



# FEEDBACK

TLC Lunch Lecture

## Towards a stronger feedback culture

Jelle Boumans

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# What we'll talk about today

- Concerns and common misconceptions about student feedback
- What *can* student feedback tell us?
- Obstacles that hinder the potential of feedback
- Moving forward: ways to improve our feedback culture



# Concerns about student feedback

## Why Student Ratings of Faculty Are Unethical

Daryl Close<sup>1</sup>

**ScienceGuide**

### 'Stop met studentevaluaties: ze bedreigen de academische vrijheid'

Nieuws | door Frans van Heest

**2 september 2024** | Het idee dat studenten de kwaliteit van onderwijs kunnen beoordelen door het enkel te volgen is een misvatting. Studentevaluaties kunnen slechts als klanttevredenheidsonderzoeken worden gezien, betoogt de Amerikaanse onderzoeker Daryl Close. Daarnaast kunnen studentevaluaties de academische vrijheid ondermijnen, waarschuwt hij.

**ScienceGuide**

### Studentevaluaties: verbannen of goed benutten?

Opinie | door Diana Dolmans & Carolin Sehlbach & Renee Stalmeijer & Jill Whittingham & Ineke Wolfhagen

**22 maart 2022** | Waar Australisch onderzoek pas opriep tot het afschaffen van studentenquêtes, pleiten onderzoekers van de Universiteit Maastricht voor verantwoord gebruik van studentevaluaties. Een ban van dit instrument is volgens hen onnodig. Wel moet men het voorzichtig hanteren; daarom formuleren zij een aantal voorwaarden waaraan het gebruik van studentevaluaties moet voldoen.

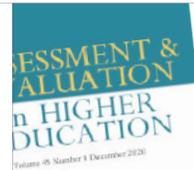


## Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education

ISSN: (Print) 0260-2938 (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/caeh20>

Sexism, racism, prejudice, and bias: a literature review and synthesis of research surrounding student evaluations of courses and teaching

Troy Hafferman



## Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education

ISSN: 0260-2938 (Print) 1469-297X (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/caeh20>

Unbiased, reliable, and valid student evaluations can still be unfair

Justin Esarey & Natalie Valdes



# Two common misconceptions

Student evaluations  $\neq$  teaching quality

Student evaluations  $\neq$  student learning

*'No single measure is adequate as evidence for evaluating teaching' (Benton and Young 2018, p. 3).*



## How can student feedback be valuable?

### *Lecturer perspective:*

- Gives insight in how students perceive and experience their learning process
- Provides input for course development and for professional development

### *Student perspective:*

- Stimulates self-reflection
- Training of professional skill
- Fosters involvement



## Towards a stronger student feedback culture:

### The project in a nutshell

#### Student

#### Observed Obstacles

Motivation

#### Proposed Remedies

Create awareness

Videos

Show impact!

Treat feedback as a skill

#### Instrument

Reliability

Validity

Harmful comments

Keep it lean!

Remove lecturer grade item

Reformulate open ended Qs

Filter harmful comments

#### Lecturer

Trust in instrument

Routine

Stronger integration in  
courses

Support lecturers

Use formative feedback  
techniques



# Formative feedback: example of a promising initiative

De Jong & Veenstra (2024), Universiteit Leiden

From the list below, please select one or two aspects of the course that you think could be improved upon (Tips).

After selecting the Tips, you will be asked to shortly elaborate on your selection in a follow-up question.

- The organization of the course
- The course material(s)**
- The instructional methods and learning activities
- The prescribed study load
- The didactic approach of the teacher
- The type of assessment(s)**
- OBJECTIVE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Figure 1. Screenshot of the first step in the FET survey where students are asked to select course aspects to give feedback on.

**Tips:** For each selected aspect, please indicate in the answer box below what you think could be improved and how.

The course material(s)

Sometimes I found the books a little unclear and sometimes they did not match the material covered during a lecture.

The type of assessment(s)

2500 words for a reflection paper is far too generous, one will repeat a lot.

Figure 2. Screenshot of FET step 2 where students are asked to elaborate on their selections.



## Next steps, supported by TLC Research Fellowship ('25-27)

1. Experiment with formative feedback techniques
2. Utilize AI to:
  - Summarize open ended feedback
  - Filter harmful comments
  - Develop measures for the *quality of* and *bias in* student feedback



## Literature

Benton, S. L., and S. Young. 2018. "Best Practices in the Evaluation of Teaching." IDEA Paper No. 69.

[https://www.ideaedu.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/IDEA%20Papers/IDEA%20Papers/IDEA\\_Paper\\_69.pdf](https://www.ideaedu.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/IDEA%20Papers/IDEA%20Papers/IDEA_Paper_69.pdf)

Close, D. (2025). Why student ratings of faculty are unethical. *Journal of Academic Ethics*, 23(3), 523-545.

