



Students Helping Students Provide Valuable Course Feedback

Students Assessing Teaching And Learning Program
crte.ucmerced.edu/satal



Purpose

To engage students in the course evaluation process by illustrating the benefits of providing more useful and valuable feedback on mid-semester and final course evaluations through peer-led workshops.

Background



- The purpose of course evaluations is to help instructors enhance the teaching and learning experience in their courses
- Student feedback can often be more judgmental than useful because students are asked to evaluate instruction with little to no formal training.
- Evaluations become missed opportunities for students to effectively communicate their learning needs and for instructors to collect actionable information about how the course is perceived (The Scholar as Teacher.)
- For feedback to be more valuable, instructors should consider teaching students how to leave constructive feedback, similarly to the way we teach them to give feedback to one another.
- Student-assisted teaching approaches are essential to the desired new paradigm of learning centered institutions (Barr and Tagg, 1995). Why not extend this into the field of assessment?
- If students are the agents who prepare students for completing course evaluations, instructors should be able to expect more practical responses that can be applied to significant course adjustments while also nurturing student abilities in evaluation.
- SATAL Program in collaboration with the Merritt Writing Program Assessment Committee designed this Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (POD) Grant funded project.
- This study was approved by the IRB office.

Method

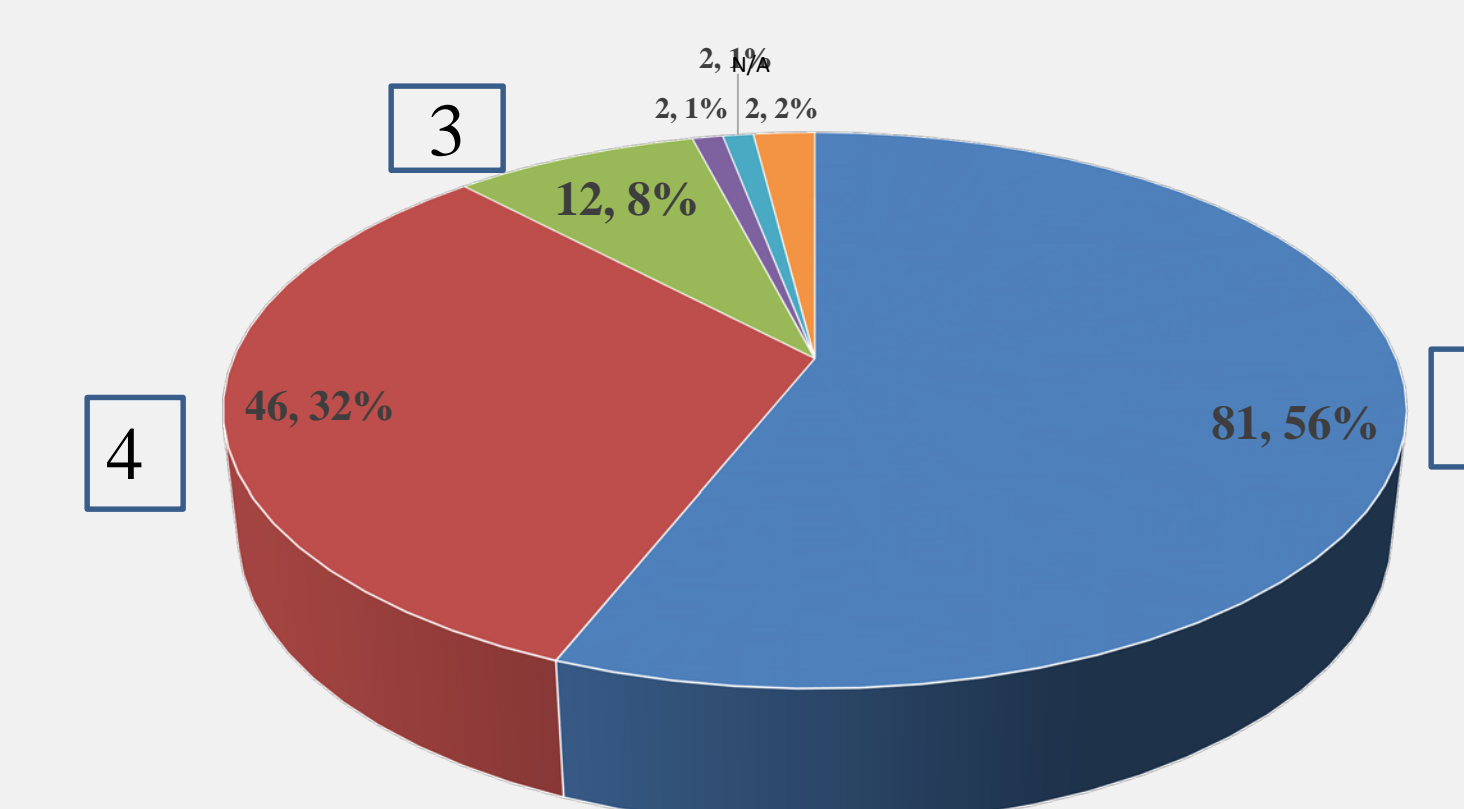
- Participants:** Nine Merritt Writing Program (MWP) Courses or 144 students participated in this project.
- Peer Led Workshops:** SATAL students developed a 30-minute live presentation delivered in participating courses about the importance course evaluations and how to leave valuable feedback.
- Pre/Post Survey:** Student responses to the open-ended questions before and after the workshop presentation.
- Three-Open Ended Questions:** Taken directly from MWP course evaluations:
 - How would you describe your writing ability now compared to the beginning of the semester?
 - Identify and evaluate aspects of this course that have been especially helpful to you.
 - Describe aspects of this course that you would change, if you had the opportunity.
- Mid/End-course Evaluations:** Participating instructors from the MWP collected and coded student responses to the three open-ended questions from mid and final course evaluations.
- Rubric:** The MWP Assessment Committee and participating MWP instructors designed a feedback rubric to measure the quality of student responses to the three open-ended questions.

