

The art of receiving writing feedback

Get ready....

- Putting your writing out into the public is confronting and requires an element of bravery especially when it's not your best writing.
- You might get negative feedback. Your work might evoke strong opinions or emotions. You might get different or opposing opinions.
- Our memories tend to focus on the negative things that are said because they invoke our emotions more strongly. Remember to listen for, and take note of, the **positive things**.

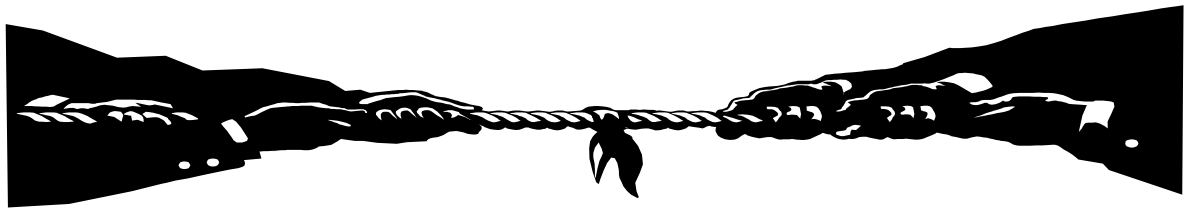


Image source: Microsoft images

You are not your writing.

- The feedback is only about this small piece of text. It's not about your whole thesis and it's certainly not about YOU. See it as an opportunity and **don't take it personally**.
- Don't apologise for your writing; we are all learners.
- Don't interrupt. Don't get defensive or justify yourself.
- Be respectful, positive and open to the critique, rather than defensive.
- If you *are* feeling defensive or angry, stay silent. Listen to the comments and write them down. When you feel calm, review the comments. This method is useful because it helps you to distance yourself a little from your writing.

Before you receive feedback:

Remind the group:

- which section the text is from
- what you're trying to achieve
- what you would like from the group.

Don't explain the text beyond that.



Image source: Microsoft images

When you receive feedback:

- Listen to all the feedback, and think before you respond. Don't forget to hear the positive things.
- **Listen actively** (see Establishing and maintaining a 'safe' space for critiquing). The speaker has taken the time to read your work and wants to identify ways of improving it.
- Answer any questions, focusing on the intended meaning in your text. What **did** you intend to say? Can you say it in a different way? Explain what you mean to the group.
- If the feedback is not clear, restate your understanding of the comments, and ask questions to help clarify. Remember that you don't have to agree with all feedback.
- Check if other people agree, disagree or have other issues to identify. Remember, this is just opinion.
- Some feedback may be the result of the reader's misunderstanding. However, if others also misunderstand, there is a problem with the writing.
- Write down what people are saying. If you can't talk and take notes at the same time, ask someone in the group to take the notes – write down what the group asks and what you reply. Make notes on the text.

After you receive feedback

- Thank everyone for taking the time and care to give feedback. Let them know it was useful and that you'll read the notes and redraft.
- Keep a record of your feedback and **look for patterns**. Once you've identified the strengths and problems in your writing, visit the SLC to find ways of addressing the problems.

Remember that you don't have to accept all feedback given – think carefully about it and make your own decision. All writing can be improved, but there are many ways to do this.