

Position on issue: The writer clearly states the position at the end of the second paragraph.

Topic development and essay organization: Although the structure of the essay isn't articulated in outline form (such as "Point 1"; "Point 2"; etc.), the structure is evident. The writer uses paragraphing and transitional phrases, such as "another advantage," to help the reader follow the train of thought. The writer develops the points within each paragraph. In the next-to-the-last paragraph, for example, the writer offers three reasons for believing that the danger of personal retaliation is not very significant.

Language usage, sentence structure, and punctuation: The essay might be subjected to two related criticisms. One, sometimes the examples seem to be a little abstract. The example of "math scores" never really gets very specific, though it is difficult to say exactly how the writer could improve on what is written.

Additionally, the prose, while effective, seems a little dry. It lacks zip. Even the recipe analogy in the last paragraph seems flat. Maybe the writer could have mentioned a specific dish, say gumbo, in which several ingredients have to be mixed together to get the desired result. Even that little flair would have lightened up the writing style.

Summary and conclusions: This is a very strong response. It would surely get at least a "5" and more likely a "6" from most readers.

Below Average Response

In my opinion, students should not get to evaluate teachers because it wouldn't mean anything, and it would just be a chance for some students to dump on teachers they don't like.

Teachers give students grades for a reason. Teachers know more than the students do because they've been to college. So when a teacher gives a test, that teacher knows the right answer and can mark the papers accordingly. This system makes sense. Students have not been to college. They don't have experience teaching classes. Most, if not all, students couldn't make up an exam to test a teacher's ability to teach. They wouldn't know which questions to ask on the exam and wouldn't know what the right answers are. So students really don't know how to grade a teacher on ability to teach.

Also, some, maybe even many, students would use the evaluation to take pot shots at teachers they don't like or have a grudge about. This would be especially dangerous if students got together to say the same thing. If only one student says a teacher is rude, then no one might care. If half the class says a teacher is rude, the principal would figure where there's smoke there's fire.

The evaluations could also be unfair to hard teachers. No students like to have a lot of homework, but homework is important. It's a given fact that some teachers give more homework than others. So would students give low marks to the teachers who gave the most homework? That seems like it might happen.

Even if there were an evaluation form with categories, this would still be a problem. Everyone could agree to mark low on "Preparedness" and "Ability to Communicate." That way, there wouldn't be any question asked about retribution. The students would be using the form.

Student evaluations of teachers is not a good idea. The whole thing won't help and it could really hurt some good teachers.

Position on issue: The writer conveys the position in the first sentence. Although the position is clearly stated, the prose used is not an effective manner in which to start the essay.

Topic development and essay organization: This essay is pretty rough, but it does contain some relevant ideas. The writer explains that the evaluations would have limited utility and further that the system could be abused. The second point is developed in greater detail than the first. The writer argues that students might conspire against an unpopular teacher and that the evaluations might be used to retaliate against taskmasters. The final point in this development—that the evaluation form itself might mask this phenomenon—is particularly interesting.