PEER FEEDBACK IN TEACHER TEAMS

Teachers' experiences and possibilities for development

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Co-teaching has become more popular in higher education recently. Such teamwork requires a variety of competences, including an understanding of team dynamics and effective team interaction. Studies show that feedback is integral to teamwork and the professional development of team members. However, while teachers are used to giving feedback to students, they may require support with feedback in teacher teams.

Our study examines how teachers of multilingual communication and language studies describe received peer feedback in their teams: what meanings they attach to it, what its contents are, and what could be developed. The data were collected via an online questionnaire and analysed using thematic analysis. The results indicate that even though teachers are generally satisfied with the feedback they receive, they wish there would be more. Teachers receive positive comments on their joint activities, but this could be complemented with more constructive feedback. Teachers asked for feedback practices to be jointly developed, both within their teams and together with the administration.

The results emphasise the importance of feedback for team interaction, integration of new members into the team, and pedagogical development. As co-teaching becomes more popular, the results of this study offer insight on how to develop team feedback interaction that support it.

Keywords: co-teaching, co-planning, feedback, multilingual pedagogy, professional development, teacher team, team teaching

Yhteisopetuksen suosio on kasvanut korkeakoulutuksessa viime aikoina. Tällainen tiimityö edellyttää monenlaista osaamista, kuten tiimidynamiikan ja tiimin tehokkaan vuorovaikutuksen ymmärtämistä. Tutkimukset osoittavat, että palaute on olennainen osa tiimityötä ja tiimin jäsenten ammatillista kehitystä. Vaikka opettajat ovat tottuneet antamaan palautetta opiskelijoille, he saattavat kuitenkin tarvita tukea palautteeseen opettajatiimeissä.

Tutkimuksessamme tarkastellaan, miten monikielisten viestintä- ja kieliopintojen opettajat kuvaavat tiimeissään saamaansa vertaispalautetta: millaisia merkityksiä he siihen liittävät, mikä on palautteen sisältö ja mitä palautevuorovaikutuksessa voisi kehittää. Tutkimusaineisto kerättiin verkkokyselylomakkeella, ja se analysoitiin temaattisen analyysin avulla. Tulokset osoittavat, että vaikka opettajat ovat yleisesti ottaen tyytyväisiä saamaansa palautteeseen, he toivovat saavansa sitä enemmän. Opettajat

saavat yhteistyössään positiivisia kommentteja, joita voitaisiin täydentää rakentavalla palautteella. Opettajat kaipaavat sekä tiimien että hallinnon kanssa yhteisesti kehitettyjä palautekäytänteitä.

Tuloksissa korostuu palautteen tärkeys tiimin vuorovaikutuksessa ja tiimiin integroitumisessa sekä pedagogisessa kehittämisessä. Tämä tutkimus tarjoaa tärkeää tietoa sellaisen palautevuorovaikutuksen kehittämiseksi, joka tukee yhä suositumpaa yhteisopettajuutta.

Asiasanat: yhteisopetus, yhteissuunnittelu, palaute, monikielinen pedagogiikka, ammatillinen kehitys, opettajatiimi, tiimiopetus

Introduction

Co-teaching and the co-planning of curricula and courses have become common in higher education in recent years (Dang et al., 2022; Fluijt et al., 2016; Voogt et al., 2016). The factors driving this change include the growing number of students, the requirement to offer multidisciplinary courses (Dang et al., 2022), and the diversifying needs of students (Fluijt et al., 2016). Teachers working in multidisciplinary teams need to negotiate their subject-specific perspectives and pedagogical views, which are also shaped by individual preferences, to create a coherent curriculum and instruction alongside a logical learning progression for students. This change from traditionally independent teaching is not without challenges, however. These include the need for additional resources and feelings of vulnerability (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018; Knights et al., 2010). Hence, teachers need specific competences related to cooperation and teamwork more than ever. As previous studies indicate (for a review, see London & Sessa, 2006), feedback is an integral part of teamwork that can help teams develop, critically reflect on their work, and strengthen their identity as a team.

In this article, we focus on the Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication (Movi) at the University of Jyväskylä, where the majority of teaching, planning, and curriculum design takes place in teacher teams. Teachers in these teams represent different disciplines, therefore it is an ideal site to explore team members' experiences and views on peer feedback. Team-teaching is particularly common at the undergraduate level, where it is part of Movi's restructured, integrated, multilingual, and discipline-specific language and communication studies (often referred to by the acronym UVK; see the Introduction of this book by Károly et al., 2024). These studies, typically consisting of three to four courses, form a mandatory part of every bachelor's level degree programme, and their curricula are designed and developed in programme-specific teams, in collaboration with the relevant departments. Each team consists of language and communication teachers in Finnish, English, Swedish, and other languages.

This system is intended to be flexible and can be modified to meet the evolving needs of students, working life, and society. Every team plans the curriculum and the studies together but may have different teaching arrangements: in some teams the teachers regularly co-teach in the classroom, while in others the actual classroom teaching is done more independently. Most teachers belong to two or more teams, some to as many as five. The team sizes vary from four to around 20 people. Some teams are more permanent with less turnover, while others experience more constant change. In short, the teams may be very different in terms of composition, which influences their interaction and feedback practices. All teams are divided

into several sub-teams. Each has a three-to-four-person "X team" that coordinates teamwork, and each individual course has its own teaching team. Courses also have responsible teachers that oversee the administrative aspects.

The change in Movi from a more traditional teaching organisation to a UVK team organisation has taken place over the past nine years, with the newest teams starting in 2022. Some teachers have worked in a more independent manner for decades previous to this change, while others have started their careers in these teams. This range of experience, along with the varying educational backgrounds of the teachers working in Movi, provides multiple perspectives teams can use to enrich their planning and teaching, but this variety is also likely to introduce additional considerations. In such a multidisciplinary setting, teachers need to renegotiate their professional identities and competences as they bring their own disciplinary perspectives on communication, regardless of the language they focus on. For example, an English teacher is no longer the only expert on communication on a course since there are communication teachers sharing or challenging their views and vice versa.

