Constructive feedback job aid essay sample

Use this job aid the next time you are asked to give or receive feedback.

Refer to it to help you recall concepts from the tutorial.

What Is the Purpose of Feedback?

•Receiving feedback helps a writer become less attached to his or her work.

•Giving feedback helps a reviewer practice analytical skills:

Criticize and examine work

Question errors

Suggest improvements

How Do I Give Feedback?

Peer review is a method for giving and receiving feedback:

•Provides additional perspectives on a work

•Helps produce a better work product

There are two types of feedback:

•Directed: reviewer uses a form or guide to examine specific elements

•General: reviewer uses feedback principles to examine an entire work

When giving feedback, look for:

•Unity

•Coherence

•Supporting details

•Sentence structure

oFragments

oRun-ons

•Proper punctuation and capitalization

•Spelling errors and misused words

Be constructive:

•First, be positive, then critique. Mark things you liked as well as errors.

•Suggest solutions or ideas, rather than simply pointing out an error exists.

•Be kind when suggesting improvements.

•Criticize the error, not the person.

•Be professional, not emotional.

•Provide the critique in private.

•Ensure you have the facts straight.

How Do I Respond to Feedback?

•Welcome the feedback.

•Make sure you understand the feedback.

•View the criticism as an opportunity to fix the problem or increase

knowledge. •Focus on possible solutions.

•Thank your reviewer.

Audio and Visual Statements for the Constructive Feedback Tutorial

This is a transcript of the Constructive Feedback Tutorial. The purpose of this tutorial is to distinguish between constructive and unconstructive feedback.

Introduction

Welcome to the Constructive Feedback Information Presentation. Do any of the following statements sound familiar?

•Great job.

•This is so-so.

•This doesn't make sense.

•Great writing. You might consider revising your introduction to include more detail. The only thing I recommend is carefully editing your work for grammar.

As a student, you will hear many types of feedback. The goal of this tutorial is to relay the importance of constructive feedback. After completing this tutorial, you will be able to:

•Explain the purpose of providing and receiving feedback. •Differentiate between unconstructive and constructive feedback. •Provide constructive feedback to classmates in a positive manner. •Respond to feedback you receive.

What is the Purpose of Feedback?

Have you ever become personally attached to something you've written, created, or discussed? Such attachment may make it difficult to see how your work might be received by an audience, which is why it's important to receive feedback from an objective reviewer early in the writing process.

When most of us think of feedback, we think of grades. Although grades are a form of feedback, they aren't always accompanied by detailed comments and are usually not provided until after a project has been submitted.

A better description of feedback is that it involves making recommendations for improving someone's work.

The purpose of feedback is twofold. When providing feedback, you apply analytical skills and deliver constructive comments and suggestions to another person. Specifically, when you review a peer's work, you apply your analytical skills to determine what is effective and what can be improved. When providing feedback, you also practice delivering constructive criticism to another person. Learning how to phrase your feedback constructively is a worthy goal, because it helps you communicate honestly and supportively.

The most common type of feedback you provide as a student is a peer review. A
peer review offers a valuable opportunity to provide and receive feedback. When you engage in the peer review process, you benefit from learning outcomes you may not have achieved by working alone.

Peer-review feedback may be used for all subject areas and is appropriate for many types of assignments, such as written work, projects, and presentations.

How do I Provide Feedback?

The feedback process occurs in one of these ways:

•Directed: When employing a directed approach, your instructor may provide you with a peer review form to complete. By answering the questions on the form as completely and specifically as possible, you provide adequate feedback.

•General: When employing a general approach, your instructor will ask you to review a classmate's work without providing a form. In this case, you must determine if your instructor or syllabus provide any review criteria for the assignment. You may learn that you must provide feedback for how well a classmate answered a question instead of providing feedback on their grammatical or spelling errors. Be aware of what to look for as you conduct the review.

Regardless of the approach, the best practice is to look for these elements any time you provide feedback:

•The author's writing makes sense.

•All paragraphs and details support the topic and relate to the main idea.

