Institutional Insights

Ginny Cockerill

Changes in the Course Evaluation Process Resulting from a Needs Assessment

Who?	Project Team & Stakeholders
What?	Needs Assessment, Goals, Data, & Results
When?	Project Timeline
Where?	Institution & Office
Why?	Impetus & Impact
So what?	Areas for Improvement & Action Steps

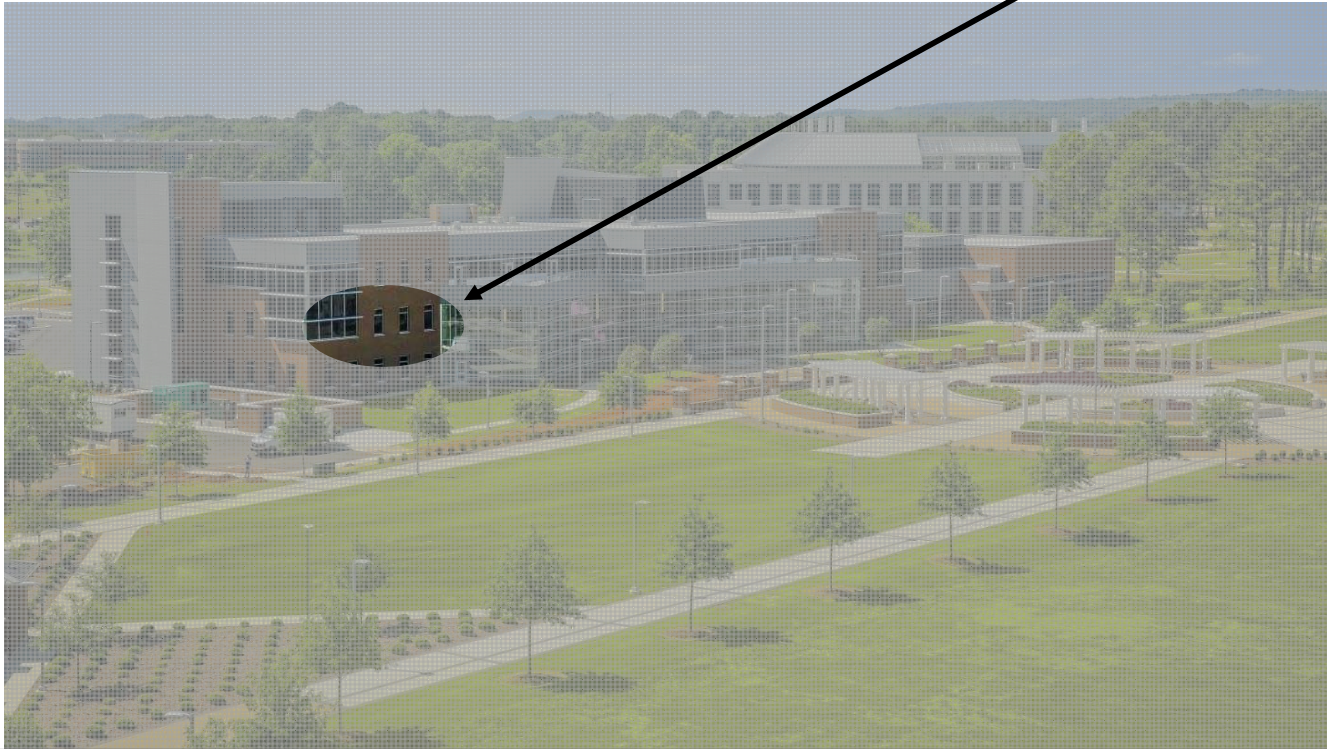|	
Where?	Institution & Office
Why?	Impetus & Impact
When?	Project Timeline
Who?	Project Team & Stakeholders
What?	Needs Assessment, Goals, Data, & Results
So what?	Areas for Improvement & Action Steps

Where?

The University of Alabama in Huntsville

Where?

Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

Where?   The University of Alabama in Huntsville

Was … established in 1950 in Huntsville, AL with
emphasis on research, engineering, aerospace

Now … public Tier 1 national university with
- 9,100 students (most on-campus/some online; most undergrad/some grad)
- 374 full-time faculty across 9 colleges
- 89 degree programs and 11 certificates
- 505 acre campus with 16 Research Centers

Blue … housed in Office of Institutional Research & Assessment
used for course evaluations and other course/instructor surveys

Why?

