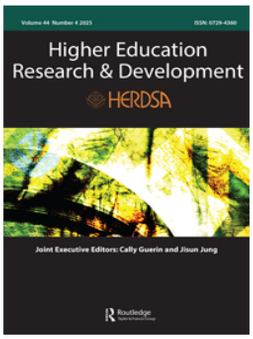

Higher Education Research & Development

ISSN: 0729-4360 (Print) 1469-8366 (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/cher20

Feedback partnerships: strengthening students' proactive recipience through co-creating dialogic feedback

Jessica To

To cite this article: Jessica To (2025) Feedback partnerships: strengthening students' proactive recipience through co-creating dialogic feedback, Higher Education Research & Development, 44:4, 1008-1023, DOI: 10.1080/07294360.2024.2445570

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2024.2445570

Published online: 27 Jan 2025.

HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT
2025, VOL. 44, NO. 4, 1008–1023
https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2024.2445570

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Feedback partnerships: strengthening students' proactive recipience through co-creating dialogic feedback

Jessica To

Teaching and Learning Innovation Centre, The University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam, Hong Kong

ABSTRACT

While the role of students in feedback is indisputable, developing learners' proactivity in feedback processes remains challenging. This conceptual paper addresses this issue by proposing feedback partnerships (FP) to strengthen students' proactive recipience. This approach emphasises a balance of power between students and teachers in feedback dialogue and their collaborative endeavours to co-create productive feedback. FP's theoretical underpinnings, two precursors (dialogue and trust) and three core values (respect, reciprocity, and shared responsibility) are examined to shed light on FP conceptualisation. The key optimal conditions for and barriers to partnership development are discussed, followed by a feedback co-creation model and illustrative cases to delineate FP operationalisation. Implications for practice and future research directions are outlined.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 3 March 2024
Accepted 16 December 2024

KEYWORDS
Feedback partnerships; feedback co-creation; students as partners; proactive recipience; shared responsibility

Introduction

Engaging students as partners (SaP) in learning and teaching is gaining traction in higher education (Bovill, 2019). As a relationship-rich ethos to increase students' involvement, SaP is defined as 'a collaborative, reciprocal process through which all participants have the opportunity to contribute equally, although not necessarily in the same ways, to curricular or pedagogical conceptualisation, decision making, implementation, investigation, or analysis' (Cook-Sather et al., 2014, pp. 6–7). It reshapes the traditional power structure by granting students power and autonomy to co-create curricula, pedagogical resources and assessment practices with academic staff (Bovill et al., 2011). It also helps to establish reciprocal trust and a supportive relationship between students and teachers (Healey et al., 2014). Other benefits include catalysing democratic education (Matthews et al., 2023), increasing students' accountability for quality education (Healey et al., 2014), promoting inclusive education (Nieminen, 2024), and sharpening student and teacher assessment literacy (Deeley & Bovill, 2017).

Notwithstanding the aforementioned advantages, partnership praxis in assessment feedback is comparatively under-explored (Carless, 2020; Matthews et al., 2023). This warrants scrutiny because productive feedback is premised on the essence of SaP,

CONTACT Jessica To jkaryan@hku.hk

including mutual engagement in dialogue, trust and power equilibrium (Matthews et al., 2024). The interplay of student and teacher feedback literacy further suggests the interdependence of students and teachers in orchestrating effective feedback (Carless & Winstone, 2023). Given the strong association between feedback and partnerships (Matthews et al., 2023; Matthews et al., 2024), it seems sensible to see students and teachers as partners in feedback processes, which is called feedback partnerships (FP) in this paper. Emerged from the learner-centred orientation to feedback (Molloy et al., 2020), FP increases students' proactive recipience (ability to seek, understand and use feedback) through their collaboration with teachers to decide what feedback to be given, how to interpret and enact it. This approach emphasises a share of decision-making power and responsibility between both parties and perceives students as a change agent in feedback processes (Carless, 2020). The process of collaboration is known as feedback co-creation.

Though FP sets a promising direction for feedback enhancement, the field lacks a comprehensive understanding of how FP is conceptualised and operationalised. Responding to Matthews et al.'s (2024) call for the principles and conditions for partnership praxis, this paper aims to unpack FP conceptualisation and implementation. It first discusses FP's theoretical underpinnings, optimal conditions for and barriers to partnership development and then presents a feedback co-creation model and illustrative cases. Its significance lies in theorising FP, developing a protocol for FP implementation, and establishing an agenda for FP research.

Why propose feedback partnerships?

Despite the significant role of students in feedback (e.g., Boud & Molloy, 2013; Winstone, Nash, Parker, et al., 2017), Van der Kleij et al.'s (2019) meta-review pinpoints the dominance of teacher-led feedback practices in the recent three decades. In these practices, teachers usually initiate feedback interaction and determine its goal and content. Students are conceptualised as passive recipients, having limited voice in the dialogue.

This teacher-driven approach may hinder feedback engagement because students do not 'see themselves as agents of their own change and develop an identity as productive learner who can drive their own learning' (Boud & Molloy, 2013, p. 705). It is also challenging for teachers to engage all learners as students' engagement is shaped by individual characteristics, feedback context and message (Gao et al., 2024; Lipnevich & Smith, 2022). For example, in Han's (2019) study, the undergraduate with higher motivation and academic ability had deeper engagement than her peer, although both studied in the same sociocultural environment. The postgraduates in Noroozi, Banihashem, Biemans, et al.'s (2023) study provided stronger justifications in argumentative writing than undergraduates upon receiving online peer feedback as they possessed more academic experiences. In another similar study by Noroozi, Banihashem, Kerman, et al. (2023), females gave more constructive suggestions than males. Gao et al. (2024) showed that students would have higher feedback receptivity if the message included problem identification, constructive advice, emotionally responsive and self-regulation components.

