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Growing Emerging Researchers in a TESOL Teacher Education Program: Implications for Feedback Practice

As teacher educators (TEs), we have a unique and remarkable opportunity to mentor the next generation of teachers. Over the years, our teacher candidates (TCs) have reported a sense of cognitive and affective dissonance while engaging in their culminating master's research requirement as part of a research seminar course. Cognitively, this research study requires knowledge-generation quite different from research they engaged in throughout the program, where they would synthesize and analyze published work in response to a prompt. This knowledge-generation process would often result in challenging previously held assumptions regarding the topic of inquiry through an analysis of authentic data gathered in the field. Many also experience affective dissonance when beliefs about their sense of self as emerging practitioner-researchers are questioned. Some research has examined ways in which to provide deliberate feedback that attunes not only to the TCs' cognitive and affective dimensions but also to where they can be moved in terms of the outer limits of their learning potential. This study examines how the lenses of socio-cultural and constructive-developmental theories can complement TEs in supporting their TCs in navigating the complex task of teacher research and proposes a framework for feedback practice grounded in a person-centered approach that accounts for TC developmental potentialities.

The chance to walk with another person in good company and confidence as you explore questions, problems and hopes for practice can be an incredibly powerful gift and opportunity, one that recognizes the fundamental dignity and fragility of the people around us (and ourselves) without letting go of the urgency of the demands we face together. (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016, p. 66)

Carl Rogers, an influential American psychologist and one of the leading founders of humanistic psychology (1961), introduced the client-centered approach to therapy that revolutionized the ways in which psychologists approached their work with their clients. He describes his approach as "person-centered," where he strove to see the experiences of his clients from their perspective and understand their fears and triumphs, while at the same time participate in the process of meaning-making with his clients through establishing mutual understanding with a "thrust towards growth" (p. 5). This approach, when applied to education, positions us as co-creators in the meaning-making process with our teacher candidates (TCs). In recent decades, we have moved away from thinking of our work as merely transmitting information to one that acknowledges our TCs' sense of agency (Molina, 2019) and funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) in the sense-making process. However, we have not necessarily considered the diversity of the developmental potentialities from which TCs make sense of their experiences as we engage in this mentoring process.

An integral part of our work is to provide feedback to our TCs as they make sense of theory in practice and as they negotiate their shifting identities from students to practitioners to practitioner-researchers. Kang & Dykema (2017) make an important observation about the role of power and identity in feedback, where students are

positioned not as passive recipients of feedback, but as active agents in the negotiation process of power and identity, in this case, as researchers.

This study postulates that the ability for TCs to negotiate power and identity as they make sense of feedback is related to the TCs' meaning-making systems (MMS) (Kegan, 1982, 1994) or Ways of Knowing (WoK) (Drago-Severson, 2004; Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016). Johnson & Golombek (2016) propose that providing feedback that is effective, meaningful, and actionable, requires those mentoring teachers to have "complex organizational, theoretical, pedagogical, and content-area expertise, and—less frequently recognized but just as important—it requires the ability to deliver and relay feedback in ways others can actually hear and take in" (p.1). In addition, Drago-Severson and Blum-DeStefano (2016) recognize that the TCs' WoK across the developmental spectrum can provide insight into their *growing edges* where appropriate supports and challenges can be provided to encourage deeper learning in a safe, respectful and trusting "holding environment" (Kegan, 1982, 1994), a space where teacher candidates can be simultaneously supported and challenged.

This study intends to make visible the private interactions with my TCs in one research seminar course so as to improve not only my own practice but to begin a dialogue about ways in which we can better support our TCs through our feedback practice as they navigate complex tasks during their program of study.

Literature Review

In this section, I describe my epistemological stance to feedback practice, which is grounded in two theoretical frameworks, namely constructive-developmental theory and sociocultural theory. These two theories, when applied to teacher education, have the potential to provide deeper insight into the inner dimensions of our work as we engage in mediating learning for our TCs.

Constructive Developmental Theory and Feedback Practice

Drago-Severson and Blum-DeStefano's (2016) approach to feedback in their work with leaders and teachers is grounded in constructive-developmental theory. Based on Kegan's framework, Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano (2016) use the terms instrumental (*imperial*), socializing (*interpersonal*), self-authoring (*institutional*), and self-transforming (*intra-individual*) to describe and characterize the different orientations to ways of "thinking, perceiving, understanding, and being" or "ways of knowing" (WoK) through which adults experience the world. These developmental potentialities include not only the cognitive dimension, but also the affective, intrapersonal, and interpersonal abilities that we bring to our experiences, which also influence how we position ourselves in response to feedback. For TCs primarily operating from the instrumental WoK, it is essential for them to get it "right" and understand the rules, so providing concrete and explicit support is of value to them. For those with socializing WoK, it is important for them to feel valued by others, so they need to feel supported, validated (Rendon, 2009), and appreciated in the feedback provided. The self-authoring knowers have their own ideas and goals, and they appreciate opportunities during feedback to have their expertise acknowledged in the feedback received. Finally, the self-transforming knowers are primarily interested in growth through integrating various perspectives and engaging in co-creation of meaning during feedback. A developmental approach to feedback then recognizes that these different WoK requires "different kinds of supports and challenges in order to fully hear, understand, and implement feedback as they grow and learn over time (p. 2)" to manage the complexities of their life and work. This means that teacher educators providing feedback to their TCs also need to acknowledge their WoK and preferred styles of feedback and adjust their feedback to the developmental needs of their TCs. This, they term "*feedback for growth*," which draws from Kegan's (1982, 1994) constructive -developmental framework and years of their work with teachers, principals, and leaders. Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano (2016) call their approach *feedback for growth* as it explicitly acknowledges the developmental potentialities of both the giver and receiver as integral to the process and experience of feedback practice.

