From: Holmes, Keeta
To: UMSL Faculty; UMSL Staff
Subject: CTL Newsletter: Learn with your colleagues, reflecting on student feedback, and more
Date: Tuesday, November 9, 2021 9:58:24 AM

November 2021

CTL's Monthly Newsletter keeps you plugged into events and support available to everyone in the UMSL teaching community and research-informed practices for use in the classroom or online.

Photo by August Jennewein

In This Issue

- **A Message from Learning Analytics Coordinator Mary Painter:** Student Evaluations of Teaching
- **Learn new teaching approaches:** Three Teaching Intentions: Student Evaluations of Teaching Edition
- **Course Evaluation:** Updates about the end of semester Course Evaluation System
- **Teaching Effectiveness Taskforce**: Learn more about our work
- **Meet New UMSL Faculty:** Dr. Sarah Jackson from the College of Nursing
- **ACUE Lunch and Learn Series:** Learn from and with ACUE credentialed faculty
- **Apply**: Community of Practice in Community Engagement

Making the Most of Course Evaluations

A message from CTL's Learning Analytics Coordinator Dr. Mary Painter
After a long semester of hard work and dedication to our students, reading course evaluation results can feel overwhelming and daunting. What if I get criticized for my teaching? What if what I thought was great about the course turned out not to be the case? What if my students make comments about me that have nothing to do with my teaching or the course?

Despite these concerns, constructively reading through student feedback has the potential to provide useful information for improving our teaching. Course evaluations give students the opportunity to share with you how they experienced the semester. We share a few tips and tricks for organizing and analyzing your course evaluations to help you sort the results in a productive, meaningful way. As you read through your results, we offer a few tips for managing the tensions of considering their feedback while reflecting on your own goals for the semester:

Begin with general questions as you read the results:

- What's working well?
- Where should I devote more attention?
- Are there substantial issues I can address in my teaching methods? Are there concerns shared in the results that are beyond my scope?

Here are some things to keep in mind for close ended questions:

- It is more meaningful to look at distribution of scores; these give a better understanding than looking at the mean.
- Look for patterns in your report. Although you may be tempted to look at outliers or unique responses, it is more useful to find trends than stay laser-focused on an individual response. Individual responses are often contradictory.

Here are some things to keep in mind for making sense of open ended questions:

- Written comments provide the most useful information for teaching improvement and goal-setting. They can provide insight into why some students may have had difficulty learning.
- Compare comments of students who gave positive reviews with those who gave less positive reviews and see if you can find any important issues to address. Positive comments tend to be more general in nature, whereas negative comments tend to focus on a particular aspect of the course.
- Look for any repeated themes in the comments students are making that can guide you to make meaningful changes in your course. Comments on items such as scheduling, class length, delivery mode tend to be critical and out of the control of the instructor. These should be discussed with your chair or Associate Dean.
- Maintain your perspective when reading negative comments. Some of the negativity may not be reflective of you or your course, but the pressures and concerns of a student outside of your class.
- If it is helpful for you, talk through your results with a trusted colleague who can help you

think about trends.

For more help with accessing reports, please visit our CoursEval Resource Guide page. For more information on interpreting and analyzing course evaluation results, please see examples of interpreting results from University of Georgia and Syracuse University.

Please see the "Teaching Intentions" section to hear more from CTL's Learning Analytics Coordinator Dr. Mary Painter for specific resources about course evaluations.

Three Teaching Intentions - Making Sense of Course Evaluations written by CTL's Learning Analytics Coordinator Dr. Mary Painter

End of the year course evaluations begin on November 29th, 2021 for the Fall semester. This section will highlight some of the ways that faculty and departments can increase participation in course evaluations, avoid biases, and communicate clearly to students the usefulness of course evaluations. Faculty, department chairs, and staff can find more information on course evaluations on our CoursEval Resource Guide page or share our CoursEval for Students page with their classes.

