"Well-constructed course evaluations can help improve teaching and learning experiences in the classroom."

"I remain hopeful that meaningful student evaluations ... can continue to occur in an environment of trust, accountability, and good will."

Katharine Lyall, President
University of Wisconsin System
Spring, 1994

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The goal of the evaluation process is to assist College of Engineering Teaching Assistants in becoming better teachers in order to improve undergraduate education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

This Handbook focuses on the use of feedback and evaluation forms to develop information about your teaching skills and style. It also provides a Resource Guide that should assist in your development and continuous improvement as a teacher.

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Introduction

This Handbook creates a framework to help you to continuously improve your teaching skills and style. The framework revolves around two components: a feedback system based upon evaluation forms, and a resource guide to help you improve. The forms in this Handbook are unique in that they have been designed for TAs by TAs. They are presented in three components: early fast-feedback, mid-semester evaluations, and end-of-semester evaluations. Since all TAs do not perform the same function, the forms and questions have been designed to address three main TA categories: lecture, discussion, and lab. The forms are designed to help you discover areas where you excel and areas where you could use some improvement.

Just as important as student feedback is how you use this information to improve. The Resource Guide suggests specific resources available to aid in your improvement. The Guide also steers you to appropriate workshops held at the beginning of each semester as part of the College of Engineering Teaching Improvement Program.

Please recognize that evaluation and feedback forms are only part of an overall continuous teaching improvement process. Other methods for obtaining useful feedback to improve your teaching include, but are not limited to: soliciting verbal feedback from your students, having your lecture videotaped, or arranging peer or supervisor class observation. These and other methods are briefly summarized in the Handbook, but the focus will be on the evaluation forms and resources to help you improve.

***

For those of you familiar with the Plan, Do, Check, Act cycle and other quality improvement principles, you will notice the framework described above reflects this same cycle:

**PLAN**: As a teaching assistant, you prepare classroom instruction.

**DO**: You teach the class or lead the discussion or lab.

**CHECK**: You evaluate your own performance. The evaluation process outlined in this Handbook can be used to accomplish this step. During the "Check" phase, you'll discover things you do effectively, as well as opportunities for improvement.

**ACT**: To complete the cycle, you need to determine how to use the feedback and what steps you need to take to improve the teaching and learning associated with your class. The Resource Guide suggests books, articles, videotapes of past workshops, and future workshops.

At this point the process starts over. The concept is continuous improvement. As TA Fellows, we encourage you and all faculty to adopt a continuous improvement philosophy toward teaching. Note that once you have asked the students: "How can I improve?" they will expect you to improve, just as you expect them to learn.

In the spirit of continuous improvement and the environment of trust, accountability, and goodwill, the College of Engineering TA Fellows believe the following framework of feedback forms and corresponding resources will help TAs continuously improve undergraduate education in the College.
The schematic above outlines the various aspects of an evaluation process. After your initial appointment and training for new TAs, the process begins and is divided into three evaluation steps: fast feedback, mid-semester evaluations, and end of semester evaluation. Improvement can enter the process at any point. Note that the loop is closed, as teaching improvement is a continuous process.
Evaluation and Improvement Process Overview

Fast Feedback

Several types of fast feedback exist, ranging from informal conversation with students to the use of fast feedback forms. Some forms are designed to be used on the first day of class, others are designed to be used after a few weeks of class, or at various times throughout the semester. The use of fast feedback forms is quite flexible. With fast feedback, you can familiarize yourself with your class and their expectations, and you can identify and correct simple problems in areas such as style, presentation, or facilities.

*Fast Feedback examples begin on page 11.*

Mid-Semester Evaluations

Mid-semester is an ideal time to obtain feedback from your class to help you improve. At this point in the semester, students in your class or lab have been exposed to homework, exams, labs, projects, and your grading, and may have useful feedback on your teaching in these contexts. The objective is to attempt a mid-semester correction that leads to high final quality performance indicated by the end-of-semester evaluations.

*Classroom observation and TA evaluation by course supervisors is now required by the College of Engineering for all new TAs (first and second semester) by the seventh week.* A sample mid-semester evaluation form is provided in this Handbook that you can provide to your course supervisor for this purpose. Even if you are not a new TA or if your department does not require it, you may wish to implement this step. Since all TAs are required by COE to be evaluated by their supervisor at the end of the semester, it is important that all TA's be observed in a teaching situation at some point during the semester in order for the supervisor to assess teaching performance appropriately.

*Mid-semester evaluation examples begin on page 21.*

End-of-Semester Evaluations

The end-of-the semester evaluation is generally not as flexible as the previous two steps. Most departments require the use of a particular, standardized end-of-semester student evaluation form.

