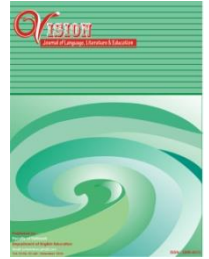




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## THE VALUE OF TEACHERS' EFFECTIVE PRAISE AND FEEDBACK TO ADULT LEARNERS TO CREATE A POSITIVE CLASSROOM CLIMATE

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Keywords	Abstract
<i>Keywords: Praise, Feedback, Classroom Climate, Educational Psychology</i>	Recent studies have demonstrated that praise for academic performances can affect students' intrinsic motivation and performances in learning. This study aims to investigate the value of teachers' effective praise and feedback to adult learners to create a positive classroom climate. The participants of this study were 41 students of fourth semester, TBI-4, UINSU. This study was conducted with a descriptive qualitative research which incorporates both qualitative and quantitative instruments to accomplish the objectives of the study. The questionnaires were distributed to the students. The questionnaires had ten close-ended questions. Students were asked to choose one best answer based on their learning experiences or their learning expectations. The results of the study suggest that effective praise and feedback are needed to boost adult learners' motivation in learning. Adult learners define characteristics of an effective praise is brief, objective and explicit. Meanwhile, an effective feedback could be delivered in a clear, brief, practical and relevant way. Adult learners also realize the importance of effective praise and feedback to maintain teacher-student interaction which results to positive classroom climate.

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## INTRODUCTION

Many problems associated with student misbehavior in class are related to how teachers discipline individual students, but, instead, the way they managed the whole classroom group. A teacher must ensure her readiness to teach and facilitate the learning process. Apart from it, classroom climate is also a crucial factor needs to take into consideration to create a successful learning. Classroom environment is one of the most important factors affecting student learning. Simply put, students learn better when they view the learning environment as positive and supportive (Dorman, Aldridge, & Fraser, 2006). A positive environment is one in which students feel a sense of belonging, trust others, and feel encouraged to tackle challenges, take risks, and ask questions (Bucholz & Sheffler, 2009). Such an environment provides relevant content, clear learning goals and feedback, opportunities to build social skills, and strategies to help students succeed (Weimer, 2009).

There are some factors that can threaten the positive classroom, it can be both from students and teachers; problems that students bring from home, lack of motivation in learning, pressure in doing test, etc. From teachers' side it can be related to the lack of motivation in teaching due to minimum response teachers gained from students during teaching-learning process, or the way teachers respond to student misbehaviors. When teachers respond in a harsh and combative manner to students' display of problem behavior, they most likely will receive combative responses from students in return and see an increase in their display of problem behavior. This type of response can combat interactions between teachers and students and definitely it will affect to classroom climate.

Among the age of learners, adult learners are considered as independent and self-directed learners. Research suggests that adult learners have different learning needs and expectations in education, which differentiates them from another students. However, there are adult learners who may need additional support for self-direction (Cornelius & Gordon, 2009).

Teachers could provide effective praise and feedback to adults. Teachers should address their misbehaviors in positive manners. Adult learners could learn from their mistakes if we elaborate them proportionally. By doing so, it will reinforce their positive behaviors. In addition to that, by providing enough positive experiences to counteract the negative, we can help students avoid getting stuck in a "negative spiral" (Fredrickson, 2001).

This study aims to investigate the value of teachers' effective praise and feedback to adult learners' intrinsic motivation and performance to create a positive classroom climate.

This study also highlights teacher's role in creating a positive, stimulating and energizing classroom climate through giving constructive praise and feedback. A teacher must know that she/he can play many roles in a classroom, as an authority figure, a leader, a source of information, a director, a manager, a counselor, a guide, and even such roles as a friend, a confidante and a parent. Teachers not only transferring knowledge but they can help increasing students' trust, interest, motivation which will finally result to students' learning achievements.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Adult Learners**

Teachers often praise young learners or adolescents for their progress in learning, but it sounds weird if we apply it to adult learners. Teachers take them for granted. Many teachers considered them as independent learners and expected to be able to handle criticism more maturely. Harmer (2001: 40) classified special characteristics of adult learners:

- They can engage with abstract thought. This suggests that we do not have to rely exclusively on activities such as games and songs though these may be appropriate for some students.
- They have a whole range of life experiences to draw on.
- They have expectations about learning process, and they already have their own set pattern of learning.
- Adults tend, on the whole to be more disciplined than other age groups and crucially, they are often prepare to struggle on despite boredom.
- They come into classroom with a rich range of experiences which allow teachers to use a wide range of activities with them
- Unlike young children and teenagers, they often have a clear understanding of why they are learning and what they want to get out of it. Motivation is a critical factor in successful learning. Many adults are able to sustain a level of motivation by holding on to a distant goal in a way that teenagers find more difficult.

