University-Wide Questions

These questions ask for an overall evaluation of a course and instructor. Unless special arrangements are made, these four questions will appear automatically on your questionnaire.

1. Overall, this was an excellent course.
2. Overall, the instructor was an excellent teacher.
3. I learned a great deal in this course.
4. I had a strong desire to take this course.

Student Course-Guide Questions

These questions help students obtain information about University courses. If you include these eight questions on your teaching questionnaire, results from these questions and the University-wide questions will be released to the Michigan Student Assembly (MSA) for publication in the on-line course evaluation guide Advice.

891. The workload for this course was (SA=LIGHT...SD=HEAVY)
892. Students felt comfortable asking questions.
893. Graded assignments reflected the material covered.
894. The grades in this course were fairly determined.
895. Students' difficulty with the material was recognized.
896. My expected grade in this course is (SA=A, A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, SD=E).
897. The course requirements were clearly defined.
898. The instructor presented material clearly in lectures/discussions.

Teaching Improvement Questions

Student responses to these questions can help teachers find strengths and weaknesses in their teaching. Questionnaires that include Student Course-Guide Questions may include up to 18 Teaching Improvement questions. Questionnaires that do not include Course-Guide questions may include up to 26 Teaching Improvement questions.

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

Knowledge

120. I learned a good deal of factual material in this course.
121. I gained a good understanding of concepts/principles in this field.
122. I learned to apply principles from this course to new situations.
123. I learned to identify main points and central issues in this field.
124. I learned to identify formal characteristics of works of art.
125. I developed the ability to solve real problems in this field.
126. I developed creative ability in this field.
127. I developed the ability to communicate clearly about this subject.
128. I developed ability to carry out original research in this area.
129. I developed an ability to evaluate new work in this field.

130. I learned to recognize the quality of works of art in this field.
131. I became more aware of multiple perspectives on issues of diversity.
132. I learned to think critically about difficult issues of diversity.

Interests and Values

140. I deepened my interest in the subject matter of this course.
141. I developed enthusiasm about the course material.
142. I was stimulated to do outside reading about the course material.
143. I was stimulated to discuss related topics outside of class.
144. I developed plans to take additional related courses.
145. I developed a set of overall values in this field.

Participation

160. I participated actively in class discussion.
161. I developed leadership skills in this class.
162. I developed new friendships in this class.

Social Awareness

163. I developed greater awareness of societal problems.
164. I became interested in community projects related to the course.
165. I learned to value new viewpoints.
166. I reconsidered many of my former attitudes.
167. I increased my appreciation of other students in this class.

Self-concept

170. I gained a better understanding of myself through this course.
171. I gained an understanding of some of my personal problems.
172. I developed a greater sense of personal responsibility.
173. I increased my awareness of my own interests and talents.
174. I developed more confidence in myself.

Vocational Skills and Attitudes

180. I developed skills needed by professionals in this field.
181. I learned about career opportunities.
182. I developed a clearer sense of professional identity.

INSTRUCTOR EFFECTIVENESS

Instructor Skill

198. I was very satisfied with the educational experience this instructor provided.
199. The instructor explained material clearly and understandably.
200. The instructor handled questions well.
201. The instructor gave clear explanations.
202. The instructor made good use of examples and illustrations.
203. The instructor stressed important points in lectures/discussions.
204. The instructor was enthusiastic.
205. The instructor put material across in an interesting way.
206. The instructor seemed to enjoy teaching.
207. The instructor appeared to have a thorough knowledge of the subject.
ASSIGNMENTS

318. Writing assignments seemed carefully chosen.
319. Writing assignments were interesting and stimulating.
320. Writing assignments made students think.
321. Directions for writing assignments were clear and specific.
322. Writing assignments required a reasonable amount of time and effort.
323. Writing assignments were relevant to what was presented in class.
324. Writing assignments were graded fairly.
325. Writing assignments were returned promptly.
257. Writing assignments encouraged the inclusion of diverse perspectives.

READING ASSIGNMENTS

326. Reading assignments seemed carefully chosen.
327. Reading assignments were interesting and stimulating.
328. Reading assignments made students think.
329. Reading assignments required a reasonable amount of time and effort.
330. Reading assignments were relevant to what was presented in class.
258. Reading assignments covered material from diverse perspectives.
259. The course pack covered material from diverse perspectives.

LABORATORY ASSIGNMENTS

331. The laboratory was a valuable part of this course.
332. Laboratory assignments seemed carefully chosen.
333. Laboratory assignments were interesting and stimulating.
334. Laboratory assignments made students think.
335. Directions for laboratory assignments were clear and specific.
336. Laboratory assignments required a reasonable amount of time and effort.
337. Laboratory assignments were relevant to what was presented in class.
338. Laboratory reports were graded fairly.
339. Laboratory reports were returned promptly.

OTHER ASSIGNMENTS

260. Group assignments helped me to learn the material.
261. The term project was very useful in learning the material.

TEXTBOOK

340. The textbook made a valuable contribution to the course.
341. The textbook was easy to read and understand.
342. The textbook presented various sides of issues.
343. A textbook would be a useful addition to this course.

AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS

344. Films were a valuable part of this course.
345. Audio materials were a valuable part of this course.
346. Films used in this course were a great help to learning.
347. Multimedia materials were a valuable part of this course.
348. Audiovisual materials were a valuable part of this course.
349. Videotapes used in this course were a great help to learning.
350. Slides/overheads were a valuable part of this course.

