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Signature feedback practices in the creative arts: integrating feedback within the curriculum

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ABSTRACT

Without teacher and student feedback literacy, it is difficult for feedback processes to fulfil their potential. Feedback literacy development within the arts or humanities is, however, under-researched. The current study fills this gap by illustrating how educators in the performative creative arts designed signature feedback practices to facilitate the development of student feedback literacy. Opportunities for feedback literacy development were created via learning cultures that embedded emotional and relational support, discussed work-in-progress, and promoted peer feedback. Focus groups with educators highlighted how integrated assessment design and signature feedback practices provided opportunities for collaborative, critical and open learning environments conducive to the development of student feedback literacy. Students were afforded ongoing opportunities to perform their work-in-progress and see first-hand the work of peers, facilitating space in the curriculum for meaningful dialogue surrounding the enactment of feedback. Questionnaire data indicated that students understood the role of feedback in their learning but sometimes struggled to generate feedback for their peers and apply it to their own work. The main significance of the research lies in showing how signature feedback practices enable the integration of curriculum and assessment and carry potential to support the development of teacher and student feedback literacy.

KEYWORDS

Signature feedback; feedback literacy; teacher feedback literacy; creative arts; curriculum

Introduction

Current university feedback practices are often critiqued as being not particularly useful for students. The reasons for dissatisfaction are manifold, particularly the prevalence of one-way transmission of feedback information and written comments frequently being received at the end of an assessment sequence (Winstone and Carless 2019). When comments are received at the end of a module it is hard for students to make productive use of them (Boud and Molloy 2013), and this kind of post hoc commentary does not adequately mirror the kinds of day-to-day feedback practices which students will experience in the professional world (Dawson, Carless, and Lee 2021). End-of-semester comments also underplay specific disciplinary ways of operationalising feedback because learning activities needed to be organized in ways which enable sufficient time, space and relational dynamics for productive feedback encounters to emerge (Esterhazy 2018).

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The disciplinary nature of feedback is underpinned by the notion of signature feedback practices denoting the characteristic ways feedback processes are enacted in specific disciplines (Carless et al. 2020). Quinlan and Pitt (2021) recently argued that feedback processes might profitably reflect the deep structures (assumptions about scaffolding know-how) and implicit structures (professional values and dispositions) of the discipline being taught. Extending Shulman's Shulman (2005) signature pedagogies they proposed ways that feedback reflects the structures, practices, and characteristic habits of a particular profession or discipline. Quinlan and Pitt's conceptual paper argued for a more nuanced and discipline-based exploration of four sources of feedback and feedback timings. Disciplinary colleagues such as educators and peers alongside the self and knowledge or services users and objects were all suggested as sources of feedback. The feedback timings referred to the natural rhythms of the discipline and how these afforded opportunities for both evaluative (judgments, criticisms and suggestions for enhancement) and consequential feedback (information about the effect of the learner's performance or action). Following from Carless (2019), Quinlan and Pitt (2021) also argued for greater understanding of the cycles and spirals of feedback within the discipline.

The aim of this paper is to explore how signature feedback practices facilitate the development of student feedback literacy within four performative creative arts sub-disciplines: Comedy, Drama, Film and Music. Its main contributions lie in analysing how educator designed feedback practices are integrated into disciplinary pedagogies through learning cultures of emotional and relational support, opportunities for peer feedback, and the analysis of work-in-progress. The paper further exemplifies how productive feedback processes are an integral part of pedagogy rather than something occurring at the end of a teaching cycle.

Conceptual framework

The framework for the paper is developed through the inter-locking concepts of signature feedback practices (Carless et al. 2020; Quinlan and Pitt 2021) student feedback literacy development (Carless and Boud 2018; Molloy, Boud, and Henderson 2020) and teacher feedback literacy (Carless and Winstone 2020; Boud and Dawson 2021). Student feedback literacy involves appreciating the value of feedback processes; seeking, generating and using feedback; making sound evaluative judgements; and working with emotions productively (Carless and Boud 2018; Molloy, Boud, and Henderson 2020). Teacher feedback literacy represents the knowledge, expertise and dispositions to design feedback processes in ways which enable student uptake of feedback and seed the development of student feedback literacy (Carless and Winstone 2020). These concepts are enacted through disciplinary feedback practices that are facilitated when educators establish learning cultures which enable their productive implementation. Within these learning cultures shared responsibilities in the development of feedback literacy are posited as essential: educators design opportunities for students to involve themselves in feedback exchanges, whereas students carry responsibilities to engage with and use feedback (Carless and Winstone 2020; Winstone, Pitt, and Nash 2021).