Good teachers of adults must take all of these factors into account. Even though adult learners already have a rich range of learning experiences and their own set of pattern of learning, they may have experienced failure and criticism at school which makes them anxious and under-confident about learning a language. Here, the roles of teacher as a

facilitator and motivator are crucial to boost their motivation and enhance their learning outcomes. Adult learners are also human beings who need to be accepted and appreciated for their efforts and achievements.

### **Establishing Rapport**

As a teacher, it is important to establish and maintain an environment that is positive, tolerant, and supportive for all students. Every student must feel safe and important in the class in order for maximum learning to take place. A positive classroom environment does not just happen; the teacher creates it. One strategy to build a positive classroom is by establishing *Rapport*. Rapport is the relationship or connection teachers establish with their students, a relationship built on trust and respect that leads to students' feeling capable, competent, and creative. The connection can be set up by:

- Showing interest in each student as a person
- Giving feedback on each person's progress
- Openly soliciting student's ideas and feelings
- Valuing and respecting what students think and say
- Laughing with them and not at them
- Working with them and not at them
- Working with them as a team, and not against them, and
- Developing a genuine sense of vicarious joy when they learn something or otherwise succeed.

### **The Value of Effective Praise to Create a Positive Classroom Climate**

#### **What is Effective Praise?**

Praise is a simple strategy teachers can apply to maintain a good rapport with their students. It also helps to boost students' motivation in learning. In reality, student's response to teacher's praise is not always similar. It may succeed to one students but it may be failed with another students. Students from different backgrounds and experiences, including socioeconomic classes, ability levels, developmental levels, and genders, may respond differently to praise (Hitz & Driscoll, 1988). Effective praise specifically describes positive behaviors and explain why they are important. Example: "Asking your friend a thoughtful question shows us you are a good-listener to peers, and listening is the secret of awesome communication."

Brophy (1981) distinguished between effective praise and ineffective praise:

Effective Praise	Ineffective Praise
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ shows genuine pleasure and concern</li> <li>➤ shows verbal and nonverbal variety</li> <li>➤ specifies the particulars of an accomplishment, so students know exactly what was performed well</li> <li>➤ is offered in recognition of noteworthy effort on difficult task</li> <li>➤ attributes success to effort, implying that similar success can be expected in the future</li> <li>➤ fosters intrinsic motivation to continue to pursue goals</li> <li>➤ is delivered without disrupting the communicative flow of ongoing interaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ is personal, mechanical, and robotic</li> <li>➤ shows bland uniformity</li> <li>➤ is restricted to global comments so students are not sure what was performed well</li> <li>➤ is offered equally strongly for easy and difficult tasks</li> <li>➤ attributes success to ability, luck for other external factors</li> <li>➤ fosters extrinsic motivation to perform only to receive more praise</li> <li>➤ disrupts the communicative flow of ongoing interaction</li> </ul>

### Strategies to Increase Effective Praise in Classroom Practice

Here are several suggestions for shaping praise to increase its effectiveness (Wright, 2012):

**Describe Noteworthy Student Behavior.** Praise statements that lack a specific account of student behavior in observable terms are compromised—as they fail to give students performance feedback to guide their learning. For example, a praise statement such as 'Good job!' is inadequate because it lacks a behavioral description (Hawkins & Heflin, 2011). However, such a statement becomes acceptable when expanded to include a behavioral element: "You could identify the types of conditional in the paragraph. Good job!"

**Praise Effort and Accomplishment, Not Ability.** There is some evidence that praise statements about general ability can actually reduce student appetite for risk-taking (Burnett, 2001). Therefore, teachers should generally steer clear of praise that includes assumptions about global student ability (e.g., "You are a really good Math student!"; "I can tell from this exercise that grammar is no problem for you."). Praise should instead focus on specific

examples of student effort or accomplishment (e.g., "It's obvious from your grade that you worked hard to prepare for this quiz. Great work!"). When praises are dedicated more specific to students' capabilities, it can help students to see a direct link between the effort that they invest in a task and improved academic or behavioral performance.

**Match the Method of Praise Delivery to Student Preferences.** Teachers can deliver praise in a variety of ways and contexts. For example, a praise could be delivered in front of a class or work group or may instead deliver that praise privately, face to face with the student, or as written feedback on the student's assignment. When possible, the teacher should determine and abide by a student's preferences for receiving individual praise. It crucial point to note, while most students in elementary grades may easily accept public praise, evidence suggests that middle and high-school students actually prefer private praise (Burnett, 2001). So, when in doubt with older students, deliver praise in private rather than in public.