The purpose of this evaluation is two-fold: (1) to obtain an overview of your strengths and weaknesses throughout the semester so you may improve next semester, and (2) to provide a formal performance assessment so your department can both ensure high teaching standards, and in some cases, determine whether to reappoint you.

A standardization of the forms is necessary for fair TA assessment. The TA Fellows have spent considerable time developing an end-of-semester form specifically for TAs that combines the best aspects of the existing forms. *Teaching* evaluations have been separated from *course* evaluations, and distinction is made between laboratory and lecture/discussion environments. The Academic Planning Council will review the TA Fellows' recommended forms in the Fall of 1994.

*End-of-semester evaluation examples begin on page 31.*
Comments on the use of this Handbook

- There isn't one "right" set of evaluation forms for everyone
  
  The forms presented in this Handbook should be used as a guide. They were selected or developed by the TA Fellows as good examples.

- The fast feedback and mid-semester forms are used for TA improvement
  
  The fast feedback and mid-semester forms are designed solely for use by TAs for self-improvement. The forms in this Handbook can be copied and used directly, or they can be used as a guide in the design of your own verbal or written questionnaires.

- The end-of-semester evaluations are for both TA improvement and performance assessment
  
  All departments in the College of Engineering require the use of a standardized end-of-semester student evaluation form. The recommended questionnaires presented in this Handbook were carefully developed by the TA Fellows as an improvement on the end-of-semester forms currently being used in the College. Depending on your department, these end-of-semester forms may be quantitatively analyzed. The questions have been designed or selected to highlight TA strengths and areas where improvement is needed. Check with your department as to what form to use.

- The Resource Guide is a valuable tool for teaching improvement
  
  Understanding your strengths as a TA and where you need improvement is only part of the overall evaluation and improvement process. You must ACT on this information in order to become a better teacher. In some cases, avenues for improvement may be obvious, for example, writing more clearly on the board. In other cases, you may be unsure of how to act on information in your evaluations. The Resource Guide included in this Handbook provides a beginning list of references, videotapes, and workshops aimed at teaching improvement.

- Teaching improvement is a continuous process
  
  Most TAs receive minimal formal teaching training prior to their first assignment. As a result, you must be self-motivated in order to improve your skills and to become a better teacher. This Handbook is designed to facilitate this process. Since your teaching style will probably undergo significant changes during your first few semesters of teaching, formal feedback and evaluation can be an extremely useful tool.

- Respect for students is an underlying principle
  
  Respect for individual students is central to the beliefs and values on which the teaching improvement framework rests.
Advice for effective use of evaluations

- Give the evaluation forms out at the beginning of class
  Giving the forms at the end of the lecture is an invitation for the students to rush through the form so they can leave sooner. Reserving time at the beginning of a class for evaluations shows that you are serious about receiving feedback and can lead to increased participation.

- Clearly state the purpose of the form
  Honestly explaining exactly what the evaluation form will be used for and who sees it can lead students to provide the most useful information. For example, it might be useful to explain when a form will be seen only by the TA versus when the form will be analyzed by faculty or the department administration.

- Read the instructions aloud to your class
  Quality of the feedback is ensured only if students fully understand the form. For example, you should clearly explain the "grading" scale on any form that has one. A score of "1" may mean "excellent" on one type of form while it may mean "needs much improvement" on another. While the forms in this Handbook should be consistent in this respect, you must remember that students fill out forms for different departments and colleges all over campus.

- Review important comments from previous forms with the class
  If a noteworthy point or issue is raised on a particular in-semester form, it may be helpful to specifically raise the issue during a subsequent class. This will show the students that you read the forms and that you are prepared to act on the information in them, or at least comment on the particular issue.

- Develop alternative questions and comments
  You are strongly encouraged to develop your own evaluation forms to suit your needs and teaching style. Appendix II to this Handbook contains a list of alternative questions and comments that you might find useful in developing your own types of feedback or evaluation.
Fast Feedback Forms

Fast feedback is intended to provide some objective information about your class and to identify areas for improvement in a quick and efficient manner. Fast feedback should only take a few minutes of class time.

Two types of forms are presented in this section:

Fast Early Feedback

The purpose of fast early feedback is to develop some objective, structural information about the class (such as schedules) and to determine student expectations for the class and TA. Note that this should coincide with a statement of your expectations for the class, which can be presented in a well-designed syllabus.

Forms for Discussion/Lecture TAs and Lab TAs are presented here. These forms are generally handed out on the first day of class and are relatively self-explanatory.

Fast Feedback

The fast feedback forms are generally used some time after the first homework is returned, although some TAs and faculty choose to use these "quick answer" forms throughout the semester. With this form, you find out how well the students understand the format, structure and grading requirements for the course. In addition, the feedback gives you an early indication of topics such as the clarity of your speaking and handwriting.