Because the teams work in a self-directed manner without rigorous supervision, feedback from administration, such as an immediate supervisor, has a less prominent role. Teachers receive feedback on the content and instruction in individual courses as well as on the logical progression of learning within a UVK path from the students and from the collaborating teachers in different departments. However, this feedback is limited in that it does not include feedback on intra-team issues, such as communication practices. Peer feedback within teacher teams would thus have the potential to help teams develop their teaching and teamwork.

In this study, we focus on peer feedback within teacher teams at Movi. With the help of data collected through an online questionnaire, we explore what kind of peer feedback teachers receive, how they perceive that feedback and how feedback interaction in their teams should be developed. We understand peer feedback in teams as an interactive process. It includes seeking, offering, giving, receiving, and utilising feedback. However, this study focuses on the aspect of receiving feedback for two reasons. Firstly, individuals tend to overrate themselves when they evaluate their own performance (Dunning et al., 2004). Feedback received from others may therefore provide a less biased evaluation of one's performance than self-evaluation does. Additionally, it allows us to examine individual understandings of the notion of feedback, different views on the importance and role of peer feedback, individual preferences as to the content of feedback, as well as internal team feedback practices.

Peer feedback in teacher teams

A significant part of work in different fields and organisations is done in groups or teams. Higher education is no exception, and functions such as teaching and course and curriculum design are increasingly done in teams of two or more (see, e.g., Lock et al., 2016; Voogt et al., 2016). The terms co-teaching and team teaching are often used interchangeably in the literature. Both practices can be defined as two or more instructors teaching a group simultaneously and cooperating on other aspects of the teaching process, such as planning and assessment (Barahona, 2017; Lock et al., 2016). The teacher teams in this study may co-teach in the classroom simultaneously, but most importantly, they co-design the curriculum and the courses. For the purpose of this article, we use the terms co-teaching and co-planning to describe the various activities that teacher teams perform in order to design, implement and assess curricula and courses.

According to Niemelä (2008), satisfying teamwork is related to general satisfaction in working life. Well-functioning teams have more independence and more opportunities to use their expertise than do non-functioning teams. Additionally, the members of well-functioning teams experience their work to be more meaningful, and they have better relationships with their co-workers. Co-teaching, or any kind of teamwork, does not automatically lead to positive results, and working in a poorly functioning team can also be burdening and stressful (Niemelä, 2008). Issues that teacher teams face can vary from practical aspects, such as time constraints, to emotional ones, such as feelings of vulnerability related to teaching expertise, or a feeling of being "forced" to co-teach (Knights et al., 2010).

Voogt et al. (2016) have considered teachers collaboratively designing curriculum as a "specific form of a professional learning community" that can affect both curriculum and the professional development of teachers (p. 123). A well-functioning teacher team working together in curriculum and course design requires, first and foremost, communication competence from all team members. The communicative tasks teacher teams can include tasks that are *coordinative*, such as work distribution and scheduling; *operative*, such as problem-solving and decision-making; *innovative*, such as creating ideas; *relational*, such as social support; and *developmental*, such as assessing and developing the team (see Raappana & Valo, 2015 for the categorisation of communicative tasks in virtual teams). To complete these tasks, especially developmental ones, teams need to reflect on their processes and performance, which can be done through feedback.

There is extensive research about feedback in education, but it mostly focuses on teacher–student feedback (e.g., Evans, 2013; Henderson et al., 2021). The concept of peer feedback in the context of higher education typically refers to student-to-student feedback (e.g., Nelson & Schunn, 2009), and less often to teacher-to-teacher feedback. Research investigating feedback between co-teachers has focused, for example, on feedback on novice teachers' teaching skills (e.g., Eck & Ramsey, 2019; Wennerberg & McGrath, 2022). In their study, Wennerberg and McGrath (2022) found that collegial peer review was received as a mostly positive practice that resulted in less isolation, better understanding of what was going on in the department, strengthened their understanding of themselves and others as teachers, as well as further collaboration between individuals. They also recognised some tensions when giving feedback to a more experienced teacher or if the receiver was not open to feedback.

Teams' overall performance can increase significantly with the help of intra-team feedback (Rasker et al., 2000). In a review of the effects of feedback on teams by Gabelica et al. (2012), feedback was also seen to help teams focus on their processes, adjust their goals, critically reflect on tasks and situations, and introduce new ideas. Furthermore, feedback has the potential to enhance team learning since it can help teams to monitor and regulate themselves. In addition, according to London and Sessa (2006), feedback can promote the development of the group, strengthen its identity, as well as help change roles, responsibilities, and behaviour patterns. On an individual level, feedback has the capacity to increase the sense of commitment to the group and one's personal capability. Therefore, we suggest that in teacher teams with long-term goals related to pedagogical development, feedback that considers issues other than classroom teaching skills, such as teamwork or pedagogical planning, may be relevant.

For feedback to function well in teams, it needs to be supported by certain organisational and team-level conditions. Baker et al. (2013) suggest that organisational feedback practices are slowly changing from task-related feedback to dialogue and a more "feedback-friendly culture". They also propose that such a culture has three prerequisites: first, the management

must recognise and promote the added value of a learning organisation; second, the workplace must be psychologically safe and trustworthy; and finally, dialogue and flexible communication should be the norms across the organisation. In addition to organisational support for feedback, team characteristics also matter. In their study on teacher teams, Dang et al. (2022) found that a supportive and collegial, noncompetitive environment helped teachers cope with contradictions and challenges related to co-teaching. They also observed that teams needed rules on organisation, planning, and communication to enhance team coherence and mutual understanding. Feedback can be an important tool for negotiating challenges, reflecting, and making team rules explicit for all team members. Trust within a team is also an important precondition for successful feedback interaction. For example, Peñarroja et al. (2015) found that information processing and learning improves when team members receive feedback about their actual performance and their processes, but only when team trust is high. Furthermore, Peterson and Behfar (2003) suggested that teams that have not established trust before receiving negative feedback are more likely to experience high relationship conflict and perform poorly.