The reviewed studies illustrate two points. First, the interplay of learner characteristics, feedback content and context highlights the need for an ecological perspective to feedback engagement (Chong, 2022; Han, 2019). Second, the intricacies of engagement make it difficult for teachers to understand diverse students' needs and to customise

feedback. FP offers a solution by creating space for students to voice their needs and for teachers to support them accordingly.

Theoretical underpinnings

Feedback partnerships are informed by the theories pertinent to feedback (feedback ecology; social constructivism) and SaP (critical pedagogy; communities of practice).

Feedback ecology unpacks students' engagement under FP. From the ecological perspective, students' participation in feedback is susceptible to the interrelationships between individual variables (e.g., motivation; self-efficacy; feedback literacy) and contextual variables (e.g., sociocultural and institutional settings; power relationships) (Chong, 2022). They would be eager to co-create feedback if they are highly motivated, situated in a supportive environment, and confident in judgement making. With the accumulation of academic experience and feedback literacy, they would be more well-versed in feedback co-creation.

Social constructivism illuminates the feedback co-creation process. The social dimension points to the dialogue between students and teachers to exchange perspectives, negotiate meanings, and brainstorm improvement suggestions. The constructivist dimension refers to the expansion of participants' zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) when their prior understanding is mediated during the dialogue, for example students realising how their academic judgements differ from teachers' and teachers recognising students' difficulties in interpreting, generating and utilising feedback.

Critical pedagogy explains the conditions for students' learning in FP. This theory promotes equality through transforming the power structure in the authorities-dominated environment (Freire, 2020) and empowering learners in feedback processes (Bovill, 2019). Learner empowerment is embodied by students' autonomy to make decisions regarding how feedback is co-created. This is contrary to the power relations in the teacher-driven approach, where teachers determine what, when and how feedback is given (Boud & Molloy, 2013).

Communities of practice describe participants' collective learning process during FP. This theory stresses their active participation in a situated learning community to negotiate meanings and construct identities (Wenger, 1998). The mutual engagement of students and teachers in dialogue helps them appreciate each other's viewpoints and experiences. This aids both parties in pursuing the common goal, developing a shared understanding of standards and co-creating feedback (Matthews et al., 2019). During the process, teacher and learner identity becomes fluid, with teachers understanding teaching and learning from the learner's perspective and students sharing the teacher's responsibility for effective feedback practices (Cook-Sather et al., 2014).

Precursors and core values

Feedback partnerships are built on two precursors and three core values. The first precursor is dialogue 'where students feel heard, and where students and faculty come to know each other, appreciate their diverse experiences, and bridge any divide or barrier that prevents shared responsibility' (Matthews et al., 2023, p. 1508). It is crucial because it connects students and teachers during partnerships (Cook-Sather et al.,

2014). Dialogue conducive to FP has six characteristics: (i) initiated by students; (ii) adaptive to students' needs; (iii) related to the shared goal of both parties; (iv) non-dominating by either party; (v) reciprocal exchange of one's experiences and interpretation of feedback; (vi) cognitively engaging to prompt one's reflection on assessment standards, goals and improvement plans (Nicol, 2010; Steen-Utheim & Wittek, 2017).

The second precursor is trust, which influences participants' attitude to and involvement in partnerships (Matthews et al., 2023). Communication trust and competence trust are pertinent to FP. The former means both parties believe their partner partakes in a frank discussion with good intentions (Healey et al., 2014). Without communication trust, participants may be anxious about exposing inadequacies and changing identities during partnership development (Matthews et al., 2023). The latter points to teachers' confidence in students' ability to identify feedback needs and co-construct improvement suggestions. Lack of competence trust could result in tokenism, and not taking students' voices seriously (Lundy, 2018).

The three core values are associated with Cook-Sather et al.'s (2014) guiding principles of SaP (respect, reciprocity and shared responsibility). Respect refers to individuals' openness and receptivity to each other's views (Cook-Sather et al., 2014). This does not mean blind acceptance of what is disagreed on but gives careful thought to others' viewpoints and suggestions, thinks about the differences, and makes decisions based on the shared goal (Matthews et al., 2023). Without respect, individuals are less likely to interact with others if they feel they themselves and their work are disrespected (Zhou et al., 2021).

Reciprocity relates to the mutual exchange of experiences and perspectives, and the balanced give-and-take during interaction (Cook-Sather et al., 2014). It is important since it opens up spaces for identity reconstruction. Applying it to FP building, students and teachers have equal opportunities to articulate thoughts and contribute to dialogue, although their contributions are not identical but vary according to their respective experiences and expertise (Matthews et al., 2023). This could be achieved by one of the parties explaining performance evaluation and improvement suggestions and then another party seeking clarification, giving opinions or alternative suggestions. The response in return could enrich the dialogue or introduce a different perspective to the issue under discussion.

Shared responsibility is concerned with the joint effort of both parties to make educational practices effective (Cook-Sather et al., 2014). Without it, they do not see each other as a feedback partner. To nurture FP, both shoulder different responsibilities and contribute to feedback communication (Nash & Winstone, 2017). To be more specific, students exhibit proactive recipience (Winstone, Nash, Parker, et al., 2017) by seeking teacher feedback, comparing their teacher's judgement with theirs, generating self-feedback and determining whether and how to enact feedback. Teachers support students' proactivity by encouraging feedback seeking and discussion of inadequacies (Johnson et al., 2020), sharpening their evaluation skills (To, 2022) and using meaningful task designs to promote feedback uptake (Winstone & Carless, 2019).

