

Student Learning Experiences Survey

Faculty Primer

Presented by:

Dr. Markeya Peteranetz
Learning Assessment Coordinator
Engineering and Computing Education Core
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
peteranetz@unl.edu

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Welcome to the Faculty Primer on the new Student Learning Experiences (SLE) survey.

The purpose of this presentation is to acquaint you with the new SLE survey, the data it generates, and the recommendations that have been put forth for interpreting and using the data.

Overview

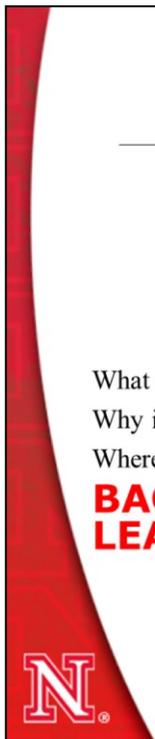
1. What about teaching evaluation is changing at UNL?
2. Why is there a new student survey?
3. Where did the survey questions come from?
4. How will the survey be administered?
5. What does the survey look like?
6. How am I supposed to use the survey data?
7. How is my department supposed to use the survey data?
8. How can I get more students to complete the survey?



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During this video, we will go over a number of important topics related to questions you might have about the new SLE survey. Questions such as,

1. What about teaching evaluation is changing at UNL?
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4. How will the survey be administered?
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6. How am I supposed to use the survey data?
7. How is my department supposed to use the survey data?
8. How can I get more students to complete the survey?
9. Let's dive in.



What about teaching evaluation is changing at UNL?
Why is there a new student survey?
Where did the survey questions come from?

**BACKGROUND ON THE NEW STUDENT
LEARNING EXPERIENCES SURVEY**



First, we are going to go over some background information about the SLE survey.

What about teaching evaluation is changing at UNL?

Task Force = EVC + ITS

1. Creating a common course evaluation survey
2. Common platform for survey
3. Academic policies and practices related to the survey



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During the 2018-2019 academic year, faculty from across campus, including representatives from the college of engineering, joined with representatives from the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor and Information Technology Services to form the Common Online Student Course Evaluation Task Force. This group reviewed and provided recommendations on the possible creation of a common set of core questions for the course evaluation survey, a common platform for distributing this survey, and academic policies and practices surrounding the distribution and use of such a survey.

One of the outcomes of this task force was the recommendation that teaching evaluation include three different sources of data: student feedback, as generated from the SLE survey, peer review, and instructor reflection. As of the spring of 2020, there has not yet been a decision as to what is expected for peer review and instructor reflection in the College of Engineering, but the new SLE survey is being introduced with the understanding that it is the first component of the new three-pronged approach to teaching evaluation at the university.

Why is there a new student survey?

- Reviewed literature and existing survey questions
 - Desire for a survey that is less biased and could be used more fairly and equitably.
1. Positive student-faculty interactions
 2. Effective active learning strategies
 3. Achievable, yet high expectations
 4. Respect for diverse talents, ways of learning and viewpoints
 5. Effective communication skills
 6. Commitment to effective teaching



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The Common Online Student Course Evaluation Task Force created and piloted the SLE survey after reviewing the academic literature on teaching evaluation in higher education as well as the processes and questions used across UNL, at other institutions, and by education researchers. Because research has found that traditional student evaluations are prone to bias against certain groups of instructors, such as women and people of color, primary concerns in creating this survey were to minimize bias and increase fairness and equity in how data are used.

Through their review, the task force identified 6 topics to be addressed by the survey:

- (1) Positive student-faculty interactions
- (2) Effective active learning strategies
- (3) Achievable, yet high expectations
- (4) Respect for diverse talents, ways of learning and viewpoints
- (5) Effective communication skills
- (6) Commitment to effective teaching

All six of these areas are part of effective teaching and connect directly to students' classroom experiences, making them appropriate for the student survey.

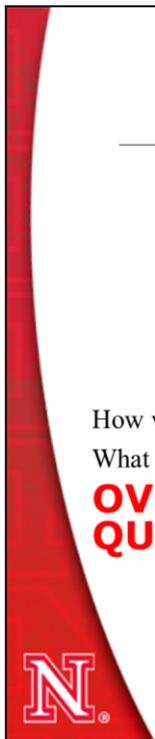
Where did the survey questions come from?

- A task force subcommittee selected an initial set of questions
- The task force reviewed the questions and made changes
- 130 instructors piloted the survey
- Changes were made based on student and instructor feedback



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Based on the six topics identified on the previous slide, a task force subcommittee selected an initial set of questions that were similar to a question set that had been used by the University of Oregon. These questions were then reviewed by the whole task force, and some changes were made before the questions were piloted as a mid-term survey by a group of 130 instructors in the spring of 2019. Following the pilot, more changes were made based on student and instructor feedback, resulting in the survey that has been adopted by the University.



