



Feedback on writing exercises

Supervising PhD students

1. Slow mover

Your PhD student is working on his first paper. The work is going slowly, though, because he keeps rescheduling appointments you've made. This is annoying you. What's more, you feel like he is not a great talent at writing and that these appointments are essential to keep him moving forward. After a first draft that took forever to achieve, a month has now passed without any new texts from him. He has postponed this appointment twice already and you have had enough.

You decide to say something about the situation that will motivate him to improve his conduct. How do you formulate your feedback?

2. An unguided missile

You feel like your graduate student wants nothing more than to do things on her own. She is very independent and knows what she wants. Rarely does she ask you for feedback, and the feedback that you do give her doesn't seem to register. This is especially noticeable in the way she works on her papers. She has barely done anything with the suggestions you made to give the paper she is currently working on more focus. In your opinion the paper lacks clear direction, it's going off in all directions, although her aim is to combine all the different secondary projects in this paper.

You decide to have a meeting to discuss this. How do you formulate your feedback?

3. More input

Your graduate student has been working for about two years now and you think it is about time he contributed more to the content. He follows the project proposal that you wrote pretty well, but you also expect him to contribute his own input to the project. In the first article there was a lack of his own creative contributions in the discussion, so you gave him some ideas as suggestions, which he immediately used. Now he has started on a second article and you feel it is time he showed some more of his own input. Increasingly you wonder what moves him. You are not sure whether he wants to continue as a researcher after obtaining his PhD, but you definitely don't see it happening if he continues as he is.

A meeting to discuss the set-up of this second article is scheduled soon. You decide to give him feedback about his own contribution. How do you formulate your feedback?