



Implications for feedback excellence of the revolution in feedback thinking

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The problem with feedback

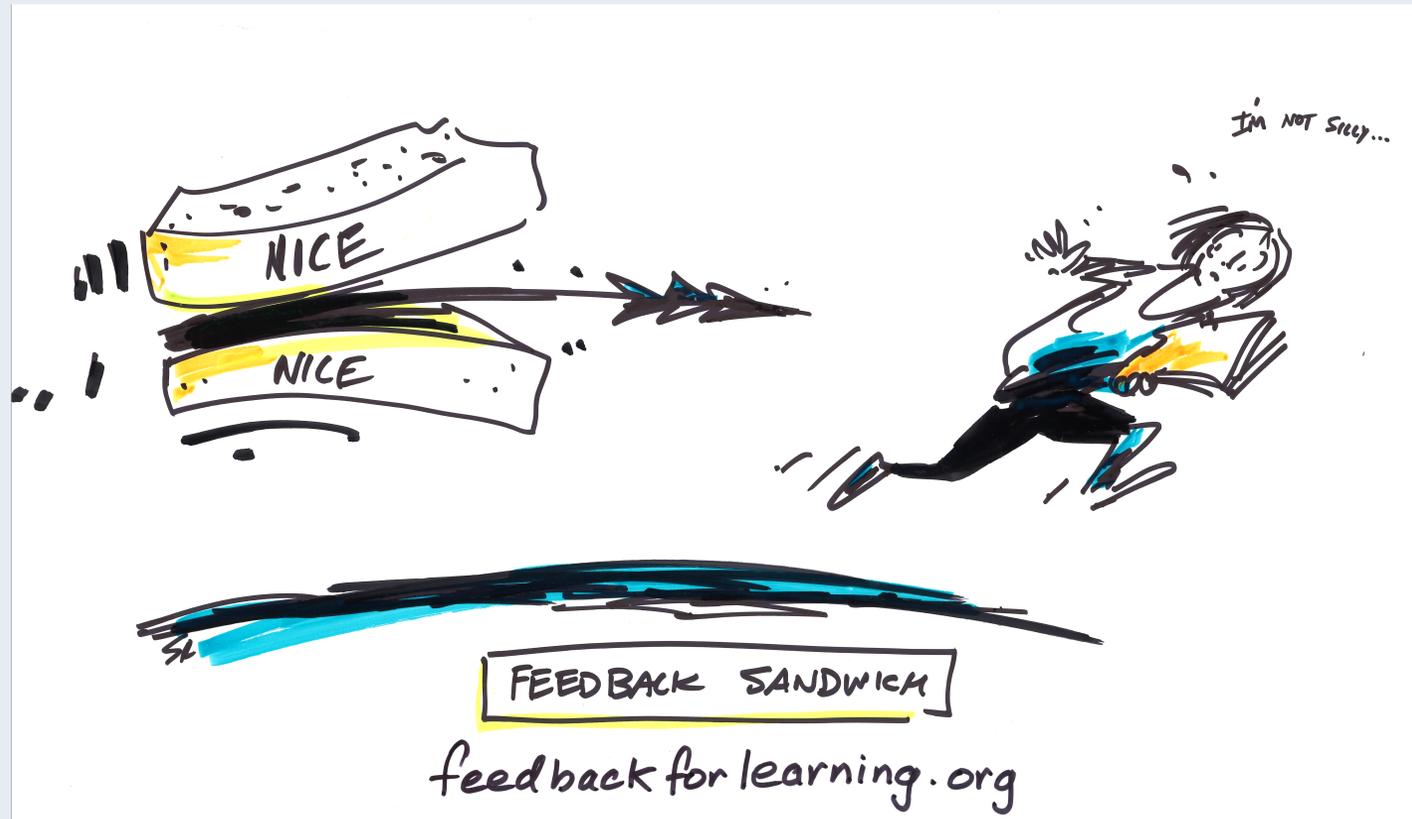
- Students complain that they do not get enough of it
- Educators resent time generating comments of which students take little notice
- Educators typically think the information they provide is more useful than students think it is
- Feedback is typically 'telling' often lacking strategies for improvement, and often lacking opportunities for further task attempts

Ende 1995, Hattie 2009, Boud and Molloy 2013, Johnson & Molloy 2017



Our dilemma

- Is it just a matter of doing what we do now just with more vigor and more systematically?
- Is our use of the term feedback based on a misconception?



