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TEACHERS' OPINIONS ON FEEDBACK IN COMMUNICATION AS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

ABSTRACT

Feedback as a form of constructive criticism plays an important role in the process of education. Its aim is to influence students' development positively. This chapter describes and characterizes the basic rules and tools of creating effective feedback. Research referring to the meaning of constructive criticism in work with students is also presented. A correctly given feedback is a great way of communicating between the teacher and the students. This skill, however, requires knowledge and practice that may help in building correct relationships at school and may be effective in teachers' educational work.

KEYWORDS: communication, education, educational process, teachers, students, feedback.

I have just received a letter form a Young scientist, who dealt with an interesting maths problem. He drew a conclusion that is right and original. He also undertook a trial to prove it. However, in his counts I found two wrong assumptions, although the result is correct. He felt intuitively that his conclusion is correct but He could not give a reason for that. I corrected him, and wrote to him that the conclusion is right and that He can use my correction. I did not want to compete with that young man and wanted him to feel independent. This way he keeps the right to be the first as far as the idea is concerned, and he can search for the right solution himself without owing anything to me .

<div align="right">Albert Einstein</div>

An effective educational communication at school is the base for all educational processes. In contrast to other processes of interpersonal communication, educational communication is expressed in the intended and intentional teacher's influence on students, unconditional acceptance, and actions aiming at help, support and students' development.[1] The teacher's educational skills, which are based on the knowledge about the student, school, methods and ways of influencing the interpersonal and task oriented spheres, are essential in

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[1] G. Koć–Seniuch, Nauczyciel i uczeń w sytuacjach szkolnych, Białystok, 1995, p. 127.

those processes. These skills include: effective communication, solving conflicts in student teams, active listening, decision making abilities, talking and, most of all, giving feedback in order to provide help and support for students' development.

Such skills thus have a decisive meaning for the quality and effectiveness of a teacher's work with a student. The teacher, as the person being in charge of the child's development in certain areas of knowledge, as well as having influence on the development of a young person's personality, is responsible for the creation of a student's positive image and the way of perceiving him/herself and the surrounding world. Thanks to certain skills and knowledge, the teacher should direct students' development in such a way as to create a positive image of the student themselves and other people. Due to many conditions resulting from the complexity of interpersonal relationships, it is very difficult and requires a huge amount of knowledge, competences and a teacher's true vocation.[2]

Teachers' skills in their relationship with students should be based on three important elements, i.e. the abilities to motivate, make contact and criticize. **Criticism** (lat. criticus "judging") is the analysis and evaluation of both good and bad qualities from the point of view of certain values (such as: practical, ethical, cognitive, scientific, esthetical and correct ones). It may concern many spheres like science (science criticism), formality correctness (logical criticism) and content-related correctness (content-related criticism or empirical criticism). In casual speech the word "criticism" is usually understood as being in opposition (in words or in writing) to a certain phenomenon, person, fact or way of solving problems, connected with a negative evaluation of such facts. Criticism may be of a constructive or destructive form. **Constructive criticism** is a type of criticism which is characterized by the fact that the person criticizing at the same time suggests a way of solving a problem. Constructive criticism is feedback information essential for following a correct path and implementing certain improvements. It requires effort and is at the same time a sign of honesty and treating the other person with respect.

Destructive criticism is usually expressed in a form of some general, subjective remarks concentrated on a person's characteristic features; it takes the form of a non-objective comments. A lack of criticism is also not good, as is its excess and unsuitable form.[3]

A constructive form of criticism in the literature of the subject is called feedback. Feedback in English means feed – to provide with food, and back – to give back. It is very often not translated into Polish, and the Polish equivalent and English version are used interchangeably.

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[2] B. Strychalska–Gać, Za szkolnym progiem, Warszawa, 2005, p. 41.

[3] Wikipedia: wolna encyklopedia [online], modified: 31.12.2010 [access: 2.09.2012], Krytyka, [in:] http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krytyka.