Signature feedback practices

Shulman's Shulman (2005) concept of signature pedagogies informs the framing of signature feedback practices. Shulman defines signature pedagogy as the types of teaching that represent the fundamental ways in which future practitioners are educated for their new professions (Shulman 2005). These fundamental practices may also involve generic elements that might be transferrable across disciplines e.g. Socratic dialogues are a feature of Law but resonate with dialogic interaction in other disciplines. Signature feedback practices are

fundamental to the discipline but are also likely to draw on generic principles of good feedback practice (Carless et al. 2020). Within the creative arts, the real-life professional world of comedy, theatre or film involves generic feedback processes of collaborative and iterative exchanges between peers, including frank appraisals of performance. Similarly replicating the environments, a performer may experience in the real performance art world conditions where signature feedback processes can be experienced. Authentic disciplinary-specific feedback practices can increase student motivation to involve themselves productively in feedback processes through their similarity with professional real-life applications (Dawson, Carless, and Lee 2021). A key way to facilitate this in university teaching and learning is for educators to design assessment tasks which are sequenced to allow for sense-making and gestation, enabling meaningful feedback exchanges between participants and signature manifestations of real-world features of the discipline.

Learning cultures

Learning cultures are characterised by supportive, open, honest and challenging interactions between individuals with a shared learning direction in a learning environment. Signature disciplinary-based feedback practices are facilitated by supportive learning cultures. Learning cultures of emotional and relational support can be achieved by fostering respect for individuals and their contributions (Zhou et al. 2021). Phrasing feedback in a sensitive way is an important part of respect, but it is also necessary to be sincere by offering constructive, critical comments. Creating a culture where open, honest and frank feedback can be shared within a safe and collaborative environment is potentially beneficial for students (Rudolph, Raemer, and Simon 2014). Experiencing setbacks as normal parts of learning and a relationally supportive culture can help students to interpret feedback as providing a path to longer-term improvement (Fong et al. 2018).

Trust is an important element of a supportive learning culture and a pre-requisite for opening oneself to critique and revealing vulnerability (Carless 2013). The learning environment needs to be structured in a way that both educators and students feel they can share and receive opinions in a supportive and emotionally sensitive atmosphere. Educators should strive to create an environment whereby students are encouraged to speak frankly and respond positively to critical peer feedback (Xu and Carless 2017).

Open and constructive peer feedback is a feature of a trusting learning culture. Peer feedback opportunities are typically operationalised when students share their work-in-progress, receive comments and then revise their work. Peer feedback can be particularly useful when timed proximally to student's performance (Gielen and De Wever 2015). The main benefits of peer feedback arise from the internal feedback that students generate when they make productive comparisons between their own work and that of others (Nicol 2021). Lower achieving students, however, often lack the necessary level of disciplinary knowledge to offer potentially useful feedback on their peers' production or draw appropriate inferences for their own work (Pitt, Bearman and Esterhazy 2020). Such students may also avoid situations which threaten their already fragile self-esteem, leading them to be risk-averse and struggle to process challenging feedback (Mega, Ronconi, and De Beni 2014). Hawe, Lightfoot and Dixon (2019) suggest that analysing work-in-progress should be a regular aspect of pedagogy in that the sharing of students' own work can boost confidence and demonstrate what is possible. Working collaboratively with peers transforms learning from a private to a public space where students are exposed to a level of vulnerability not experienced when working individually (Dixon, Hawe, and Hamilton 2020). This reinforces the need for trusting learning cultures in which participants feel comfortable to reveal vulnerability.

Synthesis and research questions

The present study addresses the following research questions:

1. How do signature feedback practices in the creative arts provide opportunities for the development of student feedback literacy?
2. How do students in the creative arts respond to opportunities for the development of their feedback literacy?

