

# Using Midsemester Evaluations to Reinforce Classroom Learning

# Midsemester Evaluations

Some Thoughts (and a Little Research) on Why  
and  
A Suggestion for How

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# Why Do Midsemester Evaluations? The Research

- Significantly improves end-of-semester student ratings (Murray, 1997)
- Midsemester feedback *with expert consultation* wildly improves end-of-semester ratings
- Cohen (1980) meta-analysis: Midsemester feedback associated with
  - Higher end-of-semester instructor ratings (> 1/3 of a standard deviation)
  - Significantly more positive attitudes among students
  - No differences in students' evaluation of their own progress or actual achievement

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# Why Do Midsemester Evaluations? (Why I Actually Do It)

- Pedagogical philosophy: We are a team.
- Something bugging you? I could fix that...  
...if I agree with you.

# Why Do Midsemester Evaluations? (Why I Actually Do It)

- Opportunity to send implicit messages
  - Everything I do is the result of careful thought and planning.
  - What we like is not always best for us.
  - I am on your side and I feel your pain (again with the team thing).

**I know what I am doing.**

# Why Do Midsemester Evaluations? (Why I Actually Do It)

- Opportunity to send explicit messages
  - Come see me if you are discontented for any reason.
    - Don't get it? Come see me.
    - Don't like it? Come see me.
    - Can't see the point? Come see me.
  - I hear you.

# Validation and Locus of Control

- Research: Performance is linked to sense of control.  
(Rotter, 1966)
- Feeling heard 1) validates emotions and 2) increases the sense of control
- Remember: Validation  $\sim$  Agreement
- Message: I hear you, I value your opinion, and I will respond (if the request is consistent with my pedagogical philosophy).



# Why Do Midsemester Evaluations? (Why I Actually Do It)

- Opportunity to send explicit messages
  - Come see me.
  - I hear you.
  - You are alone in your crankiness.

# The False Consensus Effect

- Research: How I feel is how everyone feels  
(Ross, Greene, & House, 1977)
- Message: No, they don't. You are alone in your crankiness.  
(But I can help you.)

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  - It's not me, it's you (but that's ok because we are a team and I am going to help you).

# Fundamental Attribution Error

- Research: Your personality explains your behavior, but mine is explained by the situation  
(Jones & Davis, 1965)
- Message: Your experience, and your performance, is not a result of who I am. I can help you improve your experience in this class, and your performance in it, *if you want*.

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**We are in this together.**

# The Form (created by Andy Collins, U of MN)

- Scales
- Open-ended questions
- Distribution
- Presentation of results: What WE are going to do