1. Use student feedback to support the teaching philosophy:

**Teaching Philosophy (excerpt)**
I firmly believe that connecting with my students is crucial to being a successful educator. Even when I’m lecturing, I feel that it is of paramount importance to keep the students involved in the class. I try to use ordinary prose when introducing a new concept, saving technical language for later. I keep them participating in the class, converting my lectures, whenever possible, into dis...

**Student Evaluations**

In order to improve my teaching, I frequently solicit feedback from students. Often, informal, impromptu conversations with students in my classes provide valuable information that I can act upon immediately. I also conduct informal midterm evaluations, giving students the chance to comment on my strengths and weaknesses before the class has ended. However, my primary assessment tool is the end-of-term student evaluation, officially sanctioned by the Office of Educational Assessment at the University of Washington, which publicizes the bulk of the results. These evaluations have two components: a quantitative component in which I receive the average score to a range of questions and a qualitative component in which I receive written comments from the class. The following table presents some of the most important qualitative evaluations from the two courses for which I was the sole instructor. A score of 4/5 should be interpreted as 4 out of a possible 5 points.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualitative Evaluation Results</th>
<th>Calculus I - 1998</th>
<th>PDE - 2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructor's contribution</td>
<td>4.70/5</td>
<td>4.61/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor's effectiveness</td>
<td>4.83/5</td>
<td>4.50/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor's explanations</td>
<td>4.50/5</td>
<td>4.53/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor's enthusiasm</td>
<td>4.70/5</td>
<td>4.69/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answers to questions</td>
<td>4.70/5</td>
<td>4.50/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of extra help</td>
<td>4.25/5</td>
<td>4.85/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual challenge presented</td>
<td>6.17/7</td>
<td>5.25/7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following are some selected student comments, spanning my career as both a teaching assistant and as an instructor. They were chosen to illustrate my desire and my ability to connect with students, as well as to effectively communicate mathematics. Copies of my evaluations are available upon request.

“[Karl’s] enthusiasm for the topic, ability to clearly explain material and willingness to spend as much time as necessary working with students in and outside of class is what I wish I could always have in an instructor.” (Calculus I, Summer 2000)

“He was easy to approach, interesting and sometimes even entertaining.” (Calculus I, Summer 2000)

“Karl was able to speak to the class instead of talking down to us. His explanations were informative and clear.” (Calculus II, Winter 1997)
2. Tell a story with student feedback:

Evidence of Teaching Effectiveness

I use a variety of sources to measure and improve my teaching effectiveness: student evaluations (quantitative and qualitative), supervisor evaluations, and peer evaluations, always in conjunction with my own reflection on my teaching and the class. I generally receive high evaluations from students in their quantitative responses to course evaluations (see Appendix C for Sample Teaching Evaluations). My average score on the General Evaluation section of the forms is consistently around a 4.5 out of a possible 5.0. In addition, I consistently rank in the 8th and 9th decile (out a possible 9) when compared to instructors in the institution as a whole and in the College of Arts and Sciences. I consider quantitative scores I receive from students both on their own and in conjunction with the qualitative remarks students make.

Students consistently comment that they find my courses intellectually challenging. I have attached comments from two or three students in three of the courses I have taught (see Appendix D for Sample Student Comments). Their comments reflect enjoyment of the process of active learning I emphasize in my classes, as well as an appreciation for the course material. My classroom, as depicted in their comments, is a place where people come to learn new things, to work with other people, to challenge themselves and others, to speak their views, and to be heard. And, importantly, my classroom is a place they leave at the end of quarter eager to know more. In addition to the university quarterly evaluations, I often distribute mid-term course evaluations in order to detect any problems before the quarter is over. I try to incorporate students' constructive comments into both current and subsequent classes.
3. How much to include? Should you include all the feedback you have gathered, or just “lessons learned” and responses?

Student comments and feedback
In an effort to continuously improve my teaching I have voluntarily used the help of a senior educational consultant, Margy Lawrence, from the Center of Instructional Development and Research (CIDR) at the University of Washington.1 She observed my teaching at various points and also obtained feedback from students mid-quarter in all my classes. We then discussed this feedback which she had typed to ensure students’ anonymity.

