

MRFA FEC Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEI) Survey

Bob Uttl, Antoine Eche, Olive Fast, Bev Mathison, Halia
Valladares Montemayor, Alain Morin, Verna Raab

*** Credits for Survey Design ***

Martin Haworth, Gary Koroluk, Carmen Nielson, Halia Valladares
Montemayor, Katharine Barrette, Verna Raab, Bob Uttl

*** Credits for Content Analysis Coding ***

Gary Koroluk, Halia Valladares Montemayor, Alain Morin, Martin
Haworth, Verna Raab, Bob Uttl

MRFA
Mount Royal University

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Executive Summary

The mandate of MRFA FEC is to monitor evaluation of faculty, keep abreast of the latest findings and practices elsewhere, inform MRFA membership, and make recommendations to MRFA Executive.

In January 2011, MRFA FEC conducted a survey of faculty members' perceptions of MRU SEI. The results indicate that faculty members are concerned about the validity of SEIs, SEI score interpretations, and student ratings per se.

This presentation summarizes the results of the MRFA FEC SEI survey.

Outline

- ▶ Background and Design
- ▶ Survey Questions
- ▶ Results
 - ▶ Closed Questions
 - ▶ Open Questions
- ▶ Conclusions

Background and Design

Background

- ▶ MRFA Executive Committee suggested a survey on SEIs
- ▶ MRFA FEC conducted a survey on faculty experiences with and perceptions of SEIs

Survey Design

- ▶ 6 questions: 4 closed questions + 2 open ended questions

Procedure

- ▶ Sent via email to MRFA members on January 26, 2011
- ▶ Follow up reminders (February 2 and February 9)
- ▶ Closed on February 9 (midnight)

Survey Questions

Closed Questions

- ▶ 1. Should SEIs be Confidential and Signed?
- ▶ 2. Are students aware of the ramifications of SEIs?
- ▶ 3. Would highlighting SEIs importance make them more meaningful?
- ▶ 4. Can students assess teaching effectiveness?

Each closed question also included option to comment.

Open Questions

- ▶ 5. Do you have any concerns about SEIs?
- ▶ 6. What do you find valuable about SEIs?

Results

Return Rate

- ▶ 868 were sent the survey
 - ▶ 409 full-time
 - ▶ 459 part-time
- ▶ 420 valid responses
- ▶ return rate 48.4%

Results: Closed Questions

- ▶ Q1: Do you feel that Student Evaluation of Instruction form should be:
 - ▶ 67.7% Confidential and Signed
 - ▶ 32.3% Anonymous and Unsigned

- ▶ Q2: Do you feel that students are fully aware of the ramification of the evaluations and their comments when they complete the SEI?
 - ▶ 10.6% Yes
 - ▶ 89.4% No

Results: Closed Questions

- ▶ Q3: Students typically receive brief instructions about the SEI from the OIAP staff prior to completing one. Do you feel that Student Evaluation of Instruction could be made more meaningful if students learned more about the importance and impact of the SEI?
 - ▶ 79.7% Yes
 - ▶ 20.3% No

- ▶ Q4: Though students are able to comment on their own reactions to your classroom instruction, do you feel that they are well-equipped to assess your teaching effectiveness?
 - ▶ 45.4% Yes
 - ▶ 54.6% No

Results: Closed Questions Summary

Majority of faculty believe:

- ▶ SEIs should be confidential and signed (67.7% vs. 32.3%)
- ▶ Students are not aware of the consequences of their evaluations (89.4% vs. 10.6%)
- ▶ SEI would be more meaningful if students learned more about their importance and impact (79.7% vs. 20.3%)
- ▶ Students are not well-equipped to evaluate teaching effectiveness (54.6% vs. 45.4%)

Open Questions

- ▶ Q1: 198 comments
- ▶ Q2: 187 comments
- ▶ Q3: 186 comments
- ▶ Q4: 242 comments

- ▶ Q5: Do you have any concerns that you would like to express about Student Evaluation of Instruction administered at MRU?
 - ▶ 286 answered question
 - ▶ 134 skipped

- ▶ Q6: What do you find valuable about the Student Evaluation of Instruction?
 - ▶ 323 answered question
 - ▶ 97 skipped