Socio-Cultural Theory and Feedback Practice

Socio-cultural theory complements constructive-developmental theory in that it recognizes the role of the expert ‘other’ in the learning process. Vygotsky (1978) asserts that learning, or cognitive development, happens through social interaction. Through this process, learning moves from the social or inter-psychological realm, where meaning is mutually constructed with others, to the intra-psychological realm, where one begins to own and apply the knowledge in novel situations through the integration of that knowledge with current understandings and experiences. This idea that learning is not merely an individual phenomenon, but rather a social one, where learning is derived through the negotiation of meaning with others is termed “socio-cultural” theory: “socio-” because it recognizes the role that society and relationships play in the learning process and “cultural” because it recognizes the diverse nature of the values, beliefs, and attitudes of systems (social, institutional) that influence the learning process.

Johnson & Golombek (2016) coined the term *responsive mediation* to characterize their approach to feedback that is embedded within this socio-cultural theoretical stance. They state:

Responsive mediation requires a lot of teacher educators. First and foremost, it requires that we attend to what our teachers bring to our interactions, where they are coming from and how they understand what they are experiencing. And gaining access to such pre-understandings is no easy task. (p. 42)

They lean on Miller’s (2011) definition of mediation, which involves the process of the learning and teaching of new understandings in situations where prior understandings were inadequate (p. 380). While both the cognitive and emotional dimensions of their interactions with their teachers are recognized within their mediation practice, it must be understood that the “mediational supports may not always be accepted due to the emotions and motivations they bring to these interactions” (Johnson & Golombek, 2016, p. 34).

Conditions for Growth

Both growth-based feedback approaches described above require an understanding of where our teachers are at in the moment and the outer limits of the zone of proximal development, or where they can grow. These outer limits are described as *growing edges* (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStafano, 2016) or *growth points* (Johnson & Golombek, 2016, p. 45). *Growing edges* refer to the teacher’s WoK, and providing feedback in a way that they can hear the feedback, while at the same time challenging them to think from another way of knowing. This intentionally directed feedback to their growing edges requires both support and challenge in what Kegan (1982, 1994) terms the *holding environment*. Expanding on the work of McNeill (2005), Johnson and Golombek define *growth points* as “a moment or series of moments when the teachers’ cognitive/emotional dissonance comes into being” (p. 45), where responsive mediation targeting the growth points is critical for learning. The process of learning and teaching then becomes “one of continual reorganizing, reconstructing, transforming” (Dewey, 1981, p. 491).

Research Question

As a teacher educator, I wanted to understand how to create a holding environment through my feedback practice that simultaneously supported and challenged my TCs as they engaged in the complex task of conducting research in this seminar course. To this end, the following research question guided this study:

In what ways can I provide feedback that is responsive to the needs of TCs operating from different Ways of Knowing?

Methodology

Research Setting

This study takes place in a graduate-level TESOL program at a university in the greater San Diego area. Eleven TCs were enrolled in the research seminar course in the fourth and final semester of their program of study. This

course was designed to support the TCs from the development of their Institutional Review Board (IRB) research proposals to the completion of their classroom research studies. Direct instruction was provided on research methods and the writing process. Session topics included developing a research question, defining constructs, writing a literature review, collecting and analyzing data, reporting on the findings in the study, and writing a conclusion. The TCs were required to submit four journals at various checkpoints during the semester, where they reported on the success and challenges they were experiencing at that stage in their research trajectory. They were also required to submit sections of their papers and revise those sections based on the feedback provided as they moved forward with other sections of their papers. For example, when they submitted their introductions, they received feedback within a week, and then they would then revise their introductions as they worked on the next section, the literature review. In addition to the support provided within the course itself and individualized feedback provided on their papers, the TCs were required to attend one-on-one conferences with me a minimum of two times during the semester and to provide summary reports in which they documented what they learned during the session and any remaining questions they still had.

Data Collection

Five data sets were collected, triangulated, and analyzed throughout the semester in order to understand TCs' current WoK, cognitive and affective dissonance experienced, ways in which feedback was provided and received, and evidence for shifts in thinking.

Reflection Journals. Reflection journals provided TCs with a space to (1) articulate “golden moments” of their discoveries or success (Fanselow, 1987); (2) “criticize, doubt, express frustration, and raise questions” (Bailey, 1990, p. 218); and (3) “confront the affective aspects of being a teacher [in this case, of becoming a practitioner-researcher], including what annoys, disconcerts, frustrates, encourages, influences, motivates, and inspires [them]” (Gebhard, 1999). This allowed me to identify their “potentiality” for growth defined as “a force positively present—the *ability to develop*” (Dewey, 1981, p. 485).

