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EVALUATION OF TEACHER FEEDBACK QUALITY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION AT SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

Feedback is crucial aspect of instruction and teacher understanding of feedback determine the quality of practices in classroom. This study involved four English teachers who teach at a public secondary school in Central Lombok Regency, Indonesia. Interviews were conducted with these teachers to investigate their theoretical understanding of feedback, and classroom observations were carried out to observe and evaluate their feedback practices. Analysis reveals that the teachers' theoretical understanding of feedback and its typologies remains very limited. Teachers still struggle to formulate a conceptual or operational definition that underlines effective feedback. The study also indicates that the teachers' ability to deliver feedback is not yet optimal. This is evident from the nature of the feedback provided, which remains very general, without detailed descriptions of students' achievements that could serve as references for students to improve their performance. The quality of teacher feedback to students is still largely normative, consisting primarily of verbal praise, symbols, and approving expressions. Although there are efforts to enhance individual consultations and two-way dialogue with students, these efforts are not fully realized and tend to overlook other students, as teachers focus only on the students they are engaging with in dialogue. These findings are consistent with results from previous studies.

Keywords: Feedback Quality, Evaluation, English language

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INTRODUCTION

Feedback, which can be defined as any form of dialogue that occurs between teachers and students with the goal of enhancing the quality of learning - whether conducted formally or informally (Askew & Lodge, 2000) - is a crucial activity within the classroom learning and teaching process. Through feedback from teachers, students can understand which areas they have achieved the learning targets, and which areas still need improvement. To provide quality feedback, teachers ideally should fully understand the nature of feedback as well as the mechanisms and procedures for delivering effective feedback, so that the goal of improving learning quality can be achieved. Feedback is considered effective when it meets certain characteristics, such as being understandable and accessible to students, thereby informing them about what needs to be done to meet learning goals. To achieve these characteristics, Boud and Associates (2010) argue that feedback should be informative and supportive to motivate students' learning, provided at the right time, and delivered repeatedly and specifically to serve as a guide for students in improving their learning.

For some teachers, feedback is still understood merely as correcting students' mistakes or simply providing evaluative and summative grades on students' work. However, feedback is a complex construct with various components that teachers must fully understand to implement effectively. Investigating teacher understanding of feedback and their practices is vital for improving educational outcomes. By exploring the interplay between teachers' beliefs, feedback practices, and the contextual factors influencing these practices, researchers can provide insights that inform teacher training and professional development initiatives. This, in turn, can lead to more effective feedback strategies that enhance student learning and foster positive teacher-student relationships. Considering the importance of feedback in enhancing student learning quality, research that aims to understand teachers' comprehension of feedback and evaluate the quality of feedback provided by teachers is highly necessary. This study has therefore been conducted for this purpose, guided by the following research questions.

1. How do teachers understand feedback and how do they implement it in the classroom?
2. To what extent have teachers' practice of feedback been considered as effective feedback?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher understanding and practice of feedback

Teachers' understanding of feedback and its implementation in the classroom is a multifaceted process that significantly influences student learning outcomes. Feedback is recognized as a critical component of formative assessment, serving to guide students toward achieving their learning goals and enhancing their metacognitive skills (Karim & Mohammad, 2022). Effective feedback practices are essential for fostering a supportive learning environment, as they clarify performance expectations and encourage self-regulation among students (Patzel, 2015).

Research indicates that teachers often struggle to fulfil the true purpose of feedback due to insufficient training and a lack of understanding of effective feedback strategies (Karim & Mohammad, 2022). For instance, while constructive feedback should ideally facilitate students' higher-order thinking, many teachers resort to merely correcting errors without providing comprehensive guidance on how to improve (Khamis & Selamat, 2019). This highlights a gap between the theoretical understanding of feedback and its practical

application in the classroom, where teachers may rely on their experiences rather than established best practices (Çoban & Karagül, 2021).

Moreover, the role of school leadership in promoting effective feedback practices cannot be understated. Principals who engage in systematic classroom observations and provide data-driven feedback can empower teachers to reflect on and enhance their instructional methods (Bellibaş, 2022). This collaborative approach not only improves teachers' self-efficacy but also fosters a culture of continuous improvement within the school (Kraft & Gilmour, 2016).