Optimal conditions for FP development

Five conditions are conducive to FP development. First, students' grasp of assessment standards and reflection skills is the prerequisite. To make a feedback request, students

have to understand assessment criteria, self-evaluate their performance using the criteria and identify the required support to achieve their goal (Bloxham & Campbell, 2010). This process requires the skills to reflect on task performance and prior learning experiences (Wood, 2023). Without such understanding and skills, they may fail to identify feedback needs (Bloxham & Campbell, 2010). Two measures would be effective to address this issue: (i) sharpening their understanding of criteria through plenary discussion, criteria co-construction, exemplar analysis and peer reviews (To et al., 2022); and (ii) guiding them to think how their agentic role influences learning from feedback (Wood, 2023).

Second, scaffolding to enable students' expression of feedback needs raises the quality of co-created feedback. Some students may lack the skills to make feedback requests if they are accustomed to teacher-driven practices (Winstone, Nash, Parker, et al., 2017). Useful scaffolding could be (i) workshops on framing specific questions for feedback seeking (Bloxham & Campbell, 2010), (ii) prompts to facilitate indication of feedback preferences and expectations (Macklin, 2016), and (iii) teacher modelling of how to express feedback needs.

Third, adaptive and meaningful responses to students' feedback requests encourages their sustained participation in FP. They would be more motivated to negotiate meanings and co-construct improvement suggestions if teachers are open-minded to divergent views and incorporate three elements in the response: (i) personalised feedback to address individuals' needs (Johnson et al., 2020); (ii) confirmation or mediation of learners' academic judgements (Boud & Molloy, 2013); and (iii) prompts to stimulate students' ongoing thinking about performance (Macklin, 2016).

Fourth, a psychologically safe learning environment is the cornerstone of FP. Since students' readiness to co-create feedback hinges on their communication trust in teachers, it is imperative to lessen their anxiety and embarrassment in feedback processes (Johnson et al., 2020). Technology could be deployed to build rapport with students, for example using audio feedback (To, 2022) or screencasts (Wood, 2023) to ease tensions in feedback communication. Teachers' demonstration of respect and empathy during regular classroom interaction helps to create a positive learning climate (Johnson et al., 2020; Steen-Utheim & Wittek, 2017). Teachers' revelation of their own uncertainties, inadequacies and thought processes, known as intellectual candour (Molloy & Bearman, 2019), could also set the ground for sincere conversation.

Fifth, an institutional feedback culture of growth supports reciprocal feedback exchanges. An institutional feedback culture could be understood as the influence of an institution's feedback beliefs and practices on teachers' and students' perceptions and behaviour (Ramani et al., 2018). Grounded in a growth mindset and educational alliance, the growth culture encourages students and teachers to acknowledge problems, engage in bidirectional communication, seek feedback, and co-create improvement suggestions (Ramani et al., 2019). Educational alliance refers to the positive relationship that enables both parties to set shared goals, discuss standards and co-construct feedback (Telio et al., 2015).

Barriers to FP development

This section examines the major contextual and individual barriers to partnership development and strategies for circumvention.

Cultural stereotype

There is scepticism about the compatibility of partnership praxis in the Asian context, possibly due to the stereotype that learners in this context usually see teachers as the expert, seldom question teachers' judgements and refrain from disclosing their own inadequacies for face-saving (Dai et al., 2024). However, effective FP implementation largely hinges on how teachers prepare students for feedback co-creation, not cultural backgrounds. The South Korean students in Wood's (2023) study were confident in challenging a teacher's judgements and brainstorming improvement suggestions after the teacher had created a positive learning climate and trained students' evaluation skills (see the third example under illustrative cases for details).

Rather than denying the FP possibility in Asia, it may be more meaningful for academics to recognise how their situated cultural context constrains partnership formation and to take appropriate strategies to promote partnership practices (Kaur, 2020). Given the importance of face in Asian classrooms, they could explain to students that revealing one's inadequacies, being critical of a teacher's judgements and engaging in feedback negotiation would enhance feedback quality. Demonstration of registering respectful disagreement would also aid students in feedback co-creation.

Power hierarchy

The positioning of teachers and students in teacher-driven feedback practices may hamper the development of partnership praxis (Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Healey et al., 2014). Some teachers may have reservations about granting students decision-making power and inviting learners' voice in feedback processes (Matthews et al., 2024). Some students may not see their legitimacy of making feedback-related decisions and co-constructing improvement plans. Nevertheless, students are less prone to the power hierarchy when they have positive experiences in partnership praxis. In Dai et al.'s (2024) study, the postgraduates receiving undergraduate education under a hierarchical power structure were initially reluctant to give voice about pedagogical practices. With teachers' efforts to reshape power relations in the master's curriculum, the postgraduates could appreciate the benefits of partnership-based practices and take the co-developer role.

Managing power relations requires dialogue to change the mindset of teachers and students about productive feedback (Matthews et al., 2024). Seminars or discussion forums could be organised to help teachers understand how power-sharing could increase students' feedback responsibility, how to invite learners' voice and handle disagreement over judgements. Prior to feedback co-creation, teachers could discuss with students how seeking assistance and co-constructing suggestions could facilitate feedback uptake.

