THE POWER OF FEEDBACK IN ONLINE LEARNING: HOW TO INCORPORATE INTERCULTURAL INTELLIGENCE WHEN COMMUNICATING EVALUATIVE COMMENTS

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How do cultural differences impact the way we give and receive feedback in online learning environments? The goal of this paper is to explore: (a) the notion of intercultural intelligence; and (b) culturally appropriate and effective ways of using feedback. Cultural norms and expectations vary widely in communicating evaluative messages. This paper focuses on recent literature on theories and practice that address relevant skills and understanding required for enhancing informal and formal feedback in online learning environments. The main focus of the paper is to examine how cultural and contextual factors influence communicating feedback. A key objective of this exploration is to understand different norms around power relations, face giving and saving, communication styles such as high and low context, and identities. In addition, the literature review portion will include some of the latest research on feedback, communication and sociolinguistic ideologies. The main purpose of the paper is not prescriptive, but collaborative and exploratory.

Whether we are aware of it or not, we are constantly involved in exchanging and responding to feedback in personal and professional settings. Our social life is filled with feedback: performance reviews, program evaluations, proposal comments, nonverbal communication, online and offline meetings, etc. Feedback plays a significant role in our everyday life as it affects our behaviour, decision making, and relations. The results of feedback are essential for learning and can have lasting impacts on identities, relations and attitudes. Current literature provides useful insights into the importance of feedback.

However it fails to recognize its complexity as a unique form of communication and often ignores key cultural differences around managing feedback. The biggest mistake in handling feedback stems from the assumption of similarities. For example, clear and explicit delineation of what is wrong with someone's work can be regarded as a true sign of deep respect in certain contexts. However, the same can be interpreted as rude, offensive, demotivating and humiliating in others. This is because people do not hold exactly the same beliefs, customs and expectations. In technology-mediated learning environments, non-verbal cues and other contextual factors add another level of complexity in communicating feedback

As our workplace becomes increasingly globalized, we need to understand and develop culturally appropriate and effective feedback skills that empower others and achieve results. In online learning environments, collaborative learning and effective feedback communication

play a crucial role in affecting student participation, engagement and learning outcomes. By drawing on recent research on the notion of growth mindset and intercultural competence, we will be able to consider innovative ways to create more inclusive online learning. This paper examines Eurocentric tendencies reflected in research and incorporates studies that involve non-Western value systems. The paper includes suggestions on how to:

- identify different theoretical models and research on feedback;
- apply cultural and contextual approaches to giving and receiving feedback;
- build trust and credibility across cultures; and
- harness technology to achieve culturally appropriate and effective communication

The literature review offers perspectives from a variety of disciplines, such as psychology, anthropology, and intercultural communication, and insights into the role of culture in technology-mediated communication with respect to feedback.