Promote Participation

It is important to encourage students to complete evaluations, including the written responses to open-ended questions. Helping students know that and how you use the results to improve teaching is essential in increasing response rates. Other strategies are below:

- Incentives to take the evaluation
- Reminding students in class to take the evaluation
- Taking class time to complete the evaluation
- Sending an email to all students reminding them to complete the survey
- Posting reminders on Canvas

If you choose to use incentives, remember that anonymity is crucial for course evaluation. We encourage faculty to offer extra credit, or some other reward for a certain percentage of the class completing course evaluations. For example, you can give everyone in the class 3 extra credit points if over 80% of students complete the course evaluation. You can keep track of the percentage of students who have filled out your survey by signing into the MyCoursEval page.

You can also find resources for students for filling out course evaluations on our CoursEval Resources for Students page.

Be Upfront About the Biases that Occur in Evaluations

Research shows that gender of instructors, along with other minoritized and racialized identities, influences course evaluation course evaluations scores (Huston, 2006; MacNell et. al., 2015; Fan et. al., 2019). Some researchers suggest that it may be possible to mitigate problems of biases in course evaluations by simply informing your students about potential biases in end of course evaluations (Peterson et. al., 2019).

In emails to students about course evaluations (we strongly encourage reminder emails!), faculty can use some variation of the following language from the Peterson et. al. study to help inform students of possible course evaluation biases:

"Student evaluations of teaching play an important role in the review of faculty. Your opinions influence the review of instructors that takes place every year. ... Student evaluations of teaching are often influenced by students' unconscious and unintentional biases about the race and gender of the instructor. Women and instructors of color are systematically rated lower in their teaching evaluations than white men, even when there are no actual differences in the instruction or in what students have learned.

As you fill out the course evaluation please keep this in mind and make an effort to resist stereotypes about professors. Focus on your opinions about the content of the course (the assignments, the textbook, the in-class material) and not unrelated matters (the instructor's appearance)."

Peterson et. al., 2019, p. 3

Be Clear About How You Will Use Feedback

Students are often unaware of how faculty use course evaluations to improve their teaching. Informing student of a few key points will help them better understand why course evaluations are important and how to give constructive feedback:

- Remind students that their responses are anonymous so they know that their confidentiality is protected.
- Let students know that the information is more reliable if more students fill it out.
- Let students know that you read their feedback thoroughly, and use it to improve your teaching methods for future courses

This last point is crucial: students are often unaware that the course evaluation is not only used to evaluate their instructor in annual reviews, but that faculty use it to make the course better in the future. Encourage students to use constructive feedback, and remind them that you will use this information to be better. You can find more resources for students on our CoursEval Resources for Students page.

References:

Fan Y, Shepherd LJ, Slavich E, Waters D, Stone M, Abel R, et al. (2019) Gender and cultural bias in student evaluations: Why representation matters. PLoS ONE 14(2): e0209749. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0209749

Huston, Therese A. (2006) Race and Gender Bias in Higher Education: Could Faculty Course Evaluations Impede Further Progress Toward Parity?, Seattle Journal for Social Justice: Vol. 4 : Iss. 2 , Article 34. Available at: https://digitalcommons.law.seattleu.edu/sjsj/vol4/iss2/34

MacNell, L., Driscoll, A. & Hunt, A.N. (2015) What's in a Name: Exposing Gender Bias in Student Ratings of Teaching. Innov High Educ 40, 291–303. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10755-014-9313-4

Peterson DAM, Biederman LA, Andersen D, Ditonto TM, Roe K (2019) Mitigating gender bias in student evaluations of teaching. PLoS ONE 14(5): e0216241. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0216241

Course Evaluation System

Course evaluations are now managed in the CTL. The Faculty Senate sets dates for opening and closing of course evaluation surveys, as well as when faculty can access their results.

The course evaluation schedule for the 2021-2022 academic year as decided by the Faculty Senate is now updated on the CoursEval Resources Guide webpage and the CoursEval for Students webpage. On these webpages, faculty and students can find information on when surveys will be open, report release dates, and information on the CoursEval system.