How will the survey be administered?
What does the survey look like?

OVERVIEW OF SURVEY FORMAT AND QUESTIONS



Next, we are going to look at the survey's format and questions.

How will the survey be administered?

- EvaluationKit → Canvas
- For EvaluationKit info/help, visit <https://executivevc.unl.edu/academic-excellence/teaching-resources/course-evaluations>
- For video tutorials on using EvaluationKit, visit https://canvas.unl.edu/courses/1374/pages/evaluationkit-resources?module_item_id=1326967



The platform being used to deploy the survey and manage the data is called EvaluationKit. EvaluationKit works through the UNL version of Canvas to administer the survey to most students. For courses that do not have a Canvas presence or are taught through the Omaha side of Canvas, the survey can be sent to students via email.

For more information or help with EvaluationKit, visit the EVC's website on course evaluations. If you'd like to see what EvaluationKit looks like for instructors, learn how to manage open and close dates for the survey, add your own questions, and view results, you can visit the resource page in canvas that has been created by the College of Business. These links will be given again at the end of the presentation.

What does the survey look like?

- 10 agree/disagree questions
- 2 select from a list + open ended questions
- 4 student info questions



The SLE survey has three groups of questions. First, are 10 questions that are presented with a 5-point agree/disagree response scale. These 10 items align with the 6 topics that were identified by the Common Online Student Course Evaluation Task Force. Next are two questions that ask students to select from a list of elements that which was most beneficial to their learning and that which could use some improvement. These questions are also presented with a text box and a request to provide comments related to their answer. Finally, four questions about general student information are given. We'll look at all 16 of these items next.

Educational research has identified the elements in the below statements as being important to student learning. For each statement, please select your level of agreement regarding your learning experiences in this course.

1. I feel welcome and respected.

Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither Agree nor Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
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2. I understand course expectations and how my performance is evaluated.

Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither Agree nor Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
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3. I feel challenged to learn a lot in this course.

Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither Agree nor Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
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4. Course activities effectively promote my learning and interest in the subject.

Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither Agree nor Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
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5. The learning tools (e.g. course texts, notes, slides, videos, exams, projects, etc.) support my learning.

Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither Agree nor Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
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6. I am invited to be an active participant in my learning (either face to face or online).

Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither Agree nor Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
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7. I have opportunities to learn with and from other students in this course.

Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither Agree nor Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
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8. The feedback I receive on my work is useful to me for making changes and improvements.

Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither Agree nor Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
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9. I know where to go for help in this course if, and when, I need it.

Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither Agree nor Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
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10. I find communication with the instructor (e.g. office hours, email, Canvas, etc.) effectively supports my learning.

Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither Agree nor Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
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Here are the 10 agree/disagree scale items. You may pause the video to read each of them.



11. What has been beneficial to your learning? From the following list of teaching elements, what is the one thing that has been the most beneficial for your learning in this course so far? Please provide written comments about the element you selected.

- Inclusiveness
- Course Performance Expectations
- Course Challenge
- Engagement in Assignments or Projects
- Course Learning Materials and Tools
- Active Learning Opportunities
- Quality Interactions with Students
- Timely and Useful Feedback for Improvement
- Support
- Instructor Communication
- Other
- Not Applicable

12. What could use some improvement? From the following list of teaching elements, what is the one thing that could most use some improvement to increase your learning? Please provide written comments about the element you selected.

Here is the first item presenting the list of elements. And as you can see, the second item looks the same, but has a different prompt.



This course is:

- Required by my major/degree
- Required by my college
- A chosen elective
- Don't know/choose not to answer

I spend the following average number of hours studying and/or preparing for this course per week:

- Less than 1 hour
- Between 1-4 hours
- Between 4-7 hours
- Between 7-10 hours
- More than 10 hours

My attendance in this class so far:

- Missed less than 3 classes
- Missed 3-5 classes
- Missed $\frac{1}{4}$ of classes
- Missed more than half of classes

My anticipated grade for this class is:

- A
- B
- C
- D
- F
- Do not know

The student information questions ask students about whether the course is required, how much time they spent studying for the course, their attendance, and their anticipated grade for the class.

Adding your own questions

- Will appear at the end of the survey
- Should provide clear, specific, actionable information
- https://canvas.unl.edu/courses/1374/pages/adding-questions-to-your-survey?module_item_id=1326969



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It is possible for instructors to add their own questions to the survey within EvaluationKit. Any added items will appear at the end of the survey, following all the items that were just shown. It is recommended that any added items have a clear purpose and provide specific information that can be used for improvement. Avoid questions like “how would you rate this course overall” that do not lend themselves to information that can guide you towards making improvements. This link will take you to the video created by the College of Business that demonstrates how to add your own questions in Evaluation Kit.