Impetus

- Continuing "churn" about Student Instructor Evaluations (SIE) process among faculty and students

- Sense that the use of SIE results by faculty and administrators is limited

- Desire for transparency and better collaboration with stakeholders

- Opportunity for research project

Impact

- Demonstrate intent to improve and willingness to change

- Identify specific changes in the SIE process that could be implemented

- Focus on process for distribution of SIE evaluations and reporting the SIE results (not content or other aspects that fall under faculty purview)

Who? Project Team

College of Education

Office of Institutional Research & Assessment (OIRA)

Dr. Andrea Word-Allbritton »
CLINICAL ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
Roberts Hall 321
andrea.word@uah.edu
256.824.2329

Derek Koehl
INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNER
Roberts Hall 318
256.824.2329
dk0044@uah.edu

Dr. Suzanne Simpson
DIRECTOR, INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH AND ASSESSMENT
Student Services Building 200F
256.824.6686
suzanne.simpson@uah.edu

Ginny Cockerill
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF ASSESSMENT
Student Services Building 200E
256.824.6254
ginny.cockerill@uah.edu

Who?

Stakeholders

When? 2017-2018 Academic Year

Who?

Project Team

- Dr. Andrea Word-Albritton, Clinical Assistant Professor, College of Education
- Derek Koehl, Instructional Designer, College of Education
- Dr. Suzanne Simpson, Director, Office of Institutional Research and Assessment
- Ginny Cockerill, Assistant Director of Assessment, Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

Stakeholders

- Provost
- Deans/Associate Deans
- Department Chairs
- Faculty
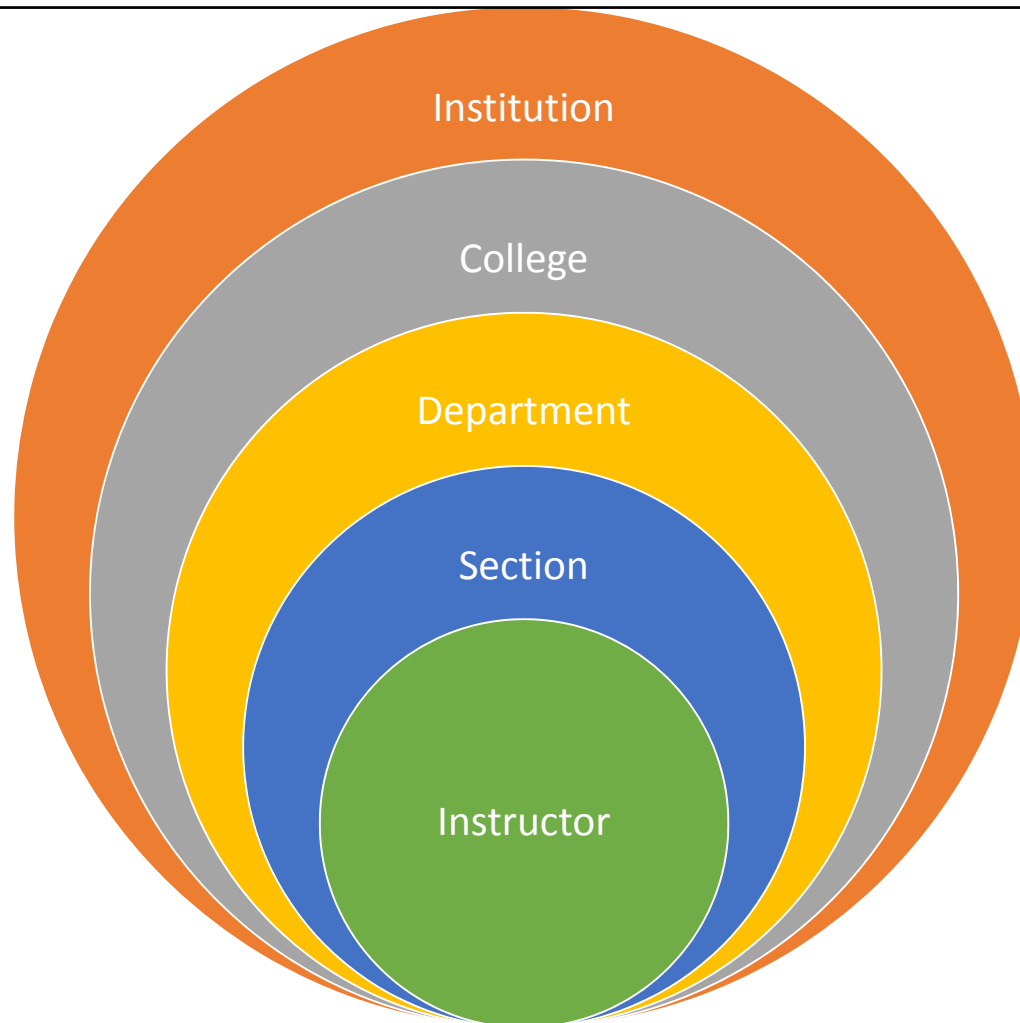- Students

