

Spring 5-12-2022

STUDENT COURSE EVALUATIONS: INSTRUCTOR EFFECTIVENESS AND LESSONS LEARNED

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STUDENT COURSE EVALUATIONS: INSTRUCTOR EFFECTIVENESS AND
LESSONS LEARNED

by

Kindalin K. Moses

A Doctoral Project Submitted to,
the College of Education and Human Sciences
and the School of Education
at The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

May 2022

This Doctoral Project was approved by:

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2022

Published by the School of Education



ABSTRACT

Student course evaluations and a cycle of instructional evaluation and improvement based on student feedback have long been established as essential to the process of quality of instructional improvement. Even though much has been written about student course evaluations in four-year universities, the research on the use of evaluation data in two-year colleges remains scarce.

To address this limitation, this research examined how student course evaluations can be maximized as a tool for instructional improvement and to assist the community college administration in assessing instructor effectiveness, the quality of their instructional programs, and the learning experiences of their students. Conducted at the largest community college in state of Mississippi, this study investigated the degree of instructor's effectiveness as reported by student evaluations and a relationship between instructor's effectiveness and (a) the quality of their learning environment, (b) the quality of their feedback, and (c) the quality of their communication. The results of this study were deduced from 4,936 student evaluations collected in spring 2021 across the college's six campuses (54.24% response rate). The positive relationships between all variables measured provides an important step in efforts to maximize course evaluation processes for two-year colleges. The project highlights the lessons learned from the process and implications for community college students, faculty, and staff.

Keywords: course evaluations, instructional evaluation, instructor effectiveness, instructional improvement, learning environment

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First acknowledgements are due to God for his grace, mercy, and fortitude he strengthened me throughout this academic journey. All we are, what we do, we do to honor Him. To my daughter, Crisalynn Moses, who is my cheerleader and prayer warrior thank you for staying up late with me while you completed your law course work. To my sisters, Melba Darden and Tommie Martin, I am forever grateful for your motivational texts and phone call conversations to push me a little bit further each day during this academic journey. To Mom, Daisy Sanders, I thank you for your inspiration and strength that I received through your home cooked meals when I would not stop to eat. Thank you for listening, offering me guidance, and supporting through this entire process.

Many thanks to the University of Southern Mississippi faculty – Dr. Richard Mohn, Dr. Jason K. Wallace, Dr. James Thomas, Dr. Shameka Woods, and Dr. Kyna Shelly who value the institution of education and their students. A special thanks to Carl Hill, Graduate Program Support Specialist and Dr. Holly Foster, Program Director, who encouraged me to visit the campus before enrolling and put me on track to start the best academic journey of my life! Special thanks to Dr. Emily Johnson who kicked off my initial study and Dr. Masha Krsmanovic for providing me with consistent and feedback throughout this capstone project. Dr. Krsmanovic, I am grateful to have you as an advisor, mentor, and professor. You provided me with the stamina to continue refining the capstone project. Also, a special thank you to Eva Layrea, Graduate Research Assistant. My sincere expression of gratitude to Hinds Community, especially Roderick Warner and Lakesha Smith. Without you all, I would not have completed my long-term academic goal.

Finally, this capstone project is testimony to the strength that is in us through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Thank You for blessing me with the academic resources and right people in my path to complete this milestone.

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my nephew, William R. Martin, and deceased Dad, Learance “Jim” Sanders. Thank you, Will, for your unwavering support and belief in me. I want to thank you, Will, for your Facetime, consistent phone calls and text message to check on my progress and encouraging me to get complete my study as well as get some sleep.

To my dad, my angel, I know you hear me – I would like to thank you for emphasizing the importance of hard work and education. To my parents, thank you for always being there for me and encouraging me in my studies.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
HCC	Hinds Community College
NCLB	No Child Left Behind Act
OIR	Office of Institutional Research
OIRE	Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness
QEP	Quality Enhancement Plan
SACSCOC	Southern Association of Colleges on Schools
SET	Student Evaluation of Teaching

CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

The purpose and use of course evaluations are evolving. Higher education institutions continue to use the results of course evaluations as a critical tool for decision-making processes related to instruction. Most colleges and universities ask students to participate in official end-of-semester evaluations as a part of broader assessment processes within these institutions. Years after the Second World War are usually described as the time when college faculty had most authority and autonomy. During this time, perceptions among both faculty and administrators emerged that implementing evaluation process might lead to improved performance of their institutions, as well as help mitigate the bias that may have been formed in traditional teaching and supervisory methods. Many also believed that evaluations could help colleges and universities identify and focus on their distinctive goals (Geber, 2020). Institutions use course evaluations as informative feedback instrument to enhance student desire to improve and to continue to learn. Effective instruction can be described as facilitating student learning and development, as well as motivating students to overcome any barriers to learning that might be in place. Effective instruction also includes designing and delivering content in student-centered and student-appropriate ways, including the implementation of active learning strategies. The practice of using evaluations and student feedback to inform improvement decisions has long been established as central to ensuring that the improvements made are of adequate quality (Brown et al., 1997).

Purpose of Course Evaluations

The improvement of teaching and learning has been defined as when faculty and instructional staff are presented with an opportunity to use student feedback to engage in a reflective and productive dialogue (Brockbank & McGill, 1998). There are many benefits to

receiving student feedback from course evaluations. Students can help improve their courses, while instructors have feedback to assist in improving their teaching. To the present day, the question remains as to why exactly students complete course evaluations. Student course evaluations serve a wide range of purposes, such as providing quality assurance, improvement, transparency, justification for and protection of the public learning, and motivation.

In line with their multiple purposes, different terms have been used to describe student course evaluations. Scholarly evidence points out to numerous terms used to describe the formal processes of evaluating college instruction, with the most prominent ones being student evaluations of teaching (SET), student course evaluations, and student rating of instruction (Gravestock & Greenleaf, 2008). Student course evaluations are based on soliciting feedback on different instructional attributes with each pertaining to a clearly defined aspect of a course, instruction, or instructor. Additionally, this process has been designed to gather the information about course design, instructional delivery, and instructor's performance. Cashin (1995) noted that six questions that commonly appear in this process center on the course content, the ability of instructor to communicate effectively, interactions between instructor and students, perceived difficulty of the course and the associated workload, assessment structures and practices, and self-reflective questions for students.

