

January 2020

A Team Approach to Using Student Feedback to Enhance Teaching and Learning

Cynthia S. Deale
East Carolina University, ohalloranc@ecu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/ij-sotl>

Recommended Citation

Deale, Cynthia S. (2020) "A Team Approach to Using Student Feedback to Enhance Teaching and Learning," *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*: Vol. 14: No. 2, Article 6. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.20429/ijstl.2020.140206>

A Team Approach to Using Student Feedback to Enhance Teaching and Learning

Abstract

This study investigated how one type of student evaluation of teaching (SET) tool and a team approach to evaluating a course helped to provide feedback in an online, synchronous and asynchronous course and an in-person, face-to-face course through a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) study. Student observational narratives and responses to a feedback tool were gathered for two undergraduate courses, one that was offered face-to-face (n=167) and one that was taught online (n=155), over several semesters. The most important factors, with regard to the teaching of the courses, were ensuring that the courses were well organized in terms of assignments and course platform sites, being careful to communicate succinctly and thoughtfully, and showing care and concern for students. Implications are provided.

Keywords

feedback, students, instruction, evaluation

Creative Commons License



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

A Team Approach to Using Student Feedback to Enhance Teaching and Learning

Cynthia S. Deale

East Carolina University

Received: 14 February 2020; Accepted: 14 September 2020

Abstract

This study investigated how one type of student evaluation of teaching (SET) tool and a team approach to evaluating a course helped to provide feedback in an online, synchronous and asynchronous course and an in-person, face-to-face course through a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) study. Student observational narratives and responses to a feedback tool were gathered for two undergraduate courses, one that was offered face-to-face (n=167) and one that was taught online (n=155), over several semesters. The most important factors, with regard to the teaching of the courses, were ensuring that the courses were well organized in terms of assignments and course platform sites, being careful to communicate succinctly and thoughtfully, and showing care and concern for students. Implications are provided.

INTRODUCTION

In higher education in the United States (U.S.), student evaluation of teaching (SET) ratings have been essential, yet controversial, tools used to help improve the quality of teaching during the last couple of decades (Chen & Hoshower, 2003; Spooen et al., 2007). At the end of a course, students are typically asked to evaluate their instructors on a variety of dimensions, including areas such as course objectives, subject matter, course structure, teaching activities, course materials, course difficulty, assistance from the teacher during the learning process, and course evaluation procedures (Spooen et al., 2007; p.672). SETs are frequently used to provide the following: constructive feedback to faculty members to help them improve their teaching, course content, and structure; a summary gauge of teaching effectiveness for promotion and tenure decisions; and information to students to help with the selection of courses and instructors (Marsh & Roche, 1997). This study explored how one type of student evaluation of teaching (SET) tool and a team approach to evaluating a course helped to provide feedback in an online and a face-to-face course through a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) study.

BACKGROUND

The use of SETs is typically based on the belief that students learn more from instructors that receive high ratings (Uttl et al., 2017). However, as long ago as the 1990s, Adams (1997) and others challenged the validity of student evaluations of teaching (SETs) as genuine measures of faculty instructional effectiveness and capability (Wright & Jenkins-Guarnieri, 2012). Adams (1997) observed that there are numerous problems with the use of SETs that have subsequently shown up in the literature, such as validity, reliability, gender bias, and a number of other related concerns (Beecham, 2009; Boring et al., 2016; Braga et al., 2014; Hoefler et al., 2012; Spooen et al., 2013; Stark & Freishtat, 2014; Wright, 2006; Yunker & Yunker, 2003). Some strongly argue that SETs should not be used to determine tenure and promotion (Lawrence, 2018).

Over the years, numerous concerns have also been raised about the use of SETs in general, ranging from the low completion rate to timing to motivation (Marlin, 1998; Adams, 1997; Armstrong, 1998; Smith & Morris 2012). However, SETs remain the primary instrument used to assess an instructor's teaching competence

and are also used as part of promotion and tenure decisions (Boring et al., 2016; Kelly, 2012; Spooen et al., 2013) in the U.S. and in many countries around the world (Seldin, 1985; Abrami, 1989; Wagenaar, 1995; Abrami et al., 2001; Hobson & Talbot, 2001; Spooen et al., 2007; Kwan, 1999), even though educators do not have a consensus on the value of these tools (Hornstein, 2017).

Studies focused on SETs often investigate topics such as the development and validity of an evaluation instrument (Marsh, 1987), the validity (Cohen, 1981) and reliability of student rankings of teaching effectiveness (Feldman, 1977), and the potential bias of student assessments (Hofman & Kremer, 1980; Abrami & Mizener, 1983; Tollefson et al., 1989). The effect of an instructor's charisma on student evaluations is an additional factor to consider and it has been argued that it can have a significant effect on a student's evaluation of teaching (Shevlin et al., 2000; Woods, 1993). In addition, gender and age bias also impact student evaluations of teaching (Bunge, 2018; Gannon, 2018). While some institutions have recognized the biases intrinsic to SETs, many continue to use them as a core teaching evaluation instrument because they are simple to use.

