

RUTGERS

# Interpreting and Utilizing Student Feedback for Change: Midcourse Surveys



Dr. Christina Bifulco

Associate Director for Teaching & Learning Analytics  
Center for Teaching Advancement & Assessment Research

# Rutgers University



- Large, public, research university in New Jersey
- 2 registration systems
- 4 campuses, 3 locations
- 3 LMSs

# Has your institution been providing midcourse (mid-module) surveys through Blue?

- Yes
- No
- No, but planning to in the future
- Not sure

# Midcourse Set-up Through Blue

- Set-up is at the course level in DIG
  - Some departments/schools select for all instructors and others allow instructors to choose to run
- Survey is short and question personalization is enabled
- Admins can change dates of midcourse in DIG
  - Reports are distributed the day after the survey ends to instructors and admins

# Engaging Faculty Through Midcourse Workshop

- Run once a semester right before the middle of the semester for instructors
- Designed as an interactive workshop
- Purpose to provide instructors with ownership over the process and ability to complete the process

# Interpreting and Utilizing Student Feedback for Change: Midcourse Surveys



*Christina Bifulco*

[bifulco@docs.rutgers.edu](mailto:bifulco@docs.rutgers.edu)

*Chris Drue*

[chris.drue@rutgers.edu](mailto:chris.drue@rutgers.edu)

Center for Teaching Advancement and Assessment Research  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

# Why a midcourse student survey?



- Obtain formative, actionable feedback
- Demonstrates care for student learning and progress
- Positively influence student end-of-course ratings
- Opportunity to respond to the student concerns

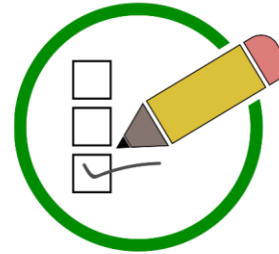
# General Process for Utilizing Midcourse





## Design a Midcourse Survey

- Include open and closed-ended questions
- Include questions about policies & practices you are willing to change
- Remember you will want to analyze *quickly*



**Short**

**Anonymous**

**Actionable**

# Question Design

- Keep the language simple
- Avoid leading questions
- Don't combine concepts in one question
- Be consistent with question scales
- Too many questions leads to survey fatigue



## Discussion in Breakout Rooms

- Take 2 minutes and think about a few questions you want to ask on your midcourse survey
  - Write them down or type them on your worksheet
- Share your questions in your breakout room
- Each group should identify a favorite question to share out with whole group (and elect someone to share!)

2 Min  
Pre-  
think



8 Min  
in  
rooms

## Decide on a Tool & Run the Survey

- [Survey in Blue](#) - department will also receive results
- Other options include:
  - Google Forms
  - [Microsoft forms](#)
  - Canvas Quizzes
  - Qualtrics
  - Old CTAAR tool

\*\* go to Canvas site for full list and links for templates

## Running the Midcourse

- Explain to the students why you are running the survey and how you will use the results
- Mention how you value their feedback
- Consider providing time in class to complete it

## Discussion in Breakout Rooms

- Look at the next section on your worksheet “Decide on a tool and run the survey”
- In your breakout room discuss the last question - How are you going to explain it to students? Why are you making them take this survey?



