



CETL TIPS: Soliciting and Using Midterm Feedback

Soliciting student feedback mid-semester is a great way to identify the changes your students feel would help them early enough to make mid-course corrections.

Here are a few ways to structure a form to solicit student feedback:

One-Minute Paper

1. What is the most important thing you learned in this class today?
2. What question is uppermost in your mind?

(The one minute paper can be completed frequently at the end of a class period. It provides a "quick read" on how students are learning, day by day, and it can provide material with which to launch the next class period. The "muddiest point" wording tends to direct attention to the content you covered. The "question that is uppermost" elicits some responses that extend the material into "what if" questions, which can be interesting fodder for the next class.)

[Download One Minute Paper \(http://www.clarku.edu/Departments/cetl//departments/cetl/pdfs/minute.docx\)](http://www.clarku.edu/Departments/cetl//departments/cetl/pdfs/minute.docx)

Teaching Feedback

1. Please list one or two specific things that your instructor does that assist your learning in this class.
2. Please describe one or two specific things that your instructor could change that would improve your learning in this class.
3. Please describe one or two specific things that you could do that would improve your learning in this class.

(This form is best used once or at most twice during the semester. It provides feedback on how students perceive the course in general. Note that the third question directs students' attention to the fact that learning is a shared responsibility between instructor and student.)

[Download the Teaching Feedback \(http://www.clarku.edu/Departments/cetl//departments/cetl/pdfs/teaching_feedback.docx\)](http://www.clarku.edu/Departments/cetl//departments/cetl/pdfs/teaching_feedback.docx)

And here are some tips for soliciting and interpreting student feedback:

Administering the Survey

- Allow 2 (one minute paper) to 5 (teaching feedback) minutes at the end of class.
- Explain why you are doing this in a way that sets a positive tone—because you are interested in making this class the best it can be, and because you are interested in their opinions, for example.
- If you really want to know what students think, don't ask them to put their names on their papers.

Processing the Feedback

- Categorize the responses to each question on a handmade tally sheet. The first time a particular response to a question appears, write down a couple of words that summarize it. The next time the same response appears, put a tick mark by the item.
- Pay the most attention to the items that appear the most often.

Giving the Students Feedback

- If you want the students to take exercises like this seriously in the future, then it is vital that you give them prompt feedback on the results—preferably, in the next class period.
- In class, or via email if class time is limited, give students a summary of their most prevalent responses to each question.

Focus mainly on the suggestions for change, and the things the students are unhappy with.

For each of the important issues, do one of the following

- a. say "that's a good idea, we'll try that"—then do it

- b. explain why you can't change
- c. invite suggestions as to how competing needs could be reconciled

Stay open, don't get defensive. Remember, you asked! Your interest in and openness to feedback will go a long way to creating a positive climate, even if the changes you can make are limited.

And of course, point out what the students suggested that they could do to improve their learning. Remind them that this is a joint enterprise!

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