1. Using GIF images to get feedback

Our students are digital natives. They can skillfully and easily use web based resources, and are motivated to use them. We can use this to our advantage while asking for feedback. One way of doing this is using GIF images. Students can be asked to use GIF images to express their thoughts on the course and learning materials. Sentence starters can be given to help learners get started with a clear direction. Please see Appendix 1 for a sample task.

A similar idea could be used with Twitter templates, which are abundant online. The students can be given tweet templates on paper during face to face education, and be provided ‘trend topics’. During online education, a template can be copied on a padlet wall, and students can type their tweets on post-its instead. To encourage students to be more descriptive and to make it more fun, encourage them to use hashtags in their responses.

TRENDING

#1: Things that worked well in today’s class
#2: Things that can be improved in today’s class
#3: Something I found confusing today
#4: A general comment I’d like to make about our course

2. Letter to the teacher

When the feedback document is prepared in the form of a letter, it may look more sincere and genuine, and it may help build a closer relationship between the teacher and the students. During face-to-face education, students can be given a letter with gaps to fill in (see Appendix 2). During online teaching, students can fill these in on a Word document, and then copy-paste their responses on an online suggestion box platform, such as: https://freesuggestionbox.com/. This platform enables free anonymous feedback so that students can express their honest opinions.
3. Feedback walls

Students can be given the opportunity to write down a piece of feedback they might want to share with their teachers whenever they would like to, rather than having to wait until they are asked to. Although we may be very open to feedback, our students may be too shy to come up front. They may be worried that their feedback can upset the teacher. Therefore, giving them a chance to express their opinions anonymously may help them make their voices heard. In class, this can be a blank paper/cardboard pinned on the wall. During online teaching, this can be in the form of a Padlet wall whose link is shared with the students at the very beginning of a course. The students can be reminded of the platform and be invited to share their opinion whenever they would like to. As teachers, we can check this wall at regular intervals, such as every Friday. The wall can be organized as a blank page, or it can be guided. To make it more guided, one option is to add headings, as in the example illustrated below. Giving guidance for students can help them to think more deeply about their suggestions and encourages them to offer suggestions rather than noting down what they might be unhappy about.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>How</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Why</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What should I add/change?</td>
<td>How should I change this? In what way would it be more useful for you?</td>
<td>When or how often should I do it?</td>
<td>Why do you think it is important / helpful to do this?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Fist to five

Fist to five offers a Likert-scale like research tool that is quick, silent, and effective. It can be used for various purposes, such as to check understanding, the mood of the students, etc. The teacher asks a question, and students respond by indicating a response on a scale of 0-5. Examples could vary, and you can make it sound serious, or fun and intimate to encourage contribution.

- How much did you like this new game? Tell me how enjoyable it was on a scale of fist to five. Five: it was so enjoyable, I want us to play this game every single day until the end of the course. Fist: I dozed off 10 minutes ago."
- How well did you understand this concept? Fist to five. Five: I understood it very well and do not need further explanations. Fist: I feel completely lost and would like us to go back to the beginning.

When the tool is used a few times, students will get used to it, and it will not be necessary to explain what 5 or 0 could refer to. All the teacher would have to do would be to ask the question, and say “fist to five? What do you think?” “Fist to five, how are you feeling today?”
5. **Pulse surveys**

Pulse surveys are quick and brief questions to take ‘the learners’ pulse’. They can be used at any stage of a lesson or the course. These surveys work well with open and closed ended questions. As pulse surveys are intended to be brief tasks, limiting the number of questions to 2-3 may be practical. Some examples of pulse survey questions and their purpose are listed below.

- How are you feeling today? (as a warm-up question at the beginning of class)
- How is the Passive Voice formed? (for concept checking at the end of class or an introduction of a language topic)
- Are the instructions I give in class clear? (to collect feedback on an area you feel you are good at or you may need to improve in)
- Write down three things you have learned in today’s class. (as an exit ticket at the end of class)
- Did you enjoy the activity we did today? (to receive feedback on a new activity, task or teaching technique recently introduced). This question can have slightly different variations:
  . The questions ‘why?/why not?’ can be added to the initial question to encourage students to elaborate on their feedback.
  . In a way similarly constructed to the fist to five tool, ‘How much did you enjoy the activity?’ can be asked along with a Likert-scale to receive written feedback.

Thanks to their brevity and simplicity, pulse surveys can be used multiple times during a semester or an academic year. They are also a good way to interact with learners during the pandemic to find out about their anxieties, distractions and other factors that may hinder learning. An example of such survey questions can be seen at [https://www.questionpro.com/survey-templates/remote-learning-pulse-survey/](https://www.questionpro.com/survey-templates/remote-learning-pulse-survey/).

Google forms, Mentimeter and Socrative are among the online tools that can be used for delivering pulse surveys. Zoom polls can also be used for closed questions.

