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CLT's new initiative: mid-semester feedback for instructors

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For many reasons, end-of-course evaluation data are not enough. They come in too late to benefit the students doing the evaluation and they do not give us the details we need. They are a one way communication, and students do not believe they make a difference. Feedback activities during the semester are much more effective, and faculty who use these techniques learn more about how to improve their course than they would from end-of-semester evaluations¹.

Over the past year and a half the Center for Learning and Teaching has conducted Small Group Instructional Diagnoses² (SGID) for 36 courses and faculty members have been highly satisfied with the results. However the method is time consuming and labor intensive, and although we continue doing these SGIDs, we have now started a new initiative that also helps you get feedback from students in time to make adjustments for the remainder of the semester. Basically we meet with you and find out what kind of feedback you want. We have a sample questionnaire that we can adapt, or we can start one from scratch to meet your needs. We then administer your survey through WebCT (anonymously). After compiling and analyzing the responses, we send you a report, usually within less than a week.

Here are some comments from faculty members who have used these mid-semester surveys

- *"I hope it encourages a lot of other instructors to do mid-semester surveys. I know it's the most useful means I've encountered of improving teaching methods and student-teacher rapport"*
- *"You can quote me with my name. It is a great service that you are providing to professors. And I have already told several professors to contact you..." (Dr Vikash Yadav, Political Science)*
- *"Wow! This is really excellent and very useful. I am sure the comments in the ... will be tougher, but I am delighted to get such feedback in the middle of the term."*
- *"I am so happy to have such detailed responses. And the most encouraging thing is that the students seemed so willing to participate! Great feedback."*

and from students

- *"... It makes me as a student feel comfortable that the doctor is giving me a chance to express myself"*
- *"... it allows students to become more involved in the course. It also shows that professors respect the students' opinions and requests by taking them into consideration."*

If you're interested in a mid-term survey, please email us at bali@aucegypt.edu or call Maha Bali on ext. 6635

Sources

1. Davis, Barbara G. Tools for Teaching. 1st. ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993.
2. Mettetal, Gwynn. "Essays on Teaching Excellence: Toward the Best in the Academy." The Professional & Organizational Development Network in Higher Education 14, 7 (2004). 30 Oct 2005 <http://academic.udayton.edu/FacDev/Newsletter/EssaysforTeachingExcellence/PODvol114>.

Share with us your experiences by contributing to the New Chalk Talk series, or by simply sending comments/suggestions to aellozy@aucegypt.edu