As one author notes, "It takes a few minutes to look at professors' student ratings on, say, a 1-5 scale, and label them strong or weak teachers. It takes hours to visit their classrooms and read over their syllabi to get a more nuanced, and ultimately more accurate, picture" (Flaherty, 2018, online). A survey of 9,000 faculty members by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), noted that 90 percent of respondents wanted their institutions to evaluate teaching with the same sincerity as they evaluate research and other forms of scholarship (Flaherty, 2018) and SETs alone do not provide that kind of in-depth evaluation. For although SETs may provide some useful information to help inform teaching practices, to genuinely understand how effectively an instructor teaches, observation is needed (Hornstein, 2017). In addition, there is the idea that examining a course as it is experienced by students has value. In other words, trying to get what the learning experience is like for those doing the learning and to focus on continuous improvement and to fully involve students in the process of gathering feedback about teaching and learning in a course is meaningful (Deming, 2000; Granat, 2018; Middaugh, 2018).

Although many faculty members may not believe that SETs provide meaningful evaluations of teaching, they have been used in Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) research to help address questions such as what students think of various instructional methods (Dickson & Trembl, 2013; Meloche, 2018; Mitchell, 2013). For example, suggestions have been made to evaluate not only a course at the end, but to also assess the modules completed during a course to provide more meaningful feedback for use in course improvement (Gilpin, 2013). Through SoTL, educators have a framework to use that allows them to contemplate different forms of data that are characteristically available in teaching environments, and to involve students in the process.

SoTL techniques offer a way of assessing courses by inviting probing questions about course content, course elements, and course delivery. As some scholars note, SoTL projects can be kind of complex and may not always be as orderly as other endeavors, but they can result in findings that help educators to better comprehend the multifaceted interactions between teaching and learning (Meloche, 2018; Mitchell, 2013). Historically, scholarly teaching involved thinking critically about one's teaching and actively making pedagogical changes and observing how student learning changed based on classroom experiences (Richlin, 2001). Whereas, if one coordinated student assessment with SoTL then faculty members could more readily determine where students are having problems and can systematically explore whether an innovative pedagogical tool improves student learning (Dickson & Trembl, 2013).

PURPOSE

In spite of some criticism of SETs, with the surge in public demand for accountability in higher education and the great concern over the quality of university teaching, the practice of collecting student ratings of teaching has been widely adopted by universities in the U.S. and all over the world as part of the quality assurance system (Kwan, 1999, p. 181). While the use of SETs is controversial for tenure, promotion, and evaluation purposes, there does appear to be merit to the use of SETs by individual instructors to learn about their own teaching practices (Uttl, et. al., 2017), and using SoTL methods can truly enhance this process (Gilpin, 2013). Therefore, this SoTL study investigated the use of student feedback and student team observations about teaching to help improve classes, using the KISS (or in this case KISSES) feedback technique. The KISS (or in this case KISSES) tool used for this study involved asking students what should keep being done in a class (K), what could be improved (I), what should be started (S), what should be stopped (S), what should be evaluated to determine effective teaching (E), and what they would share about the course content and/or activities (S). The tool was based on one used in previous work (e.g. Jackson, 2016) and it is explained more fully in the next section.

For this study, the KISS (KISSES) tool and an observational approach were used instead of the standard, online SET sent via a survey link to students at the end of the semester. The items on the SET include questions about instructor behaviors, course content, and student participation, but the results of the SETs are typically not available until well after a course has been taught and therefore, the information is not readily available to an instructor to work on improving his/her /their course quickly. Thus, applying the additional tools and observational procedures allowed the instructor to readily assess teaching and learning in

a course in a more customized manner; involve students more fully in the process, and have data readily available to use. The study investigated feedback about teaching in a face-to-face class and an online class, with the focus on how to make the feedback process a mutual one between student and instructor (Getzlaf et al., 2009). The purpose of this study was to determine what students believed were the important components of effective teaching in a face-to-face and an online course that could help improve teaching and subsequently improve the student learning experience. The questions guiding this SoTL project were the following:

1. **What methods of teaching should keep being practiced in this course to enhance learning?**
2. **How can this course be improved?**
3. **What should be started in this course that has not been included in the course before?**
4. **What activities and/or methods should be stopped in this course because they are seen as ineffective teaching/learning methods?**
5. **What aspects of the course should be evaluated to help determine effective teaching and learning?**
6. **What content and/or activity in this course stood out in terms of their/its contribution to learning such that students wish to share them/it with others?**

METHODOLOGY

This SoTL study used a team approach to the evaluation of teaching (Granat, 2018; Vargas-Atkins et al., 2017). Using this approach, the goal was to make sure that students truly had a voice in the evaluation of a course in terms of its content and with regard to the instruction of the course (Seale, 2010). This study encompassed an approach used for several semesters and involved the analysis of two courses, one face-to-face and one online.

