

A decorative border of colored pencils surrounds the text. At the top, three pencils (brown, green, red) are arranged horizontally. On the left, a yellow pencil is vertical, followed by a blue pencil, a red pencil, and a green pencil. On the right, a blue pencil is vertical, followed by a yellow pencil, and a cup containing several pencils (red, yellow, blue, green, brown). At the bottom, three pencils (brown, yellow, blue) are arranged horizontally.

Guidelines for using the

Student Input to Teaching Evaluation (SITE)

1997 SITE Committee Report

and

Updated for Fall 2012 Procedures

Provided by:

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Last Revised: September 2012, Sally Kuhlenschmidt
Original Publication: 1997, SITE Committee Report

Disclaimer

Waiting on text

Preface to SITE booklet

Since this document was created in 1997 by a university committee (see end of report), some changes in SITE procedure have been introduced.

In addition, the variety of types of courses (e.g., web-based) has increased with concomitant adjustments in evaluation procedures. We decided to provide the original 1997 document with changes indicated and a superscript keyed to information about the changes (see footnotes). Changes may include deletions (indicated by strike-outs), or insertions (indicated by brackets).

Descriptions of additional procedural issues (not part of the committee report) for particular types of classes are found on the last few pages of this booklet.

-- Center for Teaching and Learning
(renamed as Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching)

Description

The Student Input to Teaching Evaluation (SITE) questionnaire is given for the purpose of obtaining general information on student perceptions of faculty teaching. ~~The department head is responsible for assuring a process whereby a disinterested third party will administer the questionnaire to students. The student rating sheets are forwarded to Office of Institutional Research and are machine scored.~~ [In May 2012, the University Senate recommended and the Provost approved moving course evaluations (SITE) online. As of fall 2012, all evaluations will be administered online via EvaluationKIT.]

[During the evaluation period, students will receive an initial survey participation email, in addition to follow-up email reminders throughout the administration period. Evaluation results will be available online to faculty and Department Heads after the semester has ended.]

Faculty members [and department heads] will receive summary results relating to university and departmental core items, ~~individually selected items² and transcripts of any student comments.~~ ~~(Comments are being transcribed at the request of various student representatives to past committees on evaluation).~~ ~~Department heads will only receive summary results relating to university and departmental core items and student comments.~~ Deans, the Vice-President for Academic Affairs and the President may request appraisal materials from the department heads. Individual faculty will have access to a record describing such a request.

Use of the SITE

The SITE questionnaire serves two purposes. The first is as an administrative tool to assist in annual or periodic personnel actions. For this purpose faculty may be compared to one another. (The following section provides general information on the most scientifically and legally appropriate way to accomplish this).

The second purpose is for personal improvement in the classroom. ~~Under this circumstance, the individual faculty member may select or generate an additional set of items pertinent to personal goals in the classroom.²~~

Development of the SITE

The SITE is the product of periodic review by faculty committees with student representatives. The original source of questions was a pool of items from Purdue. The pool was originally selected in 1977 because it was the most flexible instrument available. The system was reviewed again in the 1980s and again selected. At that time the tool was to be used for personal development, not administrative evaluation. Another committee recommended it again a few years later, finding no other system to be any better. The latest committee review [1997] was done in

response to the New Level document recommendations. Of seventeen benchmark and Kentucky schools contacted in 1996, the vast majority designed their own tool. A check of the Mental Measurement Yearbook, a review source for tests, revealed no comparable instrument with established validity and reliability. The instrument will be evaluated periodically and modified if needed to improve its psychometric qualities.

Components of the SITE

The SITE may routinely include up to ~~four~~ [two]² sets of items:

1. A required common group of items is included on all questionnaires (see Fig. 1) These were selected by a representative faculty committee.
2. Each department may generate a set of items for its faculty.
3. ~~There are optional items that a faculty member may choose to include. A list of these items is available from the department head. Faculty may want to keep a list of the identifying numbers for their favorite choices to make preparing the request form easier from year to year. The request form is sent to faculty early in the fall semester.~~²
4. Faculty may also create their own items. To do so, select items 193, 194, and 195 from the master list. On the day of the evaluation provide students with three questions numbered 1, 2 and 3.²

Figure 1: Items Included on All SITE Questionnaires

My instructor displays a clear understanding of course topics.

~~My instructor displays interest in teaching this class.~~^{4 Dropped}

My instructor is well prepared for class.

