EVIDENCE

Program Assessment for Continuous Improvement

Face to Face with IDEA

"Academic Affairs will continue its vigorous support and investment in faculty development. This support will be tied to appropriate assessment efforts, the primary goal of which will be to improve student learning ..."

Provost Kesselman
Fall Faculty Conference
2013

There has been a steady increase in the number of students that take hybrid and online classes, and much discussion among faculty about their benefits and limitations.

An analysis of the cumulative data from the IDEA student ratings of instructors and courses adds an additional perspective, that of the students, to the considerations.

This analysis includes 11,658 face-to-face classes and 1205 online classes that were taught between 2008 and 2012. The cumulative IDEA data file changes each semester as new ratings are added and therefore these findings are just one snapshot in a changing picture. The two groups are vastly different in size, consequently, the ratings for the larger group (the face-to-face) are much more stable.

Each semester students rate 20 instructor behaviors for frequency. The ratings are on a five-point scale. All classes that had the designated 9 in their section number were included in the online group. The more recent semesters had several face-to-face classes that used the online method of administering the IDEA. These classes were correctly assigned to the face-to-face group.

In all but 3 three cases, there is much greater variability in the ratings of teacher behaviors for teachers in the online group than for teachers in the face-to-face group. Stated differently, student ratings for teacher behaviors in the face-to-face group were more homogenous than the more heterogeneous ratings of teachers in the online group of courses.

"Assessment is more than a collection of ideals, it is a set of tools that makes me think beyond what I'm teaching to how I'm teaching it."

Michelle McDonald, Associate Professor of History

Ask Me About Assessment!

In August, thirteen faculty members from six schools developed plans to build assessment into their portfolios. This year they will be engaged in scholarly assessment work and will be mentoring other faculty who want to do similar projects.

They are willing to share their know-how and ideas, you just have to ask.

The faculty members are:

ARHU Michelle McDonald
BUSN Diane Holtzman and Marilyn Vito
EDUC Susan Cydis and JY Zhou
HLTH Mary Lou Galantino, Patricia McGinnis, Carole Rae Reed
NAMS Joseph Trout, Shanthi Rajaraman
SOBL Christine Gayda, Guia Calicdan Apostle and Michael Rodriguez

Face to Face with IDEA (continued)

"Based on the ratings by students on IDEA, there is little difference in the overall picture of quality of instruction between students who have online course experiences and students who have in-class course experiences"

Top three instructor behaviors (mean ratings)
The three most highly rated instructor behaviors for the combined (12,863) courses were -
Displayed a personal interest in students and their learning –   4.482
Demonstrated the importance and significance of the subject matter -   4.480
Made it clear how each topic fits into the course -   4.406

The three lowest rated instructor behaviors for the combined courses were- (mean ratings)
Asked students to share their ideas and experiences with others whose backgrounds and
viewpoints differ from their own -   3.957
Involved students in "hands on" projects such as research, case studies or real life activities –
3.955
Formed teams or discussion groups to facilitate learning -   3.771

Instructors in the face-to-face group had higher mean ratings than instructors in the online group for fourteen behaviors or practices.

The greatest differences in ratings between the two groups were in
Displayed a personal interest in students and their learning,
(FTF = 4.51, OL = 4.19),
Demonstrated the importance and significance of the subject matter,
(FTF = 4.50, OL = 4.27) and
Found ways to help students answer their own questions
(FTF = 4.31, OL = 4.05).

For three of the twenty behaviors there was no difference in ratings between the online and the face-to-face groups of classes. These were –
*Scheduled course work in ways that helped students to stay up-to-date in their wor*k,
Involved students in "hands on" projects such as research, case studies or real life activities, and
Formed teams or discussion groups to facilitate learning.

Instructors in the online group were rated more highly for three practices –
Encouraged students to use multiple resources (data banks, library holdings, outside experts, etc.) to improve understanding,
Asked students to share their ideas and experiences with others whose backgrounds and viewpoints differ from their own, and
Gave projects, tests, or assignments that required original or creative thinking.

We computed a composite variable "RIGOR" by summing four individual items - the amount of reading, of non-reading assignments, the difficulty of the subject mater, and how hard students worked compared to the work that they did in other courses. Online and face-to-face classes were not significantly different in rigor (FTF Mean= 14.18, OL Mean = 14.23).
[t (12861) = -.970, p = .332]. Of the 20 behaviors that students rated, rigor was most strongly related to *Stimulated students to intellectual effort beyond that required by most courses.*

We are on the Web
Academic Assessment

Median and Modal ratings for 20 instructor behaviors by instructional delivery method.