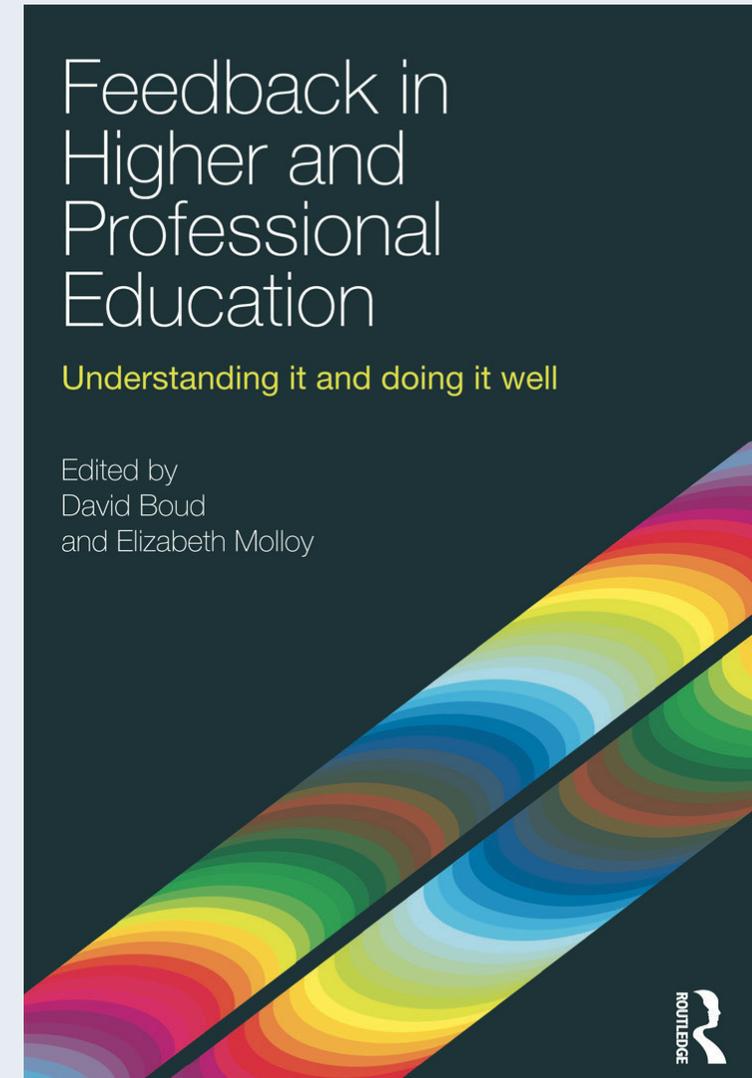


This is *not* feedback

“I left feedback on their essays, which they never collected”

What is the feedback revolution?

- A major conceptual shift in the past eight years led by scholars in Australia, Hong Kong and the UK.
- From a *teacher-centric view* to a *learning-centric one*
- Unless inputs (from others) lead to worthwhile effects, feedback has not occurred, it is merely ‘hopefully useful information’.



