Frequent Student Feedback

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Over the years, I have found that there are types of feedback that are commonly given to students. I have collected them here as a handy reference so you can avoid the more common issues in your writing and presentations.

**Writing**

**Undefined acronyms.** When you use an acronym for the first time, spell it out and give acronym in parenthesis. Example

- “This paper describes how Game Based Learning (GBL) can be applied to...”

**Avoid first person references.** This is not a hard and fast rule, and depends on the venue and style of where you are publishing, but generally scientific papers are focused on the work, not the authors. Examples include

- BAD: “In this proposal I have described about how intelligent designer feedback systems assist designers to reduce...”
- BETTER: “This paper describes how intelligent designer feedback systems assist designers to reduce...”
- EVEN BETTER: “Intelligent designer feedback systems assist designers to reduce...

**Numbers in text.** Spell out number less than 10, use number in text for 10 and greater (e.g. eight, nine, 10, 100).

**Constructions.** Do not.

**Style.** Do not use words that sound like you are assessing how good/bad a work is.

- Responding to emotions such as frustration is a *grand* step towards building a more human-like affective computing (Picard, 2002).

**Avoid vague words.** When you can be specific, do so.

- “...many of the units were faulty...” would be better as “…17 of the 20 units were faulty...”

**Charts and Tables of Data**

Charts and tables should be interpretable without any supporting text.
**Report variation with means.** When reporting averages (means) in text or in charts, you should always simultaneously report some measure of variance (e.g. standard deviation, standard error, range). Examples include:

- “Participants averaged 2054 flight hours (range 1000-3010 hours)...”
- The mean response time was 25.7 seconds (standard deviation 9.4 seconds)...”

![Example of Chart](image)

**Figure 1.** Average score (with standard error bars) for each system type tested.

**Chart Labels.**

- All axes (x and y) should have labels with units (if applicable).
- A title for the chart should be included.
- Use whole words instead of acronyms and codes

**Captions.**

- Figure captions go at the bottom of the figure.
- Table captions go at the top of the table (since tables can span multiple pages, if the caption where at the bottom you would have to flip ahead to read the caption).
- All charts, figures, or tables should be explicitly referred to in the text (e.g. “Figure 1 illustrates the average score for each system type...”)
- Charts or tables should it should follow immediately after the end of the paragraph in which it is first cited. This rule can be modified somewhat if it leaves too much blank space on the page, but the figure should be soon after its first citation.

**Chart location**

- Chart, figure, or table should immediately follow the text paragraph where it is first referenced.
Manuscript sections

Executive Summary
The executive summary is exactly what it sounds like – a summary of the whole paper for those people who will not read anything else.

- Thus there should be no information in the executive summary that is not in the main body of the report.
- And the main paper should be written assuming that there is no executive summary.

Methods
- Detail exactly what data was collected, and how it was collected. How many parts? How many operators?

Results
- Give your results in the main body of the text, not the appendix. You can put your raw data in the appendix, but you must present your data in summary form in the results section.

Appendices
An appendix can be a great place to add detail that would otherwise break up the narrative flow of the main body of the document. But an appendix is for supporting materials only.

- Do not assume that the reader will read the appendix. Everything in the main body of the text section should stand on its own. The appendix is for supplemental detail.
- The main body of the text has to have enough detail to explain and summarize the plan/experimental setup/results.
- Don’t use appendix as a repository for figures that you reference in the main text. All figures in the discussed in the main text should be in the main text.
- All appendices should be mentioned in the main body of the text.
- Each appendix should have a top level heading

References
Any information in your manuscript that came from somewhere else (pictures, ideas, text) you have to attribute the source, else it may constitute plagiarism.

- You give a citation in the text (see example in next bullet), and then list the full reference at the end of the report (see example at the end of this document).
- There are many styles to citations and reference formatting. For instance, the APA (American Psychological Association) style is a very common style (commonly used to cite sources within the social sciences (Paiz et al, 2013).

This depends on the style you use, as there are many. For APA style, some common mistakes include:
• Using “et al.” the first time you reference an article with 6 authors or less. You should give all names in this case.

Project Posters (IE 361)
• Make sure everyone in the team presents at the poster session. When there is only one presenter at the poster session, that person dominates conversation to exclusion of teammates.
• Do not make the poster too cluttered (i.e. too many words, text font too small).
• Make sure every figure or graph on the poster tells a story or makes a point.
• When presenting, judges most want to hear what the problem was, how you solved it, and the impact on the client of your solution/recommendations.
• When presenting, introduce yourselves.
• Dress well, do not chew gum, and in general be professional

Project Presentations
• Practice, practice, practice.
• Make sure you spend enough time presenting the problem, so the audience can understand the results.

Reference List