Rubric

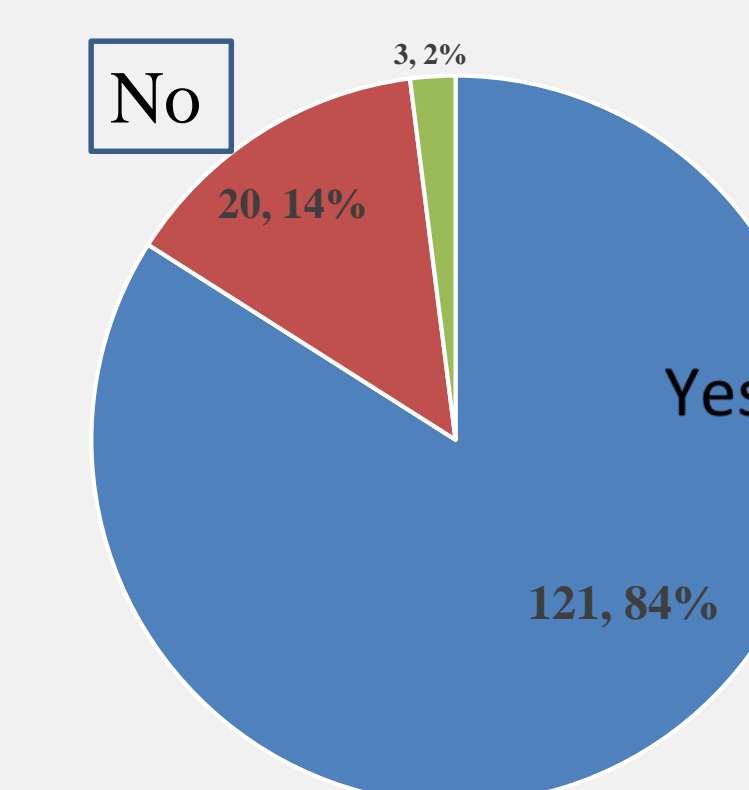
Students Helping Students to Provide Valuable Feedback on Course Evaluations			
Criteria	Highly Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not Useful
1. Offer commentary on attributes of the learning environment.	"I find the instructor very caring and that motivates me to try harder in this class"	"The instructor cares about my learning."	"My instructor's hair is cool."
2. Answer all parts of the question focusing on description rather than judgment.	"My writing ability now is better than at the beginning because now I am more confident in my work and writing based on the feedback I received from instructor and peers."	"It improved a lot. I noticed that my critical thinking ability has improved a lot."	"Hard class."
3. Attribute positive or constructive feedback to specific aspects of the course. Use examples that support your answer to the question.	"Before this class I was every unsure on how to do a research paper, now that I have taken the class I am more confident in my writing skills. I understand how to format a research paper correctly and how to follow MLA."	"Instructor sometimes describes things unclearly, but I always ask questions if I am confused about anything."	"Research projects are stressful"
4. Focus on the course and the quality of instruction given regarding the course learning outcomes.	"I loved the projects, in particular group discussions were very important to understand the readings."	"Peer review, presenting, and office hours helped me with learning."	"I wish that Cat Courses told us when assignments are due"
5. Offer suggestions that are relevant and plausible to the course or instruction and why you think they would help your learning.	"If I had the opportunity, I would include more journal writings or just open ended writing assignments so students could grow more."	"I wouldn't change anything."	"This class is too early."

