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Spring 2011 Common Student Evaluation Rating Form:
Internal Consistency of the Evaluation Questions

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

In the spring of 2011, the University implemented a common student course evaluation rating form that was first administered to students university-wide at the end of that same semester. The Administration and the Faculty Federation agreed upon ten questions that were asked of all students (see Appendix for form and rating scale). Departments were free to add any additional questions that they desired.

For the first administration of the common student evaluation, the Faculty Federation and the Administration agreed that only questions 1 through 4 would be used in the evaluation of faculty teaching by departments. Questions 5 through 10 were to be later "evaluated as to their performance against the other four test questions" (J. Griffith & A. Garro, personal communication, March 25, 2011).

Methodology

In order to evaluate whether questions 5 through 10 were producing similar responses as questions 1 through 4, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for the entire set of 10 common survey questions used to gauge student course satisfaction. Cronbach's Alpha is one of the most common ways of measuring the internal consistency of items included in a scale (Pallant, 2010). Internal consistency is one measure of the reliability of a survey; specifically, whether question items intended to measure the same issue produce similar responses (Litwin, 1995; Pallant, 2010; Suskie, 1996).

Key Findings

- The Cronbach's Alpha for the group of ten common questions on the evaluation form was 0.958 (Figure 1). Cronbach's Alpha ranges from 0 to 1 with higher values indicating greater internal consistency. Values of 0.7 or higher are acceptable, but values of 0.8 or higher are preferable and values of 0.9 or higher are considered excellent (George & Mallery, 2003, as cited in Gliem & Gliem, 2003).

Figure 1.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.958	10

- Figures 2 and 3 provide data on each of the ten common questions. The mean rating for each question is shown in the summary statistics table in Figure 2 (by default, missing cases are excluded listwise for the calculation of Cronbach's Alpha).

Figure 2.

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
A1 The course was organized.	4.31	.957	19943
A2 The course provided me with a general background in the area.	4.33	.917	19943
A3 The instructor was prepared for class.	4.44	.873	19943
A4 The instructor's explanations were clear.	4.14	1.092	19943
A5 Grading criteria were clearly stated.	4.29	.977	19943
A6 Course objectives were stated.	4.38	.871	19943
A7 Learning activities were related to course objectives.	4.38	.886	19943
A8 The course covered the stated objectives.	4.37	.874	19943
A9 The instructor provides timely and useful feedback on student work.	4.17	1.081	19943
A10 The instructor stimulated interested in the subject.	4.25	1.063	19943

- The column "Corrected Item-Total Correlation" (Figure 3) provides the correlation of the specific question item with the overall score for all the other items on the scale (i.e., the group of ten questions). A correlation value less than 0.4 would indicate a departure from the rest of the questions on the scale. All of the ten common questions, including questions 5 through 10, had corrected item-total correlations of greater than 0.7. The column "Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted" provides an indication of whether internal consistency would be improved if a particular item was removed from the scale. None of the values in this column exceed the Alpha reported (0.958); therefore, the highest internal consistency is achieved by retaining all ten questions.

Figure 3.

Item-Total Statistics

	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
A1 The course was organized.	.827	.953
A2 The course provided me with a general background in the area.	.832	.953
A3 The instructor was prepared for class.	.828	.953
A4 The instructor's explanations were clear.	.830	.953
A5 Grading criteria were clearly stated.	.784	.955
A6 Course objectives were stated.	.841	.953
A7 Learning activities were related to course objectives.	.838	.953
A8 The course covered the stated objectives.	.865	.952
A9 The instructor provides timely and useful feedback on student work.	.783	.955
A10 The instructor stimulated interested in the subject.	.774	.956

References

Gliem, J., & Gliem, R. (2003). *Calculating, interpreting, and reporting Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient for Likert-type scales.* Paper presented at the 2003 Midwest Research to Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, and Community Education, Columbus, OH.

Litwin, M. (1995). *How to measure survey reliability and validity.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Pallant, J. (2010). *SPSS survival manual* (4th ed.). England: McGraw-Hill.

Suskie, L. A. (1996). *Questionnaire survey research: What works* (2nd ed.). Tallahassee, FL: The Association for Institutional Research.

Appendix

COMMON STUDENT EVALUATION RATING FORM

Instructions to the Student: Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements that describe this Course or this Instructor:

Strongly Disagree (=1)	Disagree (=2)	No Strong Opinion (=3)	Agree (=4)	Strongly Agree (=5)

1. The course was organized

2. The course provided me with a general background in the area.

3. The Instructor was prepared for class

4. The Instructor's explanations were clear

5. Grading criteria were clearly stated

6. Course objectives were stated

7. Learning activities were related to course objectives

8. The course covered the stated objectives

9.The Instructor provides timely and useful feedback on student work

10. The Instructor stimulated interest in the subject

Comments: *Please use the space provided on the response form to make any additional written comments concerning either the **Course** or the **Instructor**:*