

ACADEMIC - IMPRESSIONS

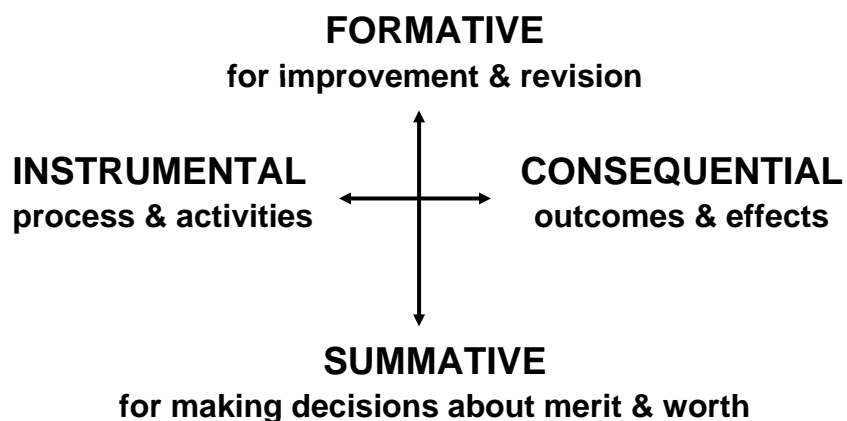
Ratings of Teaching and other Feedback from Students

Evaluating Faculty Performance
in the Classroom
June 24, 2008
Michael Theall, Ph.D.

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Evaluation Purposes and Data



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Types of student-provided data:

- Student ratings
- Student comments from evaluations
- Self-reports as part of evaluations
- Student self-initiated feedback
- Unofficial feedback (RateMyProfessors.com)
- Student learning (course data)
- Student learning (external measures)

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CHARACTERISTICS OF VARIOUS TYPES OF STUDENT- PROVIDED DATA

TYPE OF DATA	RELIABLE	VALID	GENERALIZABLE	MANIPULABLE	SECURE	USEFUL (F)	USEFUL (S)
RATINGS FROM A LOCAL SYSTEM	maybe	maybe	maybe	possible	maybe	maybe	maybe
RATINGS FROM AN EXTERNAL VENDOR	yes	yes	yes	possible	mostly	maybe	maybe
RATINGS FROM A SURVEY TOOL	maybe	maybe	uncertain	possible	mostly	maybe	maybe
COMMENTS ON EVALUATIONS	no	maybe	no	yes	maybe	yes	no
SELF-REPORTS ON EVALUATIONS	maybe	yes	no	possible	maybe	yes	maybe
SELF-INITIATED FEEDBACK	no	maybe	no	possible	maybe	yes	no
UNOFFICIAL FEEDBACK	no	not likely	no	yes	no	maybe	no
CLASSROOM TESTS	maybe	maybe	maybe	possible	maybe	yes	maybe
VALIDATED EXTERNAL TESTS	yes	yes	yes	not likely	mostly	yes	maybe

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Research Findings:

Student ratings are:

- Multidimensional
- Reliable and stable
- Primarily a function of the instructor
- Relatively valid as evidence of effective teaching
- Relatively unaffected by a number of variables posed as biases
- Useful as teaching feedback

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Marsh, 1987, 2007

Other Sources of Data from/about Students

Student comments on evaluations

Excellent for formative uses, peer/team collaborations, etc. if confidential

INAPPROPRIATE for summative use unless very strict processes for data collection, analysis, presentation & interpretation are used!

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Other Sources of Data from/about Students

Student Self – Evaluation

Can provide information about student thinking, motivation, effort, and subject interest, but is difficult to reliably interpret and use

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Other Sources of Data from/about Students

Self-initiated reports

(e.g., going to the chair or dean with praise or a complaint)

Use extreme caution; consider the nature of the comment & situation; protect all concerned; seek substantiating evidence;

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Other Sources of Data from/about Students

UNOFFICIAL FEEDBACK

- Hallway scuttlebutt/rumor/anecdote
 - “I overheard...”
- <http://ratemyprofessors.com>
 - Graffiti

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Other Sources of Data from/about Students

Student learning outcomes

Useful for formative (individual) or program purposes (if aggregated for assessment); not recommended for summative decisions. Test scores are not as reliable as ratings from a validated instrument. Criteria vary considerably (e.g., What does “All her students got A’s” mean?)

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Other Sources of Data from/about Students

Alumni ratings

Can be useful but generally the same as student ratings given same instrument; can shed light on teaching in terms of content, process, or curricular issues for formative purposes.

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BREAK

- Questions?
- Comments?
- Issues?

