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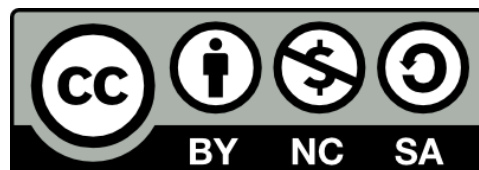


DIGITAL LEARNING
IN THE FAMILY

LEARNING PACKAGE FOR MENTORS (IO2)

Giving feedback, tips for mentors

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IV. GIVING FEEDBACK - TIPS FOR MENTORS

Important preliminary remark

People from other cultures are often not used to receiving positive feedback (praise) and especially negative feedback (criticism). Such factual criticism is often perceived as personally disparaging and not seen as an opportunity. First, make your mentee aware of the importance of criticism in Germany. The following text, written in simple language for your mentee, can help you with this:

»At work in Germany, you often get the information that you are not doing the job well, that you have to get better. Such information is called criticism. You often get criticism in Germany. It's very important: If you know what you're doing wrong, you can get better! You will also receive criticism from your mentor, but also positive reactions (praise). You will receive information about your strengths and weaknesses – i.e. what you are good at and what you are not yet very good at. Criticism has nothing to do with you personally, you receive criticism for your work and your achievements.

Criticism is always an opportunity for you, because then you can do something different and better. Always ask if you don't understand a criticism. Always ask if you don't understand a task correctly. After the interview, tell your mentor what you learned from the criticism.«

How to give effective feedback

For you as a mentor, it is important to be able to give your mentee feedback on the course of the collaboration. It is just as important that your mentee knows how to accept feedback well, because this is the only way for your mentee to progress and learn.

Good feedback is a gift. Without productive feedback, it is difficult to improve. If you don't understand your strengths and development needs, it's difficult to know how to grow and how to learn.

- Never force the feedback on your mentee. Create a basis of trust within which your mentee can ask for your opinion.
- Talk to your mentee personally about any feedback.
- Always give positive feedback (praise, strengths) first and then move on to critical observations.
- Only address things that your mentee can actually change and understand.
- Formulate your feedback appropriately, clearly, professionally and without accusations (pay attention to the needs of your mentee).
- Describe your observations and avoid moralism.
- Don't judge, don't interpret.
- Make sure your statements are based on specific, observable behavior and not on the person or situation in general.



- Do not criticize in general, but refer to individual, specific, limited and recognizable points of criticism that need to be mentioned (typical behavior).
- Form sentences as »I-statements«: report on your observations and what they triggered in you. Give examples of what your mentee could have done better in the specific situation, how your mentee could have reacted differently.
- Point out the consequences of the behavior, both positive and negative.
- If possible, make concrete and implementable recommendations for changes for areas that need improvement (criticism with a constructive solution offer).
- Offer your support, but don't force it on your mentee.
- Always make sure that your mentee has understood everything correctly. Especially with critical feedback, misunderstandings can have far-reaching consequences!

How to receive adequate feedback

Your mentee is encouraged to write to you after each meeting whether they were satisfied with the meeting and the joint work. Your mentee should also tell you what was not so good and what problems he sees in working together. In this way, your mentee should learn how to deal with feedback. It is important for you to be able to accept feedback and, in particular, criticism in a professional manner. The feedback from your mentee can be used as a starting point for the next discussion. Help your mentee offer constructive, factual criticism—both positive and negative.

The following points should help you to receive feedback professionally:

- Listen carefully. Let your mentee finish and try to understand everything that was said.
- Do not defend or justify yourself. You are only offered feedback on how you behave in a given situation, and your motivations and beliefs remain hidden from the other person. This can mean that your behaviour looks or is perceived differently than what you actually intended to achieve. See this as an opportunity for your future
- Do not defend or justify yourself. You are only offered feedback on how you behave in a given situation, and your motivations and beliefs remain hidden from the other person. This can mean that your behaviour looks or is perceived differently than what you actually intended to achieve. Take this as an opportunity to thoroughly reflect on your future behaviour.
- Pay attention to your own feelings. Keep in mind that feedback is based on observations and not ultimate realities. It does not attack you as a person, but only a specific, observed behaviour is discussed.
- Do not respond to criticism with counter-criticism. When you receive feedback, it is your behaviour that is discussed, not that of your mentee. If necessary, provide your own feedback after the Interview.
- Ask questions if you do not understand everything.
- It's up to you how much of the feedback you want to accept. Feedback is always an offer, not an instruction to change your behaviour.
- At the end of the talk, tell your mentee what you have learned from the feedback.