

Course Evaluations: Providing Helpful Feedback to Your Instructors

Instructors often find students' written comments the most valuable element of course evaluations. To help your teachers get the most out of your end-of-term feedback, please keep the following in mind:

- Remember that you are writing to your instructor. Your feedback can valuably influence the ways they teach this course and others in the future. (Unlike an online review site like “Rate My Professor,” this is not a forum for saying whether or not you recommend a course to other students.)
- Specific constructive suggestions that focus on your learning are far more useful than general praise or critiques. See below for examples of ways you can provide feedback that helps instructors understand how their instructional choices facilitated or hindered your learning. Both positive and negative feedback is most helpful when very specific.
- Comments that are not related to your learning diminish the value of your feedback. For example, it is not helpful to comment upon an instructor’s appearance or to include personal insults in your feedback.

Some examples of constructive feedback:

Less helpful: Vague critique or praise	More helpful: Specific suggestions that could improve your learning, or explanations of why the course helped you learn
“The professor just lectures.”	“The professor just lectures... “ ..., and a short break would help me pay attention for the full lecture.” “ ..., but we need more time for student questions during lectures.” “ ..., and I would learn more if I got more hands-on practice.”
“The readings were redundant.”	“The readings were redundant...” “ ...I didn’t understand why we read so many different articles on the same topic.” “ ...Could you offer more guidance on what we’re supposed to look for in the readings?”
“Discussions were awesome!”	“Discussions were awesome!...” “ ...I loved how the prof created an environment where students were willing to share perspectives and disagree.” “ ...It was really helpful that you kept notes on the board during our discussions.”