In the process of education, feedback as a constructive criticism plays an important role with the aim to positively influence students' development.

According to Bee and Bee, feedback is an essential part of a correct, two-sided communication. It is a fundamental part of the process of directing people to act and behave in a way most suitable in certain situations.[4] Feedback is constantly given by everyone in formal and informal ways. Feedback is also information from the environment when a person learns from experience about some facts and interdependences, and about their own and other people's abilities. An evaluating feedback is the base for human development, allowing for shaping of certain features and skills.

Feedback is also defined as 'information about acting or behaving, which leads to an action that is supposed to confirm or develop the action or behaviour', or 'awareness of the learners which of their actions reached a certain level, thanks to which, they will be able to perform the action, and explanation given to them on what was below a standard in order to agree on a plan allowing to avoid similar behaviour in the future, and to choose a way to a desired standard'.[5] Constructive feedback gives specific information, is concentrated on a task and is based on observation. It takes two forms:[6]

- **positive feedback** – respecting the needs of the other side, acting in order to make the contact better, striving to understand: the honest expressing one's opinions in such a way as not to hurt the other person.

- **negative/correcting feedback** – having own needs above the needs of the other person; acting in such a way leads to communication block, because the other side feels hurt, humiliated and in such conditions is unable to cooperate.

Both positive and negative feedback have benefits to teachers, students and parents.

The most important assumption in feedback is that the person receiving it can do something correctly or that there is a positive way of achieving certain results. In a school situation, such an approach to a student is mostly required. In the 1960s Rosenthal and Jacobson showed that if teachers assume that students will act wisely, they will probably do so. If, however, they assume that they will act stupidly, then this will happen.[7] It is important that feedback is of a constructive character, based on what is good and the best way to reach the aim. It should not be exclusively bad. The aim of the feedback given by the teacher is to provide students with information on their behavior and actions, which are evaluated on the basis of objective standards. It should be given in

[4] R. Bee and F. Bee. Feedback. Warszawa. 1998. p. 7.
[5] Ibidem. p. 10.
[6] O. Rzycka. Feedback w pigułce [online], modified: 11.04.2011. [access: 2.09.2012]. [in:] http://manager.wieszjak.pl/zarzadzanie-zespolem/279636.2.Feedback-w-pigulce.html.
[7] A. Janowski. Uczeń w teatrze życia szkolnego. Warszawa. 1995. p. 72.

such a way that the receiver, in this case the student, can keep a positive attitude towards himself/herself and learning. Information given should encourage the student to implement their own plan of action in accordance with the standards of behavior and action implemented by the school. Feedback is an inseparable and essential part of the process of education as it helps in learning new skills, improving existing ones and changing behavior.

Feedback is necessary as a regular and constant part of interpersonal communication between parents and children, teachers and students and future husbands and wives, friends, employers and employees. It is therefore important to provide effective, well constructed feedback within such relationships, and to do so it must be based on some rules. It should be given at a certain time, and if possible immediately after the events it concerns. Giving feedback too late makes the information too old and lacking the required meaning. This is responsible for maintaining a negative feeling, which may lead to the outburst of aggression. The person giving constructive criticism at a given time should feel confident that they have enough time to pass the information on. The capabilities of the person receiving feedback should also be taken into account. Having in mind a person's readiness to receive criticism, three categories can be distinguished:

1) "buckets" – people who know their value, have confidence in their possibilities of development and change, are positive towards receiving a constructive criticism;

2) "mugs" – people who can receive a reasonable dose of criticism in the form of three pieces of information concerning them;

3) "thimbles"– people who require special carefulness and sensitivity due to their lack of belief in their own abilities and sensitivity due to former experiences connected with destructive criticism.

A specific group comprises those who wait for constructive criticism to improve the effects of their work, but who, after getting feedback, do not change a single thing about the way they act. Russell terms such people "buckets with a hole".[8] Students also have different levels of readiness for receiving feedback depending on their former experiences, their feeling of their own values, and their evaluations of the environment. The level of acceptance of feedback may be different every day, depending on the mood, difficult situations on a certain day, stress, etc. In such a case, it is difficult to provide feedback correctly.

