

### ESTIMATED TIME

1-2 class periods

### PREREQUISITES

- This class should be taught in a classroom with access to computers.

### RESOURCES AVAILABLE

- *Constructive Criticism Rubric*
- *Criticism Examples*

### ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Students are consistently receiving constructive criticism from peers and teachers, but they are sometimes unable to utilize this feedback. It is incredibly beneficial for students to be able to see the “big picture” behind constructive criticism so that they can better understand, react, and reflect on the information they receive in grade reports, on assignments, and within collaborative groups.

Also, students who understand how to receive constructive criticism will also be better prepared to give helpful, kind, and specific constructive criticism as a peer reviewer on assignments in other courses.

### LESSON GOAL

Understand the complexities of constructive criticism so that students can better recognize, react to, and reflect on the information they receive from teachers, peers, and mentors.

### Essential Question

What are effective strategies for giving and receiving constructive criticism?

### Student Expectations

1. Participate in discussions about constructive criticism.
2. Define constructive criticism, give examples, and reflect on how they felt and reacted.
3. Role play how to elicit and react to constructive criticism.
4. Utilize the Chat Room to give and improve the art of giving constructive criticism.
5. Write a reflection about constructive criticism.

### LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the importance of being receptive to constructive criticism.
2. Demonstrate how to give, elicit, and receive constructive criticism.

### RATIONALE

While students are in school, on the job, or at an internship site, they have an opportunity to learn and apply many different skills from their mentor and co-workers. One of the skills that students can really benefit from and utilize in their academic, social, and experiential life is the ability to give, elicit, and receive constructive criticism. However, this can be a difficult skill for a student to acquire if they misinterpret constructive criticism as a personal attack. This lesson is designed to help student see constructive criticism as a “gift” from their mentor to help them grow and improve.



Giving and Receiving Constructive Criticism Rubric



Criticism Examples

## PROCEDURES: WHAT TO DO

1. **WHOLE GROUP** Hand out the *Giving and Receiving Constructive Criticism Rubric* to introduce the lesson and explain how students will be evaluated. Then discuss the following.
  - a. This quote introduces the topic for today's class:  
 "Criticism may not be agreeable, but it is necessary. It fulfills the same function as pain in the human body. It calls attention to an unhealthy state of things." ~ Winston Churchill  
 What does it mean to them? What does Churchill mean by *unhealthy*? When have they received constructive criticism? What are some examples?
  - b. What is the difference between *negative* or *destructive* criticism and *constructive* criticism? Constructive criticism can sometimes feel like someone is attacking you, but through today's lesson, you will see that constructive criticism can be an extremely helpful.
  - c. What are the benefits of constructive criticism?
2. **SMALL GROUP** Hand out the *Criticism Examples* to groups of 3-4 students. Have them discuss each one and describe each statement as vague or specific, constructive or negative. If the group decides a statement is negative, have them rewrite the criticism so it is constructive.
3. **WHOLE GROUP** Have each group present its rewrites for the negative criticisms. Then ask students to describe constructive criticism they have received.

### ASSESSMENT

**Discussion** Contribute to discussion to develop a deeper understanding of constructive criticism.

4. **WHOLE GROUP** Explain that among the most difficult things for anyone, even teachers, parents, employers, and mentors to do is to give constructive criticism. Counselors, parents, teachers, and good friends feel responsible to provide constructive criticism. People criticize others for legitimate and poor reasons. Understanding why you are receiving criticism is very helpful in figuring out how to respond to it.
  - a. On the board, write a list of at least ten reasons people criticize each other, and then identify those that are legitimate. For example, a legitimate reason is to help you save time, improve your performance, or avoid embarrassment. Poor reasons are because someone is jealous, angry, doesn't have time, doesn't understand the situation, or wants to intimidate.
  - b. Make a class list of guidelines for *giving* constructive criticism. Post it on the *Sakai* Chat and encourage students to revise or add to it. Guidelines may include:
    1. Be compassionate
    2. Be specific
    3. Be respectful
    4. Ask leading questions
    5. Be prepared that you might not understand the situation



Student Pages

6. Be calm
  7. Balance criticism with positive comments
- c. Next, for each of the reasons that were listed for giving criticism, have students suggest an appropriate, professional response. For example, if someone tells you that you are going the wrong way, you might say, “Thank You” and change directions. If someone is angry and yells at you for talking too much time, an appropriate response might be to calmly apologize and explain when you plan to be finished.
- d. Make a class list of guidelines for *taking* criticism. Post it on the *Sakai* Chat and encourage students to revise or add to it. Guidelines may include
1. Listen first
  2. Ask for clarification
  3. Determine the reason for the criticism
  4. Stay calm
  5. Stay professional
  6. Be respectful
  7. Be quiet if you can't think of anything in response
- 5. INDIVIDUAL** Have students write a one-page reflection on the following. Then have them use the *Sakai* Assignments Tool to submit their reflection for evaluation.
- a. Define constructive criticism.
  - b. Give an example of when you *gave* someone constructive criticism and explain how you felt and reacted in the situation.
  - c. Give an example of when you *received* constructive criticism and explain how you felt and reacted in the situation.
  - d. Give an example of when you received *destructive* criticism and explain how you felt and reacted in the situation.
  - e. What strategies do you use to give and receive criticism?

