

MS Teams Overview

Before we start

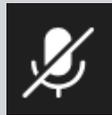


Let us know if you can hear us when we do **Audio checks**



Turn on live captions for closed captioning (see screenshot)

During the session



Please leave your microphones off



Type questions and comments into the **Chat**

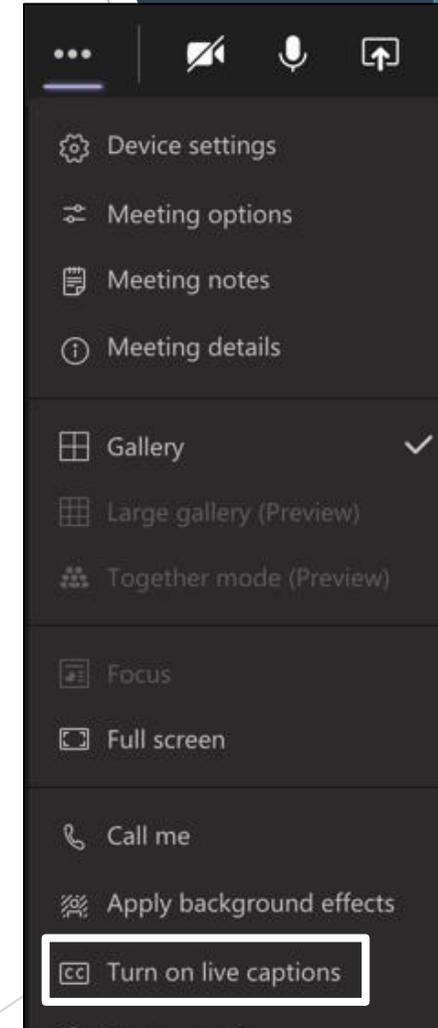


We'll record the session and share the recording with participants

After the session



Complete **Feedback Survey**



Demystifying the Dossier: Interpreting and Integrating Course Evaluations

Gregory Hum, PhD, Manager, Evaluation & Assessment, CTSI
Kyle Turner, MSc, Faculty Liaison, Teaching and Learning, CTSI

November 9, 2021

Demystifying the Dossier Series

1. Looking Ahead: Identifying & Articulating Teaching Success -
Oct 25, 2021
2. Interpreting and Integrating Course Evaluations -
Nov 9, 2021
3. Putting it into Words: Drafting Your Statement of Teaching Philosophy -
Feb 9, 2022
4. Preparing Your Teaching Dossier -
Apr 2022



Introduction



Introduction

- You'll receive
 - Slides
 - The recording
 - A worksheet

- Who is in the room?
 - What is your role?
 - Why are you here?
 - What do you hope to learn?



Topics

1. What course evaluations evaluate
2. Policies, guidelines, and requirements for **the centralised UofT course evaluations**
3. Interpreting course evaluations
4. Considering context
5. Putting it together: dossier and narratives



Key outcomes

1. Understand how course evaluations are used in the assessment of teaching at UofT
2. Be able to make informed interpretations of course evaluation data
3. Be able to summarise, contextualise, and integrate course evaluation data within a teaching dossier



What course evaluations evaluate



Course evaluations as satisfaction measures

“Universities and colleges focused on student learning may need to give minimal or no weight to SET ratings... In contrast, **universities and colleges focused on students' perceptions or satisfaction rather than learning may want to evaluate their faculty's teaching using primarily or exclusively SET ratings...**and systematically terminate those faculty members who do not meet the standards.”

Uttl, B., White, C. A., & Gonzalez, D. W. (2017; p. 40). Meta-analysis of faculty's teaching effectiveness: Student evaluation of teaching ratings and student learning are not related. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 54, 22-42.



“Validity” is based on use

“Validity refers to the degree to which evidence and theory support the interpretations of test scores entailed by proposed uses of tests. ... **It is the interpretations of test scores required by proposed uses that are evaluated, not the test itself.**”

American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education. (1999). *Standards for educational and psychological testing*. American Educational Research Association.



What Do Course Evaluations Tell Us?

- A key mechanism for students' voices to be heard
 - Key stakeholder and observer
- Self-reported experiences and perceptions of the learning environment, able to relate:
 - Teaching actions and strategies associated with effective teaching
 - Perceptions and experiences of learning
 - Pacing
 - Workload

What Do Course Evaluations Not Tell Us?

- Elements students cannot objectively/accurately assess...
 - Pedagogical ability of instructor
 - Students' learning outcomes
 - Certain attributes (e.g., instructor knowledge, caring, humour)
- Not a direct or complete evaluation of teaching effectiveness
 - Need triangulating evidence (teaching materials, peer observations, teaching dossiers)



