

SATAL Program

Assessment support for academic programs interested in collecting indirect evidence of student learning. Undergraduates in the program are trained in data collection, analysis and reporting.

How the Program Works?

- SATAL collects qualitative data of student learning to supplement other sources of data and provide a more holistic picture of the learning experiences student have in their programs.
- Tools are tailored to a program's particular assessment needs.
- Findings provide increased objectivity and confidence in the conclusions because students are more comfortable sharing their thoughts with trained peers who have no link to the program.

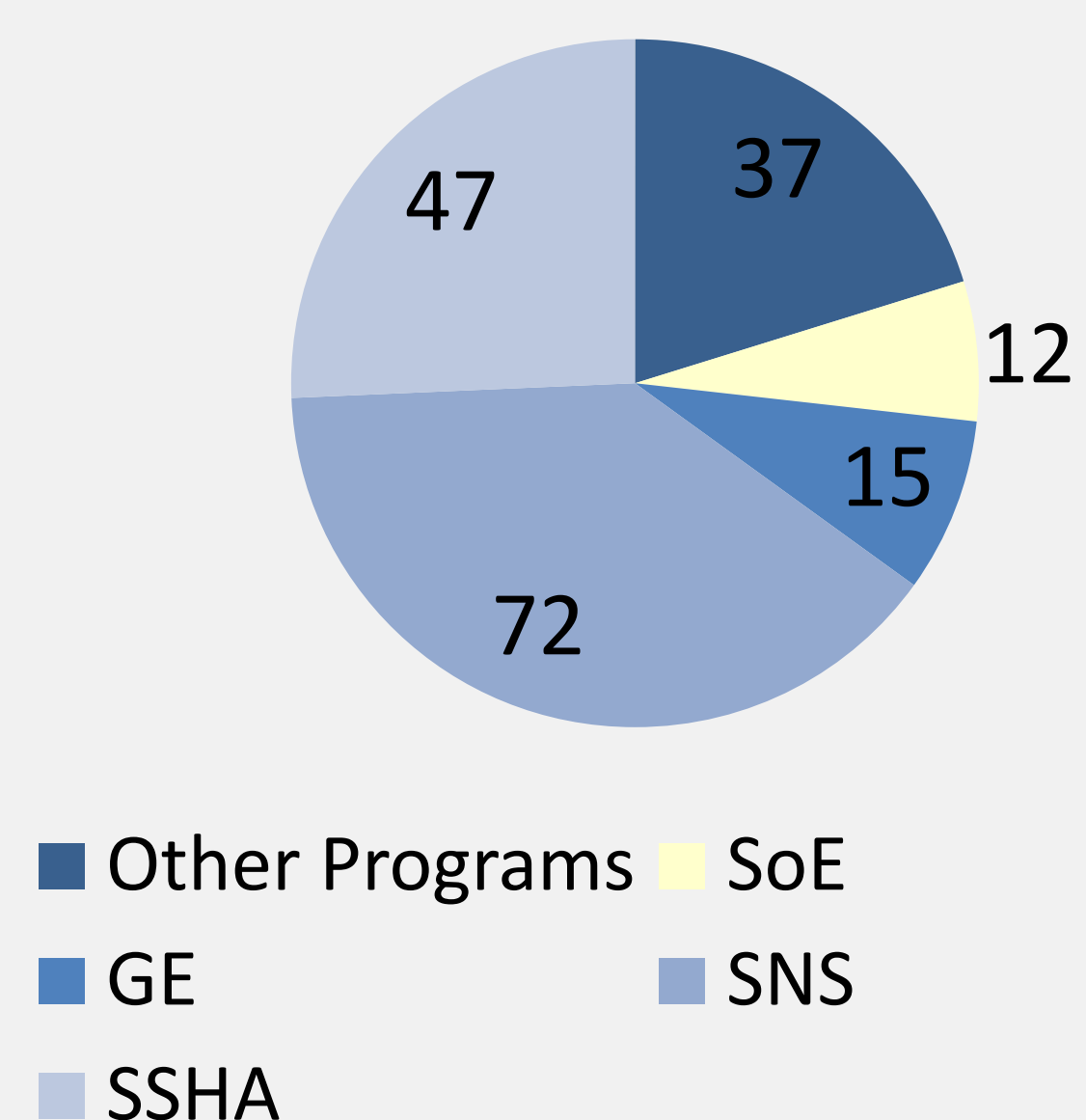
Impact on Student Learning

The data generated by SATAL has provided a number of programs with actionable information on student learning. For example,