Total number of comments: 1422

Content Analysis: Method

Coding Scheme

- ▶ Derived primarily from the responses themselves

Coding Scheme: General Scales

- ▶ Instrument Validity (9 items + Other/Specify)
- ▶ Interpretation Validity (10 items + Other/Specify)
- ▶ Student Evaluation Validity (6 items + Other/Specify)
- ▶ Administration (2 items + Other/Specify)
- ▶ Faculty (5 items + Other/Specify)
- ▶ Recommendations (9 items + Other/Specify)
- ▶ Other/Specify

Other/Specify items allowed coders to enter ideas not captured by the coding scheme.

Content Analysis: Method

Coding Scheme: Question Specific Scales

- ▶ Confidential and Signed? (7 items)
- ▶ Aware of the ramifications of SEIs? (5 items)
- ▶ Highlighting SEIs importance? (8 items)
- ▶ Can students assess teaching effectiveness? (7 items)

Content Analysis: Method

Coding

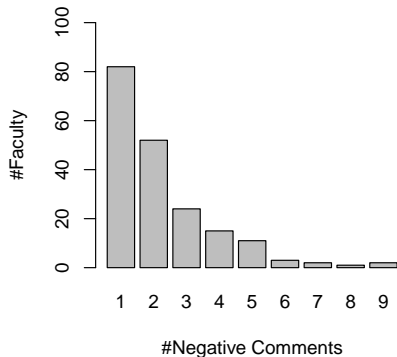
- ▶ Each idea coded into one scale only
- ▶ Ideas coded as either consistent or inconsistent with the scale
- ▶ Ideas not captured by the scales coded under Other/Specify
- ▶ Pairs of coders coding by consensus
- ▶ One pair of coders coded all responses
- ▶ Two pairs of coders coded one question each
 - ▶ Correlations among coder pairs across the scales: 0.85 to 0.95

Content Analysis: Instrument Validity

Are SEI valid measure of teaching effectiveness?

Number of faculty with

- ▶ Negative comments: 192 (45.7%)
- ▶ Positive comments: 4 (0.9%)
- ▶ Positivity Index: 2% (i.e., $4/196*100$)



Content Analysis: Instrument Validity

Are SEI valid measure of teaching effectiveness?

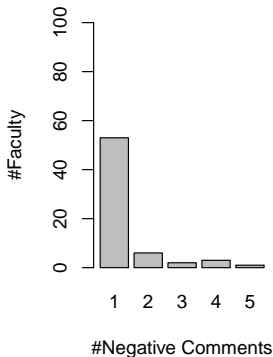
Comment/Idea	No	Yes
influenced by extraneous factors	0	69
subjective/not objective (e.g., emotional...)	0	54
popularity/liking contest, client satisfaction	1	55
harmful (e.g., used to damage reputation)	0	52
used as revenge	0	43
specific questions invalid	1	39
inappropriate/unprofessional feedback	0	33
not truthful	0	31
generally invalid, do not measure teaching	2	30
not applicable for some areas (e.g., distance)	0	8

Content Analysis: Interpretation Validity

Are interpretations of SEI scores valid?

Number of faculty with

- ▶ Negative comments: 65 (15.4%)
- ▶ Positive comments: 2 (0.4%)
- ▶ Positivity Index: 3.0%



Content Analysis: Interpretation Validity

Are interpretations of SEI scores valid?

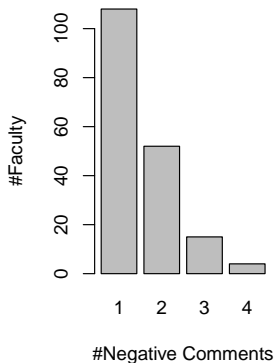
Comment/Idea	No	Yes
influenced by outliers	0	30
unclear how interpreted	0	16
given too much weight	1	13
averages/means are invalid	2	9
use/criteria inconsistent	0	6
influenced by class level	0	4
invalid for small classes (i.e., MRU)	0	2
influenced by class size	0	1
standard/criteria unreasonable (e.g., mean)	0	1
comparative data not available (by course,...)	0	2

Content Analysis: Student Evaluation Validity

Are students evaluating teaching effectiveness?

