

Survey of Undergraduate Students Regarding Student Ratings of Faculty.

Rating courses and professors is an important activity expected of students. It gives students the opportunity to think analytically about the education process and to provide information that could be useful to faculty in improving teaching. For faculty, the student ratings give crucial information about teaching performance. For the university administration, the ratings give information which can be used in making decisions about rewards, assignments and promotions.

With so much at stake on the student ratings, two questions frequently arise:

- Do the students have enough knowledge about the process to do a good job?
- What criteria do students use when rating their instructors?

In Spring 1999, Measurement and Research conducted five focus groups of students in which participants were asked what criteria they used in rating instructors. Based on their responses, thirteen questions regarding the procedure for conducting student ratings were written. The responses also provided information about teaching from which a list of twenty-four characteristics of teaching were compiled.

In Fall 1999, a random sample of 1300 undergraduate students were contacted by telephone. The breakdown of contacts are presented in Table 1. In Part 1, the results of procedural questions are presented. In Part 2, the characteristics of effective teaching are presented in order of importance to the students.

Table 1 Contacts

Category	Number	%
Refusal	73	6%
Wrong number	291	22%
Miss	358	28%
Hit	578	44%
Total	1300	

Part One. Procedural Questions

Summary

- 27% of students who fill out the ratings forms, believe that instructors almost always or often pay attention to them.
- 33% of students who fill out the ratings forms believe that the administration almost always or often pays attention to them.
- 33% of students believe the ratings are almost always or often effective in improving teaching.
- 32% of students believe that teachers are almost always or often rewarded for good ratings.
- 5% of students believe that teachers are almost always or often removed for bad ratings.
- 56% of students believe the ratings are useful to students in selecting courses.
- 97% of students almost always or often give honest ratings.
- 73% of students would almost always or often give honest ratings if they were not anonymous.
- 2% of students believe that instructors almost always or often grade easy to obtain high ratings.
- 1% of students believe that instructors almost always or often retaliate for low ratings with low grades.

Table 2. Are you familiar with the faculty evaluation forms used in most classes near the end of the semester?

Response	Count	%
No	124	21.453
Yes	454	78.547

Table 3. Breakdown by classification.

	No	Yes	total
U1	112	82	194
%	57.7	42.3	100
U2	8	115	123
%	6.50	93.5	100
U3	3	93	96
%	3.12	96.9	100
U4	1	157	158
%	0.633	99.4	100
Other	0	7	7
%	0	100	100
total	124	454	578
%	21.5	78.5	100

If yes, to previous question,

Table 4. Do you know that the results of student ratings are available to students?

Response	Count	%
No	315	69.231
Yes	140	30.769

Table 5. Do you fill out the appraisal forms when they are passed out?

Response	Count	%
Almost always	411	90.330
Often	14	3.077
Sometimes	13	2.857
Almost Never	10	2.198
Don't know	6	1.319
Rarely	1	0.220

Table 6. In your opinion, do instructors pay attention to the ratings?

Response	Count	%
Don't know	153	33.626
Sometimes	143	31.429
Almost always	62	13.626
Often	60	13.187
Almost never	29	6.374
Rarely	8	1.758

Table 7. Do you believe the administration pays attention to the ratings?

Response	Count	%
Don't know	124	27.253
Sometimes	124	27.253
Almost always	81	17.802
Often	70	15.385
Almost never	49	10.769
Rarely	7	1.538

Table 8. Do you think the ratings are effective in improving teaching?

Response	Count	%
Sometimes	168	36.923
Often	82	18.022
Almost always	69	15.165
Don't know	64	14.066
Almost never	63	13.846
Rarely	9	1.978

Table 9. Do you think teachers are rewarded for good ratings?

Response	Count	%
Don't know	169	37.143
Almost never	93	20.440
Sometimes	86	18.901
Often	51	11.209
Almost always	50	10.989
Rarely	6	1.319

Table 10. Do you think teachers are removed for bad ratings?

