
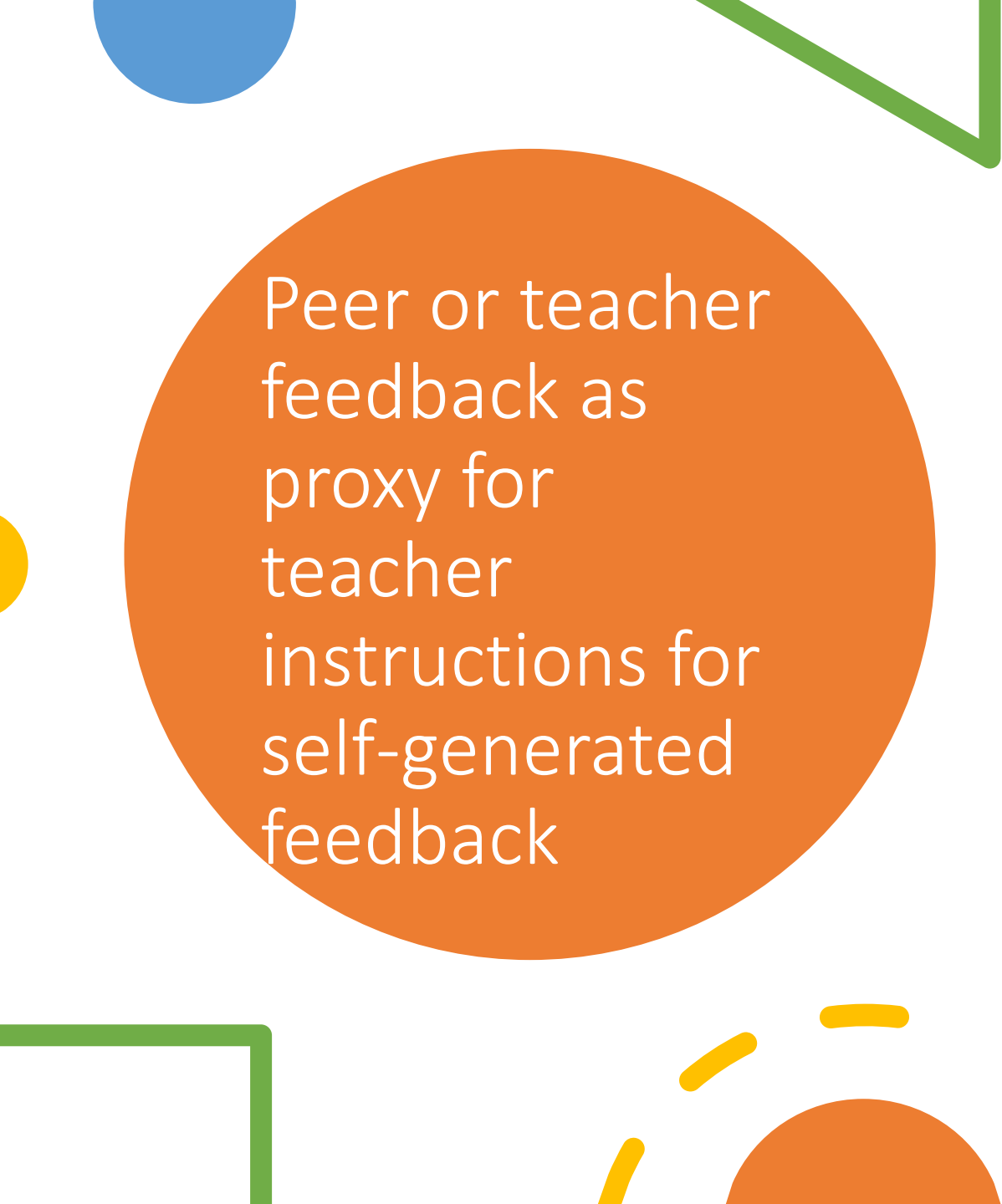
Peer feedback: external perspective on what could not be noticed alone

Unnoticed problems my essay had were revealed through peer feedback. ...Peer feedback was not a single-serving process but led to continual discussions on what a better choice might be. (Donggu 2022)

peer feedback was especially useful since we all wrote on different topics and didn't have much of a background knowledge, **we easily could notice this unclearness in other works**. (Daria interview)

Continuously reading and fixing my own article, I couldn't really find my own strengths and weaknesses and the feedback from my peers helped me realize them. (Sohee reflection)

...It enabled me to equip myself with the perspective of the reader: 'Oh that's how they think oh that's how my sentence it looks like'. (Grace interview)

Peer or teacher feedback as proxy for teacher instructions for self-generated feedback

Examples were more useful after I got teacher feedback, as there was the answer to the teacher's question in the examples. James told me to refine my intro and cohesion, and I could directly refer to the examples with good intro/outro and clear structure.

Most teacher feedback was about structure. I wanted to see how other essays had done it well. I highlighted the topic + concluding sentences/major transitions and I circled general phrasing…then I went through my essay trying to find where these parts were missing, improving my work.

Theme 4: Using **peers' teacher feedback to understand standards/calibration**

I checked **how you mark others** and that also let me know **what a good essay is**.

It's really useful for me to look at others' work, others' feedback... I think that's the most useful thing for me. **I try to think like you**, I just want to know what you are thinking about this essay.