History of Student Course Evaluation

The history of student course evaluation dates back to the 1920s and University of Wisconsin where student evaluations served as formative feedback for faculty to help them become more familiar with the needs of their students (Haskell, 1997). The scholarship on student evaluations is commonly divided into four periods. The era from 1927 to 1960 is characterized by the research of Remmers and his colleagues at Purdue University. The period

from 1960s is known as the time when the use of student evaluations was an optional, voluntary, and not as widespread assessment tool as compared to the present day. The third period is the 1970s, which Haskell called the golden age of research on student evaluations. The scholarship from this period offers evidence on how student evaluations were used for both formative and summative outcomes, thus demonstrating their increased application in higher education. The last period, spanning from 1980s until the present day, brought increased scholarly and practical interest in student evaluations. As a result, numerous research studies have been produced to measure their effectiveness, including large-scale projects such as meta-analyses (Watchel, 1998).

Types of Student Course Evaluations

There are two types of student course evaluations: formative and summative. Student course evaluations can be administered while the course is in progress (formative) or at the end (summative). The purpose of the formative student course evaluation is to provide feedback for course improvement while the course is being taught. The purpose of summative student course evaluation is to provide an overall evaluation of the course from which the instructor is to make long term improvements to the course and their teaching. In order for evaluation processes to be effective, they need to consolidate formative and summative data. Specifically, summative results should not be interpreted or applied independent of formative feedback as both serve as invaluable resources for instructors to improve their day-to-day practices (Little et al., 2009). Most commonly, formative course evaluations are evaluations delivered midway of any 10 week or longer course. Summative course evaluations are course evaluations delivered at the end of the term for all classes. Results are not returned to the instructor until after the end of the semester.

Quality of Teaching and Learning

Teacher quality matters. Little et al., (2009) noted that No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act mandates that all teachers must be highly qualified, a requirement which refers to teachers having stipulated licenses and certifications from their states. Today, most teachers meet this requirement. On the other hand, it can be argued, and it is often demonstrated in practice, that being highly qualified, as defined by federal mandates, does not automatically transfer into, or guarantee effective instruction, and especially student learning. For example, developing an approach that values different and multiple instructor's characteristics may promote collaborative learning environment. Still, the question remains as to what makes an instructor highly effective and how such effectiveness can be measured. As illustrated in the abundant and colorful literature in this domain, teaching effectiveness can encompass many attributes. Consequently, effective instruction can be measured in many different ways and for many different purposes. Still, the outcome of this process must always be unanimous – facilitate student learning. In that regard, one the primary purposes of course evaluations should be to identify limitations of one's instruction or course design and offer actionable recommendations for overcoming the identified challenges by implementing appropriate strategies.

Instructor Effectiveness

The primary criteria for determining success or teacher effectiveness are these measures of feedback from student course evaluations and changes in quality of learning, including academic, physical, or social. Comparable to modern evidence, early scholarship linked effective instruction with increased contact between students and instructors and between students themselves. Additionally, effective teaching was described as incorporation of active learning strategies, having clear guidelines regarding student outcomes, offering timely feedback, and

ensuring respect for pluralistic thinking and learning (Chickering & Gamson, 1989). Additionally, prior studies connected effective instruction with students' ability to learn course content and think critically (Anderson, 2012), communicate effectively (Nargundkar & Shrikhande, 2012), and develop intellectually (Bowman & Seifert, 2011). Instructors who implement critical thinking skills approaches and employ different instructional strategies improve student learning. Instructors are the core participants in the assessment of the process, and the focus is on building their quality of instruction and improving student learning. Instructors should be the ones who benefit the most because the knowledge they gain from the evaluations should be beneficial in helping to refine their pedagogy.

Chapter II of this study identifies common threads that took precedence over other threads related to course evaluation. These common threads included: incentives to increase response rates, reliability, and validity of student course evaluations for formative and summative purposes, purpose and use of student course evaluations, and student and faculty perceptions about student course evaluations (Sauer, 2012). Overall, student evaluations of teaching continue to serve as a widespread and influential practice in colleges and universities (Chen & Hoshower, 2003). In the age of increased institutional accountability, student course evaluations and other student input have gained widespread use in many colleges and universities. University leaders and staff commonly rely on such data to inform their academic, curricular, and instructional practices.

Statement of the Problem

This study began because the author served on a college committee tasked with supporting faculty in their efforts to assess student learning outcomes for programmatic, teaching, and learning improvement. The Committee is chaired by a faculty member and is

comprised of faculty representatives from various disciplines and curriculum coordinators. Standing members include the Vice President for Instructional Affairs, Dean of Instruction, Director for Center for Teaching and Learning, and Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Research. Additionally, the author served as the chair of Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) which establishes explicit goals and objectives, and details plans to assess student learning outcomes, learning environment, and the role of the QEP in fulfilling the mission of the Hinds Community College. Course evaluations from students and mentors serve as a direct assessment of progress on learning outcomes. These experiences raised question as to how the institution is utilizing the results of the course evaluations. Thus, the committee engaged in comprehensive analysis of scholarship on student course evaluation in higher education. A review by Cohen et al. (2014) stood out as the most prominent and applied resource. Cohen et al. strongly emphasized the need for national accountability initiatives, arguing that the assessments of student learning progress and outcomes on college campuses have most frequently been conducted by institutional researchers for the purposes of advancing academic and student support programs or student academic progress and attainment. For many years, student course evaluations have been utilized to provide feedback about modalities of instruction in courses and assure educational quality. In most cases, the college or university Office of Institutional Research (OIR) or Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (OIRE) at the Hinds Community College is responsible for conducting the course evaluations each summer, fall, and spring semester or term.