Feedback interaction in teams is a process consisting of multiple phases and shaped by various factors. Feedback can concern individual team members or the whole team. Feedback received as a group may be scrutinised more than when it is received individually, and it can more often lead to motivation to learn and develop, which can improve the overall group performance as well (London & Sessa, 2006). As mentioned earlier, feedback in teams can include different aspects, such as seeking, giving, receiving, or processing feedback. In fact, many studies do not explicitly refer to the notion of feedback but use such concepts as collaborative professionalism (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018), reflective practice (Bradbury et al., 2010), or team reflection (Fluijt et al., 2016) that can help us understand the phenomenon more thoroughly. For example, team reflection can help teams or team members focus on their performance in order to achieve mutual pedagogical goals through collaborative sensemaking (Fluijt et al., 2016), similarly to feedback.

Feedback can occur in a dialogue (see, e.g., Carless, 2013), when creating a common understanding is important, or it can be offered as a one-way message (see, e.g., Molloy & Boud, 2013). In this study, we define peer feedback in teams as an interactive process between two or more team members, with the goal of sharing information, which can be used to reflect on the actions, behaviours, practices, processes or performance of an individual team member, multiple members, or the whole team. In this study, we focus on the feedback teachers received from each other. As Ashford and Cummings proposed already in 1983, individuals seek feedback in two ways: by monitoring, that is observing the behaviours of others for cues that can be interpreted as feedback, and inquiry, that is directly asking for information from someone. Therefore, in a context where teachers constantly collaborate in teams, it is interesting to find out what exactly is perceived as feedback.

Methods

Data collection and participants

The questionnaire we used in the research (Appendix A) had both qualitative and quantitative questions, with an emphasis on the qualitative. It also included background information (length of career in Movi, subject group, number of teams). We sent the online questionnaire

to all of the teachers in Movi, (approximately 110) via email with a request to participate if the teacher had worked in a UVK team during the past academic year. This narrowed the potential number of participants to about 80. It is difficult to estimate exact numbers since many teachers belong to several teams and there is turnover in both Movi and the teams. The participants had a choice to answer the questionnaire in Finnish or English.

Thirty-two teachers out of the approximate total of 80 responded to the questionnaire, for a response rate of 40%. Twelve participants had worked in Movi for 2 years or less, five had worked there for 3 to 6 years, six for 7 to 10 years, and nine for 11 years or more. The majority of the participants, 19 belonged to one or two UVK teams, 12 belonged to three or four UVK teams and five to four or five UVK teams. Fourteen teachers had English as their subject group ten had written communication, five had Swedish, four had other languages, and three had speech communication, while four participants had two subject groups. The data contained both Finnish and English answers. For the sake of anonymity of the participants and consistency, we translated the Finnish responses used in this article into English.

As we also work in Movi and conducted the research among our colleagues, we had to be aware of our biases and make additional ethical considerations. The online survey allowed the collection of anonymous responses, and we did not collect demographic information which could have risked anonymity. As insider researchers we also benefited from all the background information and our own experiences of these teacher teams.

Analysis

We used the quantitative data collected via the questionnaire to describe the participants' overall experiences of the amount of and satisfaction with the feedback. We analysed the qualitative data using thematic analysis. We chose this method due to its flexibility, which allows the investigation of a wide variety of datasets and does not require following a specific theoretical frame (Clarke & Braun, 2013; Kiger & Varpio, 2020) or preformed questions (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). We used an inductive approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and coded the data through a cyclical coding process (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). The coding process was repeated several times with intermittent discussions between the researchers. For example, the part of the response in Table 1 was initially coded under the example codes "team size" and "team differences".

Table 1 Example of a code

A sample of a response	Examples of codes
My other team is relatively small so we have a good connection and things work. My other team seems to expand all the time and there the connection disappears from time to time and it's difficult to figure out what are the jointly agreed policies.	Team size Team differences

After comparing, contrasting, and graphically mapping the codes, we arranged them into themes. For example, the codes in Table 1 were categorised under the theme "team characteristics". We analysed the emergent themes using assisting questions, asking, for example, if the data support the theme and do the themes overlap (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). We selected a coherent set of themes to be discussed in this article considering their

prevalence and variety. We defined and described the main themes as the meanings of feedback, the content of feedback, team characteristics and resources, and feedback practices. Finally, we reported, analysed, and discussed the themes in this article.

Results

This section presents selected data gathered via the questionnaire. First, we introduce the main numerical results. Then we discuss the central themes that we formed as a result of our analysis.

All participants indicated that they received at least some feedback from the members of their team (Figure 1). A total of 24 participants reported that they received either some or a moderate amount of feedback and only 8 said they received plenty or a great deal of feedback. None of the participants reported receiving no feedback.

