

How do I know what students value from teachers?

Module focus

- the characteristics of tertiary teachers that students appreciate
- the approaches that effective tertiary teachers adopt

Module outcomes

- you will be able to identify means of better 'connecting' with your students
- you will reflect on critical points in your teaching where you may apply the ideas of this module

'We have to cover a lot of material in this Unit. They are going to be assessed on all this material, but the students seem to switch off in lectures. I'm not sure exactly what it is my students want from me. I'm giving them all they need. Why do they still keep asking questions in DSO and sending me emails? I notice that some of my colleagues seem to really 'connect' with their students. They certainly get good SETU results.'

Take a moment to reflect on this issue.

What challenges does this pose for *your* teaching?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Possible solutions

From these sites, note the words and themes which appear repeatedly:

1. http://www.stephenbrookfield.com/Dr._Stephen_D._Brookfield/Workshop_Materials_files/Ch_4_What_Lnrs_Valu_e.pdf - a 12 page chapter from Stephen Brookfield's 2006 book *The Skillful Teacher*.
2. <http://depts.washington.edu/cidrweb/Bulletin/Learning.html> - quite brief; a select few responses from students at the University of Washington when asked what they appreciate from their teachers.
3. <http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/unmotiva.htm> - this resource is an interesting (and brief) reflection by Ronald Luce, Hocking Technical College, Ohio, about what his experience tells him it is that students want from their teachers.
4. <http://www.usq.edu.au/~media/USQ/learnteach/Information%20flyers/InformationFlyerWhatstudentswantFINALp df.ashx> - based on Geoff Scott's 2005 research into student responses to the Australian Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ).
5. <http://teaching.berkeley.edu/ninecomplaints.html> - nine things students complain about at the University of California, Berkeley.

Example:

Stephen Brookfield (see the first site above) uses terminology such as the following and then distils the terms into two themes - credibility and authenticity.

- expertise
- experience
- rationale
- conviction
- congruence
- full disclosure
- responsiveness
- personhood

1. Consider drawing up a checklist - key terms in the left column, instances in your teaching where you might try to apply them, in the right column.
2. You can form judgements from everyday interactions with students.
3. Conduct a mid semester survey giving your students an opportunity to comment on your teaching.
4. Analyse Deakin's SETU results after semester concludes.

Alert !

Being told that we are not very good at what we do is very confronting. If our students have been honest with us, we can be honest with ourselves. We can objectively reflect on feedback and try to make adjustments to our teaching. We can also decide that we are doing a good job despite the views of others. We can think our students have not been objective with their feedback and continue on. We can cause ourselves undue stress worrying about what students think of us. How s/he will respond depends on the individual teacher.