Conference Summary Reports. The summary reports provided the TE with the means to understand what the TCs were able to *internalize* during the one-on-one conference sessions where the TE and TCs engaged in the joint intellectual activity or what Mercer (2000) terms *inter-thinking*.

Response to Feedback on Iterations of Research Segments. Throughout the semester, TCs submitted segments of their research projects. The TCs revised sections of their papers by responding to the feedback provided using the review feature on Word.

TE Analytic Notes. The analytic notes provided the TE with a space to document TCs' needs and challenges after each one-on-one conference session to allow for comparison between the supports and challenge the TE provided and what the TCs internalized through these dialogic interactions.

Final Reflections on Engaging in the Research Process. The final reflections were collected in order to understand (1) what the TCs learned about themselves as practitioner-researchers through engaging in this process, and (2) to identify areas of shift/growth in their understanding of their experiences as they engaged in knowledge generation.

Findings

The analysis of the five data sets revealed several essential elements of a holding environment that were created in response to the different Ways of Knowing represented in my seminar course. Because this seminar course, as with many courses in graduate-level programs within academia, catered to the self-authoring WoK, the findings focus on the specific supports created for TCs who were operating from the instrumental and socializing WoK to meet the demands of the course and prompts to encourage self-authoring knowers to consider alternatives, which characterizes the self-transforming WoK.

Creating a Holding Environment to Support Teacher Candidate Ways of Knowing

Lahey et al. (1988) in conjunction with Kegan (1982, 1994) developed the Subject-Object Interview instrument, based on Kegan’s (1982, 1994) constructive-developmental theory, to reveal a person’s meaning-making system or WoK. It has been designed “to assess an individual’s unselfconscious epistemology” or “principle of meaning-coherence” (Lahey et al., 1988, p. 427). In other words, through the sharing of experiences, the researcher can understand how the participants are making sense of their experiences and the role of themselves and others within these experiences. Using my former training in the Subject-Object Interview Protocol based on the constructive-developmental framework, I identified segments in the data that revealed evidence of primary as well as secondary ways of knowing.

Kegan (1982, 1994) reminds us that most of us lie somewhere in between WoK, which was the case in this study, where TCs provided evidence that they were making sense of their experiences from two systems, with one often more solidified than the other (See Table 1). Emotions such as “success” and “challenge” generated an understanding of what the TCs were *subject* to and therefore could not reflect on, and what the TCs were *object* to and therefore could see as separate from themselves and could reflect on.

Table 1. TCs’ Ways of Knowing

Name	Ways of Knowing
Brianna DuBois*	Self-Authoring
Barbara Jacobs	(Socializing**) Self Authoring
Choi Jun	Socializing
Bianca Kennedy	Self-Authoring
Lorraine Kittridge	Instrumental, Socializing
Shazia Qadir	Socializing (Self-Authoring)
Aisha Rabbani	Self-Authoring
Brody Roberts	Self-Authoring
Wilmina Rose	Insufficient data***
Avina Thomas	Socializing (Self-Authoring)
Fide Young	Insufficient data

* All names are pseudonyms

** Parenthesis includes secondary ways of knowing in the documents analyzed

*** Two students did not provide sufficient descriptions of their successes and challenges to make a determination of their WoK

Feedback for TCs with Instrumental Ways of Knowing

In this seminar course, there was only one TC, Lorraine Kittridge, who made sense of her experiences from the instrumental WoK, and her response to feedback was consistent with Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano’s (2016) findings.

It was important for Lorraine in this study to get things “right” and to have clear expectations and concrete suggestions on next steps, which was responsive to her instrumental WoK. She required regular feedback on her progress through email correspondence and met with me weekly to go over her work. She writes in her conference summary report, “[The TE] and I went through every one of my documents and worked diligently together to be sure I had answered everything correctly.” It became increasingly important for me to continue to provide her with quick, concrete feedback on next steps, but also hold her anxiety and shift it in a positive direction. I realized that for her, in particular, it became difficult when she sought guidance from alumni, other faculty, her peers, as well as myself, which often led to “anxiety” and “confusion,” as reported in her journal entries. As a result, she often found herself stuck and not knowing how to proceed because there are a multitude of ways to approach research practice

and interpret data. As such, it became clear that it was challenging for her to sit with ambiguity. She required significant scaffolding and modeling throughout the semester on each component of her research.

