

Feedback on Proposed SPoI Content

Feedback received summer 2009; numbered for discussion purposes.

1) I find the above referenced form(s) to be 'entirely' unacceptable. The subjects addressed in the evaluation statements are not 'partially' or 'mostly' true or false. Respectively, they are either true or false.

In my judgment, the current assessment document, though faulty and with several shortcomings, is preferable to the jibberish being offered in the revised forms.

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2) I just reviewed the questions for the Student Perception of Online Instruction on the faculty senate website. I am pleased with the types of questions posed and I think that they cover a variety of issues that will help our instruction.

However, I would like to suggest one additional question: "I was encouraged to interact with my peers during this course." (with accompanying Likert answers). One strength of online teaching is student-to-student interaction, even if it only occurs on discussion boards. If we are to embrace Web 2.0 and 3.0, then we must embrace the idea that social interaction (networking) is a critical component of any learning event. A question of this type may prompt our faculty to include interaction "events" in courses, rather than envisioning students as isolated and simply checking off content.

Please consider my suggestion. I will be happy to discuss this with anyone, for further information.

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3) I read with some surprise that starting fall 09 student evaluations for face to face classes will be conducted online. I emphatically disagree with this decision. Unless I force my larger classes (>200 students) to attend by offering quizzes etc., on average 25-50% of the class is absent at any time. A significant number of these students NEVER come to class except to take tests. What I fail to understand is why a student who has by their own choice skipped class for most of the semester and does not come to see me in office hours should be allowed to evaluate my teaching. If anything this approach will dilute the comments of those who have experienced my teaching first hand and are qualified to make an accurate assessment. The decision to conduct evaluations online is a perfect example of using technology to collect and compile data in a way that defeats the very purpose of collecting that information in the first place.

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4) Feedback on student form:

This is an improvement over the (nearly useless) pink forms. However, the form is very soft on faculty; there are very few ratings of actual classroom or out-of-class lecture/interaction quality. Mostly the questions are good, but not all are well answered.

Faculty:

Add:

I had adequate resources for teaching this class this semester (Number of TAs, computer hardware, software, support, administrative).

- a. agree b. mildly agree c. mildly disagree d. disagree

I am happy about being assigned to this course this semester.

- a. agree b. mildly agree c. mildly disagree d. disagree

Student F2F:

I would edit:

7. The instructor provided a syllabus.

- a. Yes b. No

→ 7. The syllabus was

- a. excellent b. good c. fair d. poor e. missing; none was ever distributed

9. The instructor provided a course schedule.

- a. Yes b. No

→ 9. The course schedule...

- a. was detailed b. was general c. was not handed out

Also, I would add:

1. Regarding prerequisites:

- a. I had the prerequisites for the class.
b. I had most of the prerequisites and permission of the instructor
c. I had few of the prerequisites, but had permission of the instructor
d. I had few or none of the prerequisites and did not have permission of the instructor

2. The prerequisites prepared me for the course:

- a. very well b. adequately c. minimally d. not much

3. The course should have required
(comment box)

4. The course need not have required
(comment box)

5. I felt prepared for the course when I started
a. very well b. adequately c. minimally d. not much

6. The required course materials were
a. excellent b. good c. fair d. poor

7. I feel the course prepared me for the next step in my degree or career
a. very well b. adequately c. minimally d. not much

8. The course schedule was followed closely
a. agree b. tend to agree c. mildly disagree d. disagree

9. I was able to understand the instructor's speech
a. very well b. adequately c. minimally d. not much

10. The instructor treated students with respect
a. agree b. tend to agree c. mildly disagree d. disagree

11. The quality of lecture was high
a. agree b. tend to agree c. mildly disagree d. disagree

12. The quality of section instruction was high
a. agree b. tend to agree c. mildly disagree d. disagree

13. I speak English
a. Natively with little accent
b. Natively but accented
c. non-natively but well
d. non-natively but adequately
e. non-natively and not well

14. I enjoy the topic
a. more than before the course.
b. the same as before, which is a lot
c. the same as before, which is not much
d. I do not enjoy the topic

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5) I just reviewed the proposed feedback forms for th face to face classes and teh faculty response form. They are GREAT! I especially appreciate the faculty form. This will help me organize my thoughts per class instead of reading all the feedback, trying to get past the negative ones ("I hate morning classes") and see through to the patterns that illuminate where I can make improvements. I also appreciate the question asking students how often they missed class. That way we can tell if someone was there for only half the classes their response should be weighted accordingly.

