
Results of the Feedback Survey on Student Reflections on Learning (SRL) Pilot from F23

Yolonda Freeman-Hildreth (CHP)

Karen McDonald Henning (SoL)

Heather Hill (CLAE)

Karen Lee (Assoc. VP for Acad. Admin.)

Matt Mio (CES, Chair)

Kathi Shepherd (SoD)

Mike Verducco (CETL)

**Evaluation of Faculty Teaching
Implementation Task Force
(EFT-ITF)**

27 and 28 February 2024





Juliette Daniels is 😊 feeling inspired.

Yesterday at 9:58 AM · 👥



I ❤️ college students but especially my students. They are hilarious. Fall semester course evaluation always keeps me on my toes. These responses were in order:

"Dr Daniels is such a queen. She's the only person I would happily attend a 7:30am lecture for...a goat fr."

"Brings energy, makes it interactive, connects it to dentistry-don't change a thing"

"I don't remember Dr Daniels but I'm sure she was alright. Or maybe not, I guess I don't know"

"Brings lectures to life, it's fun to witness her encourage class involvement. Sets clear expectations."

"Please continue being a human being."

"We didn't have Dr Daniels this semester"



Teaching Evaluations Are Broken. Can They Be Fixed?

Superficial assessments hurt professors and students, but reform is hard.

RATINGS REVAMP

By *Beth McMurtrie* | FEBRUARY 6, 2024

T A T hen Phoebe Young began working at the University of Colorado at



ADVERTISEMENT



Outline

- Rationale, background, and what was the SRL Pilot?
- What are the SRL survey results?
- What happens next – shorter and longer term?

Comprises the charges and work of the EFT-ITF

Rationale

American Sociological Association = SETs are

- weakly related to teaching effectiveness and student learning
- used in statistically-problematic ways
- influenced by course characteristics unrelated to teaching effectiveness
- Found to be biased against women, people of color and other minority groups

Conclusion

A scholarly consensus has emerged that using SETs as the *primary* measure of teaching effectiveness in faculty review processes can systematically disadvantage faculty from marginalized groups.



Statement on Student Evaluations of Teaching
American Sociological Association
September 2019

Most faculty in North America are evaluated, in part, on their teaching effectiveness. This is typically measured with student evaluations of teaching (SETs), instruments that ask students to rate instructors on a series of mostly closed-ended items. Because these instruments are cheap, easy to implement, and provide a simple way to gather information, they are the most common method used to evaluate faculty teaching for hiring, tenure, promotion, contract renewal, and merit raises.

Despite the ubiquity of SETs, a growing body of evidence suggests that their use in personnel decisions is problematic. SETs are weakly related to other measures of teaching effectiveness and student learning (Boring, Ottoboni, and Stark 2016; Uttl, White, and Gonzalez 2017); they are used in statistically problematic ways (e.g., categorical measures are treated as interval, response rates are ignored, small differences are given undue weight, and distributions are not reported) (Boyesen 2015; Stark and Freishtat 2014); and they can be influenced by course characteristics like time of day, subject, class size, and whether the course is required, all of which are unrelated to teaching effectiveness.

In addition, in both observational studies and

(e.g., a 6-point scale versus a 10-point scale) can affect how women are evaluated relative to men in male-dominated fields. Further, Black and Asian faculty members are evaluated less positively than White faculty (Barvishi, Madera, and Hebl 2010; Reid 2010; Smith and Hawkins 2011), especially by students who are White men. Faculty ethnicity and gender also mediate how students rate instructor characteristics like leniency and warmth (Anderson and Smith 2005).

A scholarly consensus has emerged that using SETs as the primary measure of teaching effectiveness in faculty review processes can systematically disadvantage faculty from marginalized groups. This can be especially consequential for contingent faculty for whom a small difference in average scores can mean the difference between contract renewal and dismissal.

Given these limitations, the American Sociological Association, in collaboration with the scholarly societies listed below, encourages institutions to use evidence-based best practices for collecting and using student feedback about teaching (Barre 2015; Dennin et al. 2017; Linse 2017; Stark and Freishtat 2014). These include:

Background

- Long ago history – MFA and 2007
- MFA's original task force 2020 (final report 6 Jan. 2021)
- EFT-ITF with membership from McN, SoD, SoL
- All campuses at different stages regarding reform

Students ***not*** able to rate content/pedagogy reliably

Background – Defining Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Foundational to excellent teaching at Detroit Mercy is a dedication to discernment through the process of reflection. Detroit Mercy faculty and students are expected to participate in these processes regularly in alignment with Mercy and Jesuit traditions, which include a passion for quality, an emphasis on ethics and values, care for and education of the whole person, academic excellence, and real world and life-long learning.