Feedback is evaluated as a necessary part of cooperation and the effective functioning of groups working together in companies and organizations. A lot of theories concerning feedback can be implemented in school situations, and as feedback is not of an extorting form it allows for the avoidance of stressful remarks and punishments and at the same time encourages development, which

[8] R. Bee and F. Bee. op. cit.. p. 33.

is essential in the process of education. Having the above in mind it can be stated that, as in the case of managing staff, in "managing" students at school feedback has some influential functions, for example:

- Sustaining and improving results. Feedback makes students realize which ways of behaving are effective and which are to be continued in the future. On the other hand, it allows for eliminating the behavior that negatively influences learning results.
- Getting new competences. Feedback is an essential part of the process of learning whereby the learner can observe their development and realize what should be improved.
- Development and unleashing potential. Constructive feedback at important stages in the process of learning may provide the right use of potential in students.
- Development of team work. The ability for students to provide feedback in a class is the basic element of their effective cooperation.
- Raising morale, motivation and involvement. The recognition of well performed tasks, the feeling of success, and the release of potential to grow and develop are key motivating factors.[9]

In order to achieve this, one the basic condition of proper feedback construction by the sender and the expression of constructive criticism should be fulfilled. Therefore, 10 tools for feedback creation have been formed:

1. Analysis of the situation.
2. Stating aims and results to be reached.
3. Adjusting the range of reception.
4. Creating a proper atmosphere.
5. Effective communication.
6. Description of the behavior to be changed.
7. Description of the desired behavior.
8. Collaborative search for solutions.
9. Focusing on what is good.
10. Reaching agreement.

The first step for the proper construction of feedback requires a deep analysis of the situation taking all its aspects into consideration. It should be stated where the problem is, what it results from, what needs to be changed and why. Using examples, the problem and its consequences should be made clear.

Another important step is stating the aims and results to be achieved. It is then essential to prepare the way to complete the stated aim, which should be positive and the emphasis should be on what is to be reached, not on what

should be corrected. Apart from this the aim should be clear and reachable, and should give the feeling of success. It should be supported by a strong vision of the success within reach. The aim has to be real, i.e. it should bring benefits and be set in time.

While giving feedback its reception should be adjusted. The different abilities of people receiving feedback should be taken into account, which also depend on a day and situation, as mentioned above.

The skills to create a proper atmosphere, providing the best possible conditions for understanding and accepting feedback, are also crucial. Feedback should be given in an atmosphere of trust, respect and openness, and one's experience has a decisive influence on this. For the feedback to be given successfully, people should create a contract in which they specify the rules. It is important to appoint a peaceful place in which the reception of information will not be interrupted. The most important aspects are honesty and empathy in the relations.[10]

While giving feedback it has to be remembered that the communicated information has to be efficient. It is crucial to realize that not only does verbal communication take place but so does non-verbal communication, used by the sender while giving the information, consisting of "body language" involving numerous elements, especially facial expressions and gestures.[11] Both forms usually appear simultaneously, complementing each other. However, as Argyle, Domachowski and Johson emphasize, in social functioning the non-verbal communication is as important, or even sometimes more important, than the verbal one. None of the authors responsible for the theories of communication has doubts as to the importance of non-verbal communication; the differences concern only the level of its importance. According to R. Briedwhistell, an American psychology professor, non-verbal communication is complementing, strengthening the direct, verbal communication which it is strongly connected with. It is important to bear in mind the fact that complementing verbal communication with the non-verbal cannot be avoided or ignored, as the oral component of direct communication is less than 35% and 65% of information given in a non-verbal way, which is as much as two thirds of the whole communication.[12] The effectiveness of giving constructive criticism (bearing in mind the level and the way of communication) depends on two forms: verbal and non-verbal communication. Other rules should also be remembered, such as full concentration (active listening is very difficult), having an open mind, avoiding speculation, keeping calm, showing interest by using eye-contact, nodding, making summaries and reflections, asking questions

* O. Rzycka, Feedback w pigułce [online], modified: 11.04.2011, [access: 2.09.2012], [in:] http://manager.wieszjak.pl/zarzadzanie-zespolem/279636,2,Feedback-w-pigulce.html.