• Methodology for obtaining feedback (from Margy Lawrence):
  After the instructor left the room, students were divided into groups and each given a worksheet with two questions on it: 1) List the major strengths in the class and the instructor’s teaching methods; and 2) List changes that could be made in the class or in the instructor’s teaching methods which would help you learn the material more effectively. After the groups discussed for ten minutes, Margy lead a whole class discussion about what they had written for another fifteen minutes. Margy then typed the class comments and discussed them with the instructor the next day.

Following are the students’ comments obtained by Margy Lawrence for a class I taught as the sole instructor. Points written on the board during whole class discussion are underlined. Direct quotations from small group worksheets are in quotation marks. Comments in parentheses are from Margy Lawrence.

Intermediate Macroeconomics Winter 2005 (39 students, 8 groups):

MAJOR STRENGTHS:

• Organized – lecture notes online, articles on reserve ahead of time. (All students agreed.)
  “Notes – slides are helpful.” (Group 1)
  “Lecture slides.” (Group 2)
  “Slides.” (Group 4)
  “Slides – spend more time listening.” (Group 5)
  “Slides – good reference and resource.” (Group 6)
  “Slides – being able to follow the material by using slides.” (Group 7)
  “Organized – slides online, chance to prepare before lecture or if you miss lecture.” (Group 8)

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1 Margy Lawrence can be contacted at lawrence@cidr.washington.edu. For more information on CIDR see http://depts.washington.edu/cidrweb/index.html.
3. (continued)

- **Explanation clear; reviews points; gives alternative explanations; emphasizes important points. (All agreed.)**
  
  “Good explanations – clear and repetitive, helps info soak in.” (Group 5)
  “Multiple explanations for material – shows proficiency of material.” (Group 6)

- **Available for extra help. (All agreed.)**
  
  “Available for help. Office hours, email feedback.” (Group 3)
  “Really nice – encourages questions.” (Group 8)

- **Outside articles provide alternate perspectives/explanation. (All agreed.)**
  
  “Outside sources.” (Group 1)
  “Articles are relevant to class and interesting – really easy to understand.” (Group 4)
  “Articles.” (Group 5)
  “Article use – helps with applying [sic] material.” (Group 6)
  “Incorporates readings w. class material – applications to real life, easier to learn.” (Group 8)

- **Gives practice exams – helps prepare for exams. (All agreed.)**
  
  “Practice midterms.” (Group 2)
  “Exam samples – practice exams.” (Group 6)
  “References – old tests and solution sets.” (Group 7)

- **Comments about strengths which were written on worksheets but were not discussed in class.**
  
  “Gives examples – relates to our everyday lives, shows that he wants us to learn.” (Group 1)
  “Gives actual numbers – doesn’t rely too much on book.” (Group 1)
  “Extra Credit.” (Group 2)
  “Clarity of expectations.” (Group 2)
  “Straightforward: slides, syllabus, no guesswork on material covered.” (Group 3)
  “Straightforward lectures.” (Group 4)
  “Syllabus is great.” (Group 4)
  “Website solution available.” (Group 4)
  “Website is very useful.” (Group 5)
  “Class website – posting everything.” (Group 7)
  “Good at answering questions.” (Group 7)
  “Fair grading.” (Group 8)
  “Good preparation for exams (no tricks).” (Group 8)
SUGGESTED CHANGES

• **Work through problems/examples in class using the equations we learn. (All students agreed.)**
  “Problem solving with use of equations – application of equation examples (work through actual problems).” (Group 6)
  “Use more application questions.” (Group 8)

• **On tests, specify more clearly what you want – in particular, whether you want terms or numbers. (Some students agreed. Other students said the practice exams already made your expectations clear.)**
  “Vagueness in exam questions – make the questions more specific (Graphs).” (Group 3)

• **Make homework problems more relevant to class content. (About 1/3 of students agreed.)**
  “Make homework problems relevant to class.” (Group 4)