6. **SGIF: Small Group Instructional Feedback**

SGIF involves having a facilitator visit your class to gather information from students about their learning experience in your course while you step out. Instructors can pair up and visit each other’s classes to gather feedback. Compared to surveys or other written formative feedback tools, SGIF processes ensure that the feedback is clear, includes enough details, and indicates the number of students giving a specific piece of feedback, which can be quite useful especially when student opinions seem to contradict one another.

The role of the facilitator is to lead a group discussion and take anonymous notes: what students see as valuable and what concrete suggestions they would like to offer for improving the course.

The suggested stages for a SGIF session could be as follows:

- Design your research questions or make a short and general list of aspects of the course to get feedback on.
Example research questions:

❖ What about this course has been most helpful to your learning?
❖ What specific changes could the instructor, my classmates, and I make to improve our learning in this course?
❖ What specific changes can be introduced to this course in the coming weeks / when this course is run again?

Example aspects of the course (instead of giving specific questions):

❖ Course delivery
❖ Classroom atmosphere
❖ Instructional materials

- Instructor and the facilitator meet briefly to go over the procedures.
- On the day of the SGIF session, the instructor welcomes the facilitator and introduces the facilitator and the activity. The instructor steps out for the rest of the lesson.
- The facilitator shares the research questions/areas and gives instructions.
- Students individual free write (5 mins): initially all students reflect on the course on their own and make notes.
- Small group discussion (15 mins): In groups of 3-4, students discuss their opinions and make notes.
- Whole group discussion & preparation of the debrief report (~30 mins): The facilitator invites all groups to present their views, and makes notes using a tool that enables students to see the feedback.

At this stage, it is important that the facilitator asks students questions to get them to clarify any ambiguities, or expand and elaborate certain ideas, especially the suggestions.

Students follow all the points that the facilitator is making a note of, and makes corrections if there has been a mistake/misunderstanding.

- The facilitator has a brief post-discussion with the instructor, where the two go over the notes and the suggestions.

7. Start Stop Continue

Please refer to the link here for a detailed account of how this tool can be used.

8. Learners as observers

Peer observations are commonly used among language teachers. However, learners can also provide very useful feedback if they are actively involved in classroom research. While our peers have the necessary professional knowledge and experience that enables them to make relevant and useful comments and suggestions, they view the classroom environment, teaching and learning practices from similar lenses as
we do. Learners, on the other hand, can provide valuable data as they observe an activity or a lesson through their own lenses, and bring in perceptions and perspectives unique to them. Therefore, they may be able to point to our blindspots, and offer practical suggestions. Moreover, making learners part of our classroom research communicates the value placed on their opinions and them as individuals.

Suggested steps are are listed below:

- Select the observer: the student observer can be a student in your own class, a student from another class you are teaching, or a student who is now in faculty.
- While selecting which student to approach as an observer, you may think of it as a reward to an enthusiastic learner or use the process to include less involved learners.
- After designing your observation tool, briefly meet the student before the observation to go over the purpose of the observation, what you expect the student to do (and not do), and introduce the observation tool.
- After the observation, meet with the student to go over their observations and suggestions.

Here are some example areas students can easily observe and comment on:

- tracking range of interaction patterns in class (S-S; S-T; T-S)
- time-keeping teacher talk time during one lesson hour
- time-keeping the allocated duration for a task versus student actual time on task
- tallying how often students use L1
- tallying how many times each student in the class speaks/makes an active contribution to

Needless to say, tools student observers use must be simple so that they can use them comfortably. For instance, to track which students contribute the most/least during the observed lesson or activity, the student observer can be given a copy of the class register with space next to each student to keep tally and make comments when appropriate.

Please see the following resources for more information on learner observations:


APPENDIX 1: USING GIF IMAGES

Use GIF images to complete the sentences below to give feedback on our course:

1. When I am in class, I feel like:

2. I think the assignments we complete are like:

3. When we work in groups, I feel like this:

4. The pacing of our lessons to me is like:

5. The instructional materials we use in class are like:

Considering the reflections you have done above, note down your suggestions to further improve the course and our learning environment:

Here is an example for an end-of-course feedback designed using GIF images:
https://legsohottufryanegg.tumblr.com/post/103444964057/the-final-goodbye
APPENDIX 2: LETTER TO THE TEACHER

(The sections in bold are provided by the teacher.)

Dear Teacher,

Here is my feedback on your lessons so far:

In the lessons, please continue to have vocabulary games in the morning and write new words on the board. These are very useful and/or enjoyable for us.

However, if possible, please stop writing activities in class – it’s better if we do writing tasks at home after class. I don’t find these things very useful/enjoyable.

In your future lessons, can you please be/do more skimming practice – I have great difficulty with skimming and need more practice. Also could we do more group work?

Thanks,

A section M student ☺