College of Veterinary Medicine

Teaching Academy

Washington State University

Making Teaching Matter

CVM Teaching Tool Kit Series

Getting More out of Your Student Evaluations:

Mining Student Evaluation Comments for Improvement (& Your Promotion Packet)

June 13, 2018: Stephen Hines

NOT TODAY !
(2016 sessions)

Student Evaluation of Teaching
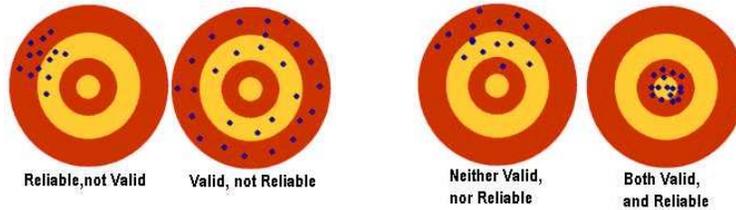*(student ratings)*

Part 1: What the literature says

Part 1: DESIRED LEARNING OUTCOMES:

At the end of the session,

Participants should be able to –

❑ examine student evaluation data and comments from a more evidence-based perspective

❑ describe the strengths and some of the key weaknesses/deficiencies of StEv

❑ begin an initial analysis of their own student comments in preparation for Part 2.

Reliability, Validity, and Bias

Reliable, not Valid   Valid, not Reliable   Neither Valid, nor Reliable   Both Valid, and Reliable

Validity= does test measure what it's supposed to measure?

Bias

Take Home Messages:

The literature says -

Student ratings of teaching:

- are imperfect and incomplete
- represent DATA so must be interpreted
- should be just **ONE COMPONENT** of a multi-dimensional evaluation system
- **have been shown to correlate well with other measures, including student learning**
- are unlikely to be discontinued any time soon

CAVEATS:

StEv can be an obstacle to change & innovation

Implementing or experimenting with new teaching practices can produce a significant dip in student ratings

- especially if students don't fully understand or buy into the rationale and/or goals
- and if the methods are out of synch with student expectations

Student are <u>NOT</u> always right.

- Learners are notoriously inaccurate in identifying the practices that lead to **RETENTION**.

- The purpose is to improve the impact and effectiveness of your teaching – to maximize learning. The purpose is **NOT** to please all the critics.

- You need to use <u>**ALL**</u> the information available to choose which practices to keep, modify, or discard.

And … there will always be jerks

God creates the world
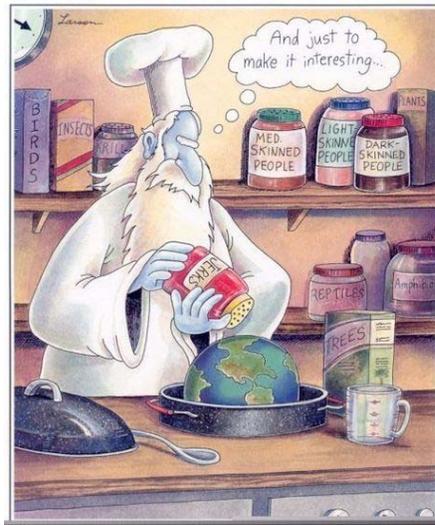
Far Side Cartoon
by Gary Larson

June 13, 2018 — **TODAY !**

Part 2: DESIRED LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the session today,

Participants should be prepared to –

❑ use the described process to identify some of their own teaching strengths, as well as practices/attributes that might need improvement,

❑ more effectively use student ratings and comments in their promotion packets, and

❑ describe other methods to improve and document teaching efficacy.

How do we make the MOST out of student ratings of teaching? → IMPROVING TEACHING

Faculty consistently rate student <u>comments</u>
as more "credible" and valuable when it
comes to self improvement …

A structured way to examine your student evaluation comments:

GOALS: **TODAY !**

- Diminish the inherent personal bias that is present in all of us to some extent
- Identify primary themes – areas of strength and areas that may need improvement
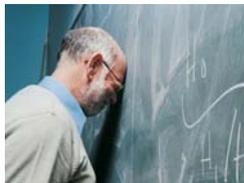- Begin to develop a plan for ongoing growth and improvement.