TRUCTIONAL COMPUTING

351. Electronic presentations were a valuable part of this course.
352. E-mail discussions were a valuable part of this course.
353. Use of the World Wide Web was a valuable part of this course.
354. Computer labs were a valuable part of this course.
355. Computer tutorials were a valuable part of this course.

EXAMS

356. Examinations covered the important aspects of the course.
357. The exams covered the reading assignments well.
358. The exams covered the lecture material well.
359. Exams were creative and required original thought.
360. Exams were reasonable in length and difficulty.
361. Examination items were clearly worded.
362. The exams were returned in a reasonable amount of time.
363. The examinations were graded very carefully and fairly.
364. The test items were adequately explained after a test was given.

GRADING
365. Grades were assigned fairly and impartially.
366. The grading system was clearly explained.
367. The instructor had a realistic definition of good performance.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY
369. I tried to relate what I learned in this course to my own experience.
370. I attended class regularly.
371. I utilized all the learning opportunities provided in this course.
372. I created my own learning experiences in connection with the course.
373. I helped classmates learn.

Open-ended Questions

These questions ask students to write short answers. You may select up to five questions from the group below for inclusion on your questionnaire.

900. Comment on the quality of instruction in this course.
901. How can the instructor improve the teaching of this course?
902. Which aspects of this course did you like best?
903. Which aspects of this course did you like least?
904. What changes would you make in the lectures?
905. What changes would you make in the readings?
906. What changes would you make in the examinations?
907. How would you change this course?
908. Which aspects of this course were most valuable?
909. Which aspects of this course were least valuable?
910. How might the class climate be made more inclusive of diverse students?
911. Please comment on the quality of the course as a whole.
912. Please comment on the effectiveness of this instructor.
913. How might the teaching methods used be more sensitive to diverse needs?
914. How might working in groups be made more inclusive for diverse students?
Best Practices for Using Online Student Ratings for Personnel Decisions

Generally, students are able to report on the extent to which a teacher appears prepared for class sessions, communicates clearly, stimulates interest, and demonstrates enthusiasm and respect for students; research shows that student responses on these dimensions are valid and reliable. Generally, students are less able to judge the knowledge of the instructor or scholarly content and currency of a course.

When using student ratings for personnel decisions, keep the following guidelines in mind:

1. Student ratings results should not be used as the only source of data on the quality of an instructor’s teaching.
2. Questions about instructors and courses should be relevant. They should fit the instructors and courses being evaluated.
3. Multiple sets of ratings of faculty courses over time should be considered; personnel decisions should be influenced only by ratings from several courses over several terms.
4. Because global ratings of the teacher or course tend to correlate higher with student learning than do more specific items, personnel decisions should rely more on global items (e.g., “Overall, the instructor is an excellent teacher.”).
5. Do not overemphasize small differences in ratings results. Especially for personnel decisions, three broad categories are sufficient (“excellent,” “very good,” “satisfactory”); needs improvement).
6. Comparative data (such as departmental, school, or institutional norms) allow individual evaluations to be interpreted within a meaningful context. For example, information about course characteristics (e.g., disciplinary field, class size, required/optional, lower division/upper division, etc.) should be considered when reviewing evaluation results.
7. For additional context, departments can provide opportunities for instructors to comment on their ratings, either in a teaching statement or in a separate document. In particular, comments allow instructors to offer their own perspective on student ratings results and they can also provide context on any special circumstances surrounding a given course (e.g., new courses or innovations in teaching, a shift from an elective to a required course, changes in departmental grading standards, student resistance to certain types of material).
8. Student rating results should be considered in personnel decisions only when at least 10 students in a given class respond and only when the majority of the students in a class have completed the surveys.
9. The use of optional items chosen by the instructor customizes the forms and makes them more useful for teaching improvement purposes.
10. While written comments are particularly helpful in improving classroom performance, they are not recommended for use in personnel decisions.

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Correlations between Student Evaluations and Grades

Review of the extensive body of research literature on student ratings indicates that there is widespread agreement that students' grades are positively correlated with student evaluations. What is not agreed upon is the meaning or the strength of the correlation. The most commonly cited correlation is 0.2-0.3, but researchers working in both field (real classroom ratings) and laboratory settings report correlation coefficients that vary from 0.1-0.5. Many of the studies use the variable "Expected Grade" as a reasonable proxy for actual grades because most student ratings forms are completed by students before they receive their final grades. The degree and direction of the correlation for any one course, instructor, or student will vary depending on the instructional context.

Many of the researchers cited below urge extreme caution when interpreting the meaning of the correlation. Higher grades might represent, student learning, grading leniency, or students' characteristics unrelated to instruction. Most researchers, even those investigating grading leniency, agree that when students perceive that they are learning they usually evaluate instructors more highly (and reasonably so). Note that none of the works that claim grading practices artificially inflate student ratings is widely accepted by the student ratings research community. In fact, some of the research indicates poor teachers who try to increase their scores by boosting students' grades may result in lower ratings (i.e. poor teachers may not be able to fool students by 'giving away' high grades).

References

 Angela R. Linse, Ph.D. Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence http://www.schreyerinstitute.psu.edu/