

Mid-Semester Evaluations

How often do you seek student feedback to evaluate their understanding of topics and key concepts? To determine whether the way you teach a class might be either too sophisticated or too basic for your students?

“Classroom assessment is of vital importance to student learning. Research shows that student achievement is increased (especially for low achievers) by the use of classroom assessment when such assessment--

- offers good feedback to students about their performance,
- sets clear standards for learning,
- is ongoing, so it can be used to monitor student growth and progress,
- is used to modify instruction to meet the needs of the student .” (Angelo/Cross, Classroom Assessment Techniques, 2e, 1993).

INFORMAL ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES

Even though assessment might be taking place *formally* – tests, quizzes, homework—it is crucial to approach assessment *informally* as well. Professor Robin Blackman says that she uses a variety of informal ways to get feedback from her students, “feedback,” she emphasizes “that requires a lot of encouragement on my part.”

Students are often reluctant to share their true feelings with teachers for many reasons. For one, they may fear repercussions or being found out despite your promises of anonymity. Additionally, some may lack the writing skills to express their views, or they could be hiding a serious lack of participation in the course. Professor Blackman says her informal techniques have included using a discussion board in D2L where students can post anonymously their responses to a short survey. She has also used a “student lounge” to obtain course comments. This semester she plans to distribute a short questionnaire and offer bonus points as incentive to respond.

MID-SEMESTER EVALUATIONS

No matter which approaches are used, a mid-semester evaluation is particularly important because it allows you to make changes that affect the students you are teaching *now*, while the end-of-term surveys only affect future classes. In addition, handing out a mid-term evaluation signals to your class that you are indeed interested in what and how they're learning, and in their responses to your

teaching. If you do use some form of mid-term evaluation, it's important to discuss the results with your class, explaining for instance, why you can't cut down on some topic, or why, based on the suggestions of the class, you will add a discussion of a particular topic.

Example: How to present a mid-semester evaluation to your class--

"Today, I'd like you to fill out a short mid-semester evaluation. The information you provide is just for me, and your input is extremely valuable. It helps me gauge how the course is progressing at the moment, that is, what is going well from your standpoint and whether you have any suggestions for how we might proceed for the rest of the semester. It also lets me know whether you are learning what I hope you are. I will report back to you about the results of this evaluation."

Below is a generic example of a mid-semester evaluation form, which you can modify in any way to suit your course.

Mid-Semester Evaluation

Your answers to the questions below will help me plan for the second half of the semester.

1. What are the most important things you have learned so far in this class?
2. What don't you think you understand well enough yet?
3. What would you like to see more of between now and the end of the semester?
4. What do you think we could cut down on?
5. What do you need to do in terms of understanding the material between now and the end of the semester?
6. How much of the reading that has been assigned so far have you completed?
100% 90% 75% 50% less than 50%
7. How many hours per week, outside of regularly scheduled class meetings, do you spend on this class?
1-2 2-4 4-6 6-8 more than 8
8. If you have comments about the class not covered in the above questions, please use this space to make them.

Last year, Professor Blackman conducted an interactive workshop on Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs), available [here](#).

RESOURCES

- The LT&ITC Library & Resource Center has an array of materials on assessment. You can survey our holdings online by clicking here. <http://www.librarything.com/catalog/LTITC&tag=assessment>
- The LT&ITC web site provides assessment information & resources
 - <http://www.mtsu.edu/ltanditc/assessingstudentworktr.shtml>
 - <http://www.mtsu.edu/ltanditc/classroomassessmenttr.shtml> :
- List of Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) from Angelo/Cross--
http://www.mtsu.edu/ltanditc/CATs_Presentation.pdf
- Classroom Assessment Techniques (Source: <http://www.youtube.com/v/g4ogt0yl8xA>)
Presenter: Shaun Longstreet, The University of California, Irvine; Length: 9 Minutes 50 Seconds
- Check out the University of Texas,Austin, Instructional Assessment Resources (IAR) web site at <http://www.utexas.edu/academic/diia/assessment/iar/>
- The teaching center of Carnegie Mellon has put together an excellent site on assessment at <http://www.cmu.edu/teaching/design/teach/teach/assesslearningteaching.html>
- Look through the LT&ITC bookmarks for more tools and resources for assessment at <http://delicious.com/LTANDITC/assessment>

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