Identifying best practice in SETs

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Approach

- Review current practise with reference to educational theory
- Share my reflections on personal experience with reference to current practise (and theory)
- Propose elements of good practise in a given context
- Highlight knowledge gaps for future investigation
Evaluating evaluations

- Evaluation methodology
  - Conforms to a theoretical basis
- Implementation
  - Results in a high response rate
- Review and response
  - Leads to improved evaluation scores
Reviewing methodology (1/2)

• The wording of questions and answers is important: student and teacher perceptions may differ
• Timing is important: lags affect perception
• Online evaluations are more prone to non-response than paper evaluations
• Sampling may be used to reduce inattentive response bias and maintain commitment
Reviewing methodology (2/2)

- Questionnaires may not allow students to express their opinions fully
- Long questionnaires may lead to apathy: standardisation to inflexibility and boredom
- Cognitive dissonance and revenge may, in isolated cases affect responses
The H-form
(Huxham et al., after Guy and Inglis, 1999)

What do you think of this course?

Suggested Changes

Positive Comments

Numeric Score

Negative Comments

2010-10-20 / Namn Namn, Institution eller liknande
Current Practice (1/2)

- In 2008 an internet survey of 22 international (incl. 15 Swedish) institutes revealed
  - 20 used questionnaires
    - Of these 5 *allowed* other methods
    - 2 institutes also used teacher-student meetings/dialogue (Chalmers and Copenhagen)
  - 2 institutes used peer review (Cardiff & Bristol)
Current Practice (2/2)

• Today most higher education institutes in Sweden use web-based questionnaires for SETs
  – 12 (of 20) explicitly recommend or propose web-based questionnaires
    • 2 only allow this approach!
  – 1 used a CEQ-based approach
  – 7 encourage continual or multi-phase evaluations

• Advice/guidance/regulations and their accessibility vary widely
Survey Style and Response Rates

- Response rates are typically <50%
  - In a survey of 31 SETs
    - Mean = 45%, range 0-128%
    - No obvious patterns
    - *All were web-based questionnaires from 3 Swedish Universitys*
- Ho et al. and Avery et al. found a reduction in response rate following the transition from paper to web-based SETs
Countering low response rates

- Avoid standard forms (Karlstad, Lund)
- Engage students (e.g. Chalmers, Malmö, Linköping)
- Allot course-time for evaluation (Karlstad, Hög. Väst)
- Be flexible!
Personal Reflections

- [some] Students want to give meaningful feedback
- A top-down approach constrains teachers and students
- Open questions allow students to express themselves, closed questions allow teachers to investigate specifics
- Feedback improves teaching quality
Recommendations for administrators

- Avoid prescriptive solutions (standard forms, single method solutions, directives from on high)
- Utilise web-based solutions with forethought
- Explore the topic, examine the literature, conduct experiments
- Issue clear and explicit guidelines, offer training and recommend reading.
Knowledge Gaps

• Does survey length affect scores?

• Does exposure increase inattentive response?

• Are web-based questionnaires treated differently by students and teachers, than paper copies or other methods?
Recommended Reading


  - J. Legal Education, 388.

- Huxham et al., 2008. Collecting student feedback: a comparison of questionnaire and other methods.
  - Assessment and evaluation in Higher Education, 33 (6)