Online Course Evaluation Task Force
Ad Hoc Item Subcommittee
Executive Summary

Item Subcommittee Effort Context and Overview

The design of a future online evaluation form will consist of multiple modules of no more than 25 items. One module will ask students to answer one or two campus-wide environment/ climate-type questions once. The core module will focus on course organization, teaching, and learning; this module will be common to all courses taught at IUB. A third module will be designed by the general education committee with a focus on the common ground (CG) and shared goals (SG) outcomes and will be included in CG or SG courses. The other three modules will be under the purview, design, and control of College/Schools, departments, and faculty.

An ad hoc committee composed of members of the Online Task Force and specialists in research expertise in higher education learning and engagement, instrument design, course evaluation, and survey methodology on the Bloomington campus was created in February 2011 to construct items for the second module.[1] Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs Gieryn discussed the need for a set of questions that focused on effective teaching to assist the campus P&T committee and his Office in promotion and tenure decision. The design of the instrument was narrowed to course organization, value of the course, instructor accessibility, and the student's perception of learning. VP Gieryn and the subcommittee also concurred that it would be useful to collect demographic course data (e.g., class size, type, required, upper division, etc.) for normalizing reporting. These data can be derived from existing course records and linked to each evaluation as part of the system implementation.

Members of the Task Force and its ad hoc subcommittee carried out an extensive literature review of research on policy recommendations pertaining to course evaluation, high-impact teaching practices, student experiences, learning outcomes, and survey instrument design between June 2010 and May 2011. An archive of course evaluations and a databank of questions were created. (All materials are located in the Task Force's Oncourse/ Resources/Online Crse Evals Resources/ folders.)

The Work of the Ad Hoc Item Subcommittee, March – October 2011

The ad hoc subcommittee met between March and early October 2011 to develop a draft instrument of nine questions that is designed to capture evaluative information about the quality of teaching and to provide administrative information for merit and P&T decisions. These nine questions will be the core of an online instrument that will be administered by instructors in every unit on the Bloomington campus; schools/college, departments, units, and

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[1]Item subcommittee members: Vic Borden (SoE), John Kennedy (CSR) Lisa Kurz (CITL), Alex McCormick (SoE), Eric Metzler Kelley School), Judy Ouimet (OVPUE), David Perry (BEST), Kate Reck (Chemistry), and Alice Robin (SLIS). Stasa Milojevic (SLIS) and Cassidy Sugimoto (SLIS) joined the committee in June to participate in the summer research program.

faculty may choose to develop additional questions that are relevant to their particular discipline or course content. The core module (8 items) is also designed to make comparisons across similar cases and over time that will contribute to assessment of teaching across the campus. Other items added to the instrument, which may include campus-wide/climate environment items, general education, and department- and course/faculty-specific, were beyond the purview of this committee.

Research was conducted during the two summer 2011 sessions to assess the validity and reliability of prospective questions through piloting the online course evaluation form and focus groups. The goal was to understand how students reflect on and interpret the series of questions and we specifically sought feedback about the quality and meaning of the question wording (item content, item order, and response set). Graduate and undergraduate students were identified for the focus groups. Faculty who taught summer courses were identified and invitations distributed to participate by having their students complete the evaluation form at the end of the course. (See the Task Force Oncourse Resources/Online Crse Evals Resources/Ad Hoc Item Subcommittee Executive Summary Report folder for Appendices A-F for the pilot instruments and summaries of findings of the focus groups.)

Results of the summer pilot testing led to further revisions in the proposed instrument during September and early October. In late September, the Subcommittee met with Vice Provost Gieryn to review the results of the summer research program and to seek further guidance on information that would assist his Office.

The Core Campus-wide Items

The core module, general course and teaching, is designed to measure aspects of teaching practice and student experiences that are deemed important for what constitutes "high-impact teaching." Many aspects of "high-impact teaching" are not measured in this instrument; nor is the instrument designed to provide salient information on the context for student learning.) Questions one through six focus on effective teaching (whether instructional responsibilities have been met), high-quality interactions with the faculty, academic challenge and effort, and high expectations. Questions eight and nine are open-ended questions that provide the student with an opportunity to comment more specifically about the course. The nine questions are presented with a brief statement of the rationale. The complete formatted instrument is found in Appendix G in the Oncourse/Resources…/Ad Hoc Item Subcommittee Executive Summary Report folder.

1. How clearly were course learning goals and objectives communicated to you?
    Not at all clearly   Somewhat clearly   Clearly   Very clearly

    Rationale: Effective instructional practice requires clarity and organization.
    A course syllabus is prepared; course goals, objectives, and requirements are communicated to students; and expectations are established. The syllabus is one indicator of how well a course is organized. Anecdotal evidence and results of the focus groups indicate that some but not all units require a syllabus, that not all

course syllabi describe course goals and objectives, or that these are communicated to students. This question is designed to anticipate what will become a campus-wide requirement that the instructor prepare and distribute a syllabus and communicate the instructor's expectations for the course.

2. How effectively was class time used to help you learn?

   Not at all effectively Somewhat effectively Effectively Very effectively

Rationale: Effective instructional practice requires teaching clarity and organization. Elements of good classroom management practice include: clear explanation, good use of examples and illustrations to explain difficult points, materials presented in a well-organized way, instructor comes to class well prepared, class time used effectively. (See *Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education*[2] for a list of the practices that constitute effective classroom instruction and findings that cognitive learning is the best predictor of "high impact teaching.")

3. How effectively did out-of-class work (assignments, readings, practice, etc.) help you learn?

   Not at all effectively Somewhat effectively Effectively Very Effectively

Rationale: Good instructional practice requires planning and reinforcement of what is learned during class time.

Out-of-class experiences help connect learning in the classroom to outside experiences, integrate ideas or information from various sources, synthesize and organize ideas, information, or experiences into new and more complex interpretations and relationships. (See *Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education* for a list of the practices that constitute effective outside-the-classroom instruction.[3])

4. How effectively did graded work allow you to demonstrate what you learned in this course?

   Not at all effectively Somewhat effectively Effectively Very Effectively

Rationale: Good instructional practice requires the student to demonstrate what has been learned in the course.

Graded work constitutes one form of feedback provided by the instructor. The question ties into campus-wide assessment and is consistent with P&T language for what constitutes an "effective teacher."

5. How much did the instructor challenge you to do your best work?

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[2] Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts at Wabash College. (2011). *Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education. High-Impact Practices and Experiences from the Wabash National Study.* Retrieved from http://www.liberalarts.wabash.edu

[3] Ibid

	Not at all	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Very much

6. How much did this course motivate you to do your best work?

	Not at all	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Very much

Rationale: Good instructional practice requires academic challenge and high expectations. This item measures the quality of effort made by students, that is, the extent to which the course made them want to do well and engaged them. This question reflects the philosophy that higher education should be challenging. .

7. How available was the instructor to provide help when needed (in person, by email, etc.)

	Not at all available	Somewhat available	Available	Very available

Rationale: Good instructional practice requires high quality interactions with faculty. Instructors demonstrate their interest in teaching and student development by being accessible and available and providing feedback. Accessibility is a measure of the quality of non-classroom interaction with the instructor. .

8. What did you like most about this course?

9. What did you like least about this course?

Rationale: Students want an opportunity to comment on the course.
Instructors often find these questions very helpful for revising course content and improving their instructional practice.

Appendices