A Description of the Face-to-Face Course

The face-to-face course was an introductory tourism class that involved conducting live video and chat links with students in other countries, through a global classroom program at the university that assisted with setting up the links with international partners. The course enrollment was limited to 16 students due to the live video links and the goal of having students communicate with each other cross-culturally during live video and chat links. Examples of course learning objectives include the following:

- Students will be able to apply critical thinking skills to evaluate global tourism issues and events from multiple perspectives.
- Students will be able to evaluate their own global understanding of tourism in diverse cultures.
- Students will be able to demonstrate how cultural beliefs and values shape people's perceptions and impact global decisions and actions related to tourism.

Course activities included readings, discussion assignments (sometimes in small group formats such as chats), online quizzes and activities focused on issues such as stereotyping, and a project comparing and contrasting tourism in the U.S. with that of the countries that the class linked with during the semester. The class assignments and content were divided into weekly modules and an online learning platform was used to augment the course.

A Description of the Online Course

The online course was a class that introduced the students to the hospitality industry. Enrollment in the course was typically between 20 and 25 students. Examples of course learning objectives included the following:

- Describe the components of the hospitality industry, including the food service and lodging industry.
- Identify industry managerial concepts and the basic functions of management.
- Explain the socioeconomic factors, with their ensuing implications, that contribute to the growth of the hospitality industry.

Course activities for this course included readings, discussion assignments, online quizzes and a variety of assignments based on different sectors of the industry such as hotels, restaurants, and events. The class was primarily conducted in an asynchronous format, but offered optional synchronous sessions. The class assignments and content in this class were also divided into weekly modules and an online learning platform was used to augment the course.

Student Training

To engage in this team approach to the evaluation of instruction, all students were provided with two one-hour training sessions about evaluating instruction and tips were provided about how to record their observations and comments, with sessions taking place either online (synchronously) or in-person. As part of these sessions, students were asked to contemplate questions about teaching and learning. These included the following:

- What do you think is effective teaching and learning and why?
- What did you like least about this instructor/course and why?
- What did you like most about the instructor/course and why?

As noted by Granat (2018), students were directed to include both compliments and complaints in their narratives and they were reminded that compliments can be more motivating than criticism. Students were also informed that their findings would be shared with faculty members and therefore, they needed to use appropriate, professional language in their evaluations. Furthermore, students were not only asked to observe the class, they were asked to carefully review the course materials, including any textbooks used, assignment directions, and the courses' online platform sites. Moreover, students were asked to provide their opinions of and ideas about good teaching and useful course materials to help increase their involvement in the tasks of observing class sessions and reviewing materials.

After the training sessions, the students were placed in teams of two (or three depending on the class so that each student had at least one partner) and asked to make at least three entries during the semester in terms of narrative, ethnographic

notes that they took about their own class observations. They completed two observational sessions and made two entries during the course and then made a third entry (the KISSES feedback tool) near the end of the course. Student teams were asked to observe the class and make comments on the same day or the same module (with regard to the online course) and then were asked to discuss their comments within their groups and add to their comments as necessary. The respondents provided copious comments. Near the end of the course, during the last week, the students were asked to complete and submit their KISSES feedback tool logs, including their notes and the KISSES comments, to the instructor anonymously (via an online platform).

The KISSES Feedback Tool

The KISSES feedback tool was provided to the students during the first week of class and they were asked to take ethnographic notes about the class rather than just evaluating the course near the end, as is traditional in many universities (Granat, 2018). The KISSES tool allowed the participants to share their experiences and provide comments. This study applied a variation on the KISS feedback tool (Access Education, 2016; Jackson, 2016). Acquiring feedback through the KISS feedback tool is a four-step process. These four steps include asking students to comment on the following aspects of a course:

1. Keep (K)

- What is the instructor doing well?
- What should the instructor keep doing?
- What should the instructor keep doing in this class when it is offered again?

This step attempted to identify the activities that are working well in a course and therefore, should continue.

2. Improve (I)

- What is the instructor already doing that can be improved?
- How does the instructor make the course more effective, efficient, or otherwise better?
- What could the instructor improve when he/she/they teaches this class again?

This step focused on current activities that could be improved

3. Start (S)

- What should the instructor be doing that he/she/they is not yet?
- Why would it work for this class?
- What should the instructor start doing when he/she/they teach this class again?