Student Instructor Evaluations

★ **Core Questions**
Please complete the following regarding your instructor, **[C$FN] [C$LN]**.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
The instructor organized the course according to a syllabus.	○	○	○	○	○	○	
The instructor followed a clear method of grading and evaluation.	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Other course policies and procedures were clearly defined and followed.	○	○	○	○	○	○	
The instructor effectively presented course content.	○	○	○	○	○	○	
The instructor's teaching styles and methods promoted learning.	○	○	○	○	○	○	
The instructor stimulated learning through questions, assignments or exercises relevant to the course.	○	○	○	○	○	○	
The instructor's approach made the students feel free to ask questions.	○	○	○	○	○	○	
The instructor was available for consultation outside of class.	○	○	○	○	○	○	
At the end of this semester, the course objectives as described in the syllabus had been accomplished.	○	○	○	○	○	○	
The instructor graded and returned material submitted for evaluation when they said they would.	○	○	○	○	○	○	
The instructor showed interest in student learning.	○	○	○	○	○	○	
The instructor responded in an effective and professional manner to student comments and questions.	○	○	○	○	○	○	

General Comments
Please provide any additional feedback you may have.

| Skip to Summary Page | Previous | Next | Save | Submit |

2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017
Spring 2015	Spring 2016	Spring 2017	Spring 2018
Summer 2015	Summer 2016	Summer 2017	Summer 2018

2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017
Spring 2015	Spring 2016	Spring 2017	Spring 2018
Summer 2015	Summer 2016	Summer 2017	Summer 2018

Student Instructor Evaluations (SIEs)

1. The instructor organized the course according to a syllabus.

2. The instructor followed a clear method of grading and evaluation.

3. Other course policies and procedures were clearly defined and followed.

4. The instructor effectively presented course content.

5. The instructor's teaching styles and methods promoted learning.

6. The instructor stimulated learning through questions, assignments or exercises relevant to the course.

7. The instructor's approach made the students feel free to ask questions.

8. The instructor was available for consultation outside of class.

9. At the end of this semester, the course objectives as described in the syllabus had been accomplished.

10. The instructor graded and returned material submitted for evaluation when they said they would.

11. The instructor showed interest in student learning.

12. The instructor responded in an effective and professional manner to student comments and questions.

- Evaluation form has
  - Core Questions (12 Items with 5-point Likert and optional comment plus General Comment)
  - College/Department/Program-specific Questions

- Evaluation form is distributed
  - to all students
  - for all instructors
  - for all courses

- Reports are generated at multiple levels:
  - Course/instructor
  - Department
  - College
  - Institution

- This Needs Assessment has results from
  - Spring 2015
  - Fall 2015 & Spring 2016
  - Fall 2016 & Spring 2017
  - Fall 2017