She came into my office, visibly upset and crying. She wanted to share her frustration with not getting it right on her literature review.... I let her unload, and as she began to calm down, I provided her with concrete ideas on organizing her literature review. I shared that there was no right or wrong way to write the literature review, but that it has to flow and provide context for her current study. I realized she needed more structure and feedback on what she was doing well. (Analytic Notes, March 13th, 2018)

My feedback regarding “no right or wrong way” was not helpful, given that she benefits from detailed and clear instructions based on her WoK. Noting this, I asked her if she thought it would be helpful to see some additional samples to serve as mentor texts to support her in her revision process. Lorraine appeared to benefit from feedback with specific ideas on how to organize her literature review. She wrote in her summary report, “Although she [TE] gave me some good guidance on what I could write, I still have some residual anxiety about doing/wording this properly.” My analytic notes recorded immediately after our conferencing meeting on February 6th suggest that “Lorraine requires step by step assistance and needs answers immediately. [I] [n]eed to slowly remove myself and the strong scaffolds to allow her to work more independently.” The following figure summarizes her response to feedback and support structures I put in place for her in response to her needs.

Ways of Knowing	Response to Feedback	Support Structures
Instrumental	Concerned with what is “right” or “proper” and needs specifics on how to “fix” issues, problems	Provision of models, rubric, explicit directions, concrete suggestions, consistent feedback, graphic organizers

Figure 1. Feedback Response and Support for Instrumental Ways of Knowing

Feedback for TCs with Socializing Ways of Knowing

Choi, Shazia, and Avina were making sense of their experience from the socializing WoK, identifying so closely with their interpersonal relationships that they could not separate the thoughts and feelings that were generated through these relationships as separate from their own. The internalized “other” for these students included friends, boyfriends, peers, spouse, and myself, as their professor. They would often share the influence of what these external “others” had on their thinking and emotions. Lorraine, who operated from both systems, provides insight into the influence of her peers on her emotional life. She indicates her sense of loss with her cohort being separated into two sections, where she states, “I am also struggling that our class is split [into two sections]. The people I have worked alongside are not in my class anymore, and I miss their support.... It is a very lonely semester...everyone is stressed and confused....” (Lorraine Kittridge, Reflection Journal, February 23rd). She often would speak on behalf of the whole group experience, particularly in her shared experience of stress and confusion.

Within this context, the internalized “other” also included researchers and authors they had read. Their research papers, particularly the literature review, strung together summaries of research in what we term “laundry list” rather than integrating the research findings within their own line of argument. It was difficult for them to articulate their own thinking about the topic. Constructive criticism in the feedback was either immediately accepted without question, as they put their full trust in what I thought, or resulted in an emotional breakdown, as they felt that I somehow had an unfavorable opinion of them and their work. For example, in our conference session, Shazia asked, “Do you think this is a good study?” On another occasion, Choi writes in her conference summary notes:

“This week I’ve been struggling with what to include in my lit. review....I was stressed out because I was stuck in my own thoughts. Hopefully, I will feel better after receiving feedback from you, and then I can work on it again and make it better.”

I noted in my analytic notes as I analyzed the sessions for the TCs operating from the socializing ways of knowing, that they “accepted” feedback in the review pane for each of the segments of their papers submitted without pushback. However, during the conferencing sessions, they were often in tears or looked visibly upset as they could not see themselves as separate from their work, and I realized the importance of appreciating and validating their strengths and abilities, while also slowly challenging them to begin to trust in their own work and ideas. In my feedback on their research papers, I noted many times where I asked, “What do you think?” “What does this mean to you?” Figure 2 summarizes the socializing knowers’ response to feedback and structures I put in place to support their needs.

Ways of Knowing	Response to Feedback	Support Structures
Socializing	Concerned with how to meet the expectations of the professor and to get research “up to par.”	Continued validation of research progress, direction, ideas, and work; connections on shared experience.

Figure 2. Feedback Response and Support for Socializing Ways of Knowing

Feedback for TCs with Self-Authoring Ways of Knowing

Brianna, Bianca, Aisha, and Brody demonstrated evidence of being embedded in the Self-Authoring WoK. They recognized their responsibility for their thoughts, feelings, and perspectives apart from those of others. Two of these students elected to complete their practicum and research in Thailand at one of our partner universities, which also speaks to their ability to make decisions about an experience they felt would be important to them. While the TCs operating from the Socializing WoK often deflected responsibility for their feelings and experiences as caused by some external person or event, the four TCs operating from the Self-Authoring WoK took ownership of the direction of their studies, whether charged with success or confusion. Unlike the TCs from the Socializing WoK, these TCs accepted feedback and often pushed back on ideas. For example, in feedback to Brody, I asked him to consider whether his work was embedded in student needs or his own passion and interest. He did not take it as criticism, but reflected for some time and decided that his study was actually a case study where he wanted to integrate videos to teach grammar, rather than an action research study as he had originally proposed. In another example, when I inquired into Bianca's rationale for her focus on writing, which was something she believed her students in Thailand needed, she was open to allowing the data to speak and found that their needs were centered around improving listening and speaking skills. She quickly redirected her action research to meet her student needs in this regard. Aisha, likewise, made her own judgments about what feedback to integrate and what to leave out and progressed relatively independently throughout the semester on her research on ELT in the Saudi context. Whereas those operating from the Instrumental and Socializing WoK needed to review and provide feedback on their revisions, this group took feedback and implemented it on their own terms without requiring a secondary review. When questioned about constructs, terminology, or process, these students often wanted to “explore” what made sense to them on their own. In the following excerpt from her reflection journal, Brianna is challenged by some of the feedback that I shared with her, but she does not take it personally as she can see her work as separate from herself. She instead wants to keep researching and moving forward. She ends by reiterating how important it was for her to ask this question even though it could be challenging to measure what she is interested in learning.

