

Course Evaluations from Students in Healthcare: Perceptions, Barriers, & Usefulness

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<http://www.salisbury.edu/about/>

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Outline

- Background and Need for Study
- Salisbury University demographics
- Survey Design and Administration
- Results Generated
- Limitations
- Future Potential

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salisbury_University



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Disclosures

- I have no financial or commercial interests to disclose.
- I have no actual or potential conflicts of interest in relation to this research.

Background and Purpose

- Teacher effectiveness must be evaluated in some fashion
- Student-completed teacher and course evaluations are commonly used and well studied
 - Many documented flaws to this system
 - Examples: Accuracy, bias, student-, course- and teacher-related factors, timing
- Lack of studies pertaining specifically to healthcare courses
- Goal: Devise ways to improve accuracy and reliability of course evaluation results by determining
 - What are student perceptions of course evaluations
 - What are barriers to students completing course evaluations
 - What is the current usefulness of course evaluations and are there ways to maximize this potential

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<http://www.salisbury.edu/about/sammy.html>

Salisbury University

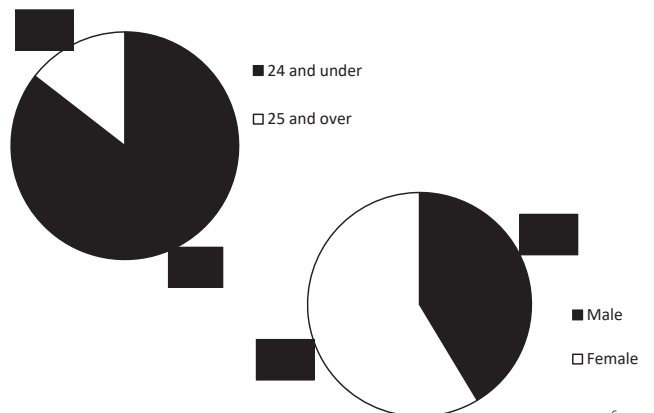
- Four-year university
- 58 distinct undergraduate and graduate degree programs
- Student Enrollment Fall 2016:

<http://www.salisbury.edu/registrar/nondegree/>



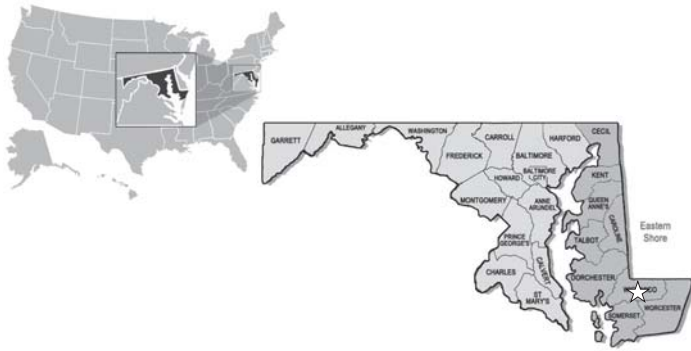
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SU Student Enrollment Fall 2016



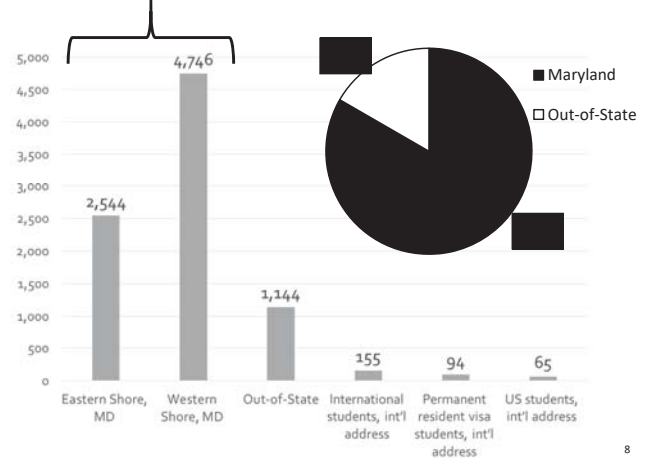
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SU Student Enrollment Fall 2016 by Residence



