Ensuring Quality in Education

**Purpose:** To describe one approach to developing a course and instructor critique system that was 1. accepted by faculty, students and administration and 2. that delivered a system that was reliable, valid, relatively unbiased, and useful.

- Introduction
- Background
- Development Strategy
- Implementation
- Challenges
- Future

**Introduction**

Science Teacher / Flight Instructor

Faculty Developer

Total Quality Education (Baldridge Criteria*)

Office of Educational Assessment

Testing

Proctoring

Course and Instructor Critiques

Surveys

*7 areas: leadership; strategic planning; customer and market focus; measurement, analysis, and knowledge management; human resource focus; process management; and results.

**Background**

Critique History

Scantron based system

- 24 or more questions (pencil only)
- Administered by the lady that ran the printing shop
- Last 10 minutes of class or “on your break”
- Left in piles at the back or in the “ballot box”
- Collected? And then...?
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- Background
  - Critique History
  - Comprehensive plan – PASS system
    - Peer
    - Administrative
    - Self (Educator's Portfolio)
    - Student (Course and Instructor Rating*)

*The language of "rating" is used throughout to emphasize the notion that students offer ratings, not evaluations.

Faculty Evaluation Committee--UAS

- Duties of the committee include but are not limited to:
  - Review faculty evaluation files for each faculty member who is undergoing performance evaluation for... according to processes provided for...and the following criteria:
    - Mastery of subject matter
    - Teaching
    - Public service
    - University service
    - Research and/or Creative Activity
    - Professional development

We need to distinguish between sources of information about teaching and the process of evaluation.

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- Background continued:
  - Faculty Affairs approves recommendation:
    - A subcommittee be formed and tasked to examine the current course and instructor evaluation system in an effort to improve both its efficiency and relevancy.

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- Background continued:
  - Subcommittee will review the current process
  - Specific areas to review would include but not be limited to the current:
    - Course evaluation system
    - Instructor evaluation system
    - Visiting professor / adjunct evaluation system

- Literature Review
  - The literature on student ratings is voluminous
    - One summary in September 1995 found more than 1500 articles and books on the subject

Literature Review

- Student ratings can be valuable indicators of teaching effectiveness, and they can help guide improvement efforts.
- Some Limitations of Students as Raters
  - Appropriateness of the instructor's objectives
  - Relevance of assignments or readings
  - Degree to which subject matter content was balanced and up-to-date
  - Degree to which grading standards were unduly lax or severe
- Comprehensive evaluation of instructional effectiveness requires more than "student ratings"

http://idea.ksu.edu/StudentRatings/online_index.html

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- Background continued:
  - For each area reviewed, the following questions should be addressed:
    - What is the current evaluation system?
    - How are evaluations conducted?
    - Who is evaluated?
    - How are evaluations administered?
    - Who receives the results of the evaluations?
    - What are the results of the evaluations to be used for?
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Development Strategy

Process

- The subcommittee organized
- Adopted a structured way of comparing the SGU system to a list of 34 recommendations*

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Key Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 3 -- Discuss and decide upon the purpose(s) that the student rating data will be used for before any student rating form is chosen or any data are collected

- Evaluation (summative)
- Improvement (formative)
- Advising (course and instructor selection)

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RECOMMENDATION 16 -- For evaluation, use a few global or summary items or scores

Suggested summary items are:
1) Overall, how effective was the instructor?
2) Overall, how worthwhile was the course?
3) Overall, how much did you learn?

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Development Strategy

Process

- Overview of the current system
- Invite suggestions and inputs concerning the current system and suggestions for a revised system.
- Provide a working draft of an evaluation system.
- Publish this information and invite faculty, student, and administration reviews and comments.
- Present comprehensive proposal to faculty for review and comment.
- Present final proposal to the Faculty Affairs Committee.
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Development Strategy

- Process: The specific goals of this project included:
  - Create a user-friendly database
  - Create a program which will randomly select names for mandatory participation in course evaluation surveys
  - Create a paperless system
  - Create a relational database to electronically collect information
  - Create separate, easy-to-use and understand report spreadsheets
  - Create a system to automatically populate each report to its appropriate designee
  - Provide a way to submit each report to its appropriate designee
  - Provide support and counseling services to instructors in order to improve instruction and course content

Development Strategy

- Coordinator of the Office of Educational Assessment (OEA) joined the subcommittee
- Development of a working system:
  1. general considerations
  2. the overall system
  3. course and instructor rating* form and questions
  4. its administration
  5. its interpretation

IT: “we can build this program for you – just tell us what you need!”

