Making Sense of Your IDEA:  
Online Course Evaluations

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(see also http://www.houghton.edu/ira/institutional_research_assessment/course_evaluation_program/)
Session Overview

1. The IDEA Center’s Online Instructional Ratings system
   - General approach
   - Two types of evaluations

2. Houghton’s Fall 2009 Profile
   - Some summary stats
   - Ways to improve ratings validity

3. IDEA Feedback Formats
   - Individual reports
   - Group reports
4. Interpreting the reports

- Types of scores and Summary Evaluation
- Types of comparisons

5. Other program assessment possibilities

- Integrative Studies
- Programs and majors
1. The IDEA Center’s Online Instructional Ratings system

General Approach

- Kansas State; 35 years of experience; not-for-profit
- Students’ rate a) self-perceived progress on your selected (most relevant) objectives; b) teacher effectiveness; c) course quality
- Benchmarking against four tiers of academics
- Faculty preferences (some on FIF): Short or diagnostic? Which objectives? Team taught? Cross-listed? Do in class or on their own?

Two types of evaluations

- Short (summative, 18 items) or Diagnostic (formative; 47 items)
- May include up to 20 other items (but HC has created 3 Christian faith items, so there are only 17 available)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Approx timing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All course data on campus server</td>
<td>Mark Alessi; Records Office staff</td>
<td>Weeks 1 – 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dept. coordinators get faculty preferences; complete their IDEA</td>
<td>Coordinators, faculty, Daryl Stevenson</td>
<td>Weeks 6 &amp; 7</td>
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<td>interface screens (earlier for half sem crs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create master course files (Survey Groups), insert dept additional</td>
<td>Glen Avery</td>
<td>Weeks 8 &amp; 9</td>
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<td>Qs, and upload to IDEA</td>
<td>Daryl Stevenson</td>
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<td>FIFs sent to faculty; they add any additional individual questions</td>
<td>From IDEA to faculty doing evaluations; faclty</td>
<td>Weeks 10 &amp; 11</td>
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<td>complete FIFs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students rate instruction</td>
<td>Students receive emails; Stevenson monitors,</td>
<td>Weeks 13 &amp; 14</td>
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<td></td>
<td>sends periodic reports to faculty; fields student</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and faculty issues</td>
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<td>HC orders reports; later delivers reports</td>
<td>Daryl Stevenson</td>
<td>Week 15</td>
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<td>Weeks 17–18</td>
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## 2. Houghton’s Fall 2009 Profile

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<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of classes included</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnostic</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>198</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Classes excluded (did not select preferred objectives)</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Response rate</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Classes below 65%</td>
<td>24 (12%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classes with 100% rate</td>
<td>30 (15%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average response rate</td>
<td>79%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Class size</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Average class size</td>
<td>17</td>
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</table>
Ways to improve validity of ratings

Select objectives carefully
- No more than 3 – 5 objectives as Essential or Important (others are not analyzed)
- Evaluate how you teach the course and how students experience it!

Insert objectives into syllabus
- Be up front about what you are trying to accomplish (see handout)
- Review near end of course (“close the loop” for them)

Attend to your pitch
- Plan how you want to increase their participation: Requirement? Incentives? Responsibility? Your positive attitude?
3. IDEA Feedback Formats

**Individual**
- Short or Diagnostic (with teaching methods and styles analyzed)
- For self, department, Academic Dean

**Group**
- For institution, divisions, departments
- For any group (e.g., all soc sci gen ed courses, if unique questions are added)
Interpreting Your Individual Report

A. Progress on Relevant Objectives

Mean of ratings on B. INSTRUCTOR and C. COURSE

Summary Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (average of A and B/C mean)
4. Interpreting the reports

**Types of scores**
- Raw or adjusted
- Converted

**Types of comparisons**
- To departmental colleagues
- To all institutional colleagues
- To disciplinary colleagues
- To IDEA database
5. Other program assessment possibilities

- Programs/Majors Outcomes Assessment—both during program and at end of Senior Capstone course (you could add your program or student self-assessment items to IDEA)
- College-wide 15 Essential Learning Outcomes Assessment—Our broad Christian liberal arts skills like critical thinking, writing, and problem solving may be assessed using multi-year trend reports
- Academic Department and Division Assessment—Group Reports allow multiple comparisons and analyses
- Formative and Summative Assessments of Faculty—For professional improvement; Rank and Tenure purposes
**Final Target List—the takeaways!**

| When completing the FIF… | - no more than 3–5 objectives  
|                         | - do select a discipline code |
| If adding departmental items… | - Tell Daryl early so separate Survey Groups are created (long before the FIF arrives)  
|                           | - Consider using for program and departmental assessment |
| Always keep track…       | - of your additional items  
|                          | - of your selected objectives |
Discussion

For other helpful resources, see the Institutional Research and Assessment web site: Course Evaluation Program