Student course evaluation is a form of assessment. The overarching goal of the assessment is to improve student learning and to satisfy accountability requirements. Given the importance of student learning assessment, it is critical to ensure that student course evaluations fulfill their intended purpose. Because student course evaluations are an assessment utilized by

faculty, deans, curriculum coordinators, and chairs, this study is critical to ensure the quality of academic programs, instruction, and student learning.

It is the policy of Hinds of Community College to evaluate each instructor by course. Student evaluations are an important to the success of classroom experience. The Board of Trustees has a fiduciary responsibility to Hinds Community College. That responsibility is to safeguard the educational mission of the institution, thereby ensuring the quality of instruction and training and that students receive is of the highest standard and that the institution operates effectively. The President leads the institution in planning, management, and administration, while the faculty are charged with the design and delivery of the educational program and employees conduct the administrative and support functions of the College. It is therefore the policy of the College, consistent with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) accreditation principles and good management practices, that faculty and employees be regularly evaluated for their work in delivering instruction, training, student services, administrative and support functions (Hinds Community College District Policy Manual, 2020). Clearly, the requirement for student course evaluation process has become a priority to maintain ongoing improvement of educational quality and its effectiveness in achieving its mission.

A large amount of research has been conducted on the topic of student course evaluations, as a measure of students' engagement or involvement with their learning, and as a measure on instructor effectiveness of instructional programs. In many cases, course evaluations offer the only opportunity for students to provide necessary feedback that can be used to advance the quality of teaching and learning. Much has been written about student course evaluations in higher education, still, the use of evaluation data in two-year colleges remains limited.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to examine how student course evaluations can be maximized as a tool for instructional improvement and to assist the College's administration in assessing instructor effectiveness, the quality of its instructional programs, and the learning experiences of the students. A related purpose of the study is to determine best practices in higher education faculty development and evaluation processes. Therefore, the goal of the study is twofold. The first goal is to provide information for improving courses and course evaluation approach. The second goal is to assist the College's administration in assessing teaching effectiveness and educational quality.

Research Questions

Course evaluations continue to serve as a widespread assessment tool adopted by colleges and universities due to their potency to offer valuable insights into students' perceptions about the quality of their learning environment and instructional practices (Spooren et al, 2013). With student evaluations being such a common measurement tool for assessing instructor's teaching effectiveness and quality of student learning, it is imperative to examine the relationship of teacher characteristics and instructional practices on their overall effectiveness. The questions guiding this study are aimed to provide a collection and analysis of information used for documenting instructor effectiveness as measured by examining the quality of learning environment, quality of instructor's communication, and quality of instructor's feedback. This study addresses the following questions:

RQ 1: What is the degree of instructor's effectiveness as reported by student evaluations?

RQ 2: Is there a relationship between instructor's effectiveness and the quality of learning environment?

RQ 3: Is there a relationship between instructor's effectiveness and the quality of their feedback?

RQ 4: Is there a relationship between the quality of instructor's feedback and the quality of their communication?

Limitations, Delimitations, and Assumptions

Limitations are effects or conditions that the researcher cannot control. Delimitations are choices made by the researcher, which should be stated because they describe the boundaries that the researcher has set for the study. A delimitation of the study is that the research focused on the largest community college in the state of Mississippi, Hinds Community College. This study was delimited to student course evaluations from one semester at the College. The main limitation of this study was that the course evaluations that participants completed were voluntary, which might have affected participation. Additionally, the following two assumptions were made – the survey instrument used in this study is valid, and if faculty do not delineate the importance of course evaluations, students believe that course evaluation are not important.

Definition of Terms

Assessment. For the purpose of this research, assessment is defined as a part of educational processes where faculty evaluate student learning by interpreting the information related to student performance collected under controlled conditions. This information must be in alignment with course curriculum and learning objectives set for the students (Ghaicha, 2016).

Face-to-face delivery. Traditional course delivery refers to instruction that occurs in the classroom in an institution of higher learning with regular face-to-face interactions between the students and instructors. Traditional is also known as in-person instruction.

Hybrid course delivery. A mixture of face-to-face and online with no more than 50% of instruction being delivered online.

Instructional Program. For the purpose of this research, it denotes a systematic educational activity used to meet instructional objectives.

Online course delivery. In this study, online course delivery refers to the instruction that occurs solely online through the internet with regular two-way communication between the students and instructors

Remote course delivery. Refers to instruction where the instructor lectures live to a class of students either in person or online.

Theoretical Framework

Two theories were used to frame this study: Evaluation Theory Tree and Responsive Approach Theory. In developing the term Evaluation Theory Tree, Alkin and Christie (2004) argued that a growing need for accountability results in a growing need for evaluation. The Evaluation Theory Tree is guided by three founding principles: use, methods, and valuing.

The Evaluation Theory is grounded in the metaphor of tree with three strong branches. The roots of the tree represent accountability and control. The branches are labeled as the use, methods, and valuing. Scattered along the branches are theorists who were significant in evaluation. The three branches are: (1) *use* – ensuring that the feedback from evaluation process is adequately applied by the appropriate audience; (2) *methods* – constructing knowledge and generalizability from the evaluation process; and (3) *valuing* – making informed judgements. The two trunks are *accountability* – accounting for actions and resources utilized, and *social inquiry* – the methods we use to collect the information we need to determine accountability. These three branches and two trunks from the Evaluation Theory that guided and supported this

research focus of course evaluation between the academic program, goals represent the branches, and strategic goals of the educational institution represent the trunk.

Robert Stake's Responsive Evaluation Approach Theory was based on two basic approaches of evaluation and asserts that the two basic acts of evaluation are *description* and *judgement*, the two countenances of evaluation (Fitzpatrick et al. 2011). The strength of Stake's Theory is the applicability of summative and formative evaluations. Stakes's theory provides a framework for improving institutional processes and increasing the usefulness of evaluation findings. The Evaluation Theory Tree and Stake's Responsive Approach, both theoretical frameworks, provide a basis for examining course evaluation measures.

CHAPTER II – LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to examine student course evaluation as a tool to measure instructor effectiveness and quality of student learning environment, whether or not there is a relationship between instructor's effectiveness and the quality of their feedback, and if there is there is a correlation between instructor's feedback and the quality of their communication. Instructors make a difference in student learning. Given the clear and undeniable link that exists between instructor effectiveness and student learning, the use of student course evaluations is strongly utilized and supported in higher education (Pike, 2011).