Two fast feedback options are presented here. The different forms reflect different possible teaching philosophies you may have. Option A is designed to be filled out very quickly, so it does not formally ask for written comments. If students want to write comments you could have them return them to your mailbox at their convenience. Option B takes a different approach by asking only for written comments by students.

You should decide which one is more suitable to your style of teaching, or use these as a guide to design your own forms or verbal questionnaires.
Course/Section____________  TA______________  Date___________

Name: _____________________________________________

Major/Classification: __________________________________

Email: ___________________________ Phone: ___________________________

Best time to reach you by phone: ___________________________________

Schedule (please indicate schedule by blocking out occupied time slots):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:45</td>
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<td>8:50</td>
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<td>4:35</td>
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<td>5:40</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

List the prerequisites you have had relevant to this course.

List the courses you are taking concurrently with this course.

Describe your personal expectations with regard to this course.

What do you expect of your TA in this course?
Course/Section ____________  TA _______________  Date __________

Name: _______________________________________________________

Major/Classification: _____________________________________________

Email: ___________________________  Phone: ________________________

Best time to reach you by phone: ______

Schedule (please indicate schedule by blocking out occupied time slots):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7:50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

List the prerequisites you have had relevant to this lab.

List the courses you are taking concurrently with this lab.

Describe your personal expectations with regard to this lab.

What do you expect of your TA in this lab?

Have you had a course in First-Aid procedures?  Yes  No  CPR? Yes  No

Are you experienced with any laboratory equipment potentially relevant to this lab?
Fast Feedback (Option A)
Discussion/Lecture/Laboratory

Course/Section____________  TA__________________  Date____________

This form is read only by your TA.

Do I speak audibly and clearly?  
(Yes)                     (No)                     
5---------4---------3---------2---------1

Can you read my writing?  
(Yes)                     (No)                     
5---------4---------3---------2---------1

Are the course syllabus and reading assignments clear?  
(Yes)                     (No)                     
5---------4---------3---------2---------1

Did you understand all the instructions and class procedures that I announced?  
(Yes)                     (No)                     
5---------4---------3---------2---------1

Do you find my teaching-style suitable for this class?  
(Yes)                     (No)                     
5---------4---------3---------2---------1

Do I encourage questions, involvement and debate?  
(Yes)                     (No)                     
5---------4---------3---------2---------1

Do I answer questions effectively?  
(Yes)                     (No)                     
5---------4---------3---------2---------1

Do you have any scheduling conflict with the office hours?  
(Yes)                     (No)                     
5---------4---------3---------2---------1

Is the pace of the course about right?  
(Yes)                     (No)                     
5---------4---------3---------2---------1
Fast Feedback (Option B)
Discussion/Lecture/Laboratory

Course/Section____________  TA__________________  Date____________

This form is only read by your TA. Specific comments are especially appreciated.

1. Can you hear me clearly?
   If no, what are the problems? (volume level, accent, habit of chopping trailing words, etc.)

2. Can you read my writing?
   If no, what are the problems? (size of writing, style of writing, etc.)

3. Do I have any annoying habits?
   If yes, what are they?

4. Do I answer questions satisfactorily?
   If no, could you cite instances of this?

5. Do you have any scheduling conflict with the office hours?
   If yes, with which one?

6. What do you like most about the (discussion or lab) session?

7. If you were a TA, what would you change in the current (discussion or lab) format?

8. What do you like most about the TA?

9. What would you like the TA to improve or change?

Any other comments or suggestions?
Mid-Semester Evaluations

Mid-semester evaluation forms

Mid-semester evaluation can be accomplished in several different fashions. You can have a peer or supervisor observe your class, or you can have a class video-taped. Alternatively, you can solicit written or oral feedback from the class. College of Engineering policy indicates that supervisors must observe new TAs (first and second semester) sometime before the seventh week (check with your department TA coordinator for the exact details.)

Mid-semester evaluation forms are provided for the three categories of TA:

- Laboratory
- Lecturer
- Discussion Leader

Each form is comprised of two parts (front and back side of a single sheet):

- Teaching evaluation
- Course or Lab evaluation

This latter distinction is important in that students should distinguish between comments on your teaching ability versus comments on the course as a whole. As a TA, you may not be able to solve course problems, although in some cases you can improve the situation for students. For example, if the students feel the text is not very helpful, class notes and alternative texts could be placed on reserve in the library.

The forms contain questions pertaining to the student's involvement and participation (for example, the percentage of discussion sections they attended during the semester). This information may help you decide how to weigh their suggestions, and may focus more detailed questions on why attendance/participation was high or low. You might also consider using fast feedback to gain further knowledge about a specific point.

