



**OBTC 2015 at University of La Verne  
June 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

**Submission Template**

**SUBMISSION GUIDANCE**

- \* Remove all identifying properties from this document \**
- \* All files must be saved in PDF format \**
- \*Please include ALL supplementary text at the end of this document\**
- \*Only one document should be submitted\**

**Submission Template for the  
2015 OBTC Teaching Conference for Management Educators**

**1) Title of Proposal:**

Providing & Receiving Constructive Feedback: Educating Students

**2) Abstract:**

Students are often asked to provide constructive feedback (i.e., open-ended questions on course evaluations, instructors asking for feedback on course practices throughout the semester, peer feedback), yet do students ever receive guidance or training on how to provide constructive feedback? We may provide constructive feedback to students on course assignments, but do we thoroughly explain to students how to effectively make use of the feedback? This session provides tools to educate our students on effective constructive feedback through an in-class activity and includes a handout which can be used in your classroom.

### 3) Keywords:

*Providing and Receiving Constructive Feedback, Learning, Engagement, Student based*

### 4) Format

- Activity or exercise
- Discussion roundtable (60 minute only)
- General discussion session

Based on the guidance on the OBTS website, this proposal fits more in-line with the activity or exercise section. However, we could see how it could be included as a general discussion session as well.

### 5) Time Requested:

- 30 Minutes
- 60 Minutes (*Roundtables must select 60 minutes*)
- 90 Minutes

### 6) Planning Details:

*Does your session have any special requirements for space or materials?*

We need only a computer, projector, and screen. We could use our own laptop as well, if a hook up cord was provided for a PC.

### 7) Learning Objectives or Goals for the Session:

*What are 2-4 specific learning outcomes that participants will get from your session?*

- A.) Understanding students' limitations in providing feedback in the academic environment.
- B.) Having a tool and plan to help students understand the constructive feedback process.
- C.) Re-evaluating where student and peer feedback could be used across management courses.

## **8) Management or Teaching Topics:**

*Describe what management and/or teaching topics are relevant to your session, and why. Please include theoretical, disciplinary, or theoretical foundations that will help reviewers understand how your ideas fit within the broader field of management.*

The idea for this session emerged from a qualitative data set of 20 undergraduate student focus groups (across all disciplines) discussing the instructor-course evaluation process. While transcribing and reviewing the transcripts, the authors of this session noticed a theme of students' lack of understanding around how or why to complete the open-ended questions on evaluations. As instructors fear influencing the evaluations, it is possible that no one has ever explained to student how to provide feedback and what type of feedback is helpful/beneficial.

The discussion among authors led the first author to consider that he frequently asks students' to provide feedback to other students (peers) on a variety of course-related work across different courses. He explains to students the value of the feedback, but has never explained to students how to provide constructive feedback. Students gaining knowledge on how to provide constructive feedback could help across all management courses—especially on student/course evaluations and classes that use group or team project approaches. Ovando (1994), Shartel (2012), and Conti & Fellenz (1985) provide overviews of how to provide constructive feedback and how the feedback can enhance the learning environment.

The second author, currently working in an applied setting, is involved with 360-degree evaluations. She has noticed a similar deficiency in the workplace when newer or younger employees are asked to provide feedback to peers and managers. The organization provides training on the process as employees become managers, but the authors feel it may be beneficial for individuals to understand the constructive feedback process earlier in their careers.

Last, students receiving more constructive (or negative) feedback during their education may help them to more effectively manage similar feedback in the workplace. Most people do not like to hear what they are doing wrong, or could do better. Thurlings, Vermeulen, Bastiaens, and Stijnen's (2012) review of feedback to teachers highlight the complexity of the process of understanding and learning from feedback. Educating students regarding making sense of, accepting, and working on constructive feedback received, may help in college and the workplace.

Please see the included handout for a variety of theory and guidance associated with compiling, providing, and receiving constructive feedback.