With a passion for diversity, equity, and inclusion, Detroit Mercy faculty strive to create an inclusive environment and support academic growth by meeting learners where they are with rigor, compassion, and personalized attention. Detroit Mercy faculty embrace a variety of teaching modalities, engage with emerging pedagogies and best practices, while aiming to improve teaching and learning through professional development activities. The faculty's dedication to student well-being includes a thoughtful and practical attention to the employment market and how best to help situate its graduates for career success.

Excellent teaching at Detroit Mercy is also excellent learning and therefore, is defined as an ongoing commitment to fostering an environment in which both instructors and students commit to their mutual responsibilities: instructors are experts in their respective disciplines as well as pedagogical professionals and students are respectful, eager, and engaged learners.

While individual disciplines may include additional goals in their definitions of excellent teaching and learning, the following includes universally accepted maxims supported by research on best practices for instruction at the college and university level:

As Excellent Teachers, Detroit Mercy Faculty:

- Model Inspired Learning
- Create an environment that strives for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Provide Rigor and Challenge
- Communicate Effectively and Consistently
- Focus on Student-Centered Mentoring
- Foster and Engage in Reflection and Self-Reflection

As Excellent Learners, Detroit Mercy Students:

- Commit to Learning
- Embrace a classroom environment that strives for diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Accept Rigor, Challenge, and Responsibility
- Respect their Instructors and Class Colleagues
- Value their Instructors' Knowledge
- Engage in Reflection and Self-Reflection

In embracing these goals, both Detroit Mercy faculty and students strive for an excellent teaching and learning community that inspires both student and instructor, demands rigor of both, and facilitates intellectual, spiritual, ethical, and social growth.

Background – Recommendations from ASA and MFA

- Items (questions) should focus on **student experiences**, and the instruments should be framed as an opportunity for student feedback.
- Responses to items should never be used as the **only** evidence of teaching effectiveness.
- Responses to items should be used as **part of a holistic assessment** to document patterns in an instructor's feedback over time.
- **Quantitation** is to be avoided, but - if necessary - needs to include distribution, samples size, and response rate.
- Evaluators of faculty teaching effectiveness need to be **trained** in interpretation and use of data.

Result is the SRL Pilot

What was the SRL F23 Pilot?

- Philosophical move to student reflection
- New, fewer items
- Aims to help faculty and admins get a sense of student self-reporting of learning habits in specific courses

Students ***can*** self-report learning habits

Current SRL Items vs. SETs

	SRL Pilot	SET
# of Likert Items	11	32
# of Free Response Items	4	2
Student Response Window	Dead Week and Finals Week	Varies by Academic Unit

What are the Feedback Survey Results? I

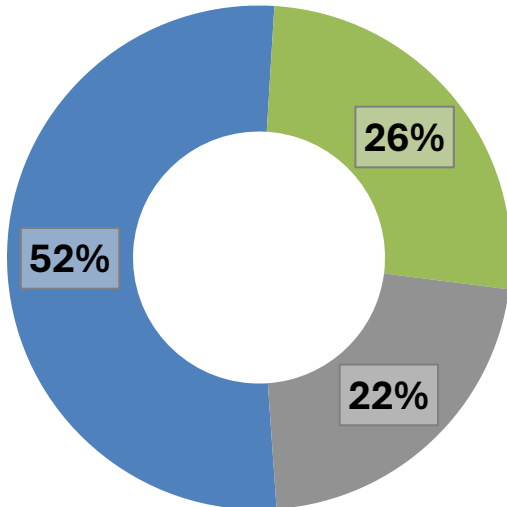
The Student Reflection on Learning (SRL) feedback...

...helped me understand what students found beneficial to their learning in the course.

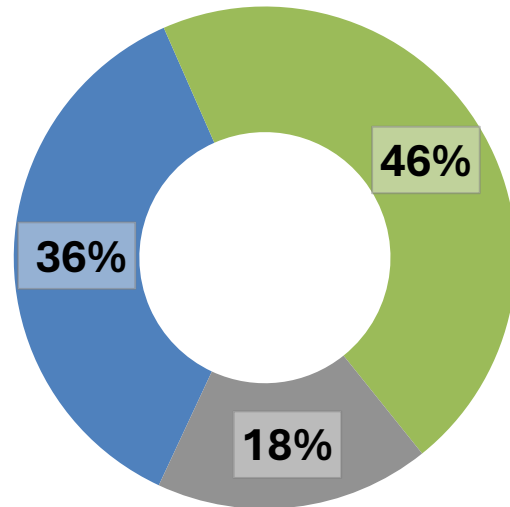
...helped me understand the level of Student engagement in course activities.

