

Utilizing the SCARF Model: A Better Way for Making Feedback Effective

Abstract

Giving feedback to students is an essential part of teachers' jobs. However, delivering crafted feedback that results in students' success in the class is very challenging. In this proposal, we introduce the SCARF model as a useful tool in preparing feedback givers and feedback receivers for productive discourse. SCARF evaluates individuals' social motivation based on five indicators: status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness, and fairness. We propose that using SCARF assessment can raise awareness amongst both instructors and students to diminish some of the possible resistance in giving and receiving feedback.

Keywords: SCARF model, Feedback, Self-awareness

Introduction

Pedagogy research emphasizes feedback as an essential means to reach the assurance of learning (Price, Handley, Millar, & O'Donovan, 2010). Giving and receiving feedback is a constant discourse between the instructor and the students (Beaumont, O'Doherty, & Shannon, 2011). A positive discourse that is effectively developed for a student paves the way for achieving the desired performance in the class and motivates the students to improve their work. Nevertheless, the content of the feedback is not the only predictor for assessing its effectiveness. Paying attention to students' differences in processing the feedback, preferences in the way they are receiving the feedback (when, from whom, where, etc.), and their level of motivation to learn are essential determinants in the usefulness of the feedback.

Giving adequate and high-quality feedback is essential in promoting deep learning among students (O'Donovan, Rust, & Price, 2016; Sutherland, Warwick, Anderson, & Learmonth, 2018); However, supplying feedback that is constructive, motivative, and effective is a very challenging task. Poorly developed feedback can be weakly understood by students and cause adverse learning outcomes (Sutherland et al., 2018). On the other hand, high-quality feedback increases the likelihood of closing the gap between what students' current understanding of the subject and what students need to understand. Indeed, good feedback helps students identify their weaknesses and focus on achieving the expected learning objectives in the future (Crisostomo & Chauhan, 2019).

SCARF model and feedback

SCARF model assesses people's differences in their social motivation and weighs five common indicators (status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness, and fairness) that can trigger a

reward or threat reaction to a social situation. Status is characterized as an individual's perceived relative importance to others. Certainty is people's ability to predict the future. Autonomy refers to people's sense of control. Relatedness is referred to as an individual's sense of safety with other people. Fairness refers to one's sense of fair exchange between people (Rock, 2008).

For example, because of status motivation, people may automatically grant feedback-giver a higher status role. As with status, people may perceive feedback-giver a distant role, resulting in a diminished sense of personal connection. Relatedly, students may feel obligated to receive the feedback, especially when an instructor initiates it. In turn, this sense of obligation may deprive students' sense of autonomy and certainty. Besides, students may view feedback as unfair when feedback-givers have asymmetrical information on their motives and behaviors.

As we can see, depending on the content of the feedback, students may perceive the feedback a threat to their status, autonomy, fairness, certainty, and relatedness. Our experience shows that this often happens in a classroom setting. Therefore, we propose that using SCARF assessment in the classroom can help students reflect on their responses to feedback and diminish some of these possible threats in response to receiving feedback.

Teaching Implications

We suggest that using SCARF assessment can enhance students' openness to receive feedback in three ways. First, students will learn about their degree of affinity towards each domain of SCARF assessment (status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness, and fairness), which can help them navigate through the feedback that they received with more open eyes. Second, instructors can give more effective feedbacks by taking into consideration various SCARF domains and be more mindful about how the feedback that they give can impact their students'

sense of status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness, and fairness. Third, students can learn to be more mindful about their peers' SCARF domains when they give feedback to each other.

We recognize that delivering crafted feedback that takes into account students' SCARF domains is time-consuming for instructors, especially those who teach larger classes. Therefore, we suggest using this method to encourage students give feedback to each other as a team.

Learning Objectives

At the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- Describe how individualized feedback can improve students' performance in the class.
- Describe the challenges associated with using individualized feedback in the classroom.
- Develop possible solutions for challenges associated with using individualized feedback in the classroom.
- Discuss teaching implications related to individualized feedback.

Session Overview

We propose that it is helpful when students know their SCARF results. Knowing their SCARF priorities can boost their awareness regarding their potential implicit but biased assumption of feedback before receiving the feedback. Indeed, the mere fact of knowing social motive can help a positive dynamic in feedback giving receiving.

In this session, First, we will ask participants to take the online SCARF self-assessment. Taking this test and reading their results will help participants navigate through their roles as a feedback-giver and a feedback-receiver. At the end of a feedback giver, participants may be more sensitive to their peers' motives and needs. For example, feedback may unintentionally

hurt their peers' self-esteem. They must improve their ability to deliver feedback more effectively. At the end of a feedback receiver, students can be reassured with positive intentions and valuable content of the feedback process. Instead of hearing, "you are not doing it correctly," they can focus on "how can you improve on the task?"

In the end, we would like to open a discussion among the participants to talk about the challenges associated with this method and possible solutions. The following questions will be used to open the discussion:

- How can we reduce the threat but enhance the utility of feedback?
- How can we make students focus more on the feedback content itself instead its threat to their self-esteem?

Session Description

Total time requested: 65 minutes allocated as follows:

- Introductions: 5 minutes
 - After a brief introduction of the presenters, participants will be asked to introduce themselves. Participants will join teams of two for the exercise.
- Exercise overview: 10 min
 - Presenters will explain the logistics of using feedback based on students' SCARF assessment.
- Exercise: 25 min
 - Participants will be given 10 minutes to take the SCARF assessment and share their results to their partner. Link to the SCARF assessment:
<https://neuroleadership.com/research/tools/nli-scarf-assessment/>
 - Participants will do a task; then, they will practice giving feedback: 15 min

- Discussion: 25 min
 - The positive outcomes associated with individualized feedback will be discussed.
 - The challenges associated with giving individualized feedback will be discussed.
 - Students will discuss their opinion/understanding on the application of SCARF model in feedback processing and how they can use this knowledge in their future study.

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