MANUAL TO AUTOMATIC

ASSESSING THE ONLINE EVALUATION PROCESS

SPRING 2008

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INTRODUCTION

Like most colleges and universities, at Honolulu Community College student evaluations of courses and faculty are integral components of the campus assessment effort. Student evaluations have traditionally been conducted with the use of Scantron sheets which require students to fill in response circles and then provide a handful of comments on the back of the forms.

A few years ago, a pilot effort was launched to conduct student evaluations online. While faculty and students reported high satisfaction with the process (particularly with the expanded comments as a result of keyboarding responses), the campus lacked the computer facilities to significantly expand the online evaluation program.

In the Fall of 2006, a grant provided funding for the purchase of two mobile laptop computer labs that were housed on the Humanities/Social Science floor of the Library Building.

FALL 2006

The availability of the mobile labs and the improvement in WIFE resulted in the expansion of an array of online evaluations. At the end of the Fall 2006 semester, selected Humanities, Social Science, and Focus classes (Writing Intensive, Ethical Reasoning, Hawaiian/Asian/Pacific, and Oral Communication) experimented with online evaluations.

During the final two weeks of the semester, a temporary computer lab was setup in a small classroom on the Humanities/Social Science floor. Faculty scheduled sessions for their classes in the temporary lab or checked out a few laptops to conduct evaluations in their own classrooms as students completed final examinations.

SPRING 2007

The perceived success/satisfaction with the pilot process led to refinement and expansion of online evaluations at the end of the Spring 2007 semester. Language Arts faculty and an array of Knowledge Surveys were added to the mix and all Humanities and Social Science faculty were invited to use the mobile lab or reserve laptops for use in their classrooms.

Evaluations were clustered into disciplines/focus areas so that for the first time, program coordinators received program level data (not individual faculty evaluations)/findings. Individual faculty members received revised/enhanced individual class reports.

FALL 2007

Feedback from participating faculty resulted in several revised online evaluation procedures - including customized evaluations, a single website with links to all online evaluations, and improved reports.

At the conclusion of the process, the campus Accreditation Liaison Officer (Professor Cynthia Smith) was apprised of the online evaluation progress and, subsequently, requested that formal assessment of faculty satisfaction and suggestions be conducted.

David Cleveland and David Fink worked with Cynthia Smith and the Assessment Committee to create an
online instrument to assess faculty perceptions about the relative utility of online versus traditional Scantron based evaluation processes and the resulting reports.

**RESEARCH DESIGN**

The online instrument (attached) contained items focusing upon:

- Demographics/Usage Patterns (Discipline, Type(s) of evaluation, Where Used)
- Evaluation Process (Reserving time; Ease of finding evaluation at website, Ease for students to complete the evaluation; Ease for students to “reset” screen to home page)
- Evaluation Reports (Satisfaction: Promptness of delivery; Report format; Report statistics; Report graphics; Comparison with group means)
- Comparison: Scantron vs. Online (Comparing process, reports, and quantity/quality of student comments)
- Written Comments (Process better or worse than Scantron; What should be modified/improved; Other comments to improve)
- Language Arts Faculty Item: Impact of opening a temporary mobile lab on their floor
- Program Coordinators Item: Utility of Program Level Reports

**RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS**

Thirteen faculty participants completed the online evaluation form.

**Respondent Disciplines**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISCIPLINE</th>
<th>PERCENT OF PARTICIPANT GROUP</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What type(s) of evaluations were administered?**

All respondents reported that their classes used *regular* HCC evaluations forms (Language Arts used a customized form); 62% of respondents reported that their classes completed *Knowledge Surveys* as well; 54% reported that their classes completed *Focus Evaluations*.
Where were online evaluations conducted?

42% used the mobile computer lab for all evaluations; 33% conducted some of the evaluations in the mobile lab and some in their classrooms with borrowed laptops; 25% conducted all of their evaluations in their classrooms with borrowed laptops.

FINDINGS

MOST USERS WERE SATISFIED WITH THE ONLINE EVALUATION PROCESS

85% of the faculty respondents reported that the online evaluation process was either Fairly Easy (46%) or Very Easy (39%) to use. The bar graph below displays the four Ease of Use evaluation items - rank ordered by mean values.

Online evaluation forms contained as many as two dozen classes, but faculty reported little difficulty with finding their classes/sections - 77% reported that finding the right class was Very Easy.

The lowest rated item was: Signing Up for Lab Time Slots

While no respondents suggested that this was Very Difficult, 15% reported that this was Fairly Difficult and only 39% rated this item as Very Easy.

![Bar Graph - Ease of Use of Online Evaluations](image)

PLANNED ACTIONS TO IMPROVE THE PROCESS

The findings from this report coupled with observations during the evaluation process and conversations with users have caused the Evaluation Coordinators to propose changes to the process, including:

♦ Open a second mobile lab during the last three weeks of the semester on the Language Arts floor (Room # 520 - Fifth floor of Building 7). This will reduce the usage of the existing mobile lab facility (Room #620 - Sixth floor of Building 7) and, consequently, open many additional time slots for administering online evaluations.

