

Seeking good feedback

Sample cover message to readers

Hi everyone,

Attached is the evolving draft of my paper. Right now I'm pretty sure which data should be included, and also have a good idea of the major points to be made for each figure. However, I have only a tentative version of the introduction prepared and nothing formal for the discussion (just an outline at this point).

What I'd appreciate most is feedback on the structure of the results section. Have I made the point of each paragraph clear? I'd also love feedback on how to set up the problem in the introduction. I feel like I've only vaguely linked the question I'm addressing to the literature; my transition from what's going on in the field at large to what we're working on in the lab not really being clear. Finally, if you can think of any connections to the literature that I've missed in the outline for the discussion, please let me know.

Of course, I'd also appreciate hearing about any other points that might jump out at you.

Looking forward to seeing your suggestions!

Chris

- Incorporate feedback as a natural part of the process: “Writing is re-writing”
- Ask for help: “How could I do better?”
- Be specific about challenges you have encountered
- Expect critiques of additional issues
- Be open to feedback; trust that the critic is on your side

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How do I know if the criticism (feedback) is “right”?

- if the criticism jives with your own gut feeling
- if multiple people flag the issue
- if the critique makes a good passage better
- for clarity issues, the audience is always right

<https://juliannadrums.com/when-should-you-not-listen-to-criticism/>

The Joy of Criticism

Criticism as information (data) that can help you improve

- As recipient: can be beneficial and positive
- As giver: intended to improve and strengthen the recipient
- **Negative criticism and how to deal with it**
 - Can be non-strategic: non-specific about goals or solutions
 - Can attack self esteem: fail to support comments with evidence or fair comparisons
 - Welcome the criticism, assume that critic has your best interests at heart
 - Listen carefully and ask questions to clarify; ask for suggestions
 - Allow critic to deliver all criticisms before responding (don't rebut point-by-point)
 - Stay cool: try to be relaxed

By Peter Fiske
<https://www.science.org/content/article/joy-criticism>
doi: 10.1126/article.65156

The Joy of Criticism

How to be a positive critic

- Be humble
- Actively seek criticism; ask “How could I be doing this better?”
- Become aware of the emotions, actions, and feelings of the people you are criticizing
- Acknowledge that your criticisms are necessarily subjective
- Give concrete and fair criteria for criticizing
- Lead through actions, set a good example, follow up with questions

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Consider reflecting on how well you take feedback.

This can help you recognize when you're being receptive or defensive...

...and when you might need to revisit the feedback at a later point.