

60-Second SoTL

Episode 15 – Future-Oriented Feedback

(Piano Music)

00:03

Jessie L. Moore:

How do feedback type, feedback orientation, and goal orientation inform feedback effectiveness? 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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(Piano Music)

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In "Importance of Goal and Feedback Orientation in Determining Feedback Effectiveness," published in the *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, Kathy Paulson Gjerde, Deborah Skinner, and Margaret Padgett report on a quasi-experimental pilot study on future-oriented feedback. Future-oriented feedback, or *feedforward*, focuses on recommendations for future action, rather than lingering on mistakes in past performance.

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The researchers examined 86 students' learning in two sections of an upper-level economics course. Both sections were taught by the same instructor, using the same course structure, materials, and activities, and in both sections, students took nine quizzes for which they first brainstormed their response to a question and then wrote their final answer. In one section, students received future-oriented feedback on their brainstorming with suggestions for how to improve future responses. In the other section, students received past-oriented feedback identifying mistakes they made in their final answer.

Students in both sections also completed an end-of-semester survey about their goal orientation and their feedback orientation. Drawing from VandeWalle's 2001 measure, students' goal orientation could be identified as learning, focusing on developing competence; as performance prove, focusing on demonstrating their competence to others; or as performance avoid, focusing on avoiding displaying incompetence.

Adapting Ashford's 1986 measure, students' feedback orientations were identified as either active feedback-seeking or passive feedback-seeking.

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The authors' statistical analysis suggests that students receiving future-oriented feedback showed greater improvement in their quiz scores over the course of the semester, especially for students with a

high learning-goal orientation. In their discussion of these results, the authors note that future-oriented feedback also might have an affective dimension, conveying to students that their instructor cares about their learning and future performance. In contrast, past-oriented feedback might be interpreted more as a justification for a grade.

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Paulson Gjerde, Skinner, and Padgett also report that students with a high active-feedback-seeking orientation showed improvement in their quiz scores, regardless of feedback type.

Interestingly, the gains associated with future-oriented feedback on quizzes did not transfer to other types of assessments like exams, suggesting that students could benefit from instruction on how to use the feedback they receive not only for near transfer to similar tasks but also for far transfer to tasks that require more mindful reflection on how to adapt prior learning.

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The next episode of 60-Second SoTL offers one strategy for facilitating this transfer of learning via *dialogic* future-oriented feedback, so keep listening to learn more about *feedforward* models of assessment.

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To learn more about Paulson Gjerde, Skinner, and Padgett's study, follow the link in our show notes to read this open access article and to review our supplemental resources for this episode. For readers who wish to experiment with future-oriented feedback, the authors offer a helpful literature review and concrete examples of this type of feedback.

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(Piano Music)

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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.

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(Piano Music)