Need for a new definition

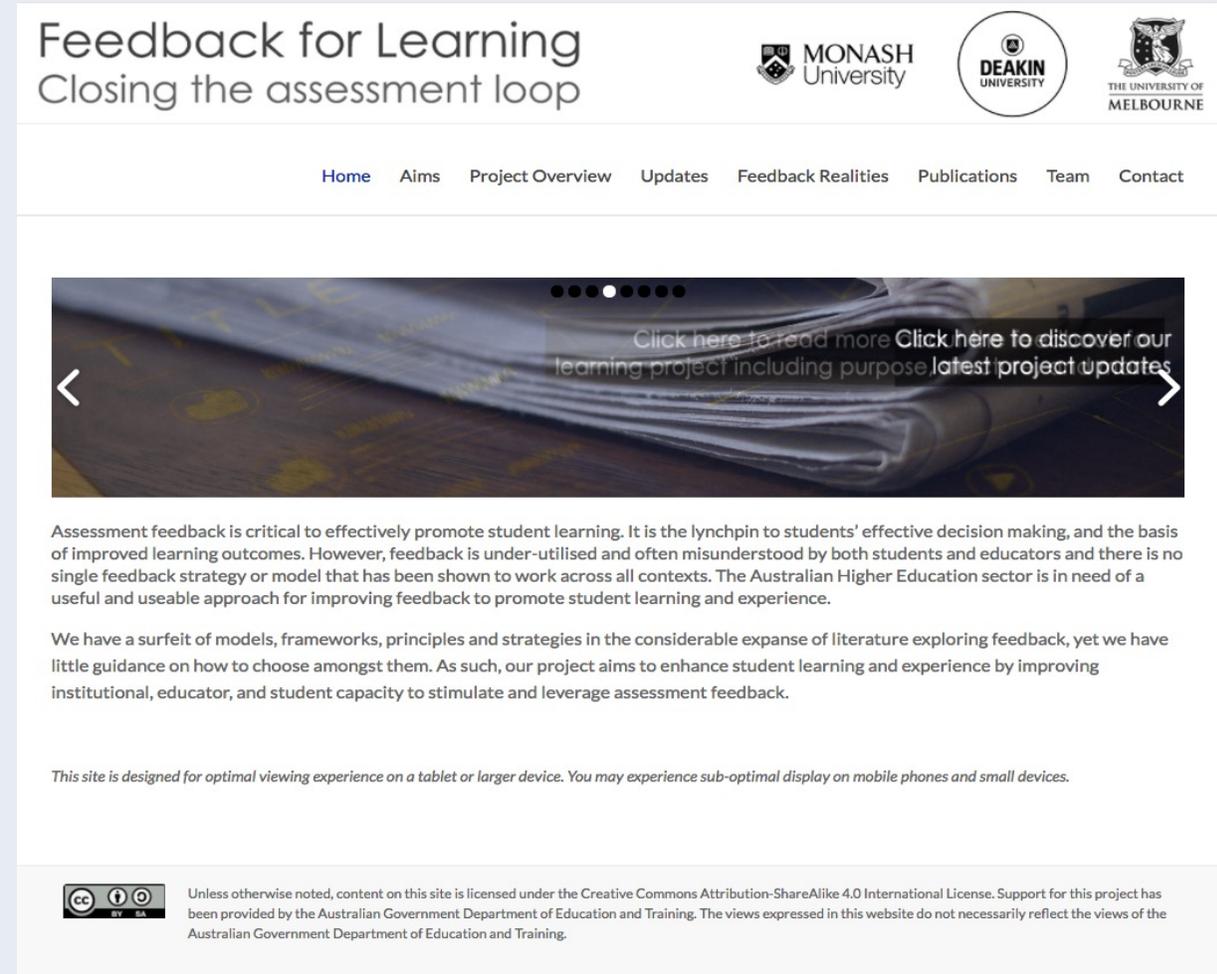
“Feedback is a *process* in which *learners make sense of information* about their *performance* and *use* it to *enhance* the quality of their *work or learning strategies*.”