Sorry if this is very “stream of consciousness” but I just wanted to let it flow however it wanted to flow....I learned that the students really enjoyed the lesson, so that was exciting. Now, I have to decide where to go next...I have been struggling a lot with my question. I feel like it needs to change, but I am not sure how....Our talk was very helpful, but I still feel like I need to make some major connections to know what to do and I wanted to do some more research on some topics we discussed....I need to start with going back to the feedback you sent on the first part of my paper, now that I am better and start to think about that and move forward. I just keep going down these tunnels of confusion as I do the readings because I keep thinking about what I am doing, and I am still hoping that I am able to collect data in a way that helps me. I chose a hard topic because it isn't as easy to measure, but it means something to me, so that is why I wanted to ask it. (Brianna DuBois, Reflection Journal, March 2nd)

TCs operating from the Self-Authoring WoK appeared to be able to hear feedback that is aligned with and supports their goals or next steps in their research process. When feedback is not aligned with her ideas, they do demonstrate evidence of beginning to consider alternative ways to pursue their work but resolve their ambiguity on their own terms. In my work with TCs with Self-Authoring WoK, I noted that I primarily served as a sounding board where they appeared to enjoy discussing their ideas and directions, but also appreciated acknowledgment of their work. The feedback practice I engaged in with them encouraged them to consider other possible influences and perspectives that could deepen their understanding of their work. Figure 3 summarizes the self-authorizing knowers' response to feedback and structures I put in place to support their needs.

Ways of Knowing	Response to Feedback	Support Structures
Self-Authoring	Concerned with sharing their own understandings and feedback as a vehicle to clarify their own ideas and direction. Professor as “sounding board” to help clarify own ideas.	Provision of space to share ideas and questions about own work; opportunity to resolve own problems and questions when “stuck.”

Figure 3. Feedback Response and Support for Self-Authoring Ways of Knowing

Shifts in Ways of Knowing

Not all of the TCs demonstrated evidence of shifts in their ways of knowing, but there were two TCs who did demonstrate some shift in making sense of their experiences at the end of the semester (See Table 2).

Name	Beginning Ways of Knowing	Changes in Ways of Knowing
Brianna DuBois	Self-Authoring	Self-Authoring (Self-Transforming)
Lorraine Kittridge	Instrumental (Socializing)	Socializing (Self-Authoring)

Table 2. Evidence of potential shifts in ways of knowing

Through the semester, Lorraine showed very interesting shifts in her WoK. In her final reflections, Lorraine shared her fears, sense of intimidation, and lack of confidence about engaging in the research process and her concern about meeting the required level of expectations of academia, which signifies instrumental and socializing

concerns. She writes, “When I started this process, I was not fond of research because I feared it. I was intimidated, lacked confidence, and truly didn’t think I had what it would take to conduct this level of research or meet the required level of academia...” (Lorraine Kittridge, Final Reflection Journal, April 27th). She then describes her confusion from the variety of feedback provided by her professors and peers, along with her own insecurities. She continues, “Due to the constant pressures of my classes, the variety of feedback from professors and peers, and my own insecurities, I constantly lost sight of my own opinions.” In my work with her throughout the semester, I pushed the limits on her ways of knowing by reminding her to trust in herself. The following email exchange where I responded to her questions about her feedback earlier in the semester provides some context in which this mediation took place. Lorraine begins the email on February 23rd by first thanking me for my time in reviewing her literature review and is happy to know that she is on the “*right track*,” which for instrumental knowers is important. She then shares her concern about the feedback I provided, where I asked that she consider using primary resources rather than secondary resources to understand the original author’s intended meanings. She responds with having had no guidance regarding this in the past and that she and her peers referred to multiple books and websites on APA citations and received “different feedback.” She uses “us” and “we” when challenging feedback, which demonstrates an internalizing of others’ experiences, but also a projection of her own experiences onto her peers. I respond with giving her a choice on whether to follow my feedback or keep her work as it is, and provide her with a rationale for my thinking process behind this. I realize in retrospect that stating that I am trying to get her to the next level of academic rigor may have made her feel that the current state of her literature review was inadequate, which may have resulted in more angst, which was counterproductive to the support I had intended to provide.

Through this email exchange, it occurred to me that this feedback regarding citations and using primary sources had impacted her deeply to the point where she wants to “fix” it and have it approved. She also makes a firm statement about how “we will need to meet this week” in order for her to have this need met. In this exchange, I also provide external resources for her so that she can become less dependent on my scaffolds over time. I provide her with my rationale again for the feedback I provided, acknowledge what she has done well, and then follow up with mediation to perhaps move her to a Self-Authoring WoK. I still give her an option to submit her revision and end with detailed advice on what she should focus on next.

TE: Lorraine, remember that I am facilitating your research work this semester and only providing suggestions as your final paper will be reviewed by an outside reviewer. You are the central decision-maker, can push back, and decide on what to take in and what to take out. My hope is that I can take you from where you are at, to the next level of excellence... Your critical peer and your content expert can review your revisions as needed...

