



End of course evaluations from students are a tool for gathering information about student perceptions of their instructor and of the effectiveness of the course. Provided care is taken to understand the nature of the data that has been collected, student evaluations of teaching can be leveraged as a valuable source of information. When taken seriously, the student voice can contribute positively to incremental improvement and professional development.

Five Steps for Responding to Feedback from Students

1. **Reflect.** Before you look at your student evaluation scores and comments, think about what you are expecting. What went well in your course? What are some areas for growth/development/change?
 2. **Read and React.** Look at your collected scores and student comments, then allow yourself to have an emotional reaction – good or bad – in response to the data.
 3. **Relax.** Take a break. Process your emotions and prepare yourself to come back to the data with a fresh, more objective approach.
 4. **Revisit.** Return to your evaluations and process them with a view to understanding your students' perceptions and experiences in your class.
 5. **Respond.** Make decisions about what you will and will not change in your course(s) and your teaching, based on the feedback your students have given you. Make some notes for yourself alongside your course materials, so that you can remember what you would like to incorporate and/or change next time.
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Systematically Interpreting Student Feedback

When you're ready to revisit and process your students' feedback, the best approach is to begin with a systematic analysis of the data you have collected. This will help you identify the strengths of your approach to your class – in the eyes of your students – as well as the areas of discomfort or dysfunction. Your aim is to first understand your students' perceptions and experiences. Once you have that in hand, you can use it to make informed decisions about changes to make, and things to keep the same.

Interpreting Quantitative Data

You should typically look at your evaluation scores – the numbers – in the aggregate: what are the averages in each category, and what's the spread (e.g., how many students rated you at each level)? As you review this data consider the following:

- Which scores align with my general sense of student experiences in this course?
 - Which scores are surprising – either because they are higher or lower than expected?
 - What factors likely contributed to these surprises?
 - How do these scores compare with (similar) courses I have taught in the past?
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Interpreting Qualitative Data

For responses to open-ended questions, the goal is to focus on the useful information, and identify trends or themes that appear. Note the frequency of themes, areas of agreement and disagreement among students, and suggestions students have for changes you might make. In addition, look for ways in which the comments your students have offered explain their numerical ratings.

One way to do this is to sort your students' comments according to this chart:

Comment Type	What to Do
Unrelated to Teaching and Learning	Discard these comments, as they do not contribute to your assessment efforts.
Nonspecific	
Positive	These comments tell you what (students think) is working in your class. Enjoy these comments and compare the themes with less positive comments. Look for areas of agreement and disagreement among students.
Actionable Suggestions	These comments offer suggestions or shed light on pain points in the class that you can do something about. Look for themes, compare with positive comments, and identify areas of agreement and disagreement among students. Consider the trade-offs associated with making each suggested change (e.g., effort required to make the change and impact on student learning), as well as ways in which you can give students additional information to help them understand why things are set up the way they are.
Nonactionable Suggestions	These comments offer suggestions or shed light on pain points in the class, but are items you cannot address in the context of your course. Sort these comments into themes and consider passing them along to individuals who can make use of the information (e.g., department head and/or curriculum committee; facilities management, etc.).

After you have identified themes and made decisions about what to change or keep constant in your class, make notes for yourself alongside your course materials. This will help you incorporate your students' feedback the next time you teach this course.