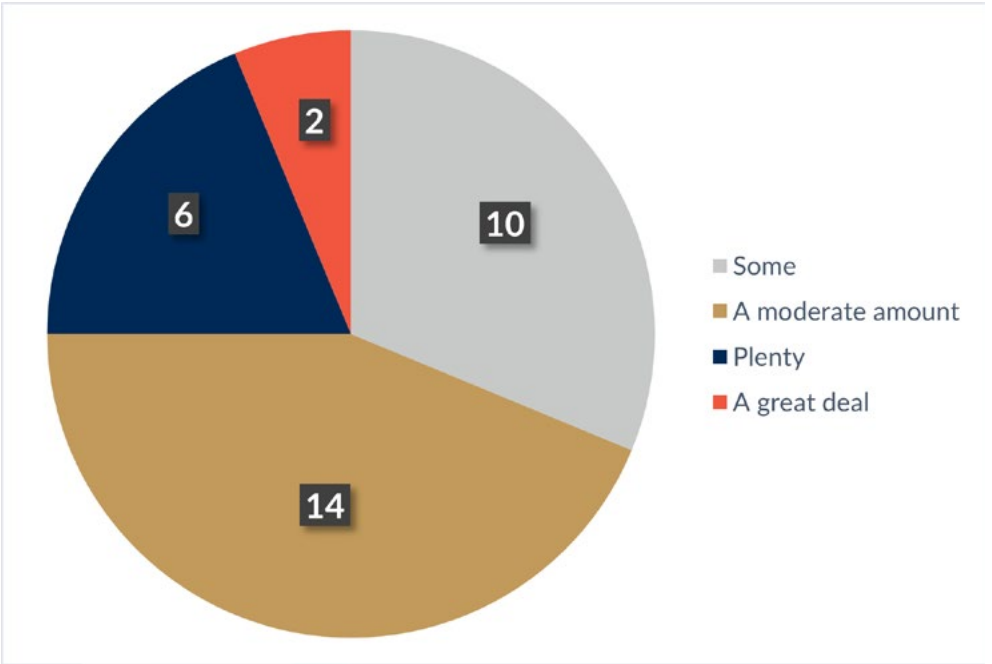

Figure 1 Amount of feedback received from team members, *n* = 32

In response to the question about how satisfied they are with the feedback they receive, 22 participants chose one of the two highest levels of satisfaction (Figure 2). Nine participants indicated they were neither satisfied or dissatisfied, no participant chose the option slightly dissatisfied, and only one answered that they were very dissatisfied.

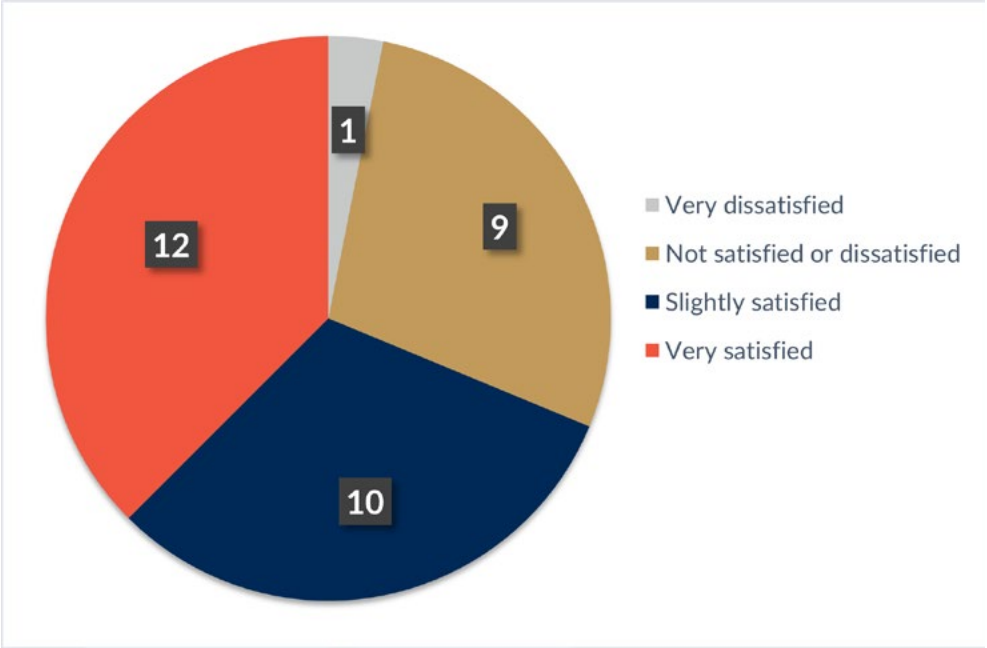

Figure 2 Satisfaction with received feedback from team members, *n* = 32

Regarding who gives feedback in the teams, several groups stood out. However, the most common group was clearly members of one's own subject group, with 25 instances. The next most common sources of feedback were other teachers of the course, with 22 referring to them, and members of other subject groups, mentioned by 16 respondents. It should also be noted that these categories may overlap for some of the teachers.

Meanings and content of feedback

Two interconnected themes in our analysis of the qualitative data were the meanings attached to feedback and its content. We will first discuss the meanings, which include the subthemes feedback as support, encouragement or motivation, and feedback creating the meaningfulness of work.

Most participants expressed satisfaction with the feedback they receive, but answers to the open-ended questions also reflected appreciation of feedback in general. Participants used evaluative words conveying appraisal, such as "nice" and "cool" to describe how they felt about receiving feedback, but also saw it as "important", "relevant", and "motivating". As one participant remarked, "Every feedback develops and motivates." Nevertheless, it was also pointed out that the amount of feedback could be increased by "reminding how important receiving and giving feedback is for working as a teacher and for well-being at work."

However, while participants emphasised the importance of feedback for teamwork and the functioning of the team, with one even claiming it as "one of the best things about working in a team", many also reported that feedback plays a minor role or is often forgotten in their teams. The written answers therefore also reflected the result that the amount of received feedback was relatively low.

Some of the participants also highlighted how feedback can enhance the meaningfulness of work and cooperation within a team. Especially teachers early in their career emphasised that feedback, particularly positive feedback, led to feelings of "belonging and being appreciated." As such, feedback was strongly connected to personal and pedagogical development as well as teacher identities. Positive comments on a pedagogical choice were seen to reinforce professional identity as well as the sense of belonging in the profession. One participant remarked how they had

> also received general, for example, encouraging comments about my own presence in the class if I have been unsure about my own teachership. In close co-operation feedback is constant. Really, I feel that UVK co-teaching has been an apprenticeship in pedagogical thinking :D

While most saw feedback as an opportunity for improvement, a few participants also expressed wariness towards it. Their comments addressed a view that since teaching is closely attached to personality, feedback on teaching might be seen as unwelcome personal criticism. Conversely, some mentioned that feedback or opportunities for feedback can also be seen as important for creating understanding the personal differences and strengths of different team members.

