

BYRAM HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
ARMONK, NEW YORK

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Title of Project: *The Impact of Immediate Feedback on Student Achievement in the World Language Classroom*

Year: 2013/2014

School/Grade: BHHS/9-12

SUMMARY OF *INVESTIGATORS OF PRACTICE* ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

Context:

We are teachers of all levels of Italian and Spanish, respectively, at Byram Hills High School. Combined, we have a total of over 35 plus years of teaching experience in world languages, including upper level and Advanced Placement courses.

We focused on all ability levels, ranging from struggling to high achieving students in grades 9, 10 and 11. Our research focused on providing immediate feedback to all of these students, multiple times during the year to determine its effectiveness.

Action Plan:

As a result of our research conducted last year, we discovered the need to further investigate the impact of immediate feedback on student pronunciation in the second language. In comparison with last year, this year we sought to provide students with immediate feedback as opposed to “delayed” (1-2 days) feedback. We wanted to see if there was a noticeable improvement in pronunciation as a result of providing this immediate feedback. We also surveyed students informally to solicit input regarding the value of this feedback.

We both set up individual meetings with students to offer personalized feedback on their oral performance in the target language. As we met with students, we made notes for them of common errors. We also used this data to help focus on problem areas in pronunciation. Because the meetings were individual we were able to provide immediate feedback. The results were based on providing this immediate feedback.

Prior to conducting our research, we decided to further our knowledge of this topic by reading several articles on feedback and by attending a workshop which dealt with how to maximize the

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effectiveness of feedback in the world language classroom.

According to the Journal of Language Teaching and Research (Vol. 4, No. 5, pp 924-931, September 2013):

- Findings indicated that learners usually feel content when they receive corrective feedback, which prevents them from committing the same errors in the future.
- Providing feedback may also foster learners' language awareness and the ability to notice gaps in their inter-language. Consequently, both linguistic consciousness raising and noticing gaps result in learners' modifying their output in constructive and long-lasting ways.
- Study shows that 81.4% of teachers and 92.8% of learners agreed that errors have to be corrected.
- Corrective feedback helps teachers in controlling students' utterances and it also improves the effectiveness of the them. It must be highlighted that students should be aware of their erroneous forms, since in many cases error correction motivates students to work on their deviant forms and, as a consequence, make progress.
- Study concludes that corrective feedback is considered to be a crucial part in language learning, and it is even expected by most students.

In addition to these findings, the workshop taught us that students must have quick and meaningful feedback in order to improve their learning.

Results:

Our research indicated that the feedback with the greatest impact on student learning involves:

- Collaborative feedback in cooperative learning groups.
- Student self-correction (with guidance from the teacher).
- Student reflects on learning; identifies what works well and what does not for him/her.
- Student sets targets for learning.
- Students develop ownership of their work and their learning.
- Students in the lower grades (9-10) were more receptive to immediate feedback than those in the upper grades (11-12).

To support our data, students shared the following thoughts with us:

- "It was so cool to get my grade back right away and I realized my own mistakes before my teacher told me."
- "It was great to be able to self-correct and not worry about it affecting my grade."
- "I'm more careful when I speak now."
- "It was good to meet one-on-one with my teacher because I wasn't embarrassed about mispronouncing words in front of my friends."

Implications:

Our findings indicated that immediate feedback was the most effective means to build self awareness and self-efficacy. This in turn set the stage for increased motivation which in turn led

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to improved performance in speaking Spanish and Italian.

After meeting with another investigator, we were intrigued by her study of success in extroverts as compared to introverts. This is inspiring us to look at these students and their performance in the second language classroom.