

# “Course Evaluations” for Formative and Summative Assessment: Provost’s Initiative on Evidence of Effective Teaching

# Learning Outcomes

Participants will be able to:

1. Review Provost's Initiative on Evidence of Teaching Effectiveness and Best Practice Literature
2. Revisit what "Course Evaluations" can be called
3. Compare and contrast formative and summative assessment of teaching
4. Describe how to analyze and use "course evaluations/student end of semester surveys"
5. Describe Contextual Narratives
6. Create a Contextual Narrative

# Goals of Initiative

- To revise and enhance the “course evaluation” (student end of semester survey)
- To promote additional evidence-based practices that are used to demonstrate teaching effectiveness for
  - formative (growth and improvement of teaching)
  - summative (decision-making, tenure, promotion and merit) assessments.

# Task Forces- Long Term Project

This initiative is a long term (3-5 year) project

- Task Force 1- Course Evaluations Revisited
- Task Force 2- Additional Evidence of Teaching Effectiveness

Task Force 1 -2016-2017- diverse representation from college and professional schools (nominations from deans and then co-chairs select)

# Best Practices in Evidence of Teaching Effectiveness

For make formative (improvement) and summative (tenure, decision-making, merit) evaluation of teaching

- There should be a triangulation of evidence (multiple types of examples- student surveys, narratives, protocol observations, portfolios, syllabi, exit interviews, etc.)
- What we call “course evaluations” should not be used as the sole or major determining factor in decision-making
- What we call “course evaluations” are actually “student satisfaction surveys” and provide important information but do not provide a “complete, accurate, valid” data if used alone

# Research on “Course Evaluations”

- Student satisfaction surveys not evaluation of teaching
- Some research suggests that lower ratings are reported for women, under-represented faculty, required courses, challenging courses, students who do not do well in courses

(Benton & Cashin, 2014; Boring, 2016; Centra, 2005; Centra, 2000; Isey, 2007; Shevlin, 2000; Steiner, 2006; Superson, 1999; Zabaleta, 2007)

# Research findings acknowledge

(Arreola, R. ,2007; Benton, S. & Cashin, W. 2012; Buller, J., 2012; Hativa, 2013)

- SRI/SETs/Student Surveys are the most commonly used sample of evidence of “teaching effectiveness” for decision-making purposes at universities
- Frequently called “course evaluations” but in reality students do not evaluate courses or instructors, rather they provide their feedback, perceptions and satisfaction
- Yet, NOT the best indicator as SRI/SETs are more of a “student satisfaction survey” than measure of teaching effectiveness or whether students actually learned. Some research suggests that:
  - Easy grading= higher scores
  - Elective courses (vs. required courses)= higher scores
  - On-line responses- lower return rate
  - More advanced and committed students (i.e. seniors and graduate students)= higher scores

# Revisiting what we call “Course Evaluations”

## “Course Evaluation” Revisited

What are they called?

“Course evaluations” is often the term used for student end-of-semester (SES) surveys.

### Preferred Terms

SES Surveys (Student End-of-Semester Surveys)

SRI: Student Ratings of Instruction

SET: Student Evaluation of Teaching

### Additional Terms

SRT: Student Ratings of Teaching

SIR: Student Instructional Report

SRI: Student Response to Instruction

SRTE: Student Ratings of Teaching Effectiveness

### Recommendations for Evaluating Teaching Effectiveness

Students can provide insight and important feedback about a course and instructor, and may be a reliable and valid measure if it is part of a larger, comprehensive evaluation system that triangulates evidence of teaching effectiveness. A student survey alone, however, should not be seen as the single measure of teaching effectiveness. Students do provide us with the information, but it is up to faculty, departments and tenure committees to provide the evaluation component and decision-making.



# Discuss

- What are they called in your department?
- What do you think they should be called?

# Discuss

- How are they used in your department?
- When do you see them?
- How do you use them?

# Driven to drink?

- How do you feel about reviewing your “course evaluations/student surveys”?
- What do you do with them?
- How are they used?