- An activity

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On-campus data collection

CHARACTERISTICS OF VARIOUS TYPES OF STUDENT DATA							
LOCAL POLICY AND PRACTICE							
TYPE OF DATA	CRITICAL?	USED?	HOW COLLECTED?	SECURE?	PUBLIC?	USEFUL (F)?	USEFUL (S)?
STUDENT RATINGS FROM A LOCAL SYSTEM							
STUDENT RATINGS FROM AN EXTERNAL VENDOR							
STUDENT RATINGS FROM A SURVEY TOOL							
STUDENT COMMENTS							
SELF-REPORTS OF PROGRESS							
SELF-INITIATED REPORTS							
UNOFFICIAL FEEDBACK							
STUDENT LEARNING (CLASS TESTS/WORK)							
STUDENT LEARNING (EXTERNAL TESTS)							

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On my campus...

What kinds of student data are collected and are these data equally weighted?

Please respond and compare your response with those of 2 other people

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Uses of Ratings Data:

- **IMPROVING INSTRUCTION**
- **UNDERSTANDING CONTEXT & OUTCOMES**
 - **RESEARCH / SoTL**
 - **DECISION-MAKING**

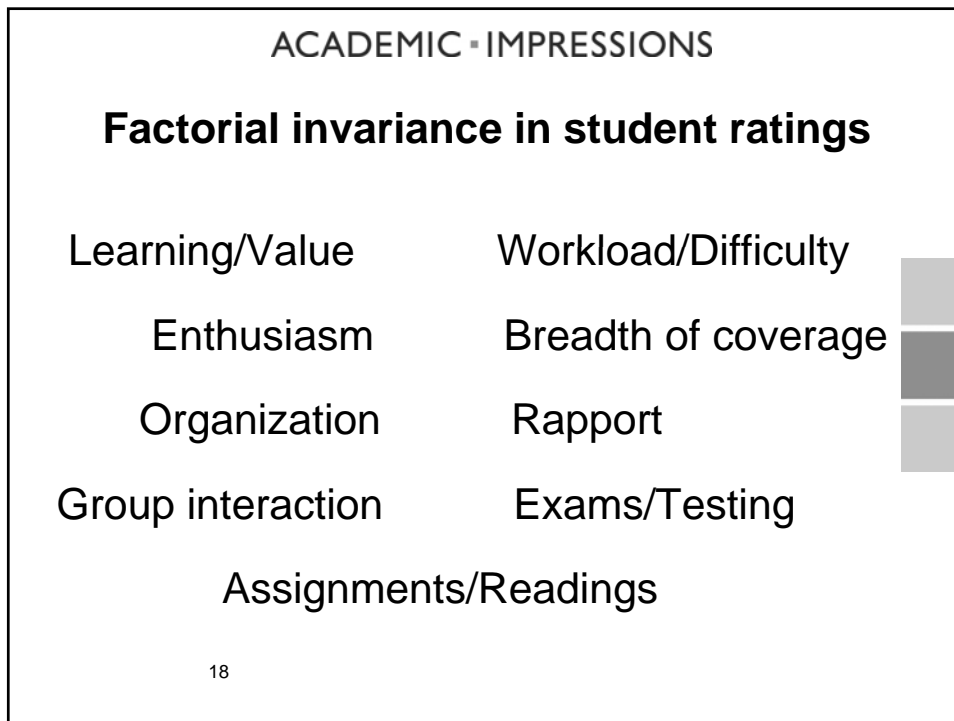
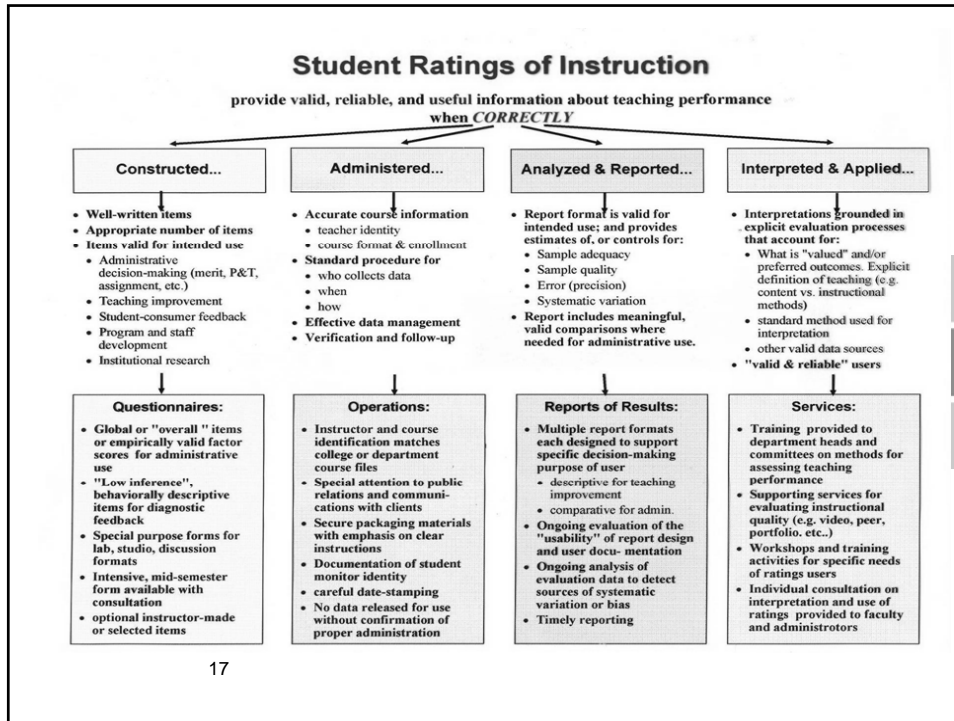
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Paper vs On-Line Systems