What? | Needs Assessment

Needs

Current Condition

Desired Condition
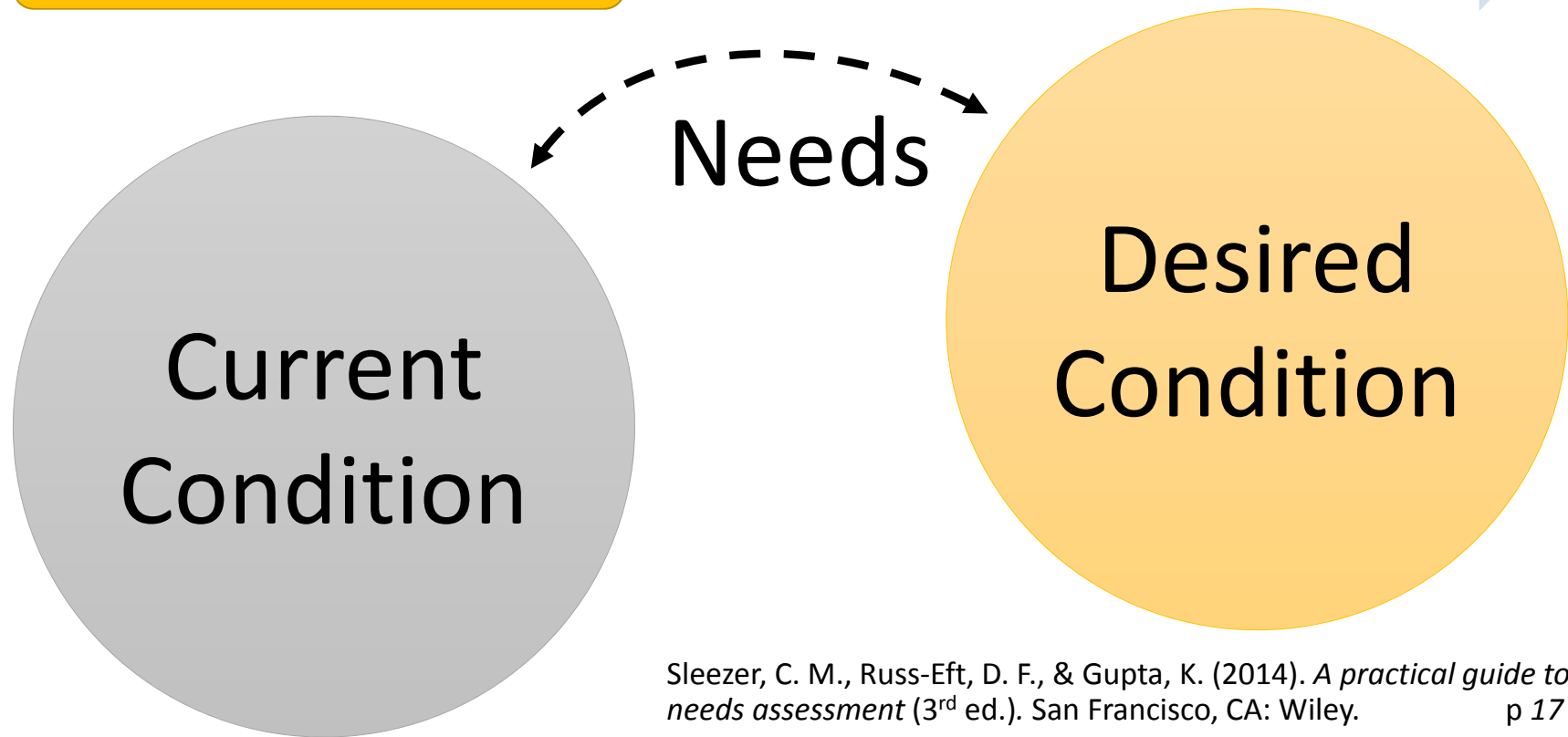
Sleezer, C. M., Russ-Eft, D. F., & Gupta, K. (2014). *A practical guide to needs assessment* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Wiley. p *17*

What? — Goals

1. to provide productive feedback to instructors **so that faculty may improve their courses**

2. to share perspectives on the most or least helpful aspects of courses **so that faculty may improve their teaching procedures**

3. to share feedback that is an essential element in **curricular planning and program review across the institution**

What? → Data

SIE Results from Blue

- What is the relationship between the number of comments for an item and the item rating?
- How do ratings and numbers of comments compare across college, course level, course type, and gen ed status?
- What patterns are visible in student ratings and in comments?

Focus Groups with Students

- What does each item mean to you?
- What are your thoughts on the process of filling out the forms?
- How do you think faculty use the evaluations?

Focus Groups with Faculty

- What does this question mean to you?
- What are your thoughts on the process of filling out the forms?
- What do you think about the SIE Reports you receive?
- Tell us about a time you changed your instruction based on SIE results. How well did it work?
- How would you categorize the SIE Core Questions?

