September 27, 2013:
Teaching Evaluations: What You Think They Tell Us, What
They Do Tell Us, and What They Don't Tell Us

Mika LaVaque-Manty and David Cottrell, UM

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TEACHING EVALUATIONS

What you think they tell us, what they do tell us, and what they don’t tell us. Sort of.

Mika LaVaque-Manty & David Cottrell, Political Science
The teaching eval project
The teaching eval project

**Context:**
Widespread concern about the existing system
The teaching eval project

**Context:**
Widespread concern about the existing system

- Response rates!
The teaching eval project

Context:
Widespread concern about the existing system

- Response rates!
- Single metric (E&E)
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Context:
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- Response rates!
- Single metric (E&E)
- Data reporting
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**Context:**
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- Response rates!
- Single metric (E&E)
- Data reporting
- Not shared with students
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- The &^*#! question bank
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Part of LATF charge

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- Evaluate current environment
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- Evaluate current tools
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  - ...and their use
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- Consider alternatives
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- Evaluate current environment
- Evaluate current tools
  - E&Es
  - ...and their use
- Consider alternatives
- Develop better tools
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Thanks to Kortney Briske, Anne Curzan, Phyllis Ford, William Gehring, James Holloway, Matt Kaplan, Mary Wright.
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- Evaluate current environment
- Evaluate current tools
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- Consider alternatives
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What do we have?
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- LSA & COE evals W05-W13
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  - 107,000 courses, 13,801 instructors (including LAB and DIS)
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- UM ratings on RateMyProfessors.com
What do we have?

- LSA & COE evals W05-W13
  - 107,000 courses, 13,801 instructors (including LAB and DIS)
- UM ratings on RateMyProfessors.com
  - 30,000 courses, 3,100 instructors
Some descriptive stats
“Focusing on Q1-Q4 misses out on important stuff.”
Q1
“Overall, this was an excellent course.”

Q2
“Overall, the instructor was an excellent teacher.”

Q3
“I learned a great deal from this course.”

Q4
“I had a strong desire to take this course.”
“Instructor acknowledged questions insofar as possible.” (Extremely low n)
"Instructor acknowledged questions insofar as possible." (Extremely low $n$)

"Grading was clear." (very small $n$)
"Instructor acknowledged questions insofar as possible."
(Extremely low \( n \))

"Grading was clear."
(very small \( n \))

"Workload in this course..."
Profs vs. GSIs
Gender
Overall, this was an excellent course.

Courses with >30 evals turned in:

- **Engineering**
- **Humanities**
- **Natural Science**
- **Social Science**

Monday, September 30, 13
Overall, this was an excellent teacher

Courses with >30 evals turned in

Monday, September 30, 13
“You can buy good evals by giving out good grades.”
I had a strong desire to take this course

Overall, this was an excellent course

I learned a great deal from this course

Overall, this is an excellent teacher
“Going electronic was a disaster.”
What happened to ratings, though?
Overall, this was an excellent course.
Overall, this was an excellent course
I learned a great deal in this course
I had a great desire to take this course

Monday, September 30, 13
The week-to-week probability of receiving a good review
(with 95% confidence intervals)
RateMyProfessors.com (RMP)

The week-to-week probability of receiving a good review
(with 95% confidence intervals)

Week

Percent Good Reviews

JAN  FEB  MAR  APRIL  MAY  JUNE  JULY  AUG  SEP  OCT  NOV  DEC

Monday, September 30, 13
RateMyProfessors.com (RMP)

The week-to-week probability of receiving a good review
(with 95% confidence intervals)

Percent Good Reviews

Week
The week-to-week probability of receiving a good review (with 95% confidence intervals)

Exam time!
Monday, September 30, 13

Overall, this was an excellent course

I learned a great deal in this course

I had a great desire to take this course

Overall, this was an excellent instructor
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I learned a great deal in this course
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Overall, this was an excellent course.
Overall, this was an excellent instructor.
I learned a great deal in this course.
I had a great desire to take this course.
Overall, this was an excellent course

Overall, this was an excellent instructor

I learned a great deal in this course

I had a great desire to take this course
But it’s not the rate as much the real numbers.
Year $t$ compared to year $t+1$: Fall/Winter terms, F08–W13

$R^2 = 0.41$
Year t compared to year t+1: Fall/Winter terms, F08–W13

$R^2 = 0.65$
Consistency of evaluations for a course over time.

Overall, this was an excellent course
Overall, this was an excellent instructor
I learned a great deal in this course
I had a great desire to take this course

Average Evaluation Prior to FALL 2011 vs. Average Evaluation Post FALL 2011

Consistency of evaluations for a course over time.
“Rate” my professors...
THE EFFECT OF EASINESS ON THE EVALUATION OF PROFESSOR QUALITY
FOR UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PROFESSORS ON RATEMYPROFESSOR.COM
Relationship between average university evalascore and RMP quality rating
Thank you.
Overall, this was an excellent course

I learned a great deal in this course

I had a great desire to take this course