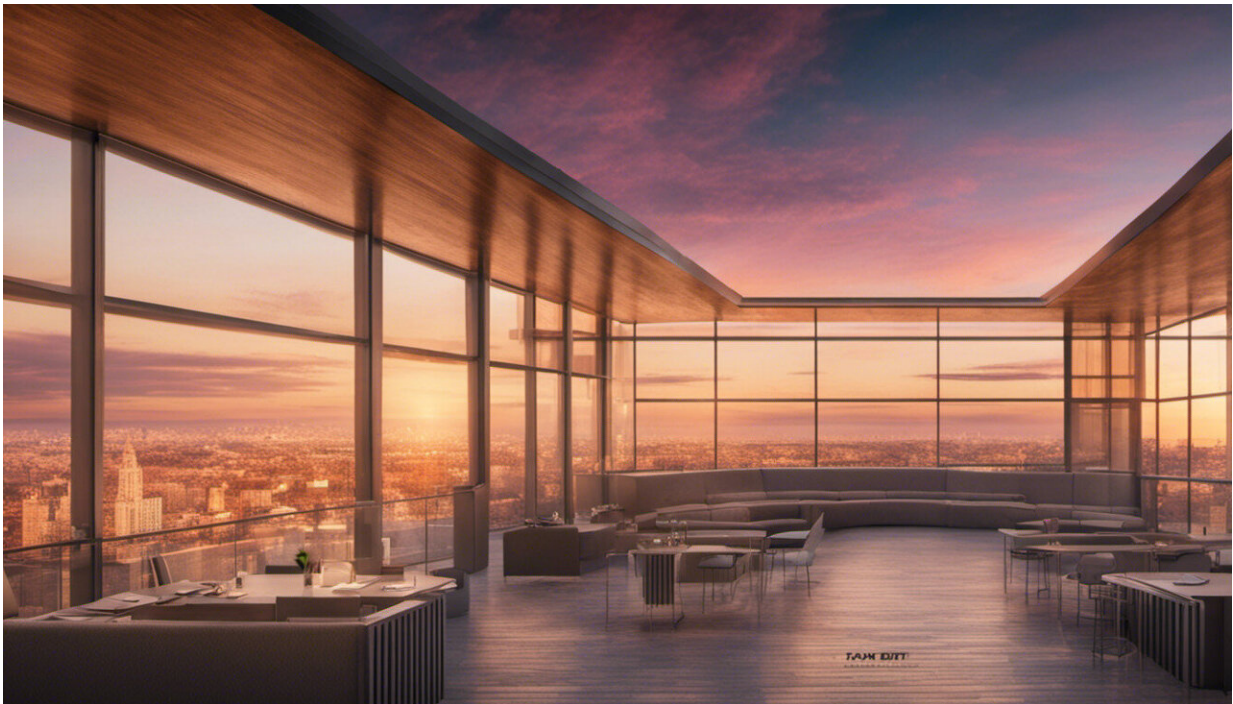


Research shows that how students engage with feedback is as important as its content

September 21 2016, by Peter La



Credit: AI-generated image ([disclaimer](#))

A new research review which consolidates thinking on how students engage with feedback has been published by psychologists at the University of Surrey and Aston University in Educational Psychologist. Run in collaboration with the Higher Education Academy (HEA), the project has also led to the launch of a 'Developing Engagement with

Feedback Toolkit', which suggests interactive workshops and a feedback portfolio as ways of helping students to better engage with their feedback.

Getting feedback on assignments is a key part of the learning process for students, and optimising its effectiveness is particularly important in an era of rising tuition fees and concern among universities about student satisfaction levels and their impact on league table rankings.

The systematic review, which looked at evidence from 195 different studies published since 1985, revealed that learners' engagement with feedback is often poor, with many students failing to look at written feedback or only looking at it once. The review acknowledges that there are a range of reasons why students fail to engage effectively with feedback – for example, they may find it difficult to understand, may not know how to use it, may not feel capable of changing what they do, or may lack motivation to engage with the advice they receive.

The review found that students' use of feedback is influenced not just by what advice is given, but also by various characteristics of the sender and receiver, and characteristics of the learning context. For example the modular structure of many degree courses means that students can perceive feedback on one assignment as irrelevant if they have now moved onto a new module.

One of the main recommendations to emerge from the review was that when educators try to improve students' use of feedback, they should first focus on the skills that their students will need in order to engage effectively. The authors identified a number of crucial learning skills and suggested that multiple interventions are likely to be needed to successfully improve all of these skills.

Based on this research, the Developing Engagement with Feedback

Toolkit has been created to help educators and students overcome some of the key barriers to engagement with feedback. Including a feedback guide for students, the toolkit suggests running feedback workshops, and using a feedback portfolio aimed at enabling students to see how feedback influences their progression.

The review's lead author, Dr Naomi Winstone from the University of Surrey, commented, "It's very clear that receiving feedback shouldn't be the end of the process: it should be the starting point.

"What we've proposed is that students will often need support in developing the necessary skills for using [feedback](#) well. Making space within the curriculum to specifically focus on these skills could help more [students](#) to make better use of the advice they receive."

More information: Naomi E. Winstone et al. Supporting Learners' Agentic Engagement With Feedback: A Systematic Review and a Taxonomy of Recipience Processes, *Educational Psychologist* (2016). [DOI: 10.1080/00461520.2016.1207538](https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2016.1207538)

The Developing Engagement with Feedback Toolkit:
www.heacademy.ac.uk/resource/d...eedback-toolkit-deft

Provided by University of Surrey

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