

Receiving Students' Feedback on the Course During the Semester

Educational Situation:

The course professor assigns essay assignments about the course, and he notices that the students are not performing it properly despite his continuous explanation. When he asked for students' opinions and feedback on the course and its assignments, he discovered that the students would have preferred if he had presented some examples and models of essay assignments to help them learn better. The idea was simple and possible, but it had not occurred to the professor. The question is: Why didn't the professor realize this earlier? And what prevented him from knowing the students' feedback and benefiting from it during the semester?

The Issue:

This issue arises from the professor's preoccupation with teaching and not paying enough attention to listening to students or asking for their feedback and suggestions during the semester. Most professors postpone listening to students and taking their opinions until the end of the semester, when it is no longer possible to benefit from their feedback on the course.

The other side is that students sometimes feel embarrassed or afraid to make suggestions to the professor or share their feedback about the course or assignments. Additionally, when some professors ask the students, they request personal information, which prevents students from expressing themselves freely. Another part of the issue is that some professors may collect student feedback every semester but fail to utilize it to make changes and adjustments to the course, leaving them with useless feedback.

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Teaching Practice: Receiving Students' Feedback During the Semester

To overcome this issue, the course professor should ask students for their feedback on the course during the semester. Moreover, if collecting students' feedback and opinions is very important, it becomes even more crucial in online learning due to the lack of face-to-face interaction with students. Additionally, collecting their feedback in the middle of the semester is important because it provides an opportunity for making changes.

It is important for the professor to clarify to students the significance of their feedback and opinions in improving the course and its materials. Their feedback can be considered in terms of course design, adding new elements, and the effectiveness and impact of assignments. Collecting students' feedback is also important for identifying whether some students need assistance or clarification in explanations, assignments, or adding specific instructions, extra lessons, or other support. Sometimes, the professor may have certain expectations about the students without asking them, and the survey can help uncover such misconceptions.

Another important point is that when students are asked for their opinions and changes are made to the course based on their feedback, this will improve their attitude, feelings, and point of view toward the course.

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Implementation Procedures:

The following steps can be used to implement this practice:

1. Planning to gather students' opinions and feedback at an early and appropriate time during the semester (e.g., weeks 4-6).
2. Designing a short online survey, taking into consideration the following suggestions and recommendations:
 - a- Do not ask for the student's name or information, so that he can express freely.
 - b- The survey may include multiple-choice questions and open-ended questions for variety.
 - c- The evaluation should cover all elements: assignments (including their quality, frequency, evaluation methods, etc.), activities, course structure, course references, teaching methods, assessment methods, and so on, and it should ask the student to justify the reasons for his critique.
 - d- Asking students about the positive aspects they liked or benefited from in the course, as well as about the weaknesses that need improvement and attention in their view.
3. Talk to the students at the lecture about the survey and its purpose and encourage them to participate in it.

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4. Thank the students for their participation and inform them of the survey results and discuss it with them.
5. When you collect the survey information, add any notes, comments, or responses you received from students about the course, its elements, and the method of teaching it during lectures or via mail.
6. The same survey can be repeated at the end of the semester to ensure whether the variables have improved or not.
7. It is important for the professor to change his performance and course based on the results of the survey to benefit and make the students feel its importance.
8. There are several ways to use electronic surveys, such as: Blackboard, Google Form, Microsoft Form, etc.

Resources:

The lecture: Using Mid-Semester Student Feedback to Improve Your Course, on the link

<http://www.lehman.edu/online/teaching-learning-webinar-series/mid-semester-surveys.php>

Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching – Promising Faculty Ambassadors program (first session) 1441 AH

Supervision and Review Team: Preparation: Dr. Nouf Alhuzami Review: Prof. Reem Alebaikan – Dr. Khawla Addoweesh