**Implement your plan and evaluate changes in your praise statements and the influence on students' behavior.** To assist in implementing your plan, we suggest teachers use self-monitoring strategies. Self-monitoring has been supported as an effective method to promote and change behaviors in a variety of settings with different populations, and thus, it has been effective in changing teachers' behavior with respect to increasing the quantity and quality of praise in the classrooms (Kalis, Vannest, & Parker, 2007).

### **The Value of Effective Feedback to Create a Positive Classroom Climate**

Apart from effective praise, effective feedback must be taken into account too by teachers. These two skills can facilitate positive interactions between teachers and adult learners in the classroom.

#### **What is Effective Feedback?**

Teacher feedback is an essential component of the learning process and can help create a positive classroom atmosphere. Summary of feedback was provided by Winne and Butler (1994) in their claim that "feedback is information with which a learner can confirm, add to, overwrite, tune, or restructure information in memory, whether that information is domain knowledge, meta-cognitive knowledge, beliefs about self and tasks, or cognitive tactics and strategies" (p. 5740).

Effective feedback must answer three major questions asked by a teacher and/or by a student: Where am I going? (What are the goals?), how am I going? (What progress is being made toward the goal?), and Where to next? (What activities need to be undertaken to make better progress?) The purpose of feedback is to provide students and teachers with information regarding students' performance and understanding and allow for continued learning following initial instruction (Miller, 2002). Effective feedback has the potential to affect future student performance by increasing correct responding and desirable behaviors and decreasing incorrect responding and undesirable behaviors (Bangert-Drowns et al., 1991; Konoid, Miller, & Konoid, 2004).

### **Strategies to Increase Effective Feedback in Classroom Practice**

There are two type of feedback that can be used to address correct and incorrect responses, respectively, are *instructive feedback* and *error correction*. Instructive feedback is a method for responding to correct student actions or responses. Instructive feedback is aimed to expose children to additional instructional information in relatively little instructional time. Instructive feedback follows effective instruction on target material, an opportunity to respond, and a correct student response (Werts et al., 1995). Another type of feedback that can be beneficial in the classroom is error correction, also called corrective feedback. Error correction is provided to a student following an academic or behavioral error with the purpose of teaching the student the correct response.

To increase the use of instructive feedback and error correction in the classroom, teachers can:

- **Identify specific opportunities**

Here, teacher must know the timing of feedback, particularly when it relates to error correction or corrective feedback. It can be given immediately during the task or teacher can delay it during fluency building since it might interrupt the learning process. Similarly, Clariana, Wagner, and Roher Murphy (2000) claimed that the effects of immediate feedback are likely to be more powerful for FT (feedback about the task) and delayed feedback more powerful for FP (the processing of the task).

- **Plan for the intentional use of these two strategies**

To ensure consistency and correct implementation of feedback procedures, it is essential that teachers monitor their use of these feedback procedures and measure adults'

responses to determine whether the feedback procedures are impactful or not. Teachers can keep track of learners' progress by providing opportunities for them to engage in the correct responses and then recording their correct or incorrect responses. For instructive feedback, teachers can assess learners' responses by conducting learning probes before beginning the use of instructive feedback and after the student has reached criterion on the targeted skill or behavior.

However, with corrective feedback, learning probes occur and can be recorded each time the student is given an opportunity to respond to the target material. Consistent recording of this information can help prompt teachers to provide adequate amounts of feedback and can provide information on whether feedback strategies are assisting students in learning new skills and information (Werts et al, 1995, 1996).

### **Balance Praise and Criticism**

The benefits of using effective praise and feedback in classroom settings are many. Teacher praise is associated with an increase in learner's correct responses, on-task behavior, and engagement. Should teachers balance between praise and criticism? This question is useful for teachers to act wisely in classroom practices. Suppose there are two teachers, the first, frequently praise adult learners with minimum criticism, meanwhile the second teacher regularly criticizes her students regarding their performances in task-completions, she rarely praises. Unfortunately, researchers have found that teachers do not necessarily use praise effectively or frequently (Beaman & Wheldall, 2000). Teachers must balance between praise and criticism. Too much of either renders it less and less effective.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Participants**

The population of this study was 41 students of TBI-4, fourth semester of English Department, UINSU. Since this research focuses on adult learners, so the writer considered that they were suitable to respond the questionnaire.

### **Instruments**

The researcher sent questionnaire to the learners via WhatsApp group. It was conducted online since it's the COVID-19 pandemic so the learners must study from home to minimize the outbreak. The value of Teachers' effective praise and feedback to adult learners to create a positive classroom climate questionnaire had ten close-ended questions. The



questionnaire was designed with some modifications based on the questionnaire of Gardner (2004).