ADVANTAGES	TYPE OF STUDENT RATINGS SYSTEM	
DISADVANTAGES		
OR		
LITTLE OR NO DIFFERENCE	PAPER-BASED	ON-LINE
INITIAL COST		
LONG-TERM COST		
RELIABILITY		
VALIDITY		
GENERALIZABILITY		
EASE OF USE		
SECURITY		
ANALYSIS		
REPORT GENERATION		
MANIPULABILITY		
USEFUL FOR FORMATIVE PURPOSES		
USEFUL FOR SUMMATIVE PURPOSES		
RESPONSE RATES		
QUALITY OF COMMENTS		
QUANTITY OF COMMENTS		
ADAPTABILITY		
ADDITIONAL DATA COLLECTION		
DATA SHARING		

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SEVEN MYTHS ABOUT
STUDENT RATINGS

1. Students are not qualified to make judgments about teaching competence

1. Students are qualified to rate (report) certain dimensions of teaching

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SEVEN MYTHS ABOUT
STUDENT RATINGS

2. Student ratings are simply popularity contests

2. Students do discriminate among dimensions of teaching and do not judge solely on the personal popularity of instructors

(PS: Popularity is not necessarily a bad thing)

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SEVEN MYTHS ABOUT
STUDENT RATINGS

3. Students are not able to make accurate judgments until after they have been away from the course for several years

3. Ratings by current students are highly correlated with their later ratings and with ratings of the same instructors by of other students

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SEVEN MYTHS ABOUT
STUDENT RATINGS

4. Student ratings are unreliable

4. Student ratings are reliable in terms of both agreement (similarity among students rating a course and the instructor) and stability (the extent to which the same student rates the course and the instructor similarly at different times)

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SEVEN MYTHS ABOUT
STUDENT RATINGS

5. Student ratings are invalid

5. Student ratings are valid, as measured
against a number of criteria, particularly
students' learning

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Validity arguments

Scriven, 1994

- *The correlation of ratings to learning*
- *The unique position of students as raters of their own learning*
- *The unique position of students as raters of changes in their motivation*
- *The “best available alternative” argument*

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Validity arguments

- *The unique position of students as raters of observable facts*
- *The unique position of students as raters of style indicators*
- *The position of students as raters of matters such as the face validity of tests*
- *The position of students as consumers*
- *Ratings as participation in a democratic process*

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SEVEN MYTHS ABOUT STUDENT RATINGS

6. Students rate instructors on the basis of the grades they receive
6. Student ratings are not unduly influenced by the grades students receive or expect to receive

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SEVEN MYTHS ABOUT STUDENT RATINGS

7. Extraneous variables and conditions affect student ratings
7. Student ratings are not unduly affected by such factors as students' characteristics, course characteristics, and teachers' characteristics

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Other relationships findings:

- Class size: slight negative (curvilinear)
- Prior interest in subject: positive
- Elective vs. required courses: more positive for electives
- Expected grade: slight positive ($r = .20$)
- Work/difficulty: slight positive (curvilinear)
- Course level: slight positive for upper division & grad
- Rater anonymity: more positive if violated

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Other relationships findings:

- Purpose of eval: more positive if manipulated
- Instructor rank: none
- Teacher/student gender: none
- Teacher ethnicity/race: none
- Research productivity: none
- Student locus & performance attributions: none
- Student personality: none

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BREAK

- Questions?
- Comments?
- Issues?

- An activity

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On my campus...

What are the major concerns about student ratings?

How should these concerns be addressed?

Please respond and compare your response with those of 2 other people

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Current, common concerns

Some thoughts on thin slices of beautiful chocolates ...

or

Why ratings behaviors should be no different than other human activities

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A final caution ...

In many instances, the greatest threats to the validity of the student ratings process are misinterpretation and misuse of data by faculty, administrators, and students.

Franklin & Theall, 1989, 1990, 2002

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For access to more information, go to:

Enhancing Your Teaching Through Use of the SIR II Report: Suggestions for Improvement

for a compendium of information on using evaluation for teaching improvement

(at the ETS website, go to the SIR II link & then to the "research" tab to find the PDF file)

<http://ntlf.com/pod/index.html>

for a review of the research and an extended/annotated bibliography

<http://idea.ksu.edu>

for very useful discussions of teaching and evaluation, see the "POD-IDEA Notes" and "POD-IDEA Learning Notes"

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N. D. Teaching & Learning #s: 48, 83, 87, 96;
N. D. Institutional Research #: 114