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## Research Proposal: Teacher Feedback and Student Grade Improvement

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## Teacher Feedback and Student Grade Improvement

Sara Sullivan

I am proposing a research project to discover whether there is a significant grade improvement in students receiving positive feedback from teachers on tests, assignments, or papers, as opposed to students receiving negative feedback or no feedback at all. I decided to look into this question because I have read several studies pertaining to student motivation and achievement and am interested to know how much, specifically teacher feedback, will improve student grades throughout the course of a semester. The studies I have reviewed discuss student motivation and achievement and indicate students' perceptions of how these behaviors are likely to occur.

In a study by Bray, Hancock, & Nason (2002), the effects of professors' instructional methods and university students' conceptual levels on students' achievement and motivation in a course on computer technologies were discussed. Instructional methods for this study are characterized by teacher-centered learning and student-centered learning, while students were rated as high- or low-conceptual learners. The dependent variables measured are student achievement and student motivation to learn. The findings of this study suggest that students' motivation to learn is a function of personality variables and characteristics of the learning environment (Bray et al., 2002). This study also suggests that regardless of conceptual level, all students are motivated to learn when exposed to student-centered instruction (Bray et al., 2002). This finding pertains to my proposal because the idea of student-centered instruction includes positive feedback and interaction from the teacher.

In a study conducted by Herman, Pedersen, Reinke, Tucker, & Voger (2000), elementary and high school students completed an open-ended questionnaire regarding African American students' perceptions of academic problems and solutions to these problems. Thematic analysis of these responses produced the following: academic preparation and active participation in class would enhance academic success, positive peer influences would be helpful in promoting academic success even during pre-adolescent years, self-empowering African American students by teaching them self-management techniques would promote academic success, and praise and encouragement by teachers and parents is needed to facilitate African American students active participation in class and their school work (Herman et al., 2000). My proposal would be useful here to research how closely positive teacher feedback and improvement of schoolwork are related.

I predict that there will be an effect of positive feedback on grade improvement. I feel that the previously discussed articles provide rationale for the importance of positive feedback from the teacher to improve grades throughout the semester. Positive feedback is a great motivational factor for students as is shown above.

## Method

### Participants

I intend to have 90 high school students as participants from a writing, a math, and a science course of junior or senior status. Each of these three classes will contain thirty students.

### Materials

A class listing from each of the three classes being used is needed to assign experimental and control groups. A standardized list of remarks and comments that are acceptable under each category to be used will be given to the teacher of each class involved. Other materials that may be needed would include books, paper, and pencil, which students would already have access to through the school.

### Procedure

To begin, teachers for each class will be given a class roster with each student randomly assigned to group one, two, or three. Students in group one will be given positive feedback on all tests, assignments, and papers throughout the semester, group two will be given negative feedback, and group three will be given no feedback from the teacher. The teachers will use the standardized list to write comments and remarks on all returned papers. Throughout the study, the students will be unaware that they are part of an experiment and will later be asked for consent to use their data.

### Implications

Through this experiment, I expect to find that students who were given positive feedback are more likely to improve their grades throughout the semester than those students who are given negative feedback or no feedback at all. If my hypothesis were not supported I would expect to find no difference in grade improvement between groups one, two, and three. I would use an analysis of variance to conduct statistical analyses of the data collected.

If my hypothesis is supported, it may help to indicate that teacher's positive feedback is motivation enough for students to want to succeed. Other studies could be

done to help reinforce the importance of teachers giving positive feedback. This experiment may help teachers to understand what motivates their students. It would be useful to society as a whole to help reassess different ways of motivating students to want to succeed.

#### References

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