Mid-Semester Feedback on your Signature Course Discussions

Mid-semester feedback is primarily designed for you:
- ☑ To know what's working well (so you can continue those things).
- ☑ To identify unmet needs or areas for improvement (so you can make those changes).

It also has value for your students:
- ☑ To share their thoughts anonymously.
- ☑ To shape upcoming sessions in order to best meet student learning needs.

Simply put, mid-semester feedback can help make your discussion sections more effective and enjoyable.

> **NOTE:**
>
> **CIS ≠ Mid-semester feedback**
>
> Course Instructor Surveys (CIS) are distributed at the <u>end</u> of the semester to meet departmental and university assessment needs.

When to Administer

If your course has a midterm, we encourage you to conduct your mid-semester feedback one week after graded exams have been returned to the students. In addition to allowing your students to get a better sense of their progress in the course, this timing gives them an intervening week to process their graded exams, and allows you to conduct a post-exam analysis/debrief.

If your course does not offer a midterm examination or equivalent, administer the feedback forms one week after handing back the assignment worth the most points during the first half of the semester.

Make sure your students complete their mid-semester feedback no later than the eighth week of class.

How to Administer

- Print out enough feedback forms for your discussion sections.

- Distribute the feedback forms at the beginning rather than the end of your session, and allow 10-15 minutes for completion. Students are more likely to take their time and give thoughtful responses if they expect to stay after completing the form.

- We strongly encourage you to leave the room as the students write their feedback. Ask one student to collect the forms and put them into an envelope, and to notify you when everyone has finished. Do not open or read the feedback during your session.

Interpreting Student Responses

Here are some things to look for as you read through the feedback:

- What reasons did students cite for why they found certain sessions/activities effective or useful?
- Conversely, which activities were less effective? Why?
- What—if anything—surprises you about your students' responses?
- How will you share the results with your students? (This demonstrates that you take their feedback seriously and are willing to respond to helpful suggestions.)
- What have you learned as you enter the second half of the semester? What will you do differently?

> **Maintaining Perspective**
> Your Sanger Center contact will happily help you contextualize the feedback you receive. While there is useful information to be gleaned from student responses, they are only one measure of your effectiveness as a TA.

Sample Feedback Form

1. Which activities have you found most engaging?

2. Which activities have you found least engaging?

3. What would make you feel more comfortable to ask questions and contribute to discussion?

4. What tasks or skills have you found most challenging in this course?

Task/Skill	Yes/No	Comments

[TA -- Insert your own course-specific list here.
For example:
Reading the text
Understanding the lecture
Connecting the reading to the lecture
Writing the paper
Asking questions
Finding time to study]

Anything else not listed above?

What skills have you been trying to teach in your sessions?
The list you provide here will mirror the objectives from your lesson plans.

5. What skills or strategies that we have worked on in discussion can you use in other classes? If possible, please provide an example (the list above may give you some ideas).

6. As you look forward to the second half of the semester, think about what would improve the value of discussion for you …

   a) What can the TA do?   b) What can you do?

   <Insert any other questions you'd find helpful>

You may want to add a question or two to this form that would address course-specific issues and/or particular concerns that you have.

Be in touch if you'd like help crafting those questions to get the most helpful information from your students.

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