Mid-Semester Feedback

Benefits of Mid-Semester Feedback

Mid-semster feedback can provide valuable information about the progress of your course and help you improve your teaching mid-semester.

Why should I consider soliciting mid-semster feedback from my class?

- Students appreciate knowing that you are interested in their opinion about how the course is progressing.
- Students feel more invested in the course if they have some input into its operation.
- Soliciting mid-semster feedback provides you with information about student perceptions of the effectiveness of the learning activities.
- Soliciting mid-semster feedback provides you with information about the direction your student ratings are taking.

What can I do with the information that I learn from soliciting mid-semster feedback from my class?

- Use it to assist you in making adjustments to your course practices that will result in greater student learning, such as changing the lecture routine; changing the nature, number, or content of quizzes; or changing the out-of-class assignments.
- Use it as valuable information about what you can do to change the direction of your student ratings.
- Use it to demonstrate to your administrators and colleagues that you are willing and responsive to your students’ concerns about their learning experience.
- Use it together with end-of-semster ratings to show your overall trajectory.

How do I solicit mid-semster feedback from my class?

- You can ask students to write an anonymous note indicating what activities they think produce the greatest amount of learning.
- You can ask students to suggest activities they think would enhance their learning.
- You can ask students how assignments, quizzes and/or exams have helped them gauge their learning and stimulated their learning so far.

Mid-Semester Feedback Techniques

Use these efficient techniques to determine how students perceive their learning.

Quick Survey

Conduct an informal survey asking students to identify what aspects of the course (including content, activities, feedback, etc.) have helped them learn and what improvements they would like to see in the course. Students can respond to your questions via a 3×5 card or half-sheet of paper. Student anonymity is best.

Self Mastery Check

Just before students hand in an assignment, ask them to consider the following three statements (or three that you write to best reflect their tasks) and determine which one most closely describes how confident they are with the task they performed (e.g., statistical problem solving, case study analysis, response paper, etc.).

1. I am confident that I can do a similar task without referring to my notes or textbook.
2. I am fairly confident in doing this type of task, but I would need to refer to my notes, textbook, or ask for some help.
3. I do not know how to do this task, and I do not know what questions to ask.

Ask each student to write the number that corresponds to their self assessment on their assignment.

(There are two benefits to this self mastery check. First and foremost, it motivates the students to really consider owning their learning. They can tell if they have really learned or if they have just
completed a requirement without any regard for learning. The students, over time, will be motivated to put a ’1′ on their paper as often as possible. Students who respond with ’2′ or ’3′ will quickly realize that they have more to do with respect to their learning. The second benefit is that the instructor can quickly make adjustments in order to motivate and enable deeper learning among the students.)

"You Are Here" Course Map
This is a visual layout of the course including concepts, assignments, schedules, etc. that illustrates the flow of learning and activity through the semester up to the current time (e.g., the first class session at the beginning of Week 4 in the semester). As you show this to students, point out that the class has just completed three weeks of the course and that certain things should have been learned or completed. Ask students to identify what they have completed and what they may need help in understanding or completing. This type of assessment can be done in class or via Blackboard. By eliciting student response to this course map, you will be able to understand the students’ progress in their learning, and remind the students to stay motivated and on task as they accept more responsibility for their learning. A sample “You Are Here” Course Map in a PowerPoint slide is shown below.

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**Examples from Brown Faculty Members**
These examples can be found on the [Teaching Tips page](http://ctl.byu.edu/single-article/mid-course-evaluation-techniques) of the Sheridan Center’s website.

**Jan Tullis (Geological Sciences): Mid-Course Suggestions**
In this short form, Professor Tullis asks students only two questions:

1. What aspects of the course have been especially good in terms of your learning?
2. What aspects of the course could use improvement?

In the second question, she also asks students to suggest changes the instructors can make to improve the learning environment and changes students can make to improve their learning in the course.

**Larry Wakeford (Education): Mid-Semester Feedback**
In this longer form, Professor Wakeford asks students to reflect on how well the class is doing with respect to the learning objectives for the course, and to provide feedback on various ways to improve the course. He also asks students assess the quality of their participation in class discussion and to reflect on how they might wish to improve their contributions to this essential aspect of the seminar.