♦ Conduct a training session with Language Arts faculty to increase their knowledge of how the system works.
Purchase and use a combination lock key holding mounted device (like those used by real estate agents) to house the mobile lab room key to ensure ready access to mobile labs.

Circulate the mobile lab sign up sheet at faculty meetings three weeks before the end of the semester; print and post large mobile lab reservation sheets on mobile lab doors

Post the mobile lab reservation sheet on a newly developed online evaluation website.

Refine/improve the online evaluation process instruction handouts.

Reconduct the evaluation of the process at the end of the semester to reassess satisfaction with the process.

HIGH SATISFACTION WITH GENERATED REPORTS

Not a single respondent selected the Very Dissatisfied or Somewhat Dissatisfied selections for the five items that focused upon the reports provided to faculty and program coordinators.

All (100%) respondents were Very Satisfied with the promptness of report preparation/delivery - reports were prepared and delivered within one week of the submission of Fall 2007 grades.

The bar graph below documents faculty satisfaction with the online evaluation reports:

Using Survey Pro software to develop evaluations, post evaluation forms to the website, collect and download student responses, and creating statistical/graphical reports has improved the quality of evaluation reports which permit faculty and program coordinators to use the assessment findings to improve student learning outcomes. Some of the benefits of online evaluation include:

- Ability to customize evaluation forms. For example, the Language Arts Division was able to add a number of items to the HCC standard student evaluation form. HCC Focus Requirement committees have developed customized evaluation forms for their Focus Areas.

- Expedites the processing of the data and the publication of the reports. Faculty receive the reports within a week of the end of the semester and as a consequence may be more likely to use the insights provided to develop strategies to further improve student learning.

Figure 3: BAR GRAPH - SATISFACTION WITH ONLINE REPORTS - ALL FIVE ITEMS RANK ORDERED BY MEAN VALUES

1.0 = Very Dissatisfied .... 4.0 = Very Satisfied

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction with reports</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promptness of report preparation/delivery</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report statistics</td>
<td>3.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report graphics</td>
<td>3.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison of your evaluation results with group results</td>
<td>3.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Format of the report</td>
<td>3.69</td>
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Students can keyboard their comments and, consequently, tend to provide more comments about the class. Comment sections are often the most valuable components of evaluations - providing insights that are more specific than those gleaned from statistical data. The comments are also printed - improving the readability of comment sections for all who review them.

Evaluation expenses are reduced by eliminating the use of expensive Scantron sheets and reducing processing/report creation expenses.

Reports can be more detailed and provide graphic summaries of the findings.

Program Level reports can be created so that Program Coordinators can assess the overall quality of the program/discipline; meet with program faculty to discuss strategies to improve learning outcomes; and then gauge the effectiveness of those strategies by reviewing future program level reports.

Group means can be calculated so that faculty have some idea of where they stand compared to their colleagues.

PLANNED ACTIONS TO IMPROVE EVALUATION REPORTS

A number of faculty commented upon or provided verbal feedback about the reports. While most comments were favorable, faculty responses have resulted in the following planned actions:

- Development of a report “cover sheet” that explains the report format, statistics, and graphics
- Meeting with faculty to explain how the reports are interpreted
- Meetings with Program Coordinators to explain/discuss how the program level reports can be used to focus on improving learning outcomes
- Meeting with faculty and coordinators to determine if additional statistics or graphics should be included in future reports
- Exploring the combination of evaluation instruments (Like combining the standard evaluation form with the English 100 Knowledge survey) so students don’t have to complete multiple evaluation forms and reports can be combined.

ALL LANGUAGE ARTS FACULTY WOULD USE A MOBILE LAB ON THE FIFTH FLOOR

If Language Arts faculty wished to utilize the online evaluation process, they had to bring their classes up to the sixth floor to use the mobile lab or check out sixth floor laptops to take to their fifth floor classrooms.
To gauge support for opening a mobile computer lab on the fifth floor, Language Arts faculty were asked if they would use a fifth floor mobile lab. All Language Arts respondents reported that they would *Probably Use* (20%) or *Definitely Use* (80%) if it could be opened.

**ALL PROGRAM COORDINATORS FIND THE PROGRAM LEVEL REPORTS USEFUL**

The online evaluation process has made program level reports possible. Program Coordinators were asked to gauge the usefulness of the program reports they received. 100% of these respondents found them to be *useful*: 50% *Very Useful*, 50% *Extremely Useful*.

Please comment on the usefulness of the "program level" reports you received?

Program Coordinator responses:

*The program level reports allow me to compare all the sections of the course and track which tasks the students see as a focus of the class and which ones we as instructors could do more with. It's very useful to have the overall picture of how the course is working as a whole. ... I am studying the documents and find the format much more practical and functional. We as a faculty can move to proceed what needs to be done to help ensure quality instruction and quality learning. ... Always appreciated for an overview. I plan to review the summary report with faculty in that area.*

**CONCLUSION**

Mobile computer labs have facilitated the use of online evaluations and despite operating the third stage of the pilot project on a shoestring with a 1/5 time retired faculty member and a part-time student research assistant, the process has flourished. Several significant improvements will be made as a consequence of this review - improvements which will, hopefully, expand the use of online evaluations and improve faculty and student satisfaction with the process.