

Time to Reevaluate Student Evaluation in Higher Education

April 18, 2020
Bashar H. Malkawi and James M. Cooper



Bashar H. Malkawi is Director of Knowledge Management at the H.H. Dubai's Ruler Court, Government of Dubai, Legal Affairs Department and a former Dean of the College of Law at the University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates.

James M. Cooper is Professor of Law at California Western School of Law in San Diego. He has consulted for governments, international institutions, and non-governmental organizations on higher education, rule of law, and technology transfer issues.

During the current COVID-19 pandemic, many aspects of higher education have been forced to change. The move towards classes using online learning platforms is the most documented fundamental shift. Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams are *de rigueur* for educational institutions at all levels. Now we must adapt our evaluation and feedback processes to reflect these challenging times and new technologies.

It is no secret that the threat to protect public health has opened the door for radical changes in the way teachers educate their students. With the emergence of new methods for teaching, higher education has entered a time of intense transformation and change. The nature of the relationship between professors and students in Universities are redefining their roles. Relationships between instructors and students are paramount to the core business of institutions of higher education. Because of the reciprocal nature of the duties between professors and students, it is a fundamental mistake to see students as customers or as clients; such a view incorrectly implies that students are passive recipients of knowledge. In fact, students are active and virtually ignores the duties that students owe to their professors, to their fellow students, to their institutions of higher learning and, equally importantly, to themselves. Instructors should provide students with an environment conducive to learning, the knowledge that will help them be successful in achieving their life goals, and the ability to feel ownership of their education. Professors have a duty to their lives. Now, more than ever, students have duties to their instructors, to their fellow students, and to themselves. It is the students' responsibility to be supportive of the professor and fellow students by being tolerant of different points of view, prepared for class, willing to work hard to complete course requirements, and willing to bring their own ideas and feelings into the class to enrich discussions. Students must own their well, student-ness.

Student evaluation is required by higher education standard-setting bodies in almost every country. The evaluation has been part of academic life for many years. It has also been widely used as a general measurement of teaching performance. Student evaluations, in turn, serve to provide guidance on improving educational delivery and serve as performance indicators for professors and universities alike. However, the current system of student evaluation suffers from several drawbacks.

Evaluation of those learning with us is quantitative in nature. Students have to answer sets of questions and these answers are then graded. Questions in the end of course evaluations are often far too general and are not specifically tailored to the courses themselves. A doctrinal course in bankruptcy may require a different kind of teaching than a biological laboratory practicum. Even courses within the same discipline or college require some differentiation in assessment. The "one size fits all" approach is clearly not working. The focus should be on the quality rather than on quantity of questions that measure everything from the physical plant of the university environment to the number of chairs and anything in between. In short, there must be discipline-specific questions in student evaluations.

Student evaluations are usually undertaken at the end of the semester, at a time when everyone is busy with final examinations. Scores are reported to the dean's office and the individual faculty member at a later stage.

The current system of student evaluation may not accurately reflect the teaching and learning experience in the classroom, be it physical or virtual. Usually, a student who failed a class is likely to give negative feedback, as opposed to someone who received a high grade. Student evaluation seems to be an opportunity for university students to express their opinions in every way possible in a non-transparent way. It is unfortunate that sometimes students even go so far as to express offensive comments. There is also the drawback of a low turnout among students to fill in the evaluation form. It is no wonder that naysayers and critics are the loudest voices, making meaningful feedback a pipedream.

The whole process of student evaluation is shrouded with secrecy. Confidentiality is maintained in all stages of the evaluation process. In an effort to improve performance,

development, and maintain excellence, an educational institution needs people who are responsive to challenges and who want to share valuable ideas and opinion in a civil manner. When a student does not provide his/her insights and information a transparent manner, the instructor in this case would not have the information they need to correct an issue for example. Of course, students are always hesitant to express their ideas and opinions so that they are involved in silence behavior, especially when the information is

considered by the instructor as something negative. However, In this case, student must place their trust in their instructors. The instructor must build trust with students so that they can express their views in transparent manner without being afraid of retribution. One way to build trust is when students believe that the instructor has the knowledge, skill, and expertise regarding the work that needs to be done.