This literature review examines how course evaluation is an indispensable method that college faculty, staff, and administrators rely on when making critical decisions regarding instructional developments and factors affecting learning environments. Also, this literature review examines the central themes of course evaluations on instructional program outcomes and overall effectiveness of evaluations in both methodology and administration as it relates to the reliability and validity of the evaluation tools to include.

Scholarship identifies learning as the most foundational need of instruction and class environment conducive to learning, as well as one of the most important attributes in student evaluations of teaching. Evidence exists that learning environment influences instructor's class management and their ability to facilitate effective instruction by applying proper class management skills that can build student relationships. This finding has been attributed to teaching being defined as a conscious activity that can make changes in students based on their goals and cognitive engagement (Shabani, 2013). Research further documents that instructors who create warm, inclusive, and professional learning environment have been found to promote students' academic persistence efforts and positive attitudes toward teaching and learning (Beare,

Caldwell, & Millikan). Literature has also identified key features of effective teachers, with most important being clear and simple communication, explicit presentation of materials, and instructor's access and approachability (Read Abadi et al., 2012). Overall, student evaluations of teaching play a significant role in developing better education and more knowledgeable learners.

The attributes of effective teaching are multifold and diverse. Among the most commonly cited ones are those that include communication and interactions between students and faculty, student cooperation, active learning strategies, timely and student-centered feedback, clear communication regarding students' expectations, and respect for diversity and pluralistic thinking and learning (Chickering & Gamson, 1989). Effective teaching has also been associated with fostering students' understanding of content knowledge and motivation to obtain that knowledge. Specifically, Anderson (2012) identified course content and critical thinking as two critical aspects of effective instruction, while other attributes recorded in the literature included collaborative activities (Lidice & Saglam, 2013) and communication (Nargundkar & Shrinkhande, 2012). Further, it has been noted that students value instructors who invest effort in understanding their needs, who are approachable for students to ask questions, available to provide clarifications, and organized (Alauddin & Kifle, 2014; Lidice & Saglam, 2013; Lumpkin & Multon, 2013). Overall, among efforts invested toward assessing and improving instructional practices in higher education, very few areas have sparked more interest than course evaluations (Wachtel, 1998). Consequently, it is not surprising that they continue to serve as one of the most widely utilized tools for assessing teaching effectiveness.

The Significance of Incentives

As the literature search proceeded, there were three common threads that took precedence over other threads. These common threads included incentives to increase response rates,

reliability and validity of student course evaluations for formative and summative purposes, and instructor's effectiveness. First, the chapter introduces that the significance of incentives to increase response rates had a large discrepancy throughout the research and explains how incentives were broken down into several components: incentives to increase response rates, perceptions about incentives, and discrepancies as to the effectiveness of their use to increase response rate.

Gravestock and Greenleaf (2008) found through the Ryerson Faculty Survey FAQ their policies on incentives to be inappropriate for non-academic work and believed that bonus marks for completing them are a form of coercion. Donovan et al. (2007) documented that the use of disincentives such as receiving an incomplete grade if students did not participate in course evaluations resulted in a 100% response rate. Further, Chapman and Joines (2017) focused on establishing the evaluation strategies being employed, their effectiveness, and their alignment with university policies. When studying the response to incentives regarding web-based evaluations, the literature review discovered mixed results based on reward incentives eliciting homogeneous responses or simply not being a highly effective strategy. In that regard, researchers explored strategies that included incentives that went against university policy as well as non-incentive strategies. According to Sauer (2012), the use of incentives was poorly viewed by faculty in terms of lower course standards and watered-down courses.

The Reliability and Validity of Responses

The second common thread revealed in the literature review was that of the reliability and validity responses to student course evaluations. Reliability and validity were addressed in two ways –the reliability of the instrument and method used to acquire student course evaluations, and reliability and validity of the student course evaluation to measure instructor effectiveness.

The reviewed scholarship also includes key descriptors of reliability and validity of methods used in online versus paper based evaluations.

Anderson et al. (2005) examined the reliability and validity of methods used in online versus paper evaluation. They stated the advantages and disadvantages of the validity of online evaluations. Advantages included timely feedback, reduced costs in administering evaluations, reduced class time needed to complete them, reduced vulnerability to external influences, ability to offer increased time to complete evaluations, and ability to offer multiple evaluation opportunities. Disadvantages to this mode included requiring computer access, possible negative effects for faculty unfamiliar with technology, and possibly lower student response rates (Anderson et al. 2005). Additionally, online and web-based evaluations were both effective with one finding delineating a qualitative benefit to online evaluations. Feedback provided to open-ended questions in online evaluations was shown to be more frequent and extensive than comments in traditional evaluation forms.

Chapman and Joines (2017) pointed out additional differences for online evaluations. Their analysis identified benefits to online evaluations such as student anonymity, absence of printing, distribution and collection of results, and more flexibility for time and location. On the other hand, the study conducted with Gravestock and Greenleaf (2008) emphasized the benefits of personnel time, money, and effort, while concluding that both response rates and overall evaluation ratings were lower with online evaluation tools. Sauer (2012) noted that online evaluation tools were not the most prevalent method of administration and clear evidence of expected growth in its usage.

Instructor's Teaching Effectiveness

The third strand identified in the reviewed literature was the use of evaluations to assess instructor's teaching effectiveness. In that regard, Sauer (2012) found opponents of student course evaluations cited several concerns about their use. In line with contemporary scholarship, Watchel (1998) emphasized challenges to providing a universal definition of effective teaching, while acknowledging that teaching tailored to solicit favorable evaluations may conflict with effective instructional practices. On the other hand, student evaluation scores may be influenced by biases that are not objectively reflecting instructor's effectiveness. The researcher closely examined the potential characteristics of instructor, student, and course level biases as a bias for effectiveness of SETs as tools for evaluating instructor effectiveness. The study found that student ratings of teaching effectiveness varied as time went on compared to student ratings at the time of the course or at the end of the course. On the contrary, Sauer et al. (2012) noted very little change or variations in student course evaluations over time. Additionally, the utilization of course knowledge has not been associated with student's rating of instructor effectiveness.

