

# Asking for and Receiving Feedback

Kristen Brookes  
Amherst College Writing Center  
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## ***Reflection on Feedback Received***

*Think about all the different readers you have had, for different projects you've done.*

What kinds of feedback have been most useful? Who, in particular, have you found helpful, and why?

What kind of feedback has *not* been helpful? Who has *not* been a helpful reader for you, and why?

## **Readerly Feedback**

Don't judge.

Be in conversation with the writer.

Tell them about your *experience* as a reader, what you are thinking and feeling as you read.

*I would love to hear more about...*

*This makes me wonder...*

*Can you say more about...*

*I'm confused here because...*

*This is similar to / different from*

*Wow! I'm so surprised because...*

## **Descriptive Feedback**

Don't judge; do describe.

“**Say back**” to the writer what you understand them to be saying.

Recount your **journey** through the piece of writing:

Where do you start, how does the journey progress, where are the twists and turns, where do you end up?

Do a **reverse outline** for the writer.

Write what each section or paragraph says and what it *does*. In other words, what point is it making, and why?

## ***Evaluative Feedback***

Here you are judging.

Tell the writer what, specifically, works about their piece.

Tell the writer what, specifically, needs work.

Tell the writer whether, overall, the piece of writing is excellent, very good, fair, or poor.

## ***Corrective Feedback***

Make “corrections”; “fix” the writer’s work for them.

Note “errors.” Tell the writer how to fix them.

## ***Coaching Feedback***

Tell the writer what works and what needs work. Suggest strategies for improvement.

## ***Facilitative Feedback***

Make observations and ask whether what you understand is what the writer meant to say.

Ask questions that help the writer figure out what they are really trying to say.

# Asking for Feedback: Suggestions and Tips

Write a memo to situate and direct your reader.

Be explicit about the kind of feedback you're looking for.

Introduce your readers to ways of responding, offering them sample "scripts" (see above).

Choose whom you ask for what kind of feedback based on their tendencies, expertise, and relationship to you and your project.

Peers: descriptive or readerly feedback  
Advisor: any kind, especially evaluative and coaching  
Writing Center: any kind (except corrective); especially descriptive, readerly, and coaching.

*Many thesis writers find that their advisor advises them primarily on their thinking and content, while the Writing Center facilitates their thinking and offers feedback on and strategies for writing.*



# Responding to Feedback: Suggestions and Tips

When a reader makes a correction that changes your idea, rather than regarding the correction as “correct,” consider it as a sign that the reader is having some trouble.

*Interpret and consider* the feedback you are given.

Maintain ownership over your project & your writing.

Ask yourself (and/or a reader):

- Were my words or ideas not clear?
- Was I not sure what I was trying to say?
- Is the correction clarifying?
- Does it suggest a good direction for me?

Ask your advisor to describe their feedback and its purpose. You might show them descriptions of types of feedback in this presentation, so that you can have a shared vocabulary.

Sometimes readers perceive a grammatical or stylistic problem (and may even correct your sentence), when in fact there may be a thinking problem (you weren't quite sure what you were saying) or a lack of clarity that can't just be “fixed” by a reader.

# What if... ????

**I receive too much feedback.**

Take a step back and get a sense of the big picture.

Rather than focusing on every mark or comment, determine the overall message of the feedback.

Consider what kinds of feedback you have received.

Label or color code what the feedback suggests you do (e.g. clarify, rethink, research, wording) and then plan and prioritize your response.

Ask your advisor for guidance and/or ask the Writing Center or a peer for help sorting through it all.

**I receive conflicting feedback.**

Think about what the value and import of each reader's responses.

Do some mapping, outlining, brainstorming, or fastwriting to figure out what you really want to say or do in your project.

Do some reflective writing. Remind yourself what your project is. Remember you are the author. Then consider the ramifications of the different responses.

Once you have digested, considered, and perhaps even revised, you might return to one or more of your readers.

**My advisor isn't giving me enough (or any) feedback on my writing.**

Initiate a discussion with your advisor to clarify their intentions, share your concerns, and start to plan what kind of feedback you will get from whom.



## ***Writer's Memo***

Write a memo to a specific reader, describing what you are giving them to read, what kind of feedback you're looking for and *why* (that is, what do you want the feedback to do to you/for you). Include any specific questions you have or particular things you want your reader to attend to.

## ***Coaching Letter to Self***

Write a letter to yourself advising yourself how best to respond to feedback that might not be easy to hear or that might not feel like what you need.

## ***Feedback Plan***

Think about the different people who might be willing to give you feedback and what kind of feedback they are best equipped to give.

Make a map of your thesis process that includes stops along the way for different kinds of feedback from these readers.

## ***Enemies and Advocates***

Make a poster that will help you hold in mind how a teacher, coach, or other mentor told or showed you their belief in or support of you.

Draw a mean picture of someone who injured your creative or scholarly self-worth (or maybe just tried to or almost did). Then scribble over that “monster,” tear it up, and throw it away.

# Want to talk about feedback?

To get feedback on your thesis or to talk about asking for and receiving feedback, connect to the Writing Center by emailing [one of us](#) or making an appointment on our [online scheduler](#).

If you'd like to arrange a small-group workshop or talk specifically about this presentation, please contact [Kristen Brookes](#).