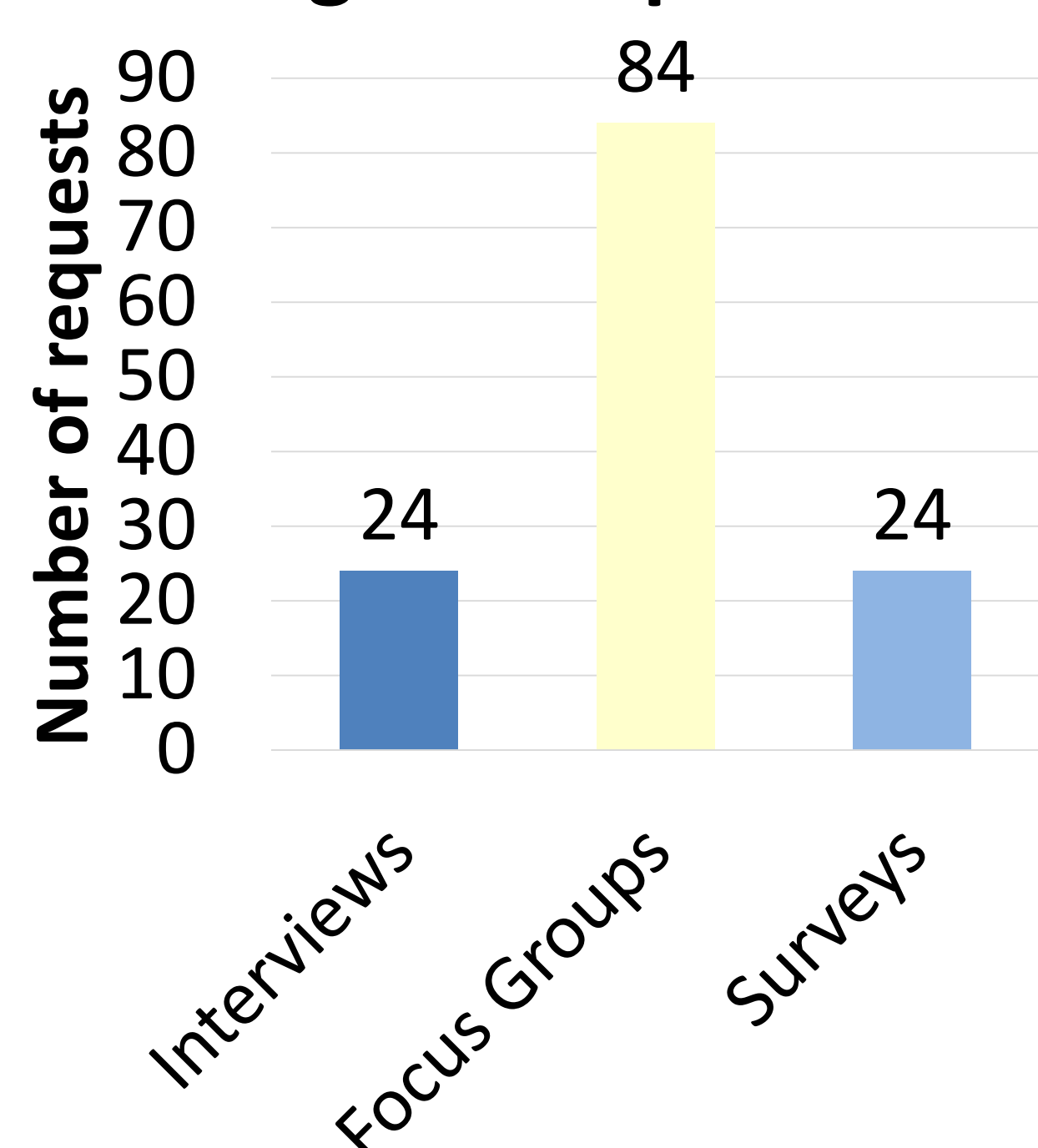
Program	Findings
Applied Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide insight into student learning needs Changes in the senior capstone course, group work in upper division classes, and course review. "The focus group discussion identified areas that faculty need to address as well as reinforced areas ...for improvement."
Physics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "...highlighting how effectively the program is attracting students to the Physics major, both in terms of total numbers (relative to the size of faculty) and student diversity."