...will inform the way I teach my courses.

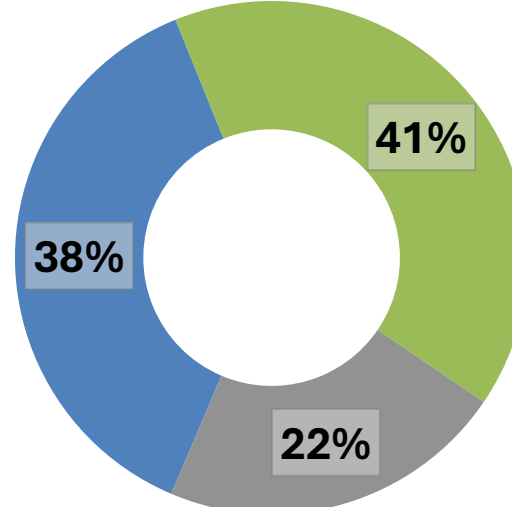
... instrument is preferable to the old Student Evaluations of Teaching (SETs).



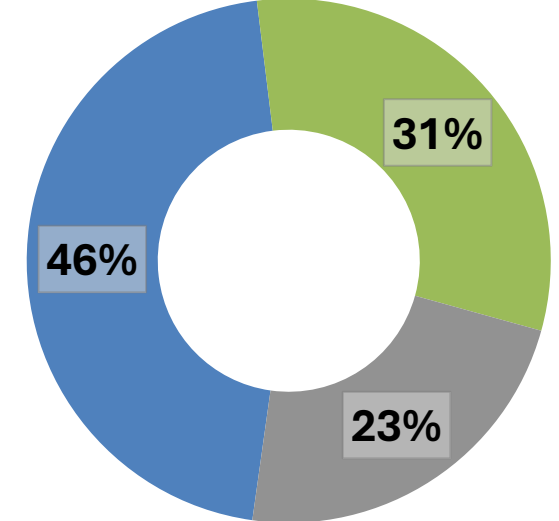
Agree



Neutral



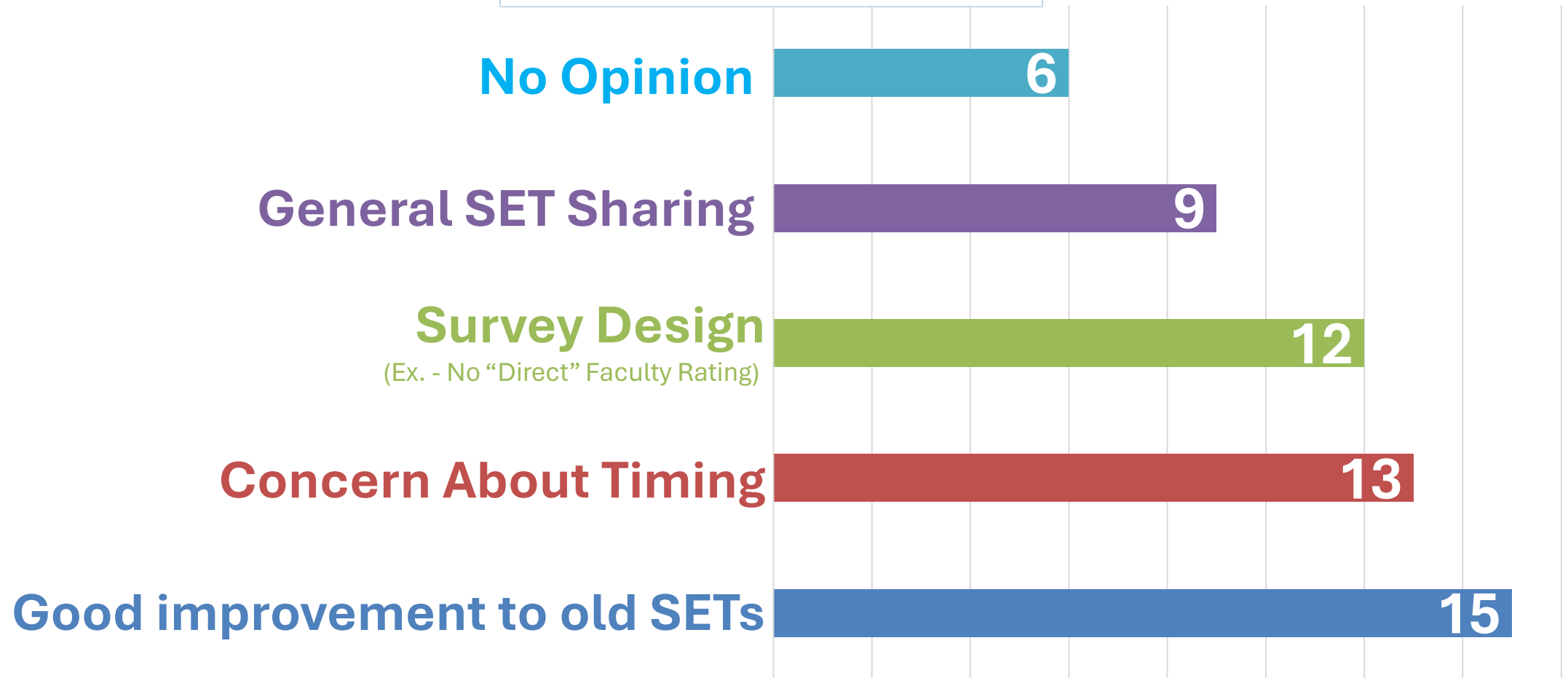
Disagree



McNichols plus Aquinas, also sent to adjuncts [N = 96]

What are the Feedback Survey Results? II

Emerging Themes



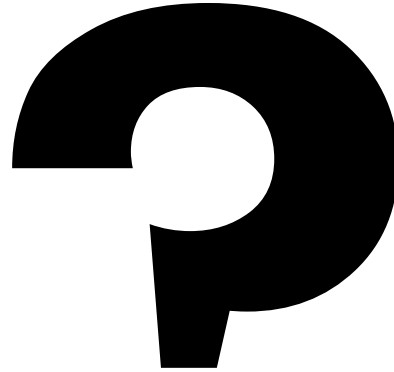
Items for the EFT ITF to consider for its final report (N = 45)

What Happens Next?

- Shorter Term
 - Compilation of feedback from survey, townhalls
 - Report to Provost with recommendation on W24
- Longer Term
 - Master set of review templates for peer observation and course materials for all of Detroit Mercy
 - Training in how to use new data for Depts, Colleges/Schools T+P, Deans, McN T+P, Provost

Work Continues

Thanks to All Who Participated!



Questions?

A Matter of Timing

- When to have Detroit Mercy's SRLs open

First – should different academic units have different schedules?

Second – best practices (negative effect on response rate, message it sends students about our trust in their feedback)

Response feedback item from surveys

Literature Best Practices on Timing of “SETs”

“On balance, it seems that there is very little to be concerned about with these seven areas of interest: i) SET data are not dominated by students with strong negative emotions; ii) SET data are not significantly skewed by angry students who fail the unit; iii) unit size