•Sentences are well written.

•Correct punctuation and capitalization are used.

•Spelling and word usage are accurate.

Whenever possible, always suggest corrections to errors you find.

Most importantly, make sure your feedback is constructive. Remember the following guidelines:

•Be positive, then critique. Mark things you liked and didn't like. •Suggest solutions or ideas, rather than pointing out errors. •Be kind when suggesting improvements.

•Criticize the error, not the person.

•Be professional, not emotional.

•Provide the critique in private.

•Ensure that you have the facts straight.

Keep in mind that constructive feedback is direct, thoughtful, kind, and solution-oriented.

How to Provide Feedback

Feedback can be either constructive or unconstructive. Consider the following essay, Learning Computer Skills:

In this day and age, everyone should know how to use a computer. Because you can do just about anything with them.

Computers come in all sizes, shapes, and colors. There are many brands on the market and different types, such as laptops and desktops. Decide what your needs are before you buy one, they are still pretty expensive, and you don't want to buy the wrong kind for your use.

Computers are pretty user friendly. Most companies also have tech support if you have any problems.

Almost every job now computer skills. You also need computer skills for school, so brush up on your skills now.

Now, consider the following unconstructive feedback Critical Carmen has provided for the author of the essay.

The first paragraph reads, " In this day and age, everyone should know how to use a computer. Because you can do just about anything with them."

Critical Carmen's comment is " sentence structure mistake." Although accurate, Carmen's feedback is vague and provides no solution.

The next sentence reads, " Decide what your needs are before you buy one, they are still pretty expensive, and you don't want to buy the wrong kind for your use." Critical Carmen comments " sentence structure mistake, no contractions, and lack of unity."

The essay continues, " Computers are pretty user friendly. Most companies also have tech support if you have any problems." Critical Carmen's feedback is " slang—you make no sense here."

The final paragraph reads, " Almost every job now computer skills. You also need computer skills for school, so brush up on your skills now." Critical Carmen comments " no clichés, missing words"

Critical Carmen then summarizes her overall feedback to the essay's author:

Hello,

Now that I gave you specific feedback in your essay, here's the bottom line: First, review the lecture on writing an academic essay! Then, revise! You are all over the place with this paper. Figure out what you want to say, and stick to that topic.

Critical Carmen

Reviewing her comments and feedback collectively, we find Critical Carmen violated the following feedback guidelines:

•Be positive, then critique. Carmen's feedback was wholly negative.

•Suggest solutions or ideas. The solutions Carmen provided via e-mail were too vague to be valuable. •Criticize the error, not the person. Carmen's e-mail focused on what the author did wrong, not on the writing. •Be professional, not emotional. Carmen's use of exclamation points and elevated language was not professional. •Ensure that you have the facts straight. Carmen failed to comment on the missing word in the final paragraph.

Carmen's feedback contained no positive comments. She pointed out errors, but did not offer solutions, criticized both the error and the person, and allowed her own frustration to affect the tone of her feedback.

Now, contrast Critical Carmen's feedback with Helpful Henry's.

To the first paragraph, " In this day and age, everyone should know how to use a computer. Because you can do just about anything with them," Helpful Henry comments, " Fragment: Attach to the preceding sentence."

The next sentence reads, " Decide what your needs are before you buy one, they are still pretty expensive, and you don't want to buy the wrong kind for your use." Helpful Henry's feedback for this sentence is: " Run-on sentence: Separate sentences with a semicolon, or begin a new sentence. Contractions are not used in academic writing," and " Lack of unity: I recommend eliminating the last two sentences in this paragraph, because they are not related to your topic."

The next paragraph reads, " Computers are pretty user friendly. Most companies also have tech support if you have any problems." Helpful Henry writes: " Change tech to technical, because slang is not used in academic writing." He also notes: " Lack of development: Elaborate on these topics with supporting details."

The final paragraph reads, " Almost every job now computer skills. You also need computer skills for school, so brush up on your skills now." Helpful Henry writes: " Be sure to read over sentence to ensure you are not missing any words. Avoid clichés in academic writing."