De Jonge & Veenstra (2024). AI-supported Formative Evaluation of Teaching. <https://researchblog.iclon.nl/ai-supported-formative-evaluation-of-teaching/>

Chen, L., & Schunn, C. D. (2025). When student evaluation of teaching is no longer indicative: Psychology students' in-class experience, motivational factors and future choices. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 86, 101475.

Esarey, J., & Valdes, N. (2020). Unbiased, reliable, and valid student evaluations can still be unfair. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 45(8), 1106-1120.

Heffernan, T. (2022). Sexism, racism, prejudice, and bias: a literature review and synthesis of research surrounding student evaluations of courses and teaching. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 47(1), 144-154.



# Do you want to know more?

- Link to the videos

The screenshot shows a video player interface. On the left is a large play button over a stylized illustration of a university campus with a bridge over a canal. On the right is a sidebar titled 'Student Feedback Videos' with a close button (X). Below the title, it says '4 videos, 07 min 13 sec'. There are four video thumbnails listed:

- 1 Why Your Feedback Matters (01:42)
- 2 How to Give Constructive Feedback (01:42)
- 3 Waarom jouw feedback belangrijk is (02:04)
- 4 Hoe je waardevolle feedback geeft (01:45)



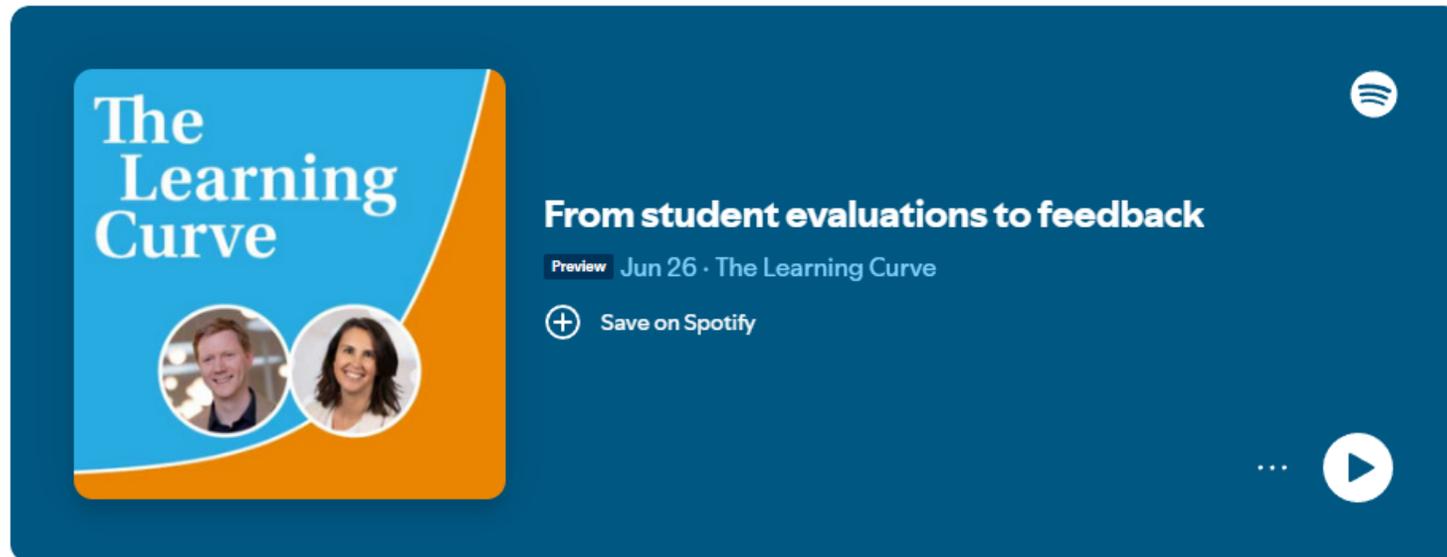
[edu.nl/gxuyr](https://www.uva.nl/onderwijs/leren/duy/gxuyr)



## Do you want to know more?

- Link to podcast

“In this episode we talk to our guest Dr. Jelle Boumans about turning student evaluations into useful feedback. We discuss anonymity, formulating constructive feedback and reflection on experience.”



[edu.nl/t3m6c](https://edu.nl/t3m6c)



# Journal Club Session

**Tuesday 7 October 12:00-13:00**

**How Midterm Student Feedback  
Enriches Our Education**

Organised by SIG SOTL (TLC Central)

**REC CK.02**



[edu.nl/7mt4f](https://edu.nl/7mt4f)



## Next lunch seminar

**Tuesday 21 October 12:00-13:00**

**Strengthening Student Resilience:**

**From Theory to Classroom Practice**

Machteld van den Heuvel (Psychology) &  
Andreas Schuck (Communication Science)

**REC C0.03 (TLC-FMG space)**



[edu.nl/8cvpw](https://edu.nl/8cvpw)