Performance measures (exams, assignments, etc.) are well-constructed.

My instructor ~~is actively~~ [provides] helpful [feedback].^{4 Altered}

Overall, my instructor is effective.

[I have learned a lot in this course.]^{4 Added}

[My instructor treats me fairly with regard to race, age, sex, religion, national origin, disability, and sexual orientation.]¹

Interpretation

The appropriate evaluation of teaching should include multiple measures, in addition to student ratings, in order to effectively measure the complex act of teaching and to avoid biases inherent in any single measure. For example, additional measures could be samples of syllabi or exams, self or peer observations, knowledge of the field, course decisions, long term outcomes, etc. Students as a group, however, experience the instructor most directly for the greatest amount of time and have important information to contribute to the complex task of evaluating teaching.

According to reliability data collected at Western, student ratings tend to be highly consistent over time (~~Budget & Management Information Office~~ Office of Institutional Research).³ However, the standard error of measurement of the instrument is such that small differences between individuals are meaningless. Ratings are useful for identifying the general cluster of teachers who are perceived by students as effective or ineffective, but finer distinctions are not appropriate. For example, there is no meaningful difference between a 4.23 and a 3.94 based upon variability displayed on prior assessments at WKU. Variables such as student motivation for the class and the amount of variability in the student responses should be considered. It is inappropriate and inaccurate to rank order faculty by student rating and assign dollar amounts by fine gradations in order. The psychometric qualities of the scale do not support that use. The 1995 New Level committee on student ratings recommended that the administration receive appropriate and ongoing training in the interpretation of teaching evaluation measures to aid them in appropriately evaluating faculty. [For an explanation of the mathematical terms used on a SITE report, see section on "Understanding Terms."]

The number of raters can alter the interpretation of ratings. Cashin (1995) recommended when fewer than 10 students responded to an item, any interpretation should be made with particular caution. When used as a part of personnel decisions, Cashin recommended ratings be used from 5 courses including 2 or more courses (with at least 15 students responding in each) from each type of term over at least 2 years.

(Cashin, William E., Student Ratings of Teaching: The Research Revisited. Idea Paper No. 32, a publication of Center for Faculty Evaluation & Development, Kansas State University, September 1995.)

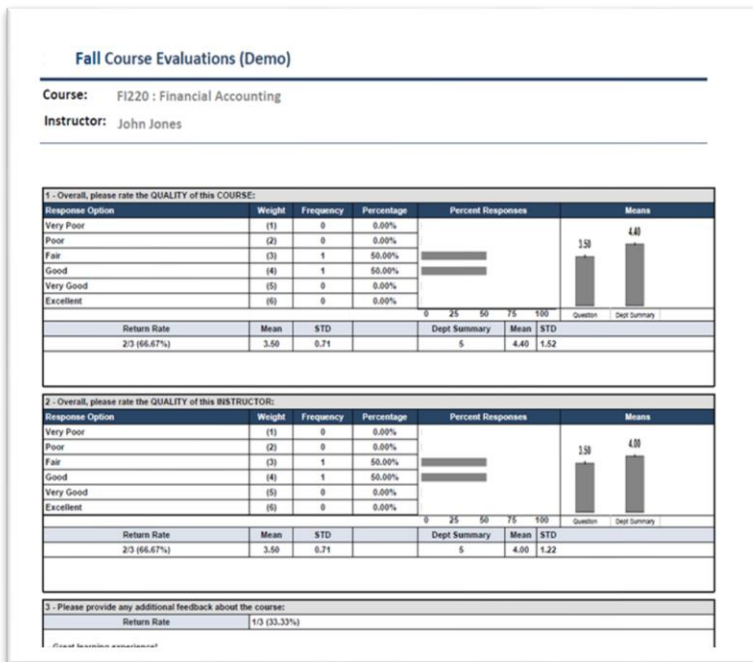
Understanding Terms

Figure 2 below contains an example of the summary statistics associated with the ratings on a particular item. When faced with a group of numbers from a measure, one of the most reasonable first steps is to try to describe the collective characteristics of the numbers. One of the first questions you might ask is, "What is a typical number?" But what does "typical" mean? It could be the average number, more precisely known as the **mean** (the third column from the end). The mean is obtained by summing all the numbers and dividing by the total number of numbers. The mean has several advantages (e.g., every number is included in the calculation) but it has a significant disadvantage. The mean is very sensitive to extreme scores. One very atypical score can substantially alter the mean. For the numbers 1, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5 the mean is 4.5.