Policies, guidelines, and requirements

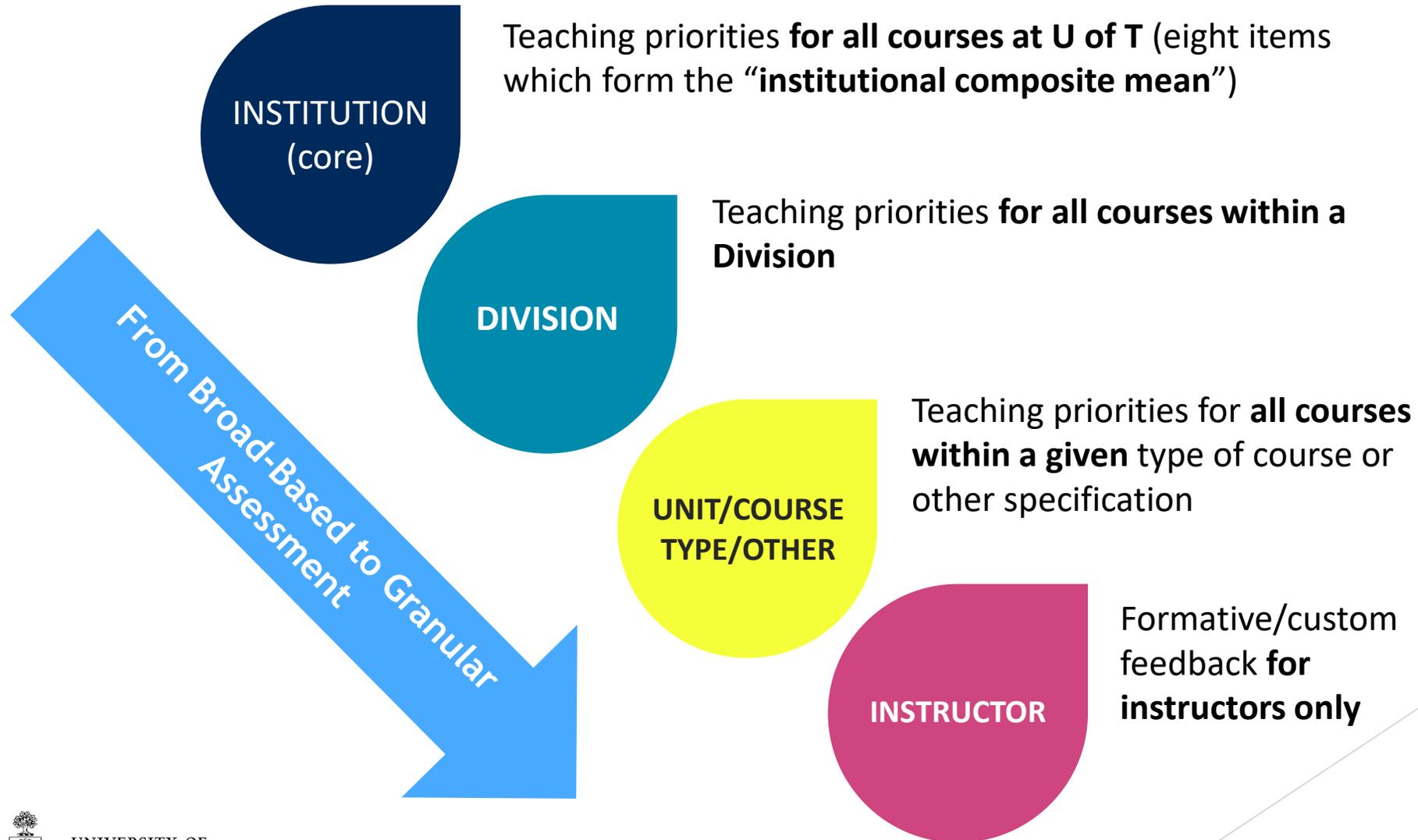


Course Evaluations at the University of Toronto

- **Are overseen by:**
 - Vice-Provost, Innovations in Undergraduate Education (Susan McCahan)
 - Course Evaluation Advisory Group
- **Design of framework and items draw from:**
 - Faculty-led committees
 - Best practices from the research literature



Cascaded Evaluation Framework at UofT



Progressive Implementation

Current Full and Partial Implementations

- Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work
- Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering
- Faculty of Arts & Science
- Faculty of Information (iSchool)
- Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education
- Faculty of Music
- Lawrence S. Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing
- Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE)
- University of Toronto Mississauga
- University of Toronto Scarborough
- *Faculty of Dentistry (Partial)*
- *Faculty of Medicine (Partial)*
- *Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy (Partial)*

Upcoming/In progress

- Rotman School of Commerce (Graduate)
- Dalla Lana School of Public Health
- Daniels Faculty of Architecture

