

Giving Constructive Feedback on Presentations

1. Positive phrasing – provide a positive framework for the message

- ▶ Explicitly identify and positively reinforce what was done well
- ▶ Constructive feedback is based on a foundation of trust between sender and receiver. Examine your own motives: be sure your intention is to be helpful, not to show how perceptive and superior you are; be on the other person's side.

2. Concreteness – ground feedback in specific, observable behavior

- ▶ Constructive feedback should be specific and clear, not general or vague.
- ▶ Prioritize your feedback – focus on the most important areas you have observed
- ▶ Be descriptive rather than evaluative. Describe your partner's actions in the classroom and the results you observed; do not judge. "You worked through the example problem very quickly, and many students seemed confused." is an observation; "You did a bad job with the example problem" is vague and judgmental.

3. Action-orientation – give a specific plan of action to follow

- ▶ Don't explain what you would have done in a similar situation; frame your feedback in terms of your partner's teaching. ~~I would have done X...~~ Better: "Perhaps next time you could try using quick group activities to check comprehension."
- ▶ Highlight costs of behavior to the other. If you can, help the other person see how the behavior in question affects the classroom and the benefits of addressing this. For example "Quick group activities might allow some students to either work through the problem themselves, or at least help them articulate where they are getting stuck; this may make your job much easier..."

4. Focus – provide feedback on behavior that the individual can change

- ▶ Offer feedback in a spirit of tentativeness. Offer it as a personal perception, not as "the truth."
- ▶ Focus your comments on your colleague's behavior rather than on her/his personality – for example, instead of saying, "You're unfocused", say, "You presented a class outline, but you didn't stick to it and I found it difficult to know where you were up to".
- ▶ Check the feedback with your partner to determine whether it seems valid. Ask your partner to rephrase and restate the feedback to see whether it matches what you intended.

When Receiving Constructive Feedback

- ▶ Begin the feedback session with your own reflections. When reflecting, you might be tempted to focus on what you feel went badly, but also try to identify a couple of things with which you were pleased.
- ▶ Discuss the feedback you get. You can ask things like "You said I lost them. Where exactly did I lose them? How could you tell I'd lost them? Why do you think it might have happened? How might I prevent this?"

Constructive Feedback: Examples

1. *The time and energy you devoted to the preparation of the class discussion questions is clearly well-received by the students; they do the work and are clearly interested in the subject. This is a definite plus. However, you might find that many of the detailed, fact-based questions that you asked in class might given to the students ahead of time to allow them to prepare for a deeper discussion in class.*
2. *The case study discussion seemed to be very productive and most of the students participated with meaningful comments and good answers to your questions. Unfortunately, there didn't seem to be enough time for closure, and I sensed that the students needed to have some resolution of at least the major issues in the case, especially since their mid-term is coming up soon. Since you are trying to keep to your schedule, it is probably impractical to resume the discussion in the next class, but one solution might be to prepare a handout to tie up some of the loose ends that you can give to the students next time.*
3. *Your opening points of the lecture were very interesting and I could see how they were related to the day's topic, but during the lecture the students seemed a bit confused about the connections. Perhaps you could write these points on the board or prepare them ahead of time on an overhead transparency so you could refer to them again during the remainder of the lecture.*