Acting on the results

Once the forms are returned, analyze the results, report back to the class with the positive findings, and act on areas where you need improvement. There are several avenues for improvement:

- Use the Resource Guide in this Handbook to identify relevant information or teaching tools
- Discuss results with a friend or peer, particularly if they are an experienced TA
- Discuss the results with your supervisor or a faculty member you associate with excellent teaching

Evaluation by faculty member (mid-semester or seventh week observation)

A form to be used by a faculty member or peer to evaluate your teaching style has also been included in this section. Most of the questions can be answered by observing you in the classroom for 10-15 minutes. The evaluation should be discussed right after class, while the details are still fresh. Find out what they liked, and ask for tips and pointers for areas they think need improvement.

Some departments use a similar version of this form for the end of semester evaluation by faculty members.
Mid-Semester TA Evaluation - Laboratory

Course/Section _______________ Instructor _______________ Date __________

Please evaluate your TA. This form is read by only your TA. Specific comments are especially appreciated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The material covered is presented in an organized way:</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The TA makes the material interesting:</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The TA stimulates my thinking:</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The TA is knowledgeable about the material:</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The TA is willing to help me:</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The TA encourages me to learn:</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I am learning from this TA:</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The TA adequately answers my questions:</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The TA adequately aids me when experimental difficulties are encountered:</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The demonstrations are helpful:</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The grading explains where my logic and understanding are incorrect:</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. The TA praises outstanding and/or original thinking:</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The TA gets the class involved:</td>
<td>way too little</td>
<td>about right</td>
<td>way too much</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Do the presentations have any of the following problems? (circle all that apply):</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>writing too small</td>
<td>writing too light</td>
<td>writing too low</td>
<td>erased material too soon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>obstructed</td>
<td>too messy</td>
<td>undefined symbols</td>
<td>other (please specify):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Does the TA's speech have any of the following problems? (circle all that apply):</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>too soft</td>
<td>too loud</td>
<td>too fast</td>
<td>too slow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sexist</td>
<td>racist</td>
<td>complex</td>
<td>slurried</td>
<td>monotones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Is there anything about the class or TA that can be improved? Any suggestion on how to do it?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. What are the TA's strengths?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other comments?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Mid-Semester Course Evaluation - Laboratory

Course/ Section _____________ TA ______________ Date __________

Please evaluate this lab. This form is read by only your TA, but the results may be shared with the course supervisor. Specific comments are especially appreciated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The amount of material covered in this lab is too much.</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The grading is fair, impartial and well defined.</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Written comments on returned assignments are helpful.</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The pace of the class is:</th>
<th>too slow</th>
<th>about right</th>
<th>too fast</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The lab notes/instructions are (circle all that apply):</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Easy to understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misleading</td>
<td>Incorrect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If a textbook is used, it is (circle all that apply):</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Easy to understand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The pre-lab lecture (if one exists for this lab) (circle all that apply):</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is adequate for lab</td>
<td>Covers too much</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The pre-lab assignments (if they existed) are (circle all that apply):</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dull</td>
<td>Interesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too difficult</td>
<td>Too easy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The laboratory assignments are (circle all that apply):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructive:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How many hours per week do you spend working on this lab? _________

What grade are you expecting in this lab? _____________

Any other comments?
Mid-Semester TA Evaluation - Lecturer

Course/ Section _____________ TA ______________ Date _________

Please evaluate your TA. This form is read by only your TA. Specific comments are especially appreciated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The material covered is presented in an organized way:</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The TA makes the material interesting:</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The TA stimulates my thinking:</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The TA is knowledgeable about the material:</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The TA is willing to help me:</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The TA encourages me to learn:</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I am learning from this TA:</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The TA adequately answers my questions:</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The TA gets the class involved:</td>
<td>way too little</td>
<td>about right</td>
<td>way too much</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Do the presentations have any of the following problems? (circle all that apply):
    - none
    - writing too small
    - writing too light
    - writing too low
    - erased material too soon
    - obstructed
    - too messy
    - undefined symbols
    - other (please specify):

11. Does the TA's speech have any of the following problems? (circle all that apply):
    - none
    - too soft
    - too loud
    - too fast
    - too slow
    - poor grammar
    - filler words ("um," "ah")
    - sexist
    - racist
    - complex
    - slurred
    - monotones
    - poor English
    - other (please specified):

12. Is there anything about the class or TA that can be improved? Any suggestion on how to do it?

13. What are the TA's strengths?

Any other comments?
Mid-Semester *Course* Evaluation

Course/ Section _____________ TA ______________ Date _________

Please evaluate this course. This form is read only by your TA, but the information may be shared with the course supervisor. Specific comments are especially appreciated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Course Assessment:**

The amount of material covered is too much. SA A D SD NA
The grading is fair, impartial and well defined. SA A D SD NA
Written comments on returned assignments are helpful. SA A D SD NA
The pace of the class is: too slow about right too fast