[10] Ibidem, p. 30–34.
[11] W. Domachowski, S. Kowalik, J. Miluska, Z zagadnień psychologii społecznej, Warszawa 2004, p. 78.
[12] A. Pease, Język ciała, Kraków 1997, p. 12.

to make sure that everything is understood, and helping the other side in solving the problem.

Feedback is a complex and difficult activity involving many skills. The behavior to be changed or corrected should be clearly described as the receiver of the feedback needs to understand the core of the issue, feel the importance of the problem, and be sure that it is necessary to change something. Everything should be said directly, avoiding speculation and judging statements such as "I don't like your attitude", etc. In explaining the negative influence of the wrong behavior people should stick to the facts and be ready to verify them according to feedback given by other people.

Behavior and attitude as the result of feedback should also be clearly described. The solution for a specific situation or problem should be sought together. However, the person receiving feedback should always be encouraged to search for solutions, and with help if needed.[13]

While giving feedback the focus should be placed on what is good. The technique of alternating good and bad news should be used. In order for the criticism to be constructive and have an expected effect the order of giving information should be as follows:

1) information of a positive character,
2) information of a correcting character.
3) information of a positive character.

Information of a positive character allows the receiver to open for the information.

At the next stage information of a correcting character can be given, showing the element in the behavior, skills or knowledge that the receiver should change or correct. Feedback should be closed by information of a positive character which will allow the action, enable the receiver to believe in his/her strength and the possibilities to reach the goal.

Another principle that allows for positive relations and building correct communication between the teacher and the student is the rule that the teacher should always judge the behavior, not the person. It is an important part of creative criticism, very often underestimated or not noticed by teachers.[14]

Finally, a positive result from feedback is possible if speakers reach an agreement. Nobody can be forced to any change. People can only be encouraged and helped in introducing changes, but these changes have to be made by people themselves. It is possible if the interested party accepts the introduction of objective standards. The person that is to change their behavior has to accept the necessity to undertake different actions that are crucial for the

changes to happen. It is helpful if there are deadlines to maintain time frames.[15]

The above described rules of feedback are included in the 10 basic rules that should be considered while giving feedback. By giving constructive criticism it is usually assumed that the person being its receiver is open to a dialogue. There are, however, some situations when giving feedback seems to be a huge challenge, for example when a person avoids contact or is difficult to reach an agreement with. Such situations happen when the receiver of the feedback:

– does not agree with being criticized,
– shows no interest or thinks it does not concern them,
– is shocked, worried or even cries,
– is furious.
– refuses the right to be criticized.

To be prepared for such situations their causes should be understood. These may result from:

– lack of self-confidence (one is afraid to get the results of the evaluation),
– acting out of stress,
– feeling of satisfaction of the state of things and the negative attitude towards taking new action.
– treating criticism as the threat to one's position, etc.

There are even more causes that depend on the specific characteristics of people, and their experience and emotions: '... understanding why people act in a certain way is valuable help in preparing to deal with them'.[16]

Using communicates of "I" and "You" types is also important.

A constructive and non constructive expression of feedback is completed by the two types of information. "I" information allows to give feedback in a constructive way, while "You" information does not create a chance for understanding and analysis of the problem that the sender would like to inform the other side about. It is therefore not a correct form. "I" information focuses on the sender's feelings which are difficult to discuss; these are the consequences of certain behaviors of the other person showing what aspects in the behavior of the other side makes the sender nervous or sad. It stops the problem from escalating and the aggression of the other person, and includes four elements:[17]

• I feel ... – a place for feelings,
• When you ... – a place for talking about a specific behavior that released the feelings,
• Because ... – explaining why the behaviour caused certain feelings,
• I expect that ...