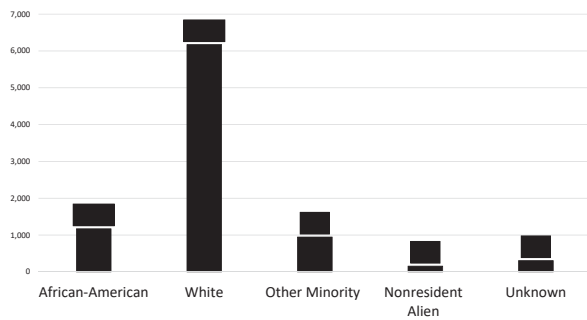
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SU Student Enrollment Fall 2016 by Residence



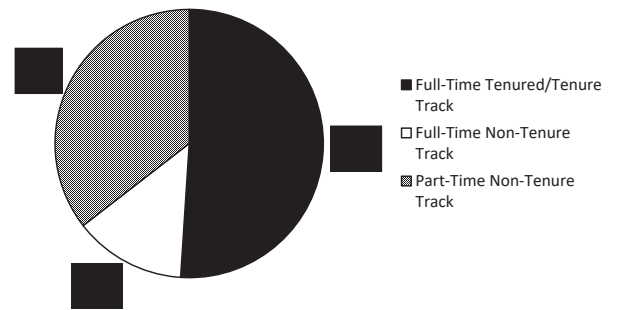
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SU Student Enrollment Fall 2016 by Race/Ethnicity



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Faculty at SU Fall 2016



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Designing the Survey

- Population of the Survey
 - Long term - Interested in the entire student body at Salisbury University
 - Short term - Identified a subpopulation that would be more easily available and had not been a focus in the research to date
 - Targeted students enrolled in healthcare courses during the fall semester 2016 at SU
 - Undergraduate: Medical Laboratory Science, Respiratory Therapy, Nursing,, & Social Work
 - Graduate: Applied Health Physiology, Athletic Training, & Nursing

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Designing the Survey

- Initial Research Question:
 - Why do students complete, or decide not to complete, course evaluations?
- Hypothesis:
 - There are several logistical and practical barriers to student completion of course evaluations, including a poor understanding of how they are used.

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Administering the Survey

- **Materials & Methods:**
 - Created a survey to gain information on students' perceptions of course evaluations and barriers to completing course evaluations
 - Survey was approved through SU's IRB committee on Human Research
 - Conducted a pilot study to correct any misunderstandings about the survey
 - Subpopulation of interest was solicited directly via email to participate
 - Information was collected from participants using a voluntary, anonymous questionnaire delivered electronically using SurveyMonkey
 - Results were assessed using Excel

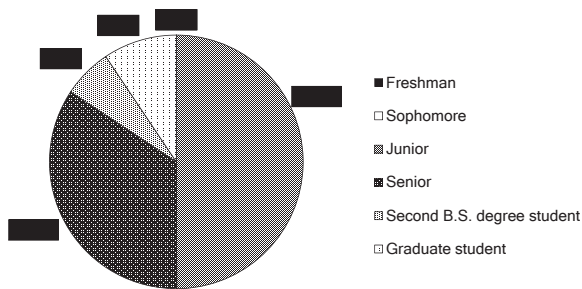
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Survey Design

- **Informed Consent**
 - Subjects agreed to participate after reading and signing a "disclosure and consent".
 - Subjects attested that they were 18 or older.
- **Question Groupings**
 - Student demographics
 - Program of study, class rank
 - Factors that influence completion of course evaluations
 - Major, Types of questions, Instructor, Class size, Timing of the survey
 - Purposes of course evaluations
 - Review process, original intent of evaluation, student's impact
 - Students self-assessment of their ability to be a good evaluator
 - Fairness, access

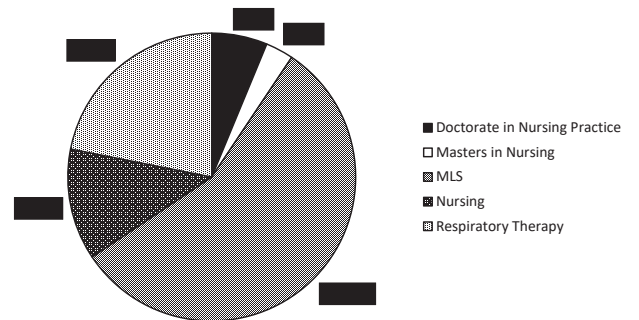
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Class Rank of Survey Participants



