Program Completion and Mentor Surveys as Indirect Evidence of Learning: From Development to Use

Jessica Miranda

INTRODUCTION

The College of Education (COE) has developed surveys, aligned with our student learning objectives, for our students in the final semester of their programs and for mentor teachers who supervise our teacher candidates in their final semester of student teaching. The surveys are administered each semester through an online survey platform.

Getting Multiple Perspectives: Student Teachers and Mentors

By surveying both the student (student teachers) and their supervisor (mentor teachers), you can gain deeper insight into how well your program is preparing your students. In addition, writing your survey items based on your student learning objectives allows you to triangulate results with your direct assessment data.

Considerations for Writing Survey Items

- **Is the question biased?** (Bad example: Our program is consistently ranked in the top 50 in the country. On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate our program?)
- **Is the question too demanding?** (i.e. Is the question long or potentially confusing?)
- **Is it a compound question?** (Bad example: How prepared are you for teaching reading and writing?)
- **Does the question include a double negative?** (Bad example: Should students not be required to participate in field experiences?)
- **Are the answer choices mutually exclusive and exhaustive?** (Bad example: How many years of teaching experience do you have?)
- **Try to use consistent response formats.** Use the same survey scale (i.e. response options) on items in a section
- **Do you allow respondents the option to pass on answering?** It’s best to let respondents skip questions, especially if it requires potentially sensitive information

Recommendations for Successful Survey Administration

- **Always include a brief statement explaining what the survey results will be used for, why each respondent’s feedback is important, and a statement about the confidentiality of the results.**
- **Send survey reminders every week during the last month of the semester.**
- **Have a faculty member who the students know ask them to complete the survey and include a link in their email.**
- **Give 15 minutes of class time for completing the program survey.**
- **Keep your survey open for a week after the end of the semester.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>USING SURVEY RESULTS: Examples of Activities and Changes Based on Survey Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BEd Elementary Education</td>
<td>After the inclusion of several student learning objectives (SLOs) into the surveys that had not been previously included, one SLO stood out as an area where students could use additional support. Through discussion of the results at a faculty meeting, faculty decided that professional development related to Native Hawaiian language, history, and culture would be beneficial so that faculty are better prepared themselves and better able to prepare teacher candidates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>Faculty noticed lower ratings from some students on items about feeling a sense of belonging to their program and the COE. To address this, faculty decided to redesign the program to include an on-campus, full day student orientation that culminates with a pinning ceremony where each student is welcomed into the program and the college, and receives a COE lapel pin.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Miranda, J. L. (2017, March). Program completion and mentor surveys as indirect evidence of learning: from development to use. Poster session presented at the Assessment for Curricular Improvement Poster Exhibit at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, Honolulu, HI.