The textbook is (circle all that apply): NA
- Excellent
- Easy to understand
- Complex
- Boring
- Vague
- Helpful
- Incorrect
-Verbose
- Out-dated
- Other:

If class notes are used, are they (circle all that apply): NA
- Excellent
- Easy to understand
- Complex
- Boring
- Vague
- Other:
- Helpful
- Unhelpful
- Incorrect
- Verbose
- Out-dated

The assignments are:
- Difficulty: Occasionally too easy About right Occasionally too hard Too hard
- Frequency: Too infrequent About right Occasionally too often Too often
- Amount: Too little Adequate Enough Too much
- Interesting: Seldom Occasionally Usually Very
- Instructive: Seldom Occasionally Usually Very

Which assignments have been most relevant to the course?

What percentage of the classes have you attended this semester? ____________
How many hours per week do you spend working on this course? ____________
What grade are you expecting in this course? ____________
Any other comments?
Mid-Semester TA Evaluation - Discussion Leader

Course/ Section _____________ TA ______________ Date _________

Please evaluate your TA. This form is read only by your TA. Specific comments are especially appreciated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The material covered is presented in an organized way:</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The TA makes the material interesting:</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The TA stimulates my thinking:</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The TA is knowledgeable about the material:</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The TA is willing to help me:</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The TA encourages me to learn:</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I am learning from this TA:</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The TA adequately answers my questions:</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The TA reinforces the ideas presented in the lecture.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The TA clarifies difficult concepts presented in the lecture.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The TA appears to be well informed about the lecture material.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. The TA gets the class involved:</td>
<td>way too little</td>
<td>about right</td>
<td>way too much</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Does the TA's speech have any of the following problems? (circle all that apply):</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>writing too small</td>
<td>writing too light</td>
<td>writing too low</td>
<td>erased material too soon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Does the TA's speech have any of the following problems? (circle all that apply):</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>too soft</td>
<td>too loud</td>
<td>too fast</td>
<td>too slow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. What percentage of discussion sections have you attended thus far? __________</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Is there anything about the class or TA that can be improved? Any suggestion on how to do it?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. What are the TA's strengths?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any other comments?
Mid-Semester Course Evaluation

Course/ Section _____________ TA ______________ Date __________

Please evaluate this course. This form is read by only your TA, but the information may be shared with the course supervisor. Specific comments are especially appreciated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount of material covered in this course is too much.</td>
<td>SA A D SD NA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The grading is fair, impartial and well-defined.</td>
<td>SA A D SD NA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments on returned assignments are helpful.</td>
<td>SA A D SD NA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pace of the class is:</td>
<td>too slow</td>
<td>about right</td>
<td>too fast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The textbook is (circle all that apply): NA

Excellent Easy to understand Complex Boring Vague
Helpful Incorrect Verbose Out-dated Other:

If class notes are used, are they (circle all that apply): NA

Excellent Easy to understand Complex Boring Vague Other:
Helpful Unhelpful Incorrect Verbose Out-dated

The assignments are:

Difficulty: Sometimes too easy About right Sometimes too hard Too hard
Frequency: Too infrequent About right Occasionally too often Too often
Amount: Too little Adequate Enough Too much
Interesting: Never interesting Occasionally Usually Very
Instructive: Seldom Occasionally Usually Very

Which assignments have been most relevant to the course?

What percent of the discussion sections have you attended this semester? __________
What percent of the classes have you attended this semester? __________
How many hours per week do you spend working on this course? __________
What grade are you expecting in this course? __________
Any other comments?
TA Evaluation by Faculty Member

Faculty Name: _______________________  TA's Name: ________________________
Course and Section # _________________  Date: ____________

The purpose of this evaluation is to identify for the TA those areas which the TA does well, as well as the areas that need improvement. It is not meant to be used in a merit-based review. An open discussion between the faculty member and the TA should occur as soon as possible after the evaluation takes place. Under each heading use the following scale and provide detailed comments for later discussion.

Does Well (DW), Satisfactory (S), Needs Improvement (NI), Not Applicable or Not Observed (NA)

**Professionalism**

____ Starts promptly and is prepared
____ Concerned about students' learning

General Comments:

**Teaching Skills**

____ Speaks clearly
____ Writes clearly
____ Clear introduction (gained attention, interest)
____ Illustrates points (explained clearly)
____ Transitions and summaries clear
____ Creates student interest and involvement
____ Answers student questions professionally and concisely

General Comments:

**Attitude**

____ Is enthusiastic
____ Is willing to help students

General Comments:
TA Evaluation by Faculty Member (continued)

**Aptitude**

___ Understands background material  
___ Explains complicated material clearly

General Comments: 

**TA's Strengths**

**Areas in need of improvement**
End-of-Semester Evaluations

The end of the semester evaluation is intended to be a tool for both the department and the TA to monitor and facilitate teaching improvement. Individual departments within the College of Engineering designate the format for the end-of-semester evaluations, and generally require their use in TA evaluations. In an effort to improve the various forms used across the College, the TA Fellows have recently developed a new set of forms designed specifically for TAs. These forms have been approved by the COE Academic Planning Council and are used by all departments within the COE. A copy of these new forms is included in this section. Department TA coordinators usually insure that TAs receive forms and instructions before their last class meeting. However, if your course is ending early or if you have not received the forms, contact your department TA coordinator before your last class meeting.