This step aimed to identify activities that could be incorporated into the class that could improve the learning experience.

4. Stop (S)

- What is the instructor doing currently that needs to stop?
- Why is it not working?
- What should the instructor stop or delete from this class the next time he/she/they teach the class?

This step allowed the learner to share what activities, content, or other items that he or she would like to see removed from the course and asked the student to identify why the item should be removed from the course (Access Education, 2016; Jackson, 2016.)

Two other items were added to the tool to make it the KISSES tool so that students could be more integrally involved in the evaluation aspect. The following two items were added:

5. Evaluation (E)

- What aspects of a course do you think should be evaluated to determine effective teaching?
- How should we assess teaching?
- What are your ideas about content, methods, etc.?

6. Share (S)

- What do you feel that you have learned in this class that you can truly share with others?
- What content and/or activity in this class do you think contributed the most to your learning and why?

The Sample

Student responses to the KISSES tool were gathered from those who completed the courses over several semesters. As noted, the face-to-face class that was evaluated was a tourism class that involved live video and chat links with students in other countries. It was a small class limited to 16 students. KISSES feedback was gathered for the class held in the fall of 2013, spring of 2014, fall of 2015, spring of 2016, fall of 2016, spring of 2017, fall of 2017, spring of 2018, fall of 2018, spring of 2019, and fall of 2019, for a total of 167 responses. The online class that was studied was an introduction to hospitality course that was offered online during the summers of 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019. For that class, a total of 155 KISSES feedback responses were collected and used for this study.

Content Analysis

The collected responses were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The process involved more than counting words; rather, it focused on identifying emergent themes, which is a method suggested by other scholars (Berg, 1989; Malterud, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Weber, 1990). The analysis of the comments was based on the qualitative research procedures outlined by Marshall and Rossman (1989).

To maintain validity, a total of three coders read and identified broad categories and narrow sub-categories that participants provided in their KISSES feedback. First, coders read and coded a comment and compared the results. When all coders agreed with the coding of the same comment, they proceeded to individually code the rest of the comments on the feedback forms without consulting or comparing the coding with each other. Every comment was thoroughly examined and categorized into groupings. Several key themes emerged from the data through the analysis process. While analyzing the data, the coders retained the research questions, which assisted them with the meaning of the codes. After completing the coding process, the results were reviewed by other colleagues, who did not participate in the coding process.

RESULTS

Global Tourism Face-To-Face Course

What to Keep

As noted, the feedback logs from 167 students were obtained for analysis in this SoTL study. In terms of what to keep doing in the class, every single respondent wrote that the live video links should continue in the course (n=167). Typical examples of their answers included the following:

Keep video chatting and communicating with different countries. I thought that this was an incredible class where I got to do things that I never imagined doing in college.

I think you should keep doing the live links. They created an opportunity to learn a lot about three very different cultures.

In addition to keeping the live video and chat links in the course, the students indicated that the course should continue to incorporate collaborative projects (n=92). These projects involved a student from the class working with a student in another country on a specific project. Typical responses about keeping the projects included the following:

You should keep the collaborative projects with the other countries, I found this very fun to do with our partners and I enjoyed learning more about the country's culture and lifestyle.

Keep doing the collaborative projects with the countries because it helps the students to practice communication skills with people, they are not friends with or are far away from, this may happen in our careers.

Other students indicated that the weekly discussion board assignments should be kept because they added to their understanding of the course (n=42). Typical responses included the following:

I think that the discussion boards were a great addition to the class. They helped me lay out my thoughts and grasp a better understanding of the class.

I think definitely keep the weekly discussion boards. Having these discussion boards helped me reflect and learn so much more about what we were learning in our course. I enjoyed writing the discussion boards weekly and reading other people's responses and takeaways.

A few students mentioned continuing to complete the individual out-of-class project that dealt with interviewing peers to find out about tomorrow's tourists (n=12). Representative responses included the following:

I think you should keep doing the tomorrow's tourist project because it was interesting to see how much people don't know about different places.

You should keep doing the tomorrow's tourist project because I thought it was interesting.

What to Improve

Several suggestions for improving the course were made by the students. The most common one was that they felt that in the future that the course could improve the chat feature that was used (n=72). Their answers included the following:

We should improve the chat part with better questions and activities just for the chat time.

The chat sessions really were not beneficial at all. Most of the time we could not connect. When we did the questions were very basic with only minimal responses received. Students were doing other assignments during this time.

In addition, 52 students indicated that the course could be improved if students all participated in the conversations during the video links. Typical responses included the following:

Improve the clarity of what should be going on when video chatting. I felt as though sometimes the conversations were off topic of what we were supposed to be talking about for that week's link. It wasn't too terribly bad at any certain point; I just feel as though the country we are linking with should be aware of what the topic is for the day.

