

Student Evaluations

Compiled

By: Kristin N. P. Marie Evans, PhD Student, Communication
D. Milton Stokes, PhD Student, Communication
Department of Communication Sciences
University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT
kristin.evans@uconn.edu
milton.stokes@uconn.edu

Introduction:

Professional educators benefit from evaluation and feedback, particularly when from multiple sources via a variety of methods. Those include student evaluations, peer-to-peer reviews, self-evaluations, and supervisory review. The focus of this informational sheet will be on student evaluations of educators. Evaluations can be both quantitative and qualitative.

Types of Evaluations

There are two types of evaluations used for professional educators: summative evaluations and formative evaluations. The focus of this handout is summative for this is the type of evaluation that affirms if an educator is performing effectively and helping students meet course objectives. Summative evaluations tend to take place retrospectively and help identify achievement as well as areas for improvement.

According to The Center for Effective Teaching and Learning at the University of Texas at El Paso, evidence of effective teaching comprises the following:

1. Individual student outcomes/learning
2. Class outcomes
3. Teaching skills or attitudes that foster learning
4. Opportunities of the learning environment/relationship to the student.

The Center also suggests considering other summative evaluation methods, including interviews and letters from student letters.

Evaluation How-tos:

Guidelines for creating evaluations

- Questionnaire construction

Quantitative questionnaires yield data that are easier to manipulate and understand; however, qualitative feedback brings useful information as well. While perhaps more cumbersome, qualitative information is rich and constrained by fewer boundaries. Therefore, questionnaires should comprise both quantitative and qualitative items.

AEJMC 2009 Boston, MA
“The Doctors Are In”
Elected Standing Committee on Teaching

-Items on the instrument

Consider designing evaluation instruments asking or addressing some or all of the following categories:

- Preparation to teach
- Knowledge of the material
- Communication skill
- Ability to stimulate interest
- Interpretation of theory and abstractions
- Attitude toward students
- Support independent thought

Other factors to consider when designing and implementing an evaluation:

- Instrument questions must be clear.
- Achieve 80% student attendance on evaluation day.
- Allow for rater anonymity.
- Consider time to complete questionnaire.
- Prohibit talking during the administration of evaluation.
- Explain the purpose of the evaluation process.
- Educator should leave the room.
- Volunteer (student) takes the questionnaires to a central processing location.

Timing of evaluation

Some research has documented that evaluations administered during final exam week may result in lower scores. Evaluations should be announced ahead of time and should be given approximately 4 weeks before the end of term.

According to information gathered and reported by Ferris State University's Center for Teaching and Learning, students can determine:

1. If the learning objectives set out in the syllabus for the class have been covered by the instructor
2. If they are getting regular and timely feedback from the instructor on their learning progress
3. If the instructor let the class go early and how often this action occurred
4. If the instructor cancelled class and how often it occurred
5. If the instructor made it clear as to the time period in which students would receive their assignments and tests back, and kept to it
6. If the material that was questioned on the tests was identified by the instructor as being the responsibility of the students to know for the test
7. If the professor was on time for the class each day and how often he/she was late
8. If the professor was available for help outside of class time
 - a. (If he/she was not available the students should indicate how many times this occurred)

AEJMC 2009 Boston, MA
“The Doctors Are In”
Elected Standing Committee on Teaching

9. If the professor kept to the timeframe announced to students that would be used to return students’ phone calls or emails
10. If the teacher provided a clear explanation for the grades that were assigned to all work and tests
11. If the instructor spoke clearly and could be easily understood
12. If the professor was willing to answer students’ questions during class or provided other opportunities for the questions to be answered
13. If the teacher offered regular encouragement to the students to do well
14. If the teacher sought students’ input on issues that directly impacted their learning (discussion guidelines, assessment methods, paper or project topics as examples)
15. If the professor made it clear why (or gave the learning purpose) students were to do the assignments given both in and outside of class
16. If the teacher kept the classroom environment positive for learning (didn’t allow sleeping, talking, doing other work, phone calls etc.)
17. If the professor knew the names of the students
18. If the textbook or other supplementary material was helpful in their learning of the course material
19. If the professor provided a clear set of learning objectives, or goals, or purpose statements etc. for each class around which students could organize the information they received in the class
20. If the pace of the class was reasonable for them individually
21. If the professor kept to the rules, policies and guidelines outlined in the syllabus

Citations:

The Center for Effective Teaching and Learning at the University of Texas at El Paso
<http://sunconference.utep.edu/CETaL/resources/portfolios/form-sum.htm>

Ferris State University’s Center for Teaching and Learning
http://www.ferris.edu/fctl/Teaching_and_Learning_Tips/Research%20on%20Students%20Evaluation%20of%20Faculty%20Teaching/EvalTeachEffec.htm