

# Authentic feedback: supporting learners to engage in disciplinary feedback

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There has been a shift in what we think of as effective feedback



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This is not  
feedback

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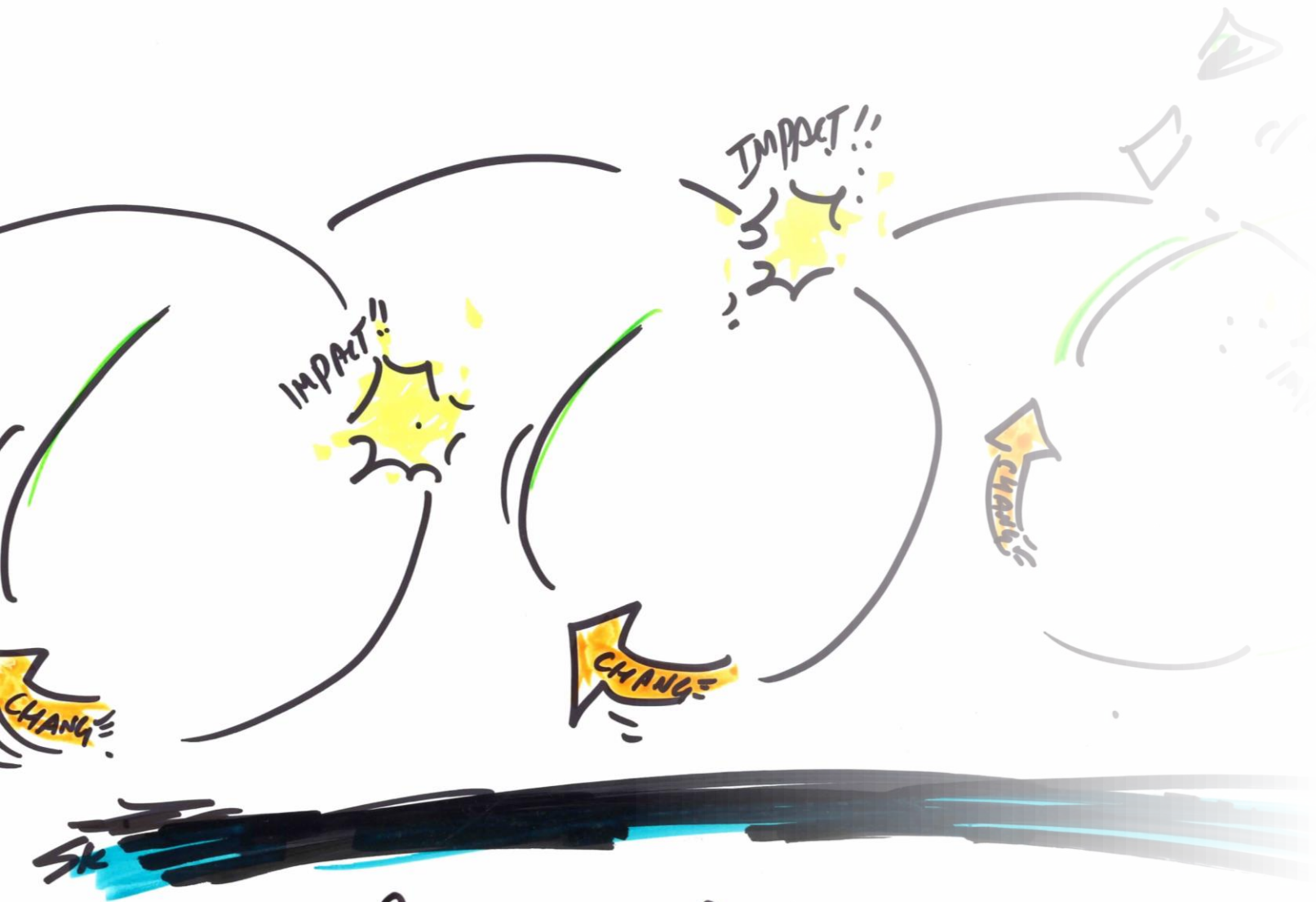
“I left feedback on their  
final essays, which they  
never collected”



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.”

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Henderson, M., Phillips, M., Ryan, T., Boud, D., Dawson, P., Molloy, E., & Mahoney, P. (2019). Conditions that enable effective feedback. *Higher Education Research & Development, 38*(7), 1401-1416.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2019.1657807>