The content of received feedback was described by the majority of the participants as mostly praise or positive feedback. Other themes that appeared in our data were feedback related to teaching, working methods and cooperation, and the desire for more development-oriented feedback. Positive feedback was described as general compliments, thanking a coworker for doing something, or "just a compliment, not really feedback". One participant expressed the importance of praising and thanking coworkers regularly:

> Well, it is of course cool to get positive feedback, and now that I started to think about these things, I've received lots of thanks and praises from my colleagues. I don't recall receiving constructive/critical feedback, except perhaps development ideas for tasks that we plan together. Positive feedback obviously makes me feel good as it makes me feel that I've done something well and maybe helped others.

However, the desire for more substantial development-oriented feedback, such as constructive criticism, was frequent in our data. Such feedback would help the teachers develop their teaching, pedagogical planning, teamwork, and themselves as professionals. As one participant described:

> It is important to say out loud when there is something to praise and things work well. … Maybe the teacher teams could think about what to develop more often and I could also receive concrete feedback about these things. … Now (at least based on my own experience) the feedback I receive is related to successes even if there are areas of development in my own work for sure.

More specifically, the feedback the participants received most was related to pedagogical planning and course administration. They received feedback on tasks, materials, and other pedagogical solutions: "materials created for shared use, Moodle spaces, tasks and instructions, exceptional situations with students (support / help for planning the reaction)".

In teams where classroom co-teaching occurs or the team members follow each other's lessons in other ways, feedback concerning classroom interaction was also offered. For the majority, however, it was not available, which many saw as an impediment to their personal professional development:

> I receive little personal feedback related to my teaching or my way of teaching, so I don't get to develop my teaching. Of course, every meeting, discussion etc. develops it in between the lines. I can't think of concrete situations. It would be nice to receive more feedback from peers and so-called mentors when you're at the beginning of your teaching career.

A few participants had received feedback on working practices and cooperation. However, considerably more felt the need for such feedback and connected this need to development as a team and individually as a team member:

> I would like to receive feedback on my interaction with the students … On the other hand, I'd like to hear how I work as a colleague: What is it like to work with me? How do the members of my team experience my efforts? What good do I bring to our team in their opinion?

Team characteristics and resources

Our examination of the themes of team characteristics and resources also revealed factors that encouraged or inhibited feedback interaction in teams, including team size, trust, and atmosphere. In some teams, feedback already seemed to be an agreed practice, while in others it had a less prominent role. The responses indicate that the characteristics of their teams influenced their feedback interaction. They reported that feedback practices were affected by the team size and that feedback interaction worked better in smaller and stabler teams compared to bigger and constantly changing teams:

> My other team is relatively small so we have a good connection and things work. My other team seems to expand all the time and there the connection disappears from time to time and it's difficult to figure out what are the jointly agreed policies. Sometimes someone might make a decision concerning the whole team by themself, which doesn't work in the long run.

Participants also described how team composition and continuity affected feedback and collaboration:

> I had different experiences in other UVK teams, but it is strongly linked to the actual setup of the team, the length of teacher collaboration (how long has that UVK been running). All UVK teams evolve and develop, and so do team dynamics – which (probably) affects feedback (readiness to give and openness to accept feedback).

Trust and relationships between the team members also influenced feedback practices: "The levels of trust between individuals in my teams is different so I guess I'm more open to feedback from the team members I trust the most." The personalities and competence of team members were also seen as shaping feedback interaction. Several participants remarked that the atmosphere in their teams was open to feedback, which corresponds with our earlier observation that the participants view feedback positively. In particular, positive feedback in the form of compliments and praise was offered freely and spontaneously.

While many expressed a positive attitude towards feedback and commented on the positive atmosphere for feedback in their teams, several participants also explained that the lack of feedback was often felt as a matter of resources. As one participant wrote, "People seem to be in a hurry all the time and there is no time for meaningful and constructive feedback interaction." Another participant expressed a desire for further resources for the purpose of

feedback: "It would be wonderful if we had resources reserved for discussions on pedagogy and working methods more often." Participants were aware of the benefits of feedback for personal and team development, but the feedback had to be balanced with other needs due to the felt lack of resources. As one participant stated, "In principle, I would like to be able to have discussions on developing my own work as well as co-working, but I doubt whether I would have the time or energy with the current resources." Some participants suggested new channels and practices as solutions for increasing the amount of feedback in their teams. They also observed that the lack of resources had an impact not only on the individual level but also on co-planning. As one participant remarked, "Often the actual feedback phase is left out because people are busy and other work is piling up."

Feedback practices

One theme that appeared in our data extensively was feedback practices and channels. Several participants wished the teams could discuss feedback practices more openly and that it would become a more integral and natural part of their cooperation:

> Teams are certainly different. … Feedback works well when it's a natural part of discussion and co-planning but when an idea for feedback arises in another context, it's harder to separately communicate that this has been bothering me. Maybe that's why close cooperation is good because there are so many opportunities to bring something up.

Feedback practices were also often mentioned when discussing the joint activities of a team. For example, a participant thought there was "an openness towards sharing and complimenting in teams, which is nice". However, the same participant also remarked that "nevertheless, there could be more channels and ways of giving feedback, and I myself should remember to both ask for feedback and praise others."