LK: Thank you again for all your support, availability, and patience with us this semester.

TE: It will be okay, Lorraine—it is something all students go through as this is uncharted territory and really pushes your thinking. Not one student has come through the previous course...that has not had to make some revisions in this course—it is a natural part of the process of academia. Every person you share your research with will provide you with suggestions and critique, which only helped us to become better researchers and writers. I go through the same process when my manuscripts are reviewed by multiple blind reviewers for journals. It is not always easy, but if you take it from the perspective that feedback is provided with the sole intention to improve your own work, then it becomes a form of service.

I end with validating her experience from a socializing perspective by sharing with her that other students, both past and present, are also experiencing similar challenges. I also acknowledge that there can be confusion for her when multiple perspectives are offered, but that if looked at from a service perspective, then perhaps, she might not take it personally, and these could help make her a better researcher and writer.

Lorraine continues to seek feedback on multiple versions of her literature review, as it was vital for her to get it in “tip-top shape.”

TE: It is okay to put in a few “as cited in” but if it is a relevant or seminal article or author in the field, it is always better to get the original article because I am interested to know what you think as you are reading it as you are becoming the expert on this topic. I have very high standards, I realize this, but this is a standard I hold for myself, and my only desire is to support you to your highest potential.... Having said this, you can push back and say that it is too much at times, and I can scale back a bit until you're ready again for the next push. You have to help me with this and let me know. Does this sound like a good plan for this important work we will be engaging in together?

In this exchange, I explicitly share with Lorraine that she can push back on my feedback until she is cognitively and emotionally ready for the next push—that this process requires her involvement in letting me know her outer limits.

KL: ...I will tell you when it is too much. I think it is a perfect plan for us. Right now, I feel as though I am at my absolute max. I don't know if I can sustain this much longer. Yet, I chose this and want to do my best. Nothing less. I will push through a little harder....

In her final reflections, Lorraine writes about the socializing aspect of engaging in research that supported her way of knowing:

I am thankful for my professors who have helped me and gave me feedback during the process, I was able to set up appointments with them and discussed how to improve my content. I am also grateful for my classmates, even though we were all busy with our research, we were able to support and encourage each other. (Lorraine Kittridge, Final Reflections, April 27th)

It is not clear if these mediation approaches helped to push her WoK, but she does refer to this pushing of her outer limit in her final reflections:

I worked tirelessly at having more confidence in myself and trusting that my hard work was sufficient... I am now a more effective researcher because I trusted in my own abilities and gained a deeper value for patience. I understand that with research comes failure or lessons from which we can learn. Practicing patience makes these failures bearable and puts them in perspective. Some of the challenges during this process were near to debilitating, yet I pushed through, worked harder, did not give up, and remained patient. (Lorraine Kittridge, Final Reflections, April 27th)

In the next section, I share with you Brianna's shift in her WoK.

Towards the end of the study, Brianna demonstrated some insight into her Self-Transforming WoK, where she reflected on her self-generated ideas and was open to influence and change through listening to and becoming open to multiple perspectives. Brianna worked independently throughout the semester and consulted with me only when she was stuck or needed a sounding board for her ideas. For portions of her paper, she asked clarification questions about, for example, the difference between “meaningful” and “relevant” and areas that she was stuck, but she wanted to resolve it on her own terms by “exploring” more. She wrote:

I realized in my lesson, using grammar with authentic materials, I am not sure if it is more that the way they learn is meaningful or that it is relevant. I kind of had an epiphany about it. I think it could go either way, but I feel I need to explore this more. (Brianna DuBois, Reflection Journal, February 23rd)

She also was able to articulate what she knows and what she does not know yet, which supported my understanding of her *growth points*. Reflecting on our class discussions on research that day, she writes:

I think my question is researchable [underline in original] because it is within the scope of what my students will do in the semester while in the class. It is meaningful because the goal is to help find ways to support their learning. I think it is measurable, but I am struggling with the best ways to measure. (Brianna DuBois, Reflection Journal, February 23rd)

Here, she feels good about what she is researching, and her goals for her research, and shares that she is struggling with how to measure learning, but is not seeking for me to resolve this for her.