Not Yet Implemented

- Faculty of Law



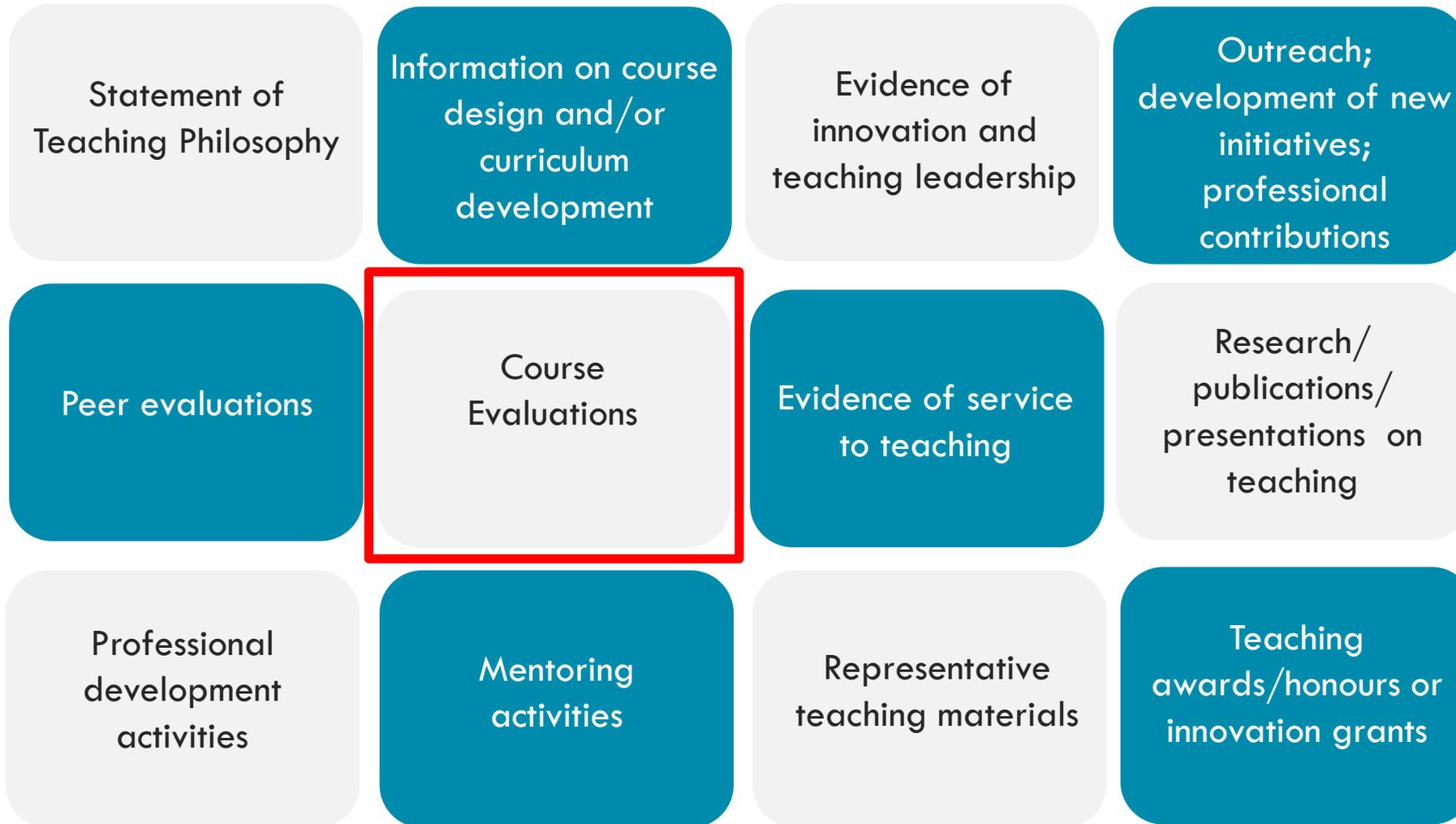
In Policy:

“Course evaluation data are meaningful only within a broader framework for the evaluation of teaching. **Course evaluation data should not be used as an exclusive measure of teaching effectiveness**, either at an individual or program level. The data collected from the University of Toronto’s Course Evaluation Framework **are intended to support and to inform summative review processes** (PTR/Merit, tenure, and promotion), program and curriculum review processes, and other forms of assessment, as appropriate”

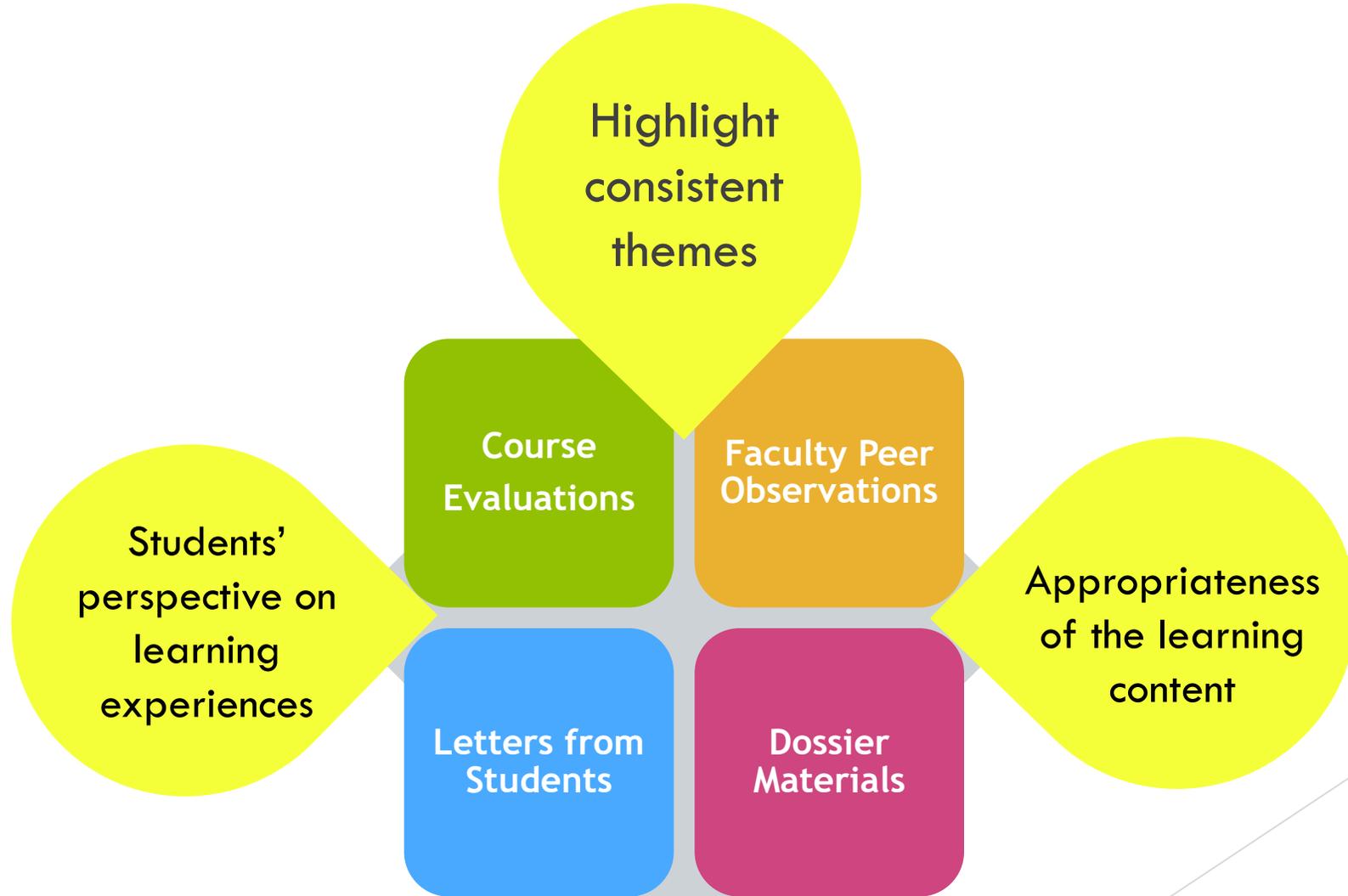
*University of Toronto Provostial Guidelines on the Student Evaluation of Teaching in Courses
(2017)*



