Student Feedback Technique: “Some Strengths I Have”

How do we move from a “one size fits all – this course will be almost exactly like the one I taught last year” model of teaching to one that is more diagnostically based where we modify what we do based upon the actual students in a course? Try using some Student Feedback Techniques (SFT).

Quick to administer, quick for students to fill out, quick for us to review these tools help move us from the “one size fits all” model to one based upon diagnostic techniques. Having information about the particular students we have in a specific course allows us to target how we teach. Incidentally, you may have heard these techniques referred to as “Classroom Assessment Techniques” or “CATs” but we prefer the above term given the connotations of the word “assessment”.

When using an SFT tell students you need their input to target the course to their needs, strengths and weaknesses. Reassure them that these are not evaluation tools, that you need their honest answers, and that you will give them feedback on what you learn and how you will use their information. Allow 10 minutes for students to complete.

We will provide one of these SFT’s each month. Here is the first one.

Student Background: What do our students know? What skills or knowledge do they bring to a course? Few of our students believe they bring much; many are fairly isolated from what they consider to be the educational inner track. Start challenging the assumptions they have about being empty vessels waiting for you to heave in information with this SFT. This is one of the few times you should ask students to put their name on one of these.
Some Strengths I Have

Everyone brings a great deal of information and experience to a course. We can have a more effective course if I know more about you so that I can mold the course somewhat to fit the needs of students in this course. Therefore, I need you to identify your strengths. Thanks for your help! Please put your name on this.

Work or life experiences that you have had that you believe are relevant to what we will be studying in this course include (please explain if you think it will help me understand what you mean) …

Skills or knowledge that you have that you think will be valuable in this course include (please explain a little if you think it will help me) …

Other courses, programs, or activities you have had that you believe will help you understand some of the subject matter in this course include (please explain a if you think it will help me) …
Also available!

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No. 1 – The All-Important First Day of Class
No. 2 – Ways to Make Your Teaching Life Easier
No. 3 – The Crucial Second and Third Classes
No. 4 – Ways to Show Students that You Respect Them
No. 5 – Promote Effective Student Study Skills
No. 6 – Components of a Well-Planned Class
No. 7 – Observe Your Teaching Tendencies
No. 8 – Ways to Keep Your Students Learning
No. 9 – Ways to Get Feedback on Teaching from Students
No. 10 – Using Short Writing to Assess Learning
No. 11 – Getting More (and Better) Student Questions
No. 12 – Mixing Things up Mid-Semester
No. 13 – Engaging Different Input Preferences
No. 14 – Helping Students Stay the Journey
No. 15 – Ways to End Your Course
No. 16 – Resources for Learning and Teaching
No. 17 – Create a Memorable AND Functional Syllabus
No. 18 – Ways to Build Your Students’ Self-Efficacy
No. 19 – Practical Study Tips to Share with Your Students
No. 20 – Laddering Thinking Skills
No. 21 – Learning Based Ways to End Lessons
No. 22 – Ways and Reasons to Be Vulnerable While Teaching
No. 23 – Using Student Groups
No. 24 – Components of a Complete Learning Experience
No. 25 – Ways to Use Visuals for Learning
No. 26 – Students’ Locus of Control
No. 27 – Help Students with Rigorous Writing Assignments
No. 28 – Ways to Shake Up Your Teaching
No. 29 – Teaching to Inspire
No. 30 – Paths to Mindfulness

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