Methods

The context for the study was a UK University. Four creative arts sub-disciplines were explored (Comedy, Drama, Film and Music). The subjects, educators and students included in this study were working at first year level. The assessment for comedy, drama and music required students to complete a final performance piece at the end of the 12-week module, which carried a weighting of between 65–75% (comedy sketch, individual drama monologue, a cover of a pop song). Film students were required to produce a short, written film script, and read this aloud as a pitch in the weekly work-in-progress sessions.

In order to explore the signature feedback practices employed, two complementary data sources were collected: focus group interviews with educators and a questionnaire for students. The first element of the data collection involved focus group interviews with eleven educators teaching film, comedy, drama and music performance. Focus groups were chosen as they afforded dialogic interaction between participants who taught within similar creative arts sub-disciplines. Three focus groups with these participants explored how educators operationalised signature feedback practices in the pursuit of the development of student feedback literacy. Interviews typically lasted 60 min and were recorded and transcribed verbatim. These data were thematically analysed by the first author.

The analysis followed a constructivist latent theoretical thematic approach, which sought to examine the underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualisations of the educators, as the authors' prior theoretical understanding meant that the data was interpreted in an analyst driven manner (Braun and Clarke 2006). The aim of this analysis was to understand the contexts and structural conditions that underpinned the signature feedback practices. Following the analysis, the first author presented the themes and associated attributed quotations to the original participants. Such a process of member checking was further supplemented by short one-to-one interviews that focused upon the specific challenges each educator faced when implementing more opportunities for students to give and receive peer feedback. The participants were also asked to reflect upon how they helped students who struggled with this practice in their learning.

The second data source was a questionnaire relating to students' experiences of the signature feedback practices their educators operationalised: 270 first year students were sent the questionnaire and 94 responded (Comedy ($n = 25$), Drama ($n = 17$), Film ($n = 30$) and Music ($n = 22$)). The questionnaire was designed to evaluate students experiences in two parts and both asked students to indicate their agreement with statements on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Part one asked the students about two aspects: using feedback and their accountability to use feedback. Using feedback asked students three questions: (1) Ongoing feedback from educators helped me to improve my work; (2) Ongoing feedback from my peers helped me to improve my work; (3) I felt confident when applying both positive and negative feedback to my work. The accountability to use feedback section asked students four questions: (1) It was

my responsibility to use the feedback to improve my performance; (2) When the educators gave me feedback, it was my responsibility to apply it; (3) When my peers gave me feedback, it was my responsibility to apply it; (4) I felt obligated to make changes to my work based on the ongoing feedback I was given. In part two of the questionnaire students were asked four general questions about their experience. These general questions were designed to elicit direct responses from the students in relation to their experiences of the specific pedagogical approaches the educators had put in place.

There are several limitations that need to be acknowledged. The study took place at a single university at a specific period of students' learning journey and is illustrative rather than generalizable. The educators' views represent self-report data, and their own particular perceptions are not triangulated with observations. The student data comprises questionnaire data which indicates broad trends, although without interviews which would enable them to elaborate their thoughts further.

Findings

Focus groups with educators

Four themes were generated from the data analysis: the learning culture, analysing work-in-progress, peers as a source of feedback and applying feedback to their work.

Learning culture

The learning culture the educators created facilitated productive feedback exchanges. In Music this was particularly well articulated by one of the educators:

> In performance-based subjects it's quite iterative and there are ups and downs all the time. Getting the students to realise this and understand how their peers cope and use the feedback is important to the creative process. I encourage them to discuss this openly and honestly, it's central to my classroom culture.

Within Film it was apparent that educators had to orientate students towards an understanding that both negative and positive feedback are a feature of the learning culture:

> I've got to be very encouraging and fair around the room, so I would say the dynamic is even more important if there's one or two people that are negative and not being very constructive in their feedback. The idea is that students blossom into confident learners that are resilient.

Resilience is a critical aspect of student feedback literacy, developed through honest exchanges within a supportive and trusting learning culture. This was underpinned by opportunities for dialogue between peers and educators in transparent, open ways to share how they coped with challenges and managed the affective side of the enactment of feedback.