During our one-on-one conference which followed, I identified a few areas that were growth points for mediation. For example, I pushed Brianna's thinking around defining her constructs in terms of what she meant by providing "meaningful" grammar instruction and how this differed from the construct of "relevant." In this session, I encouraged her to not only focus on fluency but also to consider the role of accuracy, especially as students move from intermediate to advanced levels of proficiency. I probed into what kinds of errors she was interested in focusing on in her study. Were they global errors that interfered with meaning or local errors? I probed into her approach to teaching grammar. In terms of data collection and her decisions around her action plan for phase I in her action research, I inquired into what they were doing before her intervention that influenced her action. I challenged her notion that the book was not working and asked her to "show" rather than "tell." What evidence does she have that led her to believe that teaching out of the textbook was not working? I encouraged her to collect data by looking at previous assessments, talking to her mentor teacher, and conferencing with the students (TE, Analytic Notes, February 23rd). She acknowledged that "although she taught them with the book in class differently, they still made the same errors (Brianna DuBois, Conference Summary Report, February 23rd)." I encouraged her then to think about alternative frames to understand her work as well as questions to help her dig more deeply into her work: form, focus, and use; comprehension vs. production—if they are using the grammar form taught, are they using it correctly? Are they not using the grammar form or avoiding it because they don't have control over it yet? Is this grammar point something that is encountered every day, and therefore important to know? Do your students notice that they are using a grammar point incorrectly and that they need instruction in this area? How do your methods of instruction differ from the one that was previously used, and was it the method of instruction that prevented learning of the grammar point? How do the learners' learning styles and strategies play into this process (TE, Analytic Notes, February 23rd)? This level of feedback and questioning would normally overwhelm TCs operating from the Instrumental and Socializing WoK.

Because Brianna struggled with gathering data, I provided her with alternative ideas on approaching her data collection and analysis process. We considered pros and cons for each idea above during the conference, and she began to integrate what made sense to her and served her goals and purpose as she developed her next plan of action, which was evident in her research action and assessment plan. In retrospect, I may have provided too many alternatives for Brianna to consider, but in the subsequent iterations of her study, she was able to take what made sense to her and apply it in her work.

Over the course of the semester, Brianna began to appreciate and integrate perspectives offered during our conferencing sessions and with her outside consultant. She trusted in the relational and cognitive support provided to help improve her thinking and practice, which was visible in her final research project and reflections. In her final reflections, she writes:

Collaborating with my professor...as well as Dr. [name omitted] in Japan, my colleagues at [name omitted] College and cohort at the University [name omitted] has given me a wide range of perspectives. From more informed perspectives based on experience to ways of seeing things based on different cultures or familiarity

with things I may not have encountered yet in my life. Someone looking in from the outside can see you, in some ways, more than you even can even see yourself. You are so close to your own experience that you might not notice certain things that are happening right in front of your eyes. This community of people was so crucial to my growth as a teacher-researcher. It also allowed me to have a variety of lenses in which to view my teaching practice and research by having a dialogue about it with others. We all see the world through different eyes and based on our own unique experiences. (Brianna DuBois, Final Reflections, April 27th)

Here, Brianna is able to reflect on her own closed self, where she realizes that when “you are so close to your own experience, you might not notice certain things that are happening right in front of your eyes.” Having a community to help her see beyond herself, she states was “crucial to [her] growth.” She also acknowledges that being open in this way allowed her to “have a variety of lenses in which to view [her] teaching practice.” She ends with an understanding that provides a glimpse into her Self-Transforming WoK, where she recognizes that we see the world from our own experiences.

Pedagogical Implications for Feedback Practice

It is about a client in my office who sits there by the corner of the desk, struggling to be himself and yet, deathly afraid of being himself—striving to see his experience as it is, wanting to be that experience, and yet deeply fearful of the prospect...as I sit here with that client, facing him, participating in that struggle as deeply and sensitively as I am able...It is about me as I try to perceive his experience, and the meaning, and the feeling and the taste and the flavor that it has for him. It is about me as I bemoan my very human fallibility in understanding that client and the occasional failures to see life as it appears to him, failures which fall like heavy objects across the intricate, delicate web of growth which is taking place. (Rogers, 1961, p. 4-5)

Our work with our TCs bears a resemblance to what Rogers describes above, where our TCs often share their triumphs and tribulations, breakdowns, and breakthroughs in our office, in the hallways, in the classroom, in their narratives and reflections as they engage in increasingly more complex tasks. Though most of us are not trained therapists, we play an essential role in supporting our TCs as they transition into teaching, but perhaps not deliberately, we may also be molding them as adults to engage in an increasingly complex world. In this section, I provide three pedagogical implications gleaned from this study. These include how as TEs, we can tailor feedback to meet our TCs’ current WoKs, acknowledge the affective dimension of our work, and identify our TCs’ growing edges so that we can provide deliberate feedback with a thrust for growth.

Tailoring Feedback to TC Ways of Knowing

Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano (2016) argue that it is important for feedback to align with the ways in which the receivers of the feedback make sense of their experiences; however, in academia, the self-authoring WoK is often privileged, leaving TCs with other WoK in a way, disenfranchised. In the same way, we ask our TCs to meet their students where they are, we, too, need to meet our TCs where they are and guide (not force) them through our feedback to consider alternative WoK, though balancing this, I am keenly aware, is challenging. I write in my analytic notes on February 9th, “I am torn between having her trust her own work while at the same time recognizing how new this is to all of them.”

Ways of Knowing	Supports	Challenges to current WoK
Instrumental	Models, rubric, explicit directions, concrete suggestions, consistent feedback, graphic organizers	There is no right or wrong answer.
Socializing	Validation of research progress, direction, ideas and work; connections on shared experience	What do you think about your work? What is your experience?
Self-Authoring	Space to share ideas and questions about own work; opportunity to resolve own problems and questions when “stuck”	Can you consider your problem/concern/issue from [other professors/peers, researchers, theoretical] perspective/s?