Large cohort of students

Large classes may discourage FP implementation. The rapid expansion of higher education poses an obstacle for academics to understand individual students' needs,

engage them in dialogue, and provide personalised feedback (Matthews et al., 2024). This carries implications for workload and time investment.

For workload management, academics could implement feedback co-creation in group assignments instead of individual tasks to reduce the number of discussions. Peer support within the group is likely to help students tease out key issues to be discussed in dialogue. The exploitation of technology such as learning analytics could help to monitor individual students' learning progress and identify their needs (Banihashem et al., 2022). Conducting feedback dialogue virtually via Google Doc or other similar tools could free academics from scheduling face-to-face meetings and tracking students' participation in feedback co-creation (Wood, 2023).

Psychological stress

Psychological stress in feedback processes may reduce students' readiness for FP. The undergraduates in Winstone, Nash, Rowntree, et al.'s (2017) study became less eager to participate in feedback when (i) their self-esteem was threatened by grades and teacher comments, and (ii) they believed the given comments targeted the aspects they could hardly improve. In Hadden and Frisby's (2019) study, those with feedback anxiety tended to have lower self-efficacy and perceive less emotional support from teachers. These students may refrain from articulating feedback needs for the sake of face-saving.

To assuage their tensions, teachers are advised to understand students' mentality of feedback and offer appropriate scaffolding. For instance, teachers could instil a growth mindset in low self-efficacious learners through dialogue (cf. Ramani et al., 2019; Wood, 2023), fostering the beliefs that perseverance, diligence and active use of feedback are the key to performance advancement. Teachers could also provide self-referenced feedback to help learners with low self-efficacy focus on their continued progress during feedback co-creation.

Lack of feedback literacy

Lack of feedback literacy is another hindrance to FP development. In addition to making judgements, managing emotions and enacting feedback, students are expected to articulate feedback needs, explain evaluative reasoning, and co-develop improvement plans with teachers (To, 2022; Wood, 2023). To maintain reciprocal exchange, teachers need to invite learners' voice, discern individuals' emotional state, demonstrate respect and trust in dialogue, and respond to feedback requests. Without such capabilities, they would have limited participation in feedback co-creation.

Student feedback literacy could be increased by the pedagogical arrangements and scaffolding discussed in the first two optimal conditions for FP. Teacher feedback literacy could be developed through sharing effective feedback co-creation examples and implementation advice in professional training programmes and workshops. Through sustained, active participation in these enhancement measures, students and teachers could sharpen their respective feedback literacy over time.

Feedback co-creation as manifestation of FP

To delineate FP operationalisation, this section explicates the propositions and model of feedback co-creation and presents illustrative cases.

Propositions and model of feedback co-creation

Based on the FP precursors and core values, three propositions are advanced to characterise feedback co-creation.

1. Students and teachers carry shared responsibility to co-create feedback in a feedback cycle.
2. Students make feedback requests, express views on given feedback and co-construct improvement suggestions in an environment with respect, trust, educational alliance and psychological safety.
3. Both parties have a reciprocal exchange of academic judgements and understanding of feedback during dialogue.

A model is presented in Figure 1 to illustrate the propositions and mechanisms of feedback co-creation. This model is built on Hattie and Timperley's (2007) framework of feed-up, feed-back and feed-forward as their framework specifies the constituents of

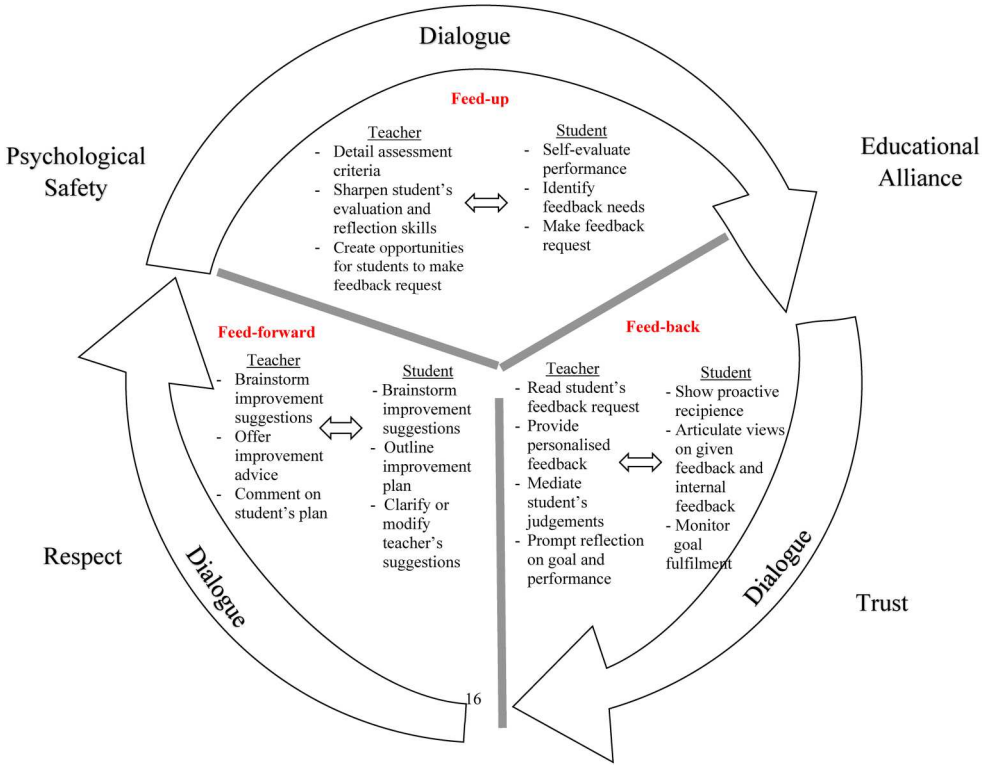

Figure 1. Feedback co-creation model.

effective feedback and provides an elaborate structure to discuss the shared responsibility of both parties in each stage of the feedback cycle. Dialogue is the thread of the feedback cycle, enveloped in trust, respect, educational alliance and psychological safety. Psychological safety is 'a shared belief that the [educator-learner relationship] is safe for interpersonal risk taking' (Johnson et al., 2020, p. 560) so that participants would be carefree to discuss problems, express disagreement, and seek assistance.

