

A Practical Analysis of the Impact of Teacher Feedback on Primary School Students' Learning Behavior

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Abstract: Primary school is a critical period for the development of students' learning behaviors. Teacher feedback, as an integral component of classroom teaching interactions, plays a crucial role in shaping primary school students' learning attitudes, learning strategies, and learning habits. Current basic education reform emphasizes a "student-centered" approach, but in practice, some teachers' use of feedback lacks scientific rationality, resulting in ineffective guidance of students' learning behaviors. This paper, drawing on the fundamentals of teacher feedback and drawing on the practical context of primary school education, analyzes the specific impacts of different types of teacher feedback on primary school students' learning behaviors and explores practical approaches to the scientific application of teacher feedback. The study found that positive and targeted teacher feedback can effectively stimulate primary school students' learning motivation, help them standardize their learning behaviors, and optimize their learning methods; whereas, vague and negative feedback can weaken students' learning initiative and even perpetuate unhealthy learning behaviors. By analyzing the mechanisms and practical strategies of teacher feedback, this paper aims to provide theoretical references and practical guidance for primary school teachers to improve the quality of feedback and promote the optimization of students' learning behaviors, thereby contributing to further improvements in the quality of primary school education and teaching.

Keywords: Teacher feedback, primary school students, learning behaviors, practical strategies, teaching interactions.

1. Introduction

Primary education is the foundation of national education. During this period, students' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral habits are in a critical formative period. Learning behaviors not only impact their current academic performance but also have long-term implications for future learning and development. In primary school classrooms, teachers, as organizers and guides, engage with students throughout the entire process. Teacher feedback, at the core of this interaction, is a crucial basis for students to understand their own learning progress and adjust their course. Compared to middle school students, primary school students have weaker self-awareness and are more reliant on external evaluation. A teacher's affirmation, guidance, or suggestion can influence their learning motivation and behavioral choices. However, current primary school teacher feedback suffers from numerous problems: some teachers provide vague feedback, using simple phrases like "good," "not bad," or "keep trying," making it difficult for students to clearly identify their strengths and weaknesses; some teachers focus on outcomes, neglecting the learning process, making it difficult to guide students to reflect on their experiences and improve their methods; and a few teachers frequently provide negative feedback, overly criticizing students when they make mistakes, undermining their confidence and fostering fear and resistance. These issues hinder the positive impact of teacher feedback and may even hinder students' learning ability and the development of positive learning behaviors. With the deepening of basic education curriculum reform, "focusing on student development and optimizing the teaching process" has become a core goal of primary education. How to stimulate students' potential and regulate learning behavior through scientific feedback is a pressing issue for educators. Based on this, this article, drawing on

primary education practice, systematically analyzes the impact of teacher feedback on primary school students' learning behavior and explores effective application strategies. This research provides insights for primary school teachers to improve their teaching and enhance effectiveness. It also enriches the practical dimensions of related research and contributes to improving the quality of primary education.

2. Types and Applicability of Feedback from Elementary School Teachers

Feedback provided by teachers to students doesn't have a single form; it can be categorized into several types based on content, nature, and purpose. In elementary schools, different types of feedback, depending on whether they align with students' thinking and learning needs, and their impact on their learning behavior, can vary significantly. The most fundamental types of feedback are positive and negative. Positive feedback, primarily based on affirmation and encouragement, recognizes students' efforts, progress, or learning, and can promote positive learning behaviors. Elementary school students are busy building their confidence and are particularly sensitive to praise. Phrases like "Your approach to solving the problem is unique" or "Your homework is more thorough than last time" can quickly create a sense of accomplishment, leading to greater initiative in class and completion, gradually forming a positive cycle. However, positive feedback shouldn't simply be "You're great." Without specific content, students won't understand their strengths, and the feedback will be less effective. Negative feedback helps students identify problems and correct mistakes, and common examples include criticism and reminders[1]. While it's not forbidden in elementary schools, it should be used sparingly and with care. Elementary school students have weak psychological resilience. Harsh words