Figure 4. Supports and challenges based on TC ways of knowing.

As can be seen in Figure 1, for TCs primarily operating from the Instrumental WoK, it is essential for them to get it “right” and understand the rules, so providing concrete and explicit support is of value to them. For instrumental knowers, explicit models and expectations, concrete suggestions and directions, as well as consistency in messaging, are helpful. They can benefit from exploring beyond right and wrong alternatives. For those with Socializing WoK, it is important for them to feel valued by others, so they need to feel supported, validated (Réndon, 2009), and appreciated in the feedback provided. For Socializing knowers, they can benefit from explicit validation of their experiences, strengths, and progress made. Because they internalize the opinions of others, encouraging them to explore their own voice can support their movement to more Self-Authoring ways of knowing, which is a pervasive WoK within academia. The Self-Authoring knowers have their own ideas and goals, and they appreciate opportunities to have their expertise acknowledged in the feedback received. For self-authoring knowers, feedback that acknowledges their ideas and directions is valuable to them; however, encouraging ways in which to hold and integrate a variety of other possibilities and perspectives could help shift them to Self-Transforming WoK. Finally, the Self-Transforming knowers are primarily interested in growth through integrating various perspectives and engaging in co-creation of meaning during feedback. It is equally important for us to also recognize where we, as TEs, may be within this spectrum and become consciously aware of our preferred ways of meaning-making so that we do not blindly project them onto our TCs who make meaning in different ways.

Acknowledging the Affective Dimension of Our Work

If I can provide a certain type of relationship, the other will discover within himself the capacity to use that relationship for growth, and change and personal development will occur. (Rogers, 1961, p. 33)

As TEs, we often pay attention to the more technical, cognitive aspects of our work; however, we are also tasked with speaking to our TCs’ dispositional qualities. In addition to professionalism, we also inquire into “capacity for reflection and inquiry,” “flexibility,” “sensitivity to issues of diversity,” and relational aspects of their performance. As such, it is part of our charge to provide coaching through our feedback practice in a way in which to support our TCs manage the complexities of their work. Dewey (1981) argues, “The trouble with traditional education was not that it emphasized the external conditions that enter into the control of the experiences but that it paid so little attention to the internal factors which also decide what kind of experience it had” (p. 518). Both the constructive-developmental and sociocultural theoretical lenses utilized in this study do provide consideration to both the cognitive and affective dimensions of our TCs.

Identifying Growth Points and Growing Edges to Inform Feedback Practice

The TC journals, conference sessions, conference summary reports, and final reflections provided insight for me to “see” into the world of my TCs. It allowed them to externalize their internal thoughts, feelings, understandings and experiences, which helped me identify potential “growth points” (Johnson & Golombek, 2016) or “growing edges” (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016) through the analysis of what Daloz-Parks (1999; 2000) terms “shipwreck moments” or manifestations of cognitive and emotional dissonance. Providing structures within the course to allow TCs a space in which to tap into their cognitive and emotional dissonance can help us identify developmental potentialities and craft our mediation or feedback that is responsive to our TCs’ current state, and growth-oriented to encourage deeper levels of understanding. It is important to understand that most people are somewhere along the developmental spectrum, but this is a helpful guide in crafting our feedback to our TCs in ways that both support and challenge them with a “thrust for growth.”

Conclusion

What I have learned in my many years of advising close to a hundred TCs in our TESOL teacher education program is that our feedback practice is integral to their learning and growth. In retrospect, I realized that I would provide feedback to our TCs that was often developmentally inappropriate for where they were cognitively and emotionally in that particular space and time. I learned through this study that in our feedback practice we should not compare our TCs to ourselves and our understandings, but we have to meet them where they are and allow them to understand and grow in their power and understanding through deliberate feedback that aims at both their “growth points” and “growing edges.” That is, understanding both their cognitive readiness, as well as their affective readiness is critical to feedback that promotes growth.

In this study, I utilized two frameworks that provided me with a lens to approach this work, and I realize there are others that may equally provide a lens in which to support our TCs. Nevertheless, I find it of value to reiterate the importance of the holding environment where our TCs can be held where they are while at the same time being challenged to explore the outer limits of their developmental potentialities. As these lenses provided a glimpse into the world of my TCs, it became important for me to approach this challenging work with my TCs with a tremendous sense of compassion and empathy as I explored where they were and where they could go in our collective holding environment. This work could potentially extend beyond TESOL teacher education where artisans, be it carpenters, mentors, or teachers, can carefully and deliberately scaffold the learning of apprentices as they seek to become full members of professional communities within academia and beyond.

I recognize that there are many other ways in which to “hold” our apprentices as they engage in complex activities in preparation for initiation into professional communities, but it is my sincere hope that this study opens up more discussions on how we can best “hold” our TCs by externalizing the inner workings of our interactions with them as it is not only for their growth that we do this work, it ultimately demands continued reflection and growth on our part.

Certainly, the carrying on of therapy is something which demands continuing personal growth on the part of the therapist, and this is sometimes painful, even though in the long run rewarding. (Rogers, 1961, p. 14)

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