

Reconsidering student evaluations of teaching

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Student evaluations of teaching (SETs)

Overall quality: 1.0

Never uploaded grades, uploads a day before D2L disables so you can't see what you would have before the final. If you miss a day you NEED to do the extra credit in order to pass. Just talks about her life every single day in the class.

Overall quality 5.0

Her class was great! She gives a ton of eye openers during her lectures and doesn't put up with ignorance. She says it how it is and expects you do your reading, as you should. There's nothing about her class that would make you fail as long as you actually want to be a student and do your part. Easy A!

Student evaluations of (my)teaching

ANTH 1110 Class: Cultural Anthropology: Fall 2018

Review 1: 12/25/2018

Review:11/03/2018

Rate my professor:

<https://www.ratemyprofessors.com/ShowRatings.jsp?tid=2177998>

What is required at BSU?

- Article 22, section D. subd.1. IFO contract: *For faculty with teaching assignments, the PDP shall include a process for student assessment*
- Article 22, section E. subd 1. *If faculty members include student course assessments as part of their reports, such assessments shall be anonymous, identified only by course/section. Any other student communications or evaluations submitted with the PDR shall not be anonymous.*

Common practice at BSU

- BSU encourages student evaluations for accreditation purposes at the university level
- While some form of evaluation is encouraged, no single format is required. Some departments use a standardized form
- Deans may give suggestions on how to document student evaluations in our yearly PDRs
- These are important in documenting satisfactory progress towards tenure and promotion

Nationwide, SETs are the most common form of assessing teaching effectiveness and play an outsized role in faculty reappointment and promotion

What is it we are trying to measure?

Teaching effectiveness:

- Teacher's ability to deliver curriculum
- Students' success at meeting learning outcomes

Typically we conflate these two issues and include questions addressing both in our SETs

Growing body of evidence that suggests the use of SETs in personnel decisions is problematic

Biases in student responses on student teaching evaluations (SET)

Gender

Nationality

Race

Accent

Age

Religion

Ability

Political opinion

Expertise

Sexuality (perceived)

This is not a comprehensive list by any means! Our attempt today is to understand the intersectional identities we all occupy and how these might be influencing how students perceive our teaching/expertise.

Gendered biases

- Female instructors receive lower scores on evaluations than male instructors because their expertise is questioned
- Students comment about women's appearances more often than their male counterparts
- More comments on women's personalities (16% vs. 4%)
- Expectations of emotional labor high from women
- When these are unmet - evaluations may include things like unhelpful, unavailable, disorganized, too emotional, aggressive, difficult
- Students evaluated women in harsher terms for equitable levels of efficiency and organization in courses

Intersections of race and gender

African American women faculty report expectations of being “mammies” from students

Black faculty subject to their students’ and colleagues preoccupation with their clothes and hairstyles

Tropes of angry/aggressive minority faculty well and alive

Minority faculty often told to lighten up - but also held to differential standards of seriousness and implied competence

Sexuality, appearance and gender performance

Instructor credibility in the classroom influenced by

- Casual appearance
- Perceived (or disclosed sexuality)
- Anti gay bias among students
- Teaching while gay - character and competence is questioned
- Transgender faculty face extreme prejudice

Should the classroom be the place where students are exposed to views and identities that they do not like or support?

Bodies, nations, accents and scents

- What does a professor look like?
 - A professor image on google is white and male
 - Are all professors able bodied?
 - Are all disabilities physical/visible?
- What does a professor sound like?
 - Accents matter - coded comments on nationality and foreignness
 - What kind of vocabulary does a professor use?
 - Women with “uppity” vocabularies receive harsher evaluations
- What does a professor smell like?
 - Is this something we think of?
 - Too much perfume/ Body odor
 - Are these coded categories for discrimination?