In relation to the validity of online versus paper evaluation as it relates to instructor's effectiveness, Anderson et al. (2005) noted that faculty considered there to be a barrier to improving their teaching effectiveness due to the timeliness of feedback from course evaluation. They provided further support for this finding by noting that the time of transcribing students handwritten responses caused delays in reporting the results to faculty members. While most faculty members report valuing and applying student feedback; they also reveal discomfort and disagreement with using student evaluations as the sole method of evaluating their teaching effectiveness (Anderson et al. 2005). While a commonality of value for student course evaluation

persists through the literature, there does not seem to be a streamlined approach to identifying what instructor's effectiveness means in relation to student course evaluation.

Summary

This literature review confirms the necessity of course evaluations which, if used for formative purposes, may have beneficial impact on instructors moving forward to improve their courses. Students seem to benefit by being able to have their voices heard as they are the primary beneficiaries. The presented research asserts a consensus that students benefit in taking course evaluations; however, there is gap within the literature regarding their effects on instructor's effectiveness. The faculty concerns regarding negative feedback and biases that they believe exist versus the biases that impact student course evaluations were discovered to be an area for future study. This chapter explored common threads like the importance of anonymity in course evaluations, and policies regarding incentives and administration. Overall, it can be concluded that student course evaluations are valid instruments to measure the quality of teaching effectiveness and student learning.

CHAPTER III – METHODOLOGY

Chapter III is divided into four sections, which are the research setting and participants, recruitment and procedure, data collection and instruments, and data analysis procedures that were used in this study. This research was designed as an exploratory study that aimed to examine how student course evaluations can be maximized as a tool for instructional improvement. The second goal of this research was to assist the College's administration in assessing instructor effectiveness and quality of its instructional programs and the learning experiences of the students. A related purpose of this study is to determine best practices in higher education faculty development and student course evaluations.

It is the policy of Hinds Community College to evaluate each instructor by course. Student evaluations are critically important part of this process. The goal of this study was twofold – to provide information for the improvement of evaluation processes and to assist the College's administration in assessing teaching effectiveness and educational quality. Overall, student course evaluations used in this study are intended to ensure the quality of its instructional programs, instructor effectiveness, and learning experiences of students.

Research Setting and Participants

This study was conducted at Hinds Community College, the largest community college in state of Mississippi. The Hinds Community College District includes Hinds County, Claiborne County, part of Copiah County, Rankin County, and Warren County. Hinds offers six locations to choose from with campuses in Jackson (ATC-Academic & Technical Center; NAHC-Nursing Allied Health Center), Pearl, Raymond, Utica, and Vicksburg. Students commute or live in our residence halls, which are located on our Raymond and Utica Campuses. Hinds offers an Associate of Arts Degree, Associate of Science Degree, and Career Certificate or Technical

Certificate. The college has two main categories of instruction: Academic and Career & Technical. Students can take classes during the day, night, or online and choose from a variety of class format such as 2-week, 4-week, and 16-week. Through centralized management, universities attempt to demonstrate that they are accountable, flexible, and efficient systems serving economic goals (Shore, 2010). Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness (OIRE) is the means through which Hinds Community College (HCC) engages in continual self-evaluation. OIRE is responsible for conducting course evaluations for summer, fall, and spring semester. It is a process that involves measuring outcomes and documenting successes as they relate to the institution's mission and fulfillment of accreditation standards. Hinds is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. Participation in course evaluations is key in providing students the opportunity to reflect on their progress during the semester while also helping professors recognize their strengths and areas for growth. Evaluations play an instrumental role in ensuring Hinds CC strategic initiatives of educational quality.

The participants of this study were full-time and part-time students from six Hinds campus locations in the spring 2021. Full-time student is a student who is enrolled in 12 or more semester hours in a given semester. Part-time student is a student who is enrolled in less than 12 semester hours in a given semester. Freshman is a student who has earned fewer than 30 semester hours of college credit. Sophomore is a student who has earned 30 or more semester hours of college credit. A total of 9,100 students were invited to complete the student course evaluations. There were 4,936 responses completed from the 9,100 invitations, which accounted for the 54.24% response rate. Of the 4,936 respondents who completed student course evaluations, 2,351 students completed the survey on Raymond Campus, 428 students completed

the survey on Jackson Campus, 380 students completed the survey on Nursing Allied Health Center Campus, 841 students completed the survey on Rankin Campus, 212 students completed the survey on Utica Campus, and 724 students completed the survey on Vicksburg Campus.

From Table 1, it was observed that 47.63% of the participants were enrolled on the Raymond Campus, 17.04% were enrolled on the Rankin Campus; 14.67% of the participants were enrolled on the Vicksburg Campus, 8.67% of the participants were enrolled on the Jackson-ATC Campus, 7.70% were enrolled on the Jackson-NAHC and 4.29% were enrolled on the Utica Campus. Interestingly, most of the respondents for students were from the Raymond Campus, followed by the Ranking, and the smallest percentage from the Utica Campus.

Table 1

Response and Percentage Comparison by Campus

Hinds CC Campus	Response Percentage	Total Responses
Raymond	47.63	2,351
Jackson-ATC	8.67	428
Jackson-NAHC	7.70	380
Rankin	17.04	841
Utica	4.29	212
Vicksburg	14.67	724
Total		4,936

Source: Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness

Recruitment and Procedure

In spring 2021, first and second-year students completed course evaluations beginning April 14, 2021, through April 30, 2021. Participants were advised of the close date of course evaluation on April 30, 2021. Each semester, students are invited to provide feedback on courses, classrooms, and instructors through online course evaluation. Student course evaluations must be conducted for each course taught by full-time and part-time instructors. In addition to soliciting responses to set questions, the course evaluations also allow for open-ended observations about perceived strengths of the course and instructor, suggestions for improvements, and other comments the student might wish to make about the course.

