

Exploring How Course Evaluation Outcomes are Collected, Shared, and Used



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Course evaluation use

- End of course evaluations are the most popular form of teaching assessments
 - Provide information for
 - course assessment & improvement
 - teaching assessment & improvement
 - tenure and promotion, contract renewal, merit review
 - student course selection
 - Institutional characteristics and culture, rather than formal policies, have greater influence on faculty use of course evaluation results

Course evaluation & org culture

- Organizational culture is reflected in assumptions and shared beliefs of faculty
 - Impact of supportive campus environments
 - Continuous improvement
 - Commitment to and support of teaching from faculty and administration
 - Creation of faculty ownership through improvement activities
 - Supportive campus environment for faculty translates into support for students
 - Controversy around course evaluations

RateMyProfessor.com

- RateMyProfessor.com (RMP)
 - Popular internet resource for students
 - Studies offer conflicting findings
 - Focus of RMP results tend to be on external factors and not
 - Instructor effectiveness
 - Teaching methods
 - What a student has learned

Research Questions

1. How do different institutions administer EOC evaluations?
2. How commonly are results from these evaluations shared with students?
3. How much do faculty use, and how much do students think faculty use, EOC evaluation results to improve their courses and teaching? Do these patterns vary by faculty or student characteristics?
4. How much do students use EOC evaluation results or results from external evaluation sources when choosing their courses?
5. What influences students' EOC evaluation ratings, and what do faculty think influences students' evaluation ratings? How do the two compare?

Data

- 2013 administrations of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)
- Experimental item sets about EOC evaluations were appended to NSSE and FSSE at 30 institutions
- 2,667 (35%) first-year & 4,856 (65%) seniors
- 2,735 faculty

NSSE (First-year/Senior)

- 95/78% full-time
- 59/12% living on campus
- 55/59% first-generation
- 64/66% female
- 87/55% traditional age
- 49/54% White
- 8/6% international
- 2/11% all online classes
- 47/50% mostly A's
- 7/9% Arts & Humanities
- 12/8% Bio. Sciences
- 6/4% Phys. Sciences
- 10/11% Social Sciences
- 13/17% Business
- 3/3% Communications
- 9/12% Education
- 11/7% Engineering
- 18/15% Health Profs.
- 6/6% Soc. Svce. Profs.

FSSE

- 51% female
- 97% U.S. citizen
- 66% White
- 37% tenured
- 21% Full professor
 - 25% Assoc. Professor
 - 25% Assist. Professor
- 41/52% lower/upper division
- 49% gen ed req.
- 23% Arts & Humanities
- 6% Bio. Sciences
- 12% Phys. Sciences
- 10% Social Sciences
- 10% Business
- 2% Communications
- 12% Education
- 3% Engineering
- 13% Health Professions
- 3% Soc. Svce. Professions

Institutions

- 19 publicly controlled
- 4 Very Small (<1k FTE)
- 12 Small (<3k FTE)
- 12 Medium (<10k FTE)
- 2 Large (≥ 10k FTE)
- 3 RU/H
- 2 DRU
- 7 Master's L
- 1 Master's M
- 2 Master's S
- 3 Bac/A&S
- 10 Bac/Diverse

Methods

- Descriptives, *t*-tests, Cohen's *d* effect sizes, ANOVAs
- Student characteristics: gender, race/ethnicity, age, educational expectations, first-generation status, international student status, veteran status, disability status, transfer status, enrollment status, living on campus, taking all courses online, athlete, Greek affiliation, major, grades, and time spent studying.

Methods

- Faculty characteristics: gender, race/ethnicity, age, international status, earned doctorate, years spent teaching, rank, tenure status, discipline, division taught (upper/lower), and teaching a general education requirement.
- Institutional characteristics include Basic Carnegie classification, institution size, and control.

1. How do different institutions administer EOC evaluations?

- 52% of faculty report students complete EOCs completely online
 - 11% mostly online
 - 16% mostly on paper
 - 21% entirely on paper
- Bac/A&S, Master's L; Small and Large more often on paper than at other institution types

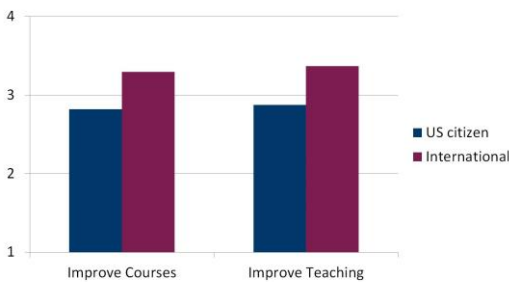
2. How commonly are results from these evaluations shared with students?

- Do students have access to EOC results (according to faculty)?
 - 15% yes
 - 24% no
 - 61% do not know
- Over half of faculty at Master's M & L and at Large institutions report students have access to results; more than other institution types

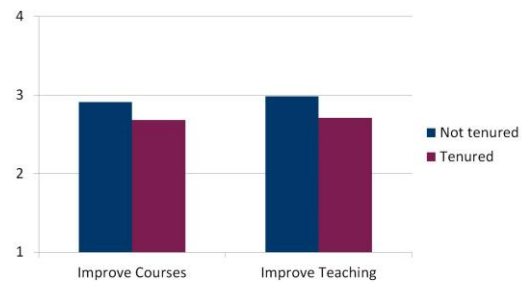
3. How much do faculty use EOC results to improve their courses and teaching?

