Interpreting Student Course Feedback Results

"Student ratings are the start of the instructor's journey toward improvement, not the end."
      - William Cashin

General Guidelines

Multiple Sources of Evaluations Data – It is important that multiple sources of information should be used to evaluate teaching effectiveness (Beran, Violato & Kline, 2007; Seldin, 2006; Ory 2001). Research suggest no more than 30-50% of the evaluation of teaching come from student ratings (Hoyt & Pallett, 1999) and that student course feedback data should not be used in alone to assess teaching (Cashin, 1995). Additional sources of feedback include peer, professional (CTLE consultants), and external evaluations.

Number of Courses – For part-time instructors (one course), ratings from two different terms are required to evaluate teaching effectiveness. For most instructors, ratings from a variety of courses, for two or more courses from at least three or more different terms, should be used (Cashin, 1995). Generally five or more courses are recommended but more courses are required as the class size decreases (Franklin, 2001). If there are fewer than fifteen raters in any of the classes, data from additional classes are recommended. Only recommendations for improvement can be made from data for one course (Cashin, 1995). CTLE tool: **Instructor SCF Quantitative Data** excel spreadsheet to average courses over several semesters.

Report Specifics

Response rates - Reliability varies depending upon the number of student who submitted results. The greater the number of student responses, the more reliable the data (Cashin, 1995). See table below:

Recommend Ratings Response Rates

Class Size	Recommended Response
5-20	At least 80%; more recommended
20-30	At least 75%; more recommended
30-50	At least 66%; 75% or more recommended
50 or more	At least 60%, 75%, or more recommended
100 or more	More than 50%, 75%, or more recommended
Source: Franklin and Theall (1991).	

Research recommends that items with fewer than ten responses be interpreted with particular caution (Cashin, 1995) and for representative results data is required from at least two-thirds of the class (Cashin, 1990). Response rate=# Forms Processed/Enrollment, should be 60% or more.

Overall, Effective Questions – General questions about the overall effectiveness of the course and instructor (question #7) are a good predictor of the overall quality of the course and/or instructor. (d'Apollonia & Abrami, 1997; Cashin & Downey, 1992)

Written Comments - Should only be used for improvements (Cashin, 1990). CTLE tool: **Written Comments Analysis Grid - http://www.ctle.utah.edu/workshopdocuments/sce-comments.pdf**

Comparisons

CTLE tool: **Student Course Feedback Analysis Form http://www.ctle.utah.edu/workshopdocuments/sce-feedback.pdf**

Faculty v. TA – Regular faculty tend to receive higher ratings than graduate teaching assistants (Braskamp & Ory, 1994; Bradenburg, Slinde, and Batista, 1977; Centra and Creech, 1976).

Course Level - Higher level courses tend to receive higher ratings (Algozzine et al., 2004, Cashin, 1995, Braskamp & Ory, 1994). CTLE tool: **Subject Report by Course Level** to accurately compare course/instructor averages to courses of same level.

Course Type - Student motivation level – higher ratings where students have a prior interest in subject matter (Cashin, 1995; March & Dunkin, 1992).

Field of Study - Teaching evaluations should be compared only between instructors in the same or similar disciplines (Cashin, 1990). Research suggests that some disciplines receive higher ratings than others (Ory, 2001.)

Student grades – the classes in which the students gave the instructor higher ratings tend to be the classes where the students learned more (scored higher on the external exam) (Marsh & Dunkin, 1992).

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