Last year, CoursEval and course evaluation services were added to the CTL portfolio of services. Starting in the Fall, course evaluation surveys are set up through the CTL in collaboration with department chairs and college deans. Faculty, business support personnel, college deans, and department chairs will be able to access reports through courseval.umsl.edu.

If you have any questions about course evaluations, please contact CTL's Learning Analytics Coordinator, Mary Painter at mapxvc@umsystem.edu.

UMSL'S Teaching Effectiveness Taskforce

There is a long and rich history relating to how teaching effectiveness is evaluated. Across the nation as in Missouri, student feedback alone has dominated this space as mandated by legislation (Missouri Senate Bill 389, Section 173.1004(1), 2007), policies from the Missouri Department of Higher Education (6 CSR 10-9.010, 2008) and subsequent UM-System Collected Rules and Regulations (CRR 320.035). In recognition of the imbalance and incomplete picture

that student feedback alone can provide, the UM-System Intercampus Faculty Council recommended in 2017 that each campus develop a multiple measures approach to evaluating teaching effectiveness.

Following this recommendation and subsequent charge from the UMSL Senate 2019-2020 Academic Advisory and Assessment Committee (AAAC), UMSL launched a Teaching Effectiveness Taskforce in August 2020 with four primary goals:

1. To craft a comprehensive definition of teaching effectiveness
2. To propose a campus-wide, multi-measure approach for the evaluation of teaching
3. To propose a system of support, recognize and incentivize teaching excellence
4. To establish a plan to measure the long-term impacts of these changes on student learning and success.

The Taskforce membership is guided by recommendations from the Senate AAAC to represent the faculty's diversity of rank, ethnicity and race, gender, discipline, and years at UMSL while limiting it to a productive size, roughly 12 members. UMSL Faculty are represented by the following faculty colleagues:

Name	**College/School and Department**	**Title**	**Taskforce Working Group Assignment**
Kimberly Baldus, Chair	Pierre Laclede Honors College	Teaching Professor	Student Feedback, Peer Feedback & Self-Reflection Combined Group
Sanjiv Bhatia	College of Arts & Sciences, Computer Science	Professor	Peer Feedback & Self-Reflection Combined Group
Baorong Guo	School of Social Work	Professor	Student Feedback
Keeta Holmes (Taskforce Support)	Center for Teaching and Learning	Director, CTL & Assistant Vice Provost	Student Feedback, Peer Feedback & Self-Reflection Combined Group
Shea Kerkhoff	College of Education	Assistant Professor	Student Feedback
Vanessa Loyd	College of Nursing	Associate Teaching Professor	Peer Feedback & Self-Reflection Combined Group
Jennifer Reynolds Moehrle	College of Business Administration, Accounting	Professor	Student Feedback
Tareq Nabhan	College of Optometry	Assistant Clinical Professor	Peer Feedback & Self-Reflection Combined Group
Seemantini Pathak	College of Business Administration, Global Leadership and Management	Associate Professor	Peer Feedback & Self-Reflection Combined Group
Kurt Schreyer	College of Arts & Sciences, English	Associate Professor	Student Feedback
Jeffrey Sippel	College of Arts & Sciences, Art & Design	Professor	Peer Feedback & Self-Reflection Combined Group
Nancy Singer	College of Education	Associate Professor	Peer Feedback & Self-Reflection Combined Group
Marc Spingola	College of Arts & Sciences, Biology	Teaching Professor	Peer Feedback & Self-Reflection Combined Group
Ann Steffen	College of Arts & Sciences, Psychological Sciences	Professor	Peer Feedback & Self-Reflection Combined Group
Hiroko Yoshii	College of Arts & Sciences, Language and Cultural Studies	Assistant Teaching Professor	Peer Feedback & Self-Reflection Combined Group
Mary Painter (Taskforce Support)	Center for Teaching and Learning	Learning Analytics Coordinator	Student Feedback
Jen McKanry (Taskforce Support)	Center for Teaching and Learning	Assistant Director, CTL	Peer Feedback & Self-Reflection Combined Group
Erin Whitteck (Taskforce Support)	Center for Teaching and Learning & College of Arts & Sciences, Chemistry &	Assistant Director, CTL and Assistant Teaching Professor, Chemistry	Peer Feedback & Self-Reflection Combined Group

	Biochemistry		

Each of the four UM-System universities has begun this work to recommend a meaningful, sustainable multi-measure system that includes student feedback, peer feedback and the opportunity for faculty to set goals and reflect on one's teaching practice.

