

USING FEEDBACK: IEF, ICES, AND OBSERVATIONS OF YOUR TEACHING

Suggested Timeline for Feedback

<i>Informal Early Feedback (IEF)*</i>	Acquire, adapt, develop IEF form	Administer IEF, calculate means and summarize comments; Arrange a consultation with CITL or faculty	Promptly debrief with your class												
<i>Classroom Observation*</i>		Arrange for classroom observation	Classroom observation by CITL staff or a faculty member; Arrange a consultation with observer.												
<i>Consultation*</i>			Consult with CITL or faculty on IEF and/or observation results												
<i>Formal Evaluation (ICES)*</i>			Request ICES (some depts order for TAs, so check with secretary)	Administer ICES											
<i>Your Response</i>	Adjust teaching based on feedback results														
<i>Week</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15

***These are required for some CITL Teaching Certificates and by some departments.**

These methods of acquiring and using student feedback are part of “best practice” and all TAs are encouraged to follow these steps. It is very important for you to explain the importance of student feedback to your students so that they take the process seriously.

Observations can be arranged by contacting Lucas Anderson lander23@illinois.edu

CITL WEBSITE
<http://citl.illinois.edu/>

GUIDE FOR USING INFORMAL EARLY FEEDBACK (IEF)

1. Allow approximately 10 minutes of class time, preferably at the onset of class.
2. Tell the students the purpose of the questionnaire:
 - a. All professors receive feedback at the end of the semester. However, you may wish to receive feedback by mid-semester so that you can assess how you are doing in the classroom.
 - b. By receiving their feedback early there may be ways in which you can affect changes that will be beneficial to them.
3. Assure them of anonymity—tell students not to sign their names. If they have concerns about their handwriting, suggest that they print. If someone acts clearly concerned, tell them to answer only the scaled items. Minimize this dialogue as much as possible.
4. Remind them of the things over which you have control. Ask them to address these components of the class.
5. Encourage them to take time in answering the open-ended questions; some of the best feedback comes from these answers. If they have trouble beginning this part, tell them to use the rated items for ideas.
6. Thank them for their help. As they complete the forms, remain present in an unthreatening place. Have them place the completed forms face down on a nearby desk. When they are done, place the forms in a folder or envelope and begin class.
7. Do not look at the forms until you are alone and somewhere other than in the classroom.
8. Have all your classes complete the forms. Comparisons can be insightful as well as helpful.
9. Do the math! Calculate a mean for each of the rated questions. Get a frequency count for the most salient open-ended comments.
10. At the next class meeting, tell the students that you read the forms and THANK them for their help. Select one or two areas/items that you can discuss with them in a positive manner. If you feel you may become defensive and not able to objectively discuss the results, you are best advised not to discuss them at all.
11. More information about IEF can be found on the CITL website.

* What is implicit here is that this is a first step in engaging your students in dialogue.

Sample Informal Early Feedback Form

Fall 2012 M&E 199

Give brief directions and purpose.

Provide basic info on the form so you can track the course over time.

Please provide feedback that will allow me to determine how the course is going so far and also make changes to improve your learning experience. No names please. Thank you.

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| 1. Homework has increased my understanding of course concepts? | Never 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Always |
| 2. Weekly quizzes help me keep up with the material? | Nope 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Absolutely |
| 3. How well is your team functioning so far? | Poorly 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Very Well |
| 4. The pace of the course is... | Too Fast 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Too Slow |
| 5. In---class small group work helps me learn? | Never 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Usually |
| 6. How well do you understand the concept of validity? | Not Well 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Very Well |
| 7. How well do you understand the concept of reliability? | Not Well 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Very Well |

8. What is the **best part** of the class so far?

Find out what is working and what isn't working. What should you keep doing and what should you stop doing?

Ask 1-3 items about course content and learning. What major concepts should students know by now?

Ask 2-6 rated items about aspects of the course you might change. Think about the most important things you want feedback on (or suspect could use some help).

