



## Helping Students Learn How to Give Constructive Feedback

### Why inform students about the importance of Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET)?

Telling your students how you use your SET results, and how to give you constructive feedback can improve the usefulness of SET to your growth in teaching.

### Improve the value of your results

Students often suspect that input on the SET is not used, and this results in lower response rates. Letting your students know that their feedback matters can increase your response rates and give you results that are more accurate.

### Improve student engagement and learning:

Letting your students know how you use evaluations, can help build rapport. Explaining the sorts of responses that are helpful to you, and why gives them a better understanding of your learning goals and teaching methods. Students tend to give feedback that is more useful when they understand how your teaching methods connect to your learning goals.

### Talking Points to Use with Students

Reassure students that Online SET is set up to protect their confidentiality.

- When students sign in with their Access ID and password to access their online survey, their names are removed from their responses to the evaluations.
- Instructors do not see any SET results until after final grades are posted. Written comments are provided to faculty as students wrote them.
- Instructors can see response rates while the course evaluation window is open, but no results.
- For students to receive credit for completing a course evaluation, they can print out the page, which pops up to give them confirmation upon completion of their online survey.

*Talking to students can boost response rates and help improve the usefulness of the results.*

## Talk to students about how course evaluations are used and by whom

### Instructors use SET to improve courses and teaching

- Explain to students how you use SET to make changes in your class. Provide examples about specific changes you have made to your class, such as an assignment, reading, or activity, because of SET input.
- Courses and curriculum are always changing. Student feedback is essential to helping these changes improve student learning outcomes.

### Tips about talking to students

- Let students know your reasons and goals when there are things that you cannot or prefer not to change in a class.
- Let them know that you may not be able to make a class perfect for each individual student. We all have different preferred learning styles.

*Provide students with examples of changes that you have made because of SET input.*

### Department usage of the SET

- Department chairs typically use course evaluation results as part of the yearly review process and they watch for patterns in course evaluations over time.
- Departments want to know what the student experience is like in their courses and in the curriculum overall.
- Departments use information gained in the SET to adapt and change the curriculum.
- Departments do not have access to comments. That is for students to have a direct conversation with the instructor.

### Help students learn to recognize and give constructive criticism

- Talk to them about how constructive feedback will be used to help you focus your efforts on improving the course.
- Describe the types of comments, which you find most useful.
- Provide examples of useful, specific comments from previous evaluations.

Adapted from Carney, E. (2015). *Preparing Students to Take Course Evaluations – Tips for Faculty*.