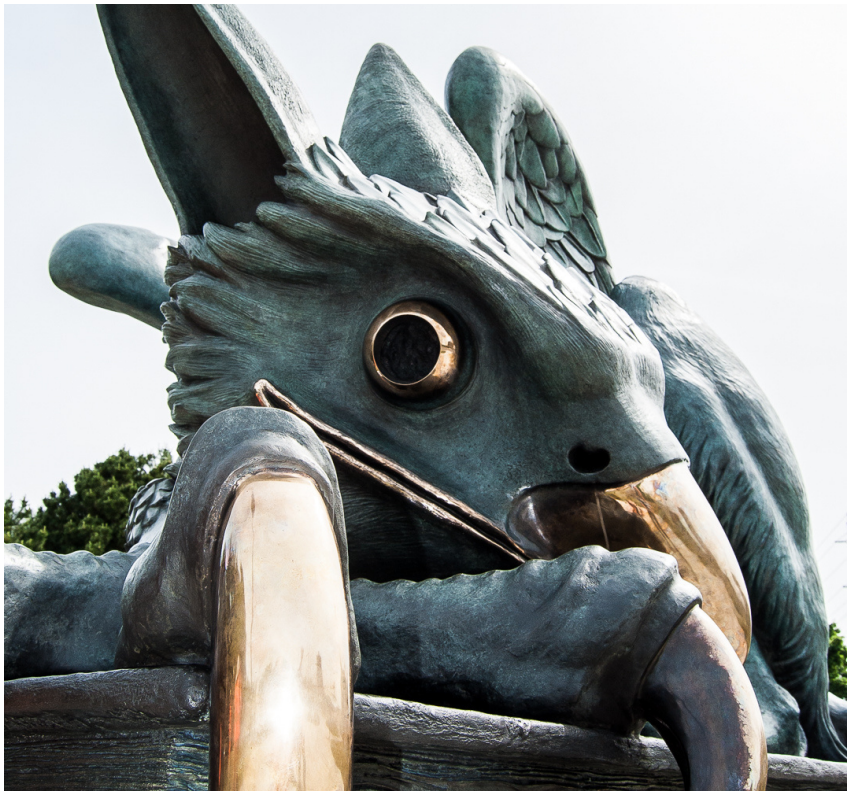

Implementing Productive Feedback in Course Design

What is this Research About?

Feedback on students' work play a critical role in improving student learning. To be productive, feedback should be collaborative between teachers and students. Students need to engage with and use feedback, not simply receive it. It is important for course design to include productive feedback opportunities to promote student learning and to lead students to take charge of their own learning. In this study, the researchers examined the integration of productive feedback in course designs from different disciplines.

What did the Researchers Do?

The researchers conducted case studies of two undergraduate courses: a biology course with 27 students and a software engineering course with 170 students. The researchers interviewed course instructors at the beginning and end of their course about the course design and course experiences. The researchers also interviewed 9 and 15 students in the biology and software engineering courses, respectively, about their course experiences. The researchers also observed teaching and learning activities and examined course documents to determine how feedback opportunities were incorporated into the course design.

What did the Researchers Find?

In the biology course, the instructor used a portfolio-assessment design, where students submitted assignments throughout the semester and received written and oral feedback via scheduled appointments. Students could resubmit their assignments after they received and incorporated feedback. In this course, formal feedback opportunities were explicitly included in the course design. In the software-engineering course, the instructor implemented a project-based pedagogy. The project was divided into 8 tasks and that increased in complexity throughout the semester. The weekly lecture and lab sessions served as informal feedback opportunities where the students would learn information that would support the completion of the current task and receive verbal coaching from the TAs. Students had to take responsibility to seek feedback in the software engineering course. The researchers found that students in both courses described the feedback as productive for their learning. Students reported that they appreciated completing small assignments throughout the semester. They also reported that the multiple opportunities for feedback were useful to independently take charge of their learning.

SoTL Snapshot

A synopsis of a scholarship of teaching and learning journal article

How to Implement this Research in Your Classroom

Integrating productive feedback into course design can promote student engagement and learning throughout the course. Productive feedback can be incorporated into course design by implementing feedback opportunities throughout the semester to help students seek help to improve their work . This research shows that implementing assessments, activities, and feedback sessions in their course will give students opportunity to take charge of their own learning by seeking and negotiating feedback, which can ultimately lead to new skills to be used in their independent work.

Citation

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University of Guelph
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