Teachers' beliefs about feedback also play a crucial role in shaping their practices. Studies have shown that there can be significant discrepancies between teachers' perceptions of effective feedback and their actual behaviors in the classroom (Norouzian & Farahani, 2012). For example, while teachers may believe in the importance of providing timely and constructive feedback, they often fall short in execution, particularly in high-pressure environments where time constraints limit their ability to engage deeply with each student's work.

Effective feedback practices contribute to a positive classroom environment, enhancing students' behavioral engagement and their sense of belonging within the school community (Monteiro et al., 2021). This highlights the importance of not only the content of feedback but also the way it is delivered, as trust in the teacher-student relationship is vital for feedback to be perceived as constructive and beneficial (Eriksson et al., 2018).

In conclusion, teachers' understanding and implementation of feedback in the classroom are influenced by their training, beliefs, and the support they receive from school leadership. To maximize the effectiveness of feedback, it is essential for educators to engage in continuous professional development, reflect on their practices, and foster strong relationships with their students.

Feedback and Student Achievement

Tunstall and Gipps' model of feedback (1996) emphasizes the importance of feedback as a critical component in the educational process, particularly in enhancing student achievement. Their framework posits that feedback should not merely be a one-way communication from teacher to student but rather a dialogic process that fosters understanding and improvement. This model aligns with the broader literature on feedback, which suggests the necessity of feedback being constructive, timely, and relevant to students' learning goals. Hattie & Timperley (2007) articulate that effective feedback is contingent upon students being engaged with their learning objectives, as feedback can only be impactful when it is directly related to the students' accomplishments and learning goals.

The relationship between teacher feedback and student achievement is multifaceted. Feedback serves as a mechanism through which students can gauge their understanding and performance relative to established learning outcomes. Abdurrahman et al. (2018) highlight that feedback acts as a scaffold, helping students recognize the gap between their current competencies and desired performance. This recognition is crucial as it motivates students to engage in self-regulated learning behaviors aimed at closing this gap. Furthermore, the dialogic nature of feedback, as discussed by Chalmers et al. (2017), emphasizes the importance of interaction between students and teachers, which can enhance the educational relationship and ultimately lead to improved academic outcomes.

Moreover, the effectiveness of feedback is significantly influenced by its format and delivery. Singh (2019) notes that both written and oral feedback can be effective, but the clarity and specificity of the feedback are paramount. Students benefit from feedback that is not only timely but also provides clear guidance on how to improve their performance. This is echoed by Brearley and Cullen (2012), who found that audio feedback, followed by dialogue, can enhance students' understanding of the feedback's value and purpose. The preference for

feedback format can vary among students, with some favoring verbal feedback for its immediacy and opportunity for clarification (Morris & Chikwa, 2016).

The role of formative assessment in conjunction with feedback is also critical. Waskito et al. (2022) assert that formative assessment practices, when integrated with active feedback, can significantly enhance students' focus on learning objectives. This approach encourages students to engage with the feedback process actively, thereby fostering a deeper understanding of the material and improving academic performance. The essence of formative assessment lies in its ability to provide ongoing feedback that students can use to adjust their learning strategies in real-time. The impact of feedback on student motivation and self-efficacy is another crucial aspect of its relationship with achievement. Aslam Aslam (2021) emphasizes that constructive feedback can enhance students' motivation, leading to improved academic outcomes. This is supported by findings from Fatima et al. (2021), which indicate that students' conceptions of feedback significantly influence their academic self-efficacy and self-regulation. When students perceive feedback as a tool for growth rather than a mere evaluation, they are more likely to engage with it meaningfully.

Furthermore, the quality of feedback is paramount in determining achievement. Hounsell et al. (2008) argue that effective feedback should not only inform students about their performance but also guide them on how to improve. This guidance is essential in helping students navigate their learning journeys and achieve their academic goals. The interplay between coursework and exams, as noted in their research, illustrates that feedback should be holistic and encompass various aspects of the learning experience. In addition to the content and delivery of feedback, the timing of feedback is also critical. Morris & Chikwa (2016) found that timely feedback is more impactful than the format in which it is delivered. Students benefit from receiving feedback while they are still engaged with the material, allowing them to apply the insights gained to subsequent tasks. This immediacy can reinforce learning and enhance retention of information.