What? → Data

SIE Results from Blue

- What is the relationship between the number of comments for an item and the item rating?
- How do ratings and numbers of comments compare across college, course level, course type (lecture, lab, etc.), and gen ed status?
- What patterns are visible in student ratings and in comments?

What? Data

Focus Groups with Students

- What does each item mean to you?
- What are your thoughts on the process of filling out the forms?
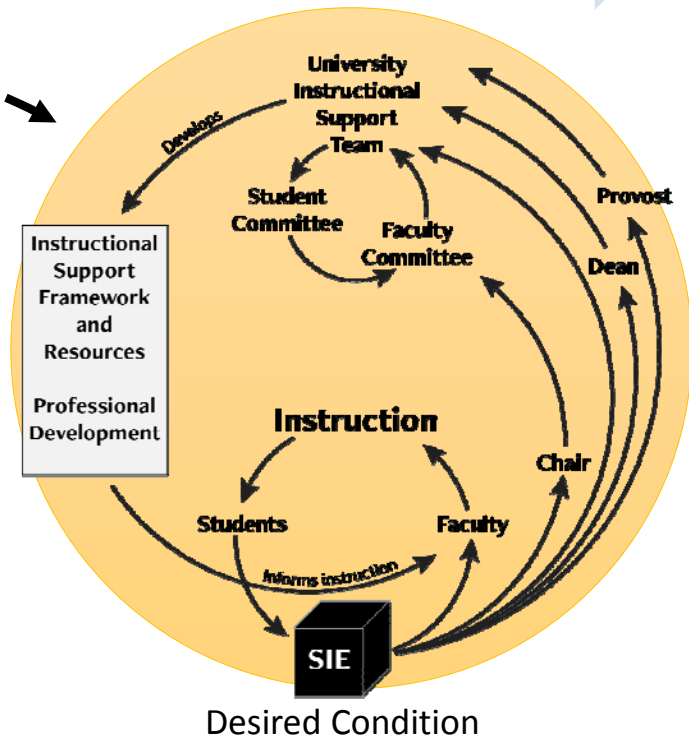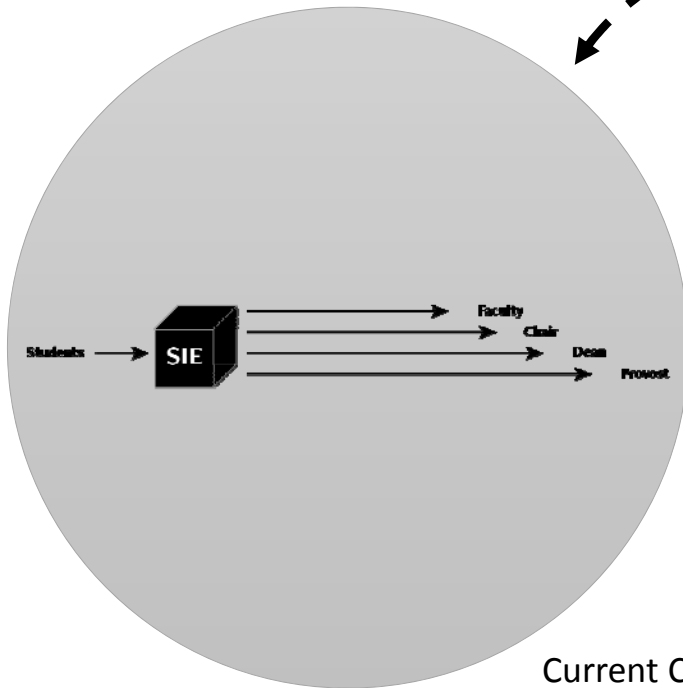- How do you think faculty use the evaluations?