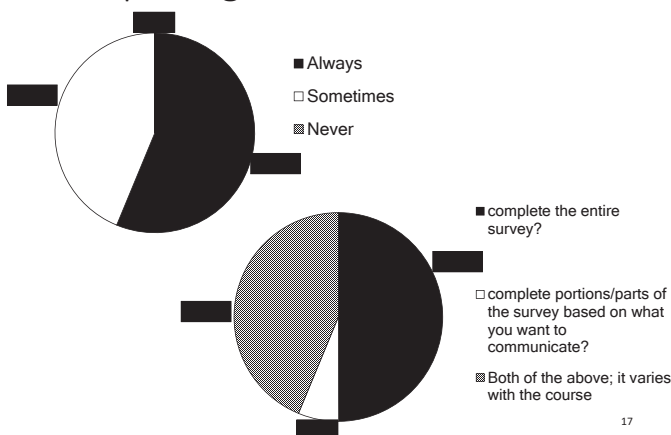
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Program of Study of Survey Participants



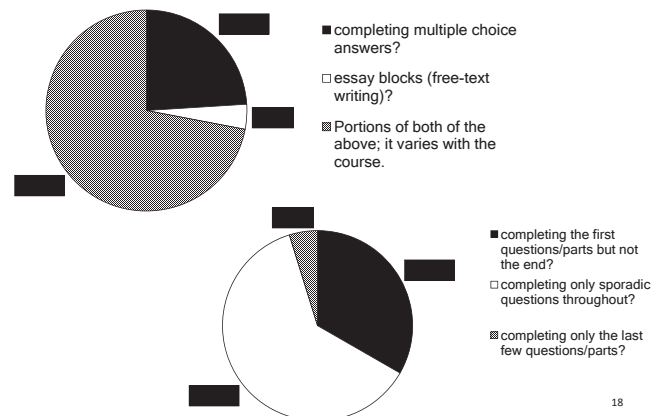
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Completing the Course Evaluations



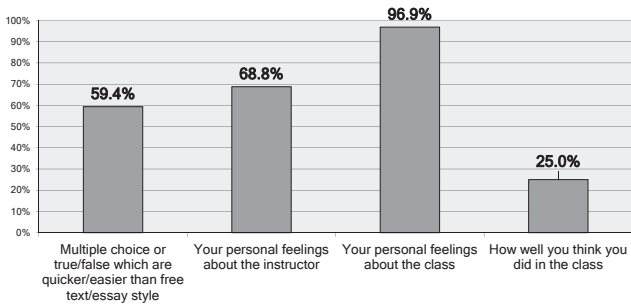
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Completing portions/parts of the Course Evaluations



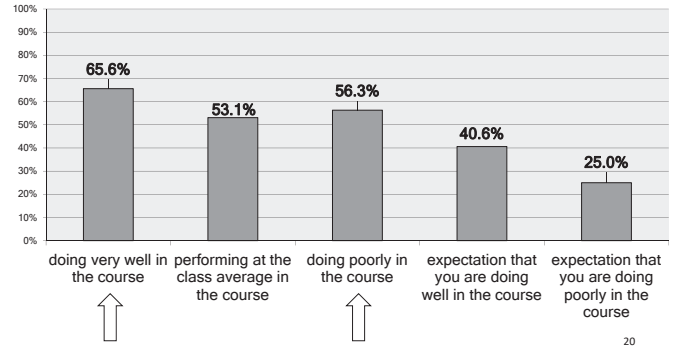
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Reasons to answer questions on course evaluations



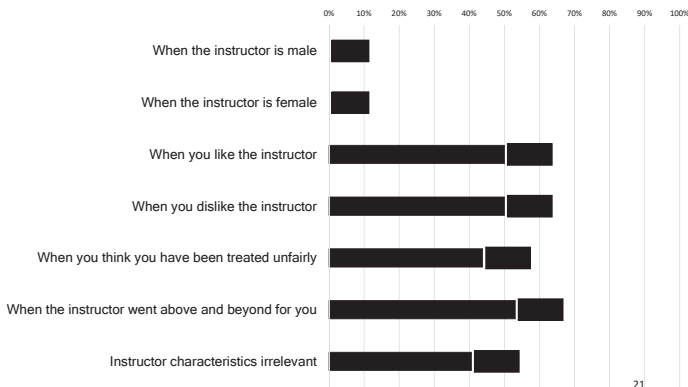
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Most likely to complete course evaluation when:



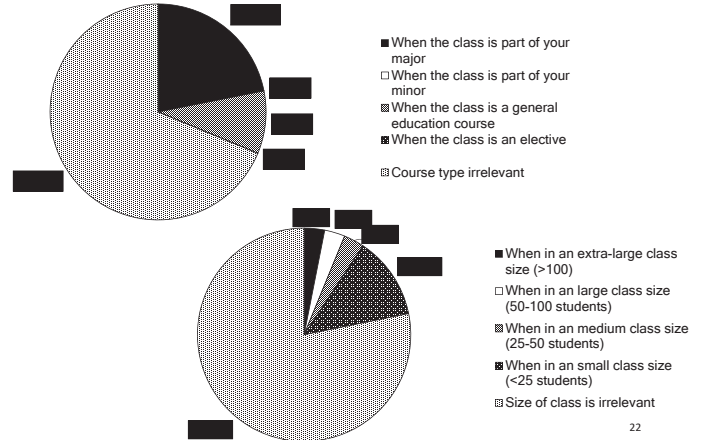
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Most likely to complete course evaluation when:



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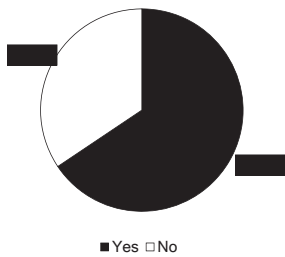
More likely to complete the course evaluation when:



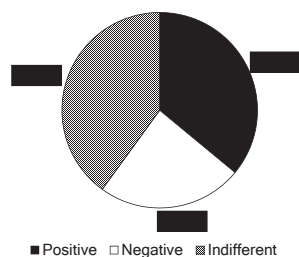
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Attitude toward the professor

Does attitude or feelings toward the professor affect completion of survey?

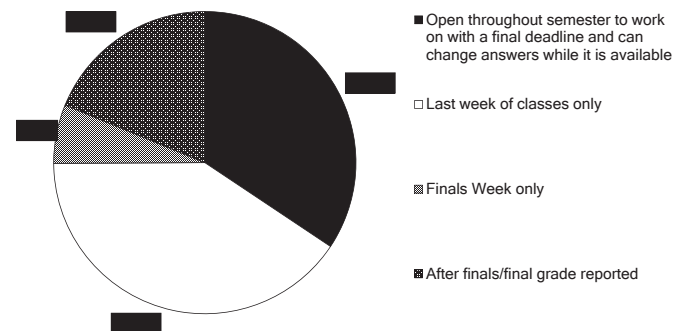


More likely to complete the survey if feelings toward the professor are:



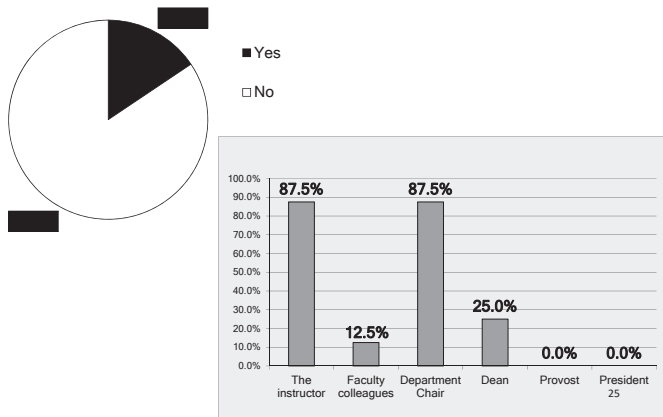
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Best time to complete survey

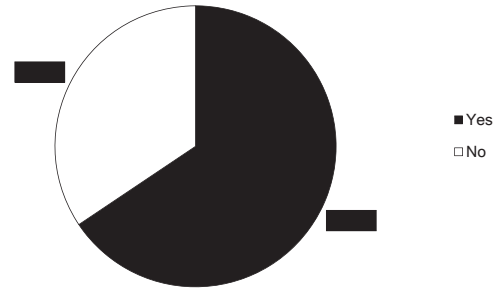


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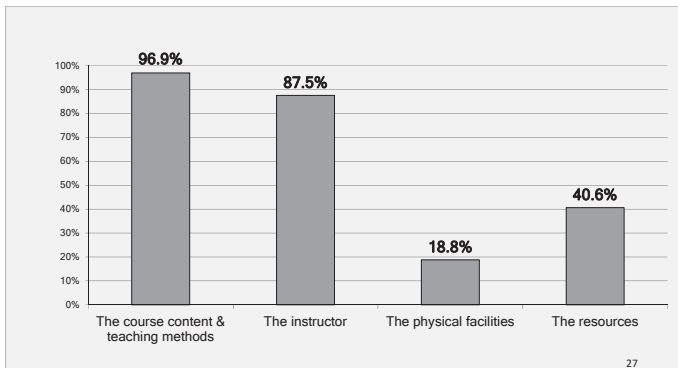
Aware of who reviews the course evaluations