Figure 2. Example of Item Summary Statistics

[Fall 2012, a table showing SITE results was replaced with the following image.]

[This figure does not reflect actual questions, response options, course title, or instructor name. It is for results demonstration purposes only.]



[The original committee report had two paragraphs on interpreting the median, but the new format does not include the median, so those were deleted, as well as later references to the median.]

The second question you might ask about your numbers is "How variable are the numbers?" You may have two sets of numbers with identical means (e.g., 6, 6, 6 and 1, 6, 11) but the first set is very uniform and the second is quite variable. By itself, the mean [does not] fully describe these sets of numbers. To describe variability a measure known as the **standard deviation** ($\{STD\}$) is used. It is essentially the average (standard) distance (deviation) that numbers are from the mean. In the first set of 3 numbers, the distance is small and the standard deviation will be small. In the second set, the $\{STD\}$ will be large. Another way to think of the $\{STD\}$ is how far from the mean the scores are spread. A small number indicates they are close together, a large number indicates scores are spread out and away from the mean.

For interpreting student ratings, the implication of a small $\{STD\}$ is that the raters agreed- there was not much variation from one rater to the next. For a large $\{STD\}$ the raters disagreed- perhaps the instructor appeals strongly to one type of student and that same style is aversive to another type of student.

[The original committee report had a paragraph explaining lower and upper bounds and confidence intervals; they will no longer be reported, so the paragraph was deleted.]

One other caution: simply subtracting each faculty member's mean rating from another faculty member's rating is not justifiable, statistically. Large differences will occur by chance and are not necessarily meaningful. For best use in evaluation, a teaching rating should be considered as a gross measure over time and situations for an individual person in light of other information about performance. Simple comparisons are not justified.

You are likely to hear two other terms with regard to ratings: reliability and validity. **Reliability** refers to the consistency of measurement. There are several types of reliability. The ~~confidence interval~~ $\{standard deviation \{inserted by Institutional Research\}\}$ is one way of estimating reliability of measurement. **Validity** asks whether the rating is actually measuring what it claims to measure. This is a much more difficult question to answer. A student rating is only one piece of information about the complex act of teaching which is why a number of sources need to be used to evaluate teaching effectiveness.

Example of a Self-Report Form

Individual faculty may wish to use a report form similar to the following to provide additional information to administration in the interpretation of student ratings in any particular semester. Individuals may also find the form useful for personal development. This form, which may be copied, is based on one in Fink, L. "Improving the Evaluation of College Teaching," from Wadsworth, E., (Ed.), A Handbook for New Practitioners. The Professional & Organizational Development (POD) Network in Higher Education, 1988, and we further alter it here for our needs.

Faculty Report on Teaching

Professor _____ Term _____
Course _____ Enrollment _____

Factors

1. The quality of the students in this course this semester was:
(Circle One) Excellent Good Average Fair Poor
Comments:
2. With what level of motivation did students begin the term (e.g., was this a required course?)
3. What is your honest assessment of your own effectiveness as a teacher in this course? Were there any personal or professional situations that significantly affected your performance?
4. Were there any other factors (positive or negative) that affected either the effectiveness of the course or your performance as a teacher (i.e., new textbook, new objectives, etc.)?

General

- A. My general assessment of my teaching in this course, compared to other courses I have taught is:
(Circle one) Excellent Good Average Fair Poor
Comments:
- B. The grade distribution for this course was:
A__ B__ C__ D__ F__ FN__ P__ X__ W__ AU__ NG__

Thank You!

Thanks are expressed to the following individuals who have contributed editing, oversight, or review of this document at various stages in its development:

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-Sally Kuhlenschmidt

Additional Procedures as Administered as of Fall 2012

Originally written by Sally Kuhlenschmidt with input from appropriate parties.
Modified Fall 2012

Formative and Summative Assessment

There are two general types of assessments. Formative assessments are used for personal development or “formation.” The feedback typically goes only to the person interested in improving his or her performance. If you wish to ask your own questions of students and you use Blackboard, it offers a Survey tool that enables you to collect formative feedback on your course from your students. Contact Academic Technology for instruction on how to use the Survey tool. If you do not use Blackboard you can simply hand out a survey of your own in class. Contact FaCET for help and examples of surveys or see our [Mid-Course Adjustments booklet](http://www.wku.edu/teaching/booklets/midcourse.pdf) (<http://www.wku.edu/teaching/booklets/midcourse.pdf>). Formative assessments may focus on specific issues of interest to the instructor, such as the value of the textbook or impact of a particular activity.