The educators wanted to create a learning culture that afforded students opportunities to experience different forms of feedback, engage in peer dialogue and promote open and honest sharing of coping mechanisms employed. This was facilitated through students ongoing work-in-progress performances, to appreciate that feedback comes from various sources and not just the educator:

> Comedy—When they do those performances, they are getting feedback on their performance skills from each other and from the educators in the room. So, they are learning to engage an audience, by acknowledging the audience is there and doing it in dialogue with them. It's important to maintain a feeling of positivity in the room throughout, even when the work being produced isn't as good as you're hoping for. So, balancing positive and negative feedback is part of it. Another thing is watching out for very sensitive students and being particularly gentle with any feedback that they might see as being critical.

Within this learning culture there is some authenticity in the feedback interactions, that resemble the professional performances of comedians. The educators were trying to create a safe space for students to discuss successes, failures, areas for experiment and refinement of their performance. However, film students appeared not always forthcoming in their appraisal of peers' work:

> I try to instil a sense of freedom to risk, because everyone is in the same boat. I would say a typical challenge faced in my seminars is when students are listening to, and critiquing, each other's work-in-progress. Often a 'code of silence' appears to be observed, i.e., students are wary of critiquing another piece of work because they themselves might meet the same reception when it's their turn.

The educators highlight a real challenge here. Not all students will be readily willing and able to engage in this process. The students need help to develop the confidence to generate and receive critical feedback for each other. The educators were trying to establish an atmosphere in which successes and failures were normal aspects of the learning process, with a focus on what could be improved:

> Drama—It gets harder where you have students who are really focused on grades and not willing to fail. But I hope that after a few weeks, we have students who want to test their boundaries, not necessarily in their assessments, but certainly in front of each other. So, they are enjoying engaging with things that they know they're not very good at. The idea that getting it wrong or doing something that doesn't work is actually valuable for them to learn from.

The educators wanted their students to understand that setbacks are a part of the learning process. Helping the students to move towards understanding this was facilitated by frequent opportunities within the classroom time for sharing work-in-progress and seeing peers work-in-progress.

Analysing work in progress

Students being exposed to examples of quality were an important part of the educators' approach to helping students recognise quality in the sub-disciplines through carefully chosen exemplars from the professional realm: Drama (West End theatre performances), Comedy (comedy club comedians), Film (Oscar-winning short films) and Music (UK album chart artists):

> Drama—The professional exemplars are great as a starting point but when things really get interesting is when we use the students' work-in-progress performances. The experience and knowledge gained from seeing the professional exemplars helps the students to judge the quality of what they are seeing in their peers' work. We then collectively discuss the good and the bad aspects and feedback is supportively given.

Dialogue and analysis surrounding both the professional exemplars and students own work-in-progress were integrated within the classroom time. The aim of this was to help students to judge the quality of their peers work and also their own. However, this process could sometimes cause negative issues for some students:

> Music—I think the peer review in terms of comment could have a detrimental effect, if the student watches someone brilliant and then that makes their anxiety even worse. I don't want to say it's a Russian Roulette system, but there is that potential it could ricochet the other way.

This pedagogy can cause unintended consequences particularly with regard to student's ability conceptions and long-term motivation. In a similar vein, dialogue surrounding what students thought would constitute quality in their discipline was reported as being challenging for some students as they lacked the necessary critical experience to judge quality. To build upon the professional level exemplars, the educators used the students' own work-in-progress as sources for comparison:

> Comedy—Towards the end of term, we have two sessions where half the students present their act in each session. So, it is a bigger audience and getting feedback from people who have not got that same kind of cuddly relationship that is being built up. It is introducing strangeness into the room, but the feedback culture is the same as before in helping the students enable each other to improve.

Presenting work-in-progress in this way in comedy has signature manifestations in terms of its authentic performative nature, and also carries generic applications for other disciplines where oral presentations are common e.g. business, education and law.

Peers as a source of feedback

The learning culture the educators created in all four performative sub-disciplines attempted to nurture peer feedback interactions. In both film and drama, the benefit and potential of students using their peers as sources of feedback was highlighted:

> Film—So they're throwing in ideas, and I say to them that they've been giving ideas, but they've also been learning how to write for themselves because they are seeing how it works. So, that interactivity between peers is crucial, it is massively important.