(<https://www.highereducationdigest.com/university-of-the-assumption-commandeering-future-leaders/>)
University of the Assumption: Commandeering Future Leaders



(<https://www.highereducationdigest.com/importance-of-teaching-life-skills-in-classrooms/>) Importance of Teaching Life Skills in Classrooms
(<https://www.highereducationdigest.com/importance-of-teaching-life-skills-in-classrooms/>)



(<https://www.highereducationdigest.com/st-paul-university-philippines-a-century-old-seat-of-supreme-learning/>) St. Paul University Philippines-A Century-Old Seat of Supreme Learning
(<https://www.highereducationdigest.com/st-paul-university-philippines-a-century-old-seat-of-supreme-learning/>)



(<https://www.highereducationdigest.com/online-education-a-great-savior-for-higher-education-during-pandemic-covid-19/>) Online Education: A Great Savior for Higher Education during Pandemic COVID-19 (<https://www.highereducationdigest.com/online-education-a-great-savior-for-higher-education-during-pandemic-covid-19/>)



(<https://www.highereducationdigest.com/what-makes-mans-search-for-meaning-by-viktor-e-frankl-a-life-changing-read/>) What Makes Man's Search for Meaning by Viktor E. Frankl a Life-Changing Read?
(<https://www.highereducationdigest.com/what-makes-mans-search-for-meaning-by-viktor-e-frankl-a-life-changing-read/>)

(https://web.whatsapp.com/send?text=Time%20to%20Reevaluate%20Student%20Evaluation%20in%20Higher%20Educationhttps%3A%2F%2Fwww.highereducationdigest.com%2Ftime-to-reevaluate-student-evaluation-in-higher-education%2F)

The COVID-19 crisis offers a window of opportunity to radically revise higher education in a manner that is reflective of our current reality. An innovative way should be developed to ensure that student evaluation is indeed contributing to advancing the system, helping refine the professor's approach to learning, and leveraging the distance learning platforms through which we are all now forced to teach.

One possibility is a weekly evaluation which provides the benefit of continuing feedback from students, to which the professor could react instantly. The student evaluation should not be anonymous but rather, transparent. A relationship of trust can be built between the student and professor. Students are more likely to respond in an objective manner and they mature through this transparent system. Student would put more effort into the evaluation. Students would become a major stakeholder in the process.

Higher education institutions should take much needed bold and innovative steps to advance the current system, including student and instructor evaluations. Now is the time, given the paradigm shifting move to online education delivery – a method that will be with us for the foreseeable future. And after we get assessment right, let's move to something a little easier – like the complete reworking of the finances of higher education. As if.

(https://web.whatsapp.com/send?text=Time%20to%20Reevaluate%20Student%20Evaluation%20in%20Higher%20Educationhttps%3A%2F%2Fwww.highereducationdigest.com%2Ftime-to-reevaluate-student-evaluation-in-higher-education%2F)

Related Articles

Impact of Coronavirus on the Indian Economy and the Indian Education System to reevaluate indian education system
 (https://www.highereducationdigest.com/impact-of-coronavirus-on-the-indian-economy-and-the-indian-education-system/)
 Student evaluation in higher education%2F)

How Does UCLA Admit Students?

(https://www.highereducationdigest.com/how-does-ucla-admit-students/)

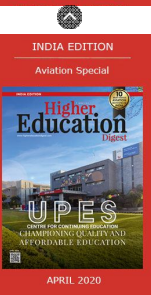
Online Learning is the New Norm

(https://www.highereducationdigest.com/online-learning-is-the-new-norm/)

Bridging Learning Gaps

(https://www.highereducationdigest.com/bridging-learning-gaps/)

RECENT ISSUES



Higher Education Digest

Home
 (https://www.highereducationdigest.com/)

Partner With Us
 (https://www.highereducationdigest.com/partner-with-us/)

About Us
 (https://www.highereducationdigest.com/about-us/)

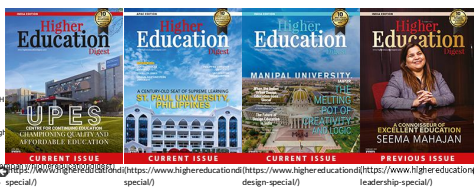
Privacy Policy
 (https://www.highereducationdigest.com/privacy-policy/)

Term & Conditions
 (https://www.highereducationdigest.com/terms-conditions/)

Facebook
 (https://www.facebook.com/highereducationdigest/)

Twitter
 (https://www.twitter.com/highereducationdigest/)

LinkedIn
 (http://www.linkedin.com/company/highereducationdigest/)



(HTTPS://WWW.HIGH EREDUCATIONDIGES T.COM/MAGAZINE/A VIATION-SPECIAL/)
 (HTTPS://WWW.HIGH EREDUCATIONDIGES T.COM/MAGAZINE/P HILIPPINES-SPECIAL/)
 (HTTPS://WWW.HIGH EREDUCATIONDIGES T.COM/MAGAZINE/I NTERIOR-DESIGN-SPECIAL/)
 (HTTPS://WWW.HIGH EREDUCATIONDIGES T.COM/MAGAZINE/W OMEN-LEADERSHIP-SPECIAL/)

© 2020 Higher Education Digest (https://www.highereducationdigest.com). All rights reserved.