The TA Fellows recognize the value of the traditional end-of-semester evaluation form that several departments have used for over twenty years. Several questions on the new forms are identical to the old College forms, including the question on the overall TA ranking. Note that the TA Fellows strongly discourage the use of a single question to determine merit or reappointment.

The forms are broken into two main areas, TA teaching evaluation and course evaluation. The rationale for this is that the two areas are distinct but are interrelated. While many course content issues are often beyond the control of the TA, the nature and organization of a course often impacts students' perception of a TA's teaching and thus should be accounted for. The course evaluation also gives useful feedback on course structure and areas for potential improvement.

The teaching evaluation portion of the form consists of five categories: professionalism, teaching skills, attitude, aptitude, and the overall evaluation. The evaluation form is a means of self-evaluation and a guide for future teaching improvement. This is why a few open-ended questions are included on the backside of the form. Open-ended questions are often more useful to the TA in obtaining feedback on his or her teaching. These types of questions present students with an opportunity to express and expand on what they see as a TA's strengths or weaknesses.

Acting on the results

Again, it is important that you use the information developed in these forms in order to improve. As stated earlier, there are several avenues for improvement that can be pursued prior to your next TA assignment:

- Use the Resource Guide in this Handbook to identify relevant information or teaching tools
- Attend relevant COE Teaching Improvement Workshops at the beginning of the next semester
- Discuss results with a friend or peer, particularly if they are an experienced TA
- Discuss the results with your supervisor or a faculty member you associate with excellent teaching
Appendix I: Resource Guide

Listed below is a collection of resources that you might find useful. After the listing is a table that identifies the resources according to the categories in the recommended end-of-semester evaluation form: professionalism, teaching skills, attitude, and aptitude.

Reference Locations:
As a short-hand, we use the following abbreviations for the locations:
EPM Edward P. Mikol Collection, 2nd Floor, Kurt F. Wendt Library
KFW Kurt F. Wendt Library
MEM Memorial Library
TMT Teaching Methods and Techniques Library, Electrical & Computer Engineering, 2420 Engineering Building

Books Especially for TAs (B)


Manuals and Handbooks Especially for TAs (M)


[M4] Felder, R. M., 15 minutes to Good Teaching, Department of Chemical Engineering, North Carolina State University, 1989. (EPM)


**Videotaped Workshops for TAs and Faculty (V)**

[V1] *Cooperative Learning: Awareness* with Karl Smith, Fall 1990, AV1000-A. (KFW)

[V2] *Successful Presentations* with Donna Lewis, Sandra Courter, and David Okamoto, Fall 1990, AV1000-B. (KFW)

[V3] *Engineering Labs* with Richard Reines and TA Panelists, Fall 1990, AV1000-C. (KFW)


[V6] *The Landscape is Changing* with Mary Rouse and *Total Quality* with Mary Cotter and Ian Hau, Spring 1991, AV1000-G. (KFW)


[V9] *Good Teachers Teach People: Discussion Skills That Work* with Richard Felder, Fall 1991, AV1000-J. (KFW)


[V11] *Transition: From TA to Profession* with Chuch Dunning, Kalluru Venkateshwar, and David Okamoto, Fall 1992, AV1000-L. (KFW)


[V16] Time Management with Harry Roberts, Fall 1993, AV1000-Q. (KFW)

[V17] Teaching Strategies to Create Creative Engineers with Mehdi Abrishamchian, Kathy Sanders, David Panciera, and Michael Plesha, Fall 1993, AV1000-R. (KFW)

[V18] Teaching Problem-Solving, Spring 1994, AV1000-S. (KFW)

[V19] Lectures and Presentation Skills, Spring 1994, AV1000-T. (KFW)

[V20] Designing and Grading Quizzes and Exams, Fall 1994, AV1000-U. (KFW)

[V21] Encouraging Creative Thinking, Fall 1994, AV1000-V. (KFW)

[V22] Office Hours as a Tool for Enhancing Learning, with Jim Burroughs, TA, Marketing, Chin-Hsu, TA, EMA and Francois Sainfort, Engineering, Spring 1995, AV1000-W. (KFW)

[V23] Transforming Passive Listeners to Creative Thinkers in the Engineering Classroom. (KFW)


