

60-Second SoTL

Episode 12 – Feedback Encounters

(Piano Music)

00:03

Jessie L. Moore:

How might a focus on feedback *encounters* help educators understand how students engage with feedback? That's the focus of this week's **60-second SoTL from Elon University's Center for Engaged Learning**. I'm Jessie Moore.

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In "Feedback Encounters: Towards a Framework for Analysing and Understanding Feedback Processes," Lasse X. Jensen, Margaret Bearman, and David Boud explore students' engagement with feedback as a contextual and social learning process. Building on Esterhazy's concept of feedback encounters, they explore feedback not merely as instructor comments but also as students' prior assumptions and agency that they bring to feedback encounters, students' meaning making with the feedback they receive, and students' subsequent actions in response to feedback.

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Jensen, Bearman, and Boud offer three characteristics that distinguish feedback encounters from other learning. First, feedback encounters relate to student-generated work; second, they involve information about that student work; and third, they prompt a change in students' understanding of learning outcomes, a change in students' performance or quality of work, or students' identification of relevant actions or next steps.

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To explore feedback encounters, the authors conducted a digital ethnographic study, collecting data from 18 students enrolled in six psychology and humanitarian studies courses at two universities in Australia and Denmark. Their collective data set included screenshots and field notes from online course rooms, digital course documents, semi-structured interviews, and longitudinal audio diaries. Within this data set, Jensen, Bearman, and Boud identified 80 feedback encounters, which they further categorize as elicited, formal, or incidental.

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Elicited feedback encounters occur when students actively seek-out assessment of their performance and next steps, and they accounted for 40 of the 80 encounters, making them the most frequently occurring type of feedback encounter. Elicited feedback encounters can include self-assessment, seeking

peer feedback, asking questions of instructors about the task, or students comparing their work to an exemplar model. The authors note that elicited feedback leaves students with high control over how and how much they share their work.

Formal feedback encounters are integrated into course design, such as when instructors comment on submitted assignments, and they accounted for 25 of the 80 feedback encounters. They often position the student with low control of what they share and high exposure. Some students also perceived formal feedback encounters as one-way communication, and although they might be intended to inform work on subsequent course tasks, students must identify their *relevancy* to future tasks in order for formal feedback encounters to alter student performance or identification of next steps.

Incidental feedback encounters, such as when students discuss assignments with each other or hear an instructor's exchange with a peer, are neither elicited by students nor planned by teachers. They accounted for 15 of the 80 feedback encounters in the study, and students generally have low control over this type of feedback encounter.

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Jensen, Bearman, and Boud note that these three types of feedback encounters often are interconnected. An incidental feedback encounter might prompt a student to pursue an elicited feedback encounter prior to a formal, instructor-planned feedback encounter. The authors further note that these interconnected sequences can be simple or quite complex. Understanding each type of feedback encounter and learning more about students' experiences with them could shape the intentional design of learning environments and inform how higher education programs teach students new strategies for engaging with feedback. With their examination of feedback encounters, the authors offer a valuable framework for future research.

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To learn more about this study, follow the link in our show notes to read the open-access article and to review our supplemental resources for this episode.

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Join us next week for another snapshot of recent scholarship of teaching and learning on **60-second SoTL from Elon University's Center for Engaged Learning**. Learn more about the Center at www.CenterForEngagedLearning.org.

04:14

(Piano Music)