



Rowan University

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Handling and Applying Feedback

Some content in this presentation is kindly contributed by the
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The Nature of Feedback

Feedback comes in a lot of different forms. For dissertation writers this may include:

- *Clarification or expansion of ideas.* Fixing issues with audience understanding or going more deeply into ideas that require further exploration or explication.
- *Reducing and cutting of ideas.* Working to say more with less or to cut out extraneous material.
- *Framing and organization.* Changing the angle at which you have approached an idea, or finding a clearer/neater way to order information.
- *Limitations and over-generalizations.* Recognition of the limitations of our own work and how far we can reasonably apply it without over-generalizing.
- *Word choice, grammar, and vocabulary.* Making changes that correct “line-level” issues in the writing. These are usually straightforward and easy changes to make.

What If I Disagree?

Sometimes, we get feedback that we believe is incorrect. When this feedback comes from editors, reviewers, advisors and committee members, this problem can be difficult to navigate. It's always a good idea to figure out *why* you disagree with the feedback, which can usually be traced back to two possible issues:

- *What you have written isn't doing the work of conveying your meaning to the reader effectively.* (E.g. Your argument hasn't been thought through enough to be convincing; you have the information in your head, but it hasn't made it to the page; etc.)
- *You and your reader have a conceptual disagreement on an aspect of your article/theory/data analysis, etc.* (In this case, it is important to bring the issue up with the reader specifically to explore where the conceptual disagreement is coming from.)

Strategies to Handle Feedback (I)

Strategy 1: Emotional Management

Getting feedback on something you worked hard on can be challenging. The first thing you want to do before starting to revise is check in with your emotions and see how you are feeling about it.

- **Read the feedback and then take a long break.** If you are feeling frustrated, angry, or overwhelmed, step back from the feedback for a day or two to let your emotions settle. Working with feedback while you are feeling negative about that feedback makes it much more difficult to actually understand what is being asked of you and apply it effectively.
- **Re-read the feedback.** Once you've had a chance to come to terms with the negative feedback, you can read it again to get a real sense of what you are being asked to do, at which point you can move on to Strategy #2.

Strategies to Handle Feedback (II)

Strategy 2: Summarizing Feedback and Creating a Revision Plan

- Re-read the text that has been commented on in its entirety.
- Create a three-column spreadsheet with these columns:
 - Column A: Write out or cut-and-paste a specific piece of feedback from the text.
 - Column B: Record your thoughts about how to revise and any questions you have about that specific feedback.
 - Column C: Write your revision plan. How do you plan to put this specific feedback into action?
- Go through the entire text, using this three-column spreadsheet to record, comment on, and plan a task for each piece of feedback you have been given.
- Once you are ready to revise, work through your tasks one by one.

Feedback	Thoughts	Plans
“Methodologically, I still have questions about the strength of the claims we can draw from self-reported data. You are claiming too much from self reports” -Advisor A	Even though I disagree with classic self-reported data arguments, I agree my claims can be augmented. I see where this perspective is coming from. I wasn't careful enough about this in the draft.	In the methods chapter, I will add a discussion of self-reported data to the “limitations” area. In Ch 5, in the discussion 27, I will temper my claims. I also want to emphasize, to address my own concern, Salomon and Perkins' (2012) Detect, Elect, Connect model

Strategies to Handle Feedback (III)

Strategy #3: Consider Another Set of Eyes for Your Revision

After you've made your revisions, step back and re-read your feedback, making sure you carefully made all of the changes.

Once you feel that you have made those changes, give your document and the original feedback to another person to see if there is anything that you have missed or misunderstood. This is a great thing to bring to a writing group peer review session, but it's also something that can be done for you by a willing friend.