Number of faculty with

- ▶ Negative comments: 179 (42.6%)
- ▶ Positive comments: 26 (6.1%)
- ▶ Positivity index: 12.6%



Content Analysis: Student Evaluation Validity

Are students evaluating teaching effectiveness?

Comment/Idea	No	Yes
unable to evaluate (e.g., instr. knowledge)	26	105
are not/should be accountable	0	94
unaware of SEI importance (e.g., tenure)	0	21
blame instructor for their failure to learn	0	15
may have attended only a few classes	0	14
may be unprepared	0	14

Content Analysis: Comments on Faculty

Comment/Idea	No	Yes
consider SEIs helpful	28	142
positively modify courses	0	52
negatively modify courses (dumb down courses)	0	11
inflate grades to get high SEIs	0	1
engage in gamemanship	0	3

Content Analysis: Recommendations

Comment/Idea	No	Yes
questions should be meaningful/specific	0	9
include questions on student dedication/attendance	0	7
should be abolished	0	6
include questions on student preparation	0	2
more focus on comments	0	5
more open ended questions	0	1
more questions on content	0	1
questions should ask both strengths and weaknesses	0	1
should be online (completely or alternatively)	2	1

Content Analysis: Comments on SEI Administration

Comment/Idea	No	Yes
should highlight importance	0	48

Content Analysis: Comments on Signed vs Anonymous

Comment/Idea	No	Yes
signed would result in higher quality data	1	33
signed could result in repercussions	0	22
signed SEIs would reduce data/responses	1	21
signed would reduce inappropriate responses	0	12
signed could reduce frankness/truthfulness	1	15
follow up on signed/conf. is too complicated	0	1
SEIs should be weighted by GPA/grade	0	5

Content Analysis: Comments on Student Ability to Evaluate

Comment/Idea	No	Yes
one cannot teach to all learning styles	0	20
students do not care about learning	0	16
students want examples/templates/recipes	0	8
students are responsible for their learning	0	8
course difficulty influences SEIs	0	5
students care only about marks	0	3
activities students like may not result in learning	0	3

Content Analysis: Comments on Student Awareness of SEI Importance

Comment/Idea	No	Yes
are not aware of consequences	0	20
awareness of consequences varies	0	16
believe SEIs are meaningless	0	8
see it as a chore... fill them up in hurry	0	8
do not understand meaning of promotion/tenure	0	5

Content Analysis: Comments on SEI Instructions to Students

Comment/Idea	No	Yes
tell them what they are used for/who uses them	0	49
don't know what they are told	0	17
include it in orientation	0	13
encourage them to be honest/objective/...	0	11
workshop by SA or/and MRFA	0	10
I tell them myself	0	10
give them script	0	9
should have opportunity to do SEI in all courses	0	1

Content Analysis: Comments on What Is Valuable to Faculty

Comment/Idea	No	Yes
comments are valuable	1	98
honest feedback/constructive feedback	0	30
makes me feel good	0	12
overall mood and satisfaction with course	0	12
ratings are valuable	5	5
flag obvious problems	0	5
students are careless	0	4
helps me identify areas for improvement	0	2

Content Analysis: Summary

Faculty's perceptions of SEI

- ▶ Faculty have serious concerns about validity of SEIs as a measure of teaching effectiveness
 - ▶ Concerned about instrument validity
 - ▶ Concerned about interpretation validity
 - ▶ Concerned about students' ability to evaluate faculty
- ▶ Faculty find comments useful for formative purposes
- ▶ Student should be informed about SEIs, including their purpose, use, and interpretation

Conclusions

- ▶ develop a new reliable and valid instrument
- ▶ inform students about importance and use of SEIs
- ▶ ensure students' accountability
 - ▶ require students to sign SEI forms
- ▶ ensure high interpretive validity
 - ▶ recognize SEI influenced by factors beyond instructors' control
 - ▶ remove outliers
 - ▶ summarize SEI using medians
 - ▶ avoid interpreting random variations
 - ▶ add confidence intervals around SEI scores
- ▶ provide more opportunities for formative feedback within SEIs
 - ▶ faculty find written comments helpful

Q & A

Questions?