



Workshop on Developing a New Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET)

Workshop Outcomes

- Participants will develop a shared understanding of best practices regarding the construction of a student evaluation of teaching (SET) measure.
- Participants will compare their current SET measure with best practices

Workshop Outline

1. Warm-up Activity

a) In groups, discuss your current SET measure:

- What aspects of the evaluation are most useful to you?
- What aspects of the evaluation are least useful to you?
- What concerns do you have about the evaluation instrument?

2. Topic 1: Creating a context for student respondents

Providing students with an understanding of the purpose of the SET measure should improve the quality of the feedback they give. This may take the form of a formal statement that is read by the faculty member when the instrument is distributed or found at the front-end of the assessment device.

a) In groups, discuss your current way of assisting creating a context for students.

b) In groups, consider the usefulness of creating a “preamble” with any of the following elements not part of your current system:

- We are looking for honest feedback (both positive and negative)
- Results will be used in the process of modifying the course in future terms
- Results will be available to both faculty member and other review groups
- Results are part of the retention and promotion process
- Submissions are anonymous and will not be made available to faculty until after grades have been turned in (assuming this is the case)

For more information on how to help students provide more useful feedback, consider using [this video](#) from UC-Merced's SATAL program.

3. Topic 2: Question/statement quality

The best SET measure questions/statements are concrete, directly observable by students, specific and unbiased. However, many SET measures use questions/statements that lack clarity leading to difficulty in interpreting the results.

- Example: “Instructor was responsive” lacks specificity (two alternatives that might both be used)
 - “Instructor returned assignments within 2 weeks”
 - “Instructor responded to emails within a few days”
- Example: “Faculty member helped me learn” lacks specificity (two alternatives that might both be used)
 - “Feedback on projects and/or written assignments assisted me in understanding the material”
 - “Faculty lectures/presentations assisted me in understanding the material”
- Example: “Faculty showed sensitivity to diversity and/or inclusion” – lacks specificity (three alternatives that might both all used)
 - “Instructor discussed material from a variety of theoretical positions”
 - “Class discussion included materials from a variety of cultures and/or a diverse selection of authors”
 - “Instructor was respectful of ideas or issues raised by students from different racial or ethnic backgrounds”

a) In groups, review the questions/statements on your current measure to determine whether there are items that might be improved.

Campus expertise in the form of faculty who work on survey development can be valuable in this exercise.

4. Topic 3: Numbers versus narratives

The most effective SET measures include a combination of numerical (quantitative) vs narratives (qualitative) response types, each of which has advantages and disadvantages.

- Quantitative (“The course was well-organized” – please rate 1 to 5 with 1 being very organized and 5 being very disorganized)
 - advantage – ease in analysis, ease in comparison
 - disadvantage – lack understanding of why the score was given, comparison between differ types of classes (required vs elective) could contribute to bias
- Qualitative (“Please discuss the class organization”)
 - Advantage – more details, freedom of students to express their opinions
 - Disadvantage – difficult to make comparisons with other faculty, reliant on students written skills and willingness to answer open-ended items

a) In groups, review the questions/statements on your current measure to determine whether the balance of quantitative responses to qualitative is appropriate for your institution.

5. Topic 4: One measure or more

In most cases the same SET measure is used for all classes. An advantage is that it allows for comparison of faculty on the same measures. A disadvantage is that some items may not be applicable for all classes, and it does not allow for faculty to receive feedback on items not assessed by measure. Other institutions tie specific items to courses depending on the learning objectives related to the course. An advantage is that this allow for feedback that is directly relevant to the class. A disadvantage is that it complicates the assessment reporting.

a) In groups, discuss whether a single version or options is the best approach for your institution.

6. Topic 5: What is the point?

Depending on how they are designed, SET measure generated data can be an important source of information that can be used as an assessment of a current course (descriptive/summative – how was the class) and/or ways of improving future performance (developmental/formative – how to improve the class the next time it is taught). Institutions need to determine the intended purpose of the SET measure, and this should be part of the process of determining appropriate response possibilities included on the measure.

a) In groups, please discuss whether your current SET is descriptive/summative, developmental/formative, or a combination.

b) In groups, please discuss whether the current descriptive/summative-developmental/formative balance is appropriate for your institution.

7. Topic 6: What is the plan?

To ensure continuous improvement, it is important to have a plan for regular review of the SET measure.

a) In groups, discuss how often this should occur and determine who should be involved in the process

8. Wrap-Up: Identify key takeaways for the workshop