

Acknowledgement Strategies

The most obvious form of acknowledgement is praise—“You did a great job!”—but you can also consider these:

Acknowledging feelings/state of mind, for example:

- I could tell you were a bit nervous, but you handled it very well when you brought up...
- I realize you worked really hard on the abstract. It must be disappointing to get this feedback.
- I know the presentation didn't go as well as you wanted, but let's talk and keep on practicing and revising it.
- I know you're struggling with writing; I struggle with it as well sometimes. Some strategies that work for me are...
- It's time for us to celebrate all this hard work! *or* That was a really great final presentation—let's have a celebratory dinner/ice cream/coffee...

Acknowledging improvement, for example:

- I've noticed a lot of improvement from your first practice run to your final presentation. What strategies have been the most useful for you?
- Your writing/presentations are showing more and more clarity.
- I see that you've been setting aside time every morning to work on your presentation. How is it going?
- Adding in the findings from was a creative approach.

Acknowledging effort or engagement, for example:

- You're participating more frequently in conversations at lab meeting; I appreciate that.
- I can tell from your outline that you've been thinking about Can you walk me through your thought process?
- I see where you were going with your thinking on this, but let's consider it a bit further. For example,...
- You've done a great job with getting your paragraphs drafted out; now continue with filling them in with sufficient detail. For example, this sentence could be elaborated on.
- You asked an interesting question during the seminar last week—let's discuss it further.
- [Mentee name], that speaks to your point about.... [acknowledges participation in discussion]
- When you receive a draft, schedule the time to go over it in your calendar, then tell the mentee, e.g., “I got it. I'm going to look it over Tuesday at 2PM, and you'll have it back by Tuesday night.”

Acknowledgement of accomplishments or progress publicly, for example:

- Can you share this idea/this information with the rest of the team at the next meeting?
- Before we start on the agenda for today, I just want to recognize [mentee name] for compiling a great list of resources for... *or* I wanted to congratulate [mentee name] on their accepted manuscript/abstract/...
- Mention a mentee's communication success (accepted abstract, manuscript, etc.) to a colleague in the mentee's presence (for example, at a conference).

General engagement strategies, for example:

- The audience looked really engaged during your presentation.
- Walk to the meeting with me and let's talk about that.
- I notice you talked to Dr. X. How did your conversation go?