

Teaching with Writing (TWW) Tip

Ask Students for Mid-Semester Feedback

Teaching with Writing



Rationale: Mid-semester feedback lets you address student concerns while classes are still in session. Timely feedback allows you to reinforce or adjust your approach during (rather than after) the course.

The process:

Choose a format

- 4x6 index card (one question per side)
- Paper and pencil survey with Likert scale response options
- Online survey with Likert scale response options

Request feedback

- State your goals explicitly: you're gathering feedback to help you improve the course, and the process will be anonymous and confidential.
- Limit your prompts to two questions relative to writing assignments, writing instruction, and feedback.
 - Open-ended questions allow students to provide specific examples. Sample questions: What have you found most useful about the writing assignments and/or the comments and grading given your writing so far? What changes do you suggest for this course's approach to writing instruction or writing assignments?
 - Likert-scale prompts allow students to indicate their level of agreement with statements like these: Writing assignments are adequately described and discussed; In-class writing instruction contributes to my ability to successfully complete course assignments; Instructor and peer comments have helped me to revise my work effectively.

Review responses

- Look for patterns in student feedback: are multiple students struggling with the same assignment? Does the feedback indicate student confusion about grading criteria?
- Sort responses into several categories: what's working well, what can be changed in current or future iterations of the course, and what can't/won't be changed (assignment weights, grading criteria, and so forth).

Summarize and share results at the next class meeting

- Thank students for their candid feedback; acknowledge negative feedback and positive responses.
- Let students know what the feedback revealed, and explain feedback will be used to strengthen the course.

Comment:

Midterm feedback can provide valuable insight into students' responses to pedagogical methods. Midterm feedback can also be compared to end-of-the term feedback.

Learn more:

- Procedures for eliciting student feedback: <http://writing.umn.edu/tww/feedback/index.html>
- Midterm sample feedback form: http://writing.umn.edu/tww/feedback/mid-sem_form.pdf with procedural info: <http://writing.umn.edu/tww/feedback/mid-semop.html>
- End-of-term sample feedback form: <http://writing.umn.edu/tww/feedback/end-sem-form.pdf> with procedural info: <http://writing.umn.edu/tww/feedback/end-semop.html>
- Additional sample survey formats: <http://gsi.berkeley.edu/teachingguide/improve/midterm-eval.html>

Questions? Visit us online at <http://writing.umn.edu/tww/index.html>

Further support: Contact a member of the WAC (Writing Across the Curriculum) team for a phone, email, or face-to-face teaching consultation: <http://z.umn.edu/twwconsultation>. *Our purpose is to provide practical strategies for teaching with writing. Our goal: to offer timely and pragmatic support to faculty members and instructors who teach with writing in undergraduate and graduate courses in all disciplinary areas.*