The feed-up stage primes students for feedback co-creation by developing a shared understanding of assessment standards and facilitating goal setting and identification of feedback needs. During task preparation, teachers detail assessment criteria, encourage goal setting, sharpen students' evaluation and reflection skills, and create opportunities for students to make feedback request. Upon task engagement, students self-evaluate performance according to the criteria, identify the aspect of work in need of assistance, and seek feedback (Molloy et al., 2020). This is the occasion where they could initiate the dialogue and decide the feedback to be co-created.

The feed-back stage engages both parties in the reciprocal exchange of academic judgements and understanding of feedback. Following task submission, teachers read individual students' work and feedback requests, provide personalised feedback to respond to individuals' needs, and comment on the effectiveness of students' self-evaluation (Matthews et al., 2023). Teachers not only address mastery of knowledge and task strategies, but also mediate students' judgements (Boud & Molloy, 2013) and prompt their reflection on goal and performance. Assistance is given in case students fail to identify or express feedback needs. For students, it is imperative to demonstrate 'proactive recipience' (Winstone, Nash, Parker, et al., 2017) to interpret the given feedback, seek clarification of unclear points, generate internal feedback through comparing their judgements with teachers' (Nicol, 2021), and consider how to improve performance. It is also crucial to articulate their views on the given feedback and internal feedback and to monitor goal fulfilment as externalising cognitive process deepens their feedback understanding and catalyses self-regulated learning (Nicol & McCallum, 2022). From the reciprocal exchange, both parties could recognise each other's perspective and set the common ground to discuss improvement suggestions.

Building on the reciprocal exchange, both parties brainstorm improvement strategies or plans to advance performance in the feed-forward stage. This could be accomplished by students outlining their improvement plan and then teachers commenting on its appropriacy (To, 2022; Wood, 2023) or, alternatively, teachers offering improvement advice followed by students' clarification or modification of the given suggestions. It is noteworthy that feedback co-creation may or may not end with the cycle completion because students could make additional feedback requests if they have further questions. In actual implementation, the feed-back and feed-forward stages may exist concurrently as participants discuss performance and improvement plans in the same conversation.

Illustrative cases

Guided by the propositions, three cases are selected to illustrate reciprocal exchange and shared responsibility during feedback co-creation. With this point in mind, Bloxham and Campbell's (2010) interactive cover sheet is excluded as this instance only spotlights students' feedback request, not the negotiation and co-development process.

The first case is Macklin's (2016) use of a cover letter to facilitate feedback co-creation in a US classroom. To increase first-year students' psychological safety, the teacher discussed with students how feedback dialogue could satisfy their needs as an essay writer and her needs as a reader, and how such interaction could improve writing. This developed mutual respect and communication trust. Then, she made them think about their goals, expectations of writing and preferences for teacher feedback. Prior to draft submission, they reflected on their own achievements and challenges in the writing process, described their feelings, and expressed their feedback needs on a cover letter. Upon reading their drafts and letters, she responded to individuals' feedback requests and suggested how they could address her needs as a reader in the next draft. This was an opportunity to gauge their self-reflection ability, pose questions to stimulate their thinking about how to improve writing, and encourage them to express opinions about her judgements. Upon receiving teacher comments, they considered whether and how they would utilise the given comments for draft revision. They could raise questions about the comments, further discuss improvement suggestions, or make an additional feedback request if necessary. This initiative was also implemented for other major assignments in the course to let her and her students broaden experience and skills in feedback co-creation.

Macklin (2016) administered anonymous surveys to ascertain students' perceived effectiveness of co-created feedback. The teacher's reflective notes were kept to document and examine students' participation in the dialogue. All students found the co-created feedback and draft-plus-rework task design beneficial to their writing development. The practice was particularly useful to writing-estranged students as feedback co-creation empowered them in the writing process and reconnected them to the learning community. The reciprocal exchange also enabled the teacher to meet the needs of diverse students and forge a stronger bond with students. To balance workload, the teacher reduced the number of assignments from four to three to reserve more time for deep conversation.

The second case involves the use of peer and self-review to enable feedback co-creation in a postgraduate class from a university in Hong Kong (To, 2022). In this instance, the teachers held a class discussion of assessment criteria to enhance education majors' understanding of standards for task preparation. After assignment completion, they participated in a peer review whereby they applied their understanding of criteria to make judgements and provided constructive comments to help peers identify areas for in-depth reflection. They demonstrated proactive recipience by self-evaluating performance, discussing the appropriateness of the peer feedback received, self-generating an improvement plan, and seeking teacher guidance for the subsequent related task in an audio self-assessment. The teachers' audio reply mediated their judgements, discussed the effectiveness of their improvement plan, and gave alternative suggestions in case their plan was ineffective. This case illustrated the shared responsibility of teachers and students in feedback co-creation, with the former using two-part tasks and skilful sequencing of feedback interaction and the latter exhibiting proactivity in the dialogue.

