

HELP STUDENTS TO LEARN FROM FEEDBACK

We learn a great deal from the comments we get from other people about things we do and things we try. Bring this natural way of learning into your training events.

- 1 Remind participants how much we all learn from other people's comments. Ask them to think of something about themselves they feel good about, then to jot down a few words about how they know they feel good about this. Their answers will often involve 'other people's comments or reactions' - in other words, feedback.
- 2 Help people accept positive feedback. Encourage participants to accept compliments. Advise them that it is unproductive to modestly 'shrug off praise'; it is better to accept it and swell with pride! This way, people are encouraged to continue to give positive feedback, rather than being embarrassed at having their comments rejected.
- 3 Help participants accept negative feedback too. Advise that there is no such thing as criticism - it should all be regarded as feedback! Explain the benefits of listening until as much as possible has been learned from constructive feedback, rather than going on the defensive and stemming the feedback, missing what could have been learned.
- 4 Provide participants with opportunities to give each other feedback. Getting people to work in pairs or in groups helps to allow participants to discuss each other's ideas, and helps to develop confidence in giving feedback.
- 5 Give 'expert witness' feedback when appropriate. Participants will wish to have your views on important issues, as you are the facilitator of the training event. But be careful that they don't regard you as an authority on everything!
- 6 Gather feedback yourself from participants. Lead by example - show participants how you can be receptive to their feedback, and accept it, whether positive or negative.
- 7 Persuade participants to actively seek feedback. Help them to become better at asking leading questions so that other people will give them reactions and comments about their performance or achievements.
- 8 Help participants to use non-verbal feedback. Alert them to the value of facial expressions and body-language as means of gathering feedback. Also don't forget to use these sources of feedback yourself as you facilitate their learning.
- 9 Build feedback sessions into your training events. These can be sessions where participants not only tell you how they think the sessions are going but, more importantly, tell you how they are feeling about the training event, the topics and themselves.
- 10 Make it all right to have 'feelings'. Often we have feelings about things which we have not yet rationalized, but the feelings are every bit as real as our logical thoughts. Encourage participants to share their feelings and to make their feelings known. 'How do you feel about this?' is a very useful discussion-starter!

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