



Using IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction to Evaluate Faculty Development

Kelley, B. (2019). Student ratings of instruction as “found data.” *Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education, Spring*, 4-8. Retrieved from: https://www.aalhe.org/assets/docs/Intersection_Spring_2019_AAL.pdf

At the University of South Dakota, the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) uses IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction (SRI) to evaluate the effectiveness of various faculty development programs. IDEA SRI is thus considered an “essential piece of found data” which, when combined with local measures, permits triangulation of evidence regarding the effectiveness of various programs and initiatives.

For example, IDEA scores are used to evaluate the Course Design Fellowship (CDF), a one-week, 20-hour program where faculty design or redesign a course. The goal of the CDF is to help instructors create an online course that keeps students active and engaged. CTL staff track IDEA converted scores for progress on relevant objectives, global measures of the teacher and the course, and IDEA’s overall summary score, which is a weighted sum of the three. Scores are recorded two semesters before and two semesters after participation in the fellowship. Results show meaningful gains in average scores, with the greatest increases occurring in the second semester after the training. What’s more, the gains in scores coincide with how frequently the instructor uses technology and class activities to actively engage students. Such findings counteract the prevailing myth that SRI will be lower when implementing active learning strategies.

Of added interest is the finding that the earlier the CDF training occurred in advance of teaching the class the higher were the career student ratings of teaching quality. Specifically, faculty who participated in CDF three weeks in advance saw 72.25 % of their courses with average ratings of 3.5 or greater, compared to 65.73% of those participating 1-2 weeks prior, and 59.33% of those less than one week.

In summary, then, this study shows how CTL staff can use existing SRI data to evaluate the effectiveness of programs and initiatives.