Using the ecological perspective to frame this design-based study, To (2022) employed an open-ended survey, interviews and feedback vignettes to examine how various variables shaped students' engagement. For affordances, the audio feedback mode fostered students' psychological safety as they became less anxious to discuss

weaknesses with teachers and enjoyed a personal feedback space for self-reflection. The progression of peer, self- and teacher feedback increased their proactivity and feedback literacy because both reviews afforded their development of evaluation skills and articulation of feedback needs. For constraint, some students lacked competence trust in their own judgements and were uncertain about the quality of self-assessment. The teachers tackled this constraint by confirming their accurate judgements, explaining their problems during judgement making, and refining their judgements in the audio reply.

The third case relates to the use of peer feedback and technological affordances to support feedback co-creation in a research writing class from a university in South Korea (Wood, 2023). In this case study, the teacher first explained task criteria to his undergraduates, honed their evaluation skills through exemplar analysis, and asked them to reflect on the influence of their role and previous feedback experiences on learning. After producing an initial draft, they participated in online peer assessment, utilised the peer feedback received to revise the draft, and submitted the revised version to him for another round of formative feedback. Upon receiving his screencast feedback, they expressed opinions about his judgements, explained their reasoning, sought clarification or assistance, outlined their revision plan and invited his comments via Google Doc prior to assignment submission. This allowed the teacher to monitor students' understanding of the given feedback, to respond to their feedback requests, and to offer support for feedback negotiation and co-creation.

To explore students' experiences with dialogic screencast feedback, Wood (2023) gathered data through open-ended surveys, interviews, students' reflections and extracts of feedback exchanges. The screencast-enabled dialogue was effective in aiding self-assessment, setting enactment goals, and promoting agentic uptake of feedback because the feedback arrangements made them responsible for feedback processing and help-seeking. The feedback extracts demonstrated how they expressed respectful disagreement, negotiated ideas, and brainstormed improvement suggestions with the teacher. Their development of agentic role could be attributed to three strategies: (i) using screencasts to establish communication trust; (ii) leveraging an interactive technological tool (Google Doc) to catalyse reciprocal exchange of perspectives; and (iii) teachers' efforts to nurture a positive classroom atmosphere and a growth mindset for candid discussion of problems.

Implications at curriculum and programme levels

In addition to the optimal conditions presented earlier, there are implications for practice at the curriculum and programme levels. When planning the course curriculum, teachers could consider embedding feedback co-creation in nested tasks, two-part tasks or draft-plus-rework designs to enable students' utilisation of co-created feedback to enhance the quality of their subsequent related tasks (Winstone & Carless, 2019). By doing so, students would appreciate the value of FP and the importance of active participation in dialogue, contributing to feedback literacy development. The inclusion of exemplar analysis, peer- and self-assessment in assignment preparation routines would be useful in training students' evaluation skills and increasing their responsibility in feedback processes. Depending on the curriculum time available and participants' technology savvy, teachers

could engage students in face-to-face feedback dialogue in tutorials or virtual exchange via Google Doc, Zoom or other online communication tools.

The success of FP also rests on a staged approach to implementation at the programme level. In institutions with the dominance of teacher-centred feedback practices, it is advisable for programme directors to develop students' self-appraisal skills, a positive learning atmosphere and a feedback culture of growth in their first year of undergraduate education. Once students have more psychological safety and confidence in making academic judgements, opportunities for negotiating feedback and co-constructing improvement suggestions could be introduced in the second year. With the accumulation of academic experience, they would be ready for feedback co-creation in their junior and final years and be able to transfer their feedback co-creation capability to postgraduate education and beyond. The staged approach works well when most course instructors in the programme embrace the partnership praxis and practise feedback co-creation in their curricula.

Limitations and research agenda

While this conceptual paper extends the pioneering work on FP (Carless, 2020; Matthews et al., 2023; Matthews et al., 2024), it has three limitations. First, the feedback co-creation model in Figure 1 needs validation and experimentation in different cultural and academic settings to identify context-specific implementation affordances and constraints. Second, most of the existing feedback co-creation examples are small-scale interventions in the disciplines of language (Macklin, 2016; Wood, 2023) and education (To, 2022). This may raise doubts about the scalability and viability of feedback co-creation in other disciplines. Third, there is scant mention of the impact of FP on students' learning outcomes as few empirical studies have investigated this aspect. These limitations open up possible avenues for future research.

The first research direction is conducting comparative studies to explore FP implementation in varied cultural and academic contexts. Considering the influence of power dynamics on partnership praxis (Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Healey et al., 2014), participants in Western and Asian regions may have differing interpretations and practices of FP. It would be illuminating to compare the perceptions and experiences of teachers and students in both contexts to cast light on the development of culturally responsive partnership praxis. It would also be insightful to probe into freshmen's and postgraduates' experiences in feedback co-creation to identify the specific support required for respective learner groups.

The second direction is assessing the viability of feedback co-creation in different disciplines and class sizes. Since feedback designs are subject to disciplinary features and norms (Carless et al., 2023), future research could explore whether and how feedback co-creation could be practised in soft (e.g., architecture and business) and hard (e.g., engineering and medicine) disciplines. It is also worth looking into the possibility of conducting FP in large classes with the aid of technology or generative artificial intelligence.