The integration of technology in feedback processes has also been explored in the literature. Hepplestone et al. (2011) suggest that technology can facilitate student engagement with feedback, making it more accessible and interactive. By leveraging digital tools, educators can create feedback loops that encourage students to reflect on their learning and make necessary adjustments. This aligns with the notion of feedback as a continuous dialogue rather than a one-off event. The importance of student perceptions of feedback cannot be overstated. Sewagegn & Dessie (2020) emphasize that students' understanding of feedback's purpose and their beliefs about its utility are crucial determinants of educational outcomes. When students perceive feedback as meaningful and relevant, they are more likely to engage with it constructively, thereby enhancing their learning experiences.

METHODS

Research Design

This study is qualitative descriptive research with a case study approach focused on English language teaching in high schools, in Lombok. The case study approach was chosen for this evaluative research due to its flexibility and applicability for diverse purposes. Shaw (1999) explains that case studies can take the form of descriptive studies that explore and provide a comprehensive view of issues that are relatively unknown to the public and may not be accessible through other research instruments like questionnaires. Case studies also have the advantage of selectively capturing data on the research process, allowing for various perspectives to be presented on the data collected.

Context and participants

This study involved four teachers. Among these four teachers, three are male and one is female. Two of the selected teachers are senior teachers with over ten years of teaching experience and have obtained teaching certifications, while the other two are honorary teachers with a maximum of five years of teaching experience and have not yet obtained teaching certifications. All teachers involved in this study hold bachelor's degrees in English language education.

Data Collection Methods

To obtain the data needed for this research, several data collection techniques were employed, including interviews, classroom observations followed by discussions with teachers, and document analysis. The documents required in this study include student worksheets containing teacher feedback, teacher notes, and lesson plans. A total of twelve classroom observations were conducted, with one observation per week, covering the teaching and learning process over a three-month period. Information on students' and teachers' perceptions and understanding of quality feedback was gathered through interviews. According to Liamputong and Ezzy (2005), interviews offer the advantage of gathering dense and varied data while capturing contextual and relational aspects related to the interviewees' perceptions. Additionally, through interviews, researchers can gain insights from respondents' language use, as language and expression can reflect understanding and values. Similarly, raun and Clarke (2006) states that interviews are the best data collection method for gathering in-depth information on perceptions and experiences. Given these characteristics and advantages, interviews are considered the most appropriate and relevant technique for this study, which aims to explore and deeply understand students' and teachers' perceptions and experiences related to feedback quality. The interviews will last between 40 to 60 minutes.

To ensure the accuracy and reliability of the interviews, they will be recorded with respondents' permission so that others can listen to the recordings. The research team will transcribe the interviews, which will then be triangulated by several experts and professionals to enhance the reliability and validity of the interview and transcription process.

Data Analysis Methods

The data analysis in this research is heavily reliant on the type of data collected. For data obtained through interviews, Grounded Theory will be employed to analyze data related to students' and teachers' perceptions and understandings of quality feedback. Specifically, interview data will be analyzed through inductive thematic analysis, following the guidelines proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Inductive thematic analysis is a method used to identify, analyze, and report patterns within a dataset. This method generates codes derived from raw data (interview transcripts). These codes are interrelated, eventually leading to the emergence of major themes that encapsulate the core ideas of the interview. This method is chosen because it is the most suitable for analyzing large datasets, as will be collected in this study. Additionally, theoretically, this method is regarded as highly flexible (Braun & Clarke, 2006), with flexibility being a key characteristic of qualitative research.

To conduct inductive thematic analysis, there are three main stages. First, open coding is performed, utilizing words from the interview transcript to derive codes that accurately reflect the data. Next, the researcher conducts axial coding, where issues with similarities or differences are grouped. This stage aims to identify overarching themes and general patterns from the open coding. Axial coding then connects these interrelated concepts/themes, which are presented through diagrams. These diagrams contain information about the relationships between concepts, thereby allowing an explanatory model to emerge. Lastly, selective coding is employed to integrate the concepts from axial coding to identify core variables (Saldaña,

2009). At this stage, emerging themes are analyzed and refined, and the data is organized according to the primary themes identified.

