

My Favorite Assignment: The Feedback Document FAQs

Do I have to include this document in the grade?

No! It works well as an extra credit assignment; usually once the students see their own writing the way someone else would see it, they are much more willing to work on improving it. Using the document as extra credit adds a different view to doing the revisions.

It can, however, be part of a writing rubric and part of a grade. That's up to the individual instructor.

Can you use this document for program assessment?

Yes—in fact, I've used it as part of our accrediting self-reflection this year. The document also allows individual students to talk candidly about their writing backgrounds and what they need to improve.

Is this document the only communication you have with the students about their writing?

It can be in a really large course. I use it as part of other feedback strategies; another assignment in the foundations course has a guided peer review of the writing as well as a self-reflection assignment of how the student's writing has improved over the course of the semester and how that improvement can help the student's career. I've also used this document in conjunction with a 360 degree review the students have with their bosses and co-workers about their communication skills.

I also offer opportunities to meet with me via zoom for an hour to discuss writing needs. While the good students immediately take me up on the offer, this document allows me to seek out those who seem to need more help.

Can this document be used more than once in a course?

Absolutely! Incentives work. The students want better grades and I want better writing. In an upper-level consulting course, the students have one large assignment that has six parts. We use the feedback document with each part, which helps the student track his or her own growth.

How do the students react to the document?

While they probably do roll their eyes at the idea of yet another document, they like the chance to earn extra credit. When they see how the document begins conversation that helps their score not only in my course but in others, they see value in it—at least that is what the course evaluations have said.