The third direction is examining the impacts of FP on students' learning process and outcomes using various research approaches. Experimental studies could be conducted to ascertain whether students in the FP group would have a higher level of motivation, self-efficacy and performance than their counterparts in the non-FP group. Case

studies could be carried out to explore students' and teachers' challenges in feedback co-creation through surveys, interviews and dialogue analysis. Longitudinal studies could be done to trace students' changes in FP readiness and capability throughout their learning journey (Carless, 2020).

Conclusion

When educators are in search of a more effective feedback approach, engaging students as feedback partners sets a promising direction for increasing learners' responsibility and proactive recipience. To enhance educators' understanding of the partnership praxis, this paper has unpacked FP conceptualisation and implementation. The partnership approach emphasises the joint efforts of students and teachers in co-creating productive feedback in a psychologically safe environment, with dialogue and trust as precursors and respect, reciprocity and shared responsibility as core values. Such collaborative endeavours not only improve feedback quality and uptake but also contribute to learner independence.

Like other pedagogical and assessment innovations, it takes time and patience to nurture feedback partnerships in the current higher education landscape. By outlining the partnership framework and the feedback co-creation model, this paper hopes to inspire academics to rethink their feedback practices and embark on their partnership journey.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This work was supported by the Education Research Funding Programme [Project no.: OER 17/22 TKY] from the Ministry of Education, Singapore.

References

Banihashem, S. K., Noroozi, O., van Ginkel, S., Macfadyen, L. P., & Biemans, H. J. (2022). A systematic review of the role of learning analytics in enhancing feedback practices in higher education. *Educational Research Review*, *37*, 100489. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2022.100489

Bloxham, S., & Campbell, L. (2010). Generating dialogue in assessment feedback: Exploring the use of interactive cover sheets. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *35*(3), 291–300. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602931003650045

Boud, D., & Molloy, E. (2013). Rethinking models of feedback for learning: The challenge of design. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *38*(6), 698–712. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2012.691462

Bovill, C. (2019). Student-staff partnerships in learning and teaching: An overview of current practice and discourse. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, *43*(4), 385–398. https://doi.org/10.1080/03098265.2019.1660628

Bovill, C., Cook-Sather, A., & Felten, P. (2011). Students as co-creators of teaching approaches, course design, and curricula: Implications for academic developers. *International Journal for Academic Development*, *16*(2), 133–145. https://doi.org/10.1080/1360144X.2011.568690

Carless, D. (2020). Longitudinal perspectives on students' experiences of feedback: A need for teacher-student partnerships. *Higher Education Research & Development*, *39*(3), 425–438. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2019.1684455

Carless, D., To, J., Kwan, C., & Kwok, J. (2023). Disciplinary perspectives on feedback processes: Towards signature feedback practices. *Teaching in Higher Education*, *28*(6), 1158–1172. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2020.1863355

Carless, D., & Winstone, N. (2023). Teacher feedback literacy and its interplay with student feedback literacy. *Teaching in Higher Education*, *28*(1), 150–163. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2020.1782372

Chong, S. W. (2022). The role of feedback literacy in written corrective feedback research: From feedback information to feedback ecology. *Cogent Education*, *9*(1), 2082120. https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2022.2082120

Cook-Sather, A., Bovill, C., & Felten, P. (2014). *Engaging students as partners in learning and teaching: A guide for faculty*. Josey-Bass.

Dai, K., Matthews, K. E., & Shen, W. (2024). It is difficult for students to contribute': Investigating possibilities for pedagogical partnerships in Chinese universities. *Teaching in Higher Education*, *29*(2), 584–598. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2021.2015752

Deeley, S. J., & Bovill, C. (2017). Staff student partnership in assessment: Enhancing assessment literacy through democratic practices. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *42*(3), 463–477. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2015.1126551

Freire, P. (2020). Pedagogy of the oppressed. In J. Beck, C. Jenks, N. Keddie, & M. F. D. Young (Eds.), *Toward a sociology of education* (pp. 374–386). Routledge.

Gao, X., Noroozi, O., Gulikers, J. T. M., Biemans, H. J., & Banihashem, S. K. (2024). A systematic review of the key components of online peer feedback practices in higher education. *Educational Research Review*, 100588, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2023.100588

Hadden, A. A., & Frisby, B. N. (2019). Face threat mitigation in feedback: An examination of student feedback anxiety, self-efficacy, and perceived emotional support. *Communication Quarterly*, *67*(1), 60–75. https://doi.org/10.1080/01463373.2018.1531043

Han, Y. (2019). Written corrective feedback from an ecological perspective: The interaction between the context and individual learners. *System*, *80*, 288–303. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2018.12.009

Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, *77*(1), 81–112. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543029848

Healey, M., Flint, A., & Harrington, K. (2014). *Engagement through partnership: Students as partners in learning and teaching in higher education*. HEA.