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6) This committee has worked hard to change the forms and these are much better than what we are using right now. I think the online version will make shorter and look better with radio buttons to click on etc.

Good job!

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7) Kudos to all committee members who generously gave of their valuable time and expertise.

I reviewed the new "Spol" online questionnaire for all class configurations. I am pleased that these evaluations will be divided in sections and scored separately. Section III on "Instructor" should stand alone and be the only ratings used for our faculty annual departmental assessments.

In section III, question #10 regarding class materials, may be a problem for some departments. In the Speech Department, the faculty does not have an individual choice of which textbook is used. Therefore, when students assign a score to the textbook question, the rating may be unfairly counted against instructor and thus lower overall evaluation score.

Just a thought Overall, well designed evaluations.

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8) I think these are major improvements and I realize there was a lot of work involved.

I suggest one missing element pertains to computer-lab courses where learning is contingent on the availability, reliability, and access to the computers and properly performing software.

I have taught these types of courses for years. The students, and instructor, get very frustrated when the software/hardware does not work properly and nobody is available to fix the problem(s). Consequently, students tend to blame the instructor when in fact the lab operation/performance is beyond his/her control.

I teach grad courses at night. We do not have a computer support person on duty at night despite numerous catastrophic failures over the years that have stopped midterms and final examinations.

The same applies to study abroad evaluations. In the study abroad environment, there are factors related to travel, accommodations, the failure of the host institution to deliver the promised curriculum, and a host of other conditions beyond the instructor's control. Regardless, the instructor gets the credit or blame.

I think both of these special circumstances need to be addressed.

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9) First, I want to applaud the individuals who obviously worked hard to create the new SPoI forms. That was a huge task and I am sure it took many hours to create these new forms. Thank you for your hard work and dedication.

The only comment I have about the new SPoI forms is regarding the SPoI form for W courses. I believe that item #12 ("The instructor was available to assist me at prearranged times outside of class either online or in person") could be clarified more effectively for W courses. The notion of time and place is so grounded in F2F courses, however the idea of a "prearranged time outside of class" isn't very applicable in virtual students' experiences. In my experience teaching W courses, most students *only* used the Course Mail option for correspondence. Although I provided other options for communication (F2F office hours, chat room meetings, etc.), most students didn't take advantage of the additional options. In fact, most of my students didn't have a need to come to my office because they knew that they would receive an answer to an e-mailed question within hours of it being sent. Perhaps that item could be revised to something along the lines of...

"During the semester, the instructor was available to assist me either online or in person."

Other ideas???

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10) In general I think the form is too long and may be overkill if the goal is to inform program evaluation issues. I assume that the forms would be beta-tested with a group of students filling out a realistic number of forms for the average course load before implementation - "form fatigue" seems likely if there are several courses for a student to evaluate.

I prefer a model in which a minimal question set is used to screen major issues. For example rather than 5 questions about the web-course element, one could apply a single Likert question about satisfaction of web resources and an open field for particular comments. In the rare cases where a score is poor, this can trigger the program evaluation committee to make a more in-depth review.

I suspect that many items are not truly independent (and therefore are redundant). If a student is generally satisfied with an instructor then 15 questions are not needed to find this out! If an instructor wants specific student advice on what to improve, this can be elicited informally or by an open-ended question.

Some of the items included seem to be available with basic data mining, rather than burdening students with too many items (which may then be answered non-selectively anyway). For example, the enrolment characteristics, how often people use web resources etc.

What are the "major domains?" For me: something about enrolment, course organization, course (web) resources, faculty performance, assessment, workload motivation to continue in the field. Likert scores are flags for program evaluators; open field answers are great for faculty that have the motivation to read and act upon them.

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