Work on ways to keep the conversation going and to make sure that every student participates in these valuable discussions in class.

Students also observed that the technology used for the live video and chat links could be improved. Examples of their answers included the following:

Technology issues, although this will probably always be a potential problem.

The connection of the links, whether it be sound or visual should keep being improved.

What to Start

A number of recommendations were made for activities to start doing in the course. They included the following:

Assign each student a question to ask (n=52).

Have each student develop a question to ask (n=47).

Find better ways to talk to students in other countries (n=14).

What to Stop

A number of recommendations were made for activities to stop doing in the course. They included the following:

Change the time of the class (n=72).

Stop the vocabulary assignment (n=32).

Stop the discussion board assignments (n=27).

What to Evaluate

In terms of aspects of a course that students thought should be evaluated to determine effective teaching and how to assess teaching, students responded with a variety of suggestions. Their answers were not always directly related to the questions as written, but provided interesting feedback. A major theme was being caring (n=110). Examples included the following:

You showed you care by answering emails, etc. This may not seem like it matters in teaching, but it is huge.

I also think that having you as a teacher made it that much better because you were just as excited as we were to link with the countries and that made it better for us.

Another theme that received attention was that of organization (n=77). Representative answers include the following:

I feel like course organization is number one in terms of effective teaching. A disorganized course and course platform site frustrate students from day one and then they may not learn much because they continue to feel frustrated by a lack of organization. So, organizing a course by week or in modules by topic is very important and it is important for the instructor to communicate to students how the class is organized.

Organization, organization, organization. Need I say more? Being organized is helpful to everyone and allows students to spend their time learning the material or concentrating on skills instead of trying to figure a course out.

What to Share

The course was a tourism class that focused on live links with students in other countries so it was not surprising that students felt that they could share content and/or activities related to cross-cultural engagement and global issues (n=112). Examples of their answers included the following:

I would share that we are more alike than different as people on the globe.

I'd share that cross-cultural communication is a wonderful and needed experience that everyone should have.

Introduction to Hospitality Online Course

As noted, an online class was also evaluated using the KISSES feedback tool and student observations. A number of comments were provided.

What to Keep

Students had some very strong feelings about what to keep in the class. Keeping the discussion board (n=101) and responding quickly to emails (n=87) were frequent comments. Examples of students' answers included the following:

I think you should keep doing the DB. I think it's a great way of interacting with the class online.

Keep responding quickly to emails. Explaining assignments thoroughly. Always being available for questions.

What to Improve

Students also came to consensus on the need to improve assignments (n=97), assignment directions (n=94), and shorten emails (n=72). Representative answers included the following:

Improve some of the assignments and make them less repetitive.

I think that the directions for a few assignments could maybe be stated in a more clear and straightforward way. I know there was a little confusion with the tourism attraction assignment, I believe, and what all was expected with that.

Although I enjoy the detailed emails, I think maybe some of the other classmates can get intimidated by the long emails and skip over directions that are given.

What to Start

Some suggestions about what to start doing to improve the course consisted of providing better directions for assignments (n=42) and creating better assignments (n=37). Examples of answers included the following:

Start providing better descriptions on assignments.

Start-maybe include a tourism project where you create your own mini-version of something.

Something that I think sounds fun to start doing in this class is (to) assign a project to students to either design a (pretend) hotel, resort, restaurant, or even plan a wedding, and see what they can do with it!

What to Stop

Activities to stop doing in the class also received a variety of answers, but some were more common than others, including not responding to two other students in the discussion board assignments (n=78). Examples included the following representative answers:

Stop making us comment on 2 other people's assignments.

I completely understand the need to interact with other students taking the course, but however I do find that the two responses on others' work that was required for each assignment became a little repetitive. I feel like a lot of people had a hard time with knowing how to respond to others' posts, so maybe an alternative for interacting with other students could be introduced.

What to Evaluate

In terms of what to evaluate, most comments dealt with instructor behaviors (n=72) and organization (n=34). Examples of representative responses included the following:

I appreciated the reminders and communication from the professor. I also think the professor did a great job of spreading the work out amongst us.

Having organization. I really like how the course is set up. It is not too much work and the topics are interesting. I have had some classes that were not organized, and it caused some students to not have interest in it.

The course set up, organization, assignments, and discussion boards were well thought out and provides students with the information needed for introduction to hospitality.

What to Share

In terms of what the students would like to share, it seemed that the topics of the course were of most interest (n=86). Representative comments included the following:

What I liked most about this class was the freedom to explore different topics and different areas. We were not forced to just view one specific topic; we had a choice in what we explored. I also liked learning about the many different hospitality careers.