Under the leadership of Dr. Nancy Singer (College of Education), the 2020-2021 Taskforce researched best practices and investigated approaches by peer and aspirant institutions including existing practices within the UM-System to articulate the needs for a system at UMSL. While the Taskforce is still engaged in what shape the multiple measures approach will take, the Provost and the Senate AAAC committee approved two recommendations and improvements in Spring 2021:

1. **UMSL's definition of and context for Teaching Effectiveness**
   The definition of and context for Teaching Effectiveness provides a foundation for the Taskforce's work. The Taskforce sent drafts of this definition campus-wide two times last year before finalizing it and securing approval from the Provost and Senate Academic Advisory and Assessment Committee:

   Effective teaching at the University of Missouri-St. Louis creates a student-focused learning environment valuing a diverse community that is inclusive and equitable. Effective teaching relies on relevant, organized, inspired, and engaged instruction and promotes critical and creative thinking.

   Effective educators use disciplinary, interdisciplinary or professional experience to design research-informed, carefully-constructed courses. Effective educators tailor teaching strategies and assessments, use appropriate technology, and ensure timely, constructive feedback to support student learning and achievement. Their high educational standards foster lifelong, self-directed learning.

   Sustained teaching effectiveness requires refinement through analysis, constructive and continuous feedback, reflection and professional development. Effective teaching is strengthened by institutional resources, programs, and collegial support and is documented and assessed by outcomes as established by departments and instructors incorporating feedback from students, peers, and self-reflection.

2. **Improvements to the Course Evaluation Survey and process for collecting student feedback**:
   a. Student feedback should be comprised of both formative at mid-semester and summative at end-of-semester.
   b. Course evaluation surveys will be centrally managed.
   c. There should be an increased set of common questions beyond the five Senate Bill 389 questions on all course evaluation surveys tied specifically to the definition of teaching effectiveness and allow departments the opportunity to add 1-4 additional questions as desired.

This year's Taskforce is led by Dr. Kimberly Baldus (Honors College) and centers our work on around this agenda for 2021-2022:

1. Finalize common question set for student end of course evaluation surveys; prepare to pilot

the common questions.

2. Outline and develop a set of strategies to increase quantity and quality of formative and summative student feedback.
3. Develop a streamlined, efficient multiple-measures approach to incorporate peer feedback, self-reflection and student feedback into a holistic system
4. Gather feedback from faculty, chairs, administrators, Senate committees on developing approach
5. Seek external review of holistic system to reduce impact of bias
6. Recommend training and support programs

In regular and ongoing updates shared in the CTL newsletter and campus-wide messages, Taskforce Chair and Associate Dean Dr. Kimberly Baldus will share updates on the progress the Taskforce is making toward this year's agenda. In December, she will share more about the progress of our two working groups: 1) student feedback working group and 2) combined peer feedback and self-evaluation working group.

Meet New UMSL Faculty

Throughout this academic year we will be featuring the new full-time faculty joining our campus. This month we are featuring Assistant Teaching Professor Sarah Jackson from the College of Nursing.

Sarah Jackson started her career as a nurse practitioner at UMSL and is excited to rejoin our community full time after working in private practice for the last few years. Sarah earned her Masters and Doctor of Nursing Practice degrees from UMSL and is eager to share the new and exciting developments in primary care with prospective NPs.

