

ASCILITE 2024

Navigating the Terrain:

Emerging Frontiers in Learning Spaces, Pedagogies, and Technologies

Interventions to improve students' feedback literacy: Cut-and-paste or tailored to the curriculum?

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Feedback literacy has been identified as a key capability to promote in higher education, such that individuals can make the most of the imperfect feedback situations they find themselves in, both within their studies and the world beyond – work and life inclusive, and increasingly digital. Recent attention has turned to interventions that can improve student feedback literacy. These have largely been context-specific and focused on particular feedback opportunities that have been created within a unit or module of study. However, the enacted components of feedback literacy as established by Dawson et al (2024) are relatively generic, and so it may be possible to support the development of students' feedback literacy more generally. This symposium will welcome debate on the level of tailoring of feedback literacy interventions and offer insights into interventions which may improve students' feedback literacy regardless of context, building on psychological theories of health behaviour change.

Keywords: feedback, feedback literacy, behaviour change techniques

Student feedback literacy (SFL) is “the understandings, capacities and dispositions needed to make sense of information and use it to enhance work or learning strategies” (Carless & Boud, 2018, p. 1316). SFL takes a student-focussed approach to effective feedback and has been the subject of increasing study within higher education (Nieminen & Carless, 2023). SFL offers the promise of a transferable capability: individuals could enact their capabilities beyond higher education to improve their performance in life and work and in digital settings. To operationalise SFL, a variety of self-report scales have been developed. These variously focus on students' attitudes or beliefs, and more importantly, the behaviours students engage in to evidence their underlying feedback literacies (Dawson et al., 2023; Woitt et al., 2023), since it is what the student *does* which is important for learning (Biggs, 1999).

Improving SFL has also been a focus of research. A scoping review of published interventions identified 16 articles between 2011 and 2021, 11 of which were published in 2021 alone (Little et al., 2023). Subsequent searching to the end of 2023 has identified an additional 30 peer-reviewed articles reporting on interventions designed to improve SFL. Whilst the reporting of interventions and outcomes has varied, much of this work has focused on specific cohorts of students undertaking a particular unit or module, with interventions tailored to suit the student context. This approach to supporting and developing SFL is time-consuming and is unlikely to scale well, especially when compared to generic digital feedback literacy supports. Therefore, this raises the question: how generic can an intervention be to support the development of SFL?

Symposium outline

This symposium will promote debate on the design, tailoring, and implementation of SFL interventions. All presenters are collaborators on an Australian Research Council funded Discovery Project titled “Feedback literacy for effective learning at university and beyond”, at Deakin University. Firstly, Joanna Tai will offer an overview of SFL and its importance in higher education. Then, Laura Hughes will unpack health behaviour change, which offer a detailed taxonomy for interventions (Michie et al. 2013). This enables a detailed understanding of the mechanisms of action, which can help educators to shift what students *do* in feedback. Adopting this vocabulary of behaviour change techniques, Phillip Dawson and Tegan Little will offer two models for SFL development: a generic MOOC, and curriculum-embedded approach with direct links to assessment and feedback activities. They will compare and contrast the feasibility of implementation for larger cohorts and through hybrid and digital means.

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Following the presentations, the audience will be encouraged to discuss the following questions:

- Do generic modules work to develop student competencies and capabilities? (e.g. academic integrity, ethical behaviour, safe spaces)
- How much does SFL matter in your context?
- Would you implement an embedded or a generic SFL module?

This symposium will appeal to academics, academic developers, and learning designers who are interested in improving students' engagement with feedback and wish to explore the spectrum of possibilities from generic to specific.

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