[13] R. Bee and F. Bee, op. cit., p. 36–38.
[14] B. Strycharska-Gać, op. cit., p. 41.

[15] R. Bee and F. Bee. op. cit., p. 39–40.
[16] Ibidem. p. 43.
[17] Solution of Human Resources [online]. [access: 2.09.2012]. Feedback na bieżąco w rozwoju kompetencji. [in:] http://www.solution.pl/feedback-na-biezaco-w-rozwoju-kompetencji.html.

"You" information focuses on the other person, and is of a judgemental and accusing character. It includes generalizations, accusations, instructions and evaluation.

Sending "I" and "You" information, as H. Rylke states, also allows the teacher to recognize not only the student's but also teacher's psychical area. The teacher's ability to preserve an important balance and border between "I" and "You" does not mean not being involved in emotions and a relationship with a student. Sending "I" information is a responsibility for one's own words, actions and relationship with students. Overusing "You" information by the teachers does not solve cognitive and communication problems; on the contrary, it makes the problems grow and creates obstructions in the process of communication.[18]

A list of useful advice and recommendations that can be used in giving and receiving criticism in the teacher student relation was created by H. Hamer.[19]

While giving critical information:

* express the accusation directly to the interested person and use eye contact,
* do not compare the criticized behavior to others, it causes humiliation,
* express the accusation right after the situation,
* when the receiver accepts the accusation, do not repeat it, it causes humiliation,
* criticize only behavior that can be changed,
* do not highlight dissatisfaction,
* express only one reservation at a time – any more makes the receiver nervous and stops them from listening! (this often happens when teenagers are "bombarded" with criticism),
* avoid being malicious and sarcastic,
* do not ask about the motives of the criticized behavior and do not try to guess,
* avoid the words "never" and "always", as they destroy creditability,
* if you do not praise a lot and often, do not expect openness to your criticism.

How to accept critical remarks?:

* stay calm and show that you are listening,
* maintain eye contact,
* try to understand the criticism, do not defend yourself,
* do not ascribe the sender hostile feelings towards yourself,
* do not change the subject,

* do not criticize the person that criticizes you,
* do not say to the critic that they are overreacting,
* do not joke,
* do not ascribe the sender with something that was not said,
* at the end of the conversation show that you have understood the accusation,
* give yourself time to be calm; order your thoughts before you further discuss the accusations.

The choice of place is also important while giving feedback. A student should not be criticized in front of their colleagues or other people as this multiplies the punishment by humiliation. Negative feedback should be given directly face-to-face. Similar to praising, students prefer to receive it in privacy, not in public, which may cause a hostile atmosphere and create an unpleasant reaction from the rest of the students.

Feedback should be descriptive information not evaluation, and should refer to the aspects of behavior that can be changed. For feedback to be proper it is necessary to emphasize that it is the opinion of the person forming it. It is also important that the person forming feedback has a positive attitude to the receiver and that the latter is prepared to accept feedback. It cannot be forced as it should take the form of an offer.

Correctly given feedback is a great form of communication between teacher and students. This skill requires knowledge and practice that help in building correct relationships at school, and can also be an effective way of the teacher's didactic and educational work. The teacher should not criticize a student if their knowledge or experience are beyond the area the criticism refers to. The issue we know nothing about cannot be criticized. The teacher is not an expert in every area of knowledge, is not someone who never makes mistakes as "there is no proof that God gave the tool of education and creation of everything to scientists".[20]

There is a sort of educational gap as far as giving feedback is concerned. Future teachers are very rarely taught how to correctly and constructively criticize students, and students therefore receive more destructive and constructive criticism at school. However, it is worth considering what can be changed in this sphere. Therefore, constructive information given to students should refer to certain ways of behavior in specific situations. Information given this way is to be a source of knowledge on how the actions undertaken by the student are seen by others and how they influence them. The student may thus compare their own intentions and approaches with their reception by others and the actual results. If there are discrepancies (and the student accepts the reservations), a correction can be made. This type of information is

[18] G. Koć-Seniuch. Teorie komunikacji a kształcenie nauczycieli. [in:] Z zagadnień pedeutologii i kształcenia nauczycieli, ed. H. Kwiatkowska, T. Lewowicki, Warszawa, 1995, p. 190.
[19] H. Hamer. Klucz do efektywności nauczania. Warszawa, 1994, p. 72–72.