	Mode		Median	
	FTF	OL	FTF	OL
1. Displayed a personal interest in students and their learning	5	5	4.6	4.3
2. Found ways to help students answer their own questions	4.5	4	4.4	4.2
3. Scheduled course work (class activities, tests, projects) in ways...	4.5	5	4.5	4.5
4. Demonstrated the importance and significance of the subject matter	5	5	4.6	4.4
5. Formed "teams" or "discussion groups" to facilitate learning	5	4	4.0	3.8
6. Made it clear how each topic fit into the course	5	4	4.5	4.3
7. Explained the reasons for criticisms of students' academic...	4	4	4.2	4.1
8. Stimulated students to intellectual effort beyond that required by...	4	4	4.3	4.1
9. Encouraged students to use multiple resources (e.g. data banks,...	4	4	4.1	4.3
10. Explained course material clearly and concisely	5	4	4.5	4.3
11. Related course material to real life situations	5	5	4.5	4.5
12. Gave tests, projects, etc. that covered the most important points...	4.5	4	4.5	4.4
13. Introduced stimulating ideas about the subject	4	4	4.4	4.3
14. Involved students in "hands on" projects such as research, case...	4	4	4.1	4.0
15. Inspired students to set and achieve goals which really...	4	4	4.2	4.1
16. Asked students to share ideas and experiences with others..	4	4	4.1	4.3
17. Provided timely and frequent feedback on tests, reports,...	5	5	4.5	4.3
18. Asked students to help each other understand ideas or concepts	4	4	4.2	4.0
19. Gave projects, tests, or assignments that required original or...	4	4	4.2	4.3
20. Encouraged student−faculty interaction outside of class (office...	4	4	4.3	4.2

Based on the ratings by students on IDEA, there is little difference in the overall picture of quality of instruction between students who have online course experiences and students who have in-class course experiences. Students' ratings of rigor (as here defined) are not different in the two groups of classes and the modal ratings for all 20 behaviors are very similar.

COACHE

Look out for emails this fall from COACHE and from Academic Affairs about COACHE.
Stockton will once again participate in the COACHE faculty survey - the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education. COACHE is "a research group focused on measuring and improving the academic workplace … (and) committed to making the academic workplace more attractive and equitable to faculty."

The COACHE survey is a faculty job satisfaction survey that solicits, summarizes, and reports information about what faculty do with regard to their main responsibilities – teaching, research, and service. It produces summaries that are of immediate use to academic policy and decision makers.

More importantly, the COACHE report gives us all feedback about what faculty think and feel about institutional policies such as, the clarity and reasonableness of tenure and promotion policies, perceptions of the extent to which faculty experience recognition and appreciation, work-life balance, and many others.

"My only issue particularly with standardized tests is that I worry about the reliability of the measures."

John Bulevich, Assistant Professor of Psychology

"Useful assessment helps to facilitate student learning."

The most "rigorous" courses are the ones in which students are "stimulated to intellectual effort beyond that required by most courses"

IDEA 2008-2012

Useful Assessment

This year program assessment shifts into high gear. All programs should now have an assessment plan for the academic year and coordinators will report the program's progress on these plans at the end of the academic year. The value and success of this process lies in its usefulness to the program members for teaching, and meeting their students' learning needs. Useful assessment will answer questions about student learning outcomes in your program.

It begins with a hypothesis or question about the learning of students and requires that you have good measures of your outcomes. Measurement is a central issue. Valid and reliable measures are essential for useful assessment. You should spend some time choosing, modifying, or developing a measure and ensuring that it will give reliable results. Additionally, to reduce measurement error, students must get clear instructions on what you expect them to do.

If it is not possible or feasible to get information from all the majors in your target group, then you should assess a representative sample of your students. A representative sample gives results that you can interpret broadly for the program.

Set some criteria for acceptable or expected performance and review your students' work in the light of these criteria. The findings should help you to answer your original assessment question and allow you to evaluate your hypothesis.
Program members should get together and make meaning from the findings. The program members will have the appropriate context in which to interpret the findings and they can then decide on the next steps.

Repeating the assessment is a legitimate next step in order to determine the reliability of your results. You may also want to repeat if the results do not give you a clear answer to your original question. Program members may decide on any number of possible responses to the assessment findings. Responses could range from curricular changes to maintaining the status quo.

Useful assessment helps to facilitate student learning.

For more assessment recourses visit the assessment web site at http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/page.cfm?siteID=209&pageID=88

COACHE (Continued)

"COACHE's tools are designed to generate actionable diagnoses. The results include peer comparisons and provide Provosts and faculty affairs professionals with a roadmap for making sound investments in their faculty"

Stockton tried to participate in the COACHE survey in 2003. Unfortunately, our response rates were very low and therefore the information that we got was not representative of the full faculty and as a result, not very useful.

The survey is long, and that may have been a factor in the poor response rate in 2003, but the report detail will work to our advantage as we interpret and act on the results of the survey.

In October, when the survey period begins, please respond to your email solicitation to participate. You can get more information at http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=coache

COACHE
The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education
at the Harvard Graduate School of Education

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Academic Assessment