CNS Mid-Semester Survey Interpretation Guide

Reading, interpreting and acting on student course feedback can be tricky. The following outlines some approaches you could consider, if you have received particular feedback. It is important to combine the student feedback with your own course context and your previous instructional feedback. Take the feedback as an opportunity for improvement.

After you have given the mid-semester survey, it is important to follow-up with your class to let them know you have heard their feedback and taken it seriously, either taking time to do so in class or by following up in email.

Item #	If …	then…
1 & 2	the majority of students report that the class is too slow and too easy	-Insert more assessments into the class period and move on if students have mastered the material -Check with instructors of previous courses to ensure material is not overly duplicated -Check alignment of readings and class lectures and activities to make sure each offer additional value -Consider asking a STEM colleague to observe your class and give you feedback on pacing
1 & 2	the majority of students report the class is too fast and too hard	-Consider the reasonableness of prerequisite knowledge/skills you are assuming -Check your prerequisite assumptions with instructors of previous courses; consider making prerequisite review materials available -Consider providing detailed instructions on how students should prepare for class and study between classes -Insert more assessments into the class period for you and students to check for understanding -Consider asking students to submit a reflection at the end of class with a summary of what they thought the key idea was and a question on what was most unclear to them, for more ideas on this take a look at the UT FIC's webpage on "checks for learning" https://facultyinnovate.utexas.edu/check-learning -Consider asking a STEM colleague to observe your class and give you feedback on pacing.
3	the average reported class time is much higher than 2.5 * credit hours of the course	-Consider whether you should trim the number or length of assignments and readings -Consider providing explicit suggestions for how to study for the course and approach course assignments -Consider providing explicit breakdown of how long you expect them to spend on various things outside of class time
3	the average reported class time is much less than	-Consider increasing the number and complexity of structured assignments -Consider addressing your expectation for how much work they should be putting in outside of class time and how that time should be used

	2.5 * credit hours of the course	
4	many students report they are bored and few report that they are interested	-Consider utilizing more real world examples drawn from fields of interest of the students -Consider incorporating more active learning approaches into your course -Consider doing a pre-course survey to gather information on student interests and where appropriate integrate ties to these in the class -Also, combine with feedback from questions 1 & 2. If many report that the class is too slow and too easy, this may explain the feedback about lack of interest.
4	many students report they are confused	-Combine this feedback with your answers from questions 1 & 2. If they also report the class is too fast and too hard, follow the previous suggestions. -In general, consider pausing more for questions (and pausing long enough). -Consider asking students to submit a reflection at the end of class with a summary of what they thought the key idea was and a question on what was most unclear to them
4	few students report they are active in class	-Check out the TIDES portal for tips on incorporating more active learning approaches into your course: https://cns.utexas.edu/teaching-portal/active-learning
4	few students report they are supported in the class	-Consider being more explicit about office hour availability and what sort of help you can provide -Look at comments in question 7 to help identify any particular support needs that might be missing -In future classes, consider making an assignment early in the class that students must turn into you in your office (this helps lower the barrier of coming to your office for help and builds rapport) -Check out the tips for "office hours and student mentoring" at https://cns.utexas.edu/teaching-portal/teaching-hacks
4	any students report they are disrespected in class	-This feedback should be taken very seriously. -If a few students report this or you have received this feedback personally previously, consider giving the Extended mid-semester survey on "Approachability and Rapport with Students" to help clarify the problem. -Consider addressing this feedback with the class by saying something like: *"I take the learning environment in this class very seriously and was saddened to hear that some students felt disrespected in the class. Whether this came from me, the TA or your classmates, I would welcome further feedback so I can ensure all the students are treated with appropriate respect. Please feel free to provide more details in an anonymous note and I ensure you that this feedback will heard. Every student has the right to respectful treatment within this class."* -Consider taking some diversity and inclusion training.

4	many students do not report that they are valued	-Consider more group activities and group learning, for ideas on resources check out the FICs webpage on group learning: https://facultyinnovate.utexas.edu/group-learning or TIDES resources on group activities: https://cns.utexas.edu/images/CNS/Spotlight_Workshop2_HandoutsCombined.pdf -Consider trying to learn student names and calling on them by name -Include more invitations to office hours in class and describe how you help students succeed -Evaluate your class structure and policies to see if you are portraying respect to your students in the learning process
4	many students report that they are overwhelmed	-Combine this with feedback from questions 1 & 2. If they feel the class is too fast and too hard also, consider assessing your expectations. -Consider explicitly sharing how students should be spending their time in the class -Consider providing more in-class knowledge checks and providing more feedback on their progress -Look at the comments from question 6 and 7 to look for course specific feedback on the components that may be causing students to feel overwhelmed -Let students know that it is okay to struggle and that it takes time to master the material
4	few students report that they feel encouraged in the class	-Consider including more invitations to office hours in class; reflect on your informal comments in class -Try to avoid saying content is "easy" or "simple" as this can be discouraging to struggling students -Assess how you respond to student answers in class and on assignments and try to provide more positive encouragement on the right components and not just focus on pointing out the errors -Consider making more explicit recommendations on how to study and approach learning course material

If you have received student feedback that you would like help addressing, please feel free to request a consultation from TIDES by emailing s.eichhorn@utexas.edu.