Reflecting on and Renovating Teaching Evaluations within Non-Traditional Classrooms

Abstract:

This 60-minute roundtable session promotes instructor reflection on traditional teaching evaluations and offers ways to improving performance through the integration of varied tools and techniques. This session is designed to improve student assessment and instructor performance. Instructors will bring their institution’s evaluative criteria. We will start by discussing the importance of teaching evaluations and the ways in which teaching has changed, yet measures of evaluation have not. Following this discussion, we will brainstorm ways to reinvent evaluations to address new and varied approaches to teaching and learning. Participants will reflect upon their institution’s evaluation metrics and share how their performance is assessed. Finally, we will collectively outline supplemental tools and techniques with the potential to improve students’ perceptions and evaluations of our teaching.

Keywords: teaching evaluation, redesign, effectiveness, student assessment

Evaluation of teaching in institutions of higher education have embraced traditional, often out dated measures of performance. These measure are too often based upon student surveys of instruction heavily sked toward face-to-face classrooms (i.e.: Did the instructor present material clearly during class?), ignoring the varied methods for teaching and learning made popular by technology adoption. This has resulted in teaching evaluations which do not accurately assess the instructors’ abilities or contributions to the learning experiences. Furthermore, this reliance often diminishes perceptions of instructor efforts, subject matter expertise, and performance within non-traditional class contexts. While more institutions are modifying their evaluative criteria to meet changing needs, far too many have yet to reshape their approach to evaluating teaching.

In this 60-minute roundtable session, I creating space designed for instructors to reflect upon their existing institution-based tools for appraisal and modify performance-based approaches which will facilitate higher evaluative results. This session will guide instructors’ reflection on teaching and learning needed to enhance performance outcomes as related to their institution’s student survey of instruction (end-of-course student assessment). Participants will first determine which measures coincide with instructor performance then collaborate to identify those measures within their control. Once identified, participants will focus on these areas in an effort to identify supplemental tools and techniques with the potential to contribute to student perceptions. This brainstorm process will culminate in a number of strategies for enhancing student perceptions of instructors and positively impact desired instructor performance outcomes.

Session Description and Plan:

Activities will guide participants through Kolb’s Model of Learning (1984). This includes: concrete experience (doing something), reflective observation (thinking about what was done), abstract conceptualization (making generalizations), and active experimentation (planning for implementation). Participants will:

* Bring a copy of their institution’s student survey of instruction. Exemplars from other institutions will be provided to ensure full participation.
* Reflect upon the relevance of their institution’s survey within multiple contexts (e.g., hybrid, flipped, online, etc.).
* Determine which measures have the greatest impact on their performance evaluation.
* Identify which measures are clearly within their control as an instructor.
* Brainstorm the implementation and use of supplementation tools and techniques to enhance evaluative outcomes.
* Develop a plan to enhance teaching and learning effectiveness in non-traditional classrooms.

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| **Time Allocation** | **Activities** |
| 5 minutes | Introduction– Importance of Teaching Evaluations & Change from Traditional Student Survey of Instruction (Presenter) |
| 5 minutes | Review of General Student Survey of Instruction (Presenter) |
| 10 minutes | Assessment of Personal Student Survey of Instruction (Participants) |
|  | Determination of pertinent & impactful measures |
|  | Share in dyads … then report-out of findings |
| 10 minutes | Theme findings on whiteboard (Presenter) with discussion |
| 15 minutes | Brainstorm the implementation tools & technique for themes (All) |
| 10 minutes | Select (3) most useful strategies (Participants) |
|  | Develop implementation plan |
|  | Determine how to measure outcomes |
| 3 minutes | Debrief (Presenter) |

References:

Kolb, D.A. 1984. Experiential learning: Experience as a source of learning and development. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.