## ASSIGNMENT 1

### ASSESSMENT

**Define** Identify constructive criticism, give an example, and explain how you felt and reacted.

- 6. WHOLE GROUP** Explain that another aspect of criticism is asking for it. Many people are reluctant to give criticism and must be asked. As a class, brainstorm a list of ways to ask for criticism. These may include the following.
- a. How am I doing?
  - b. Is there a better way to do this?
  - c. How did you learn how to do this?
  - d. Can you show me?
  - e. What can I do to improve?
  - f. What would you do if you were me?
  - g. How would you have handled this situation?
- 7. PAIRS** Have students practice in pairs asking for feedback from another peer without laughing. Help them choose three different scenarios from the *Criticism Examples* to role play, making the wording



Community Building Rubric

feel right for them. The student not asking for feedback needs to give a made up, but realistic answer.

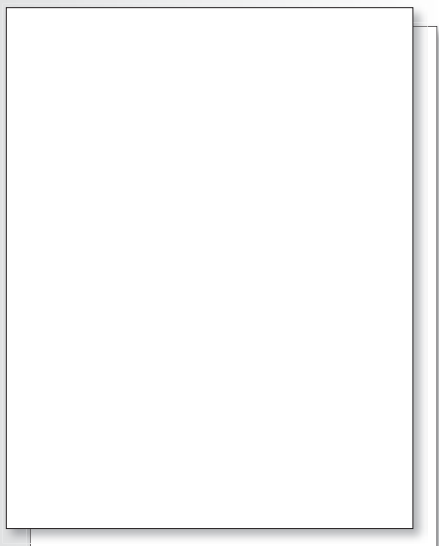
**ASSESSMENT**

**Role Play** Work with other students to practice the skills needed to ask for, clarify, react to, and document constructive criticism.

- 8. PAIRS** Explain to students that they are now going to give and receive real constructive feedback in the Chat Room function of the *Sakai* site by following these directions.
  - a. Post one assignment, a photo you took, drawing, journal entry, perhaps even Assignment 1 from today's class on *Sakai*. Do not offer up anything you are not comfortable sharing or receiving feedback on.
  - b. Your partner will read/react/and give constructive criticism on your work.
  - c. Students will work to give helpful, specific, and kind constructive criticism.
- 9. WHOLE GROUP** In the next class session, have volunteers give examples of effective constructive criticism they received.

**ASSESSMENT**

**Chat Room** Give constructive criticism to other students, utilizing proper technique and wording.



Student Page

## REFLECTION



## ASSIGNMENT 2

Have students write a reflection on the following prompts. Have them use the *Sakai* Assignments Tool to submit their reflections.

- Do you think this lesson should be called Giving and Receiving Constructive *Criticism* or Giving and Receiving Constructive *Feedback*? Why?
- Record, describe, and explain three examples of receiving and/or giving constructive criticism at site or in school. Include your feelings, your reactions, and what you would do differently in the future. Apply specific wording, labels, and concepts from this lesson to help you synthesize and apply your learning.
- What are the five most important things to remember from this lesson if you were to teach it to a friend or sibling?

### ASSESSMENT

**Reflection** Demonstrate understanding of giving and receiving constructive criticism.

### ASSESSMENT

Use the *Giving and Receiving Constructive Criticism Rubric* to evaluate student performance. Have students complete the rubric as a self-evaluation and then discuss the results.

In addition to the rubric, each submission should be evaluated individually for appropriateness for submission to the ePortfolio before posting.

## INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY

### CHAT ROOM

- Post and update guidelines for giving and receiving constructive criticism.

### ANNOUNCEMENT

- Use Announcements to remind students of assignments and due dates.
- Announcements should be coordinated with Assignments and Schedule.

### SCHEDULE

- Add Assignments to the Schedule.

### EVALUATE/REVIEW

- Student Assignments
- Student Portfolio
- Add a test or quiz if desired.

### LESSONS

- Review Lessons.
- Add Resources if desired.
- Change a Lesson if desired.
- Schedule a Lesson.
- Unschedule a Lesson.

### COMMUNICATE IF DESIRED

- Blogger
- Chat Room
- Drop box
- Mailtool
- Roster

### Ohio Academic Content Standards

#### Reading Language Arts Grade 10

#### Writing Process Drafting, Revising, Editing

10. Use available technology to compose text.

#### Writing Applications

6. Produce informal writings (e.g., journals, notes and poems) for various purposes.

## DIFFERENTIATING INSTRUCTION

### SPECIAL NEEDS

Students on IEPs should have additional practice with an aide, trusted student, or adult before he or she practices in front of the group, as well as additional assistance writing a constructive criticism for a peer.

Students with special needs can also use this lesson to help them create a form they can bring with them to a job site that explains to the mentor anything the student would like for him or her to know, especially information that they would like to share from the student's IEP (i.e. "I cannot type, I write things out by hand", "I struggle to talk with people I don't know, so I would like support in this area", etc.).

### GIFTED AND TALENTED

Gifted students may want to keep a running log at site (and beyond, if desired) of feedback they receive from mentors. This log may prompt the student to look for additional reflection on repetition of constructive criticism, areas in which to improve, areas in which the student would like more feedback, etc.

In addition, gifted and talented students may want to organize a form/survey/interview process for the students at the school to offer constructive criticism. These students may also want to use this data to create a school improvement group/leadership group that creates positive change within the school from the student body.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### WEBSITE SOURCES

Preview sites for appropriateness before recommending them to students. If links are broken, search for similar information.

These are excellent lists and tips for constructive feedback/criticism.

Teachers might want to just copy and paste information into word documents from these websites in order to avoid unnecessary distractions from advertisements.

- <http://www.selfhelpmagazine.com/articles/growth/feedback.html>
- <http://www.iwmf.org/training/constructive.php>
- <http://www.princetonreview.com/cte/articles/hired/handleCriticism.asp>
- <http://www.onlinedatingmagazine.com/columns/abetteryou/22-constructivecriticism.html>