Course evaluations survey link was in the participants' Learning Management System and disseminated via student e-mail. Email messages were sent to communicate the importance of the surveys with participants and when summative course evaluations were required from every student in each course, full data sets were used. Evaluations were anonymous and instructors did not see results until their final grades were submitted. The course evaluation surveys remain anonymous for students.

Students evaluated the instructor by instructor's name, subject, and course number, but any personally identifiable data were removed from the results of this study. Data and results were provided by The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research. The data were provided electronically in Microsoft Excel format. Course evaluations are housed in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research for processing and generating reports individual faculty, department heads, and administrators.

The course evaluation survey (Appendix A) includes 18 Likert-scale questions and three open-ended questions. The course evaluation survey is divided into six sections: instructor

ratings, course rating, course type, instructional delivery type, course delivery, and course descriptors. In the instructor ratings sections, students are asked to rate, on a five-point (very poor, poor, fair, good, very good) eleven individual characteristics of the instructor as well as the overall rating of the instructor.

The eleven individual characteristics include: (1) instructor's effectiveness of teaching the subject matter, (2) instructor's efforts towards creating a good learning atmosphere in the classroom environment, (3) instructor's ability to treat all students with respect, (4) instructor's ability to use the class time well, (5) instructor made the objectives and expectations of the course clear, (6) instructor's knowledge of the subject matter, (7) the ability of the instructor to stimulate interest, (7) instructor's ability to answer questions about the course content and methods, (9) instructor accessibility outside of regular class time, (10) instructor's written or verbal comments, and (11) instructor's approachability. There are three items in the course delivery section, with "Face-to-Face," "Online," and "Mixed." The course descriptor section contains items asking students to identify campus location, course instructor by last name, course instructor by first name, course subject by prefix and by section number.

Data Collection

To conduct this study, approval was granted from the Institutional Review Board of the University of Southern Mississippi (Appendix B) and Hinds Community College (Appendix C). The study was conducted from archival data from the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (OIRE) at Hinds Community College. The research design of this study was quantitative survey instrument and included a qualitative component. Given that archival data was used, there was no need for informed consent. There was no compensation involved with this study.

Data Analysis

Analyses were performed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences or SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 25.0 IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows. A descriptive analysis was conducted to answer the first research question. To answer the second through fourth research question, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to understand the correlation between the variables. The researcher did not share the data with any other individuals, except the project advisor and research support assistant.

CHAPTER IV – RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine how student course evaluations can be maximized as a tool to begin making better interpretation and utilization of course evaluation data and to assist the College's administration in assessing instructor effectiveness and quality of instruction. A related purpose of this study was to determine best practices in higher education faculty development and course evaluations. This chapter has two sections. The first section discusses the characteristics of the evaluations and corresponding courses selected for this study. The second section presents the results by research questions. The chapter ends with a summary of major findings.

Characteristics of Course Evaluation

Nature of Course Subject

Data indicated that respondents evaluated the following range of courses from 22 Academic Programs of study: Art, Biology, Business Administration, Chemistry, Computer Science, Commercial Aviation, Criminal Justice, Dance, English & Modern Foreign Languages, Health, Physical Education & Recreation, History, Journalism & Mass Communication, Mathematics, Music, Nutrition & Food Sciences, Philosophy & Political Science, Physics, Psychology, Reading & Education, Sociology, Speech Communication, and Theatre. Data also indicated that respondents evaluated the following range of courses from 13 Career & Technical Programs of study: Agricultural & Natural Resources, Arts, Media & Entertainment, Building Trades & Construction, Business Office Technology, Education & Human Services, Engineering, Technology, & Design, Hospitality & Tourism, Information Technology, Manufacturing, Marketing, Sales & Services, Nursing & Health Related Programs, and Public Services, and Transportation & Logistics.

A total of 90 different subject areas were evaluated by respondents. The results revealed higher response rates for course evaluations in the following courses: responses were received from 627 students in Business and Finance Technology; 564 students in English; 378 students in Speech; 310 students in Business Office Technology; 288 students in Mathematics; and 205 students in Health, Physical Education, Recreation.

Respondent's' Gender and Age

Differences in completion of course evaluation were also apparent by gender and age. Significantly more female than male students responded to the course evaluation survey. When gender was examined, females showed a higher completion rate of course evaluations than males. The highest proportion of participants are aged 15-17 and 18-19. Of the 4,936 respondents who completed survey, 60% were female (n = 2,959) and 40% were male (n = 1,976). Results are based on the 4,936 responses.

Instructional Delivery Method

With regards to the instructional delivery method of the evaluated courses, responses revealed that 43.88% (n = 2,166) respondents were enrolled in face-to-face courses, 37.07% (n= 1,830) were enrolled in online courses, and 19.04% (n = 940) were enrolled in mixed-mode delivery courses. For the purposes of this study, Hinds refers to mixed instructional delivery as both synchronous and asynchronous. Instructional modalities are referred to as hybrid, remote, and/or virtual.

Research Question One Results

This chapter presents the findings and lessons learned that emerged from student course evaluations of the 4,936 participants. Research question one asked – What is the degree of instructor's effectiveness as reported by student evaluations? To answer this question, the

researcher conducted a descriptive analysis. As illustrated in Table 2, the results showed the instructors' effectiveness received a high rating as 73.4% of respondents "very good" and 18.1% of respondents "good." Respondents identified the instructor's knowledge of subject matter as the highest most recognized instruction action with 78.2% of respondents "very good" and 16.9% of respondents "good". The ability to treat students with respect was second highest-rated instructor action, with 77.9% of respondents rating it as "very good" and 15.9% as "good". The third highest instruction action, the quality of communication/ability to communicate objective and expectations, received a 75.1% of responses as "very good" and 17.2% as "good". Responses identifying the instructors' abilities to answer questions and provide feedback with the degree of approachability, and the ability to use class time were aligned variables at the 74% of respondents "very good".

