

Strategy: Methods for More Robust Student Evaluations

Faculty seeking more robust student evaluations can begin, days or weeks before the official evaluation, engaging in conversations with students about evaluations and doing activities with students. This process will not only help faculty receive more intentional feedback in student evaluations, but it will also help students understand how to give feedback with intention, whether in evaluations or in peer review.

Origin

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Application

Addressing Misconceptions

Two of the reasons students often don't write feedback in evaluations are because they don't believe what they write matters, and they don't believe what they write will lead to change. Instructors should plan to have a conversation with their students, in order to address these misconceptions. Student evaluations are used in a number of ways, including for decision-making by other students, by department heads, and by hiring committees. It is also true that students often benefit from the feedback the instructor has previously received, and it can be beneficial to explain to students how your instruction has developed due to previous comments left by students.

What Useful Feedback Isn't

It may be useful, at some point in the conversations and activities on student evaluations, to share what useful feedback *isn't*. Some of the feedback to be avoided includes feedback that isn't specific, feedback that is gendered, and feedback that is more about the instructor than the instruction. Another suggestion is for the instructor to ask students to give feedback in the same manner they wish to receive feedback. Instructors should be mindful, in this regard, that they have been giving the kind of useful feedback they'd like to receive.