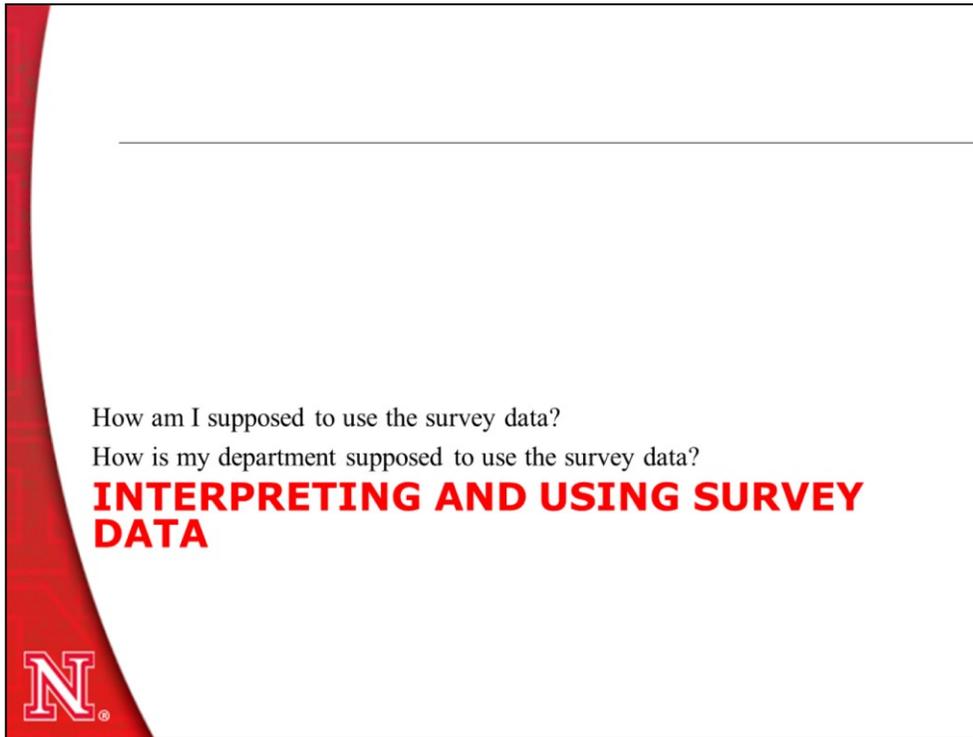
Adding a mid-semester survey

- Create new “project” in EvaluationKit
- Give during second quarter (4-8 weeks into a 15 week course)
- Can be only custom items
- Keep it short
- Focus on actionable information
 - *What aids your learning in this course, and why?*
 - *What impedes your learning in this course, and why?*
- Only use data formatively



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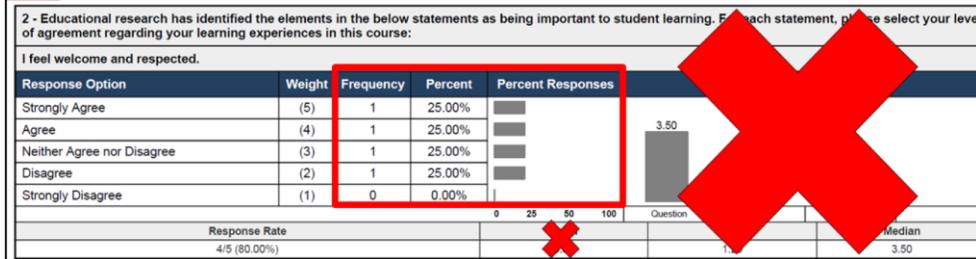
It is also possible for instructors to conduct a mid-semester survey through EvaluationKit. In order to add a mid-semester survey, you must create a new “project” within EvaluationKit. Mid-semester surveys should be given during the second quarter of a course, so between weeks 4 and 8 of a standard 15 week course. These surveys can consist of only custom-made items if you’d like. It is recommended that the survey be kept short and items focus on generating information that can be used for improvement within that semester, such as “What aids your learning in this course, and why?” and “What impedes your learning in this course, and why?”. Mid-semester evaluations should only be used formatively, and not be included in any summative evaluations.



Finally, we will review recommendations for interpreting and using the data generated by the SLE survey.

How am I supposed to use the survey data?

- DON'T compare SLE survey results to old student evaluation results.
- Always consider and report class size and response rates.
- DON'T look at means. DO look at proportions per response option.



The College of Engineering SLE Survey Task Force has put forth a set of recommendations related to the appropriate uses of SLE Survey data. First, do not attempt to compare results of the new survey with prior results from the old student evaluation forms. The two cover similar topics but are different enough that they should not be compared.