[20] C. Banach, My i nasze sprawy. Kraków, 2000, p. 7.

not a sign of disrespect and does not negate the person itself, rather the behavior.

Non-constructive criticism referring to general features and behavior does not give the student a chance to draw conclusions concerning the aspects which are right in their behavior (to strengthen such behavior and improve it) and which are wrong. They have no chance to correct the action. This type of information is a source of uncertainty and makes people uneasy. These are especially negative generalizations that make communication difficult, enforce conflicts and tensions, and are often seen as an attack on and violation of dignity, causing negative emotions. Being aware of the existence of positive and negative feedback, the information given to students should not be one-sided, as each person is neither completely good nor bad. The knowledge about both good and bad behavior has its consequences, enabling the student to choose such behavior that will be approved. Constructive criticism in positive feedback concerns either negative or positive student behaviors, and does not provide objective knowledge about the student. It has a label form that is not easily changed. Unfortunately, as practice shows, labelling students happens very often. As A. Janowski states: 'together with a poor knowledge of children labelling happens, i.e. a situation when an opinion (especially negative) about a student becomes an opinion commonly adopted by other teachers who had no chance to have their own opinion about the student'.[21] Opinions are also adopted by colleagues and the student may be seen as weak and as having problems with learning. Giving only one-sided information on the student in a form of positive or negative feedback only sets the opinion become: the teacher closes their eyes to new experiences and maintains a stereotype about the student. This situation is considered very dangerous as it triggers a mechanism of self-fulfilling prophecy. As a result, the student who was often told that they are not clever and that little can be expected from them will actually start to behave this way, seeing no sense in changing the opinion.[22] It is also dishonest to label good students who, in teachers' opinions, are always nice, prepared for classes, clever and well behaved. This can cause situations in which such a student will discover that they don't need to try to be accepted, which has negative effects on cooperation and building relationships with teachers. Thus, it is important for teachers to use both positive and negative feedback in their work with students. Praise given to the student in class is motivating and of a great value, and is especially important for weaker students. Thanks to that, the student may change their motivation towards learning, set themmselves more difficult goals, understand the relationship between effort, its effects and the praise received from the teacher. A typical sign of such a change

will definitely be an increase in self-esteem and confidence. In a situation when a student gets a lower grade for their work, words of destructive criticism will make people expect only poor results from them. Teachers', parents' and friends' expectations will stay at a low level, not always in response to a student's actual abilities.[23] To avoid such situations, while giving feedback the teacher should:

- act quickly by giving criticism as fast as possible when everyone knows what the matter is.
- stay calm to have a conversation focusing on the facts.
- never criticize in writing: criticism should be given directly, in person.
- talk about what is seen, without analyzing what the student could possibly think or feel. The teacher should not look for hidden intensions. S/he should talk about the situation as if it was unexpected.
- present facts by giving examples of the behavior evaluated.
- focus on the problem, not the person.
- show the effects by talking about the consequences of the student's behavior.
- set action for the future together with the student and at the same time explain what the situation taught both of you, and what conclusions can be spread among others.
- respect and appreciate by establishing conditions for respecting dignity, appreciating students' responsibility for their own behavior or by appreciating their efforts they make in improving the situation. It is also worth expressing optimism for the future.
- treat criticism as the tool for development, a means of improvement and development of the student's competences.[24]

The teacher should always be interested in the causes of the problem from the student's perspective as well. Only then can all the factors involved in the situation be spotted, a proper solution found and a similar situation prevented in the future.

