

Improving Student-Professor Communication Through Short-Term Learning Reflections and Midterm Feedback



Project Goal

The goal of this HSTEM project is to examine the benefits of implementing more direct lines of communication between students and professors in the form of short-term learning reflections and mid-semester reflections. Short-term learning reflections, such as weekly reflections or one-minute sheets, can help students reflect on their own learning and can help professors address small or large disconnects by identifying points of confusion. Mid-semester reflections will allow professors to assess the progress of the class as well as find ways to improve the course going forward. This project will attempt to find ways to make these forms of feedback more useful and effective and will create a resource to help professors implement student feedback into their teaching by using the short-term reflections and mid-semester feedback surveys effectively.



Motivation for Project

Research has found that:

- ☐ Midterm feedback improves teaching, especially when paired with professional consultation (Murray, 2006).
- ☐ “Mid-semester evaluations could help in obtaining more positive attitudes from the students towards the course and the instructor at the end of the semester” (Wickramasinghe et al, 2006).
- ☐ Midterm feedback “promoted two-way communication with learners on instructional design and decision making” (Diamond et al, 2004).
- ☐ Daily or weekly reflections on learning allow students to think about what they have learned, understand their learning strengths and weaknesses, and self-monitor their progress in the class (Wilson, 1986).
- ☐ Midterm feedback and short reflections can also help identify students who are struggling in the course, as well as class-wide points of confusion throughout the entire course (Wilson, 1986).



Project Plan

The output of this project will be a resource about the benefits of creating effective modes of feedback and suggestions on how to easily implement short-term and midterm feedback in the classroom.

To do this, I will collect information from Amherst College’s Center for Teaching and Learning, interview professors who use one-minute sheets and midterm feedback, and reference past HSTEM inclusive teaching projects to gain information on the best ways to collect and address feedback. As part of the final project, I will gather information on different resources professors can use to collect such feedback (such as different online platforms that can be used) and strategies on how to approach the feedback.

HSTEM Influences

<i>The Privileged Poor: How Elite Universities are failing Disadvantaged Students</i> by Tony Jack	HSTEM Inclusive Curricular Practices Handbook
This HSTEM reading focuses on how students, especially disadvantaged students, come into college with different levels of knowledge and confidence regarding classes, interactions with professors, and many more aspects of college life. This project helps aid this disconnect by allowing students to communicate with the professor on a weekly or daily basis with the short-term learning reflections, and/or check in about progress through mid-semester reflections.	The HSTEM Inclusive Curricular Practices handbook proposes a lot of ways to make the classroom more inclusive. For this project, it has been a resource for suggestions to improve short-term reflections and how to execute midterm feedback.

Resources

- Murray, H. (2006) Does evaluation of teaching lead to improvement of teaching?: International Journal for Academic Development: Vol 2, No 1. (n.d.). Retrieved April 11, 2025, from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1360144970020102>
- Wickramasinghe, S. R., & Timpson, W. M. (2006). Mid-Semester Student Feedback Enhances Student Learning. Education for Chemical Engineers, 1(1), 126–133. <https://doi.org/10.1205/ece06012>
- Diamond, M. R. (2004). The usefulness of structured mid-term feedback as a catalyst for change in higher education classes. Active Learning in Higher Education, 5(3), 217–231. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787404046845>
- Wilson, R. C. (1986). Improving Faculty Teaching: Effective Use of Student Evaluations and Consultants. The Journal of Higher Education, 57(2), 196–211. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1981481>
- Jack, A. A. (2019). The privileged poor: How elite colleges are failing disadvantaged students. Harvard University Press.
- “HSTEM Inclusive Curricular Practices Handbook”. 2020.