



Evolution of a Course Evaluation: From Pilot to Established Program

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May we borrow/review your
program evaluation protocols?

Yes, but which ones?



The eCore[®] Program

- Pilot program allowing Georgia residents to complete their first two years of college education completely online
- Created in answer to the 1999 Regents Technology Principles, a BOR white paper on incorporating technology in higher education
- Focuses upon the collaborative development and delivery of web-based, asynchronous core curriculum courses



The eCore[®] Program

- Program uses WebCT as course management system (CMS) platform
- Courses are developed and taught by faculty from across the System
- Offered for credit through a consortium of institutions within the University System of Georgia (USG)



Development of eCore®

- Course Development began in Spring 2000
- Collaborative teams of 2-6 faculty, an instructional designer, and technologist
- Faculty representing 32 of 34 USG institutions have participated in either designing, instructing, or both



Development of eCore[®] (cont'd)

- Courses incorporated recent guidelines from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), requiring parity for services available to online students that roughly matched those services available to students in traditional face-to-face programs
- 23 core courses (48 sections) taught
 - Spring 2005
 - Course schedule and other administrative information:
<http://www.gactr.uga.edu/ecore/admin/index.html>



Evaluation Surveys

- Student Surveys
 - Student Profile Survey
 - Student Services Questionnaire
 - Student Course Evaluation Survey
- Faculty Surveys
 - Self-Evaluations



Faculty Surveys

Faculty were originally asked to complete two surveys

- Instruction and student issues
- Administrative details



Instruction and Student Issues Survey for Faculty

- 38-question survey
- Offered Fall 00, Spring 01, and Summer 01 before modified



Instruction and Student Issues Survey for Faculty

- To evaluate and revise course content and course structure
- To estimate the number of hours faculty devoted to various instructional activities
- To gain critical measures of feedback on the level of interaction within the courses



Instruction and Student Issues Survey for Faculty (cont'd)

- To measure effectiveness of the collaborative course development process
- To explore how faculty responded to enrolled students who did not initially “login” or stopped participating during the semesters
- To evaluate students’ grade distributions and make overall comparisons of their eCore[®] students with traditional, face-to-face students on grades, motivation, and engagement



Administrative Support and Infrastructure Survey for Faculty

- 33-question survey
- Offered Fall 00, Spring 01, and Summer 01 before modified



Administrative Support and Infrastructure Survey for Faculty

- To improve technical and administrative support
- To improve faculty training
- To assess the accuracy and timeliness of student roster information
- To assess the ease and effectiveness of access to System administrators
- To evaluate the course management system help desks
- To explore the mode and reliability of faculty Internet access



Administrative Support and Infrastructure Survey for Faculty (cont'd)

- To gather opinions on faculty modes of compensation for teaching the courses as determined by their institutions or departments, i.e., monetary payment or course releases, etc.
- To review faculty assessment (in part, through their student's feedback) on the System's handling of
 - advisory services
 - proctored exams
 - helpdesks
 - bookstore
 - online registration
 - library services



Combined eCore[®] Faculty Survey

- 33-question survey
- Survey first offered in Fall 01
- Primary reason for combining surveys:
 - As the administrative and technical glitches were resolved over time, the administrative survey provided increasingly less value and fewer insights



eCore[®] Faculty Survey (cont'd.)

Focused on six areas:

- Demographics (related to faculty rank and tenure status as well as gauging online teaching experience and how much time was spent on various teaching tasks during the semester)
- Faculty preparation, readiness, and support (explored the various teaching orientation and training procedures for eCore[®])
- Course design and objectives (reviewed effectiveness or ineffectiveness of course materials and exercises)



eCore[®] Faculty Survey (cont'd.)

- Assessing eCore[®] students (asking faculty to compare their online students with their traditional students in a number of categories)
- WebCT and technical difficulties (how often faculty required helpdesk assistance and asking how timely and effective were the responses)
- Faculty reflections and comments (what suggestions might they make to novice online faculty as well as thoughts on how their online experience has affected their approaches to teaching)



eCore[®] Faculty Survey (cont'd)

- As time went on we noticed that faculty response rates began to decline.
- The lower response rate seemed especially large for instructors who taught the same course for several semesters in succession.
- We came to the conclusion that faculty were becoming bored with answering the same series of questions for each and every term.



Veteran eCore[®] Faculty Survey

- In response to this situation we further adapted the surveys, now dividing the instructors into two categories:
 - online novices
 - online veterans
 - veterans defined as those instructors having taught two or more courses within eCore[®]



Veteran eCore[®] Faculty Survey (cont'd)

- 19-question survey
- Focused on
 - requests for suggesting ways to improve new faculty training
 - reflections on how their methods of instructions had evolved during their tenure as online instructors



Final phase

- As the program proved itself and student enrollment grew, the final stage of our pilot program arrived:

The transfer of its administration from the System Office to a governing body residing within one of the System's institutions.



Final phase (cont'd)

- Elements of the survey, once necessary for large-scale, System-wide and SACS requirements, were no longer considered necessary
- A committee was established to evaluate and redesign the faculty self-evaluations. The new intent of the survey was to:
 - provide individual faculty with more specific information that would benefit them the most
 - lesser concern of providing critical, overarching data that verified the program's success to its administrators.



Final phase (cont'd)

- Format of maintaining novice and veteran instructors retained
- Originally intended to delete, or reduce, questions relating to the help desk.
 - However, the USG switched course management systems from WebCT CE to WebCT Vista
- More focus on training procedures and materials and how they might be improved



Questions?

- All surveys can be viewed at:
<http://www.alt.usg.edu/research/best/surveyinstrument.phtml>
- PowerPoint presentation will be available at:
<http://alt.usg.edu/publications>
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