What? Goals

1. to provide productive feedback to instructors **so that faculty may improve their courses**

2. to share perspectives on the most or least helpful aspects of courses **so that faculty may improve their teaching procedures**

3. to share feedback that is an essential element in **curricular planning and program review across the institution**

What?   Results

Faculty don't use SIE data because it is …

a. Conflicting

b. Limited

c. Overwhelming

d. Confusing

e. Unsupported

What? → Goals

1. to provide productive feedback to instructors **so that faculty may improve their courses**

2. to share perspectives on the most or least helpful aspects of courses **so that faculty may improve their teaching procedures**

3. to share feedback that is an essential element in **curricular planning and program review across the institution**

What?   Results

Programs/Departments don't use SIE data because it is …

f. Unrelated

g. Small-scale

What? → Results

Faculty (Goals 1 & 2)
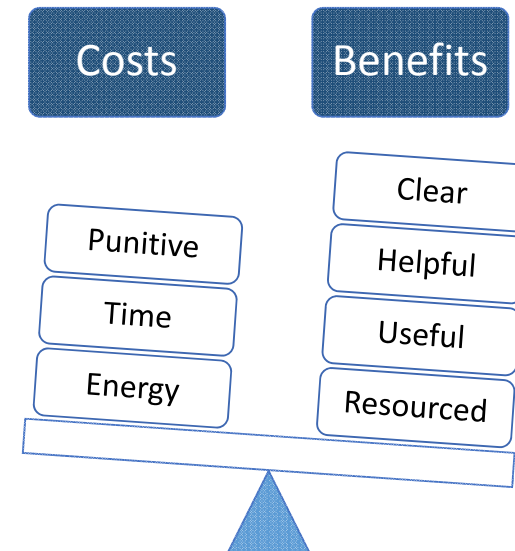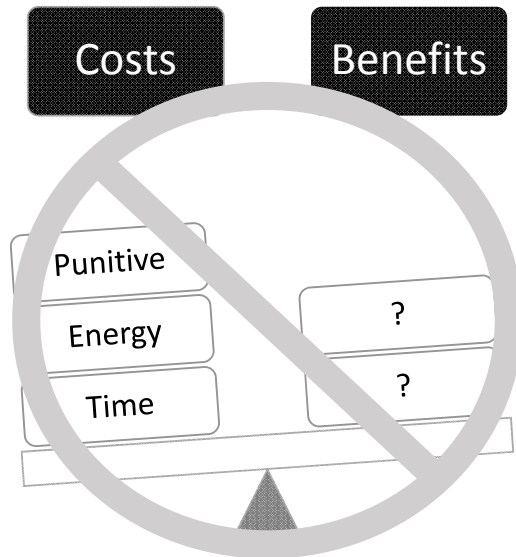
don't use SIE data because it is …

a. Conflicting

b. Limited

c. Overwhelming

d. Confusing

e. Unsupported

Programs/Departments (Goal 3)

don't use SIE data because it is …

f. Unrelated

g. Small-scale

"If you want faculty to buy in, you have to provide them with something they value."

**"If you want faculty to buy in,
you have to provide them with something they value."**

So what?

Areas for Improvement & Action Plan

Action Plan
Student Instructor Evaluations (SIEs)
Needs Assessment Results

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE

Area for Improvement	Action Steps	Anticipated Timeline
1. COURSE CONTEXT		
Characteristics of a specific course, which may be out of the instructor's control, can play an important role in students' expectations and perceptions. What are their motivations for taking the course (e.g. general education, major, elective)? Is this course offered online or in-person? Is it primarily a lecture course or one where more interaction is expected?	a. Add fields to the individual course report indicating the course type (lecture, etc.) as well as the course delivery method (trad, online).	Include in the next round of reports (Spring 2018)
	b. Add the percent of students enrolled with the primary major in the college where the course is offered.	Include in the next round of reports (Spring 2018)
	c. Offer departments the option of an additional comparison column so they can see how this course compares to similar courses, rather than just to courses in that department and college	Pilot with a single college in the next semester (Summer 2018)
		Expand to additional colleges upon request (Fall 2018 and ongoing)
2. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS		
Student comments provide a wealth of information that is not currently being used in a systematic or user-friendly way. Are they generally satisfied with the course but have additional suggestions? Are there specific materials or techniques that they found beneficial or not as beneficial to their learning? What experiences in this course contributed to a low rating? Are you going to ask: What experiences contributed to a high rating?	a. Add text analysis results to each level of report (individual, college, department, and institutional) indicating the primary themes from the comments	Pilot with a single college in the next semester (Summer 2018)
		Expand to include all colleges within one academic year (Summer 2019)
	b. Expand this text analysis to allow for cross-tabulating those results with selected quantitative results for further insight	Pilot with a single college within one academic year (Summer 2019)
		Expand to additional colleges upon request
3. TRENDS OVER TIME		
The students in any one section of course represent a wide variety of needs, perceptions, and experiences that may not necessarily be indicative of all students who take that course, so making significant pedagogical or curricular change based on the feedback from a single section may not necessarily result in overall improvement. Was there something different about this group of	a. Add a new report that shows the cumulative SIE results for the course and instructor disaggregated by term	Pilot with a single college in the next round of reports (Spring 2018)
		Expand to additional colleges upon request (Fall 2018 and ongoing)
	b. Expand this new report to include student demographics for each	Pilot with a single college in the next

So what?

