



# INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

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## *Student Evaluations: Tools for Instructor Learning*

Student evaluations of instructors and courses, long performed on an informal basis at college and university campuses across the nation, can be a positive tool for assessing instructor performance. At the Wolfson Campus of Miami-Dade Community College, we have implemented a systematic method of evaluation, in conjunction with the overall goal of the college-wide Teaching/Learning project, to make teaching and learning the most productive process it can be. Last fall our campus once again administered the evaluation instrument, encompassing a sample of 545 sections offered by 394 instructors.

Since we have begun collecting data and providing feedback to the faculty, there has been an increase in the positive ratings that students give their instructors. For example, between 1988 and 1990, the approval rating of students for the item "Instructor motivates student interest" improved from 87.5% to 89.1%; "Instructor encourages questions/participation" rose from 93.0% to 94.1%. These kinds of evaluations, when performed on a consistent basis, provide instructors with firsthand knowledge of how their students perceive their teaching and the course, enabling them to concentrate on areas which may need improvement.

It should be noted that the results are regarded by the campus as perceptions by the students rather than as absolute judgments. Negative student response to an item does not necessarily mean that the teaching method or course needs extensive change, but it usually signifies that the instructor needs to devote time to assessing his/her performance in this area. In some instances, better communication with students is all that is required to increase their understanding and appreciation of the teaching goals and methodology.

The evaluation addresses instructor preparation, as well as general course content. We are particularly interested in improving the responses to questions about required writing in all courses. [Since we are strongly urging all faculty to include writing assignments in their courses, we have instituted the use of collateral readers to mark writing assignments for deviations from edited American English. The assignments are then returned to the faculty member, who grades the content. As the use of the collateral readers

becomes more familiar to instructors, we hope to see all courses include writing assignments.]

A detailed breakdown of the evaluation results over the past three years at the Wolfson Campus is included on page 2. While there is overall improvement in instructor and course rankings, some items have shown no improvement and some have declined. We believe that these are exceptions which can be expected; however, we plan in the future to conduct statistical analyses to identify those which items may be of statistical significance in further analyzing the results.

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**May 24-27, 1992  
Austin, Texas**

For more information, write or call: Suanne Roueche, NISOD, The University of Texas at Austin, EDB 348, Austin, TX 78712-1293, (512) 471-7545.



EVALUATION ITEM	1988 Agreed	1989 Agreed	1990 Agreed
1. Instructor made course objectives clear to all.	91.7%	93.3%	92.2%
2. Instructor made grading system clear to all.	91.8%	93.2%	93.6%
3. Exams covered material and assignments.	92.1%	93.5%	93.1%
4. Exams, etc., were graded fairly.	90.7%	92.2%	92.6%
5. Instructor encourages questions/participation.	93.0%	93.6%	94.1%
6. Instructor shows thorough knowledge.	95.5%	95.9%	95.2%
7. Instructor was concerned with student progress.	88.7%	91.3%	90.8%
8. Instructor motivates student interest.	87.5%	89.1%	89.1%
9. Instructor was available for help and advice.	91.3%	91.1%	91.3%
10. Instructor was well prepared for class.	94.3%	95.2%	95.2%
11. Instructor starts class on time.	93.0%	94.6%	95.7%
12. Instructor dismisses class on time.	93.4%	93.5%	94.0%
13. Instructor presents material clearly.	90.4%	92.4%	92.0%
14. Instructor's teaching ability is very good.	91.6%	93.0%	92.1%
15. Would take another class with instructor.	85.9%	87.5%	87.0%
16. Objectives agree with what is taught.	93.1%	94.7%	94.7%
17. Course material is sufficient for objectives.	91.1%	92.5%	92.5%
18. Assignments help in understanding the material.	89.9%	92.0%	92.2%
19. Textbook covers course material well.	82.1%	85.3%	85.7%
20. Writing assignments required in course.	74.5%	76.3%	78.3%
21. Required writing important to understanding.	75.0%	77.2%	78.1%
<b>EARLY INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION AVERAGE</b>	91.7%	92.6%	92.6%
<b>YEARLY COURSE EVALUATION AVERAGE</b>	82.5%	84.7%	85.4%

Suzanne D. Roueche, Editor

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