No one expects you to share your student evaluation comments with anyone else in the room.

FEEDBACK

**NEGATIVE comments have at least
3 times the emotional impact when
compared to positive comments.**

- "Dr. X has a lot of pride in his teaching, which sometimes becomes too much. He says all the time how this course is so different and so much better than other courses (including tests), but I do not see how it is. …… **It annoyed me how he acted like he was better than everyone** when the tests and the structure of the course are the same as the others."

- "**I do not think a positive learning environment was cultured in the lab or classroom.** I felt my questions were not taken seriously and I was expected to come to lab and class everyday knowing everything, not to clarify concepts and learn."

- "…. the answers keys to previous years' exams – were often rather condescending in the explanations. Making it known that "clearly" or "obviously" an answer is this or that because we talked about some minor little detail in lecture and lab …. **does not make for a positive learning environment** when going over old exams to practice."

Scoring/coding your student comments to identify themes: Steps #1-3

1. First, examine numerical scores *(= frame of reference)*

2. Steel yourself → INITIAL READ

3. Walk away for 24-48 hours
   - breathe, exercise, rest, drink …

Step 4: 2nd Reading

4. → **Make a list of perceived themes**

- both positive (strengths) AND negative (suggested areas of improvement)

TODAY !

WORKSHEET

- Read through STRENGTHS and begin to create a list of THEMES
- If you don't have student comments with you, create a list from what you remember from previous StEv

Start with "strengths" - Examples

- ✓ Likeable / "cares about our learning"
- ✓ Positive / good energy
- ✓ Knowledgeable about subject / Subject Expertise
- ✓ Organized
- ✓ Solicited feedback / interested in student feedback as a mechanism for change

If you didn't bring your student evaluations comments, try to construct a list of themes based on your MEMORY from previous StEv.

Step 4: 2nd Reading

4. → **Make a list of perceived themes**

   • both positive (strengths) AND negative (suggested areas of improvement)

TODAY !

WORKSHEET

• Read through STRENGTHS and begin to create a list of THEMES
• If you don't have student comments with you, create a list from what you remember from previous StEv

Step 4b: 2nd Reading, part b

4b. → **Read through your list**

• Examine list for themes that are related and can be combined

• Combine / condense if possible and appropriate

• Note themes where there are conflicting opinions

Step 5: 3rd Reading = "coding"

- tally number of comments per theme
- combine theme if/as necessary

For example:

- More index card cases – throughout course

- Index card cases NOT effective – too little lead time

- Negative tone to explanations on exam keys

For example:

- More index card cases – throughout course

- Index card cases NOT effective – too little lead time
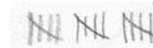
- Negative tone to explanations on exam keys

STEP 6: Analyze results for <u>Take Home lessons</u>:

- **Keep, discard, modify** – Write these down

- Meet with teaching colleague(s) to discuss

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SUMMARY: Scoring/coding your student comments to identify themes

1. First, examine numerical scores *(= frame of reference)*
2. Steel yourself → **INITIAL READ**
3. Walk away for 24-48 hours
     - breathe, exercise, rest, drink …

4. 2nd reading → **record perceived themes**
     - both positive AND negative
     - examine list for themes that are related and can be combined
5. 3rd reading = **"coding"**
     - tally number of comments per theme
     - combine themes if/as necessary
6. **Analyze data for Take Home lessons:**
     - Keep, discard, modify – Write these down
     - Meet with teaching colleague(s) to discuss

QUESTIONS ?

REPORTING StEv DATA – e.g. promotion packets

See RTA "recommended practices" document

1. **Quantitative summative data**
2. <u>**Summary**</u> **of student narrative comments**
   - beware of "cherry picking" and "testimonials"
   - present graphically or in table form when possible
3. **Instructor reflection on student evaluations**
   - e.g. how you view and use student feedback
   - specific examples of practices you've changed or adopted (or kept) in response to student feedback
4. **A list of student selected teaching awards**
   - include criteria for award and year

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Consortium of West Region CVM

TESTIMONIALS

- "one of the best teachers [mother ?] ever had. She cares about her students [mother ?] ows. She knows her stuff and it shows, she can teach like no other."