Examples of effective feedback practices

feedbackforlearning.org

- Survey with 4,514 student responses in two large universities identified examples of feedback working well
- In-depth interviews with multiple teaching staff and students to understand what is occurring and why
- Case studies of exemplars of effective feedback and lessons learnt in enabling feedback



The screenshot shows the homepage of the 'Feedback for Learning' website. The header features the title 'Feedback for Learning' with the tagline 'Closing the assessment loop'. Logos for Monash University, Deakin University, and The University of Melbourne are displayed. A navigation menu includes links for Home, Aims, Project Overview, Updates, Feedback Realities, Publications, Team, and Contact. A large banner image of a stack of papers is shown with a carousel of text: 'Click here to read more', 'Click here to discover our learning project including purpose', and 'latest project updates'. Below the banner, a paragraph explains the importance of assessment feedback and the project's goal to improve it. A second paragraph discusses the challenge of choosing among many models and strategies. A disclaimer at the bottom states the site is designed for optimal viewing on tablets and larger devices. The footer contains a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License logo and text stating that the content is licensed under this license and that the views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Australian Government Department of Education and Training.

Feedback for Learning
Closing the assessment loop

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Assessment feedback is critical to effectively promote student learning. It is the lynchpin to students' effective decision making, and the basis of improved learning outcomes. However, feedback is under-utilised and often misunderstood by both students and educators and there is no single feedback strategy or model that has been shown to work across all contexts. The Australian Higher Education sector is in need of a useful and useable approach for improving feedback to promote student learning and experience.

We have a surfeit of models, frameworks, principles and strategies in the considerable expanse of literature exploring feedback, yet we have little guidance on how to choose amongst them. As such, our project aims to enhance student learning and experience by improving institutional, educator, and student capacity to stimulate and leverage assessment feedback.

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Assessment versus feedback: An important distinction

Mark or grade justification

- Judgements and comments about what students have completed
- Identifies areas of deficiency
- Essentially backward-looking

Feedback information

- Comments about what students can do to improve their work
- Essentially forward-looking

The need to disentangle assessment and feedback in higher education

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ABSTRACT

In contemporary higher education systems, the processes of assessment and feedback are often seen as coexisting activities. As a result, they have become entangled in both policy and practice, resulting in a conceptual and practical blurring of their unique purposes. In this paper, we present a critical examination of the issues created by the entanglement of assessment and feedback, arguing that it is important to ensure that the legitimate purposes of both feedback and assessment are not compromised by inappropriate conflation of the two. We situate our argument in the shifting conceptual landscape of feedback, where there is an increasing emphasis on students being active players in feedback working with and applying information from others to future tasks, rather than regarding feedback as a mechanism of transmission of information by teachers. We surface and critically discuss the problems created by the entanglement of assessment and feedback: overemphasis on grades; comments justifying grades rather than providing feedback too late to be useful; feedback subordinated to assessment in course design; overemphasis on documentation leading to downgrading of feedback created by requirements for evidence. We then propose a series of strategies for the reorientation of feedback, through models that give priority to learning cycles. We conclude by offering practical suggestions for practice that seek to engage with the distinction between assessment and feedback, and to disentangle assessment and feedback.