Henry's comments throughout the paper are much more detailed than were Carmen's comments. What about his feedback e-mail? It reads:

Hi, classmate.

Great topic! You are absolutely right: in the Information Age, it is difficult to get a good job or complete an education without computer knowledge.

Because the title of your essay is Learning Computer Skills, I would recommend including only supporting details about that topic. Another solution might be to make your title more specific, then address one aspect of that topic, such as the importance of learning computer skills. Your statement that computer skills are needed for both school and jobs could be explained further. If you have any questions about my feedback, please let me know.

Regards,

Helpful Henry

Now, it's your turn to consider feedback.

Take a moment to review the following assignment written by Cat Classmate. Consider possible constructive feedback you would provide for Cat Classmate:

Is the world a ruder place than it used to be? Recently, a TV show covered this subject. Both a woman and a man dropped packages, but few people helped either one pick up the stuff. A pregnant woman stood, while other people sat in all the available seats on a bus. A woman even tucked the back of her skirt into her underwear to see if anyone would point it out. That would be a great idea for a show on being punked!

Some sections of the country are ruder than others. People in the Midwest for example are courteous, whereas people in the Northeast are less so. My parents taught me to be polite, especially to older people. Maybe if schools taught classes in courtesy, we would all end up being less rude than we are today.

Consider the feedback you would provide to the author, Cat Classmate. How does it compare to the following example? Try to recognize constructive and unconstructive feedback:

Dear Cat Classmate,

Starting with a stimulating question is an effective way to begin an introduction! Your thesis—the main idea—is usually included in the first paragraph, so readers know what position you're taking. Never, never, never

write a one-sentence paragraph like you did for your conclusion! You just left your readers hanging!

It might strengthen your argument if you name the television show and the date it was shown. But I can't really follow your muddy argument.

Readers don't have any idea what show or timeframe you are writing about; you are really confusing them.

Your suggestion for a solution to the problem of rudeness is effective. I think you forgot to check your facts, because it's unfair to say Northeasterners are rude without backing it up.

I think we can all benefit from more lessons in courtesy; if you expanded on that idea, you could create a more complete conclusion.

The first paragraph reads " Starting with a stimulating question is an effective way to begin an introduction! Your thesis—the main idea—is usually included in the first paragraph, so readers know what position you're taking. Never, never, never write a one-sentence paragraph like you did for your conclusion! You just left your readers hanging!" The opening statement is positive and then provides a critique. However remainder of the paragraph points out errors rather then suggests solutions.

The next paragraph reads " It might strengthen your argument if you name the television show and the date it was shown. But I can't really follow your muddy argument." The opening statement suggests a solution rather then points out an error. The second sentence not a kind way to suggest improvement.

The next paragraph reads " Your suggestion for a solution to the problem of rudeness is effective. I think you forgot to check your facts, because it's unfair to say Northeasterners are rude without backing it up." The opening statement provides positive feedback. However the second sentence is lacking professionalism.

The final paragraph reads " I think we can all benefit from more lessons in courtesy; if you expanded on that idea, you could create a more complete conclusion." This statement provides ideas that can improve the essay.

A revised version of the same message without the unconstructive feedback would go something like this:

Dear Cat Classmate,

Starting with a stimulating question is an effective way to begin an introduction! Your thesis—the main idea—is usually included in the first paragraph, so readers know what position you're taking.

It might strengthen your argument if you name the television show and the date it was shown.

Your suggestion for a solution to the problem of rudeness is effective. I think we can all benefit from more lessons in courtesy; if you expanded on that idea, you could create a more complete conclusion.

Responding to Feedback

Now that you know how to provide constructive feedback, you can learn how to respond to feedback concerning your own work. Any time you receive feedback, make sure you:

•Respond positively.

•Clarify comments.

•Focus on solutions.

Ask yourself:

•Do the suggestions make sense?

•How does the feedback improve the work?