- "an absolutely amazing instructor, and honestly one of the best profess [niece ?] had in my 2 years of veterinary school and [niece ?] rs of undergrad."

- "on of my favorite teachers that I have ever had; when I look back in the fu [yoga partner ?] for sure be a name I remem [yoga partner ?] shows that he loves what h ing, making it more interesting for the students."
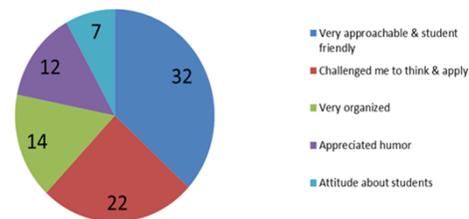
Student comment summary – presented in TABLE form

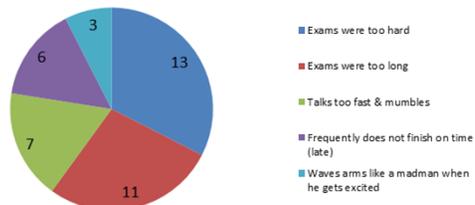| Most common positive student comments-	Most common negative student comments-
• Instructor is approachable (32) • Instructor challenged me to think (22) • Course was well organized (14) • Instructor has a good sense of humor (12) • Instructor cares about students' well being (7)	• Exams were too hard (13) • Exams were too long (11) • Talks too fast (7) • Often does not finish on time (6) • Drinks too much coffee during class (3)

Student comment summary

– presented in GRAPHIC form

Number of postive student comments

■ Very approachable & student friendly
■ Challenged me to think & apply
■ Very organized
■ Appreciated humor
■ Attitude about students

Number of negative student comments

■ Exams were too hard
■ Exams were too long
■ Talks too fast & mumbles
■ Frequently does not finish on time (late)
■ Waves arms like a madman when he gets excited

QUESTIONS
so far ?

Interim / Formative Student Feedback ?

It's on you!

1. **Index cards**
2. **Blackboard** – allows tracking
   - survey tool
   - poll tool
3. **Clickers**
   - TopHat – allows for text entry
4. **Qualtrics survey**
   - free access to WSU faculty & staff
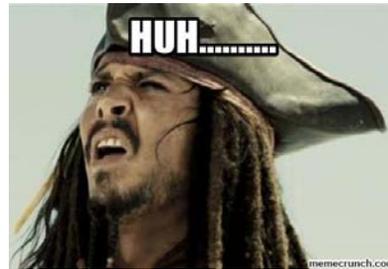   - easily learned – online tutorials

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

How to get more specific feedback

Ask supplemental questions!
- custom questions are easily added to BLUE - WSU's end of semester StEv course/instructor survey
- use Qualtrics survey tool (free to WSU faculty)
- https://surveys.wsu.edu/

Plan ahead!

Peer Observation

- An expected part of all promotion packets
- **Your** responsibility to arrange   **PLAN AHEAD !**
- CVM TA Initiative – See web site or email Rachel Halsey
- **Guiding principles → Best practice**
  - ✓ multiple observations
  - ✓ multiple settings (including lab and clinic floor)
  - ✓ pre-observation discussion (goals & expectations)
  - ✓ post-observation discussion (debriefing and coaching)
  - ✓ → document for promotion packet
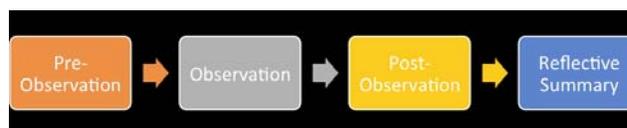
Self Assessment

A reflective statement/document
- essential part of becoming a critically reflective teacher
- typically part of **Teaching Portfolio**, often in the form of a Teaching Philosophy

EXAMPLES:
- how you view and use student feedback
- specific examples of practices you've changed or adopted (or kept) in response to student feedback

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QUESTIONS ?

Spring 2018: CVM TA brown bag:

"Documenting your Teaching and Teaching"
- Feb 15 (Bustad 145): 12- 1 pm
- Steve Hines, moderator

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The END