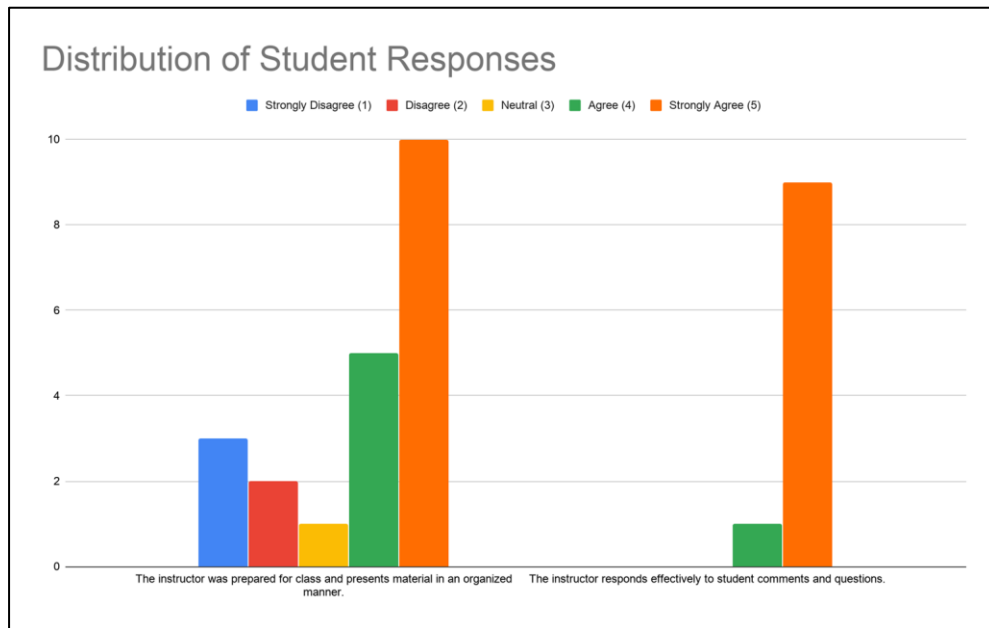
5  
Min

## Analyzing the Feedback: Quantitative

- Important to keep in mind when you are choosing questions
- Consider looking at the mean and also the distribution for likert-scale questions



# Analyzing the Feedback: Quantitative



***Google Spreadsheet Template:***  
<http://go.rutgers.edu/sra0yapj>





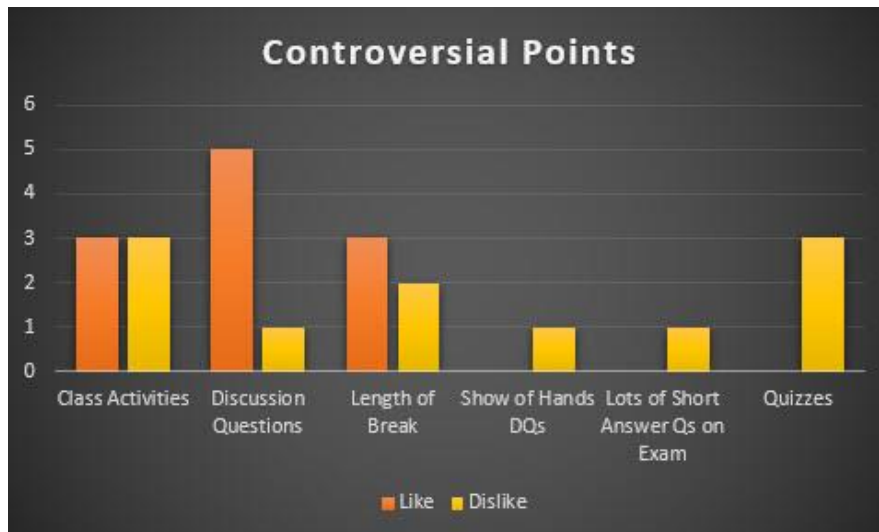
## Analyzing the Feedback: Qualitative

- Use an excel spreadsheet to code and organize comments
- First read all comments and decide on how to group them into common themes
- Tally each successive instance of similar themes during second read-through



# Analyzing the Feedback: Qualitative

	A	B	C
1	Uncotroversial Points	Like	Dislike
2	Everything is Beautiful	7	
3	Study Guides	9	
4	Merit Points	8	
5	Lecture Slides/Lectures	8	
6	Canvas Page	3	
7	Videos	3	
8	Review Game	3	
9	Readings	1	
10	Controversial Points	Like	Dislike
11	Class Activities	3	3
12	Discussion Questions	5	1
13	Length of Break	3	2
14	Show of Hands DQs		1
15	Lots of Short Answer Qs on Exam		1
16	Quizzes		3
17	Suggestions	Like	Dislike
18	Let us leave early	2	
19	Class is too long	2	
20	More snacks	2	
21	More "What do we think" Qs	2	
22	More Video Examples	1	
23	Expand more lecture slides	1	
24	Study Guide Review	1	
25	Extra Credit	1	
26	More Discussion Questions	1	
27	Fewer more detailed discussions	1	
28	Extra Credit	1	



**Google Spreadsheet Template:**  
<http://go.rutgers.edu/y60jsyyc>



## Discussion Question

What do you do when an equal number students like and dislike a teaching practice or policy?