Don't forget to thank the reviewer.

Responding to feedback in a positive manner, clarifying the reviewer's comments, and focusing on solutions ensures that you get the most from feedback. Check for suggestions that don't make sense at first, think of how the feedback improves your work, and e-mail or call your reviewer to thank him or her for his or her help.

Earlier, you practiced providing feedback to Cat Classmate. Imagine Cat has returned the favor by providing you with feedback as part of a peer review. Review Cat's message, and consider the different ways you could respond to her:

Hi there,

What an interesting assignment response! I never knew there was such an active subculture dedicated entirely to body art. You wrote descriptively

about the role of tattooing as used for personal and group expression by different people, past and present. I would work on transitions, because sometimes, the flow is not as smooth as it could be. I also recommend you use your conclusion to summarize the main points of your writing, rather than to branch off into another subject, how tattoos affect body image. There were a few misspellings, so work on that, too. I hope this helps! Let me know.

Regards,

Cat Classmate

Now, we can start by reviewing how to welcome Cat's feedback. One possible response is." I didn't realize I wrote that poorly." Rather than welcoming feedback, however, this response negatively focuses on your work. Let's try again. Another possible response is " Are you sure you caught everything?" Rather than welcoming the feedback, this response is critical of Cat. Let's try one more time. Consider " This is great! I now know what I can improve!" This type of response is appropriate constructive feedback because the statement indicates appreciation for Cat's feedback. Congratulations! We have now selected our first sentence to respond to Cat's feedback.

The response must also indicate that we understand Cat's feedback. We could say, " I wanted to describe the role of personal expression in tattooing." This response, however, is a restatement of Cat's comment and does not seek to understand her feedback. Can we think of a different response? How about " Thanks Cat, I thought I should have added more to

the conclusion." This response affirms the feedback, rather than clarifies comments.

Do you have any other ideas? Consider this response: " Would you be able to point out some of the misspellings?" This statement is appropriate constructive feedback because the statement seeks a better understanding of Cat's feedback. Great job! We have selected our second sentence to respond to Cat's feedback.

You need to view the criticism as an opportunity to fix a problem or increase knowledge and focus on possible solutions. One possible response is " I thought I included enough transitions. Why couldn't you find them?" Rather than recognizing the opportunity to improve transition development, this response defensively questions Cat's ability as a reviewer. Another possible response is " You didn't mark any misspellings, and I don't see any. Are you sure about that?" Rather than recognizing the opportunity to improve spelling skills, this response defensively questions Cat's judgment. You can respond, " Great feedback, Cat. I will review the course materials on transition development and remember to reread for spelling errors in the future." This response is appropriate feedback, because it describes how you will use Cat's feedback to improve specific skills.

Lastly, you need to thank Cat. One way to thank Cat is to state, " I've fixed everything and am resubmitting it to you. Do you think you could do another review?" Rather than thanking Cat, however, this response asks her to do more work. Another possible response is " Great work, Cat! I hope we get to do a peer review in the future!" This response praises her. Though

expressing praise and enthusiasm is an effective idea, the response does not directly express your appreciation. Another way to thank Cat is to say, " I see my writing in a different light." This response is appropriate because it lets Cat know her the help is appreciated.

Taking all of this into consideration, the constructive message to Cat reads:

Hi, Cat,

Your peer review is great! I know what I can improve! Would you be able to point out some of the misspellings? I will review the course materials on transition development and reread for spelling errors in the future. I see my writing in a different light. I really appreciate your help!

Thanks,
Your fellow student

You have now completed the Constructive Feedback Tutorial.

Constructive Feedback Job Aid

Use this job aid the next time you are asked to provide or receive feedback. Refer to it to help you recall concepts from the tutorial.

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•Receiving feedback helps a writer become less attached to his or her work.
•Providing feedback helps a reviewer practice analytical skills, such as criticizing and examining work, questioning errors, and suggesting improvements.

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Peer reviewing is a method for providing and receiving feedback. It provides additional perspectives on work and helps produce better work.

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