Mostly, they consisted of attitudinal questions. They are used to find out what people think and the covert beliefs, attitudes, values, and interests. The four-point scale was used for all responses with related labels such as (a. always, b. sometimes, c. seldom d. never) or (a. yes, b. no, c. maybe, d. not at all) to gather the data. The reason for using this method was that the study in a simple way could retrieve the opinions of several students on the questions of the study (Johansson & Svedner, 2006).

### **Data Collection**

The study was conducted to 41 students of TBI-4, fourth semester of English Department, UINSU. Before the questionnaires were distributed, they were requested to be honest in doing the questionnaires. They were asked to choose one best answer based on their learning experiences or their learning expectations. Then, the questionnaires were sent to students in document form via WhatsApp group.

The writer intends to gain numerical data to find out adult learners responses about teachers' praise and feedback in creating a positive classroom climate. Every student accepted the same questions. They were given two hours to do the questionnaires. When they have finished, teacher collected the data and come to the process of analyzing the data.

### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The result showed that there were about six questions which gained most similar respond out of ten questions, they were also dominant in percentage. Started with the first question, the students were questioned whether praise and feedback are crucial in language learning, here there were 27 students who answered crucial, so it was estimated about 65,8% students said praise and feedback are crucial in language learning. Next, the third question, "Do you find praise and feedback help you to boost your confidence in learning?" Thirty eight students responded "yes", it was about 92.6%. Fourth question, "Do you feel motivated to do your best in learning if your teacher praises you?" They are about 35 students out of 41 students who responded "always" (85.3%).

The dominant percentage (95.1%) was shown in question number 7, "Do you think praise and feedback are useful to maintain teacher-student interaction?" The adults answered "Yes". Another dominant percentage (85.3%) is for question number nine, they were asked,

“Are praise and feedback effective in creating positive classroom climate?” It was around 35 students responded “Yes” for this question. The last dominant percentage was gained from question number 10. The writer asked the adults “Will you engage more actively in classroom activities if your teacher guides you with constructive feedback? Honestly saying, twenty nine students (70.7%) responded “Yes.”

Table 1: Data Result of Questionnaire

No	Questions	Crucial	Very crucial	Not so	Not at all
1.	According to you, are praise and feedback crucial in language learning?	65.8%	34.1%	-	-
2.	Does your teacher give praise and feedback in classroom interaction?	Always 41.4%	Sometimes 41.4%	Seldom 17%	Never -
3.	Do you find praise and feedback help you to boost your confidence in learning?	Yes 92.6%	No -	Maybe 2.4%	Not at all 4.8%
4.	Do you feel motivated to do your best in learning if your teacher praises you?	Always 85.3%	Sometimes 12.1%	Seldom 2.4%	Never -
5.	What characteristics of a good praise that help you to improve your motivation in learning?	Brief, subjective and Implicit. 14.6%	Long, subjective and implicit. -	Brief, objective and Implicit. 82.9%	Long, objective and Implicit. 2.4%
6.	What characteristics of a constructive feedback that help you doing your task?	Clear, brief, and relevant. 51.2%	Repetitive, long and relevant. 2.4%	Practical, brief, and relevant. 46.3%	Theoretical, long and relevant. -
7.	Do you think praise and feedback are useful to maintain teacher-student interaction?	Yes 95.1%	No -	Maybe 4.8%	Not at all -
8.	Should praise and feedback be given in every meeting?	Yes 63.4%	No 17%	Maybe 14.6%	Not at all 4.8%
9.	Are praise and feedback effective in creating positive classroom climate?	Yes 85.3%	No -	Maybe 12.1%	Not at all 2.4%
10.	Will you engage more actively in classroom activities if your teacher guides you with constructive feedback?	Yes 70.7%	No -	Maybe 26.8%	Not at all 2.4%

## CONCLUSION

After analyzing the data, it proves that adult learners realized the successfulness of a classroom interaction does not only focus on teacher or students only. They both cooperate to create a positive, energizing and supportive classroom climate. The adult learners also suggests that praise and feedback should be given by teacher every meeting (63.4%). In terms

of characteristics of a good praise, the adult learners prefer brief, objective and explicit praise to long, subjective and implicit one. Teachers are expected to give clear, brief, practical and relevant feedback to guide them doing the task. This study suggests that teachers should not be autocratic figures in education. They should be open for insight and suggestion from their students to improve the quality of their teaching particularly, and education generally. Moreover, if they deal with adult learners who have had previous learning experiences, they can be critical of teaching style and classroom management. To conclude, teachers' effective praise and feedback are crucial to adult learners to create positive classroom climate, but teachers must give them in balance proportion. Too much of either renders it less and less effective. Use praise and feedback considerately.

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