9. What is the **least useful** part of the course so far?

Give them a chance to comment on anything, but lead them toward constructive criticism. After all, this is for improvement.

10. What would you **change** to make the course even better?

Give plenty of room for their answers. The form is meant to be completed by students, not you.

Thank them again! They are helping you. Really, they are.

Thank you for your comments

SAMPLE INFORMAL EARLY FEEDBACK SUMMARY SHEET

After administering the informal early feedback form, calculate a mean for each of the rated questions and a frequency count for the most salient open-ended comments. Bring this summary to your IEF consultation meeting with CITL or a faculty member.

Please circle the number on the scale which best represents your perceptions:								MEAN	
1.	The instructor is well-prepared for each class.	Yes, always	5	4	3	2	1	No, never	3.9
2.	How would you characterize the instructor's ability to explain?	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Poor	3.4
3.	Did the instructor make good use of examples and illustrations?	Almost always	5	4	3	2	1	No, never	3.5
4.	The instructor encouraged your participation in class.	Yes, always	5	4	3	2	1	No, never	3.2
5.	The grading was fair.	Yes, always	5	4	3	2	1	No, never	4.2
6.	The instructor is easily approachable when students have class related questions.	Yes, always	5	4	3	2	1	No, never	3.2
7.	Overall, how would you rate the instructor?	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Poor	3.5
8.	Please rate yourself: I am working up to my potential in this course.	Yes	5	4	3	2	1	No	3.2

Comments

A. What do you like best about this section?

- Good textbook 4
- Quizzes helpful 5
- Grading is fair 4
- Class is at 10:00 2

B. What are the major strengths and weaknesses of the instructor?

- Knowledgeable 4
- Nice during office hours, took time to listen 3
- Writes helpful comments on assignments 1
- Energetic, is really trying 1
- Uses examples from recent research 1
- Everything seems to run together, so it's hard to follow 4
- Hard to tell what is important 2
- Too brilliant and too technical when answering questions, gets excited when he talks about the technical stuff, but seems bored the rest of the time 1
- Examples don't make much sense 3
- Explanations not always clear, assumes we are following when in reality, I am often lost 1
- Tries to cover too much in each class, seems eager to rush to next point 4
- Hard to interrupt to ask questions 2

C. What changes would you suggest to enhance this section?

- Maybe an outline 5
- More class involvement 3
- Less material 7
- Get a better textbook 3
- More examples 4

INSTRUCTOR AND COURSE EVALUATION SYSTEM (ICES)

The following information is from <http://CTE.illinois.edu/teacheval/ices/main.html>. You should plan to visit this site for needed information about the ICES end-of-course evaluation process.

ICES. The Instructor & Course Evaluation System (ICES) is used across campus as the official instructor and course evaluation for faculty and teaching assistants. The ICES results are often utilized for course improvement, promotion & tenure review, teaching award decisions, and student registration assistance (via our "Teachers Ranked as Excellent by Their Students" list). ICES results are only one indicator of teaching effectiveness and should be used in conjunction with other measures of teaching quality such as student learning outcomes, observations, document analysis, and self-review.

Ordering ICES Forms. Currently, there are several ways to order forms (details on website).

1. Individually: A red request form should be sent to you each semester for each class section you teach, or you can ask for them in your departmental office or come to Measurement and Evaluation (M & E) in 247 Armory. Submit completed request to M & E.
2. Ordering through the department: Some department secretaries order ICES for all TAs in the department.
3. Some departments are participating in a pilot of ICES On-Line. These departments will provide TAs with information on how this works.

The List of Teachers Ranked as Excellent by their Students. This list recognizes teaching assistants whose students give them an aggregate rating which exceeds the absolute cutoff on Item 1—Instructor's Overall Teaching Effectiveness (Cutoffs for course categories are Required—4.3; Mixed—4.4; Elective—4.5). The list is published in the *Daily Illini*.