SATAL brings students voices to program assessment efforts, generating insights into student need and interests unavailable through simple paper or online surveys.

Requests by School or Program



Program requests



Assessment Tools

How is your program developing? Who are your students? What are they learning?
Ask your students!

Focus Group

Purpose: Gain students' perspectives on their courses and obtain specific information about the why and how of their responses.

Implementation:

Before

- Action plan to recruit participants
- Practice the questions
- Assign roles (moderator – note taker)
- Prepare material (handouts, recorders, etc.)

During

- Create a comfortable environment
- Facilitate a discussion among 6 - 8 participants.
- Record session

After

- Draft a summary report
- Identify trends in the participants' responses
- Keep students' identities confidential.
- Ensure a quick turnaround time for the report

Challenges:

- Gain sufficient student participation to have confidence in focus group conclusion.
- Faculty encouragement seem to be the most successful in gaining students participation.
- Gifts cards, drawings, and some extra points could help in student recruitment.

Sample Report:

Consider those outcomes for which you rated your abilities as "No change," "Weaker," or "Much weaker." What might UC Merced do to increase student achievement of these seven Learning Outcomes?

Most of the students agreed that effective communication was lacking between peers (11 or 69%). Several students agreed that UCM has the right amount of activities, but it is up to the students to participate in them (6 or 38%). Some of the students suggestions included: 1) Fliers may not be the right way to attract students (5 or 31%) ..."

Illustrative Comments

"Insert direct quotes of student responses recorded during the focus group."

Class Interview

Purpose: A quick manner of informing faculty about what the students like, don't like, and their suggestions for the class.

Implementation:

This pen-and-paper assessment option can also be offered as a PowerPoint clicker version with demographic questions in order to provide a cross tabulation of the students' feedback.

During

Following the **Think -Pair-Share approach**, students complete an individual and a group survey on the questions:

- 1) What helps learning in this class
- 2) What changes should the instructor make to help your learning
- 3) What actions would you take to improve your learning?

After

SATAL students interview the class and tabulate the group consensus highlighting trends in the results.

Challenges:

- The interview will take some time off class time to administer, usually 20 to 30 min.
- Findings are more general than using the focus group tool in which students have a chance to provide specific examples or explain the why to their responses.

Sample Report:

What helps learning in this class	# of Students	% of Students
Homework assignments	10	33%
What changes should the instructor make to help your learning	# of Students	% of Students
More example problems	15	50%
What actions would you take to improve your learning?	# of Students	% of Students
Go to office hours	9	30%

Survey

Purpose: Feedback on teaching practices, instructional material, achievement of the program learning outcomes, etc. Exit interviews may reduce absenteeism, improve innovation, and increase engagement and retention.

Implementation:

- An exit survey / interview is usually conducted with graduating students to assess what should be improved, changed, or remain intact.
- Results from the entry and exit surveys are often compared to identify changes in the students' feedback.
- It is important for each class/ program to customize its own exit interview according to its own needs.

Challenges:

- Surveys administered online may have lower response rate than the pen and paper version.
- Same as class interview, survey findings could be more general than using the focus group tool.

Acknowledgments

Current SATAL students who are assisting faculty and programs in their existing assessment projects as well as in the day- to-day operations: Charlesice Hawkins, Jessica Gray, Katie Sunahara, Michael Pham, Ruben Garcia, Eric Chu, Joanna Valenzuela, Brianda Garcia, and Sandra Garcia.