Impact

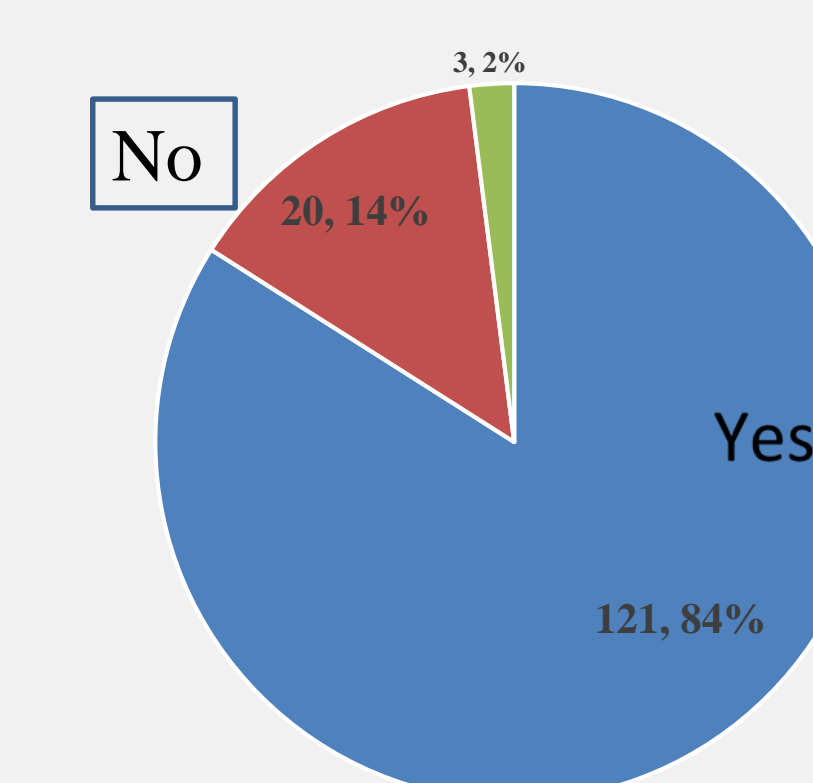
On a scale of 1-5 (5 highest), how would you rate your skills at providing valuable feedback on course evaluation after this presentation compared to before?



Would you recommend this presentation to other courses?



Did you find the rubric useful?



Illustrative Comments:

"The criteria 2 and 3 were the most useful because they guided me to explain myself not be vague with my answers."
 "Feedback is given in every course that we take or will take. We always will need feedback to improve ourselves."
 "The presentation is useful for those who don't have the skills."
 "I already know how to provide useful feedback."

Acknowledgments

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 MWP Faculty: Cher Finley, Stan Porter, Derek Merrill, and the MWP Assessment Committee.
 Poster Designed by: Adriana Signorini and Mariana Abuan.

Evidence of Student Learning

1. How would you describe your writing ability now compared to the beginning of the semester? Please explain.

Pre-survey Responses	Post-survey Responses
<i>In the beginning of the semester I don't think I could write that well. Now, I think I'm a bit better.</i>	<i>In the beginning of the semester I was very weak when it came to my sentence structure. Since we worked so much on revising sentences I got so much better on that.</i>

2. Identify and evaluate aspects of this course that have been especially helpful to you.

<i>The aspects that were the most helpful was learning about the sentence structures and how to improve them.</i>	<i>The aspects that work the most helpful was learning from the style book. It was able to help me out a lot when it came to changing.</i>
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3. Describe aspects of this course that you would change, if you had the opportunity.

<i>The aspects of this course that I would change is the fact that there isn't a specific thing he looks for. There is no rubric or a specific set of instructions for the assignment.</i>	<i>I would change how we don't really have a specific rubric or a specific set of instructions. We need to have more peer-reviews and sentence workshops on our essays. Plus, giving us more detail on what we can improve in our paper. Even when I go to office hours, the instructor doesn't help me in detail, instead they help me vaguely.</i>
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