The Teaching Dossier



The Role of Course Evaluations



Interpreting Course Evaluations



In the chat

What do you do when you receive course evaluation reports?

- Do you look at them at all?
- What sections do you look at?
- How do you make sense of feedback?
- Do you have a standard process?



Interpreting course evaluations reports

1. Look closely at the data available
2. Look for trends and consider context
3. Find the coherent and meaningful “story” that highlights consistent themes across the dossier



The PDF Reports

- **Institutional, Divisional, Departmental items**
 - Sections 1-3

- **Instructor selected items**
 - Section 4
 - Optional
 - Only reported to instructor
 - Formatted identically to section 2



Core Institutional Course Evaluation Items	Core Institutional Teaching Priorities
1. I found the course intellectually stimulating.	Students are engaged
2. The course provided me with a deeper understanding of the subject matter.	Students gain knowledge
3. The instructor [name] created a course atmosphere that was conducive to my learning.	Atmosphere promotes learning
4. Course projects, assignments, tests and/or exams improved my understanding of the course material.	Components improve understanding
5. Course projects, assignments, tests and/or exams provided opportunity for me to demonstrate an understanding of the course material.	Components provide opportunity to demonstrate learning
6. Overall, the quality of my learning experience in this course was...	Overall positive learning experience
7. Please comment on the overall quality of the instruction in this course.	
8. Please comment on any assistance that was available to support your learning in the course.	



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The UofT Course Evaluation Report

- **Section 1: Course Evaluation Executive Summary**
 - Numerical data for each item
 - Five institutional items and institutional composite mean
 - Qualitative data
 - Divisional and departmental items
- **Section 2 Course Evaluation Details and Summaries**
 - Graphical summary and statistics for numerical items
- **Section 3 Comparative Data**
 - Numerical comparisons with Division/Department averages
 - Consider cautiously
- **Section 4 Formative Data**
 - Instructor-selected items
 - Only reported to instructor



Section 1: Course Evaluation Overview

Raters	Students
Responded	14
Invited	25

- Response rate is important but typically satisfactory

Section 1: Course Evaluation Overview

Part A. Core Institutional Items

Scale: 1 - Not At All 2 - Somewhat 3 - Moderately 4 - Mostly 5 - A Great Deal

Question	Summary	
	Mean	Median
I found the course intellectually stimulating.	3.9	4.0
The course provided me with a deeper understanding of the subject matter.	3.8	4.0
The instructor created an atmosphere that was conducive to my learning.	4.2	5.0
Course projects, assignments, tests, and/or exams improved my understanding of the course material.	3.8	4.0
Course projects, assignments, tests and/or exams provided opportunity for me to demonstrate an understanding of the course material.	3.8	4.0
Institutional Composite Mean	3.9	-

- ICM is the most reliable and valid score of student learning experiences
 - Mean 3.94 (UG) and 4.1 (grad) across institution
 - The five items that form the scale typically have no meaningful differences between them
 - Only large differences (>1) are typically meaningful
 - Context should be considered



