

Understanding Associations between Dialogic Feedback and Schoolwork Engagement – the Role of Teacher-Student Relationship, Feedback Usefulness and Students' Migration Background

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Dialogic Feedback has been defined as “interactive exchanges [related to the quality of student work] in which interpretations are shared, meanings negotiated and expectations clarified” (Carless et al., 2011). Closely related to the concept of scaffolding, dialogic feedback is argued to be particularly effective in promoting learning because it requires the student to actively use and make sense of feedback, instead of merely “receiving” it (van der Kleij et al., 2019). Furthermore, dialogic feedback practices, when applied appropriately, are predictive of a trusting student-teacher relationship (Carless, 2012), which may have direct consequences for student achievement, engagement and motivation (Roorda et al., 2011).

Research explicitly examining dialogic feedback tends to focus on secondary to higher educational settings (Adie et al., 2018; van der Kleij, 2023; Winstone & Carless, 2019). However, even young children have a need for feedback to be negotiable and adaptive to their interests, rather than merely prescriptive (Hargreaves, 2011). Initial research concerning student participation in class dialogue indeed indicates some positive effects on learning, particularly when the conversation is scaffolded by the teacher (Bürgermeister et al., 2019). However, results are mixed, with Herrmann et al. (2021) recently finding such benefits only for classrooms with a high ratio of students from a migration background. Thus, the function and benefit of dialogic practices in the early years of schooling are far from settled, and effects may differ due to individual characteristics.

Focusing on German-language instruction in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Grade, the present study examines the relationship between student-reported dialogic feedback practices and schoolwork engagement. Engagement is conceptualised as the multidimensional (Fredricks et al., 2004), “observable manifestation of motivation” (Skinner et al., 2009). Specifically, emotional engagement (e.g. positive activating emotions) and cognitive-behavioural engagement (e.g. participation, attention) are the outcomes of interest. Based on prior literature, it is hypothesized that dialogic feedback predicts (a) the usefulness of feedback and (b) the quality of the teacher-student relationships, as reported by students themselves. These are postulated as mediating pathways in the association between dialogic feedback and emotional engagement and cognitive-behavioural engagement. Students' migration background is explored as a potential moderator of feedback effects.

Preliminary analyses (N=257) show that the effect of dialogic feedback on emotional engagement with schoolwork is mediated through increased quality of teacher-student relationship ( $b = 0.115$ , Bootstrapped 95% CI [.051, .188.]) and feedback-usefulness ( $b = 0.169$ , Bootstrapped 95% CI [0.083, 0.273]). Effects on cognitive-behavioural engagement are mediated only by feedback usefulness ( $b = 0.15$ , Bootstrapped 95% CI [0.074, 0.246]). Neither the indirect nor the direct pathways significantly differ based on students' migration background. Results are discussed in the context of previous findings.

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