

# Capstone feedback

## Objective/Purpose/Goal

The goals of this activity are to:

- Get feedback from students on their key learnings and their perspectives of the course, its content and delivery, and suggestions on how it could be improved
- Help students to identify and articulate the knowledge and skills they have developed in this course
- Link student development and learning to future employment opportunities

## Background

**Feedback on the course:** For course feedback to be valuable, it needs to be clear, practical and implementable (whether you choose to action or not). To ensure we get the most out of student feedback and increase the 'usability' of the feedback we need to encourage students to reflect on their own experience of the course, but also clarify and moderate it with their peers. Using a model to encourage this reflection reduces the likelihood of unsubstantiated and unhelpful comments such as: *"it was OK or Things could be explained better"*.

**Student learning and articulation of their experience:** Research around the employability of our graduates has found that they have difficulty in articulating their learning experiences and making links between what they do to a 'learning environment' and a future workplace. A way to help students articulate their experience is to give them the opportunity to analyse and discuss the skills and knowledge they have developed or enhanced.

## Overview

This activity is done in two stages:

- Step One: Students take time to reflect and answer the focus questions (Capstone Feedback Handout) on their own. Working on their own is an effective way for students to reflect initially on their own experience.

Then

- Step Two: They form groups to discuss their responses and produce a 'group' response to the questions. Working as a group provides an opportunity for the individual responses to be clarified, moderated and validated.

## Group size

Any size

## Materials/resources

- Handout: **Capstone Feedback Questions**
- A3 or butchers paper to capture group feedback

## Physical setting

It is best if students can work in a group setting but if you are in a more formal lecture style environment, student can work with those immediately round them.

## Approximate time required

1 hour

## Suggested instructions

1. In your final class set aside an hour – suggest this occurs in the first part of the session as it will help students to focus.
2. Introduce the idea that you want them to reflect on: what they have covered in the course and how what they have learned could be applied. Also to get their feedback on what works and what could be improved in the course.
3. Ask students to complete the Capstone Feedback handout individually (about 5 minutes) – encourage them to look through their notes, think about the assessments. (The idea is to get a holistic view of the course rather than just feedback on just the last couple of weeks.)
4. Ask students to discuss their responses in small groups (4-6) – get them to document the group's responses to the questions – this can be collected at the end of the session.
5. Open the session up to the whole group – suggest getting one/two ideas from each group on each question. This is an opportunity to clarify and discuss the students' experience and to help them to understand how what is covered in the course can link to their future directions. *Eg why do all this group work? You can help make the links for them that it helps them to gain experience working with different people/ sometimes challenging situations/ scheduling work etc.*
6. Collect the written group responses – this will give you food for thought both for the delivery of your course and also for ways that you can help your student make links and articulate their learning

## Variations/alternative

- If you have limited time, you could simply ask students to reflect individually, complete the handout and hand it in – no names unless they want to.

- You could discuss questions 1 – 3 on student learning in class and the reflections on the course content and delivery you could look at after class – this would be an option if time was limited/you wanted to focus on reflecting on the students learning
- This activity can also be done earlier than the final class, for instance to refocus students after the mid semester break and to give you some feedback that you could use in the rest of the course– I'd leave out question 3
- Flipped option – ask the student to complete the Capstone Feedback Handout prior to class and then you can use the class time for group discussion.

### **Tips**

- You could give students the option of putting their name on the group feedback – you could then follow up on issues if necessary.
- Don't argue with feedback on the course, you asked for an opinion – but feel free to clarify/explain if required
- In responding to the feedback don't make any promises – this is food for thought

### **Sources**

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## Handout: Feedback questions

Take a moment to think about this course and ask yourself:

1. What I have **learnt** (formally/informally)? Or had reinforced?
2. What skills have I developed or improved?
3. How can this knowledge and skills be used for my future employment?

Now, think about the **content and conduct** of the course:

1. What worked well? What should we do again next time?
2. What suggestions do you have to improve the course the next time it is run? What changes should we make?
3. Anything else you would like to add about the course?