Section 1: Course Evaluation Overview

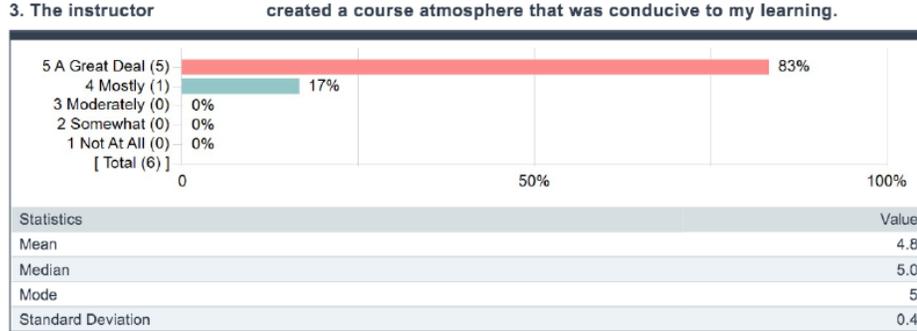
Scale: 1 - Poor 2 - Fair 3 - Good 4 - Very Good 5 - Excellent

Question	Summary	
	Mean	Median
6. Overall, the quality of my learning experience in this course was....	3.8	4.0

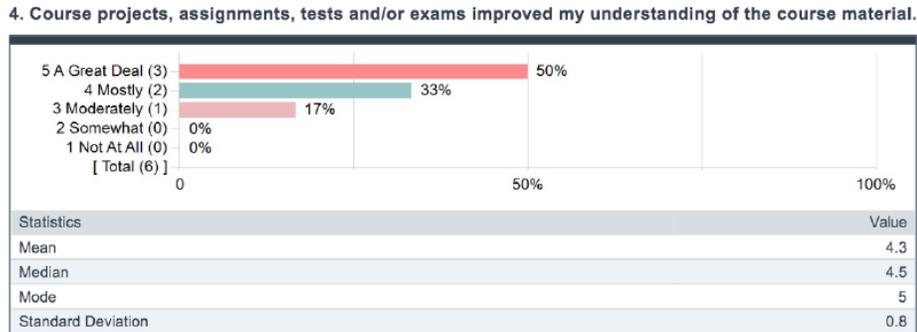
- “Overall” question less reliable



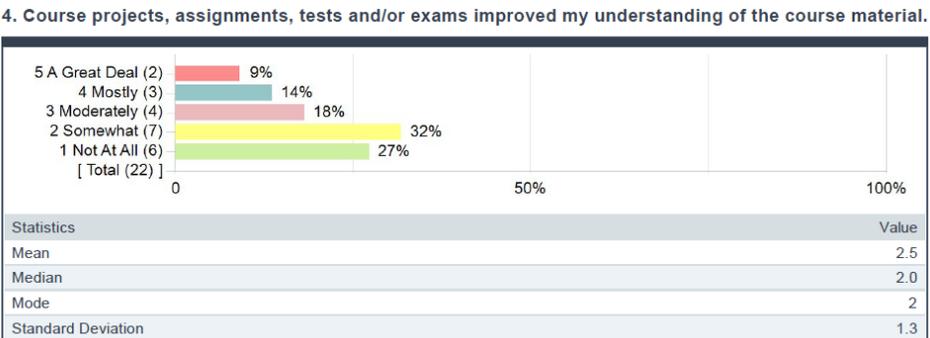
Section 2: Response Distributions and Additional Statistics



- Students generally agree (clustered)
- But the amount of agreement or variation (spread, reflected in standard deviation) can reflect something about the course

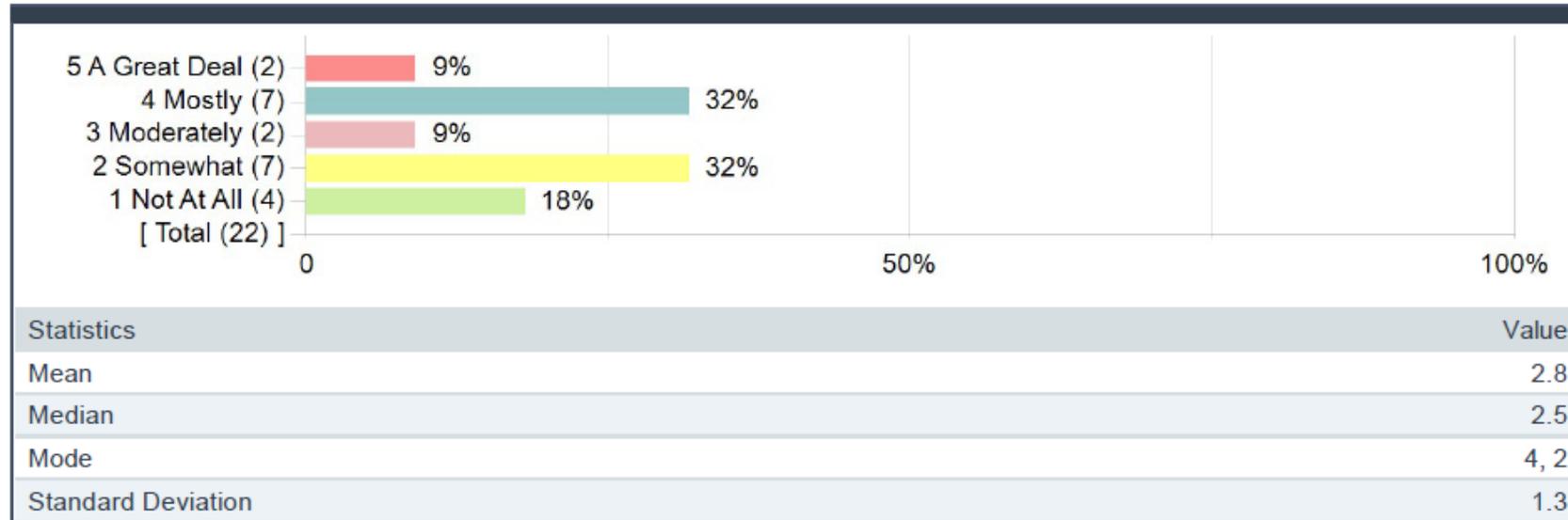


- In unimodal (single peak) distributions, mean and median are more reflective of common sentiment