First, **I skim their article and guess** what **the teacher will mention**, after I listen to the feedback I also want to indicate some other opinions different to the teacher's and maybe give more feedback about this task.

From viewing others students' final feedback, and you point out in what, in what aspects improved, **I could get the information about essay writing** in my head little bit.

When giving peer feedback: I wasn't sure my feedback was valid but by looking at your feedback on Daria's and Emily, **I could compare the feedback I gave and your feedback, so I could do self-feedback better**.

I watched other first draft feedback before I submitted my final draft – and saw your feedback video I couldn't give that feedback at first, **but after watching your feedback I could fortify that information** and it **became more important to me.**

Using Peers' Teacher feedback for 'where to next' (Hattie and Timperly, 2007)

I kept thinking that even if I got a lower grade than them when I was reading those other good essays, **I was thinking that I can do better than that if I do it next time.**

I also watched a lot of teacher feedback videos for students, positive and negative, and saw where other students had gone wrong or needed to improve. I was able to learn somewhat from their mistakes as well and incorporate some of their learning points into my own. (

I also watched and **read feedback** that my peers got, and this gave me a better understanding of what mistakes I and others usually make. And if I know it, I can fix it.

Comparing with other students' essays and their essay feedback, it was the biggest help than any other feedback I got. (Sorry to say this to peers and James)...I watched Daria's essay feedback and I could avoid the mistakes that she made. Without that, I would use the mistakes she made.

Comparing my work with peers that got better feedback and grade, I could understand the point I have to work on.

If I think I had done worse on one assignment that someone else, then what better resource is there than looking at how others did it and compare/contrast?

Relationality and collaborative learning: Explicit comparison as a group discussion

It made me focus more on the example essays. **It was also valuable to hear what others think about the examples**. (Yeji interview)

Examples were useful but **I got more help through discussing the example essay with peers** and getting to know different viewpoints from other groups. **Through discussions, I got to know how others would read essays and how my introduction paragraph should be revised**.

(Emily interview)

Theme 5: Appreciating self-generated feedback is an emergent & culumative skill

Danger of 'over-selling' benefits of self generated feedback

I'm not use to do comparisons. **I guess I needed (a lot of) time to understand that it was helpful.** The comparison that actually helped me was the one with Daria's work (honestly, it might have been because of the urgency of the situation, as I had less than a week to redo my work)

I think making comparisons (in class explicit task) was fruitful, in that it allowed me to feel something was off, but unfortunately **I'm not quick-witted and absorbent enough to be able to point out all I should in one session.** Making comparisons at home by myself actually helped fill the rest of it. Guess that's just how I am. **Slow-witted.**

It's very hard for students to compare when they have little knowledge of what to do & don't know what to look for... I didn't have previous experience of writing essays.

It's going to sound stupid but comparing was a complicated action at first. I'm not used to comparing my work to others (mainly because I'm afraid of plagiarism, and because I thought I did not need to look at others to succeed, which isn't really smart) and **it took me a while to understand the value of comparing.** Learn from others, from what they did well (in terms of structure for example), and from their mistakes

Discussion and conclusions

- Students use peers work to generate product and process feedback enhancing reflective processes (Carless, 2023) and reflective agency (Niemenen and Yang, 2023) - potential for lasting impact beyond module.

- Peer and teacher feedback synergise with self-generated feedback with holisitic benefits – comparisons for higher level benefits, peer feedback for aspects beyond awareness – teacher feedback for self-orchestration of learning from examples.

- Teacher instructions may be unnecessary or counter-productive – learners generate own instructions from information about where they are and where to next.

Discussion continued

- Students calibrate evaluative judgement from peers' teacher feedback and from discussions with peers about what they noticed from self-generated feedback (Yan and Carless, 2022)

- Viewing teacher feedback on work they have peer reviewed is a workload sustainable and cost effective method for calibrating self-generated feedback and evaluative judgement & considered worthwhile

However

- Learners need scaffolding from simple to complex, multiple practice opportunities, tailored for skill levels focus on skill development over product – can help risk of damage to long term agency and self-efficiacy (Panadero et al. 2019)

- Self-generated feedback deployment needs caution, sensitivity, expectation management and risk awareness.

Limitations

Contextual factors vary & so will milage – adapt for context

Set up requires teacher feedback literacy - the skills, knowledge and understanding required to support learners in orchestrating their learning from self-generated feedback and in reflectively using assessment processes for self-formation and agency development.

Requires indvidualised tasks - or blinding for students on same task could offer 3 or 4 different variations.

Key conclusions and contributions

Expands work on exemplars/self-assessment and self-generated feedback – offers an exemplar of set up and potential benefits for evaluative judgement and feedback literacy – would agentic learners cheat?

Calibration of learning/judgement from self-generated feedback through group discussion, peer feedback, peers' teacher feedback and dialogic teacher feedback.

Given appropriate scaffolding students will self-orchestrate learning from peers' work, their process, and teacher feedback (aligns with Jensen et al. 2023) exercising their reflective agency (Nieminen & Yang, 2023) in their cost-benefit judgements.

Exemplars, peer feedback, open teacher feedback (formative) can be deployed holisitcally for maximum synergy as a workload and budget sustainable formative/summative assessment strategy. That empowers learner agency – will this impact integrity?

Questions and comments