The principles and rules of forming feedback and its proper use in the educational process seem to be clear, easy and obvious, but their significance is seen when they are not properly used nor respected in practice. This is a very common cause of the disturbances in the process of communication and education. In order to find out about teachers' actual knowledge on feedback, research by A. Pawlak and K. Bragiel-Wardowska was conducted on a group of 148 primary and junior high school teachers within the cujavia-pomerania voievodeship. Due to the size restriction of the article only conclusions based

[21] A. Janowski, Uczeń w teatrze życia szkolnego, op. cit., p. 72.
[22] Ibidem, p. 72.

[23] G. Koć-Seniuch. Nauczyciel i uczeń w sytuacjach szkolnych. op. cit.. s. 154.
[24] A. Grabka. Zmotywuj pracownika. Jak sprawić, aby twój zespół był wydajny i odnosił sukcesy. [in:] http://www.nbpnews.pl/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/zmotywuj-pracownika.pdf 2010, access: 10.05.2012, p. 22.

on the part of the results will be presented. Respondents taking part in the research were asked about knowledge of different synonymous expressions connected with feedback. Based on the results it can be stated that the most popular was feedback (43.5%), while the less popular was the Polish version of English feedback (21.5%), even though it is a direct translation from English. A similar number of respondents (21%) understood feedback as constructive criticism. The remaining part did not give any answers. Where, then, do teachers know the definitions from?

The biggest group learnt about the notion of feedback during their studies (26%); a similar percentage of teachers learnt about it during different courses, and workshops (24%); 21.5% of respondents stated they know about feedback from private conversations and professional discussions; 10% found out about the issue from mass media, i.e. newspapers, radio, TV, the Internet, and also from books, films, and cinema. A high percentage (18.5%) gave no answer to any of the questions. Interestingly, only one fifth of the respondents learnt about feedback during their studies. Such data results may be rooted in the fact that more than half (65%) of the people involved in the research have been teachers for many years. We should hope that nowadays, while educating future teachers, constructive criticism is a part of the curriculum. Further research may provide an answer to this.

Analyzing ten tools of forming feedback, it was pointed out that it is crucial to recognize the type of the receiver of the information as far as their tolerance and individual predispositions to accept constructive criticism and behavior are concerned. Do teachers use this clue in their work with students? A high percentage of teachers (65%) said that they adjust the feedback to the student's individual needs. Less than one third (29%) admitted that they do so only sometimes, and only 4% said that they rarely pay attention to their student's needs concerning the form of feedback referring to their school achievement and behavior during classes and breaks. Two per cent of the respondents never thought about the problem. None of the teachers admitted that they do not adjust feedback to the student's needs. What does this state of things result from? Do teachers know the rules of forming feedback? In order to check this the respondents were given ten tools of feedback forming in the correct order. Three of them were changed on purpose in such a way that they were not formulated according to the assumptions of constructive feedback. The teachers' task was to mark the ones which, according to them, had a negative influence on the correctly given feedback. Only people who knew the theory and had experience in forming and giving feedback had no problem with the task.

The first false tool of feedback forming referred to focusing on reaching the aim at all costs, i.e. changing the behavior and student's conduct. Inconsistency with the rules of forming feedback was spotted by one fifth (16.5%) of the questioned teachers.

This may result from the fact that only a small percentage of teachers involved in the research tried to reach the set goal in a democratic way, taking students' feelings and reactions into account. Does this mean that 83.5% of teachers do not pay attention to the effects of destructive criticism?

Moreover, as much as 20% of respondents marked the next false tool, which was labelling students' behavior to be changed without showing empathy. It means that the remaining part of the teachers see nothing wrong in such behavior. They perhaps do this not realizing that it destroys a student's self-assessment and creates a gap between a student and a teacher, which in consequence makes good communication and cooperation impossible.