has only a small effect overall, with mixed effects at the faculty level which may reflect genuine concerns rather than bias; iv) student citizenship does have a small effect, but gender does not; v) international students have a net positive effect on SET ratings rather than a negative one; vi) racism and sexism do not dominate SET ratings; and, vii) the effects of examinations on SET scores are negligible.”

Spooen, P.; Vandermoere, F.; Vanderstraeten, R.; Pepermans, K.
Exploring high impact scholarship in research on student’s evaluation of teaching (SET), Educational Research Review, **2017**, 22, 129-141.

Arnold, I. J. M.
Do examinations influence student evaluations?, International Journal of Educational Research, **2009**, 48, 215-224.

Eouanzoui, K. B.; Jones, J. A.
Should the Student Evaluation of Teaching Feedback Period End Before Finals Week?, Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association; April **2016**; Washington, D.C.

O’Donovan, R.
Missing the forest for the trees: investigating factors influencing student evaluations of teaching, Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 13 October **2023**.

Spooen, P.; Brockx, B.; Mortelmans, D.
On the Validity of Student Evaluation of Teaching: The State of the Art, Review of Educational Research, **2013**, 83(4), 598–642.

Williamson, A. L.; Wang, I. G.
Redesigning a Course Evaluation Instrument: Experience, Practical Guidance, and Lessons Learned, Journal of Management Education, **2023**, 47(4) 388–416.