

Feedback Uptake and Closing the Feedback Loop

Category: Assessment, Feedback and Learning

Feedback uptake is the learner's active use of feedback to influence subsequent work, strategies or understanding. A feedback loop closes when information about performance is interpreted, translated into action and connected to new evidence of performance. Reading, downloading or acknowledging comments does not by itself constitute uptake.

Uptake is partly a design issue, not solely a learner responsibility. Learners need intelligible information, evaluative judgement, motivation and a timely opportunity to apply it. Short loops may improve a current task; longer feedback spirals can reshape approaches across modules and years ([Carless, 2019](#)).

Closing the Loop

1. **Receive and locate:** Access the feedback and connect each point to evidence in the work.
2. **Interpret:** Clarify meaning, priorities, standards and any uncertainty through dialogue or examples.
3. **Decide:** Select feasible actions and explain how each should improve the work or approach.
4. **Apply:** Revise, resubmit or transfer the chosen principle to a sufficiently related task.
5. **Evaluate:** Compare new evidence with the earlier work and refine the strategy if needed.

Examples in Practice

Students submit a thesis abstract, receive focused comments, prepare a response plan and revise before the proposal. Their cover note identifies changes and unresolved questions, allowing the supervisor to see whether the loop has closed.

Why It Matters

Closing loops shifts attention from the quantity and speed of comments to their consequences for learning. It also makes visible the barriers—assessment timing, unclear standards or limited agency—that may prevent apparently high-quality feedback from being used. Designs should indicate where feedback can transfer when direct resubmission is unavailable ([Winstone et al., 2017](#)).

Further Reading

6. Winstone, N. E., Nash, R. A., Parker, M., & Rowntree, J. (2017). [Supporting learners' agentic engagement with feedback: A systematic review and a taxonomy of recipience processes](#). *Educational Psychologist*, 52(1), 17–37.
7. Boud, D., & Molloy, E. (2013). [Rethinking models of feedback for learning: The challenge of design](#). *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 38(6), 698–712.
8. Carless, D. (2019). [Feedback loops and the longer-term: Towards feedback spirals](#). *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 44(5), 705–714.

Related Terms: Feedback Literacy | Dialogic Feedback | Feed Forward | Self-Regulated Learning