“It is easier to move a graveyard than develop your own critique system.”

Academic Medicine 75:575-594; 2000

Roles for IT, OEA, Administration, Students?

Overview of SGU System

The language of “rating” is used throughout to emphasize the notion that students offer ratings, not evaluations

Development Strategy

Critique Flow Chart

Do another Evaluation?

Stop

Notes Question Lookup View

Categories

QuestionNumber

Required

Course_ID

Course_Name

Faculty_Name

Faculty_Fullname

EC_Number

Note 1: Based on the possible EC_Numbers for a specific student, a list of possible user choices is populated into the Intro Form.

On Eval Form, there is a Dblookup to the Question Lookup View to pull up the correct questions based on the selected EC_Number.
The Introduction
Screen:
This appears after a student enters the system

Student will select the Type of Evaluation and then the Course or Instructor being evaluated

Sample Evaluation Prototype with standard questions and two possible departmental questions. Student evaluates and submits

If a student forgets to answer a required question that question will become highlighted in yellow

When all required questions are answered, the yellow highlights disappear

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Step 1: First Run of Online Critiques Sp03
- Notice to students instructions & link
- Emphasis on mandatory nature of evals
- Posters outside lecture halls/bus stops
- Ppt. Presentation to Freshman class
- Reminder messages (blanket)
- Contact e-mail for problems with efficient technical assistance
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Results of the First Run vs Fall 02

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Admin Date</th>
<th>Fall 02</th>
<th>Spring 03</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avg. Return Rate:</td>
<td>Paper: 56%</td>
<td>Paper: 62%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Online: 36%</td>
<td>Online:</td>
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Variation Jr.-Sr.

Inverse relationship

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Step 2: System Analysis

- Collate student “help” messages
- E-Mail Survey of Non-Participants (classes with < 50% return)
  - Explicitly state “mandatory” nature
  - Point out steps taken
  - Solicit assistance in system improvement

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Step 3: Incentive Strategies (Fall 03)

- DOS Memo re: Official E-mail Account
- No staggering – midterm/term end
- Extended eval window (sandwiched- pre/post exams)
- Mailbox notices / Student Paper Article
- Faculty announcement in-class when evals open
- Bi-weekly reminders
- Syllabus statement
- Faculty presentation of results
- Work with IT to address technical “kinks”

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Step 4: Second Run/Analysis of Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Admin Date</th>
<th>Fall 02 (paper evals)</th>
<th>Spring 03 (paper/online)</th>
<th>Fall 03 (online)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Return Rate:</td>
<td>Paper: 56%</td>
<td>Paper: 62%</td>
<td>Midterm 66% Term End 88%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Variation Jr.-Sr.</td>
<td>Inverse relationship</td>
<td>Inverse relationship</td>
<td>Insignificant</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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Subsequent Submission Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Spring 04</th>
<th>Fall 04*</th>
<th>Spring 05</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>91%</td>
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</table>

*Course Only/Post Hurricane Ivan

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Measures of Success

- Consistently high response rates
- Response rates high across all schools/departments
- Increased number of evaluation comments submitted
- Positive response from “shareholders”
- Historical data for assessment and accreditation

*Up to 30 pages of comments for some courses

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Reasons for Success?

- “Shareholders” consulted in system design
- Student surveys with personalized responses
- Submission Flexibility
- Helpdesk support for technical/general inquiries
- Consistent administration (no surprises)
- Faculty involvement – closing the “loop”
- Efficient reporting of results

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Future (Modifications, expansion, management)

- Early grade access for completing via course management system
- Electronic access to reports
- Collating comments by threads
- Adjust frequency of faculty evaluations

Closing the Loop!

Summary / Conclusions

- Do not build the system in isolation!
- Reflective Inquiry and Action
- Written guidelines and procedures
- Dedicated Staff – The Right Stuff
- No prizes/extra credit: professional responsibility

Thank you and good bye from Sitka-by-the-Sea where the Tongass National Forest and the Pacific Ocean are part of the classroom