[V25] Role of Graduate Teaching Assistant, Part one: Lecturing (includes introduction), 1985, University of Washington, Tape 1 out of 5. (TMT)

[V26] Role of Graduate Teaching Assistant, Part two: Leading Discussions, Tape 2 out of 5. (TMT)

[V27] Role of Graduate Teaching Assistant, Part three: Directing Labs, Tape 3 out of 5. (TMT)

[V28] Role of Graduate Teaching Assistant, Part four: Grading, Tape 4 out of 5. (TMT)

[V29] Role of Graduate Teaching Assistant, Part five: Tutoring (includes conclusion), Tape 5 out of 5. (TMT)


[V31] TA Training Series #2, Sex, Lies and TAs, Clemson University. (TMT)

[V32] TA Training Series #3, The Unprepared TA, Clemson University. (TMT)

[V33] American Electronics Association - Teaching Electrical Engineering. (TMT)
Journals about Teaching and Learning (J)


[J5] *Wisconsin Ideas*, The University of Wisconsin System (quarterly) (KFW)

[J6] PRISM, American Society for Engineering Education (monthly) (KFW)


- Different Words in the Same Classroom
- Women and Men in the Classroom: Inequality and Its Remedies
- The Dissertation, from Conception to Delivery
- The Art of Leading a Discussion
- How I Could Have Done Much Better
- How Students Learn
- Balancing Teaching and Writing
- The Stresses of Beginning Teaching
- Real Teaching
- Faculty Development Writ Large: A Decade of Working with Teachers to Help Them Improve Their Teaching
- The “Muddiest Point in the Lecture” as a Feedback Device
- How Students Learn: Part II
- Teaching by the Case Method: One Teacher’s Beginnings
- College Teaching is a Funny Business
- Teaching American Students: A Guide for International Faculty and Teaching Fellows

General Readings on Teaching and Learning (G)


[G28] Smith, K. A. *Cooperation in the College Classroom*, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, 1993. (KFW)


Other Resources

Adult Career and Educational Counseling Center
905 University Ave, Rm. 209.....................................................26 3-6960
Director-Lisa Munro

Campus Assistance Center:
420 North Lake Street..........................................................26 3-2400

Computer–Aided Engineering Center (CAE):
1410 Johnson Drive.................................................................26 3-3075
User Services Support–Mary Baldwin.................................26 2-6950

Counseling and Consultation Services:
905 University Avenue, Rm. 401.................................26 2-1744

Dean of Academic Affairs:
Associate Dean–Michael L. Corradini.................................26 5-2001
2630 Engineering Hall

Dean of Students:
117 Bascom Hall.................................................................26 3-5700
Dean–Mary K. Rouse..............................................................26 3-5702

Engineering Audiovisual Services:
138 Kurt F. Wendt Library....................................................26 3-3163
Director–Robert Perras..........................................................26 3-9726

Engineering Career Services:
1150 Engineering Hall.........................................................26 2-3471
Director–Sandra Arnn

Engineering Counseling Service
2701 Engineering Hall.........................................................26 2-3507
Linda Schilling

Engineering Diversity Affairs
Assistant Dean–Alem Asres....................................................26 2-7764

Greater University Tutoring Service (GUTS):
303 Union South.................................................................26 3-5666

MACC:
2112 Computer Science & Statistics Bldg...............................26 2-2254

Testing and Evaluation Services:
366 Educational Science Bldg.................................................26 2-5863

Writing Lab:
6171 White Hall.................................................................26 3-9305
Director-Bradley Hughes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Professionalism</th>
<th>Teaching Skills</th>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Aptitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books especially for TAs</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>B1</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>B2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>B5</td>
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<td>Manuals and Handbooks for TAs</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>M4</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>V2</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>V3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>V4</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>V5</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>V6</td>
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Appendix II. Additional Questions and Comments

The following questions are taken from "How am I Teaching," (Weimer, M. et. al. Magna Publications, Inc. 1988) and other evaluation forms. A copy of this set of questions and questions from other sources can be found in a folder on the network at CAE (see the mid-semester evaluation section of this handbook).

If you wish to tailor a form of your own, read through this list of alternate questions and comments and select those you think are appropriate. It's a good idea to have a friend look them over to ensure that the ordering makes sense, and that the form can be filled out in the time that you have allotted. Consider leading the students to some answers, by listing some possible answers (both positive and negative). In a pilot project, we found the students like being given different options, but others saw all the things that could be wrong and got a negative opinion of the TA even though they didn't circle the options. Don't expect the students to be able to "brain-storm" and come up with ways of improving your teaching in 2 minutes. If you ask open-ended questions, give them time and a reason for responding in detail.