> Drama—I emphasise how helpful it is to everybody's learning to have each other's feedback, looking for opportunities to have students affirm that feedback they are receiving is useful to them and explain why, role modelling the kind of points that we need to observe in each other's work.

The educators wanted the modus operandi of the learning culture to reflect ongoing giving and receiving feedback between peers. Fostering this, however, was not without its challenges and there was an element of transition to embedding this new feedback culture:

> Comedy—I think probably the biggest challenges are a) getting the students talking in the first place and b) getting them to go beyond bland praise. You have to get the quieter ones to come out of their shells. As for b), students will always tend to reach for 'I liked it when you…' as their first response. The key is to constantly remind them that by working out why things didn't work, or how they might work better, we're not criticising the work but rather helping it to improve.

The implication here is reciprocity, students were giving constructive peer feedback as well as receiving it. However, educators concede this is challenging for many students. There is a period of adaptation and learning in which students are experiencing a new learning culture. Not all students will progress through this process at the same speed, nor will they all generate feedback that mirrors what an educator might produce. The educators reflected that developing a healthy engagement in these kinds of interactions took time and was facilitated by building trust. Central to this was greater educator involvement in the development of students' confidence and momentum:

> Drama—It tends to fall more to the lecturer, especially early in the term, than the students to respond to whether that's appropriate and correctly understood. There is a point where it stops feeling like you're pushing a boulder uphill and it starts to roll downhill. It gets easier, they get more vocal because they can see exactly where they're heading and they're more confident as well.

The drama educator's candour here is representative of the challenges faced when helping students to engage in peer feedback activities. To help students to navigate the difficulty in adapting to a new feedback environment many of the educators offered multiple opportunities for students to refine work-in-progress over the course of the module.

Applying feedback to their work

Ongoing opportunities for students to experience peers' work-in-progress exposed them to many instances of varying quality. Educators talked about students starting to improve their recognition of features of quality and the implications for their own ongoing work:

> Comedy—Towards the end of term, where they're looking at some different acts, they're going to spot quality better. It is also about their actual skill of giving feedback, of identifying what is really ticking and being able to articulate it. So beyond it made me laugh, it made me laugh when you did this. The key challenge is then being able to refine their own performance in light of all of this, not everyone can do this though.

There was a consistent expectation in all sub-disciplines that students would readily evaluate each other's work. At the same time, opportunities for consequential feedback were apparent through the performers having an audience for their work-in-progress. The discussions surrounding how different sources of feedback might apply to their own work made this expectation a normalised approach of the learning culture the educators had created. Not all students, however, were able to do this in their first year of study. Students were afforded multiple opportunities to adjust their performance considering the feedback they received from multiple sources. However, receiving, discussing and then applying feedback was not always a positive experience for all students. For some students despite these opportunities, they were unable to apply this to their own work or made the agentic decision not to do so:

> Drama—Some of the students were really good at making judgements about their peers' work and seeing how that may also apply to their own. However, for some students they were great at giving critical but helpful feedback about a peer's performance, but then when we discussed their own performance, they could not see they were making the same mistakes. It was a strange block, even when we showed them a video, they still couldn't see it.

The ability to critique someone else's work-in-progress is often easier for students than identifying or applying such criticisms to their own work. Similarly, the ability to recognise consequential feedback takes time to develop. Sometimes immersion and personal ownership in our own work-in-progress blinds us to its limitations and impedes our attempts at improving it.

Questionnaire with students

The results from the questionnaire were firstly analysed by individual sub-discipline areas. No statistical differences between the sub-disciplines were found. We now discuss the combined performance arts sub-disciplines results overall.

Using feedback

The three questions in this part of the survey asked students to reflect upon how they used feedback they received from their educators and peers. In particular they were asked if this feedback helped them to improve their work. Means scores of 4.5 for educator feedback and 4.4 for peer feedback suggest a high level of agreement that both sources of feedback assisted students. However, in the focus groups with the educators, it was noted that some students struggled to apply the ongoing feedback they received to their work-in-progress. This could be explained by the lower mean score (3.9) for the question relating to student's confidence level when applying feedback.

Table 1. Using feedback.