Student teaching evaluations in times of contingent employment

- Nearly 75% of all faculty nationally are not tenured (AAUP 2017)
- Adjuncts or part-timers form more than 50% of all faculty nationwide (AAUP 2017)
- Most hiring decision of contingent faculty depend heavily on SETs
- Known gender discrimination in SETs - could these be illegal?
- Hurt women and minority faculty disproportionately
- SETs are important components of tenure and promotion
- BSU - being a good teacher is a prerequisite for obtaining tenure

Student evaluations could be hurting faculty diversity

Increasing recruitment and retention of diverse faculty in priority in academe

BSU strategic plan titled :I “Inspired by PLACE, Enriched by Diversity,”

Changing demographic of students - In the next 30 years White people will become a national minority. College students expected to be more than 50% minorities

Please note: Past workshops on these issues conducted by CPD: for more information visit the CPD website.

American Sociological Association

Sep 9, 2019 press release

<https://www.asanet.org/press-center/press-releases/reconsidering-student-evaluations-teaching>

- Despite the ubiquity of SETs, a growing body of evidence suggests their use in personnel decisions in problematic
- SETs are weakly related to other measures of teaching effectiveness and student learning
- They are often used in statistically inappropriate ways - distributions not reported, small differences given undue weight, categorical measures are treated as interval, response rates are ignored etc.
- They can be influenced by time of day, subject, class size, whether class is required, all of which is unrelated to teaching effectiveness.

Endorsed by 17 other national professional organizations

American Anthropological Association

American Dialect Society

American Folklore Society

American Historical Association

American Political Science Association

Archeological Institute of America Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies

Canadian Sociological Association

Dance Studies Association

International Center of Medieval Art

Latin American Studies

Association Middle East Studies Association

National Communication Association

National Council on Public History

Rhetoric Society of America

Society for Cinema and Media Studies

Society for Classical Studies

Society for Personality and Social Psychology

Society of Architectural Historians

Sociologists for Women in Society

So what should we do?

<https://www.asanet.org/press-center/press-releases/reconsidering-student-evaluations-teaching>

Student experience vs. teaching effectiveness

Questions in SETs should focus on student experience

instruments as opportunity for student feedback rather than places for students to comment on teaching effectiveness

Augsburg University and University of North Carolina Asheville renamed their instruments

University Course Survey / Student Feedback on Instruction Form

Emphasize that student feedback is important but it is NOT an evaluation of teaching effectiveness

SETs not the only evidence

Additional evidence for teaching effectiveness should be sought

If SETs are used they should be part of a holistic measure of assessment

Peer observations

Review of teaching materials

Instructor self reflections

Widely used approach in teaching institutions but slowly becoming more common in research institutions like USC, UC Irvine, U of Oregon

Example: University of Nebraska Lincoln

“Student evaluations should not be a major consideration in the quality of a faculty member’s teaching. Student assessment has been extensively documented to reflect implicit bias that negatively impacts specific ethnic, age and gender demographics. Furthermore, such data vary directly with course assignment.”

https://advance.unl.edu/files/annualevaluationoffaculty3_2013.pdf

- Ensure transparency in evaluation of faculty
- Take steps to avoid implicit bias
- Conduct assessment collaboratively
- Maintain equity and consistency in review

Comparing SETs

Do not compare SETs of individual faculty members to each other:
especially within a department or to a department average

As part of a holistic set of measurements the SETs can be used to track
patterns in that individual faculty member's feedback over time

If using Quantitative scores

Include sample size

Distribution

Response rates

All of this will provide and interpretative context for these scores
(for example low response rates can be assigned low overall weight)

Train the evaluators

Deans, Chairs, hiring committees, tenure and promotion committees etc should be trained in how to interpret and use SETs as part of a holistic assessment of teaching effectiveness

Suggestions by our Deans

Dr. Joe Ritter, College of Individual and Community Health

Dr. Marilyn Yoder, College of Business, Math and Science

Dr. Jim Barta, College of Arts, Education and Humanities

Resources

University of Nebraska Lincoln

https://advance.unl.edu/files/annualevaluationoffaculty3_2013.pdf

University of Michigan

<http://www.crlt.umich.edu/resources/student-ratings>

University of Southern California

<http://cet.usc.edu/resources/instructor-course-evaluation/>

University of California Irvine

<http://www.cwsei.ubc.ca/resources/TeachingPracticesInventory.htm>