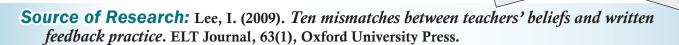# researchsnapshot

10 Mismatches Between Teachers' Beliefs and Written Feedback Practice

What is this research about?

Teacher beliefs influence their instruction. This research explores the incongruence between teachers' beliefs about providing feedback to students and their actual practices. Ten areas of disparity between educators' beliefs about feedback and how it actually plays out on written assignments are identified through this research.

How can teacher feedback be constructed so that it positively influences student learning and motivation? How can feedback become an effective tool to scaffold student development?

What did the researchers do?

Lee, an associate professor with the Faculty of Education at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, collected data to explore feedback practices from the perspectives of both teachers and students. A large sample of student-written texts were collected and analyzed for the feedback that teachers provided. Teacher interviews were later conducted focusing on teacher beliefs and practices about feedback. In addition teachers participated in a questionnaire to reveal some of their beliefs and their perceptions about their feedback practices. One goal of this study was to investigate the extent to which teacher beliefs are manifested in practice. Based on the trends in the data, the researcher developed a list of ten "mismatches" between teachers' beliefs and their actual feedback practices. Lee then suggested next steps (outlined in the *What you need to know...* section) for teachers who are interested in examining and enhancing their feedback practices.

What you need to know...

There appears to be some misalignment with teachers' beliefs about feedback and their actual feedback practices. It may be helpful for teachers to clarify their beliefs about feedback, narrow their purposes for providing feedback, challenge their current practice, and evaluate the effectiveness of their feedback practices. In this way, feedback can be strategically shaped to better meet its ultimate objective, which is to improve student learning.

What did the researchers find?

1. Teachers believe that good writing is more than simply form, **BUT** they provide most of their feedback in this category.
2. Teachers believe that it is best to focus feedback on specific errors or feedback for a specific purpose, **BUT** they mark errors comprehensively.
3. Teachers believe that students benefit from locating and correcting their own errors, **BUT** they consistently correct and locate errors for students.
4. Teachers believe that students have limited ability to decipher the editing codes, **BUT** they use them anyway.
5. Teachers believe that scores or grades cause students to ignore teacher feedback, **BUT** they use them anyway.
6. Teachers believe it is important to highlight students' strengths and weaknesses, **BUT** they focus almost always on the weaknesses.
7. Teachers believe that students should take more responsibility for their learning, **BUT** their practices take this control away from students, making it nearly impossible.
8. Teachers believe that the writing process is helpful, **BUT** teachers ask students to write single drafts and provide feedback on these, responding to the product at the end instead of providing feedback throughout the process.
9. Teachers believe that students will continue to make the errors that the teacher corrected in their work, **BUT** teachers continue to focus on correcting student errors.
10. Teachers believe that the effort they invest in providing students with feedback is ineffective, **BUT** they do not alter their feedback practices.

What change can you make to your practice today, this week, this month?

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