like "You got it wrong on such a simple question? You're not paying attention!" can easily lead to self-denial and avoid learning, making them particularly inappropriate. However, negative feedback like "There's something wrong with the steps in this question. Let's work out how to fix it" is fact-based and delivered in a calm tone. It can help students identify shortcomings and proactively correct them. This type of feedback is very appropriate and can regulate learning behavior. Regarding content, process feedback and outcome feedback are crucial. Process feedback focuses on the learning process, such as problem-solving ideas and methods. For example, when evaluating a text analysis, you can say, "You incorporated real-life experience, your thinking is clear, and paying more attention to the details will lead to a deeper understanding." Outcome feedback focuses solely on the results, such as "You got this question wrong" or "You scored 80 on the test." Elementary school students are currently more focused on learning methods and developing habits, not just focusing on scores. Therefore, process feedback is more appropriate. Outcome feedback, without specifying how to improve, can lead students to focus solely on the score and not the process. There are also oral and written feedback options. Verbal feedback is quick and suitable for classroom interaction and group discussions; written feedback can be retained for a long time and is suitable for grading homework and reviewing test papers. For example, writing "neat handwriting and attention to punctuation will be better" on the homework is best used together to help students optimize their learning behavior.

3. The Intrinsic Mechanisms of Teacher Feedback's Impact on Elementary School Students' Learning Behavior

3.1. Indirect Guidance Mechanisms at the Affective and Cognitive Levels

Teacher feedback indirectly influences elementary school students' learning behavior through emotional and cognitive processes. Emotionally, elementary school students are sensitive to and easily resonate with teachers' evaluations, and their attitudes toward feedback directly translate into their own emotional cognition. Positive and specific feedback can make students feel validated, generating joy and pride, which in turn motivates them to learn and encourages them to actively participate in class and complete tasks. However, negative and blunt feedback can lead to feelings of loss and inferiority, and even resistance to learning, resulting in behaviors such as being hesitant to speak up in class and procrastinating on homework. Over the long term, positive feedback can lead students to associate learning with happiness and a sense of accomplishment, while negative feedback can easily lead to pain and failure. This perception can solidify into a stable learning behavior. Cognitively, elementary school students often have a vague understanding of their own learning progress. Teacher feedback can provide a clear reference. Process feedback can help students organize their thinking, identify effective methods and areas for improvement. For example, it can point out problems with calculation habits and provide suggestions, helping them adjust their learning methods. Furthermore, feedback can help students establish learning standards. Elementary school is a critical period for developing learning standards[2]. For

example, when correcting an essay, explaining that a rhetorical device is used to make it vivid can help students use this as a benchmark and actively experiment with subsequent writing, making their learning behaviors more targeted. If feedback lacks clear guidance, students will struggle to identify problems, adjust their cognitive structures, and become unfocused in their learning behaviors.

3.2. Direct Shaping Mechanisms at the Behavioral Level

At the behavioral level, teacher feedback directly shapes elementary school students' learning behaviors through reinforcement, de-emphasizing, and providing role models. According to behaviorist theory, individual behavior will be strengthened or weakened by external reinforcement, which is obvious in primary school students: when students show good behaviors such as listening carefully and thinking actively, timely and positive feedback will let them know that the behavior is recognized, making them more willing to repeat and strengthen good behavior; when bad behaviors such as skipping classes and doing homework carelessly appear, gentle feedback and guidance for correction can make students realize that the behavior is inappropriate, reduce or even avoid bad behavior. In addition, primary school students have strong imitation abilities, and the excellent learning behaviors or improvement directions mentioned in the teacher's feedback will become their imitation objects. This mechanism of guiding behavioral imitation through feedback can quickly promote good learning behaviors within the class and achieve the overall optimization of students' learning behaviors.

