

HOW DO STUDENTS' HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH ACADEMIC FEEDBACK SHAPE THEIR BROADER RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE ASSESSMENTS?

By Jordon Millward



MY BACKGROUND

- 2nd year PhD student with CHERS and DOLS.
- My PhD is looking at:
 - How do different forms of interactions shape the development of professional identity and the career trajectories of life science students?
- Spent 7 years teaching in further education prior to joining Imperial and spent some time moderating the same qualifications alongside my PhD.
- Throughout my PhD one of the areas, I've explored is students' interactions with their curriculum and how this has been shaped with their historical experiences.
- My research has examined Life Science students' interactions through mixed methods research using interviews, surveys and secondary data analysis.



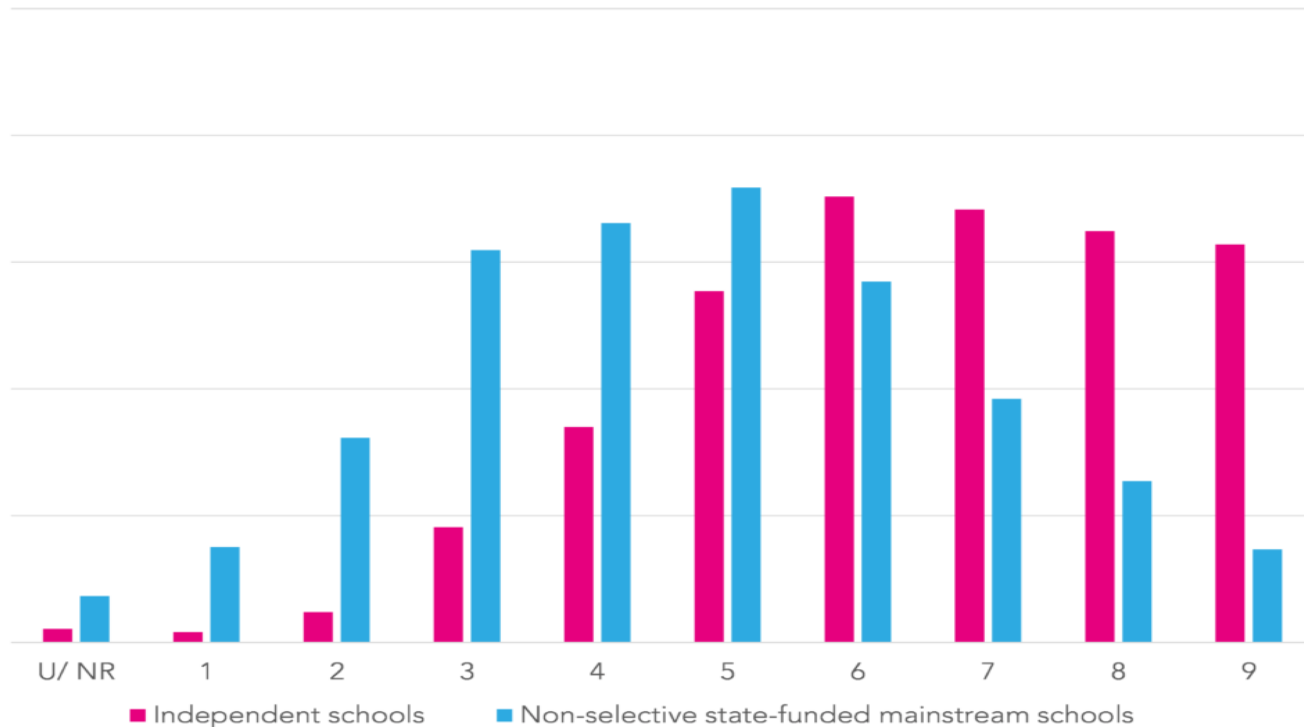
INITIAL THOUGHTS

- My study so far has looked at interviewing students about the interactions they experience as life science students and how these interactions related to the conceptual identity production (CIP) and procedural identity production (PIP) (Le *et al*, 2019).
- Students experience a variety of interactions within the curriculum through their historical experiences and how they apply themselves to their subject.
- One of a students' primary ways of interacting within their curriculum is through feedback to them about their progress which can happen directly or indirectly. This experience can then shape the concept of their relationship with their discipline.
- This brings us think about how we apply feedback to the students and how they perceive it.



