**Teaching Evaluations and Feedback**

I have grown tremendously as an instructor as a result of years of student feedback. From the very first time I was instructor on record, it was clear that several students enjoyed my approach while others pointed out areas I could improve. While my first inclination might have been to denounce the negative comments or decide I was a lousy instructor, I chose to accept the good with the bad. I believe this is crucial when accepting feedback at any level, formal and informal. Several comments suggested things I was doing correctly that aided the students’ learning, and I valued these as reassurance that my students were learning from me. One of my goals from the very first teaching position I enjoyed has been to find what works while avoiding what is ineffective. Making myself available to students in a variety of ways seems to be essential to an effective learning environment. I strive to respond promptly to student emails and hold regular office hours. I encourage students to make appointments if the hours I am offering conflict with their schedule. I have met students early in the morning and later in the evening because those were the only times they could come to my office.

Overall, the feedback I receive in class is very positive. Most of the students I have taught

thoroughly enjoy the course and tell me that they have learned a lot. I believe one of the reasons for some

of the negative comments I’ve received in formal evaluations, especially for online courses, is because at the outset, I only knew of one way to teach online: provide lecture notes in the content section and incorporate discussion board conversations. I am pleased to report that from my students and other individuals on campus, I have learned more effective ways of teaching online. As noted in several of the comments, I have routinely sought Youtube videos explaining concepts which seem particularly challenging for students. Whereas at first, I didn’t feel comfortable altering the syllabus or course design mid-way through, I have learned that responding immediately to student concerns and suggestions is one of the most effective methods of managing any classroom.

Another change that was relatively easy to implement but very important was that I now include

the date stamp whenever I post an online announcement so that students can see exactly when the note

was posted. I also received feedback to become more active in the discussion boards, and while I

primarily had not responded as much so as to allow the students to discuss among themselves, I now take

a much more active role and encourage critical thinking. I strive to position myself clearly as the

instructor, but integrate my comments within the students to emphasize my online presence. Most

recently, in the way of informal feedback, I have been told by several students that it would help them

learn if I more clearly discussed the differences between highly related concepts. This is definitely a

strategy that I have implemented and has been very well-received.

Finally, I have also begun asking students to informally provide feedback through a technique I learned from a course I took on teaching psychology effectively. The method asks students to complete the sentences, “Start,” “Stop,” and “Continue” in providing at least one thing students would benefit if I implemented, one thing students find ineffective, and one thing that students find effective and would like me to continue doing. Students have been very forthcoming with praise for how effectively I manage the classroom and identifying little ways I could improve my already effective teaching. I have received many positive comments from the “Start,” “Stop,” “Continue” exercises, with many students noting the effectiveness of videos, pictures, and examples that I include in class. I had several students suggest that an outline would be helpful at the start of each lecture, so I now include outlines to provide students an easy way of organizing their notes. Overall, most feedback on these exercises indicates satisfaction.

Actual comments from my students include, “My favorite teacher at OU,” “I learned more in this class than any other I’ve ever taken,” “Thank you for always responding so fast to our emails!” and “Keep doing what you’re doing. You’re a great teacher!” Whether it be taking a more active role in online forums, seeking feedback on my self-generated exam items from seasoned faculty members, adding more information to my lecture slides, posting my slides ahead of class time, holding study sessions, or slowing down the pace of my lecture, I strive to fully accommodate student requests. My students know that I value their honest opinions and will modify teaching strategies however necessary to best facilitate their learning. It is truly rewarding to have my students come to me years after the class has ended and tell me that they could tell I really care. Student success is crucial to me, and it delights me that students can tell.