4. Current Problems with Elementary School Teacher Feedback

Although teacher feedback is crucial for elementary school students' learning behavior, it currently suffers from numerous problems in elementary school settings. Not only does it fail to have a positive impact, it can sometimes even have negative consequences. These issues primarily arise in five key areas. It's common for feedback to have unclear objectives. Some teachers lack a clear direction when providing feedback, unsure whether to motivate students, correct mistakes, or guide them to optimize their methods. For example, after a student answers a question in class, the teacher simply says, "Well, sit down," leaving the student with no useful information. Other teachers, driven by the need to meet the teaching schedule, simply give a cursory evaluation, ignoring individual student differences and failing to meet the needs of each student, ultimately failing to provide precise guidance[3]. Feedback is also often one-sided. When grading math homework, for example, some teachers simply mark students' mistakes and assign grades, without analyzing where and why they made mistakes, or acknowledging the effort and unique thinking behind their solutions. Over time, students become fixated on grades and neglect developing their skills. The same applies to essays: teachers often say "well done" or "you need to work harder," without specifically addressing what's good or needs improvement. This leaves students with no direction for improvement or identification of their weaknesses, rendering feedback completely unhelpful. The negative impact of inappropriate feedback methods is also significant. Once, a student in class got a simple math problem wrong, and the teacher bluntly said,

"You can't even do something this simple? You weren't paying attention in class." The student bristled and subsequently refused to raise their hand in class. Some teachers also rely solely on verbal feedback, omitting specific comments when grading homework and rarely using gestures like smiling and nodding in class. Students don't feel the teacher's attention, and naturally, their motivation to learn is diminished. Delayed feedback timing can also negatively impact effectiveness. For example, if a student secretly plays with stationery in class, and the teacher does not remind him at the time, and criticizes him after class, the student has long forgotten what he did in class and may make the same mistake next time; the same goes for homework. Some teachers take several days to correct it before handing it out. Students have no idea how they thought about the questions at the time, and the feedback becomes meaningless. The lack of interaction in feedback will also turn feedback into a one-way output of "teachers talk and students listen." For example, a teacher will hand out an essay directly after correcting it, without giving students the opportunity to ask questions. Some students wonder why they were deducted points but cannot ask questions; some teachers use a set of standards to evaluate all students. Regardless of whether they have good or poor grades, the feedback content is the same, and it is impossible to help each student accurately[4].

5. Optimizing Practical Strategies for Teacher Feedback

In response to existing issues reported by primary school teachers, and in light of students' cognitive and learning needs, strategies can be developed along five dimensions: clarifying goals, enriching content, optimizing methods, seizing opportunities, and strengthening interaction. This approach can leverage the positive impact of feedback on learning behavior. Clarifying feedback objectives is fundamental. Teachers should set clear goals that integrate teaching objectives with student differences, focusing on "promoting student development": for students with weak foundations, the goal is to "boost confidence and correct basic mistakes," providing timely recognition when they complete simple tasks. For students with strong foundations, the goal is to "expand their thinking and enhance their abilities," encouraging them to tackle challenging problems. Furthermore, specific goals should be prioritized, such as "mastering the steps of two-digit multiplication and correcting carry errors" when grading math homework, rather than the general "improving calculation skills," making feedback more targeted. Enriching feedback content is crucial. Breaking the paradigm of prioritizing results over process, and generalities over specifics, strengthens process-oriented feedback. When grading reading passages, teachers should not only acknowledge students' accurate thinking in identifying key sentences but also encourage deeper understanding in the context of the passage. Feedback should be specific, highlighting strengths when affirming, such as "The class sharing connects well with the text and is very thoughtful," and providing clear guidance when pointing out weaknesses, such as "For word problems, you can first list the given conditions and analyze the relationships." Optimizing feedback methods is key. Adapting to the psychology of elementary school students, use gentle and diverse methods, avoiding harsh criticism and monotonous forms. When students make mistakes, use a model of "acknowledging

progress, pointing out problems, and offering suggestions." For example, first praise neatness of homework, then point out missing calculation steps and review the rules together. In class, combine verbal feedback with nods and smiles[5]. When grading homework, in addition to textual feedback, use stars and smiley faces to add interest. Knowing the timing of feedback is crucial. Provide immediate feedback for interactive classes and immediate tasks, providing immediate recognition when students offer novel ideas and gentle reminders when they become distracted. Feedback on essays and complex word problems can be delayed, but should be completed within 1-2 days to prevent students from losing memory. Enhancing interactive feedback is a key approach. Break the "one-way flow" and establish a closed-loop interactive system. Allow time for students to ask questions after feedback. Encourage student participation in feedback, using a "self-assessment + peer-assessment + teacher-assessment" model. In essay teaching, students first engage in self-assessment, then peer-assessment in groups, and finally, the teacher provides comprehensive feedback to cultivate students' reflective skills.