Johnson, C. E., Keating, J. L., & Molloy, E. K. (2020). Psychological safety in feedback: What does it look like and how can educators work with learners to foster it? *Medical Education*, *54*(6), 559–570. https://doi.org/10.1111/medu.14154

Kaur, A. (2020). Students as partners: Challenges and opportunities in the Asian context. *International Journal for Students as Partners*, *4*(2), 145–149. https://doi.org/10.15173/ijsap.v4i2.4366

Lipnevich, A. A., & Smith, J. K. (2022). Student-feedback interaction model: Revised. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, *75*, 101208. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2022.101208

Lundy, L. (2018). In defence of tokenism? Implementing children's right to participate in collective decision-making. *Childhood (Copenhagen, Denmark)*, *25*(3), 340–354. https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568218777729

Macklin, T. (2016). Compassionate writing response: Using dialogic feedback to encourage student voice in the first-year composition classroom. *Journal of Response to Writing*, *2*(2), 88–105. https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/journalrw/vol2/iss2/5

Matthews, K. E., Cook-Sather, A., Acai, A., Dvorakova, S. L., Felten, P., Marquis, E., & Mercer-Mapstone, L. (2019). Toward theories of partnership praxis: An analysis of interpretive framing in literature on students as partners in teaching and learning. *Higher Education Research & Development*, *38*(2), 280–293. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2018.1530199

Matthews, K. E., Sherwood, C., Enright, E., & Cook-Sather, A. (2024). What do students and teachers talk about when they talk together about feedback and assessment? Expanding notions of feedback literacy through pedagogical partnership. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *49*(1), 26–28. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2023.2170977

Matthews, K. E., Tai, J., Enright, E., Carless, D., Rafferty, C., & Winstone, N. E. (2023). Transgressing the boundaries of 'students as partners' and 'feedback' discourse communities to advance democratic education. *Teaching in Higher Education*, *28*(7), 1503–1517. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2021.1903854

Molloy, E., & Bearman, M. (2019). Embracing the tension between vulnerability and credibility: 'Intellectual candour' in health professions education. *Medical Education*, *53*(1), 32–41. https://doi.org/10.1111/medu.13649

Molloy, E., Boud, D., & Henderson, M. (2020). Developing a learning-centred framework for feedback literacy. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *45*(4), 527–540. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2019.1667955

Nash, R., & Winstone, N. E. (2017). Responsibility-sharing in the giving and receiving of assessment feedback. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *8*, Article 1519. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01519

Nicol, D. (2010). From monologue to dialogue: Improving written feedback processes in mass higher education. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *35*(5), 501–517. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602931003786559

Nicol, D. (2021). The power of internal feedback: Exploiting natural comparison processes. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *46*(5), 756–778. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2020.1823314

Nicol, D., & McCallum, S. (2022). Making internal feedback explicit: Exploiting the multiple comparisons that occur during peer review. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *47*(3), 424–443. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2021.1924620

Nieminen, J. H. (2024). Assessment for inclusion: Rethinking inclusive assessment in higher education. *Teaching in Higher Education*, *29*(4), 841–859. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2021.2021395

Noroozi, O., Banihashem, S. K., Biemans, H. J., Smits, M., Vervoort, M. T., & Verbaan, C. L. (2023). Design, implementation, and evaluation of an online supported peer feedback module to enhance students' argumentative essay quality. *Education and Information Technologies*, *28*(10), 12757–12784. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-023-11683-y

Noroozi, O., Banihashem, S. K., Kerman, N. T., Khaneh, M. P. A., Babaee, M., Ashrafi, H., & Biemans, H. J. (2023). Gender differences in students' argumentative essay writing, peer review performance and uptake in online learning environments. *Interactive Learning Environments*, *31*(10), 6302–6316. https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2022.2034887

Ramani, S., Könings, K. D., Ginsburg, S., & van der Vleuten, C. P. (2019). Twelve tips to promote a feedback culture with a growth mind-set: Swinging the feedback pendulum from recipes to relationships. *Medical Teacher*, *41(6)*(6), 625–631. https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2018.1432850

Ramani, S., Könings, K. D., Mann, K. V., Pisarski, E. E., & van der Vleuten, C. P. (2018). About politeness, face, and feedback: Exploring resident and faculty perceptions of how institutional feedback culture influences feedback practices. *Academic Medicine*, *93*(9), 1348–1358. https://doi.org/10.1097/ACM.0000000000002193

Steen-Utheim, A., & Wittek, A. L. (2017). Dialogic feedback and potentialities for student learning. *Learning, Culture & Social Interaction*, *15*, 18–30. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lcsi.2017.06.002

Telio, S., Ajjawi, R., & Regehr, G. (2015). The 'educational alliance' as a framework for reconceptualising feedback in medical education. *Academic Medicine*, *90*(5), 609–614. https://doi.org/10.1097/ACM.0000000000000560

To, J. (2022). Using learner-centred feedback design to promote students' engagement with feedback. *Higher Education Research & Development*, *41*(4), 1309–1324. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2021.1882403

To, J., Panadero, E., & Carless, D. (2022). A systematic review of the educational uses and effects of exemplars. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *47*(8), 1167–1182. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2021.2011134

Van der Kleij, F. M., Adie, L. E., & Cumming, J. J. (2019). A meta-review of the student role in feedback. *International Journal of Educational Research*, *98*, 303–323. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2019.09.005

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind and society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge University Press.

Winstone, N., & Carless, D. (2019). *Designing effective feedback processes in higher education: A learning-focused approach*. Routledge.

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. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2016.1207538

Winstone, N. E., Nash, R. A., Rowntree, J., & Parker, M. (2017). 'It'd be useful, but I wouldn't use it': Barriers to university students' feedback seeking and recipience. *Studies in Higher Education*, *42*(11), 2026–2041. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2015.1130032

Wood, J. (2023). Enabling feedback seeking, agency and uptake through dialogic screencast feedback. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *48*(4), 464–484. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2022.2089973

Zhou, J., Dawson, P., Tai, J. H. M., & Bearman, M. (2021). How conceptualising respect can inform feedback pedagogies. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *46*(1), 68–79. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2020.1733490