Sarah brings a unique combination of experience to our department:15 years of nursing experience, 6 years teaching as an adjunct professor (undergraduate and graduate), plus 8 years of experience as a nurse practitioner where she was actively involved in all areas of care, from infants to end-of-life, and private to public health. Her knowledge and involvement in these areas allowed her many professional opportunities. She acted as NP on the MOQI project, a $14.8 million CMS-funded research grant to improve care to seniors in long-term care (University of Missouri – Columbia). Her body of work also includes experience administering free school physicals to students in low-income situations. During the pandemic, Sarah continued to work in our communities. She worked COVID triage, traveled to low-income areas to give immunizations and last week, she started giving first vaccinations to those in the 5-11 year old population.

As the newly appointed Residency Faculty Coordinator, Sarah oversees all residency courses, placements and hours for DNP students. This semester, Sarah is teaching Clinical Diagnostics in Advanced Nursing Practice and Diagnosis & Management II: Adult Health I. Most recently, Sarah helped students in Advanced Pharmacology & Advanced Pathophysiology ahead of boards. She has a wide variety of research interests and is most zealous about putting the newest treatment guidelines into practice, health care equity and universal health care.

In her free time, Sarah enjoys spending time with her husband, their five children and two dogs.

She has a knack for gardening and a passion for travel.

ACUE Lunch and Learn Series: Open to All Members of our Teaching Community

Faculty that participated in ACUE's "Effective Online Teaching Practices" will host monthly Lunch and Learn meetings in 2021-2022 to share what they found to be successful in their courses. These monthly meetings are open to all UMSL faculty, staff, and graduate students to learn more about the innovative work of our colleagues.

The Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) "Effective Online Teaching Practices" program provided faculty with an opportunity to learn evidenced-based teaching strategies, apply, and reflect on what they have learned. We have been featuring faculty from the program who employ practices from the program in our CTL newsletters over this past year. Please check out past issues to learn from the creativity of your colleagues.

You will have the opportunity to continue to learn from and with your colleagues through a virtual Lunch and Learn Series where ACUE credentialed faculty will share strategies that have been successful in their courses and then host discussions about how you can employ those strategies in your own context. All members of the UMSL community (faculty, staff, graduate students) are welcome to attend.

Last month we heard from Alicia Hutchings (College of Nursing), and Keiko Ueda (Department of Language and Cultural Studies about setting clear course expectations and giving feedback to students using the comment feature in Canvas.

Event Details:

- **Date of the next Lunch and Learn:** November 19th, 12:00 - 12:50 PM
- **Presenters:** Ho Kim (College of Business Administration) and Paula Prouhet (College of Nursing)
- **Topics:** Delta/Plus Feedback Technique and Transparency in Learning and Teaching
- **Location:** Virtual (see Registration below)

If you have any questions, please reach out to CTL Assistant Director Erin Whitteck (elwbcf@umsl.edu). If you have already registered for the event, you do not need to register again. A Zoom link and Outlook invite will be sent through email.

Register for the ACUE Lunch and Learn Event November 19th

Service Learning Community of Practice

The advertised deadline for application was November 3rd but organizers are still accepting applications. Do not click on the image to apply as highlighted but instead the button below.

Apply Here for the Service Learning Community of Practice

About the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), a division of the Office of Academic Affairs, supports the professional development of those who teach and learn at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Our goals - to promote engagement in courses, on campus, and in the community - enhance the University as we align our activities, services, and consultations with the campus goals to promote excellence in teaching, research, and service.

Director, CTL and
Assistant Vice Provost for Academic Innovation
Keeta Holmes
holmeskm@umsystem.edu

Assistant Director of Student Support Programming
Jenna Alexander
alexanderjm@umsystem.edu

Assistant Director
Jen McKanry
mckanryj@umsystem.edu

Assistant Director
Assistant Teaching Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry
Erin Whitteck
elwbcf@umsystem.edu

Learning Analytics Coordinator
Mary Painter
mapxvc@umsystem.edu

Testing Center Coordinator
Sarah Butler
butlersr@umsystem.edu

Testing Specialist
Joel Erickson
ericksonjw@umsl.edu