**Thesis ring: giving and receiving feedback**

In your thesis ring meetings you will provide other students with feedback on their writing. It is important to be aware of certain criteria, described here, when giving and receiving feedback. Feedback literally means ‘giving back’. It is not a euphemism for criticism. You could describe feedback as: information regarding the way my message or behaviour has been received and interpreted.

By receiving feedback you get information about what others notice and this allows you to obtain insights into your own blind spots. It helps you analyse your own patterns in your behaviour or, in the case of this thesis ring, your writing. It stimulates you to think about and implement possibilities to improve. *Receiving feedback* allows you to develop your competences or skills. Logically, *Giving feedback* is a prerequisite for this. Well-given feedback can help you assess your strengths and weak points and allows you to address your weaknesses from the basis of your strengths. Feedback is an instrument for your own development. It can therefore be useful to think about certain points on which you would like to receive feedback beforehand.

Here, we list the advice/pointers for when you **give** and when you **receive** feedback.

When **giving feedback** it is important to:

1. **Balance** your feedback: Mention **both positive** and **constructive** aspects (Tops and tips). It is equally important to know your strengths, as it is to know your weaknesses. Moreover, receiving positive feedback motivates.

2. **Be specific.** Comments such as “ I think it is a bad paragraph and it needs revision” are not helpful for the receiver. “For me, some of the sentences in this paragraph are quite long and I found it hard to identify the main clause.”

3. **Connect concrete suggestions** for improvement **to constructive feedback.** This will give the receiver the feeling that they can actually improve/work on it.

4. Provide examples.

5. Limit your comments to what you have **observed (objectively)** in an open way (without any judgement or premature conclusions). For instance: “I noticed that you used two different names throughout your text for this treatment, did you do this for a certain reason?”. In this way you give the receiver the opportunity to respond and explain. To address the subjective factors, which also play a part in how you receive information, you can **describe the effect it has on you**. For instance: “For me, it would be clearer if you started with this element”.

6. **Respect the intentions** of the receiver. Be careful with remarks such as “I think you should have elaborated on that topic”. This may not be in line with the intentions the receiver had when writing that piece. Check this first.

7. **Don’t generalise.** Try to avoid using always/never in your sentences, such as “You always do that”.

8. **Stimulate** the receiver **to reflect** on his or her own patterns/behaviour. For instance by checking if he or she understood what you meant with your feedback.

When **receiving feedback** it is important to:

1. To **let the other person finish** his or her story/sentences.

2. **Listen**

3. **Don’t get angry** (the other person is helping you).

4. **Don’t defend** yourself (an often made mistake).

5. **Summarize** the feedback **and check** if you understood it correctly.

6. Consider if you agree with the feedback and to what degree.

7. **Don’t trivialise** the received **positive feedback**. Try to see the opportunities to **use it**.

8. Try to find/**think of opportunities** for adjustment/change **together.**