Section 2: Response Distributions and Additional Statistics

2. The course provided me with a deeper understanding of the subject matter.



- In the extreme case, student responses are bimodal
- Summary statistics are less accurate
- Bimodal divided responses: consider context
 - Different students?
 - New teaching approach?



Section 3: Comparative Data

Part A. Core Institutional Items

Scale: 1 - Not At All 2 - Somewhat 3 - Moderately 4 - Mostly 5 - A Great Deal



- Not intended to be an absolute benchmark
- Small differences not meaningful
- Calculated at survey level and should be considered cautiously
 - Does not account for context such as class size



Is this a Low Score?

- The average ICM across the institution are 3.94 (undergrad) and 4.1 (grad)
 - Scores close to (above and below) this are therefore typical
 - Are comparators needed? (e.g., score of 4)
 - “Good” can just mean “Good”
- “Below average” does not equal “bad”
- Context should always be considered over direct comparisons

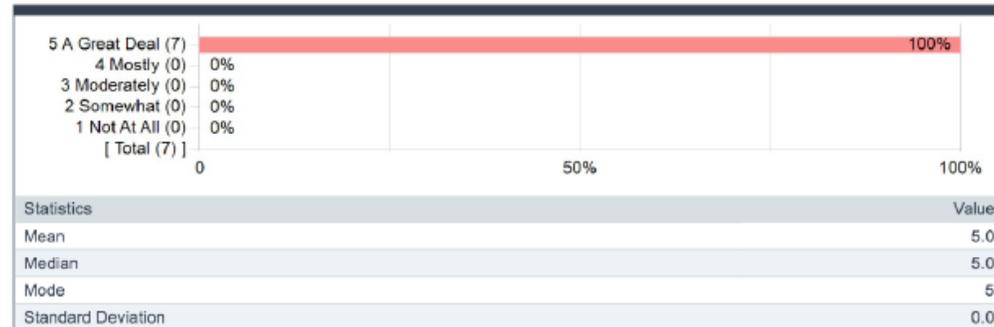


Section 4: Formative Data/Instructor-selected items

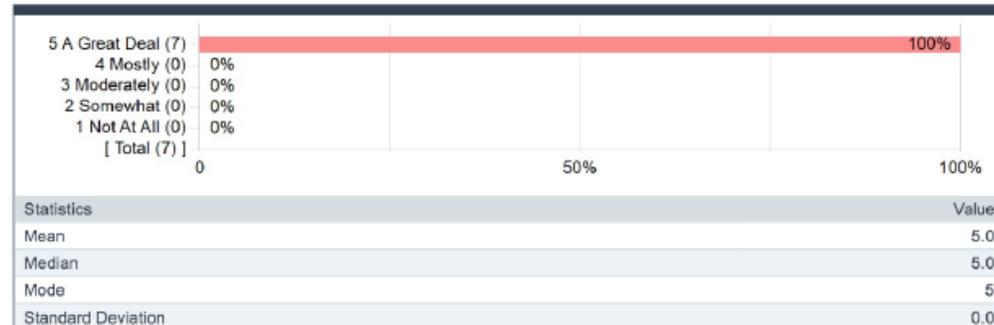
Section 4: Formative Data

These items are optional items which you selected from the item bank during the question personalization period. Note that the results from these items are only reported to you as they are primarily intended to function as personal formative feedback.

D-1. The course instructor responded respectfully to students' questions.



F-1. The course instructor encouraged students to express their own ideas in the class.



- Only goes to the instructor
- Similar format to Section 2 (response distributions)



Considering context



Consider Context

- Do not over-interpret numbers
- Consider the numbers in their context
- **Some examples:**
 - Multi-instructor courses
 - Response rate
 - Class size
 - Graduate vs. undergraduate
 - Online vs. face to face
 - Students enrolled
 - Specific incidents
 - Progress of the course over time
 - New innovations and strategies



Resources

Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation. (2018). *University of Toronto's Cascaded Course Evaluation Framework: Validation Study of the Institutional Composite Mean (ICM)*. Toronto, ON: Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation, University of Toronto.

https://teaching.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Validation-Study_CTSI-September-2018.pdf