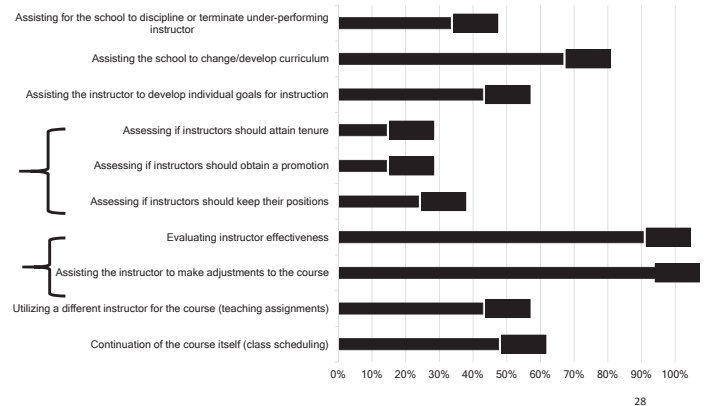
Aware of purpose of the course evaluation



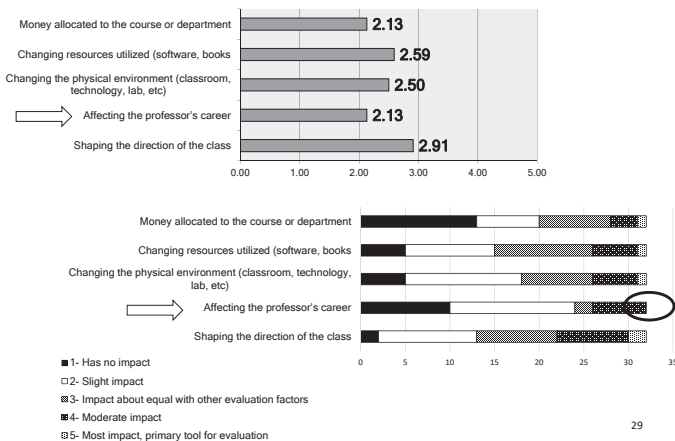
What is being evaluated by a course evaluation?



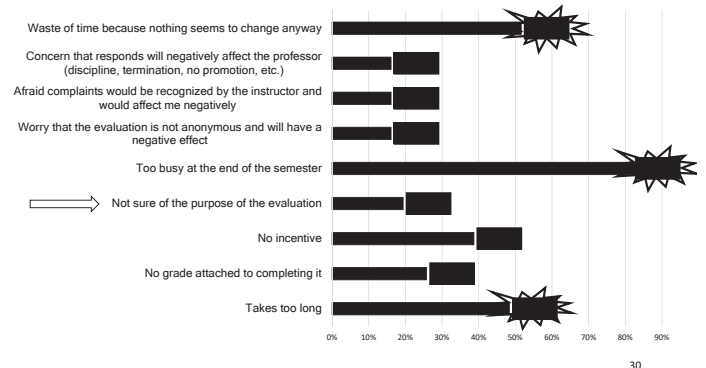
Purpose of the course evaluation



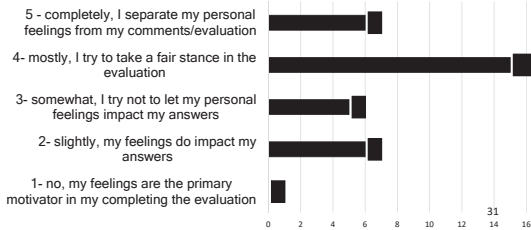
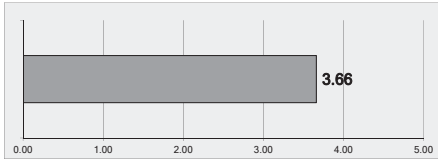
Impact of evaluation



