Student Evaluation of Instruction
Roanoke College

Description of the System

The Student Evaluation of Instruction system is a product of work done by a faculty-staff committee in 2004-2006. Their efforts resulted in the development of a system that was endorsed by the Faculty Personnel Committee and approved by the faculty. The system incorporates five basic kinds of information:

* Summative questions	To provide an overall assessment of the course and the instructor. There is a set of 9 standard or core items with a five-point rating scale, but students are also encouraged to make comments for each item. These summative items are the ones used for purposes of evaluation.
* Formative questions	To provide feedback for improving the quality of instruction. A set of up to 10 instructor-selected items can be used for each course being taught, and sets can easily be changed by the instructor.
* Background questions	To determine students' perceptions of course difficulty, effort made, expected grade, and so forth.
* Open-ended questions	To allow students to make comments and suggestions about the course and the instructor.
* Assessment questions	To collect information for major or program assessment. These items are currently used for most Intellectual Inquiry (INQ) courses, some courses or all courses in several departments, and the Intensive Learning term.

The committee first sought to identify the characteristics of effective instructors by reviewing the literature and soliciting input from, and holdings meetings with, each academic department. The product of that work was a four-page document outlining criteria for effective teaching. The committee then selected a subset of characteristics for which they thought students could provide informative commentary.

From this subset, nine characteristics (the summative items above) were judged to be most useful both to the instructor and to those who must make evaluations of teaching effectiveness. The nine items are intentionally broad, so additional direction to students is provided in the form of guide questions to stimulate thinking about the various facets of the statements. Space for comments about each statement is also provided.

The system, implemented entirely via the web, is designed to provide important information about student opinions of instruction, to permit the flexibility in the selection of formative items (there are over 400 items from which to choose) to meet the needs of different class formats and contents, and to provide timely feedback to faculty members so that results can be used to improve instruction.

Selecting Formative Items

Five to six weeks before the end of a term, instructors will be able to select formative items for each course. For courses with multiple instructors, each instructor is evaluated separately by default. Items are selected from a bank, and new items can be added to meet instructors' needs. The evaluation forms contain any formative items that have been selected. Items can be browsed or searched within the online system, or you can find PDF copies of the complete *Formative Item Catalog* at the Institutional Research web site in versions with items listed numerically or by category.
    http://roanoke.edu/inside/A-Z_Index/Institutional_Research/Student_Evaluations.htm

Courses in Which Evaluations Should Be Administered

As approved by the teaching faculty in 1988-1989, evaluations should be administered in all regular courses offered, including those taught by visiting and part-time professors (formerly adjuncts), in the fall and spring terms. Administration of forms during the summer session is optional, and administration during May Intensive Learning Term, which includes travel courses, is at the discretion of the program director. Currently all May Term courses are being evaluated. Evaluations are optional for laboratory sections and courses with five or fewer students enrolled. Internships, independent studies, and applied music courses are typically not evaluated.

When Evaluations Are Administered

The evaluation forms are ordinarily available to students online during the two final calendar weeks of the term (not including final exams). Students are required to log in with e-mail user name and password. Although the actual responses are recorded anonymously, a record of who responded is retained, and only a single response per course is permitted.

Although students will most often complete the online evaluations on their own time, it is possible for someone acting on behalf of an instructor to have a class complete the evaluations in a computer lab. Such an arrangement is desirable for maximizing the response rate and encouraging students to make more detailed comments. The course instructor may not be in the room while students complete evaluations.

Reporting of the Results

Results are available online shortly after the time that final grades are due. Both web/HTML and PDF reports are provided, including a report that has results for just the summative items (which is the only portion that department chairs and program directors see) and a report detailing summative responses in all courses taught. Other reports are prepared at the department and campus levels and for the directors of academic programs (e.g., Honors and General Education). However, students' comments and results for the formative and background items are not shared.

The nature of normative informative for the reports may change. However, at the present time, means (averages) are shown numerically or graphically relative to the 25th and 75th percentiles for all courses campus-wide.

<div align="right">Office of Institutional Research
July 2017</div>