Electronic Course Evaluation Analysis, Fall 2015

Background

Student evaluations of courses at Baylor University are administered every semester to allow students to provide feedback on their courses for instructors and administrators. Each semester, department chairs designate which courses are required for evaluation based upon University and department policy, and instructors are then given the opportunity to volunteer their courses for evaluation.

Paper evaluations had been administered for all courses through the department of Institutional Research and Testing since 1988. In December 2010, the Faculty Senate at Baylor University formed a Committee for Online Faculty Evaluation to explore the prospect of electronic course evaluations. In Fall 2011, electronic course evaluations were piloted with existing survey software at the University. This pilot included all courses taught by graduate teaching assistants, courses in the School of Social Work, and three religion courses. The survey software was not well integrated with other systems at Baylor and did not meet the needs of the University for course evaluations. The Committee then reviewed proposals from vendors for a new survey tool.

EvaluationKIT was chosen as the vendor for electronic course evaluations. This tool was piloted in Spring 2012 and included the courses that participated in the Fall 2011 electronic evaluations along with Truett Seminary, the Law School, the School of Engineering and Computer Science, and the department of Communication Studies. The number of courses evaluated electronically increased in Fall 2012, with approximately 40 percent of all units participating.

Instructors and students were surveyed about the evaluation process in Spring 2013. Their responses revealed that 75 percent of instructor respondents and 92 percent of student respondents had a positive experience with electronic evaluations, and 75 percent of student respondents indicated that they preferred the electronic evaluations. Electronic evaluations expanded in Spring 2013 to include 95 percent of all courses. As of Fall 2013, one hundred percent of courses were evaluated electronically, eliminating the use of paper evaluations.

Despite these advantages, some concerns about electronic evaluations include perceived changes in the distribution of responses and reduced response rates. IRT staff conducted analyses from each semester with electronic evaluations to examine any differences in student response distributions and response rates as compared to results from paper evaluations. The following figures include data from all electronic evaluations administered through EvaluationKIT for undergraduate courses taught by faculty from Fall 2013 through Fall 2015, as compared to paper evaluations for undergraduate courses taught by faculty administered from Summer 2009 through Spring 2013.
Methodology

Participants

A total of 11,726 undergraduate courses were evaluated on paper from Summer 2009 through Spring 2013. Beginning in Fall 2013, all courses were evaluated electronically, resulting in 2,286 undergraduate courses in Fall 2013 and 2,210 undergraduate courses in Spring 2014. In Fall 2014, 2,379 undergraduate courses were evaluated electronically, and a total of 2,258 undergraduate courses were evaluated electronically in Spring 2015. A total of 2,518 undergraduate courses were evaluated electronically in Fall 2015.

Measures

Course evaluations include six general information items for the student, including their classification and expected grade in the course. These items are followed by fifteen likert-scale items in seven sections to which students respond with their level of agreement with the statements. Students then respond to three free-response items which examine instructor and course quality.

Procedures

Course evaluations are available during the last two to three weeks of the course. For paper administrations, instructors passed out paper copies of the form and allow students to complete the evaluations in class. Electronic course evaluations are available through the University’s Learning Management Systems, Blackboard and Canvas, through a single-sign-on link at www.baylor.edu/course_evaluations, and through the EvaluationKIT mobile app that is available to all student and instructor users. Students are able to complete the evaluations at any time during the evaluation period.

Analysis

Analyses are provided for the fifteen likert-type items for electronic course evaluations in each semester as compared to results from the Summer 2009 through Spring 2013 paper administrations. In addition, response rates and mean scores for each term are provided to examine differences between terms.

Results

The number of undergraduate courses evaluated electronically has remained fairly steady, from 2,286 in Fall 2014 to 2,518 in Fall 2015. As the number of courses evaluated electronically increased, response rates remained fairly stable, ranging from 65.98% in the Fall 2013 administration to 60.45% in the Fall 2015 administration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Courses Evaluated</th>
<th>Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2009- Spring 2013 Paper Administration</td>
<td>11,726</td>
<td>82.48%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2013 Electronic Administration</td>
<td>2,296</td>
<td>65.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2014 Electronic Administration</td>
<td>2,232</td>
<td>64.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2014 Electronic Administration</td>
<td>2,391</td>
<td>66.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2015 Electronic Administration</td>
<td>2,276</td>
<td>64.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2015 Electronic Administration</td>
<td>2,541</td>
<td>60.35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This value represents forms completed for course packets that were returned to IRT for processing. Each semester, packets were created that were not returned to IRT. The response rate for all forms, including those that were not returned to IRT, from Summer 2009 through Spring 2013 is 73.0%.
The electronic course evaluation tool also allows for IRT staff to view response dates and times without any link to student information. An analysis of the Fall 2013 through Fall 2015 responses revealed that response rates increased after an email reminder was delivered, and that approximately 91 percent of responses were received on a weekday on average. In addition, an average of 63 percent of responses were received during regular business hours between 9:00 AM and 4:59 PM, and between 28 and 37 percent of responses were received in the first five days of the evaluation period in the five semesters.

Course evaluations are composed of fifteen likert-scale items in seven sections: Communication, Attitude Toward Students, Attitude Toward Subject, Preparation and Organization, Policy and Evaluation, Text and Instructional Material, and Overall. Students were asked to respond with their agreement to each item on a six point scale, from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree”. Results for each section are presented below, along with the items included in each section. The distribution of responses was fairly constant over time, and differences between paper and electronic administrations were slight.

**Mean Scores**

The mean score in each section decreased only slightly between paper and electronic administrations; however, these differences are negligible.
Communication

The Communication section included two items: “The instructor explained the material clearly” and “The instructor had an effective style of presentation”.

Attitude Toward Students

The Attitude Toward Students section included two items: “The instructor treated students with respect” and “The instructor was concerned that students learned the material of the course”.

**Attitude Toward Subject**

The *Attitude Toward Subject* section included three items: “The instructor appeared interested in the subject material”, “The instructor stimulated my interest in this subject”, and “The instructor stimulated my thinking”.

![Attitude Toward Subject Diagram](image)

**Preparation and Organization**

The *Preparation and Organization* section included three items: “The instructor made effective use of class time”, “The instructor was well-prepared for each class”, and “The course was well organized”.

![Preparation and Organization Diagram](image)
Policy and Evaluation

The Policy and Evaluation section included two items: “The requirements of this class were clearly explained” and “The exams were a good measure of my knowledge of the material”.

Text and Instructional Material

The Text and Instructional Material section included one item: “The assignments (readings, papers, problems, projects, etc.) contributed to my understanding of course content”.

...
Overall

The *Overall* section included two items: “I learned a great deal from this course”, and “The instructor used procedures and methods conducive to learning”.

![Overall Undergraduate Course Evaluations](chart.png)