## Discussing the Results



- Purpose of this process is to **gain and respond to student feedback**
- Open next class with a summary of the class' comments and discuss possible changes in the course, if any
- A best practice is to use the feedback to make some changes to your classroom or course to show that you are receptive and responsive to student feedback

# Additional Uses for Student Feedback

- Use as an indicator of effective teaching
- Provide evidence and support in teaching portfolio
- Consider using the end-of-course survey results as well



(in the workshop we will have a few slides about teaching portfolios at this point)

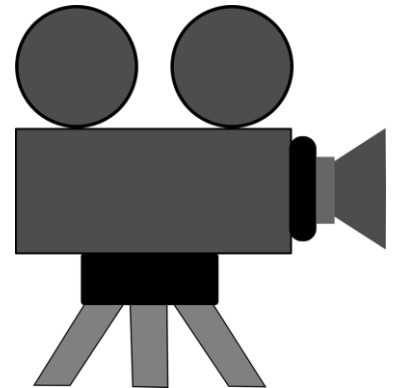
## Discussion Question

What if you end up with more questions than answers from the student feedback??



# Peer Observations

- Since peer review is part of the promotion and tenure process, most departments have a protocol
- Ask a colleague to observe your class informally
- Video or record your own class to observe yourself



# References

- Cohen, P.A. (1980). Effectiveness of student-rating feedback for improving college instruction: A meta-analysis of findings. *Research in Higher Education*, 13(4), 321-341.
- Diamond, M.R. (2004). The usefulness of structured mid-term feedback as a catalyst for change in higher education classes. *The Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education and SAGE Publications (London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi)*, 5(3): 217–231
- Kumar, S., Martin, F., Budhrani, K., & Ritzhaupt, A. (2019). Award-winning faculty online teaching practices: Elements of award-winning courses. *Online Learning (Newburyport, Mass.)*, 23(4), 160–180. doi:<https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v23i4.2077>
- Murray, H.G. (1997) Does evaluation of teaching lead to improvement of teaching? *The International Journal for Academic Development*, 2:1, 8-23.
- Murray, H.G. (2007). Low-inference teaching behaviors and college teaching effectiveness: Recent developments and controversies. In R. P. Perry & J. C. Smart (Eds.), *The scholarship of teaching and learning in higher education: An evidence-based perspective* (pp. 145-200). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer.
- Pastore, S., Manuti, A., Scardigno, F., Curci, A., & Pentassuglia, M. (2019). Students' Feedback in Mid-Term Surveys: An Explorative Contribution in the Italian University Context. *Quality in Higher Education*, 25(1), 21–37.
- Ramachandran, R., & Rodriguez, M. C. (2020). Student Perspectives on Remote Learning in a Large Organic Chemistry Lecture Course. *Journal of Chemical Education*, 97(9), 2565–2572.
- Sozer, E. M., Zeybekoglu, Z., & Kaya, M. (2019). Using Mid-Semester Course Evaluation as a Feedback Tool for Improving Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 44(7), 1003–1016.
- Wilson, J., Ryan, R., & Pugh, J. (2010). Professor–Student Rapport Scale Predicts Student Outcomes. *Teaching of Psychology*, 37(4), 246–251.



## Side note: Results in Blue & Closing the Loop

- Main idea throughout workshop was discussing the results with students and we continually stress this
- In email instructors receive about report we also **include:** “We highly suggest closing the loop with students by discussing the results and any actions you are taking due to their feedback as soon as possible. Additional resources and templates to aid you with analysis are available in Canvas (you will need to log into Canvas with your netID and password).”

# Questions?



# Workshop Resources

- [Worksheet](#) for instructors to follow along and use for notes/activities
- [Google Spreadsheet template for QUAN analysis](#)
- [Google Spreadsheet template for QUAL analysis](#)