Summative assessment, on the other hand, is a summary of a person’s performance that tries to measure major areas of interest at a macro level. It is typically used by a person in a supervisory position, such as a teacher uses an exam to assess a student’s learning. In this case the SITE would qualify as a summative assessment.

Face-to-Face Courses

The Office of Institutional Research manages online SITE process. If there are fewer than 4 respondents in a class OIR does not report SITE results. It is unclear with the new online system how long data will be retained. To be safe, you should keep a copy of the results.

Team Taught Classes

The students receive an online survey for each instructor.

Regional (formerly Extended) Campus Courses

SITE ratings are officially sent to the department head, not to the Regional Campus director. There may be sharing of information with the Regional Campus director under certain circumstances. --Department Head Retreat Summer 2002.

In approximately 2006 or 7, Institutional Research began providing them to both the department head and the regional campus director due to a verbal agreement with the Office of Academic Affairs.

Interactive Video Service (formerly ITV) Courses

IVS sub sections are combined into one class (the master section) so the numbers are large enough to collect data. The results come to the instructor as one course and are treated otherwise the same as face-to-face courses.

Independent Learning (formerly Correspondence) Courses

Starting in Summer 2002, the Independent Learning Office (formerly Correspondence Study) administers an internal evaluation of 4 questions about the instructor, 5 about course content and 3 about staff and office materials with a place for additional comments. It is given to students during the final examination by whoever the proctor is. The pertinent part of the information will be forwarded to instructors. To view a copy of the questionnaire, ask the Independent Learning Office (270-745-4158).

Totally Internet-Delivered Courses

Online courses are treated identically to face-to-face courses except for a slightly different set of SGA items. See SGA section below for details.⁷

Additional Caution

There is no data at this time to support validity of inferences made from direct comparison of student ratings across the different methods used in face-to-face versus web-delivered courses. As should be true across the variety of face-to-face instructional activities, evaluation of web-delivered instruction will entail professional judgment and consideration of factors such as the nature of the students and the particular challenges of the various teaching tasks for that course. It is recommended that multiple sources of information be considered such as instructor responsiveness to students, the nature of exams, and the clarity of learning objectives.

Student Government Association (SGA) Items

As of this writing (September 2012) the new online system is still investigating how to incorporate SGA items. Following is the history and past process for SGA items:

Quoting from an April 25, 2005 e-mail from Sherrie Serros, Senate Chair: "At the April 21, 2005 University Senate meeting, the Senate endorsed (by a narrow margin) the implementation and evaluation policy developed by a joint committee of members of SGA, the University Senate and Academic Affairs.

In doing so, the senate expects faculty cooperation in the administering of these evaluations. If feasible, use the same protocol as was used with SITE (colleagues, program assistants, student-workers, etc.)

Should your class have a nontraditional schedule, wherein the class does not meet this week, simply explain that on the envelope and return to your Dean's office. Similarly for distance classes, should there be insufficient time to get to remote sites, just note that on the envelopes."

End of E-mail from Senate Chair.

From an April 25, 2005 e-mail from Barbara Burch, Provost: "Representatives of the University Senate, the SGA, the Council of Academic Deans and the Provost's Office worked together to develop a plan that would enable the SGA initiated questionnaire about classes and professors to be administered this semester. This plan was endorsed by the SGA, CAD, University Senate, and the Provost.

Administration of this special questionnaire will take place this week (April 25-29). It is to be administered in every class in which SITE evaluations are conducted, and as with the SITE evaluations, all faculty and academic departments are expected to cooperate in administration of the special questionnaire.

The advance information about this process has been addressed by the deans and department heads of each college, and these plans should already be well in place. It is assumed that in most instances, the proctoring and other arrangements will be similar to that used for the SITE evaluations. As there are only six questions on the instrument to be administered, and no allowance made for open-ended "write in" responses, it is anticipated that the time required for administering the instrument will be minimal.

