

A comparison of concurrent vs. end-of course faculty evaluations shows that first impressions are important.

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PURPOSE

This study sought to enhance the process of faculty evaluations by testing the hypothesis that when students are given opportunities to evaluate faculty at the time of their lectures, the evaluations would be more formative.

EVALUATION DATA

Table. 1 Numbers of students and evaluations used in reporting the results.

	Concurrent Evaluations	End-of-class Evaluations	Total
Number of students submitting evaluations	38	94	132
Number of students submitting comments	31	58	89
Number of students who edited evaluations	7	N.A.	7
Total number of evaluations	305	1768	2073
Total number of comments	106	427	533
Percent of evaluations with comments	35%	24%	26%

MATERIALS AND METHODS

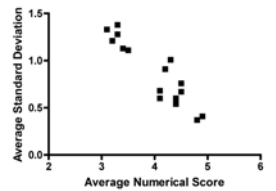
- 1) The data were collected from first year (M1) students at the Stritch School of Medicine (Loyola University Chicago) during their integrated course in physiology and histology, which included 16 faculty lecturers..
- 2) **Evaluation instrument:** A secure web-based application was developed to collect student evaluations of faculty. Students rated faculty on a 1-5 Likert scale for the following three areas: 1. The lecturer related the content to the learning objectives; 2. The lecturer communicated effectively; and 3. The lecturer added to my understanding in a way that I could not have done on my own. A text box was also available for students to include comments.
- 3) **Administration of Kolb's Learning Style Inventory (LSI):** All students were offered an opportunity to take the paper-based version of Kolb's LSI (Version 3) through the Teaching and Learning Center at matriculation. The majority of students (90%) elected to complete the instrument.
- 4) **Data Collection and Analysis:** Student evaluations of faculty were considered "early" or "Concurrent" if they were posted anytime between the first day of class and the last lecture. "End of class" or "late" evaluators were allowed three weeks from the final exam to complete their evaluations. Data were collected from the server logs. All data were entered into Excel spreadsheets. Once the data for individual students were entered, the names of students were deleted from the database prior to further analyses in order to maintain the confidentiality of individual students. The data were analyzed using Spearman's correlations and the Student's t-test.

RESULTS

1. Only 38 students (26% of the total) submitted an early evaluation (Table 1)..
2. Most students (99%) evaluated all 16 faculty.
3. More early evaluators (82%) included comments COMPARED TO 62% who submitted comments at the end of the course.
4. The average number of comments for early evaluators (5.3) was significantly higher ($p=0.03$) compared to the late evaluators (3.4).
5. Only 3% of the students changed their evaluations.
6. There was a significantly high correlation ($R = 0.91$; $p<0.0001$) between the average numerical scores faculty received from students who evaluated concurrently vs. those who evaluated at the end of the course.
7. There was a significant inverse correlation ($R = -0.92$; $p<0.001$) between the numerical scores for faculty and the standard deviations of those scores (Fig. 1)
8. There were no associations of learning style with any of the variables measured in our study.
9. Students who elected to evaluate concurrently had an average final grade (86.7) that was significantly higher ($p<0.03$) than those who evaluated at the end of class or not at all (83.9).

ASSOCIATIONS OF STDEVATIONS WITH FACULTY SCORES

Fig. 1 Inverse correlation between the average numerical score AND the average standard deviation for that score for each of the 16 faculty evaluated.



The data indicate that there was consensus among the students for faculty receiving high evaluations whereas other faculty had mixed evaluations.

CONCLUSIONS

- 1) Giving students an opportunity to evaluate faculty coincident with their teaching does not affect their evaluations numerically.
- 2) Early evaluators tend to provide more comments.
- 3) Students who provide written comments tend to be those who achieve better grades in the course.