Second, always consider and report class size and response rates. With small classes, a small number of students providing a different response could lead to major shifts in results. With low response rates, the responding students are more likely to represent the extreme ends of the experience spectrum.

Third, the report produced by EvaluationKit will give both means and proportions for the response-scale items, but focus on proportions of students responding with each option rather than item means. Interpretations and reporting, for summative evaluation purposes, should be based on the proportion of students answering agree or strongly agree for each item.

How am I supposed to use the survey data?

- Consider how the different items align with individual teaching goals.
 - Set personal benchmarks.
 - e.g., 90% of students marking agree or strongly agree
 - Don't forget about the open-ended questions!
- Make comparisons for different courses, sections, and/or cohorts – but only for formative purposes
 - Especially if you're making intentional changes to your teaching



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In order to make the survey results most personally useful for improving your teaching, take time early in the semester, or at least before reviewing your results, to consider how the different items align with your personal teaching goals. For example, if you are focused on increasing the use of active learning strategies in your classroom, you might be particularly interested in responses to the item “I am invited to be an active participant in my learning (either face to face or online).” After identifying items that relate most to your teaching goals, set personal benchmarks, or targets, for those items, such as having 90% of students marking agree or strongly agree for the item.

Also consider how the list-items and their associated open-ended questions might align with your teaching goals. Students' comments can provide a great deal of useful information about topics not covered in the other survey items, and might also suggest ways you've made improvements.

Finally, compare results across your courses, sections, or semesters—but only for your own formative assessment purposes. This can be especially useful if you're making intentional changes to your teaching, such as trying out new pedagogies or adding new kinds of learning activities.

How is my department supposed to use the survey data?

- Departments should come up with thresholds for "acceptable" levels for each of the items
 - e.g., 75% of students marking agree or strongly agree
 - Do not have to be the same for each item
 - Can vary according to factors (course size, course level, etc.)
 - For now, they should NOT vary based on delivery mode (e.g., online vs. in person)
- All thresholds should be documented and made easily accessible for relevant faculty
- Summative evaluation should NOT use item mean scores or comparisons to department means.



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Departments should come up with thresholds for "acceptable" levels for each of the items (for example, 75% of students marking agree or strongly agree). These thresholds do not have to be the same for each item and could also be allowed to vary according to other factors such as course size or course level. For now, it is recommended that department thresholds NOT vary based on delivery mode (e.g., online vs. in person). Although this type of comparison might be warranted, it must first be determined whether the SLE survey items are equally appropriate across delivery modes.

All department thresholds should be documented and made easily accessible for relevant faculty, such as in a shared Box folder.

Finally, summative evaluation such as annual reviews and promotion and tenure reviews, should also focus on proportions and performance relative to thresholds, and should not be based on SLE mean scores or department means.

How can I get more students to complete the survey?

- Provide class time for completing the survey
- Explain to students how you use the results to make changes
- Extra credit
 - Small number of points
 - Must be based on collective completion, not individual



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The final topic in this video is increasing response rates. Guidance has been put forth by the EVC's office with regard to incentivizing students to complete the SLE survey.

First, consider giving students time in class to complete the survey. If you decide to do this, think about using the procedures for the old paper-based evaluations: give students a few minutes at the end of class, and then leave the room so they have a greater sense of anonymity in responding.

Second, let your students know how you use the survey results to make changes. Students are more willing to complete surveys when they believe someone will look at their responses and make use of them.

Finally, you have the option to give extra credit points related to the survey, but only if done in a way that is fair to all students and still makes the survey truly optional. This means the number of points offered must be small relative to the total number of points available in the course. If the extra credit offer is too large, it becomes coercive, and also has the potential to diminish the validity of the grades assigned for the class. Clearly, a grade that is boosted 15% just by completing the survey no longer reflects the students' learning in the class. Also, if you choose to give extra credit for survey completion, it cannot be based on students individual completion of the survey, but rather must be based on the class's collective completion. The surveys are done anonymously, so individual completion cannot be tracked through EvaluationKit, and even if it could, completing the surveys

must be completely optional. The EVC's office recommends setting a target completion rate for the class, such as 80%, and then awarding the entire class the extra credit points if that target is hit.

Useful links:

- For EvaluationKit info/help, visit <https://executivevc.unl.edu/academic-excellence/teaching-resources/course-evaluations>
- For video tutorials on using EvaluationKit, visit https://canvas.unl.edu/courses/1374/pages/evaluation-kit-resources?module_item_id=1326967



Here again are the links for EvaluationKit that were given earlier in the video. If you have questions about the SLE survey or using the data it generates, you can contact me, Markeya Peteranetz, or your department's representative on the Continuous Improvement of Teaching and Learning Committee.