In recent discussions, it has been pointed out that there may be some classes that are offered on a schedule that differs from the regular academic calendar. It is assumed that the same arrangements that are made for SITE evaluations for such classes would also apply for these questionnaires. However, if there is a circumstance that would prevent administration of this instrument as planned this week, it will be important for you to notify your department head of this situation."

End of E-mail from Provost.

Figure 3: The SGA Items are:

My professor was available to meet with me when the professor's assistance was needed.

The instructor provided feedback in a timely manner regarding grades.

My professor was in the classroom and ready to begin class at the appointed hour.

My professor responded to class questions in a timely manner by phone or email.

The recommended textbook or prescribed material was needed to fulfill requirements for this course.

My expected grade in this class is:

From a February 28, 2006 e-mail from Barbara Burch, Provost: **“This is to advise you that effective with the spring 2006 semester, the SITE and SGA assessments will be administered on the same class day. The SGA assessment questions will be clearly separated and distinguished from the SITE assessments questions. SITE results will continue to be provided directly only to the faculty member and his/her department head. Results of the SGA assessments will be provided to SGA for distribution to interested students.”**

Background Information and Basis for Change:

For many years WKU has administered the SITE assessments in each class taught during the fall and spring semesters. The results of those assessments are provided to the faculty member teaching the class and his/her department head. These results may be used for self-improvement and are also used as one piece of information that department heads consider when they do annual evaluations of faculty.

The Student Government Association has become very interested in providing students with more information about classes and professors and, in the past, has requested that results of some of the questions on SITE assessments be made available to students to help them decide which classes they would like to take in the future. That request was denied because of the limited authorized distribution of SITE assessment results, and the use of the SITE assessment as part of the personnel records.

Based on this decision, the SGA developed their own set of assessment items, and requested that these be administered along with the SITE assessments. Last year, I assembled an ad hoc committee made up of representatives from the

University Senate, the SGA, and the Provost's Office to address the SGA request. There was general agreement that it was not unreasonable for SGA to be able collect and distribute relevant information about classes and faculty members to help students make better-informed decisions about class selection. There was disagreement about whether the SGA questions should be administered along with the SITE assessments or administered on another day. Essentially, the University Senate representatives preferred separate day administrations (to avoid possible data contamination) and the SGA preferred administration on a common day (to insure greater participation). As a compromise, the Provost decided that, on a trial basis, there would be separate day administrations. It was also agreed by all members of the ad hoc committee that participation rates would be monitored and, if there were substantial differences in participation rates for the SITE and SGA surveys, the two surveys would be held the same day.

The participation rates in the Spring 2005 semester were substantially lower on the SGA assessments than on the SITE assessments. The ad hoc group met again, and it was agreed that the SGA assessment would again be administered separately in the fall of 2005, and if the participation rates were not comparable to the SITE participation rates, then the SGA forms would be administered on the same day as the SITE assessments in subsequent semesters.

According to the report prepared by the Office of Institutional Research, there was a 95% participation rate in the SITE assessments and an 83% participation rate in the SGA assessments during the fall 2005 semester. The difference in participation rates was judged to be substantial. As a result, the Provost has determined that, effective with the spring 2006 semester, the SITE and SGA assessments will be administered on the same class day. The SGA assessment questions will be clearly separated and distinguished from the SITE assessments questions. SITE results will continue to be provided directly only to the faculty member and his/her department head. Results of the SGA assessments will be provided to SGA for distribution to interested students."

End of E-mail from Provost.

Figure 4: The SGA Items for Online Classes are:

~~My professor was available to meet with me when the professor's [instructor was available electronically, via phone, or face-to-face, when] assistance was needed.~~^{6 Altered}

The instructor provided feedback in a timely manner regarding grades.

~~My professor was in the classroom and ready to begin class at the appointed hour.~~^{6 Deleted}

~~My professor responded to class questions in a timely manner by phone or email.~~^{6 Deleted}

The recommended textbook or prescribed material was needed to fulfill requirements for this course.

My expected grade in this class is:

Note from Institutional Research August 2010: SGA Results are also posted to TopNet.

Institutional Research Website

Institutional Research provides an informational website (http://www.wku.edu/institres/site_eval.php) with important dates and frequently asked questions. Please visit for up-to-the-minute information.

