

# DEVELOPMENT OF THE *STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE ON INSTRUCTION* (SQOI)

The principal reason for developing the Student Questionnaire on Instruction (SQOI) was to provide a course evaluation instrument and reporting system for college and university use that embodied and reflected empirical research findings in the teaching evaluation area. While many colleges and universities employ "home-grown" evaluation instruments on their campuses, these instruments have often been designed by faculty who do not have requisite expertise in the evaluation of teaching effectiveness. As a result, the instruments created do not measure instructional effectiveness adequately, often resulting in faculty dissatisfaction with such instruments and scepticism regarding the conclusions derived from their use.

Over the years, evaluation researchers have concluded that instruction needs to be viewed as a multidimensional activity and that a relatively finite set of constructs underlie effective teaching (Feldman, 1976; Feldman, 1989; Marsh & Roche, 1993). These constructs have been summarized by Centra (1998) and can be identified as follows: (1) good organization of subject matter and course, (2) effective communication, (3) enthusiasm for the subject matter and teaching, (4) positive attitude toward students, (5) fairness in examinations and grading, (6) flexibility in approaches to teaching, (7) appropriate student learning outcomes. By utilizing these seven constructs in the development of the SQOI, it can be fairly claimed that the SQOI is a valid instrument for use in determining teaching effectiveness in college faculty.

According to Seldin (1998), the systematic use of student ratings by deans at liberal arts colleges nationwide continues to increase. For example, while 80.3% of deans at 604 liberal arts colleges used student ratings in 1988, that figure had risen to 88.1% by 1998. In addition, student ratings of instruction were far and away the most heavily cited source of information for these deans regarding the performance of faculty. Given that critical decisions regarding faculty such as retention, promotion, tenure, and salary level are directly influenced by how well faculty teach, it is of vital importance to measure instructional effectiveness as accurately and fairly as possible and then convey the results of such measurement efforts to faculty, department chairs, and deans in a clear and accurate manner. Regarding this latter point, a course report form has been developed for use in conjunction with the SQOI. The report contains not only information specific to a given course section (e.g., response frequency, average rating per SQOI statement, etc.) but also vital department and campus-wide comparative information which can be used to put into proper context the evaluation results for a particular course section taught by a given faculty member. [For more details on this latter point, please see *Features and Description of the Student Questionnaire on Instruction (SQOI)*].

In conclusion, the SQOI is a valid instrument since it stems directly from constructs that research has shown define effective college instruction. The instrument, and the accompanying course report form which has been designed to display SQOI evaluation results in a clear and comparative manner, make it worthy of consideration for use on college and university campuses.

## References

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