# Formative and Summative Assessments of Teaching

- Formative Assessments
  - Evidence of teaching effectiveness used to guide growth and development in teaching
  - Ongoing
  - Reflective Practice
- Summative Assessments
  - Evidence of teaching effectiveness used by department/school/college/university for decision-making purposes
  - Rehiring part time, scheduling and assignment of courses, tenure, promotion, merit

# As research and best practices indicate

- Should use multiple-measure (triangulation) of evidence
- “Course Evaluations/Student Surveys” are **one** piece of evidence
- **They should not be the sole indicating for summative decisions**

# How to look at your “Course Evaluations/ Student Survey’s

The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning Quick Notes presents

## Formative Feedback and Reflective Practice Using Student End-of-Semester (SES) Surveys

### HOW TO REVIEW STUDENT END-OF-SEMESTER (SES) SURVEYS

<b>EVERY SEMESTER</b>	Review your SES surveys each semester for ongoing personal growth and development in your teaching and learning.
<b>WITH A GRAIN OF SALT</b>	The SES survey largely measures student satisfaction and perception. While these factors are important and necessary, they do not sufficiently determine teaching effectiveness.
<b>RATINGS AND COMMENTS</b>	Review the ratings (quantitative assessment) and comments (qualitative assessment).
<b>IDENTIFYING PATTERNS</b>	Note trends, themes and patterns in surveys.
<b>DISREGARDING OUTLIERS</b>	Disregard single “outliers.” If you have one comment that is outstanding or one that is terrible, do not pay too much attention to that single response; focus more on the patterns.

### HOW TO USE SES SURVEYS

<b>WORK WITH A MENTOR</b>	Review your surveys with someone in your department or school. In addition, the CETL director can confidentially review your SES surveys to provide feedback.
<b>CLARIFY ASSESSMENT</b>	Clarify how this data might be used for summative review (i.e. promotion and tenure, reappointment) and if you can provide a reflective narrative to accompany the data.
<b>DETERMINE RELEVANCE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are your strengths as perceived by your students? What are their concerns with the content, instruction and learning?</li><li>• Are there elements that you can, and are willing to, change? How would you go about addressing these?</li><li>• Can you provide an explanation as to why you are not willing to change certain aspects of the course or instruction?</li></ul>	
<b>WRITE A CONTEXTUAL NARRATIVE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Your strengths as perceived by students</li><li>• An action plan of what areas of perceived problems you will address and how</li><li>• A rationale or context on other areas of concern and why you are not aiming to change those</li></ul>	
<b>EVALUATE CHANGES</b>	Review next semester’s SES surveys and determine if and how change has occurred.

# How to Review Surveys

## HOW TO REVIEW STUDENT END-OF-SEMESTER (SES) SURVEYS

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# Apply this to your situation

- Discuss and share



# How to use the Surveys

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### WRITE A CONTEXTUAL NARRATIVE

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### EVALUATE CHANGES

Review next semester's SES surveys and determine if and how change has occurred.

# Apply this to your situation

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# What is a Contextual Narrative

The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning Quick Notes presents

## Contextual Narratives to Accompany Student End-of-Semester Surveys

A contextual narrative is a reflective written document that a faculty member develops after reviewing their student end-of-semester survey to provide a context, explanation, rationale and action plan.

### Why is Contextual Narrative Useful?

#### For Formative Evaluation

- Allows faculty to reflect on teaching for ongoing growth and improvement
- Provides an action plan for future growth
- Provides faculty rationale and explanation for ratings and comments
- Provides faculty opportunity to reflect on changes that they have implemented over time (prior action plan)
- Provides starting point for conversation with mentor or coach

#### For Summative Evaluation

- Provides clear context, explanation and rationale to chair, committee or others with decision-making powers
- Should be part of triangulation of evidence (multiple measures) to provide a comprehensive picture of teaching effectiveness

#### SES Surveys: Instructor Report

INTRO TO SAMPLES 100  
WINTER 2016  
PARTIALLY ONLINE  
13 STUDENTS  
REQUIRED FOR SAMPLE MAJORS

##### Course Context

First Semester Teaching the Course Partially Online

Contextual narrative is a reflective written document that a faculty member develops after reviewing their student end-of-semester survey to provide a context, explanation, rationale and action plan.

##### Academic Conduct Issues

Academic conduct issues are a reflection of the student's behavior in the classroom. They are not a reflection of the student's ability or potential. They are a reflection of the student's behavior in the classroom.

##### SES Summary Results

###### Strengths

Contextual narrative is a reflective written document that a faculty member develops after reviewing their student end-of-semester survey to provide a context, explanation, rationale and action plan.

###### Issues

Contextual narrative is a reflective written document that a faculty member develops after reviewing their student end-of-semester survey to provide a context, explanation, rationale and action plan.

###### Plan of Action

Contextual narrative is a reflective written document that a faculty member develops after reviewing their student end-of-semester survey to provide a context, explanation, rationale and action plan.

###### Rationale

Contextual narrative is a reflective written document that a faculty member develops after reviewing their student end-of-semester survey to provide a context, explanation, rationale and action plan.