## 9) Session Description and Plan:

*What will you actually do in this session? What activities will you facilitate, how long will they take, and how will participants be involved? Reviewers will be evaluating how well the time request matches the activities you'd like to do, and the extent you can reasonably accomplish the session's goals. Reviewers will also be looking for how you are engaging the participants in the session. Include a timeline for your session.*

2 minutes	Brief introduction of authors
10 minutes	Activity for participants Phase 1: Watch 30-second student presentation, then provide feedback. -In this phase, the participants are not provided any guidance. Phase 2: Explain the goal of the presentation, then provide feedback again. -Discuss the ability to understand the goals of the presenter.
5 minutes	Distribute and review constructive feedback handout. -Explain optional exercise in student pairs. Helps students to understand the process. See Handout 2.
5 minutes	Phase 3: After reviewing the handout, watch the video clip one last time then participants provide feedback again. -Discuss the ability to gain comfort with the process.
5 minutes	Discussion of value, use, and implementation in all management classes for student feedback and with course/instructor evaluation process.
3 minutes	Questions and general discussion – can be included in discussion above.
30 minutes	Total Estimated Time of Session

## 10) For Activities and Exercises:

*Attach any materials needed to run the activity and debriefing questions. Evidence for effectiveness may also be included.*

Included as an attachment is the handout distributed to students regarding how to provide and receive constructive feedback (Handout one).

Handout two (the optional exercise to conduct in student pairs) provides examples of situations where students need to generate written constructive feedback.

## **11) Implications for Teaching or for Teachers:**

*What is the contribution of your session?*

The short demonstration, student activity, and the constructive feedback handout (or even the constructive feedback handout on its own) provide a tool to help instructors educate students on how to provide constructive feedback. This is valuable to students in the classroom when they need to provide peer feedback to other students. In addition, it is helpful when instructors ask for informal feedback during the semester on aspects of the course as well as with the end of the semester formal course/instructor evaluation process. When a student receives constructive feedback, this information can be used to help the student improve. Last, with the growth of feedback and evaluation gathered at all levels in the workplace, students are then armed with tools to provide constructive feedback to other employees.

## **12) Application to Conference theme:**

How does your session fit with the overall OBTC theme of Learning in Community?

The proposed sessions fits with engaging students in an active learning community by creating an opportunity to help their peers learn and help the instructor improve the learning environment. By providing constructive feedback to other students, the student is both helping another student to improve in a course objective as well as learning him or herself through the process. In addition, the student being able to provide effective constructive feedback to the instructor helps the instructor make changes that may improve the classroom environment for learning.

## **13) Unique Contribution to OBTC:**

*Have you presented the work in this proposal before? If so, how will it be different? Is this proposal under current review somewhere else? If so, please explain. How will your proposal be different for the OBTC conference?*

This work has not been presented before at any conference. The authors generated the proposal specifically for the 2015 OBTC conference.

#### **14) References and/or Additional Materials:**

Conti, G.J., & Fellenz, R.A. (1985). Giving constructive feedback. From theory to practice. *Adult Literacy and Basic Education*, 9, 1.

Ovando, M.N. (1994), Constructive feedback, *International Journal of Educational Management*, 8, 6: 19 -22

Shartel, S.A. (2012). Giving feedback – An integral part of education. *Best Practice & Research Clinical Anaesthesiology*, 26, 77-87.

Thurlings, M., Vermeulen, M., Bastiaens, T., & Stijnen, S. (2013). Understanding feedback: A learning theory perspective. *Educational Research Review*, 9, 1-15.

# How to Provide

# FEEDBACK



## Constructive Feedback Checklist

- ☑ *State the constructive purpose of your feedback*
- ☑ *Describe specifically what you have observed- focus on behaviors!*
- ☑ *Describe your reactions and/or the effects*
- ☑ *Keep it short and concise*
- ☑ *Focus on the issue/ work, not the person*
- ☑ *If you are able, offer very clear and specific suggestions – avoid ambiguity*
- ☑ *Express your support and summarize clearly*

Giving feedback is not easy. These guidelines can help you to provide feedback in a way that is supportive, easily understood and can be acted upon...

