

Suggestions for Gathering Midcourse Feedback on Student Learning

In addition to midcourse assessments of students' academic progress, it is helpful halfway through the course to ask students to reflect on their own learning and give us feedback on what's helping and hindering their learning. This process can give us valuable information and help us link our course goals and student outcomes more effectively.

The strategy that we recommend, and one with which many of us have had enormous success, is the Midcourse Feedback Form (on next page).

In using this form, we usually suggest the following process:

1. Administer the form in class. Explain that the purpose is to get feedback in order to help further your students' learning, a way of showing you care about their learning and progress in the course, and that you are flexible. Knowing we care is important for student motivation. Making a change or two based on feedback shows our flexibility and students appreciate that. It takes about 5-7 minutes. (Note: We have done this in online classes using a forum asynchronously and/or during a Collaborate session, in which students take time to do the forum "during class." Let us know if you want more details.)
2. Once you have the feedback forms, share them with someone else, someone you trust and feel comfortable with, for our human tendency is to only see and dwell on the ONE out of 20 responses that is critical, and we miss all of the good and positive things students say about us. Please remember to identify both strengths and issues from the feedback.
3. Finally, be sure to collate the results and give the students a report on what they said as soon as possible, preferably the next class. Summarize the themes for questions 1 and 2 (what was most helpful, and what least), tell the students one or two things you will change if possible, and read out loud virtually everything they say for #4, which are usually wonderfully honest student statements of how they need to change to take more responsibility for their own learning.

We hope you find this feedback form helpful! If not, use one of your own design. If you have questions before using this form and process, or if you want one of us to read the feedback you receive (in confidence) and tell you what we see, please let us know.

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Midcourse Feedback Form

1. What 3-4 things in this course (teaching methods and approaches, assignments, readings, experiences, etc.) are going well, are working best for your learning?
2. What 3-4 things in this course (teaching methods and approaches, assignments, readings, experiences, etc.) are not going so well, are working least well for your learning?
3. In terms of #2, what can I as the teacher do differently to help your learning?
4. In terms of #2, what can you, the student, do differently to help your learning?
5. Reflecting on the questions above, what are you learning about yourself this semester?