APSU Writing Center

Understanding Feedback on Your Academic Writing

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- As a university student, seeking feedback from professors, peers, and writing center tutors is essential for improving your academic writing. When you enter the professional world, you'll also encounter feedback regularly. Developing the ability to interpret and apply feedback now will sharpen your writing skills and critical thinking abilities. Remember, feedback is not an indicator of failure—it's a tool to help you grow as a writer!

Why Is It Important to Ask for Feedback?

- Asking for feedback means you're no longer working in isolation. It helps you clarify uncertainties, refine your arguments, and strengthen your overall writing. The APSU Writing Center staff encourages students to seek feedback whenever they need guidance, as it promotes continuous growth and improvement as a writer.

When Is a Good Time to Ask for Help?

- There's no wrong time to ask for help in your writing process. Whether you're brainstorming ideas or polishing a final draft, feedback is valuable at every stage. Here are some typical questions that might prompt you to seek feedback:
  - Do I understand the assignment correctly?
  - I have an idea for my topic, but how do I get it on paper?
  - Does my argument or paper make sense?
  - Are my transitions smooth, or should I reorganize my content?
  - Is my writing effective and clear?
  - Does my work meet the requirements of the assignment?
  - Is there a better way to structure this information?

Types of Feedback

- **Your Own Feedback:**
  - One of the most powerful tools is self-assessment. Step away from your paper for a few hours or days and return with fresh eyes. This break allows you to spot potential organization issues, transition problems, or grammatical errors that you might have missed.

- **Feedback from Friends or Family:**
  - Friends or family members, even those not familiar with your subject, can offer valuable insights. They can help you assess the clarity of your ideas and provide feedback on flow and structure. This process allows you to discuss your ideas out loud, which can clarify your thinking.

- **Writing Center Peer Tutor Feedback:**
  - Writing tutors are trained to help you at any stage of your writing process. They can assist with everything from brainstorming and organizing to identifying patterns in grammar or style that need improvement. Their experience with various writing assignments can give you a broader perspective on how to approach your work.

- **Professor Feedback:**
  - Your professor is one of the most valuable sources of feedback because they created the assignment. They can help clarify any confusion about expectations, formatting, or content. Professors also have insights into what makes a successful paper in your specific course or discipline.

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Key Reminders About Feedback
- Your writing ability is not defined by a few comments. Feedback is meant to help, not to criticize your abilities.
- Don't hesitate to ask for help from a writing tutor or professor. Seeking support is a sign of strength, not weakness.
- The paper you submit will always be your own. It's your job to take the feedback and decide what changes align with your vision and goals.
- Reflect on the feedback carefully and think critically about what advice will improve your writing. You don't have to make every suggested change, but thoughtful revision is key.

References

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