

**Small Group Feedback Session for
Thomas Leibundgut, Teaching Assistant
Classics 83/History 101: The Greeks
Friday, February 8, 2019 at 1pm**

The student small-group method of gathering teaching feedback has been in use at Stanford since the spring of 1980. It is a procedure initiated by the instructor and done in his or her absence during approximately 20 minutes of a class period.

During this time, a trained interviewer asks the students the following three questions:

1. What is going well in this section/lab and contributes to your learning?
2. What could use improvement? If not already obvious, what specific suggestions would you make for change?
3. (Optional) What can you, as students, do to make this section/lab even more successful?

If the class is very small, the students are interviewed as a whole; if large, the students are divided into groups of three to six. For this session, the class of 16 students was divided into 4 groups.

This method has been found to yield very specific and useful information from students. The results of the SGFS are discussed with the instructor in a private session afterward, and the consultant and the instructor consider what changes in the class, if any, seem appropriate.

The results of this session are as follows. All the answers were unanimous unless otherwise noted in parentheses with the approximate proportion of students who agreed with that item. Illustrative student comments from the written evaluations are provided for selected items.

1) What is going well in this class and contributes to your learning?

- All students felt that the small group discussions were helpful to their learning.
- All students agreed that Thomas is a respectful, low-pressure, and flexible TA, which helps students feel comfortable in class and contributes to their learning.
- Most students agreed that the individual presentation contribute to their learning (13/16).
- Most students appreciate when Thomas bring examples of physical objects (Greek collection pieces) to class to help students visualize things from readings (13/16)
- Most students enjoyed that the section is not overly structured, and that Thomas doesn't cut off discussion (11/16)

2) *What could use improvement? If not already obvious, what specific suggestions would you make for change?*

- Most students wish that there were more opportunities for small group discussion before going into large group discussion so that they can gain confidence in their ideas before sharing with everyone. (15/16)
- Most students would appreciate an introduction before individual presentations to help them find connections about how the topics relate to previous lessons—for example, a brief reminder of the background for a previous topic before going into more detail. (15/16)
- Some students would like to see the individual presentations be more interactive—perhaps through use of PowerPoint presentations, visual aids, etc. (11/16)
- Some students wish that there was time for longer large group discussions. (8/16)

3) *What can you, as students, do to make this course even more successful? (Collected from student notes but not raised for discussion. The number in parentheses shows the number of groups that mentioned the statement in their notes.)*

- Students agreed that they could bring up more of the ideas they shared in their small groups when the class is brought back together for discussion. (4/4)
- Students felt that they could do more preparation with the readings, could practice their presentations more beforehand, and could attend office hours to make the course more successful (3/4)

Facilitator: Molly Witter
VPTL Graduate Teaching Consultant