# Getting the Most out of Practice: Peer Feedback

You will get feedback on your interpreting performances from various sources, including instructors, peers, and yourself. Sometimes, such as after an exam, you will get feedback that is focused on evaluating your skill level (evaluating your performance) against certain criteria *(this kind of feedback is called 'summative')*. However, most of the feedback you will receive is focused on your development, growth, and learning, and is intended to give you information and guidance that you can use as you work to improve your skills *(this kind of feedback is called 'formative')*.



We often give feedback to and receive feedback from our classmates *(this is called 'peer feedback')*. This feedback can be very helpful to us in our practice and learning. This handout contains recommendations and guidance about peer feedback.

- Remember that the purpose of feedback is to share information/observations that will help someone make positive progress along their learning journey. It should be honest, but also constructive. It's meant to build up, encourage, and motivate—not to tear down, discourage, or judge.
- Remember that you are commenting on the **performance**, not the person. Avoid comments directed at the person; instead, direct comments toward the interpretation. For example, comment that "the part about X was difficult to follow" rather than "you didn't make sense when you explained X." Avoid making comparisons between individuals.
- Balance positive and negative comments. Be sure to mention at least one thing you learned or really appreciated.
- Ask questions. For example, how did the interpreter feel about their performance? What difficulties were encountered? How were they resolved? Listen to the answers to your questions, and follow up on them.
- Find out what the interpreter's goal for the exercise is and tailor your comments to that goal. For example, if the interpreter's goal was to use effective interaction management strategies, focus your feedback primarily on that aspect of their performance.
- Don't just pay attention to language—also be attentive to and comment on behavior, and on consequences of choices. For example, "I noticed that you did not ask for clarification in section X. How might that have affected the interaction?"
- Give examples, but do not give a laundry list of 'errors.' Look for patterns in the performance *(things that happen more than once, similar issues that create a trend)* and comment on those. Pick the most noteworthy things you observed, or things that are related to the interpreter's stated goal for the exercise.
- If your classmate is willing for you to do so, offer concrete (specific) suggestions of things that the interpreter could do to address issues and to further develop their skills.
- Be gracious, humble, and attentive to what your classmate is open/not open to receiving as feedback during a given practice session.

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