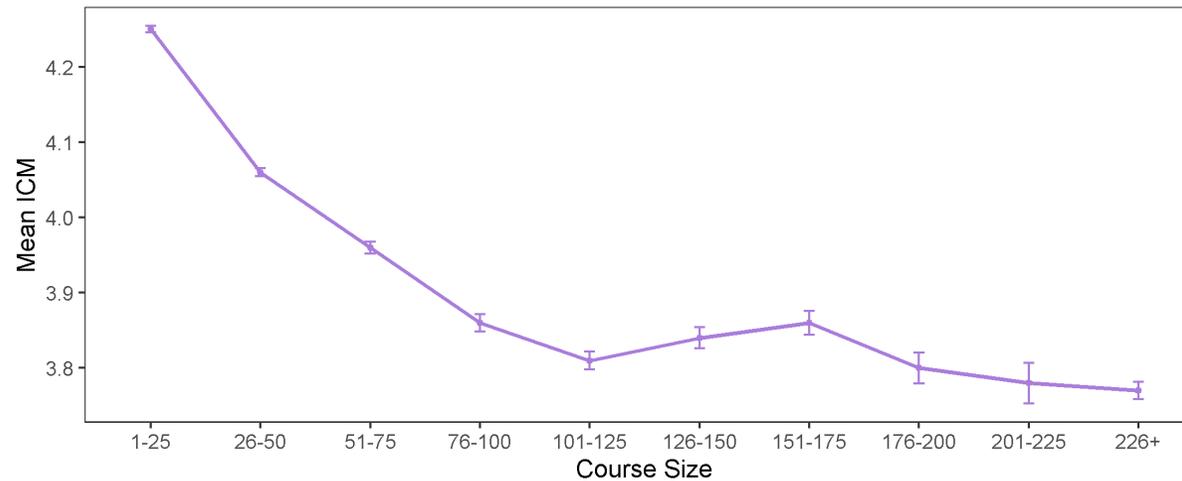
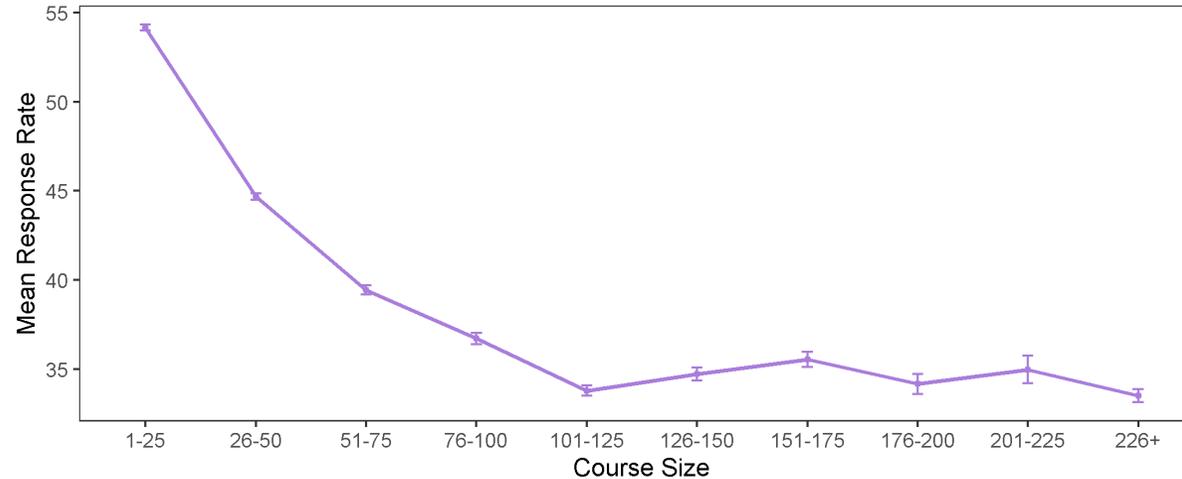
Centre for Teaching Support and Innovation (2018). *University of Toronto Course Evaluation Interpretation Guidelines for Academic Administrators*. Toronto, ON: Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation, University of Toronto.

https://teaching.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Interpretation-Guidelines_Final_Oct.1.2018.pdf



Context: Class Size

- Largest identified factor
- A trend long described in the literature (Feldman, 1978)



Context: Class Size

- “empirical evidence...suggests... deleterious outcomes associated with large-sized classes:”
 - Reliance on lecture
 - Less active student engagement
 - Less interactivity and feedback
 - Less emphasis on deeper learning outcomes
- Associated with lower:
 - Grades
 - Satisfaction
 - Course evaluation scores

Cuseo, J. (2007). The empirical case against large class size: Adverse effects on the teaching, learning, and retention of first-year students. *The Journal of Faculty Development*, 21(1), 5-21.



Response rate guidelines

Table 1. Interpretation of precision based upon margin of error interval sizes for response rates at given course size ranges

		Course Size				
Margin of error interval	Interpretation	1-25	26-50	51-100	101-200	200+
< ±0.1	Very precise estimate	>90%	>80%	>80%	>60%	>50%
< ±0.2	Precise estimate	>80%	>70%	>70%	>50%	>40%
< ±0.5	Somewhat precise estimate	>70%	>50%	>40%	>20%	>10%
< ±1.0	General estimate	>60%	>20%	>10%	>10%	>10%
> 1.0	Very general estimate	< 30%	<10%	<5%	<3%	<1%

Note. Guidelines are based on a 95% confidence interval around the mean with margin of errors ranging from ±0.1 to ±1.0, a standard deviation of 1.0, and correction for the use of a finite population.