Several participants indicated that joint planning is a common part of work. As a participant stated, "We plan teaching content mostly together, whether in subject groups or UVK teams, [and] feedback is given mainly during that joint activity." However, feedback for teaching mostly happens in teams where teachers operate in the same classroom. Otherwise, some participants expressed a hope for more concrete structures for feedback, such as a more scheduled approach:

> Maybe include a reminder at intervals in the academic year or life of a course to solicit/provide feedback. Perhaps write a protocol for asking and offering feedback, the same principle as for asking for lesson observation. Define the scope of what you think feedback is. Is a smile feedback? An annual performance evaluation? Avoid bureaucratizing it. Make time for informal feedback from students before the course end.

Aside from planning the feedback in their teams, several participants also suggested that feedback practices could be more generally agreed on:

> We haven't formalized or agreed on any feedback for one another in my UVKs so I can't complain about not receiving it. I do get feedback the odd time about pragmatic things but I don't think we really give much or any pedagogical feedback to one another. So while I'm not dissatisfied, I think we could organise something more substantive in the future and that would be welcome.

In addition, many wished for more channels, even anonymous ones, to encourage giving feedback:

> There could be more clearly marked practices and channels for [feedback]. The culture of complementing could be developed and facilitated, for example, have sessions for praising or build Flingas for anonymous compliments. In addition, ways and principles for development-oriented feedback could be developed in a manner where problems could be discussed in pairs or small groups in a good spirit.

Even though our study focused mainly on experiences of received feedback, feedback was seen as an interactive process. Several participants also reflected on other aspects of feedback besides what they had received. For example, one participant wrote that "[feedback] is interaction so I also give feedback to others." Some participants wondered whether they or others have enough courage to give constructive feedback to each other regarding, for example, teamwork skills:

> I do wonder whether people have the courage to give enough constructive feedback, but maybe it is part of the development ideas when we co-plan a course or a task. Maybe no one dares to tell me directly that could you be quieter in meetings or point out my insufficient group work skills. :D

Some also mentioned that they felt they needed encouragement to give feedback to others: "If more encouragement or channels were offered, maybe?" Some participants also wrote about everyone's own responsibility, not only in giving more feedback, but also in seeking it. As a participant observed, "I could remember to ask for feedback myself and also praise others." A few participants commented that their satisfaction with feedback was connected to the fact that they ask for feedback when they need it, even if they might not otherwise receive much. This sense of personal responsibility was also raised as a few teachers suggested that teachers should seek feedback more. On the other hand, as one participant remarked, there could be more support and channels for seeking feedback that might change the current situation: "Referring to feedback on teaching approaches and strategies, I suggest that teachers be encouraged to ask for feedback if they want it."

Most typically, participants mentioned they received feedback especially from their co-teaching partners:

> I receive feedback especially from the teachers I directly teach together with (i.e., co-taught lessons). This feedback has usually been related to smooth cooperation. E.g., coordinating and planning, creating the atmosphere in the classroom and encountering students and the fluency of co-taught lessons in general.

Co-teaching in a classroom is seen as a natural environment for feedback discussions that can help teachers develop classroom interaction. Several participants mentioned that they would like more co-teaching or more cooperation between teachers teaching the same groups:

> I am not sure, but maybe observations could be a way for teachers to better get to know each other as teachers (if they are not co-teaching already?) and automatically get some feedback? Whenever I went to observe a colleague last autumn it always ended up in a combined feedback / professional development moment, in which I shared my thoughts on the lesson and how it went, and at the same time got ideas for my own lessons or a better understanding

> on the content of the lesson. Sometimes you need to see things in practice to be able to understand them and give constructive feedback.

Some reported their teams had given up co-teaching in the classroom entirely and felt they could not get the feedback they needed regarding classroom interaction: "I'd like to receive feedback on teaching and, e.g., classroom interaction but I can't get that because co-teaching has been left out entirely."

Overall, these results were mostly similar to each other in terms of the positive attitudes towards feedback, the content of the feedback and areas for development. The differences between teams were visible in how the team characteristics and practices varied, which created a range of conditions for feedback interaction.

Discussion

Our results support earlier studies on peer feedback in teams: Feedback is mostly viewed positively (e.g., Baker et al., 2013), and its importance to both personal and team development has been recognised (e.g., Gabelica et al., 2012). Despite the perceived importance of feedback, these attitudes were not always reflected in the everyday practices of individuals or teams.

From positive comments to development-oriented feedback

Overall, the results showed that while the teachers' satisfaction concerning the feedback they received was considerable, they also desired more of it. Furthermore, they indicated clear possibilities for improvement. This discrepancy may be partially explained by what previous studies have illustrated, and which was also reflected in our results, that praise and compliments are appreciated but may not be as effective for development as other types of feedback are (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). However, the findings also demonstrated that the praise was often connected, for example, to task performance, effort, and engagement, which, according to Hattie and Timperley (2007), are connected to more significant benefits in achievement than praise about one's self. As they further proposed, such feedback can help increase self-efficacy, which was supported by our results where positive comments were connected to motivation and increased the perceived sense of purpose. This is consistent with an earlier finding by London and Sessa (2006) that positive feedback is often received more openly and with more faith in it. Nevertheless, while more positive feedback and channels should be encouraged, also ways of giving more constructive feedback could be explored.

Feedback is especially important for new members of a team or people new to a profession (Molloy & Boud, 2013). Our results agreed with previous research that feedback is important for integrating newcomers to a team (London & Sessa, 2006), especially new teachers desire feedback (Eck & Ramsay, 2019), and they understand the benefits of co-teaching for personal development as teachers (Lock et al., 2016). Creating an equal co-teaching relationship between novice teachers and teachers with more experience might also be challenging and requires time and mutual effort (Lock et al., 2016). Teams should thus ensure that new teachers also have the opportunity to form these co-teaching relationships and participate in feedback discussions equally.

It may also be beneficial to have a discussion in teams about the meanings of feedback, which can then lead to developing new feedback practices. Several participants raised the question of what is meant by feedback, which is partly connected to our choice not to influence the participants too much by providing definitions of feedback that might restrict their thinking.