In all honesty, the thing I liked the most about the class was that it was related to the travel industry...it felt I was visiting an old friend! I would like to share all that I learned and relearned about the travel, tourism, and hospitality industry!

Students' Feedback about the KISSES tool and observations

After the student teams had observed the class sessions, thoughtfully reviewed course materials and online platform course sites, and completed the KISSES tool log, they were asked to reflect on their experiences examining the course and course online site. Students provided positive feedback about their involvement in the evaluation process to help improve the class. Representative comments included the following:

I have never been really asked what I think of a course before. I felt like what I said mattered and that the instructor really wanted feedback so that she could improve the class.

I liked doing the observations and talking with my classmate afterwards to see what we both thought. I have not done anything like this in the past, so it was really interesting to see not only what I thought, but what my classmates thought about the class as well.

I liked feeling like what I think can make a difference and really help improve the class.

IMPLICATIONS

Exploring the KISSES feedback for several semesters of courses was very helpful. While on a per course basis a class can be changed from semester to semester, by looking at the courses over several years, the instructor could truly get an idea about what is going on in a course and how students, in general, view their course experiences. Using a simple tool such as the KISSES one allows students and faculty members to have a common set of points that can be shared in conversations about improving courses and thus, enhance teaching and learning. In this SoTL project, the KISSES feedback provided some rather consistent feedback that the instructor could use to improve the courses in the future. Overall, the most important factors with regard to these classes that emerged from this SoTL study were making sure that the courses are well organized in terms of assignments and course platform sites, being careful to communicate succinctly and thoughtfully, and showing care and concern for students.

As noted by previous researchers (e.g. Granat, 2018), applying this method of course evaluation created challenges as well as rewards. Not surprisingly, developing a culture of assessment was a necessity and not easily realized when the project began. This system was employed by just one faculty member to help her with her classes, but students at first were reticent to help out because they did not understand their roles and the process and some were confused that their views on teaching and learning truly mattered to the professor.

At the end of the project, the students were asked to evaluate their experience and they overwhelmingly agreed that it was a positive experience, with many noting that they felt truly valued in the teaching and learning process. For example, two students stated the following:

I felt like my participation in and thoughts regarding this project really mattered. I had never thought so much about a class and how it was taught so it was really enlightening and interesting. I think that this will positively change the way I think about my classes and have a positive impact on my learning now and in the future.

I enjoyed really doing a project to help improve teaching and learning. I also learned what SoTL means and realize more about how to do some research and think critically and even though this was about teaching and learning I think it could be helpful in my future career when I may need to work on employee training and development.

The process itself was evaluated in the end by students and the instructor and the following suggestions for implementing a team approach to course and instructor teaching evaluations were made:

Both students and the instructor believe that students should receive training about observing class sessions and reviewing course materials, including course online platform sites.

Both students and the instructor think that students' ideas should be included in the questions asked.

The instructor strongly believes that student teams should meet prior to observing class sessions to agree on how they will proceed to observe the class sessions and course materials.

Both students and the instructor think that student teams should meet after observing class sessions to agree on how they will present their finding about their observations the class sessions and course materials.

The instructor believes that the processes should be reviewed and revised as needed, using feedback from the students and the instructor(s).

However, despite several limitations and potential drawbacks, processes such as those involved in this SoTL study may help educators cultivate a culture of continual improvement in their programs, institutions, disciplines, and higher education, in general. As noted in formative work about SoTL, studying what works and what is happening (Hutchings, 2000) are thoughtful questions to ask about one's teaching and through a student and faculty team approach to the evaluation of instruction one can ask both of these types of SoTL questions and make positive changes in one's instructional practices.

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Conducting course and teaching evaluations in this way was meaningful and continues to provide value for both students and the instructor. The team approach used in this project has offered numerous ideas for how to make positive changes in students' course experiences. This process allowed for both formative and summative comments by students and permitted students to focus on what they observed in a course not only at the end, but while it was happening.

However, this project had several limitations. It was conducted with just two courses and other or additional results might occur in different kinds of courses in different kinds of learning environments and in different disciplines. Furthermore, while this project helped the instructor learn more about students' perceptions of her teaching, the connections to student learning were not clear. Thus, further SoTL research is needed that focuses on how student learning is impacted so as to help the instructor use an evaluation process more effectively and, most importantly, to positively influence student learning. In future research, the process could also be implemented by other instructors to see whether or not they find it more helpful than the use of traditional SETs applied at end of the course. Moreover, it is possible that this process distracts from learning and therefore, additional studies are necessary to determine if this is occurring. Finally, this project could be the topic of further work that explores how a team approach to the evaluation of teaching could be applied in an entire department.