- More precise is better
- Estimates poorer than ‘general’ should be considered very cautiously



Talking to Your Students about Evaluations

We recommend that you:

- Talk to students about how you use course evaluation feedback
- Model and demonstrate a culture of constructive feedback

We suggest that you:

- Provide class time to fill out your evaluations (protocol available)
- Talk about live response rates from Quercus (reassure students of anonymity)

<https://courseevaluations.utoronto.ca/faculty-admin/instructors/using-in-class-time-for-course-evaluations/>

Course Evaluations Are Now Open!

You will have time in class next week to provide feedback on this course

Bring any of the following electronic devices to class:

- Smart phone
- Tablet
- Laptop

Check your e-mail for a link to your evaluations, or go to <http://uoft.me/openevals>

To access the Course Evals page on Quercus



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO CENTRE FOR TEACHING SUPPORT & INNOVATION

Course evaluation comments



On the poll

What strategies do you use to review student comments? (select all)

- I don't read them
- I do a general review
- I have a formal review system (e.g. a checklist, text analysis system, etc)
- I write a summary or reflection
- I ask a peer to review them
- Other



Reading Comments

- Don't discount or ignore comments
- Look for context for the quantitative data
 - Can help explain the trends you see in the data
 - Does this explain any bi-modality observed?
- Positive comments are potential sources of evidence for your dossier narrative
 - Look for comments that are *pedagogically relevant*
- Critical comments point to areas of improvement
 - With some lead time, implement changes in your teaching
 - Closer to your dossier deadline, provide plans for improvement



Reading Comments

- Not all comments are true, helpful, or meaningful
 - Try not to focus on negative comments
 - Do not focus on isolated comments
- Look for common comments and consensus
 - Positive comments tend to be shorter; don't underestimate them
 - Negative comments tend to be longer; don't overestimate them
- Look for constructive and actionable comments



Review Comments Systematically

- Skim your comments for common themes
 - Lecture organization
 - Alignment between content and assessments
 - Clear instructions for assessments
- Look for specific feedback, not just “Great course”
- Keep a running tally of themes and group them
- Don’t ignore the positives!



Interpret Comments Clearly

- Reflect on common themes
 - What do students mention most often?
 - What suggestions do they make?
- Focus on the actionable
 - What is easiest to implement or change? What's the best 'bang-for-your-buck'?
 - Don't try to change everything at once
- Look for explanations of quantitative scores or distributions
- Look for connections between themes uncovered and your teaching philosophy, including facets of your teaching that you hadn't considered



Putting it together: Dossier and narratives



How are Course Evaluations included in a dossier?

We recommend including:

- A numerical summary of course evaluation data
- An accompanying qualitative narrative

Check requirements around full course evaluations reports in appendix

- Typically committees will have access to this



The template

- Template and accompanying documentation is available through CTSI
 - You may modify the template
- Do not combine different evaluation forms numerically
- You are not required to use this template



Possible dossier organisation: course evaluation chapter narrative

1. Introduction

- Overall picture
- Describe organisation of remainder of this chapter

2. Provide narratives in separate sections

- By each course
- By distinctive groups of courses

3. Summary

- Key highlights
- Planned next steps and actions



The purpose of the narrative - connecting the data

1. Highlights

- “I believe that fostering an environment...”
- “The course I designed was well received...”

2. Contextualises

- “My scores for large and required courses were...”
- “In COURSE301, the students...”

3. Connects

- “As outlined in my teaching philosophy...”
- “In order to improve...”



Ideas and themes to consider

- **A narrative account**
 - What was the course? Who took it? How did it go?
 - Lessons learned; next steps
- **Focus on trends**
 - Do not focus on small differences in numbers or isolated comments
 - Consider improvement over time
 - Connect changing scores with concrete actions you took
- **Triangulate the course evaluations**
 - Quantitative and qualitative
 - Other data sources
 - The rest of the portfolio



Tips for describing quantitative data in the text

- **Refer to the summary**

- *As seen in the summary table, my scores have been consistently above 3.6. The exceptions were...*

- **Use the qualitative anchors**

- *Students described the course as “mostly” (4.2) producing an atmosphere conducive to their learning.*



Tips for describing quantitative data in the text

- **Aggregating within the scale**
 - *87.7% (114/ 130) of students' scores for the ICM rated the course as “mostly” (4) or “a great deal” (5).*
- **Connect with qualitative comments**
 - *Students gave consistently high ratings on the course being intellectually stimulating, which is further supported by comments like the following...*



Course evaluations throughout the dossier

- Teaching Philosophy Statement
- Narrative of courses taught, teaching strategies, etc

- References to scores
- Quotes from student comments



Wrapping it up



CTSI Consultations

<https://teaching.utoronto.ca/teaching-support/consultations/request-form/>

- Teaching strategies
- Interpreting course evaluation data
- Course design, development and/or review
- Working with graduate students and teaching assistants
- Using educational technology in the classroom
- Teaching award nominations
- Research on pedagogical topics (Scholarship of Teaching and Learning)
- Online learning
- Other



Wrapping it up

- We will send out the slides, recording, and worksheet to participants
- Please provide us with feedback
- Contact us:
 - Gregory Hum, gregory.hum@utoronto.ca
 - Kyle Turner, kyle.turner@utoronto.ca
- Register for the rest of the series



Wrapping it up

- Any questions?
- Contact us:
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 - Kyle Turner, kyle.turner@utoronto.ca