KEYWORDS

Assessment; feedback; summative; formative; students

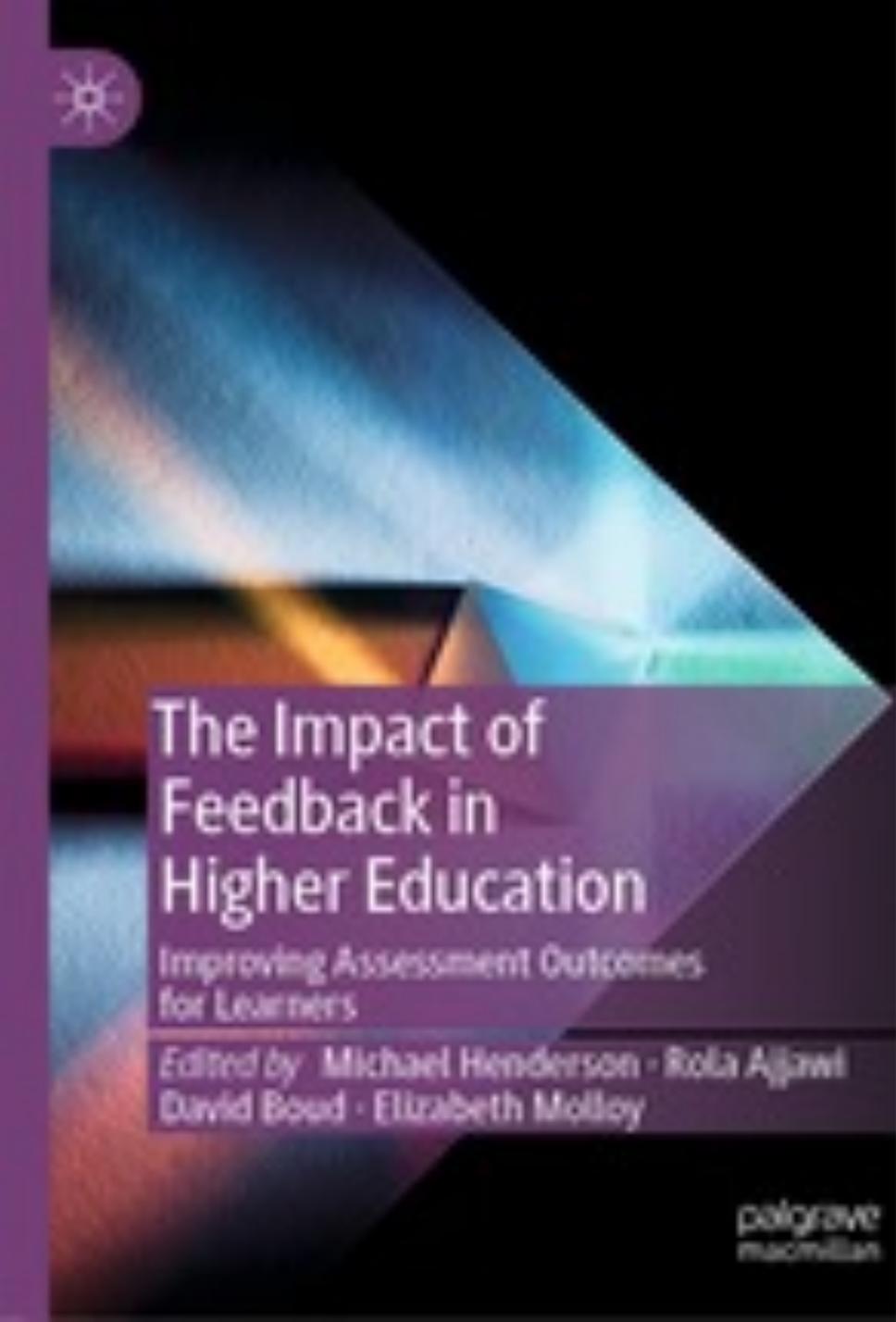
Key points about feedback

- Feedback provides one of very few ways in which courses are tailored to the individual needs of students
- Feedback processes need to be carefully designed
 - Giving comments to students is *only a part* of any feedback process
 - Without active involvement from students before and after inputs, feedback can't influence learning
 - Unless the loop is completed, feedback has not occurred
- Feedback can, ultimately, only be judged in terms of its effect on student learning

Designing opportunities for feedback

- *Start with the student*
- Provide opportunities for *action*
- Build *early* feedback opportunities
- Construct *feedback-rich environments*
- Facilitate *co-construction of understanding* between learners and others
- Encourage *multi-source feedback*
- Explicitly prepare learners to acknowledge and *work with affect* in feedback

Henderson, M., Molloy, E. ,Ajjawi, R.,and Boud, D.,(2019)..



The Impact of Feedback in Higher Education

Improving Assessment Outcomes for Learners

Edited by Michael Henderson · Rola Ajjawi
David Boud · Elizabeth Molloy

palgrave
macmillan

Is this enough to improve feedback?

While it is the overall feedback process that makes a difference, the information we communicate to learners is still very important.