Many people marked imposing a solution as an inefficient step in forming feedback (30%), which means that these teachers take students' thoughts, feelings and opinions into account, and try not to impose their solution to the problem appearing in the process of education. All in all, the results of the surveyed teachers, a high percentage of whom could not spot the three wrongly formulated rules and would use them in forming feedback, allow us to conclude that teachers' knowledge about feedback is worrying. This is surprising when compared with the results received with reference to the necessity of adjusting the criticism to students' needs. It is puzzling as to whether a teacher who could not spot incorrect information in the list of the stages of feedback forming has the ability to give constructive criticism and adjust it to the student's needs.

Destructive criticism, as G. Koć-Seniuch states, 'makes sensitive people with low self-esteem believe even less in their own strengths and cognitive abilities, and decreases their activeness and creativity. There appears an additional problem concerning the significance of getting to know the students, their features of character and environmental conditions, as well as the teacher's life wisdom in his/her contacts with students'.[25]

In their response to open questions, the respondents emphasized that the opinion directed to students without third parties is the most effective as it 'reaches' them the best. They declared that the opinion given by them describes students' achievement in learning, points out some knowledge gaps, and shows the methods of correcting mistakes and creating the necessary skills. One respondent claimed: 'I talk about my students work, tell them about their achievements and shortages. I suggest the methods and the ways of improving their skills and shortages in knowledge. I pay attention to what the student has already mastered, stressing that he/she does not need a lot to achieve success. Feedback is given in a positive atmosphere that motivates them to work'. Other teachers also pointed out the importance of the way information is given. They emphasized the significance of creating a good, friendly atmos-

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[25] G. Koć-Seniuch, Nauczyciel i uczeń w sytuacjach szkolnych, op. cit., p. 135.

phere while giving constructive criticism. They pointed out that depending on the situation of the students they are given either praise or are reprimanded. There were also teachers who appreciated the importance of praise in the process of education, especially with weaker students. According to one of the surveyed teachers, 'Praise directed to the student in front of the whole class motivates and is especially important for weaker students'. As the research shows, teachers are aware of the importance of feedback in the process of effective and efficient education. Unfortunately, a high percentage has little knowledge about it. A large group of teachers has problems with proper feedback forming and has no idea about the rules. At the same time, many of the respondents stated that they use feedback and adjust it to the students' needs.

In light of the research results it is crucial to include information about feedback in the curriculum in future teachers' education.

Most of the surveyed (94%) think that the teachers' education should include information concerning proper feedback forming. A small percentage of the surveyed (6%) has no opinion about it. Apart from the above cited opinions, we should be aware that: 'teaching is a job that is not finished in any completed form of education, re-education, and additional courses. A teacher becomes the teacher not only due to their studies. The education a future teacher gets can only start the process of becoming a teacher ... A teacher becomes a teacher by doing the job. He/she becomes one due to their own effort in understanding and changing the person itself due to the self-reflection and changes in the personality it involves'.[26] Considering the dissatisfying results on teachers' knowledge of motivating students using constructive criticism. J. Kozielecki's statement should be remembered: 'any action can bring success, failure or so-called surprise (i.e. a surprising not an unintentional effect) ... A failure (feeling of failing in the performed activity) – as long as the teacher is competent enough and psychically strong enough – triggers so called task reaction, strengthening the motivation to overcome difficulties, expanding towards the areas of action that may compensate for the failure, and even make it a source of inspiration to change thinking and acting within the used methods of work.'[27]

It is very valuable and crucial in presenting the influence of constructive criticism on teachers' work to compare the answers received from teachers with students' answers. Only a research conducted among teachers and students could show the whole picture of the issue. However, E. P. Torrence's (1962) list

[26] R. Kwaśnica, Wprowadzenie do myślenia. O wspomaganiu nauczyciela w myśleniu, [in:] Z zagadnień pedeutologii i kształcenia nauczycieli, ed. H. Kwiatkowska, T. Lewowicki, Warszawa, 1995, p. 38.

[27] W. Komar, Dramat zawodności nauczycielstwa – dylematy, genezy i przyczyny, [in:] Z zagadnień pedeutologii i kształcenia nauczycieli, ed. H. Kwiatkowska, T. Lewowicki, Warszawa, 1995, p. 96.