Footnotes

1. This item was recommended by the Ethnic Relations Task Force Plan of Action submitted to President Ransdell in December 1998. The Task Force composed the new item and it was added to the SITE in Fall of 1999 based on their recommendation (made May 14, 1999). The current (Fall 2002) iteration of this committee is University Diversity Advisory Committee and is appointed by President Ransdell. (Information provided by John Hardin, Co-Chair of UDA committee).
2. These changes relate to a request by the Office of Institutional Research with the concurrence of the Council of Academic Deans. As of Fall 2000 the decision was to drop optional items because of a change in the hardware (the end of the IBM mainframes) and capacity to manage the cafeteria items and use of the optional items was low and decreasing over the years, particularly as departments adopted departmental core sets. The last year less than 2% of sections were using them. (Information provided by Jay Sloan of the Office of Institutional Research). Many faculty create their own forms and handle the personal development process separately from the SITE.
3. Name change of unit.
4. Fall 2009 one item was dropped, one altered, and one added. A memo dated 9/17/2009 indicates that Sherry Reid, Retta Poe, David Lee, John Bonaguro, Blaine Ferrell and Bob Cobb drafted a revision that was forwarded to Deans for feedback but they provided no comments. Barbara Burch was noted as having given oral approval on 9/20/2009. Retta Poe reports that the group met one time at the request of CAD to make some recommendations.
5. In Fall 2009 the Office of Institutional Research took on the job of administering the online student ratings. Also in Fall 2009 the Online Student Rating Instrument was dropped and the items developed for face-to-face classes were substituted. The same memo mentioned in footnote 4 seems to be the source.
6. After several years of complaints from Online instructors that the SGA items made no sense for their situation but were being examined by accrediting agencies, Rob Wyatt of Distance Learning, Sally Kuhlenschmidt of FaCET, Bob Cobb from Institutional Research and Julie Dent and John Bowers of Academic Technology met to discuss the problem (Spring 2009). Dr. Kuhlenschmidt and Dr. Wyatt proposed changes to the items as noted in Figure 4 which Bob Cobb forwarded to the Council of Academic Deans and indicated he would ask the SGA president for review. The rationale for deleting "My professor was in the classroom and ready to begin class at the appointed hour." was that being in class at the appointed hour isn't relevant for online instruction. The revised first item captures the closest relevant element for online classes. The item "My professor responded to class questions in a timely manner by phone or email." was deleted as it was redundant with the revision of the first item.

7. In the interest of tracking the history of student ratings at WKU so we retain this in the institutional memory, the following material is provided. In July 2000, the ReachU committee approved the web-delivered course evaluation form and process developed by the Student Rating Instrument subcommittee (Bob Berkhofer, Allan Heaps, Sally Kuhlenschmidt, Leroy Metze, John Stallard, Linda Todd: Chair, and Carol Wilson). Academic Technology devised an electronic submission process that was piloted in Fall 2000 for all courses designated as web courses on TopNet..

In Fall 2009 the Office of Institutional Research took on the job of administering the online student ratings. Also in Fall 2009 the Online Student Rating Instrument was dropped and the items developed for face-to-face classes were substituted. The same memo mentioned in footnote 4 seems to be the source. Faculty received an emailed notice from institutional.research@wku.edu (email subject line OSITE: Faculty Notification) during the semester detailing how they can add personalized questions to the standard instruments. Faculty members visited: <http://www.wku.edu/osite/>. The link to the instrument was emailed to the students, who clicked on the link and responded. Faculty were notified by institutional.research@wku.edu (email subject line OSITE: Faculty Notification) when students got the link so they could encourage students to respond. Students could write in their comments on the web form, just as they did for the print SITE in face-to-face classes. After grades were turned in, results were delivered in the same manner as for in-person classes. Paper reports were delivered to instructors and PDFs were delivered on CDs to department heads.

Just as for the print SITE, the information was not maintained beyond the 60 day period after print copies were delivered to faculty and department heads. Faculty and department heads were expected to maintain copies. Originally materials were provided only digitally via a website. They were changed to print in 2009.

The items on the 2009 Online Student Rating Instrument were:

- Overall, my instructor is effective.
- The instructor challenged students to learn.
- The instructor clearly outlined the time frame to complete course activities/tasks/assignments.
- The instructor encouraged students to be actively engaged with course materials/activities.
- The instructor provided feedback within time frame specified in course materials.
- The instructor treated me fairly without regard to race, age, gender, religion, or disability.
- The instructor was readily available for interaction with students.⁵

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