Given the volume of data anticipated (four interview transcripts), NVivo software will be used to organize emerging themes and to validate themes generated from the coding process. The use of computer software for data analysis in this study assumes that NVivo is a reliable tool for facilitating aspects of the Grounded Theory process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To ensure the validity of the transcriptions, open, axial, and selective coding, as well as the resulting themes, the transcriptions, codes, and themes will undergo verification and cross-checking by the research team and be validated by an external validator and experts.

For classroom observation data, a word-for-word transcription of dialogues between students and teachers during the teaching process will be conducted. In post-observation discussions with teachers and students, the researcher will request feedback from respondents on aspects related to quality feedback. Transcriptions of classroom observation data and subsequent discussions with teachers and students will be analyzed using Tunstall and Gipp's (1996, pp. 395-401) feedback typology. According to this typology, feedback can be classified into eight types, namely: rewarding, approving, specifying attainment, constructing achievement, punishing, disapproving, specifying improvement, and constructing the way forward communication.

RESULTS

Teachers' Understanding of Feedback

English teachers exhibit a limited understanding of feedback, primarily restricted to the lexical definition based on the basic meaning of the term "feedback." Teachers do not share a unified understanding of feedback and tend to provide general definitions. Some teachers appeared confused when asked to explain their understanding of feedback. Feedback is perceived merely as written comments on students' work, especially on summative assessment sheets like daily, midterm, and final exams.

> "Feedback is the response we provide to students based on their test results. This feedback can be positive or negative, depending on the scores they receive." (L, 26 years old)

The quote above illustrates that feedback is perceived as an evaluative tool for student performance quality. When students perform well, feedback tends to be positive, and vice versa. Senior teachers also tend to view feedback as evaluative, yet they acknowledge feedback as a potential tool for enhancing students' academic performance. They believe that feedback provided on test scores can help students recognize areas for improvement.

> "I believe students can understand whether they passed or failed based on the grades given by the teacher. If their scores are low, they can study again in the subjects where they struggle. If their scores are high, it means they have passed. I believe feedback can motivate them to study harder, although it might also discourage them from learning [smiles]." (H, 45 years old)

Furthermore, teachers' understanding of feedback is limited to basic knowledge. They lack a comprehensive understanding of feedback types and were unable to provide theoretical or operational definitions of feedback types when asked by the researcher. Their understanding of feedback is limited to giving grades on students' worksheets. There is reason to suspect that teachers have minimal knowledge about feedback's role in improving the

teaching and learning process. Throughout all interview transcripts, no teacher mentioned feedback as a tool to improve classroom learning and teaching processes.

Teachers' Practice of Providing Feedback

Based on twelve classroom observations, feedback practices by English teachers are evaluative and corrective. This is reflected in the methods, strategies, and purposes of providing feedback. In terms of methods, feedback is often provided in written form, such as signatures on correct answers and cross marks on incorrect ones. Oral feedback is also given, but it is generally generic. In terms of strategy, teachers tend to provide direct feedback, whether addressing errors or when students answer questions correctly. During lessons, indirect feedback is given when a student's answer is deemed inadequate; in such cases, the teacher invites or encourages other students to provide a more accurate answer. Once a satisfactory answer is obtained, the teacher provides general feedback, using normative expressions and praise such as "that's nice, good, excellent." There is no attempt to elaborate or offer detailed information that could serve as a reference for students to improve their work quality. Occasionally, the feedback mechanism is handed over to students by allowing another student to provide a more accurate answer.

Teacher Feedback Quality

Class observation results also document physical evidence of teacher feedback practices, including student worksheets that have been commented on, assessed, and reviewed by teachers. Based on the collected documents, the quality of teacher feedback provided to students can be described. The feedback typology developed by Tunstall and Gipp (1996) serves as an analytical framework to examine the types of feedback used by English teachers in this study.