**The receiver should be able to understand it...**

- Ensure the receiver **knows** you are going to give feedback
- Be **concise** and to the point
- Use specific examples and highlight observed **behavior**

**The receiver should be able to accept it...**

- Include **positive** messages
- **Describe**, but do not evaluate or judge
- If possible, ask **questions** that allow the receiver to respond

**The receiver should be able to do something with it...**

- Concentrate on things that can be **realistically** changed
- If possible, suggest **solutions** or alternatives
- Summarize clearly the message of your feedback

## REMEMBER

**Focus on BEHAVIORS!**

- Not skills
- Not personality
- Not generalities

*Not your perception or interpretation of the behaviors-- don't assume you know motives, attitudes, feelings, etc.*

## How to Receive Feedback

- Listen
- Ask questions for clarification
- Don't get defensive
- Ask for examples to understand
- Respond to the overall message, don't be distracted by details
- Don't argue
- Reflect
- Take suggestions to heart



# Examples of Feedback

✔ = Effective Feedback; ✘ = Ineffective Feedback

## ➤ State the constructive purpose of your feedback

- ✔ You mentioned that you are uncomfortable presenting in front of a group. Would you like me to share ideas on how you may gain comfort?
- ✘ You are obviously uncomfortable when you present in front of a group. I can tell you what will help, but I don't know if it will make any difference.

## ➤ Describe specifically what you have observed—focus on behaviors!

- ✔ I've noticed you have been late to our last two meetings. Can you please explain why?
- ✘ What is wrong with you that you can never get to meetings on time?

## ➤ Describe your reactions and/or the effects.

- ✔ When you don't provide your part of the project on time, I am frustrated as I'm unable to complete the entire project and deliver it to our manager.
- ✘ You just don't care if you get me the information on time.

## ➤ Keep it short and concise

- ✔ Interrupting others makes it difficult for all ideas to be shared.
- ✘ When you interrupt others while they are talking, you likely feel you are helping to make progress in the meeting. However, consider all of the negative short and long term effects your interruption may have. One, for example, is that it may be difficult for all ideas to be shared during the meeting.

## ➤ Focus on the issue/work, not the person

- ✔ I would appreciate you keeping the team informed about the status of the project.
- ✘ Your inability to send a simple email with a status update shows your continued laziness.

## ➤ Offer very clear and specific suggestions—avoid ambiguity

- ✔ The typographical errors that you're making on your reports is higher than your peers. To improve the effectiveness of the report, please thoroughly review the reports prior to submission.
- ✘ I have no idea what is going on in your report because of all the errors. Please drastically improve all future report submissions.

## ➤ Express your support and summarize clearly

- ✔ I heard in our last meeting that you are not interested in hearing all of the details. I understand your point, but I wonder if there might be another way to approach this so it is clear that you appreciate the work. You might try asking them specific questions about the information you are most interested in, as some details may be important.
- ✘ It's incredibly rude to tell people who have put together a presentation for you that you don't care about the details. Not only do I disagree with the disrespectful behavior, but I also feel we're missing out on key information that the presenters have now excluded from the presentation.

## Handout Two: Exercise for Providing Written Constructive Feedback

*Please separate the paper at the line below. Each member should keep one-half of this document.*

You are assigned to a team of four students for an eight-week long class project. During the first week, the team agrees on policies/expectations for all group members, lays out a timeline of major project milestones with due dates, and sets up bi-weekly meetings. The team agrees to use email as the main form of communication on the project and all members are included on all team correspondences/emails.

By the fifth week, one group member has never sent an email to the group, did not have their assignment complete (or even started) for the first meeting, and missed the second meeting without providing any notice to anyone else on the team. The three members of the team are not happy with this individual and it is beginning to make conversations associated with the project very tense. One team member called out this individual in the last team email by asking why she has not responded to the emails and the individual still did not reply. As you want (1) to try to correct this situation before it gets any worse and (2) to practice providing constructive feedback as you plan to be a manager one day, you decide to set up a meeting with the individual to have a discussion. Write down the major points of what your plan to say to this individual with aspirations of improving the situation for all team members.

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You are an employee in a work group who is providing written constructive feedback associated with the annual performance of another employee in your work group at your same level. Annual peer reviews are a common practice in your company. You two report to the same manager and she has not had any issues with this employee previously and the employee has always provided you complete and timely work. You noticed this employee is very detail-oriented and rarely makes mistakes or oversights in his completed work. You also notice that this employees is very combative with other group members, both in conversations and through email. The employee is consistently pushing back (or maybe even refusing) requests from yourself and other group members.

Other group members and you have complained to your manager that this employee is not providing information on time and is not sending all the information needed. When you ask for additional information, you do not receive a response. As a result, other members of the group and you are sending incomplete or late reports out to others internally and externally. A few months ago, your manager shared that she spoke to the employee and he was going to change his behavior. You have not noticed any positive change in behavior. Write down the major points of what you would include on the peer review.