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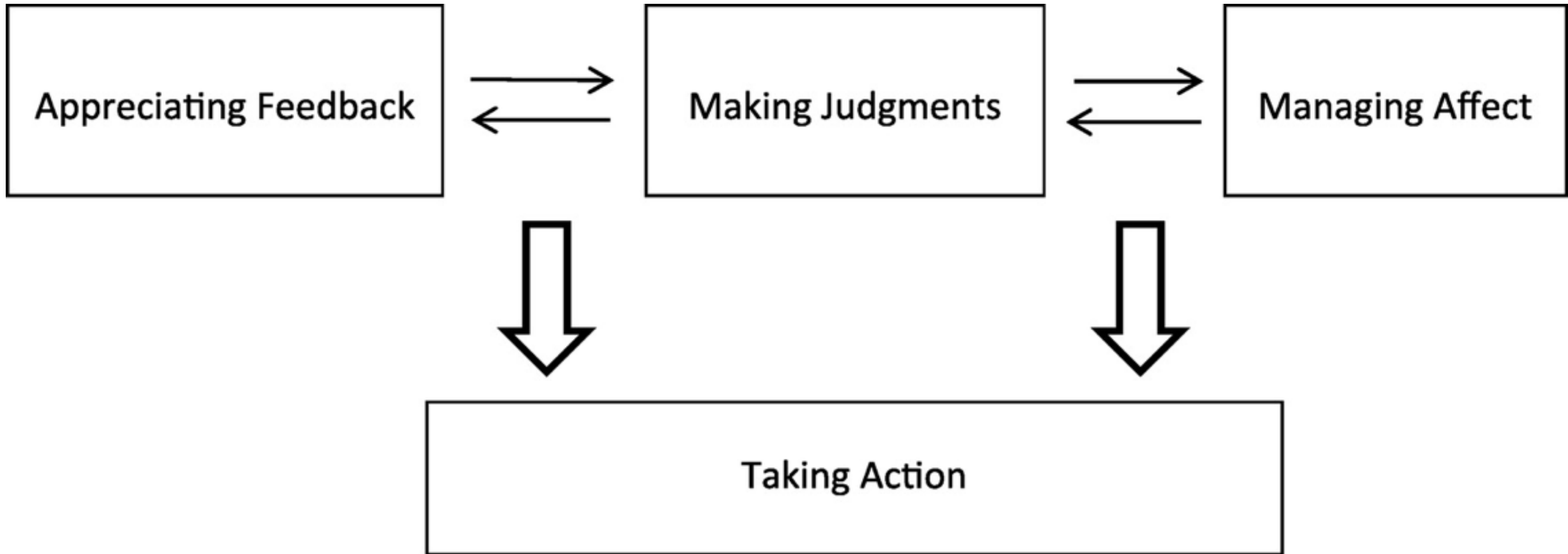
This requires a lot from learners

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


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Carless, D., & Boud, D. (2018, 2018/11/17). The development of student feedback literacy: enabling uptake of feedback. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 43(8), 1315-1325.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2018.1463354>



Carless, D., & Boud, D. (2018, 2018/11/17). The development of student feedback literacy: enabling uptake of feedback. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 43(8), 1315-1325.


<https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2018.1463354>




Feedback  
literacy is for life  
and work, not  
just study

The business literature's concept of 'feedback seeking behavior' finds that employees have difficulty with feedback too

Joughin, G., Boud, D., Dawson, P., & Tai, J. What can higher education learn from feedback seeking behaviour in organisations? Implications for feedback literacy. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2020.1733491>







How can we prepare students  
for the feedback practices they  
will find in the world of work?

Let's look to **authentic assessment**




How can we  
prepare  
learners for  
the tasks they  
will encounter  
in work?

- To prepare learners for the work tasks they will face, we use **authentic assessment**
- Authentic assessment aims to faithfully represent the sorts of tasks, contexts and standards learners face in the world of work
- Authentic assessment has three dimensions:
  - Realism
  - Cognitive challenge
  - Evaluative judgement

Villarroel, V., Bloxham, S., Bruna, D., Bruna, C., & Herrera-Seda, C. (2018, 2018/07/04). Authentic assessment: creating a blueprint for course design. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 43(5), 840-854. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2017.1412396>



# Authentic feedback: supporting learners to engage in disciplinary feedback practices

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How can we prepare learners for the **feedback** they will encounter in work?

- To prepare learners for the **feedback** they will face, we propose **authentic feedback**
- Authentic **feedback** aims to faithfully represent the sorts of **feedback** learners face in the world of work
- Authentic **feedback** has five dimensions:
  - Realism
  - Cognitive challenge
  - **Affective challenge**
  - Evaluative judgement
  - **Enactment of feedback**



# Examples of authentic feedback practices



Newsroom pitch  
processes in  
journalism



Crit in architecture



Revise and resubmit in  
a research course



Code reviews used in  
computer  
programming



Debriefing processes  
used by surgical teams



Peer observation of  
teaching used by  
educators



# Case study: digital media feedback

- Large introductory course on digital media at an Australian university
- Teaching, learning and assessment are delivered through digital media
- We will go through the five dimensions for this case

# Realism

**To what extent do learners engage in the tasks and the social and physical contexts of feedback in the discipline or profession?**

Feedback takes place in the authentic social and physical context of social media.

Feedback information is often real-time and ephemeral.

Some feedback forms are authentic, e.g. likes, replies, retweets, blog comments.

Sources of feedback include educators, peers and other social media users.

# Cognitive challenge

**To what extent does feedback engage learners in higher-order thinking?**

Learners are required to make sense of multiple sources and modalities of feedback, which requires judgement.

While some modalities were potentially unchallenging (e.g. likes on social media), these were supported by other more challenging modalities (e.g. substantive audio feedback).



# Affective challenge

**To what extent do learners regulate and make productive use of their emotions?**

Learners faced additional challenges inherent to social media.

This included the fatiguing effects of a continual stream of feedback information from Twitter.

# Evaluative judgement

**To what extent do learners make judgements about the quality of their own work and the work of others?**

Learners made judgements about the quality of their peers' work and provided comments.

Learners also engaged with practitioners who commented about the quality of their work.

# Feedback enactment

**To what extent do learners respond to feedback as a professional would in the discipline or profession?**

Learners made sense of formative comments via social media on drafts of their work, which they used prior to submission.

# Feedback for Learning

## Closing the assessment loop



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### Case study 4 – Authentic feedback through social media

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# Final thoughts

- Authentic feedback aims to improve the **transferability** of feedback literacy to students' graduate lives
- If we want to prepare students to engage in feedback in the world of work, we need to give them similar experiences
- Authentic feedback  $\neq$  better feedback
- **Scaffolding** may be necessary for some authentic feedback practices
- Key question for educators is to ask: **how closely do my feedback practices resemble the feedback practices of practitioners in my discipline?**