An analysis of teacher feedback to students, using Tunstall and Gipp's (1996) feedback typology, reveals that the quality of teacher feedback is generally adequate, as it offers a description of student learning achievements. However, the descriptions within this feedback tend to lack detail. Out of the eight types of feedback suggested by Tunstall and Gipp, English teachers can implement positive feedback for students. The types of positive feedback provided by teachers include rewarding feedback, which is positively evaluative in nature. Examples of this type of feedback include giving stickers, star symbols, and drawings of smiling faces. Approving feedback, which is usually both evaluative and positive, indicating the teacher's approval of students' work. This feedback might involve facial expressions, checkmarks, or general praise. Specifying attainment, which is descriptive and highlights specific aspects of student achievement. An example of this feedback would be specific praise such as, "This work is very good because…". Constructing achievement, where feedback is focused on improving student performance. This type of feedback fosters communication between teacher and student regarding the student's learning process.

Additionally, although not all teachers employ it, a teacher may provide detailed feedback on student abilities, termed specifying improvement. This type of feedback includes corrections aimed at addressing mistakes and providing solutions for improvement, focusing on achievement rather than personal attributes of the student. Notably, some teachers show a tendency to provide personal feedback through individual consultations, which generates anticipative feedback to address potential future mistakes. This feedback type emphasizes constructive critique on student work and encourages two-way communication between teacher and student to explore ways to enhance the learning process.

Teachers generally avoid using feedback types such as disapproving and punishing, though these are occasionally employed. Both types are negative and often reflect disappointment in student performance, for example, statements like, "I am disappointed with your work today." One type of feedback not practiced by English teachers is punishing

feedback, which is evaluative but negative, involving negative comments and punitive measures, such as denying students classroom entry.

DISCUSSION

This study aims to explore the theoretical understanding of feedback among English teachers and to describe how teachers implement feedback in the classroom. Additionally, it seeks to evaluate the quality of teacher feedback based on the typology proposed by Tunstall and Gipps (1996). Analysis results indicate that the theoretical understanding of feedback among teachers remains limited despite the relatively effective practical application of feedback on student work. This paradox can be attributed to several interrelated factors, including the prevailing educational culture, teachers' beliefs and practices regarding feedback, and the systemic challenges that educators face in integrating feedback into their pedagogical approaches.

The institutional culture surrounding education plays a significant role in shaping teachers' understanding of feedback. As highlighted by Kornegay et al., feedback is deeply intertwined with the learning culture within educational settings, which defines the expectations and norms of the teacher-learner relationship (Kornegay et al., 2017). This culture can either facilitate or hinder the effective use of feedback. For instance, if the educational environment emphasizes grades and standardized testing over formative assessment, teachers may prioritize error correction over constructive feedback that fosters deeper learning (Karim & Mohammad, 2022). This focus on superficial feedback practices can lead to a limited theoretical understanding of feedback's potential as a tool for enhancing student learning. Teachers also often perceive feedback as a mechanism for identifying errors rather than as a reflective process that engages both teachers and students in meaningful dialogue about learning (Karim & Mohammad, 2022). This perception is supported by findings from Khamis and Selamat, who argue that feedback is frequently viewed as a mere correction tool rather than a continuous assessment mechanism that encourages self-assessment and reflection among students (Khamis & Selamat, 2019). Consequently, teachers may not fully grasp the theoretical underpinnings of feedback, leading to a disconnect between their practical application and a deeper understanding of its educational value.

Another contributing factor to the limited theoretical understanding of feedback is the lack of training and professional development opportunities for teachers. Research by Alshahrani and Storch indicates that many teachers are aware of the benefits of selective feedback but often lack the necessary training to implement it effectively (Alshahrani & Storch, 2014). This gap in professional development can result in teachers defaulting to familiar practices that may not align with best practices in feedback provision. As a result, their theoretical understanding remains superficial, as they rely on instinct rather than informed pedagogical strategies.

Additionally, the emotional responses of both teachers and students to feedback can complicate its effective implementation. Studies have shown that students often experience anxiety in response to feedback, which can hinder their ability to engage with it constructively (Mafulah & Basthomi, 2023). This emotional dimension can lead teachers to provide feedback in a manner that prioritizes immediate comprehension over deeper learning, further limiting their theoretical understanding of feedback's role in the learning process. The interplay between feedback and emotional responses indicates the need for teachers to develop a more nuanced understanding of how feedback can be tailored to meet the emotional and cognitive needs of their students. Furthermore, the nature of feedback itself can contribute to misunderstandings among educators. Feedback is often conceptualized in a predominantly monologic manner, where teachers provide comments without engaging students in a dialogue

about their learning (Ajjawi & Boud, 2018). This approach can lead to a lack of clarity regarding the purpose and effectiveness of feedback, as students may not fully understand the rationale behind the comments they receive. Consequently, teachers may not recognize the importance of fostering a dialogic feedback process that encourages student engagement and reflection, thereby limiting their theoretical understanding of feedback as a collaborative learning tool.

