

Closing the Loop: Leveraging Feedforward and Feedback to Improve Teamwork Quality and Student Satisfaction in Higher Education

Abstract

Group work is a core component of active learning in higher education; however, interpersonal conflict, unequal participation, and unclear role distribution remain persistent challenges. This study addresses these issues by designing and implementing a structured instructional model grounded in self-assessment, peer assessment, feedforward, and feedback within a university course context. The study involved 118 undergraduate students enrolled in semesters 6 and 7 of the Bachelor of Hospitality Management program at Western Community College, all of whom participated voluntarily. In Phase 1 (Week 8 of a 15-week semester), students completed a structured self- and peer-assessment to identify their own strengths and capacities, as well as those of their group members. This phase was supported by facilitated group dialogue, during which the instructor acted as an active observer, guiding discussions with targeted questions and enabling a structured feedforward process focused on improving collaboration, role clarity, and group dynamics for the remainder of the project. In Phase 2 (Week 15), a final feedback stage was conducted. Students completed a summative questionnaire reflecting on their teamwork experience, and the instructor engaged groups in reflective discussions addressing the quality of collaboration and perceived changes in group functioning over time. Findings indicate that 67% of students perceived the model as effective in improving group work performance and fostering a positive, collaborative learning environment, while nearly 70% recommended its continued use. Additionally, over 80% of participants suggested implementing the approach in other courses and future semesters. Based on combined qualitative and quantitative feedback, the initial model was refined and optimized. The final version, informed by insights from all participants, is presented at the end of this article and offers a practical, transferable framework for enhancing teamwork quality and reducing conflict in higher education, particularly within intercultural learning contexts.

Keywords: Group work, peer evaluation, self-assessment, feedforward, feedback