REFERENCES

- Abrami, P. C. (1989). How should we use student ratings to evaluate teaching? *Research in Higher Education*, 30(2), 221-227.
- Abrami, P. C., & Mizener, D. A. (1983). Does the attitude similarity of college professors and their students produce "bias" in course evaluations? *American Educational Research Journal*, 20(1), 123-136.
- Abrami, P. S., Marilyn, H. M., & Raiszadeh, F. (2001). Business students' perceptions of faculty evaluations. *The International Journal of Educational Management*, 15(1), 12-22.
- Access Education (2016, November 9). *KISS goodbye to strategy guesswork*. Colchester, Essex, UK. Retrieved January 22, 2020 from <https://www.theaccessgroup.com/education/resources/blog/kiss-goodbye-to-strategy-guesswork/>
- Adams, J. V. (1997). Student evaluations: The ratings game. *Inquiry*, 1(1), 10-16.
- Angelo, T. A. & Cross, K. P. (1993). *Classroom assessment techniques: A handbook for college teachers*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Armstrong, J. S. (1998). Are ratings of instruction useful? *American Psychologist*, 53(1), 1223-1228.
- Beecham, R. (2009). Teaching quality and student satisfaction: Nexus or simulacrum? *London Review of Education*, 7(1), 135-146. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14748460902990336>
- Berg, B. L. (1989). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Boring, A., Ottoboni, K., & Stark, P. B. (2016). Student evaluations of teaching (mostly) do not measure teaching effectiveness. Retrieved from *Science Open Research*. doi:10.14293/S2199-1006.I.SOR-EDU.AETBZC.v1
- Braga, M., Paccagnella, M., & Pellizzari, M. (2014). Evaluating students' evaluations of professors. *Economics of Education Review*, 41(1), 71-88. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2014.04.002>
- Bunge, N. (2018, November 27). Students evaluating teachers doesn't just hurt teachers. It hurts students. *American Association of University Professors (AAUP)*. Retrieved from <https://www.aaup.org/article/student-evaluations-teaching-are-not-valid#.XjrwRCN7m70>
- Chen, Y. & Hoshower, L. B. (2003). Student evaluation of teaching effectiveness: An assessment of student perception and motivation. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 28(1), 71-88, DOI: 10.1080/02602930301683
- Cohen, P. A. (1981). Student ratings of instruction and student achievement: A meta-analysis of multisection validity studies. *Review of Educational Research*, 51(3), 281-309.
- Deming, E. (2000). *Out of the crisis*. Boston: MIT Press.
- Dickson, L. K., & Treml, M. M. (2013). Using assessment and SoTL to enhance student learning. *New Directions for Teaching & Learning*, 1(136) 7-16. DOI: 10.1002/tl.20072.
- Feldman, K. A. (1977). Consistency and variability among college students in their ratings among courses: A review and analysis. *Research in Higher Education*, 6(3), 223-274.
- Flaherty, C. (2018, May-June). Teaching eval shake-up. *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved January 22, 2020 from <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/05/22/most-institutions-say-they-value-teaching-how-they-assess-it-tells-different-story>
- Gannon, K. (2018, May 6). In defense (sort of) of student evaluations of teaching. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved February 1, 2020 from <https://www.chronicle.com/article/In-Defense-Sort-of-of/243325>
- Gilpin, L. S. (2013). Enhancing teaching & learning: Analysis of module and end-of-course narratives. *Mountain Rise*, 8(1), 1-16.
- Getzlaf, B., Toffner, G., Lamarche, K., Edwards, M. (2009). Effective instructor feedback: Perceptions of online graduate students. *The Journal of Educators Online*, 6(2), 1-20.
- Granat, B. M. (2018). Course/faculty assessment (CFA): a student team approach to course and faculty assessment. *Medical Science Educator*, 28 (1), 439-443 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40670-018-0553-2>
- Hobson, S. M., & Talbot, D. M. (2001). Understanding student evaluations. *College Teaching*, 49(1), 26-31.
- Hoefler, P., Yurkiewicz, J., & Byrne, J. C. (2012). The association between students' evaluation of teaching and grades. *Decision Sciences Journal of Innovative Education*, 10(1), 447-459. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4609.2012.00345.x
- Hofman, F. E., & Kremer, L. (1980). Attitudes toward higher education and course evaluations. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 77(2), 610-617.
- Hornstein, H. A. (2017). Student evaluations of teaching are an inadequate assessment tool for evaluating faculty performance. *Cogent Education*, 4(1), 1-8.
- Jackson, H. (2016, October 12). KISS: Rules of engagement. *SecED*. Retrieved January 22, 2020 from <http://www.sec-ed.co.uk/best-practice/kiss-rules-of-engagement/>
- Kelly, M. (2012). *Student evaluations of teaching effectiveness: Considerations for Ontario universities*. Toronto, Ontario: Council of Ontario Universities (COU #866).
- Kwan, K. P. (1999). How fair are student ratings in assessing the teaching performance of university teachers? *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 24(2), 181-195.