6. A Support System for the Coordinated Development of Teacher Feedback and Learning Behavior

To ensure that teacher feedback consistently and positively guides primary school students' learning behavior, a support system must be established across three dimensions: institutional, capacity, and environmental. This system will support scientific feedback and behavioral optimization, prevent feedback from becoming a formality, and ensure long-term effectiveness. Institutional support is fundamental. Schools should establish a comprehensive teacher feedback management system and incorporate feedback skills into teaching evaluations and training. First, they should formulate feedback behavior guidelines, clarifying principles such as "balancing process and results" and "avoiding negative and offensive language." Feedback quality should be incorporated into performance appraisals and teaching evaluations. Teachers should be encouraged to prioritize feedback through assessments of homework corrections and classroom observations. Second, a regular training mechanism should be established, with specialized training covering primary school student psychology and feedback strategies. Experienced teachers should be invited to share their experiences and conduct simulation exercises. Furthermore, platforms such as feedback-themed teaching and research and online groups should be established to promote mutual learning among teachers. Improving teacher capacity is crucial. Teachers need to enhance their adaptability both professionally and psychologically. Professionally, they should deepen their knowledge of educational psychology and teaching evaluation, understand the cognitive characteristics of primary school students, master the appropriate methods for different feedback methods, and design personalized feedback tailored to the subject, such as focusing on problem-solving logic in mathematics and on language expression in Chinese[6]. Psychologically, we should cultivate patience and empathy, respect students' differences, and tolerate mistakes. We should also enhance reflective skills, regularly review feedback cases, analyze results, optimize strategies, and improve the fit between feedback and learning behaviors.

Optimizing the teaching environment is a key support. We must create a respectful and inclusive classroom and school environment. In the classroom, teachers should establish an equal teacher-student relationship, clarify that "mistakes are part of learning," and eliminate students' fear of feedback. On campus, we should promote the concept of "positive feedback" through bulletin boards, broadcasts, and themed class meetings, showcasing examples of behavioral improvement. We should also strengthen home-school collaboration, disseminate scientific feedback methods to parents, and encourage them to provide feedback in positive and concrete ways, such as affirming their children for completing homework independently and with neat handwriting. This ensures that students receive consistent guidance at home and at school, fostering a collaborative force for improvement.

7. Conclusion

This article, drawing on practical experience, explores the impact of teacher feedback on elementary school students' learning behavior. It examines feedback types, mechanisms of action, practical challenges, optimization strategies, and support systems, clarifying its core role in developing students' learning behaviors. The conclusions are as follows: First, the adaptability of teacher feedback types to the elementary school educational context directly determines the effectiveness of guidance. Positive feedback and process-based feedback, combined with oral and written feedback, align with elementary school students' cognition and needs and can reinforce positive learning behaviors. Negative feedback requires controlled frequency and method, correcting errors in an objective and gentle manner. The adaptive use of different types of feedback is fundamental to effective feedback. Second, teacher feedback influences learning behavior through three mechanisms: affective, cognitive, and behavioral. Emotionally, positive feedback fosters a sense of accomplishment and confidence, while negative feedback can easily trigger resistance. Cognitively, process-based feedback helps students adjust their cognitive structures and establish learning standards. Behaviorally, feedback shapes behavior by reinforcing or weakening it, providing role models for imitation. This synergy among these three levels provides a theoretical basis for developing feedback strategies. Thirdly, current feedback from primary

school teachers suffers from issues such as unclear goals, one-sided content, inappropriate methods, delayed timing, and a lack of interaction, which weakens positive effects and even hinders behavioral development. Strategies must be developed from five dimensions to ensure that feedback is scientific and targeted. Finally, building a collaborative development guarantee system is key to the long-term effectiveness of feedback. Institutional norms and training, teacher capacity building, and classroom and home-school collaboration support each other to ensure the advancement of feedback practices and the optimization of behaviors. In summary, teacher feedback is a systematic project that influences the development of students' learning behaviors. Primary school teachers need to attach importance to feedback, use appropriate strategies based on student characteristics and teaching scenarios, and rely on school-home collaboration to form a virtuous cycle. In the future, we can explore the differentiated feedback needs of students in different subjects and grades to help improve the quality of primary education and the long-term development of students.

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