

## Encouraging Students to Give Feedback

[www.jcu.edu.au/office/tld/teacheval/EncouragingStudentsToGiveFeedback.doc](http://www.jcu.edu.au/office/tld/teacheval/EncouragingStudentsToGiveFeedback.doc)

### Why Students Don't Give More Feedback

- ◆ Students who believe their efforts will not result in any changes are less motivated to make an effort and become cynical of the process.
- ◆ Students believe that negative feedback will lead to retribution from their teacher.
- ◆ Students lack a clear understanding on how to give feedback.

### Improving Written Feedback

- ◆ Students must believe that their feedback will make a difference.
- ◆ A few minutes spent telling students how you value their feedback can influence their attitude to feedback.
- ◆ Teach students how to give feedback by observing a model. When you give them feedback on their work use the same guidelines you want students to use when giving you feedback.

### Qualities of Effective Feedback – Information for Students

**Feedback should be specific.** Use examples to support your point.

Don't say "this teacher is disorganised"

Do say "this teacher was often late to class and forgot to bring their notes"

**Feedback should concentrate on observable behaviour.** Use examples to support your observations.

Don't say "this teacher doesn't care about his students"

Do say "I visited her office during contact hours three times and she was never there"

**Feedback should not be personalised or use emotional wording.**

Don't say "this teacher doesn't like me" or "this teacher is hopeless"

Using examples of incidents and behaviours would be more helpful.

**Feedback should describe the effect the behaviour has so the teacher can experience it from a different perspective.**

Don't say "we can't understand her"

Do say "when jargon is used that I don't know, I don't understand what is being said and cannot take good notes."

**Feedback should offer alternatives to the behaviour being criticised.**

Do say "when using jargon write on the board what it means"

Do say "when using technical terms, please write the terms on the board so we can check them"

Do say "when using new terms please write them on the board so we can check the spelling"

**Feedback should point out the good and the bad.**

Giving praise and showing understanding in feedback helps the receiver of the feedback be less defensive about negative comments

### Optimal Conditions

Provide students with the optimal conditions for giving feedback.

1. Give students adequate notice of the evaluation. This gives the students time to formulate useful comments.
2. Provide students with adequate instructions. Describe the purpose of the feedback and how you intend on using the feedback. Provide them with prompts on specific areas you want feedback about. Thank the students in advance for their time and effort.
3. Provide the students with adequate time to give their feedback. Arrange for the evaluation to take place when there is plenty of time to concentrate on the feedback rather than rushing to make their next class on time. Allow at least 10 minutes of class time to dedicate to the evaluation. Your willingness to take class time for the evaluation shows the students its importance.

Svinicki, M.D. (2001) Encouraging Your Students to Give Feedback. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*. 2001(87) 17-24.