Areas for Improvement & Action Plan

Area for Improvement	Action Steps
1. COURSE CONTEXT	
Characteristics of a specific course, which may be out of the instructor's control, can play an important role in students' expectations and perceptions. What are their motivations for taking the course (e.g. general education, major, elective)? Is this course offered online or in-person? Is it primarily a lecture course or one where more interaction is expected?	a. Add fields to the individual course report indicating the course type (lecture, etc.) as well as the course delivery method (trad, online).
	b. Add the percent of students enrolled with the primary major in the college where the course is offered.
	c. Offer departments the option of an additional comparison column so they can see how this course compares to similar courses, rather than just to courses in that department and college
2. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS	
Student comments provide a wealth of information that is not currently being used in a systematic or user-friendly way. Are they generally satisfied with the course but have additional suggestions? Are there specific materials or techniques that they found beneficial or not as beneficial to their learning? What experiences in this course contributed to a low rating? Are you going to ask: What experiences contributed to a high rating?	a. Add text analysis results to each level of report (individual, college, department, and institutional) indicating the primary themes from the comments
	b. Expand this text analysis to allow for cross-tabulating those results with selected quantitative results for further insight

So what?

Areas for Improvement & Action Plan

3. TRENDS OVER TIME	
The students in any one section of course represent a wide variety of needs, perceptions, and experiences that may not necessarily be indicative of all students who take that course, so making significant pedagogical or curricular change based on the feedback from a single section may not necessarily result in overall improvement. Was there something different about this group of students or about this semester that may have unduly impacted the student responses? How closely does this group of students align with the students who are likely to take this course in the future?	a. Add a new report that shows the cumulative SIE results for the course and instructor disaggregated by term
	b. Expand this new report to include student demographics for each course

4. RESOURCES	
Both students and faculty are left largely on their own in the SIE process: student in knowing what kind of feedback is helpful to faculty and faculty in knowing how to interpret student feedback. For students who want to participate fully in the process, what kind of comments are most helpful to faculty? For faculty who want to identify and implement changes, what language do students use in describing their experiences?	a. Add a link in the notification emails that go to both faculty and students back to the help materials and resources currently available
	b. Expand the current help resources to include guidance for students in completing the SIEs (technical guidance and example responses)
	c. Rewrite the notification emails to better guide faculty and students to the newly available materials and resources

So what?

Areas for Improvement & Action Plan

5. VALUE-ADDED	
The primary interaction faculty have with the Blue, the software used for SIEs, is the SIE process. Providing other resources or services through this software portal would ensure their familiarity with the system and likely mitigate some of their objectives to an online process.	a. Design a Class Profile template to provide basic demographic and academic preparation information to each faculty member about each section (based on the Collaborative Learning Class Profiles)
	b. Identify the needed data and restructure the data sources in Blue according
	c. Create and send the initial Class Profiles within 2 days of the census data

6. ORGANIZATIONAL INTEGRATION	
Although SIEs provide information that can support teaching effectiveness, there is currently no formal integration of SIE results with other institutional initiatives that support teaching and learning. Where do SIE results confirm other observed teaching support needs? How can the OIRA collaborate with other units to share information that will enhance teaching effectiveness efforts institution-wide?	a. Confer with Academic Affairs and Faculty Senate to investigate synergies among units supporting teaching and learning.
	b. Work with Library or other units on campus to begin developing a resource repository related to instructional effectiveness
	c. Seek guidance in establishment of a task force to investigate coordination of professional development opportunities for faculty in the domain of teaching practice.
	d. Include links (hopefully targeted) in report or emails to resource repository

Institutional Insights

Changes in the Course Evaluation Process
Resulting from a Needs Assessment

gdc0004@uah.edu

256-824-6254

Ginny Cockerill