###### Explanation

Contextual narrative is a reflective written document that a faculty member develops after reviewing their student end-of-semester survey to provide a context, explanation, rationale and action plan.

### LENGTH

2-3 paragraphs or longer

*(if significant issues/concerns could be 1-3 pages)*

### FREQUENCY

- Years 1-2: every course
- Years 3-6: new courses, courses with concerns/issues and changing contexts and frequently enough to provide evidence for reviews
- Post-tenure: new courses, courses with concerns/issues

See full example on back.

### TEACHING PORTFOLIOS

When preparing for Reviews and Tenure and Promotion Reviews, the contextual narratives can be part of a larger teaching portfolio or can be integrated into a larger teaching narrative.

# Contextual Narratives

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# What to include in a contextual narrative

1. Overview of course
2. Context of this semester
3. Summary of results
4. Plan of Action of things you will continue and what/how you will revise things
5. Rationale of concerns expressed that you will not revise
6. Explanation of concerns

# How to write a contextual narrative

**SES Surveys: Instructor Report**

INTRO TO SAMPLES 100  
WINTER 2016  
PARTIALLY ONLINE  
33 STUDENTS  
REQUIRED FOR SAMPLE MAJORS

**Course Context**  
First Semester Teaching the Course Partially Online

Academic Conduct Issues

**SES Summary Results**

Strengths	Issues	Trends over 3 Years
1. Student feedback	1. Data collection	1. Student feedback
2. Student feedback	2. Student feedback	2. Student feedback

**Plan of Action**

**Rationale**

**Explanation**

## LENGTH

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## FREQUENCY

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## TEACHING PORTFOLIOS

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# Example of a Contextual Narrative

The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning Quick Notes presents

## Contextual Narratives to Accompany Student End-of-Semester Surveys

### SES Surveys: Instructor Report

Brief overview  
of the course

WRT 160: Composition 2 | WINTER 2016 | FULLY ONLINE  
16 STUDENTS | REQUIRED IN CAS: WRITING FOUNDATIONS

Specific issues  
encountered.

Others include:

- tried new technique
- changed assignments
- first time teaching course
- personnel context (e.g. minority, English language learner)

#### Course Context

##### First Semester Teaching the Course Fully Online

In August 2015, I found out I would be teaching my first online class in the winter. In preparation, I took e-Learning and Instructional Support's Quality Online Certification Course in Fall 2015. The course was helpful as far as getting the basic structure of my course ready and learning guidelines for activities, but the greatest learning curve would be how I would actually interact with students.

#### Student Preparedness Issues

To add to the challenge of being a first-time online teacher, most of my students were first-time online students. As busy adults, they found the online class option to be alluring, but many had a hard time keeping up with the course content and seemed at times resentful to me that more time was required than they had anticipated. They most strongly disliked that I required two real-time meetings via WebEx since they expected to take the whole class at their own pace.

Summary of  
perceived  
strengths and  
issues,  
and SES trends  
over time

#### SES Summary Results

##### Strengths

- Organization of course
- Constant communication

##### Issues

- Felt workload was too much
- Unhappy with grades/requirement to meet

##### Trends over 3 Years

- Overall positive reviews over years. Issues this year were different than others, likely due to format

What you may  
change in course  
to address  
concerns

#### Plan of Action

• **Spend more time communicating commitment and structure of online class.** While the QOTCC told us we would need to communicate expectations to students, I would do this more specifically to my course. My goal would be for students to determine early on whether they should stay in course or drop. I think many students realized too late that an online course was not for them.

• **Allow flexibility with web conference meeting times.** I had the whole class meet at three points throughout the semester. Next time, I would do this in small groups and give students a variety of times to choose.

Why you are not  
changing certain  
aspects of the  
course

#### Rationale

• **Course Load.** I will review course activities to see if anything can be better streamlined, the assignments and projects I have in this course are integral to the course objectives. Therefore, I won't eliminate most of course workload.

Context for  
concerns  
(e.g. first time  
teaching  
course, low  
morale due  
to cheating)

#### Explanation

Most students worked hard to meet the course requirements and did so with a positive attitude. About a third of students who remained in the course were unhappy with the course, and most of them probably should have dropped the course before the tuition refund deadline. I received a lot of positive feedback on course design, and while I had more negative comments than usual, I suspect this is because a portion of the class had different expectations for the course.



# Try writing a contextual narrative for a previous course

- Work on contextual narrative
- Share



# Thoughts on Contextual Narratives

- Thoughts?
- Questions?

# Next week

- Creating a Teaching Portfolio: Evidence to Demonstrate Teaching Effectiveness

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