- Lawrence, J. W. (2018, May-June). Student evaluations of teaching are not valid: It is time to stop using SET scores in personnel decisions. *American Association of University Professors*. Retrieved February 2, 2020 from <https://www.aaup.org/article/student-evaluations-teaching-are-not-valid#.XjrwRCN7m70>
- Malterud, K. (2012). Systematic text condensation: A strategy for qualitative analysis. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, 40(8), 795-805.
- Marlin, J. (1998). Student perceptions of end-of-course evaluations. *Journal of Higher Education*, 58(6), 704-716.
- Marsh, H. W. (1987). Students' evaluations of university teaching: Research findings, methodological issues, and directions for future research. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 11(3), 253-388.
- Marsh, H. W., & Roche, L. A. (1997). Making students' evaluations of teaching effectiveness effective: The critical issues of validity, bias, and utility. *American Psychologist*, 52(11), 1187-1197. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.52.11.1187>
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (1989). *Designing qualitative research*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.
- Meloche, A. (2018, September 28). Using student evaluations in SoTL research. *Art History Teaching Resources (AHTR)*. Retrieved from January 24, 2020 from <http://arthistoryteachingresources.org/2018/09/using-student-evaluations-in-sotl-research/>
- Middaugh, M. F. (2010). *Planning and assessment in higher education: demonstrating institutional effectiveness* (1st edition). San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Mitchell, E. (2013). Reflective course construction; An analysis of student feedback and its role in curricular design. *Education for Information*, 30(1), 149-166. DOI 10.3233/EFI-130942
- Richlin, L. (2001). Scholarly teaching and the scholarship of teaching. In C. Kreber, (Ed.) *Scholarship revisited: Perspectives on the scholarship of teaching* (pp. 57–68). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Seale, J. (2010). Doing student voice work in higher education: An exploration of the value of participatory methods. *British Educational Research Journal*, 36(1), 995–1015.
- Seldin, P. (1985). *Current practices in evaluating business school faculty*. Pleasantville, NY: Center for applied Research, Lubin School of Business, Pace University.
- Shevlin, Banyard, P.M., Davies, M. & Griffiths, M. (2000). The validity of student evaluation of teaching in higher education: Love me, love my lectures? *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 25(4), 397-405, DOI: 10.1080/713611436
- Smith, P., & Morris, O. (2012). *Effective course evaluation: The future for quality and standards in higher education*. London, UK: Electric Paper Ltd. International House.
- Spooren, Brockx, & Mortelmans, (2013). On the validity of student evaluation of teaching the state of the art. *Review of Educational Research*, 83(4), 598-590. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3102/0034654313496870>.
- Spooren, P., Mortelmans, D. & Denekin, J. (2007). Student evaluation of teaching quality in higher education: Development of an instrument based on 10 Likert scales. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 32(6), 667-679, DOI: 10.1080/02602930601117191
- Stark, P. B. & Freishtat, R. (2014). An evaluation of course evaluations. *ScienceOpen*, 1-7. <http://doi.org/10.14293/S2199-1006.I.SOR-EDU.AOFRQA.v1>
- Tollefson, N., Chen, J. S., Kleinsasser, A. (1989). The relationship of students' attitudes about effective teaching to students' ratings of effective teaching. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 49(3), 529-536.
- Uttl, B., White, C. A., & Gonzalez, D. W. (2017). Meta-analysis of faculty' teaching effectiveness: Student evaluation of teaching ratings and student learning not related. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 54(1), 22-42.
- Vargas-Atkins, T., Mclsaac, J., & Willis, I. (2017). Focus group meets nominal group technique: An effective combination for student evaluation? *Innovations in Education & Teaching International*, 54(4), 289-300.
- Wagenaar, T. C. (1995). Student evaluation of teaching: some cautions and suggestions. *Teaching Sociology*, 64(1), 64-68.
- Weber, R. P. (1990). *Basic content analysis*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Woods, P. (1993). The charisma of the critical other: Enhancing the role of the teacher. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 9(80), 545-557.
- Wright, R. E. (2006). Student evaluations of faculty: Concerns raised in the literature, and possible solutions. *College Student Journal*, 40(1), 417-422.
- Wright, S. L., & Jenkins-Guarnieri, M. A. (2012). Student evaluations of teaching: Combining the meta-analyses and demonstrating further evidence for effective use. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 37(1), 683– 699. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2011.563279>
- Yunker, P.J. & Yunker, J.A. (2003). Are student evaluations of teaching valid? Evidence from an analytical business course. *Journal of Education for Business*, 78(6), 313-317.