More importantly, the participants' differing conceptions of feedback also highlight the need to discuss the issue in teams to create a common understanding.

Based on previous studies (e.g., Eck & Ramsay, 2019), it was not surprising that much of the feedback was positive, whether simple compliments or more constructive feedback. However, while much of the studies discussing positive peer feedback between teachers concentrates on classroom interaction, most of the participants considered cases of such feedback outside of the classroom. Taking into account that actual co-teaching together in a classroom is not a common practice according to the responses and, even then, it is done mostly in pairs, most of the feedback teachers receive is likely connected to the core task of teams, namely, planning the courses and their materials. This planning, which is done either by the whole UVK team or smaller, often subject-specific teams, enables constant discussion as the results indicated. However, some participants found it difficult distinguishing "feedback" from "pedagogical discussion" in such situations. This might explain why the teachers felt they receive a moderate amount of feedback but are very satisfied with what they do get: the participants gained satisfactory insight into core areas of their work without actively seeing it as feedback.

Awareness of a group's developmental stage is also important regarding feedback (London & Sessa, 2006). The teams in our study have formed at different times and have been at different stages even during this study and, as such, their needs for feedback might have differed. Newly formed UVK teams may need a different focus for feedback than do those which have already been running for a longer time. For example, in the beginning stages, feedback could help teams become motivated while in the latter stages it could be more task oriented or reflective (London & Sessa, 2006).

Team characteristics and other conditions to consider

Our results suggested that team characteristics such as trust, team size, and stability shape feedback interaction in teams. Feedback seems to work better in smaller teams that have been working with the same members for a longer time, which may be partially explained by trust. Moreover, other studies have recognised that trust plays an important role in team feedback interaction (Baker et al., 2013; Peñarroja et al., 2015; Peterson & Behfar, 2003). Some researchers (e.g., Costa et al., 2009) have found that trust in teams develops more naturally from prior social capital, that is, the familiarity among team members through previous experiences. This might also explain why participants reported that they received the most feedback from other teachers within their own subject group. As teachers have been involved in co-planning with members of this group even prior to the UVK teams and operate with them in other tasks outside of their UVK teams, this might result in increased familiarity and trust. Trusting the person giving the feedback seems to increase the perceived accuracy of feedback (London & Sessa, 2006). This was confirmed by our finding that teachers were more open to feedback from those colleagues they trusted the most. This suggests teams and subject groups should consider how to increase feedback beyond group borders.

On the other hand, the stability of a team and the opportunity to create mutual experiences in the future might also be important factors in building trust within a team. Poppo et al. (2008) found that the expectation of continuity is an important factor of trust but that the history of a team has a lesser impact. There is much turnover in many of the teams in our study and

the expectation of continuity may be low, at least for some teachers. Stabler teams may then have higher expectations of continuity, and thus have more trust, which then benefits their feedback interaction. Or as Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018, p. 132) stated: "Teachers cannot collaborate with each other if they are making new acquaintances every year. When there is a culture of high turnover, teachers behave as self-centred individuals who have to sink or swim by themselves." Though in an environment like Movi turnover is inevitable, creating a smaller and stabler team structure is an important administrative challenge. However, responsibility also belongs to the teams themselves, whose acknowledgement of the importance of trust could make them pay more attention to the phenomenon and its effects on feedback.

Our finding that there are not enough resources for feedback discussions in teams should also be addressed by both administration and the teams themselves. Administration should be aware that feedback is an essential part of teamwork that requires time and perhaps also organisational structures. Several studies (Dang et al., 2022; Lock et al., 2016; Voogt et al., 2016) indicate that co-teaching requires institutional support that has an important part in creating a suitable culture for the work. A "feedback-friendly culture" has the potential to improve performance, innovation, and growth across the organisation (Baker et al., 2013). On the team level, teams should consider their own perceptions of feedback in relation to resources. Questions to consider include whether feedback should be a continuous part of the team's work or the topic of annual meetings. Our results suggest that teachers want feedback to be a more "natural" or continuous part of their teamwork. Teams that monitor their process regularly perform better than teams that only evaluate their performance after completing a task (Rasker et al., 2000). Then again, as Baker et al. (2013, p. 261) argued, "Quality feedback requires quality time." If feedback is seen as merely another task by teams, as Baker et al. (2013) claimed happens too often and is supported by our results, time should be allocated not only to changing this perception but to providing quality feedback. Teams should therefore have sufficient resources for feedback but there is no need for a considerable increase if they include feedback as a part of their other processes and tasks such as curriculum, course and lesson planning or co-teaching.

Our results show that while the relatively new UVK structure encourages co-teaching, the greater experience in teaching individually in the classroom may produce a sense of vulnerability and reduce the desire to co-teach. If one is used to working alone, there is an added sense of vulnerability in co-teaching (Knights et al., 2010). Yet, as Lock et al. (2016) point out, if co-teaching is done well, co-teaching and constructive feedback are, in fact, inseparable. They also suggest that the co-teaching relationship should be based on trust, and this requires an open mind and willingness to develop. This seemed to be the case for the teachers in this study, too, and when they reported to have developed trust with their co-teaching partners, peer feedback within the classroom seemed natural and constructive to them.

However, based on our results, there is a perception among teachers that there are not enough resources for classroom co-teaching or that the resources have been allocated to different matters. Knights et al. (2010) also highlighted how one of the possible problems of co-teaching is time constraints, which was also seen in the findings that stressed the lack of time for feedback interaction in teams. As co-teaching involves teachers from different subject groups working together in the classroom, its expanded use could also increase the amount of feedback teachers receive from members of other subject groups. There are further potential benefits as well, such as learning from other teachers (see Dang et al., 2022; Wennerberg & McGrath, 2022). This is something the Movi teams could consider: What is lost if they

give up co-teaching entirely? In which ways could co-teaching help them develop? Could observing other people's teaching also be increased outside of co-teaching?

