

Compiling Your Own Student Evaluations of Teaching

Rationale

Part of creating a competitive record for job applications (e.g., faculty applications) that ask you to provide “evidence of effective teaching”. There are multiple ways to demonstrate effectiveness, such as by describing course development efforts, providing peer reviews, and making course materials (e.g., syllabi, lectures) available, among others. However, although there is a vigorous debate to be had about student evaluations of teaching (SETs), many institutions would like you to supply aggregate data from course evaluations to demonstrate teaching effectiveness.

The current version of SETs used by the university seem to have engendered two issues. First, the well-intentioned focus on having students evaluate a subset of teaching behaviors and the strong qualitative emphasis have made it difficult to summarize and aggregate evaluations, particularly for outside parties who would not have the internal context of SETs that we have at CSU. Second, reports from many instructors suggest that response rates are quite low with this version of SETs, leaving instructors to rely on small sample sizes. Thus, relative to others on the job market, you may have SETs that differ (for the wrong reasons) from other applicants.

Solutions

There are solutions available! An ideal approach would be to create your own, customized student survey administered at the end of the semester that can yield data you could report in job applications. This can be done in at least two ways.

1. On Canvas, click into any of your courses and then click on the “Course Survey” link. You should now be taken to “MyEvalCenter” (if not, click on that link, which will be at the top). If you look at any of your current courses, there is an “Add Questions” link. I tried this in one of my own classes and found that it generally walked you through the process. There is also support available (at this e-mail address: cosurvey@colostate.edu) to help you.
2. A second option is to create your survey using the Quiz function in Canvas. For instance, you can create an ungraded survey with anonymous responses and include any questions you like. (I use this function to obtain mid-semester feedback from students.) If you are interested in this option, a how-to guide for the Classic Quiz function is included in this document.

In terms of the specific questions to use, there is an almost endless list of possibilities. As a starting point, here are a simple set of 5 questions that could be used:

The instructor was knowledgeable about the subject.

The instructor was enthusiastic about the course.

The instructor was prepared for class sessions.

Overall, I would rate the instructor as good.

Overall, I would rate the course as good.

The particular scale used is up to you, but you might use a simple 5-point style of response (e.g., “Strongly Agree” “Agree” “Neutral” “Disagree” “Strongly Disagree”).

Increasing Response Rate

Creating your own questions would permit you to have an additional method of demonstrating teaching effectiveness, but the issue of student response rate remains. The traditional approach to addressing response rate involves several practices such as communicating with students that you take their feedback seriously, reminding them about the survey and its importance, and setting aside designated class time to complete the survey. In addition, you might also provide a small incentive to the class for completing the survey. (Example: A small amount of extra credit is given to the whole class if response rates meet or exceed 75%.)

Creating an Ungraded, Anonymous Survey in Canvas

1. Click on “Quizzes” in Canvas.
2. Click on “+Quiz”.
3. Canvas now gives you the option for “Classic Quizzes” or the newer version. I’m using the Classic option here.
4. Start on the “Details” tab.

Points 0 Not Published 

Details Questions

Unnamed Quiz

Quiz Instructions:

Edit View Insert Format Tools Table

12pt  Paragraph  **B** *I* U A             

5. Name your Quiz (you might use “Short Course Survey”).
6. Scroll further down the page to the “Quiz Type” menu. Click on this and select the “Ungraded Survey” option and then click the “Keep Submissions Anonymous” box.

Quiz Type

Options

Shuffle Answers

Time Limit Minutes

Keep Submissions Anonymous

Allow Multiple Attempts

Let Students See Their Quiz Responses (Incorrect Questions Will Be Marked in Student Feedback)

Show one question at a time

Quiz Restrictions

Require an access code

Filter IP Addresses

7. Scroll to the bottom of the page and set the availability and due date (in the example below, I've set the quiz to be available in the last week of April and to be due by the end of the final exam week for this particular spring semester.)

The screenshot shows the 'Quiz Restrictions' and 'Assignment' settings for a quiz. Under 'Quiz Restrictions', there are two checkboxes: 'Require an access code' and 'Filter IP Addresses', neither of which is checked. Under 'Assignment', the 'Assign to' dropdown is set to 'Everyone'. The 'Due' date is set to 'May 13, 2022, 11:59 PM'. The 'Available from' date is 'May 1, 2022, 12:00 AM' and the 'Until' date is 'May 13, 2022, 11:59 PM'. A '+ Add' button is visible at the bottom of the assignment section.

8. Next, scroll back to the top of the page and click on the “Questions” tab.
9. Select the “Multiple Choice” option and then paste in the appropriate question and choices.
10. When you are satisfied with your questions, be sure to go back to the “Details” tab and launch the survey by clicking “Save and Publish”.