

Course Evaluation

Dickson Kimeli Rutto

Abstract - Tertiary institutions offer various courses; students enroll for any of the courses depending on their career choices and/or qualification. Courses done impact directly on an individual's career preparation, job placement and practice as such they should be relevant and adequate. Every training institution should have set standards for course evaluation at all levels. This paper gives vital information on course evaluation.

Index terms: *Course, Course evaluation, Course evaluation tools, student evaluation test (SET).*

Course: refers to a programme of education leading to an examination/qualification. It can also be explained as a set of classes/plan of study in a particular field leading to a given qualification e.g. diploma, degree etc.

Course evaluation: refers to a way of finding out information about a course regarding to instruction.

Course evaluation tools: are instruments used to obtain feedback from respondents in course evaluation.

Student evaluation tests (SET): are set of items in form of questions that make up the evaluation instrument.

1:0 INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions' ultimate goal is to foster national development. Thus should provide quality teaching & learning of courses it offers in order to achieve the goals. Course evaluation seeks to establish the quality of instruction in any given course, student ratings of teaching administered through SET's have been used overtime to determine this quality. Clayson et al (2009), asserts that SET's define effective teaching for many purposes; they are popular partly because the measurement is easy and takes little class or faculty time. SET ratings are valuable provided relevant items are presented to students, this call for a sound development of evaluation tools.

1:1 COURSE EVALUATION TOOLS

Refers to instruments used to obtain feedback from learners about the course being evaluated. It consists of a number of items to be responded to by students. The responses will then be analyzed statistically to arrive at evaluation findings. Course evaluation templates for online responses and course evaluation forms for paper responses are the major course evaluation tools in use.

On the next page is a sample evaluational tool.

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- Dickson Kimeli Rutto, University of Eldoret.
Email: dixonkimeli@gmail.com

STUDENT COURSE EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

COURSE CODE	
COURSE TITLE	
INSTRUCTOR	
ACADEMIC YEAR	
SEMESTER	

The purpose of this form is to provide you with an opportunity to give feedback on the course you have just completed. This evaluation is important as it provides information to improve the course. ON THE TABLES PROVIDED PLEASE TICK THE RESPONSE THAT REPRESENTS YOUR OPINION

S/NO.	TEACHING APPROACHES	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	The instructor stimulated my interest in the subject					
2	The instructor managed classroom time and pace well					
3	The instructor was organized and prepared for every class					
4	The instructor used a variety of instructional methods to teach the course objectives (e.g. group discussions, student presentations, etc.					
5	The instructor challenged students to do their best					
6	The instructor demonstrated in-depth knowledge of the subject					
7	The instructor responded to questions					
8	The instructor appeared enthusiastic and interested					

		YES	NO
9	The syllabus was explained at the beginning of the course.		
10	The course was delivered as outlined in the syllabus		
11	The instructor was accessible outside of class		

	INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
12	The course was supported by adequate library resources.					
13	Instructor gave guidance on where to find resources					

	FEEDBACK AND ASSESSMENT	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
14	Information about the assessment was communicated clearly.					
15	Feedback was provided within the stated period.					
16	Feedback showed how to improve my work (eg corrections including comments).					

		YES	NO
17	Instructor explained the grading criteria of the course		
18	Exams were related to the course learning outcomes		
19	Projects/assignments were related to the course learning outcomes		
20	The instructor actively prevented cheating in the course		

	OVERALL EXPERIENCE	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
21	How do you rate your overall experience in this course					

		YES	NO
22	This was a worthwhile class		
23	Would you recommend this course to a fellow student		

	STUDENT SELF EVALUATION	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
24	I contributed constructively during in-class activities					
25	I feel I am achieving the learning outcomes					

In the spaces below, give your own views and any further comments about the course

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND VALUABLE FEEDBACK

1:2 SET SCORES

Refers to ordinal arrangement of variables with ratings falling into categories and presented in a given order, in the sample evaluational form given previously the SET score ratings are represented by: Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly disagree also Excellent, Very good, Good, Fair and Poor. SET scores measures what students say about a given item in the evaluation instrument, which in turn will be used to evaluate the course.

1:3 COURSE EVALUATION PROCESS

Course evaluation is mainly a summative form of evaluation done at the end of the course. In some cases, it may be done within the course of study (formative) for specific reasons. The evaluation has to be planned and executed efficaciously in order to yield reliable results. Evaluation tools should present items that yield the specific objective i.e. evaluate a course, they should also have clear instructions to respondents. At the end of teaching the course, the tools are administered to students; during administration, the instructor should not exert any influence at all. Students should be left to respond independently & individually. After filling in the question items the class representative, student volunteer or an administrator collects the forms and deliver them to the designated registry/administrator. The responses will then be statistically analyzed & interpreted and results published by relevant bodies of the institution. Conclusions of the findings & recommendations will also be made for possible implementation. The evaluation findings will then be availed to the departmental heads where it can be accessed. Course instructors should not be allowed access until they have submitted all grades of the course.

Generally, the process of course evaluation involves:

- i. Preparing course evaluational tools

- ii. Administering the tools to students to gather information
- iii. Analyzing & interpreting the collected information.
- iv. Drawing conclusion & making recommendations.
- v. Implementation of recommendations where possible

1:4 IMPORTANCE OF COURSE EVALUATION

Rahman (2006), states that course evaluation is beneficial because instructors can review how others interpret their teaching methods thereby improving their instruction. Other than this course evaluation is also valuable as it:

- a) Provides useful feedback that an institution can use to improve its courses
- b) Provides information that can be used to make decisions e.g. about promotions, tenure etc
- c) Provides a form of satisfaction to an instructor about his/her teaching

Generally, with course evaluation there's an expected overall improvement of an institution's courses instruction and quality in the long run.

1:5 CRITICISM OF COURSE EVALUATION AS A MEASURE OF EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION

Despite being used widely in educational institutions, course evaluation has faced a number of criticisms including:

1. Students maybe biased in their responses.
2. Other factors like personality, looks, gender, disabilities, ethnicity etc. may influence student response.
3. Some teachers argue that raising the level of standards and/or content may result in worse SET scores for a teacher.
4. It may have a demeaning effect on students' attitude towards the teacher.

5. Paper based evaluations can be very costly over the years, as the institution has to produce enough copies for each student for all the courses.
6. As compared to paper-based evaluation the response rates to online-based course evaluation maybe very low, therefore, the results will be less valid.

Basing on the above criticism, SET's may not be a good source of information for making conclusive decisions of: Tenure, retentions, demotions, promotions etc.

1:6 CONCLUSION

This article has explored a number of aspects regarding to course evaluation. It has established that for effective course evaluation the evaluation tools should be valid & reliable. The ultimate goal of course evaluation is to improve the quality of courses offered in an institution. Thus, it's the duty of all institutions to carry out this practice. The information provided in this paper adds more knowledge on the already existing knowledge about course evaluation. It is beneficial to all people involved in the field of education i.e. teachers, teacher trainers, student trainees, quality assurance officers etc.

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