Response	Count	%
Almost never	221	48.571
Sometimes	102	22.418
Don't know	98	21.538
Often	13	2.857
Almost always	11	2.418
Rarely	10	2.198

Table 11. Are the ratings useful to students in selecting courses?

Response	Count	%
Almost always	173	38.022
Sometimes	101	22.198
Often	81	17.802
Almost never	55	12.088
Don't know	40	8.791
Rarely	5	1.099

Table 12. Do you give honest ratings when rating your instructors?

Response	Count	%
Almost always	422	92.747
Often	20	4.396
Sometimes	10	2.198
Almost never	3	0.659

Table 13. Would you give honest ratings if they were not anonymous?

Response	Count	%
Almost always	298	65.495
Almost never	56	12.308
Sometimes	45	9.890
Often	35	7.692
Don't know	15	3.297
Rarely	6	1.319

Table 14. Do you think instructors grade easy to get good ratings?

Response	Count	%
Almost never	335	73.626
Sometimes	71	15.604
Don't know	28	6.154
Rarely	10	2.198
Often	8	1.758
Almost always	3	0.659

Table 15. Do you think instructors retaliate for low ratings by giving low grades?

Response	Count	%
Almost never	314	69.011
Sometimes	69	15.165
Don't know	53	11.648
Rarely	12	2.637
Often	5	1.099
Almost always	2	0.440

Part 2. Characteristics of Teachers and Teaching

Now I am going to name some characteristics of teachers and teaching. For each one, please tell if, when you do your ratings, you consider it very important, somewhat important or not at all important.

Table 16		Not at all im- portant	Some- what im- portant	Very im- portant
Instructor is knowledgeable about the subject matter.	Count %		20 3.47	557 96.53
Instructor treats all students with equal respect.	Count %		41 7.14	533 92.86
Instructor grades fairly.	Count %		53 9.20	523 90.80
Instructor is well-prepared for class	Count %	3 0.52	57 9.88	517 89.60
Instructor cares about students' learning.	Count %	5 0.87	84 14.58	487 84.55
Instructor clarifies difficult material.	Count %	7 1.22	83 14.44	485 84.35
Instructor answers questions in class.	Count %	8 1.39	106 18.40	462 80.21
Instructor is willing to review material as needed.	Count %	4 0.69	155 26.91	417 72.40
Instructor is enthusiastic about teaching.	Count %	9 1.57	160 27.88	405 70.56
Instructor encourages students.	Count %	11 1.91	171 29.69	394 68.40
Instructor is willing to give extra effort to ensure learning.	Count %	5 0.87	177 30.78	393 68.35
Instructor makes material useful to students.	Count %	9 1.56	197 34.20	370 64.24
Instructor stimulates ' students learning.	Count %	11 1.91	196 34.03	369 64.06
Instructor teaches at students' ability level.	Count %	25 4.34	190 32.99	361 62.67
Instructor presents material in an interesting manner.	Count %	5 0.87	222 38.54	349 60.59

**Measurement and Research Services
Data Summary #199**

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Instructor is open to students' ideas and opinions.	Count	18	211	347
	%	3.13	36.63	60.24
Instructor is easy to reach outside of class.	Count	4	227	345
	%	0.69	39.41	59.90
Instructor is focused on the topic.	Count	12	244	319
	%	2.09	42.44	55.48
Instructor is personable.	Count	35	277	263
	%	6.09	48.17	45.74
Instructor sets high standards of performance.	Count	21	297	256
	%	3.66	51.74	44.60
Instructor provides a challenging environment.	Count	35	316	225
	%	6.08	54.86	39.06
Instructor sticks to syllabus.	Count	85	305	185
	%	14.78	53.04	32.17
Instructor is entertaining in class.	Count	83	355	137
	%	14.44	61.74	23.83
Instructor influences choice of career path.	Count	151	336	89
	%	26.22	58.33	15.45