Question—using feedback ($n = 94$)	Mean
Ongoing Feedback from educators helped me to improve my work	4.5 ± 0.52
Ongoing Feedback from my peers helped me to improve my work	4.4 ± 0.52
I felt confident when applying both positive and negative feedback to my work	3.9 ± 0.65

Table 2. Accountability.

Question—accountability ($n = 94$)	
It was my responsibility to use the feedback to improve my performance	4.4 ± 0.52
When the teacher gave me feedback, it was my responsibility to apply it	4.5 ± 0.50
When my peers gave me feedback, it was my responsibility to apply it	4.0 ± 0.52
I felt obligated to make changes to my work based on the ongoing feedback I was given	4.0 ± 0.67

Table 3. General questions.

General questions ($n = 94$)	Mean
Understanding that failure was part of the learning process helped me in my learning	3.8 ± 0.55
Seeing my peer's work in progress helped me understand how good my own work was	4.4 ± 0.49
Generating feedback for others helped me in my own work	4.0 ± 0.64
Seeing how my peers applied their ongoing feedback helped me in my own work	3.8 ± 0.56

Accountability

High mean scores for all four questions in this section indicate that generally the majority of the students felt a high level of responsibility to use the feedback from their educator and peers to improve their work (see Table 2). This perhaps suggests that the culture of embedding feedback processes within the curriculum, learning activities and assessment design was having a positive effect upon students' sense of responsibility to use feedback in their work.

General evaluative questions about the process

The general questions directly asked students about their experiences of the specific pedagogical approaches the educators had put in place (Table 3). Question one asked students about their understanding that making mistakes was part of the learning process. A mean score of 3.8 suggests that although the educators created opportunities for students to experience setbacks and chances for ongoing refinement, the students did not feel as comfortable and accepting as the educators would have wished for. The second question asked students if seeing their peer's work-in-progress helped them to understand how good their own work was. The mean score of 4.4 suggests the students were very positive about the opportunity to see their peers work-in-progress and that this helped them to recognise the quality of their own work. Students however were slightly less positive in their response to question three (mean score 4.0) where they were asked if generating feedback for others helped them in their own work. The final question asked students if seeing how their peers applied their ongoing feedback helped them in their own work. A mean score of 3.8 suggests that not all students were convinced that this had assisted them in the production of their own work.

Discussion

In this study we demonstrated how educators managed the interplay between generic and signature feedback practices within the creative arts to support the development of students' feedback literacy (RQ1). The data illustrate sources of signature feedback identified by Quinlan and Pitt (2021). The self as source of feedback was enabled by arranging for students to self-assess their own work against their peer's work-in-progress performances. The process of judging others' work against their own afforded opportunities for generating internal feedback in the ways envisaged by Nicol (2021). Peers were sources of feedback as they, too, were trying to hone their performance over the duration of the course. For instance, in comedy a signature feedback practice was to use peers as an authentic audience for work-in-progress performances. Educators tried to replicate the professional world through mock audiences to expose students

to similar situations one might experience at a comedy club. To promote consequential feedback the educators tried to get students to share how the acts made them think and feel, and how this impacted upon their subsequent performance.

The students' attitudes to feedback, their beliefs about its utility and their understanding of the values of the discipline were fostered by learning cultures that utilised multiple opportunities for students to present and discuss work-in-progress in supportive yet critical learning atmospheres. This signature feedback practice of presenting work-in-progress in authentic situations operationalised opportunities for feedback being integrated both within the assessment design and the learning activities within the curricula. This replicated the kinds of conditions a performer may experience in the professional performance art setting. These natural feedback rhythms and cycles described by Quinlan and Pitt (2021) were part of the fabric of the learning culture the creative arts educators created. One such rhythm involved the sharing of feedback, which was not just in the hands of the educator but involved shared responsibilities between participants in the ways envisaged by Winstone, Pitt, and Nash (2021).

The students' ongoing work-in-progress afforded numerous opportunities for meaningful dialogue surrounding the critical feedback students received and generated for their peers, offering a comparative view to practice within healthcare settings reported by Rudolph, Raemer, and Simon (2014). The iterative feedback cycles of peers performing their work-in-progress and engaging with feedback messages from a wide variety of interlocutors underscore how creative arts sub-disciplines foster the relational dynamics of feedback depicted by, for instance, Esterhazy (2018).

