How to Give Useful Feedback

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Student evaluations of teaching play an important role in the review of faculty. Your opinions influence the review of instructors that takes place every year. The Ohio State University recognizes that student evaluations of teaching are often influenced by students’ unconscious and unintentional biases about the race and gender of the instructor. Women and instructors of color are systematically rated lower in their teaching evaluations than white men, even when there are no actual differences in the instruction or in what students have learned.

Disclaimer, Raising Awareness

As you fill out the course evaluation please keep this in mind and make an effort to resist stereotypes about professors. Focus on your opinions about the content of the course (the assignments, the textbook, the in-class material) and not unrelated matters (the instructor’s appearance).

Evaluate Your Performance
Self Evaluation

Sample Prompts

- How many assignments did you complete on time?
- How much time (on average) did you spend on course work each week?
- How attentive and engaged were you during class time?
- Did I work as hard as I could have?
- Did I set and maintain high standards for myself?
- Did I spend enough time to do quality work?
- Did I regulate my procrastination, distractions, and temptations in order to complete my work?
- Did I make good use of available resources?
- Did I ask questions if I needed help?
- Did I review and re-review my work for possible errors?
- Did I examine best practices for similar work?
- Am I proud of my work?
- What is one thing I learned in this course?
Evaluate Your Instructor
Effective Feedback

- State the assessment and support it.
  - Positive
    - ___Instructor’s name___ is great!
    - ___Instructor’s name___ is great because she comes to class prepared and answers questions very effectively!
  - Negative
    - The class sucks!
    - This class could be improved. For example, the content in this class is so important, we could meet for two hours instead of one each week!

Source: Dr. Rachel Kajfez
Effective Feedback

• Focus on what is important and relevant.
  - Positive
    o I love Rachel’s COE jacket!
    o The class is structured in such a way that we are encouraged to share our perspective and support our peers.
  - Negative
    o I hated the blue paper my syllabus was printed on.
    o The Lab Chart Assignment did not accomplish what was intended. Next time, I’d suggest that a specific topic was given for the comparison to scope the project.

Source: Dr. Rachel Kajfez
Effective Feedback

• Observable
  o Example of not observable behavior: “They do not know what they are talking about.”
  o Example observable behavior: “They did not provide feedback until two months after the project deadline.”

• Objective
  o Example of subjective comment: “Their voice was very annoying and they were not enthusiastic about the content.”
  o Example of objective comment: ”They expressed that they cared about us by asking each class how we were doing.”

• Free of value judgment
  o What is a value judgment? An assessment of something as good or bad in terms of one’s standards or priorities.

• Unambiguous (Be very specific!)

Source: DiPaola, M. F., n.d.