Table 2:

Descriptive Statistics for Instructor Ratings

	Very Poor		Poor		Fair		Good		Very Good	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Instructor's Effectiveness	77	1.6	81	1.6	264	5.3	891	18.1	3,623	73.4
Knowledge of Subject Matter	36	0.7	31	0.6	174	3.5	835	16.9	3,860	78.2
Ability to Treat Students with Respect	70	1.4	49	1.0	187	3.8	786	15.9	3,844	77.9
Communication of Objectives and Expectations	66	1.3	241	4.9	848	17.2	3,706	75.1	3,706	75.1
Provide Feedback	68	1.4	69	1.4	220	4.5	891	18.1	3,688	74.7

Table 3 presents the total number of respondents, means, standard deviation, and percent of respondents selecting “very good” to “very poor” for the 11 SET dimensions related to measure the quality of instructional effectiveness. In general, the results indicated that all the variables were scored high. The highest mean was found for the category of “instructor’s knowledge of subject matter” (M=4.71, SD=.633), followed by “the instructor’s ability to treat student with respect” (M=4.68, SD=.724). The results revealed that students at Hinds tended to give high ratings to instructors who showed respect to students, have knowledge of subject matter, and have the ability to use class time well.

Table 3

Descriptive Analysis for Instructor Effectiveness (n = 4,936)

Dimensions	M	SD	%	Skewness
Instructor Effectiveness in Teaching	4.60	.795	73.4	-2.444
Quality/Effort to Create Learning Environment	4.60	.761	72.3	-2.364
Communication of Objectives and Expectations	4.63	.763	75.1	-2.557
Knowledge of Subject Matter	4.71	.633	78.2	-2.832
Ability to Stimulate Interest or Appreciation of Course	4.58	.780	71.6	-2.385
Accessibility Outside of Regular Class Time	4.58	.732	70.6	-2.229
Quality of Written/ Verbal Feedback	4.57	.755	70.5	-2.283
Ability to Treat Students with Respect	4.68	.724	77.9	-2.903
Ability to Use Class Time	4.64	.732	74.1	-2.560
Ability to Answer Questions and Provide Feedback	4.63	.755	74.7	-2.598

Degree of Approachability	4.63	.756	74.1	-2.583
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Note: percent of very good/good

Research Question Two Results

Research question two asked – Is there a relationship between instructor’s effectiveness and the quality of learning environment? Pearson r Correlation indicated a relationship between instructor effectiveness and quality of learning environment. The results showed instructor effectiveness was correlated with instructor effort toward creating a good atmosphere in the classroom environment. As shown in Table 4, the Pearson r correlation revealed that instructor’s effectiveness was significantly correlated to quality of learning environment ($p < 0.001$).

Table 4

Relationship of Instructor Effectiveness and Quality of Learning Environment

Independent Variable	Correlation Coefficient	Sig. (1-tailed)	N
Instructor Effectiveness in Teaching	.842**	.000	4936
Quality of Learning Environment	.842**	.000	4936

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).⁷

Research Question Three Results

Research question three asked – Is there a relationship between instructor’s effectiveness and the quality of their feedback? Pearson r Correlation indicated a relationship between instructor effectiveness and quality of instructor’s feedback. The results showed instructor effectiveness was correlated with the quality of feedback. As illustrated in Table 5, Pearson r correlation revealed that instructor’s effectiveness was significantly correlated to quality of feedback ($p < 0.001$).

Table 5*Relationship of Instructor Effectiveness and Quality of Feedback*

Independent Variable	Correlation Coefficient	Sig. (1-tailed)	N
Instructor Effectiveness	.792**	.000	4936
Quality of Communication Feedback (Written/Verbal)	.792**	.000	4936

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Research Question Four Results

Research question four asked – Is there a relationship between the quality of instructor’s feedback and the quality of their communication? Pearson r Correlation indicated a relationship between instructor feedback and quality of communication. As shown in Table 6, the Pearson r correlation revealed that instructor’s feedback was significantly correlated to quality of communication ($P < 0.001$).

Table 6*Relationship of Instructor Quality of Feedback and Quality of Communication*

Independent Variable	Correlation Coefficient	Sig. (1-tailed)	N
Quality of Communication	.766**	.000	4936
Course Objectives and Expectations	.766**	.000	4936

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Overall, the results of this study revealed a positive relationship between the variables measured which included (1) instructor’s effectiveness and quality of learning environment, (2) instructor’s effectiveness and quality of feedback provided, and (3) instructor’s quality of feedback and quality of communication. Additionally, this study demonstrated that the two

characteristics students value most in an instructor are their knowledge of subject matter and ability to treat student with respect. This research supported the theory that student course evaluations provide a framework for improving institutional processes and increasing the usefulness of course evaluation findings. The knowledge obtained in this study provides an important step to maximize course evaluation processes for two-year colleges and recommendations for doing so are presented in the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER V - DISCUSSION

The results from this study and positive relationships between all variables measured provide an important step to maximize course evaluation processes for two-year colleges. This study contributes to our understanding of how to maximize course evaluations processes for Hinds Community College to begin making better interpretation and utilization of course evaluation data they are already collecting. Additionally, the results presented in this research can provide peer institutions with deeper insight regarding the instructional approaches that students view as beneficial, or those that can be further improved. The findings of this study can be put into practice by community college faculty and administrators in several ways. Building on the contributions of other scholars who sought to assess the correlation between course evaluations and instructor effectiveness, Webster-Wright (2009) reported activities such as professional development programs, collegial collaborations, mentoring, and even having informal discussions can all foster the development of professionals. These recommendations can be applied through the lenses of this research to offer several lessons that can be learned from the analysis of student course evaluations.

This study reaffirms the correlation between the instructor's effectiveness and the students' quality of learning environment. Course evaluations are tools for instructional improvement and to assist institutional administrators in accessing instructor effectiveness, the quality of their instructional programs, and the learning experiences of their students. In addition, this study revealed the instructor's quality of feedback, quality of communication, and ability to treat students with respect play a vital role in the quality of student learning. Therefore, it is important that institutions support faculty in the interpretation and utilization of course evaluation data. Students are uniquely positioned to provide feedback about their learning

experiences that cannot be obtained through other means, to report on the extent to which their provided feedback is valuable, and to reflect on how the instructors interact with students. It is important that students value the effectiveness of feedback in course evaluation in improving student learning and effective teaching in higher education. Overall, student course evaluations contain valuable information about students' learning experiences.

