Key Principles about the Course Evaluation Questions and System Operation

Boise State course evaluation is performed using the “What Do You Think” (WDYT) system from CollegeNET. This cloud-based system was adopted initially during the Fall 2010 semester. It is administered for the campus by the Office of Institutional Research. The system dynamically creates evaluations for students to complete in real time comprised of different question sets depending on course characteristics. Questions on a given evaluation may come from multiple sources, but the primary source is typically the College and Department for the course.

Over 95% of all classes taught at Boise State, including all terms of instruction, are evaluated by students. The most recent university-wide response rate was 62%. The evaluation results are used by faculty and academic administration for the purpose of systematically and regularly assessing instruction and improving the quality of teaching and learning at Boise State.

Question Types

University Question Set
A university question set was developed by a cross-disciplinary group of faculty with facilitation from the Center for Teaching and Learning. This is a core of 6 widely applicable and well-formed questions--4 multiple choice and 2 open-ended.

College, Department, or Subject Defined Question Sets
Roughly 70% to 80% of the question sets are based on the College, Department, or Subject of a course. Likewise, those units make the decisions on the bulk of the questions to ask. Departments or Subject groups may decide to include additional question sets, or not. Some have used other characteristics such as Type (lab, lec, sem, etc.), Course Number, or Level (eg. all 400 level numbers, or all GRAD vs UGRD) to define question sets.

Specialty Question Sets
There are other question sets that cut across College/Dept/Subject. The main ones are Online, Honors, Service Learning, and Summer. In other words, all Online courses automatically receive a set of questions from extended studies about the online nature of the course; any classes marked as honors sections receive a set of Honors questions; Service Learning sections get SL questions; Summer courses include some Summer term questions.

Instructor Defined Question Sets
All instructors are able to create extra questions of their own to ask of a single class or many of their classes. Many instructors use this to ask pedagogical or outcome-specific questions. Instructors are notified that they can add their own questions approximately 1-2 weeks before the evaluation begins.

Co-Instructor Questions
Any question set may be identified as an "Instructor" set. Thus, if there are three co-instructors, for example, there will be three "instructor" sets in the evaluation filled out by the student, with the appropriate instructor name added to those questions. Each instructor then only sees responses to their instructor set (plus all the non-instructor set questions)

Selective Course Removal from Evaluation
If there are specific department-defined courses that should not be evaluated via the online evaluation, we can exclude them systematically. This is determined on a case by case basis. For example, some departments prefer to exclude classes where only 1-2 students are in a section as any semblance of anonymity is compromised.
NOTE: We do have a workaround, however, to artificially cross-list small sections, so the student results are aggregated in a report. This makes it possible to evaluate, for example, internships overall, and define a special set of questions for that educational experience.

Questions?
If you have issues logging into the system, please contact helpdesk@boisestate.edu. If you have any other questions about how the system works, please contact onlineevals@boisestate.edu or call us at x61575.