

Student name: _____

Class: _____

Date: _____

LEARNING FROM MISTAKES

Everybody makes mistakes in their studies, work or personal lives. People often feel upset when this happens, but mistakes can prompt you to review what you did wrong, learn from your mistakes and do things differently the next time.

You think about learning from mistakes in *C21 English for the 21st Century*, Level 5. Useful feedback in academic settings supports other students and provides constructive suggestions for improving their learning and academic activities. It is important to respond to feedback in a positive way that accepts honest criticism and any mistakes that have been made.

Practice

1 **01** Imagine you have made a presentation. Listen to the feedback comments. Tick the ones you would like to receive.

- a b c d e f

2 **02** Read and listen to the feedback conversations. Then discuss the questions in pairs.

Conversation 1

- A We need to talk about your report. It has some serious problems.
B Oh, dear. I'm useless. I can't write reports.

Conversation 2

- A The formatting is wrong in your essay. The type is too small to read.
B I followed your instructions. You said 10-point Times Roman.

Conversation 3

- A There are so many spelling and grammar mistakes. I can't read it.
B But I checked it. There can't be any mistakes.

Conversation 4

- A You aren't paying attention in lectures. You usually look like you're asleep!
B I'm not asleep! I take lots of notes.



- a Is the feedback polite and kind?
b Does the feedback include suggestions on how to improve?
c Is the feedback constructive (will result in positive changes)?
d Are the responses to the feedback positive?

TIP

Feedback should help the listener to respond positively and motivate them to improve.

3 In pairs, rewrite the feedback from the conversations in Exercise 2 to make it more constructive. How will the listener respond? Role-play the conversations.

4  **03 Role-play the feedback conversation. Then listen and discuss the questions in pairs.**

Tutor I liked the way you presented the data. But it might help to show the sources next time.
Student Yes, I should have added them to the graphs. I'll put them in for my next presentation.
Tutor Good. It was interesting how you included an image for your first point. How about using one for each main point? It really helps the audience follow your explanation.
Student I hadn't thought about that. I could have shown a video to explain it better. I'll research better visual aids in the future.
Tutor The audience really appreciated how you answered their questions, but I would suggest facing them a little more and maintaining eye contact.
Student Yes, you're right. I shouldn't have looked at the screen to explain the chart. I'll try to look at my audience more from now on.
Tutor I thought the summary slide at the end was particularly useful for the other students. It'd be better to stick to keywords, though.
Student So they listen and don't just read it. Got it. I'll definitely do that for the next one. I should have added it to the handout too, I guess.

- a Is all the feedback positive?
- b Is the feedback constructive?
- c Does the feedback include suggestions for how to improve?
- d Does the student mention what he should have done in the past?
- e Does the student mention what he will do in the future to improve?

TIP

Be positive when listening to feedback that includes criticism. Use positive body language (eye contact, posture, etc.), and accept criticism by stating what you should have done and by suggesting ways you will improve in the future.

5  **In pairs, write positive responses to the tutor's comments.**

a
I liked the subject of your talk. But it might help to add images next time.

b
It was interesting how you used a poll to collect data. How about asking more people in future?

c
Your argument was very focused. Perhaps add a few more citations, though.

d
I really appreciated your participation, but I would suggest listening to others more in seminars.

e
I thought your questions in the lecture were good. It'd be better to stick to the main topic, though.

f
The level of detail in your exam answers was excellent. One thing to work on, though, is checking your answers for mistakes.

- 6**  In pairs, role-play the feedback scenarios. Then listen to other people's conversations. In groups, present your feedback on what was good, what could be better and any suggestions you have.

Scenario 1

Student A is talking to Student B about exam results. Student B:

- didn't do enough work (revision, reading)
- didn't check answers after writing them
- didn't make a plan before writing essay questions
- was tired in exams because they didn't sleep enough beforehand
- didn't join any study groups

Scenario 2

Student A is talking to Student B about their project. Student B:

- hasn't encouraged other students in the group
- has interrupted and been negative in meetings
- hasn't researched any data for the project
- hasn't practised the project presentation
- has made spelling and grammar mistakes in project proposals

Reflect

- 7**  Think about feedback you have received from teachers and other students. Discuss how you responded to it. Could you have done anything different?