AN OPPORTUNITY DIFFERENCE?

Grades awarded in all GCSE subjects, 2019
Pupils at end of Key Stage 4



- Adams *et al.*, (2020) found that a student's relationship with feedback has a long-term influence on their future attainment.
- When compared to a historical context student's prior attainment may already influence their future and perpetuate an attainment gap.
- When students from a selective academic background are mixed with those from a non-selective route, there may in turn be an opportunity difference.

Fig 1: Thomson, 2021



WHAT SHOULD FEEDBACK COVER?

- Sadler (2010) argued that feedback needs to be communicated effectively, and students need to understand it to use it for improvement.
- The two broad functions of feedback, providing a statement of performance and providing advice or suggestions to improve.
- Sadler (2010) suggests that feedback should provide expository and didactic guidance for improving future work. However, students face at least three interpretive challenges while trying to capitalise on feedback, such as;
- Personal investment in the production.
- Understanding of certain concepts or criteria.
- Lack of embedded knowledge necessary to identify the feature of their work.



OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH FEEDBACK



- <https://www.menti.com/albqadgw849h>



METHODOLOGY

- My research has taken the view of student identity developing through social constructivism.
- The initial survey I piloted with first years looked at the perspective students have about their curriculum during their induction.
- Whereas further research undertaken during my project has looked at collecting demographic characteristics of students through surveys.
- Looking at how students interpret their professional identity and career intentions through a career roadmap which drew from Quinlan and Renninger (2022) river artefact.
- The 1-1 interviews with the students explored their interaction within and outside their curriculum and how the relationships shaped their professional identity and career intentions.



HOW WE REINFORCE OUR STUDENTS'

- Many students who I've interviewed refer to early success in a quantifiable form particularly international students.
- Students from an international background can study at institutions like Imperial because of their attainment and the encouragement they receive from the schooling systems.
- Students who are strong in STEM subjects are encouraged to pursue a degree in the UK because of its prestige precisely because they are told they are capable.
- Conversely in students from a UK background many individuals refer to not getting the grades for the top university placement as a failing.
- This contrasts the conceptual view students have of themselves and disadvantages how the national students reflect on their progress.



EFFORT-FEEDBACK THROUGH PLACEMENTS

- An observation from students who are in their final year of their life science degrees is they felt their lab skills were disadvantaged by COVID in their first year of study.
- In the sample of students interviewed 7 out of the 10 students have referred to an internship or placement they have carried out.
- They reflect on the feedback or progress they have made in terms of skill development in the professional roles they have done.
- Zeeb *et al* (2022) highlights the effort-based feedback of supervisors or teams for the student completing a task or doing well in their role.
- Now in an academic setting this can sometimes be related to inflated praise or feedback and the procedural relationship in work is crucial



STUDENT'S INTERACTION WITH FEEDBACK

- Pitt and Norton (2017) looked more specifically on how learners interact with feedback and how it changes based on who delivers it.
- When discussing with students their progress on their course students often referred to attainment-based relationships with academic staff, and emotional based relationships with family and peers.
- A student's historical relationship with feedback will vary based on their background prior to their degree with the preconceptions of feedback from prior experiences applied to staff.
- Whilst their parents maybe involved directly or indirectly in their success but the students particularly international students are driven to make their parents proud.
- Home students were far more self-directed than their international peers.



HOW HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIPS SHAPE OUR STUDENTS

- Students particularly the home students may have an adverse relationship with their feedback.
 - Grade focused
 - Not acknowledging tutor comments
 - Transactional rather than discussion based
- When learners discussed skills, curriculum design and their modules during interviews, they praised delivery that related their tasks to real world applications particularly the work of the lecturers engaged in research.
- Learners were more disconnected when they could not relate to their task either professionally or emotionally through their disciplinary identity.



WHAT CAN WE DO?

- Recognise which students need more support earlier on:
 - A focus on home students.
 - Widening participation students.
 - Learners not engaging in peer feedback or formative assessments.
- Debrief learners following assessment to breakdown key take aways and relate it to their disciplinary development over grades.
- Time our assessments so they can improve.
- Better develop peer support system such as discussion forums moderated by other students or GTAs.
- Embed professional feedback from industry.



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