**Organization:**
- Begins class on time in an orderly, organized fashion
- Previews lecture/discussion content
- Clearly states the goal or objective of the period
- Reviews prior class material to prepare students for the content to be covered
- Provides internal summaries and transitions
- Does not digress often from the main topic
- Summarizes and distills main points at the end of class
- Appears well prepared for class

**Presentation:**
- Incorporates various instructional supports like slides, films, diagrams, etc.
- Uses instructional support effectively
- Responds to changes in student attentiveness
- Uses a variety of spaces in the classroom from which to present material
- Blackboard writing is large and legible.
- Speech fillers for example "OK, Ah" are not distracting
- Speaks auditorily and clearly
- Uses gestures to enhance meaning and not to release nervous tension (Repetitive gestures tend to do the latter)

- Communicates a sense of enthusiasm and entusiasm toward the content
- Use of humor is positive and appropriate
- Presentation style facilitates note taking
- Speech is neither too formal nor too casual
- Difficult vocabulary is explained
- Level of language is appropriate
- Establishes and maintains eye contact with the class
- Talks to the class, not the board or windows
- Varies the pace to keep students alert
- Selects teaching methods appropriate for the content

**Rapport:**
- Praises students for contributions that deserve commendation
- Solicits student feedback
- Requires student thought and participation
- Responds constructively to student opinions
- Knows and uses student names -- Responds to students as individuals
Treats class members equitably
Listens carefully to student comments and questions
Tailors the course to help many kinds of students
Recognizes when students do not understand
Encourages mutual respect between students

**Credibility and Control:**
Responds to distractions effectively yet constructively
Appears comfortable and competent with the content
Responds confidently to student inquiries for additional information
Uses authority in the classroom to create an environment conducive to learning
Speaks about the course content with confidence and authority
Is able to admit error and/or insufficient knowledge
Respects constructive criticism

**Content:**
Includes illustrations
Selects examples relevant to student experiences and course content
Integrates text material into class presentations
Relates current course content to what’s gone on before and will come after
Relates current course content to students’ general education
Makes course content relevant with references to “real world” applications
Presents views other than his/her own when appropriate
Seeks to apply theory to problem solving
Explicitly states relationships among various topics and facts/theory
Explains difficult terms, concepts or problems in more than one way
Presents background of ideas and concepts
Presents pertinent facts and concepts from related fields
Presents up-to-date developments in the field
Relates assignments to course content
Clearly organizes assignments
Carefully explains assignments

**Interaction:**
Encourages student questions, involvement, discussion, and debate
Answers student questions clearly and directly
Gives students enough time to respond to questions
Refrains from answering his/her own questions
Responds to wrong answers constructively
Provides ample time for questions
Encourages students to respond to each other’s questions
Encourages students to answer difficult questions by providing cues and encouragement
Allows relevant student discussion to proceed uninterrupted
Presents challenging questions to stimulate discussion
Respects diverse points of view

**Active Learning:**
Clearly explains directions or procedures
Clearly explains the goal of the activity
Has readily available materials and equipment necessary to complete the activity
Allows opportunity for individual expression
Provides practice time
Gives prompt attention to individual problems
Provides individuals with constructive verbal feedback
Careful safety supervision is obvious
Allows sufficient time for completion
Provides enough demonstrations
Demonstrations are clearly visible to all students
Required skills are not beyond reasonable expectations for the course and/or students
Provides opportunities for dialogue about the activity with peers and/or the instructor
Allocates sufficient clean-up time within the class session

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS:
"How am I teaching" recommends giving the questions in pairs--positive and negative.

When do you find the instructor to be most helpful in your learning?
When do you find the instructor to be least helpful in your learning?
What am I doing right?
What improvements could we make? How can I improve?
When do you find the instructor making himself/herself most clearly understood?
When do you find the instructor making himself/herself least clearly understood?
When do you feel most intellectually stimulated by this course?
When do you feel least intellectually stimulated by this course?
When are you clearest about what material should be in your notes?
When are you confused about what material should be in your notes?
What material are you clearest about?
What material are you confused about?
When do you feel most convinced that the course is worth your effort?
When do you feel least convinced that the course is worth your effort?
When do you feel most certain that the instructor cares whether you succeed in the course?
When do you feel least certain that the instructor cares whether you succeed in the course?
When do you feel most sure that you understand the course objectives?
When do you feel least sure that you understand the course objectives?
When do you most want to discuss the material in this course?
When do you least want to discuss the material in this course?
When do you find yourself listening most intently to the lecture material in this course?
When do you find yourself listening least intently to the lecture material in this course?
Which assignments (class activities) are most relevant to the course objectives and student needs?
Which assignments (class activities) are least relevant to the course objectives and student needs?
How can I do to make the subject more understandable? Interesting?
What would you change in the class?
What are my strengths/weaknesses?