We also demonstrated how creative arts students responded to the educators attempts to develop their feedback literacy (RQ2). Our findings exemplify how the four dimensions of the student feedback literacy framework developed by Carless and Boud (2018) were operationalised. First, the questionnaire data shows evidence of students appreciating the value of feedback processes in developing their work. Second, through peer feedback on student work-in-progress, they were afforded opportunities to make judgements about the work of their peers and appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of their own work. Third, directly experiencing their own and their peer's successes and failures presented opportunities to develop their ability to acknowledge and manage the affective dimension of feedback. Fourth, the integration of curriculum, assessment and presentation of student work-in-progress afforded opportunities for proximal feedback dialogues which encouraged students to act in response to feedback. Crucially, the signature feedback practices replicated the kinds of conditions a performer may experience in the professional performance art setting.

The findings from both the educators and students indicate that some students did struggle in the early stages to generate feedback for their peers. The educators reported that some students found it difficult to make judgments about quality, compose and receive feedback, manage the affective dimensions of dealing with critical feedback, and take action to improve their work-in-progress. Students indicated that whilst they understood the role of feedback in their learning and appreciated the need to take personal responsibility for using feedback, applying it to their own work was still challenging. The student questionnaire data supported many of the educator's reflections about their signature feedback practice and suggested interplay between teacher and student feedback literacy in ways envisaged in the literature conceptualizing feedback literacy (Carless and Boud 2018; Carless and Winstone 2020).

We have illustrated how creative arts educators shaped signature feedback practices by fostering emotionally and relationally sensitive feedback exchanges between participants. There are several implications for practice which can inform how educators across various disciplines design and implement curriculum, assessment and feedback. Firstly, educators afforded ongoing opportunities in the curriculum for students to perform their work-in-progress, see first-hand the work of their peers and engage in generating and receiving feedback within situations that

replicate the signature pedagogies of the discipline. Central to successful implementation is the need for educators to communicate and negotiate with students the rationales for peer review so they can appreciate the process, expectations and benefits that can accrue from meaningful engagement.

Secondly, educators are recommended to design the curriculum in ways that afford students opportunities to enact the feedback they receive during modules rather than at their end. Creating landing spaces within the curriculum where students can implement feedback during the construction or curation phase of their assessment work can help students to recognise their strengths and weaknesses and afford opportunities to enact feedback prior to summative submission.

Thirdly, educators can help students to generate evaluative feedback by creating opportunities to experience their own and their peer's successes and failures. Finally, students potentially benefit from conditions that replicate the signature feedback practices of the discipline when educators design assessment tasks which are sequenced to allow for sense-making and gestation, enable meaningful feedback exchanges between participants and manifestations of real-world aspects of the discipline. The educator capacities needed to facilitate the implementation of these strategies exemplify the design and relational facets of teacher feedback literacy proposed by Carless and Winstone (2020).

Conclusion

This study suggests that opportunities for the enactment of signature feedback practices and the development of feedback literacy within supportive learning cultures have potential to be integrated within the curriculum. These practices carry significant potential to enhance student learning because when feedback and pedagogy are intertwined, comments are timed so that students are able to make use of them. Whilst the findings from this study add to our knowledge and understanding of signature feedback practices within the creative arts, they also have implications for other disciplines where performance type elements are integral to the discipline.

Divergent points of emphasis between our two data sets suggest further research is needed to understand the relationship between the opportunities that educators create and the impact these have upon student learning outcomes. To advance our findings, longitudinal inquiry with multiple data collection points in various contrasting disciplines could explore the relationship between complex similarities and differences in the signature disciplinary feedback practices across the students' entire undergraduate program. The educator capacities for designing and implementing signature feedback practices could also be worth investigating given recent interest in teacher feedback literacy.

Data for this study were collected prior to the onset of COVID-19, and it remains to be seen the extent to which the learning cultures reported here can be readily re-created in digital environments. Promising possibilities may lie for instance in video peer feedback, online chat, asynchronous discussion forums or in the moment video streaming.

Disclosure statement

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