However,

- Some kinds of comments lead to negative outcomes
- Many feedback processes do not lead to improved learning



The notion of feedback literacy

“the understandings, capacities and dispositions needed to make sense of information and use it to enhance work or learning strategies”.

Key features identified:

- appreciating feedback
- making judgments
- managing affect
- taking action.

Carless and Boud (2018)

Developing a learning-centred framework for feedback literacy

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ABSTRACT

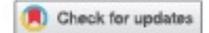
There is an increasing focus on notions of feedback in which students are positioned as active players rather than recipients of information. These discussions have been either conceptual in character or have an empirical focus on designs to support learners in feedback processes. There has been little emphasis on learners' perspectives on, and experiences of, the role they play in such processes and what they need in order to benefit from feedback. This study therefore seeks to identify the characteristics of feedback literacy – that is, how students understand and can utilise feedback for their own learning – by analysing students' views of feedback processes drawing on a substantial data set derived from a study of feedback in two large universities. The analysis revealed seven groupings of learner feedback literacy, including understanding feedback purposes and roles, seeking information, making judgements about work quality, working with emotions, and processing and using information for the benefit of their future work (31 categories in total). By identifying these *realised* components of feedback literacy, in the form of illustrative examples, the emergent set of competencies can enable investigations of the development of feedback literacy and improve feedback designs in courses through alignment to these standards.

KEYWORDS

Feedback; learning; feedback literacy

Mechanisms for embedding feedback literacy

- *Eliciting*
- *Processing*
- *Enacting*



Eliciting, processing and enacting feedback: mechanisms for embedding student feedback literacy within the curriculum

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ABSTRACT

Recent feedback literature suggests that the development of student feedback literacy has potential to address problems in current feedback practice. Students' feedback literacy involves developing the capacity to make the most of feedback opportunities by active involvement in feedback processes. How the development of student feedback literacy can be embedded within the undergraduate curriculum has not yet been discussed in any depth. This conceptual paper fills that gap by elaborating three key mechanisms for embedding feedback literacy within the curriculum: eliciting, processing and enacting. These are illustrated through enhanced variations of four existing practices: feedback requests, self-assessment, peer review, and curated e-portfolios. The discussion summarizes the key implications for practice and identifies the need for further empirical work investigating how students elicit, process and enact feedback in situ, and longitudinal research exploring the impact of curriculum design on the development of student feedback literacy.

ARTICLE HISTORY

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KEYWORDS

Feedback; feedback literacy; curriculum; course design

We also need feedback literacy

- *At the macro-level*
in the design of entire programs
- *At the meso-level*
to design course units/subjects
- *At the micro-level*
to design appropriate inputs to individual students



What feedback literate teachers do: an empirically-derived competency framework

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ABSTRACT

If feedback is to be conducted effectively, then there needs to be clarity about what is involved and what is necessary for teachers to be able to undertake it well. While much attention has recently been devoted to student feedback literacy, less has been given to what is required of teaching staff in their various roles in feedback processes. This paper seeks to elucidate teacher feedback literacy through an analysis of the accounts of those who do feedback well. An inductive analysis was undertaken of conversations about feedback with 62 university teachers from five Australian universities using a dataset of transcripts of interviews and focus groups from two earlier research studies. Through an iterative process a teacher feedback literacy competency framework was developed which represents the competencies required of university teachers able to design and enact effective feedback processes. The paper discusses the different competencies required of those with different levels of responsibility, from overall course design to commenting on students' work. It concludes by considering implications for the professional development of university teachers in the area of feedback.

KEYWORDS

Feedback literacy; pedagogical processes; inductive analysis; course design; academic development

So, what then is feedback excellence?

- Thinking of feedback in terms of what learners do
- Designing feedback *processes* into courses—how many feedback loops can be completed?
- Students need their learning from feedback inputs to land in subsequent tasks
- Development of students' feedback literacy is needed, especially in early course units

If it isn't designed to improve students' subsequent work, whatever else it may be, it isn't feedback!



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