Creating opportunities for feedback interaction

In most teams, feedback seemed to be a "natural" or inherent part of pedagogical co-planning. However, more open discussions on agreed feedback practices and channels were desired to enhance constructive feedback and feedback on, for example, co-working practices. Dang et al. (2022) argued that many contradictions in teacher teams, such as a lack of team coherence and role ambiguity, can in fact be managed by establishing rules for organisation, planning, and communication. Furthermore, if feedback mechanisms are not well designed, they may not be taken seriously (Clausen et al., 2008). It is important to jointly agree on feedback practices by establishing rules for communication. When these are clear for all team members, the threshold for giving and seeking feedback is also lowered.

Our results indicate that everyone may not have enough courage or motivation to give or seek feedback. As previous research synthesised by Ashford et al. (2003) suggests, seeking information that helps meet goals and regulate behaviour is typical in contexts of high uncertainty, novelty, and change, which are often present in our study's context as well. On the other hand, some teachers in our study emphasised individual responsibility and freedom of choice in seeking feedback. This is understandable since feedback often has an emotional charge because it may include information about oneself, and thus has the potential to hurt one's ego or image, which can motivate an individual to avoid or disregard feedback (Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Ashford et al., 2003). Based on our findings and existing research, we suggest that teachers should consider their own motivations for seeking feedback: why do I need feedback or why do I feel I do not need it? It would also be beneficial for the teacher teams to understand the emotional dimension of feedback and practice sensitivity when giving feedback to their teammates. Trust, clear practices, and rules for feedback interaction in teams could also decrease the fear of losing face when seeking feedback.

Limitations and future directions

Our study has some limitations, but these also offer opportunities for further research. As we only focused on the feedback teachers received it would be beneficial to study the feedback process in a more comprehensive manner by, for example, examining feedback as a dialogue or studying feedback from different sources. A change of focus could produce important information on feedback in teacher teams.

Another limitation of our study is the response scale in our questionnaire for the question about the amount of feedback received. The scale was ambiguous because people have different understandings of what is seen as "plenty" or "some", and what is actually counted as feedback. Though this can be seen as a limitation, the scale also allowed the participants to answer on the basis of their understanding of what feedback actually is, and in the open questions they had a chance to elaborate on that understanding. Furthermore, we did not ask the participants about the regularity or continuity of feedback, which could have given us a more thorough understanding of the matter.

We also recognise that our own position within the organisation has affected the study: Our experiences in teams have in part guided us, from choosing the topic to reporting the results.

Even though the questionnaire was anonymous, our position as colleagues may have affected how the participants answered. Our subjectivity, however, is a resource that both assisted the analysis as well as helped us identify the relevant information for this context (see, e.g., Braun & Clarke, 2023). This study has indicated important areas for development in our organisation. Though the results should be verified in the future by similar research into different teaching organisations and their teams, the context of Movi and feedback also merits further study.

A multilingual approach to the teaching of languages and communication warrants more research in general. The teacher teams that design the curriculum and the courses are an important actor in these studies and should be studied further. The functioning of these diverse, multilingual, multicultural, and multidisciplinary teams affects the quality of teaching and learning results. Our study examined one part of team communication that can promote team and pedagogical development: peer feedback. By examining a topic that has not been widely researched before in this context, we have obtained important insight into peer feedback in teacher teams.

This research into non-hierarchical teams also opens paths for future studies outside of teaching. Movi currently offers a unique context, especially in the Finnish university system, but its organisation into teacher teams may be adopted in the future by different higher education institutions. Moreover, the team structure offers insight into teamwork in general, insight which can further understanding within other contexts, too, such as the heavily team-oriented IT field or similarly developing areas. Although the results of this study may be specific to a certain context, they offer insight that may be used directly or as inspiration for further studies into team communication.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire about peer feedback in UVK teams

Questionnaire about peer feedback in UVK teams

The purpose of this questionnaire is to examine the experiences teachers in UVK teams have on receiving peer feedback. The data will be used to develop UVK work as well as in an article in the Movi ebook. You can participate if you have been a member of at least one UVK team during the previous academic year (2021-22).

Answering the questionnaire takes approximately 15 minutes.

Privacy notice

1. How long have you taught at Movi?

- ○ 0-2 years
- ○ 3-6 years
- ○ 7-10 years
- ○ 11 years or more

2. How many UVK teams have you been part of during the previous academic year?

- ○ 1
- ○ 2
- ○ 3
- ○ 4
- ○ 5
- ○ 6
- ○ 7 or more

3. Which subject groups do you belong in? (You can choose more than one)

- ☐ English
- ☐ Written Communication
- ☐ Speech Communication
- ☐ Swedish
- ☐ Finnish as a Second Language
- ☐ Other Foreign Languages

4. How much feedback do you receive from the members of your UVK teams?

- ◯ None
- ◯ Some
- ◯ A moderate amount
- ◯ Plenty
- ◯ A great deal

5. Who gives you feedback for UVK work in your teams?

- ☐ Members of your own subject group
- ☐ Members of another subject group
- ☐ Responsible teachers
- ☐ Other teachers of the course
- ☐ Other teachers from your UVK team
- ☐ X team
- ☐ Someone else, who? [ ]

6. What does the feedback you receive from your UVK team members concern?

[ ]

7. How satisfied are you with the feedback you receive?

- ◯ Very dissatisfied
- ◯ Slightly dissatisfied
- ◯ Not satisfied or dissatisfied
- ◯ Slightly satisfied
- ◯ Very satisfied

8. Explain your choice for question 7 briefly

[ ]

9. What would you like to receive feedback on from the members of your UVK teams?

10. What would you not like to receive feedback on from them?

11. How could feedback be developed in your UVK teams?

12. Something else you would like to say concerning the topic (for example, do your experiences differ depending on the team?)