• **Comments about changes which were written on worksheets but were not discussed in class.**
  “Homework – too much questions.” (Group 1)
  “Too much questions.” (Group 1)
  “Less homework.” (Group 2)
  “Maybe make the material more interesting.” (Group 2)
  “Classroom needs more windows.” (Group 3)
  “Reading materials – article is too long for answering one question (quiz) during class.” (Group 3)
  “Make explanations shorter.” (Group 4)
  “Different classroom although we know it is not your fault.” (Group 5)
  “Better classroom – both set up and location suck.” (Group 7)
  “Book is too expensive – don’t use it as much as it costs.” (Group 7)
  “Make explanations shorter.” (Group 7)
  “Speak slower (accent).” (Group 8)

OTHER COMMENTS WRITTEN ON WORKSHEETS

“Great teacher!” (Group 4)
Response to Feedback

Obtaining this feedback from an educational consultant at the midpoint of the quarter provides two great advantages for my teaching. First, I can identify potential problem areas while there is still time to address these for the remainder of the course. Second, the availability of Margy Lawrence’s knowledge and advice provides me with a valuable resource. Discussions with her have allowed me to integrate different styles and methods into my teaching and reach a wider range of students than the textbook, or an instructor operating without self-evaluation, could reach.

- After obtaining this feedback, I asked students **specific questions** about all new equations introduced. However, these questions were always geared to the economic concept in an equation instead of just plugging numbers into it.

- I decided not to change the **amount of homework** assigned, since in my opinion it was not excessive. The end of quarter evaluation showed that most students thought that the assigned work was reasonable.

- The feedback showed me that my approach of using **additional sources from scientific articles** to support the readings in the textbook was appreciated by students. These articles from the *Journal of Economic Perspectives* and Fed Reviews were accessible to students and furthered students’ understanding of the material.

- The work in preparing a **comprehensive webpage** for the course with a detailed schedule of material, readings, slides, exams etc. was greatly appreciated. I was happy to see that students felt comfortable in my class to ask questions and that I had created an overall environment of learning.

As stated in my teaching philosophy, I view my teaching as a continuous process of improvement just as my research. Thus, I would greatly appreciate any opportunity to continue working with educational consultants in the future and attend conferences on teaching.

Margy Lawrence conducted feedback sessions in my other classes as well which are available upon request.

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1 The course webpage for the very similar course taught in the Spring of 2005 is available at: [http://students.washington.edu/tschreib/indexeteach.html](http://students.washington.edu/tschreib/indexeteach.html).
4. Peer or colleague review:

Lecture evaluation: Danielle Smith
July 28, 1998
Psychology 355: Survey of Cognition

Susan Zeft PhD
Dept. of Psychology
University of Washington

Overall I think Danielle did an excellent job with this lecture.

- The pace was perfect, she presented just enough new information, but gave students time to digest it by interspersing demos, examples and questions.

- She began with a nice review at the beginning of the lecture to let students know how this lecture fits into the bigger picture.

- She did an excellent job of asking questions and allowing students to feel comfortable enough to answer them. Obviously her questions were not too hard nor were they ridiculously easy. The students seemed to be quite involved in the course.

- She also did a great job of answering questions. She provided clear alternative explanations.

- I recommended a few specific places in the lecture that could have been slightly clearer or a point could have been repeated for emphasis. However, these issues may have had to do with definitions provided in the previous day’s lecture.

- The summary was also very good. She did a nice job of watching the time and finishing with a summary.

My impression was that she is a natural born teacher. She was completely comfortable, personally connected with her audience and demonstrated a very natural and easy style. In short, I think Danielle will make an excellent teacher.

5. Self evaluation:

I believe that my strengths as a teacher are that I care about my students and my subject matter; I bring enthusiasm and knowledge to class; I am able to use examples to explain things clearly; I relate class topics to the real world; and I make efforts to improve my teaching.

Some areas for improvement include a few simple-sounding issues (speaking slower, writing bigger, improving use of board space) as well as some more complex issues. For example, during Fun Thursday discussions I would like to moderate more and intervene less; so I am trying to find ways to let students have more control without letting the class get out of control. My latest effort in this area is to hand out questions for students to think about prior to class. If necessary, I can use those questions to guide class discussion. But I am hoping that providing a common starting point for analysis will allow for a class that is both free-flowing and topical.