In addition to these factors, systemic challenges within educational institutions can impede teachers' ability to engage with feedback on a theoretical level. For instance, the pressure to meet curriculum standards and the demands of high-stakes assessments can lead teachers to prioritize compliance over pedagogical innovation (Farid, 2021). This environment can stifle teachers' willingness to explore new feedback strategies or to engage with the theoretical literature on feedback, resulting in a reliance on traditional practices that do not fully leverage the potential of feedback as a learning tool. Moreover, the complexity of feedback itself poses challenges for teachers seeking to deepen their theoretical understanding. Feedback encompasses various forms, including written, oral, and peer feedback, each with its own set of best practices and theoretical frameworks (Zhang & Zheng, 2018). Teachers may struggle to navigate this complexity, leading to a fragmented understanding of feedback that does not translate into coherent pedagogical strategies. This fragmentation can further perpetuate the cycle of limited theoretical engagement with feedback, as teachers may feel overwhelmed by the breadth of literature and practices available.

The interplay between feedback and assessment practices also highlights the need for a more integrated approach to teacher training. As noted by Molloy and Boud, feedback is often perceived as a problematic aspect of the student experience, with educators believing their feedback is more useful than students perceive it to be (Molloy & Boud, 2013). This discrepancy underlines the importance of aligning feedback practices with assessment strategies that prioritize student engagement and learning outcomes. By fostering a more comprehensive understanding of feedback within the context of assessment, educators can enhance their theoretical engagement with feedback as a pedagogical tool.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study involved four English teachers. Interviews with the teachers were conducted to investigate their theoretical understanding of feedback, and classroom observations were carried out to evaluate their feedback practices. The analysis reveals that teachers' theoretical understanding of feedback, and its typologies remains very limited. Teachers are still confused about formulating a conceptual or operational definition that could serve as a reference for providing feedback. The study also indicates that teachers' feedback skills are still not optimal. This is marked by the feedback given being mostly general, lacking in specific descriptions of student achievements that could serve as a reference for improvement. The quality of teacher feedback is still considered normative, often consisting of verbal praise, gestures, and expressions of approval. Although there are efforts to increase individual consultation and two-way dialogue with students, these efforts are not fully realized and tend to neglect other students as teachers focus on those engaged in the dialogue. These findings align with previous studies.

Given the limited knowledge, skills, and quality of teacher feedback identified in this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. There is a need for training on feedback concepts and classroom application for teachers. On a broader scale, teachers require training on assessment methods, as feedback is a critical form of assessment. Teachers' ability to provide feedback will greatly support and assist students in achieving their learning goals and targets.

2. Training programs on English language teaching methods should not marginalize the topic of assessment. There is a tendency in teaching method training to overlook feedback-related issues, despite feedback being a 'key' to successful learning processes.
3. This study concludes that the quality of feedback to students could be enhanced if teachers had greater knowledge of constructive and descriptive feedback strategies and techniques. This would help teachers understand students' learning styles, allowing them to match the type of feedback given to students' needs.

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Appendix 1 Teachers model of feedback based Tunstall and Gipps' model of feedback typology (1996)

Teacher	Lesson	Types of feedback							
		Positive				Negative			
		Evaluative positive		descriptive achievement		Evaluative negative		descriptive achievement	
		Rewarding	Approving	Specifying attainment	Constructing achievement	Punishing	Disapproving	Specifying achievement	Constructing the way forward
Teacher 1	1	X	X						
	2	X	X						
	3	X	X						
Teacher 2	4	X	X						
	5	X	X		X		X	X	X
	6	X	X						
Teacher 3	7	X	X						
	8	X	X				X	X	
	9	X	X	X					X
Teacher 4	10	X	X						
	11	X	X				X		
	12	X	X						