

Evaluations topic: **Online Teaching Evaluations**

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#### Introduction:

The world of teaching is changing. With a number of college courses including online components to enhance instruction and the growing number of online courses being offered at colleges and universities, it is apparent that the method of teacher evaluation will soon follow suit. For many teachers, creating and interpreting online evaluations is uncharted territory. This information sheet will both describe the online evaluation and how it can effectively be used at colleges and universities.

#### About Online Evaluations:

Online evaluations can be a helpful tool for teachers to gain relevant feedback about their course structure and method of instruction. There are both benefits and drawbacks to using online evaluations. These attributes must be considered when deciding to utilize an online evaluation method.

#### Benefits:

- Immediate feedback
  - Online survey instruments have the capability of providing immediate feedback of the results of the evaluation. Faster turn around of evaluation results allows the instructor to use the information gathered more effectively and apply it directly.
- Lack of time constraint
  - When a student takes an online survey, that student has the luxury of taking his or her time to answer each question honestly and thoughtfully. When evaluations are given during class time or at the end of a class period, students tend to rush to complete the evaluation in order to finish the assignment and move on to their next task. Allowing students the freedom to complete the evaluation at their leisure may increase the quality of their responses.
- Personalized questions
  - With an online evaluation, teachers can personalize their questions and tailor them to meet the specificities of their particular course. Commonly, written university evaluation sheets include questions that are not applicable to every course. An online evaluation would allow the teacher the ability to remove irrelevant questions and add

questions that relate to their individual course, while keeping a set of standard university questions for all courses.

- No interruptions to instruction
  - Written evaluation forms require that teachers take time from class instruction to offer the evaluation to their students. This 20-30 minute time span can often come at an inconvenient point in the class period. Online evaluations allow for teachers to use their entire class period for instruction as students complete the evaluation at their leisure.
- Saves resources
  - Online evaluations save time and money. Time is saved both inside and outside of the classroom. Money is saved by cutting printing costs and costs associated with compiling and scoring the results of written evaluations.

Drawbacks:

- Difficult to ensure student participation
  - The greatest drawback of online teacher evaluations is that teachers tend to have difficulty in getting students to complete the evaluations. While the lack of time constraint and interruptions to the class period are positive aspects, this also means that students must complete the evaluations on their own time. Teachers can find this task to be a difficult one as it is unethical to provide any incentive to students for completing the evaluation and participation is 100% optional.

Tips Using Online Evaluations:

1. **Plan ahead** – If using online evaluations is new for you, be sure to give yourself enough time to understand the process. Setting up a mock evaluation website for your colleagues to test out may be a useful idea. Seeming unprepared with your evaluation tool is not a good start to a positive evaluation.
2. **Announce the evaluation early** – Let the students know when the evaluation will open online and when it will close. Give them the web address ahead of time.
3. **Reminders and thank yous** – Planning ahead also allows for time to periodically remind your students to complete the evaluation either during the class or via email with a link to the evaluation website. Also, mentioning that you are appreciative of anyone who has already completed the evaluation will encourage other students to complete it.
4. **Ensure anonymity** - Stress that all feedback is 100% anonymous. Hold off on reading any feedback until after the semester is over. If students know that you

will not be reading their evaluations until after they have received their grades, they are more likely to participate and give more detailed responses.

5. **Explain the importance** – Students will be more likely to complete your evaluation if they understand why it is important. Help the students to understand how their responses will be used and why they are of value to you personally. No one wants to feel as though they have wasted their time, so letting students know that their opinion counts will produce more responses.

#### Helpful Websites:

##### **Online Evaluations.Com**

<http://service.onlinecourseevaluations.com/AdminBenefits.aspx>

This service specializes in helping college and university faculty in creating, maintaining and interpreting online evaluation.

##### **Digital Measures**

[http://www.digitalmeasures.com/course\\_response/](http://www.digitalmeasures.com/course_response/)

This website supplies a service specifically for online college instructor evaluations.

##### **Evaluation Kit**

<http://www.evaluationkit.com/>

An online program designed specifically for online course evaluations of college and university courses.

##### **Question Pro**

<http://www.questionpro.com>

This website is useful for creating online evaluations and has a template for usage. Free Trial Available.

##### **Survey Monkey**

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/>

This website features easy-to-use software that allows individuals to create their own surveys. Limited access to this service is free.

##### **Tiger Survey**

<http://www.tigersurvey.com/index.php>

This website also features free programming for survey creation.

#### Citations:

Azukus, L. & Stiener, S. *Assessing Online Instructors: the Virtual Observation*

[http://www.uwex.edu/disted/conference/Resource\\_library/handouts/05\\_1947H.pdf](http://www.uwex.edu/disted/conference/Resource_library/handouts/05_1947H.pdf)

#### Digital Measures

[http://www.digitalmeasures.com/course\\_response/](http://www.digitalmeasures.com/course_response/)

#### Eastern Kentucky University Teaching Tips

[http://www.tlc.eku.edu/tips/evaluating\\_teaching/](http://www.tlc.eku.edu/tips/evaluating_teaching/)