- Faculty use course evaluation results between “Some” (2) and “Quite a bit” (3)
 - Improving course content ($\bar{x} = 2.83$) and teaching ($\bar{x} = 2.88$)
- Most notable differences were for international faculty and by tenure status

Use of EOC Results by Citizenship



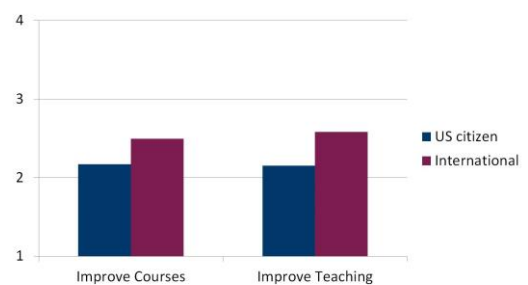
Use of EOC Results by Tenure Status



3. How much do students think faculty use EOC results to improve their courses and teaching?

- Students thought that course evaluation results were used between “Some” (2) and “Quite a bit” (3), slightly less for seniors than first-years
 - Improving course content ($\bar{x} = 2.37/2.10$) and teaching ($\bar{x} = 2.34/2.10$)
- Most notable differences were for international students

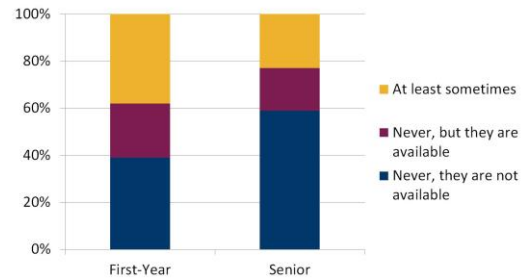
Student Perception of Use by Citizenship



4. How much do students use EOC results or results from external sources when choosing their courses?

- 38% of first-years and 23% of seniors at least sometimes use EOC results when choosing their courses
- 33/28% of students **submitted** evaluations to external sources such as ratemyprofessors.com
- 56/49% of students **used** the results from external sources when choosing their courses

Use of EOC Results When Choosing Courses



5. What Influences EOC Eval Ratings: Greatest Influences (by mean scores)

Student Influences

- **How clearly the instructor explained difficult material**
- The instructors' knowledge of course content
- **How the instructor interacted with students**

Faculty Perceptions of Student Influences

- **How instructors interact with students**
- The ease or difficulty of understanding instructors
- **How clearly instructors explain difficult material**

5. What Influences EOC Eval Ratings: Smallest Influences (by mean scores)

Student Influences

- **Whether the course was required or an elective**
- The grade students expect to receive
- How much assignments interested students

Faculty Perceptions of Student Influences

- Other factors beyond the instructor's control
- **Whether the course was required or an elective**
- How much the student learned

Implications: Student Access

- Mixed practices regarding student access
- Student EOC access is worth considering
 - Formal EOCs reflect institutional priorities
 - Formal EOCs are administered systematically
 - Many students use external sources such as RMP

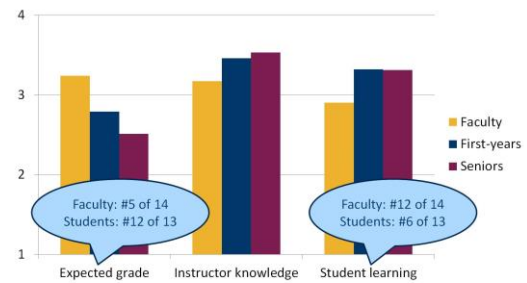
Implications: Faculty Use

- Greater use of EOC results by nontenured faculty (including off-track)
 - Reinforces some of the tenure critique
 - BUT cross sectional design limits inference
 - Further inquiry is needed

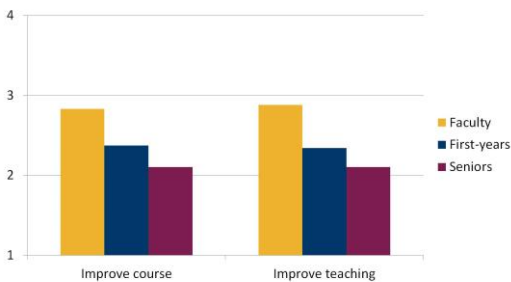
Implications: Convergence & Divergence of Faculty & Student Views

- Some consistency between student and faculty on factors that most and least influence overall EOC ratings
- **But** some notable disconnects regarding these influences and use of results for improvement
 - Lack of understanding and awareness between faculty and students

Notable Disconnects: Influence on Overall EOC Ratings



Notable Disconnects: Faculty Use of EOC Results



Implications for Research

- Despite the important role that EOC evaluations play, a surprisingly thin research base
- Important to learn more about how faculty and students make sense of and use them
- Opportunity to bridge gaps of understanding

Questions?

Paper, presentation, and more information about NSSE and FSSE at nsse.iub.edu



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