



Constructive Feedback

Receiving and Giving Text Feedback

Get feedback on content and structure first, then on language aspects. The reason is that proofreading your text too soon is like sanding pieces of wood before you know which pieces you need to build the table (L. L. Clark).

Receiving Feedback

To get helpful feedback, discuss the following points with the person you are asking for feedback:

- What exactly do you want to get feedback on? Clearly formulate your request (see checklist "Text feedback") (cf. Frank et al. pp. 98-99).
- Take some workload off the person giving the feedback by not asking for feedback on all the text levels listed in the checklist (1 - 8) at the same time, but by setting a focus for the feedback (cf. *ibid.*).
- The person should concentrate on this focus when reading your text (cf. *ibid.*).

Adopt the Following Inner Attitude:

- First listen, do not justify. Only ask as to clarify something (cf. Frank et al. p. 101).
- Accept feedback and take notes (cf. Frank et al. p. 100).
- Adopt the following inner attitude:
 - "Thank you, I will think about it." (*ibid.*)
 - I am not stupid; it is just that the text is not yet fully developed (cf. *ibid.*).
 - The role of the person giving feedback is to support me in developing the text and improving it (cf. *ibid.*).

When giving feedback on linguistic aspects such as sentence structure, it helps to observe yourself while reading: Where do I stumble? Which sentences do I have to read several times before I understand them?

Giving Feedback

To give friendly, approving, and encouraging feedback, pay attention to the following points:

- Be sensitive.
- Consciously notice and mention positive things first (Frank et al. p. 101), e.g. pointing out what has been well done.
- Formulate the feedback subjectively from the point of view of an interested reader (cf. *ibid.*):
 - I noticed...
 - I did not quite understand...
 - To me, it seems like you wanted to say... at this point, but it is not quite clear to me.
 - At this point I could not follow as a reader:
 - I would suggest the following...
- When giving feedback, imagine how the other person takes the feedback.
- Address specific aspects of the text (Frank et al., p. 101).
- Wait until the person receiving feedback has found the section of the text that you are talking about.

You do not always need to suggest changes to the text. Describing difficulties in understanding or confusion is often already very helpful (cf. Frank et al. p. 100).

Source: Frank, Andrea, et al. Schlüsselkompetenzen: Schreiben in Studium und Beruf. 2nd ed., J.B. Metzler, 2013.

Compilation: Writing Center of TU Dresden, 2020.

Revision: Sharon Király, typesetting, accessibility and translation: Leonie Reuter, 2022.

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