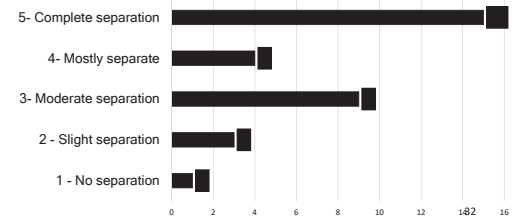
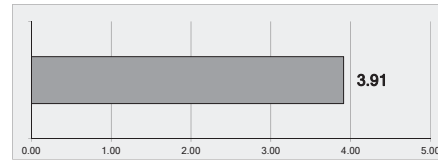
Reasons course evaluation is not completed



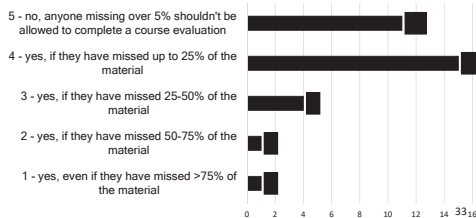
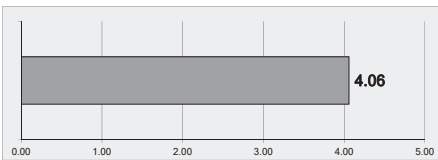
Capable of Constructive Criticism



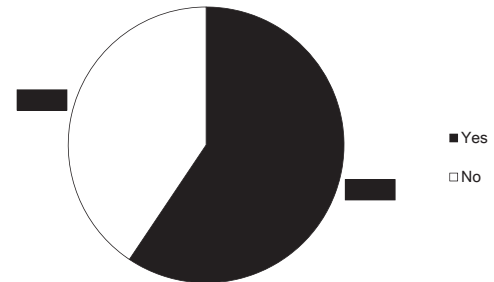
Able to discriminate improvements within and outside of the teacher's control



Completion of course evaluations by students that miss class

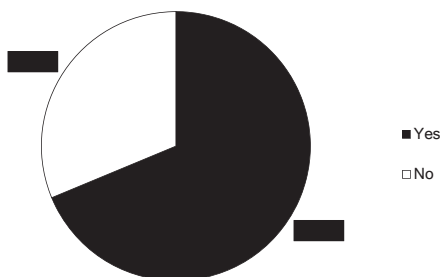


Access to course evaluations by students that withdraw from class



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Consideration of personal lack of best effort when completing evaluation



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Major Findings

- Major barriers to student completion of course evaluations
 - The time needed to complete course evaluations
 - Timing of course evaluations
 - Poor understanding of the purpose of course evaluations
- Students regard themselves as accurate and objective course evaluators
- Students support participation from students who have withdrawn from the course
- Comments from students
 - "I don't feel that my department puts too much value in evaluations"
 - "The end of the semester is too late for a terrible instructor or course to be receiving feedback"
 - "my feelings about my professor impact my evaluations-- I answered yes, but I would like to say I do try to remain fair and constructive"
 - "I wouldn't give a course a bad evaluation solely because I disliked the professor, but more so because I feel that maybe different teaching methods would better improve the course as a whole"

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Student Completed Course Evaluations

Perceptions

- Students feel they are good evaluators
- General feeling that course evaluations reflect the instructor and are reviewed primarily by the instructor
- Course content evaluated
- Personal feelings do not affect results
- Waste of time
- Unsure of the full purpose

Barriers

- Unsure of the purpose
- Don't feel they are taken seriously
- Answers don't really matter
- Felt to be a waste of time, so unwilling to invest personal time into evaluations
- No personal incentive

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Study Limitations

- Small population used in study
- Process of informed consent unwieldy and probably contributed to small sample size
- Confined to healthcare majors, and representation from each discipline was uneven
- Intuition suggests that students who completed this survey are also more likely to complete course evaluations

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Future Potential

- Campus-wide administration of survey to capture differences between majors
- Modifications to course evaluations suggested by this study:
 - Change current process of recruiting students to complete course evaluations to incentivize students
 - Increase awareness among students of how results will be used
 - Incentivize students by showing how their input is valued
 - Actively engage students in the result process, make select results available with instructor permission
 - Shorten the length of course evaluations and minimize free text answers to increase participation
- Increasing awareness and compliance in completing course evaluations leads to more accurate and reliable data → Pedagogy and Curricula can be best modified

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Thank you! Questions?

- Acknowledgements:
 - Diane Davis, Ph.D., MLS, SC, SLS(ASCP)^{CM}
 - Lisa Joyner, MEd, RRT, RRT-NPS
- References:
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