This study corroborated many of the themes common in the literature related to how course evaluations are a critical tool used by administrators and instructors to make serious decisions regarding design and instruction of the course and factors influencing class atmosphere and quality of teaching and learning. Common themes that emerged in the findings, consistent with earlier research, included learning and class atmosphere are the most important factors in effective teaching. Fostering a positive learning environment is one of the most important approaches an instructor can take to provide a quality learning experience.

The results of this study indicate positive relationships between all variables measured and provide an important step to maximize course evaluation processes for peer institutions. Student evaluations of teaching correlate with teaching effectiveness factors such as students' learning environment, quality of their instructor's feedback, and instructor's quality of communication of course objectives and expectations. These findings have significant implications for understanding how administration assesses instructor effectiveness, the quality of their instructional programs, and the learning experiences of their students. As this study revealed, course evaluations are a vital component of assessing the quality of education and accountability of higher education for reviewing institutional quality of student learning.

Implications

The findings reported in this project shed new light on lessons learned to substantiate the impact of student course evaluations on instructors moving forward to improve their courses. The findings suggest three lessons learned related to accountability and performance measures, evaluation survey instruments and measurement, and incentives for course evaluation.

First Lesson: Sharing feedback from course evaluations can be effectively used to provide the necessary accountability to ensure that proven classroom practices and pedagogy are implemented effectively. Literature has already recognized the value of feedback in developing effective strategies for fostering the development of students as independent learners who monitor, evaluate, and regulate their learning (Ferguson, 2011). Consequently, if properly designed and implemented, student evaluations offer valuable data that instructors can apply to improve their teaching. Therefore, modeling effective feedback practices emerges as an important skill for college instructors as it can impact the quality of students' learning processes (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Instructors have a vital role in increasing their student's own ability for understanding course evaluations as an efficient instrument for measurement of a quality learning environment and instructor effectiveness. Additionally, course evaluations serve as an institution's accountability mechanisms.

Second Lesson: The College will continue to examine several areas regarding the administration of student course evaluations. While *SurveyMonkey* was the online survey tool to analyze spring 2021 results for the College, initially, the College purchased and began using the *SmartEval* software in the fall 2020 as the course evaluation system. The Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness is relaunching the *SmartEvals* online course evaluation system in fall 2022 semester. This decision has been reached because the *SmartEvals* system includes updated

engagement tool aimed at increasing student participation, improving survey response rates, and improving evaluation reporting. The College will analyze the advantages and disadvantages of using the software system. Second, the College will examine results of course evaluation on instructional program outcomes and assess how well a program is meeting its stated goals.

Third Lesson: The finding of this study suggests that there are concrete ways to assess teaching effectiveness through end-of-course evaluations. This evidence is consistent with prior scholarship that described course evaluations as a frequently adopted assessment tool in colleges and universities due to their potency to solicit constructive feedback and document the quality of learning environment, as well as be used to design and implement the most appropriate changes for improvement (Spooren et al., 2013). There are clear advantages to using an online method for student course evaluations, especially in terms of their efficiency and practicality. Online evaluations offer advantages to both students and their institutions. Students can benefit from extended time for reflection in completing the forms, thus providing more constructive feedback, their privacy and anonymity concerns can be alleviated, and the quality and quantity of their open-ended comments has been found to increase (Weimer, 2016).

Beyond the noted implications for institutional consideration, the findings of this study offer implications for incentives of course evaluations. As noted in Chapter II, the literature review revealed mixed results related to incentives to increase response rates, and reliability and validity of student course evaluations. These findings have significant implications for understanding how to effectively increase response rates. The results of this research support the idea of using incentives for raising response rates which can be accomplished in several ways. First, telling students that their feedback is valuable and will be used to their benefit could make a student more likely to complete a survey. To promote students' responses, some instructors are

even scheduling class time for this activity or taking students to a computer lab. The second approach may include telling the students the response rate of the survey and sharing the main findings. Next, students can be given a few specific examples of how instructors used feedback from past course evaluations. Additionally, students must always be reminded that their responses are completely anonymous, and that instructors will only see de-identified and aggregate results after grades are released. Overall, institutions need to create effective ways to engage students in the process of completing course evaluations and to overcome barriers to participation in course evaluation. The results of this research suggest that student course evaluations serve a multipurpose tool that aims to improve instructor effectiveness and assure the quality of their instructional programs and learning experiences of their students.

It is also important to note that the presented findings provide novel and resourceful insight into the study of course evaluations as a measure of students' engagement or involvement in learning at two-year colleges. Both research and practice strongly emphasize the need for national accountability initiatives, arguing that most assessments of student learning are conducted by institutional researchers or consultants, for the purposes of improving institutional programs or student success rates (Cohen, 2014). At the same time, a large amount of research has been conducted on the topic of student course evaluations as a measure of students' engagement or involvement with their learning. Even though much has been written about student course evaluations in four-year universities, the use evaluation data in two-year college remains limited. To address this limitation, the purpose of the research was to examine how student course evaluations can be maximized as a tool for instructional improvement and to assist the community college administration in assessing instructor effectiveness, the quality of instructional programs, and the learning experiences of their students. Conducting this study at

the largest community college in state of Mississippi helped address the critical limitation of contemporary research by providing insights unique to under-investigated research setting of two-year community colleges.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This research also yields itself to several limitations. First, the study was conducted at only one institution so future research should investigate how these findings compare to the results from student evaluations at other colleges of comparable size and type. Second, the study was conducted at one point time so longitudinal research is needed to see how students' perceptions compare over time. Additionally, the research was conducted at a unique time of spring 2021 when the pandemic was still peaking and instructional delivery was affected, so it is possible that these unique circumstances may have affected students' perceptions. Therefore, additional research should investigate how students' perceptions compare to their evaluations before pandemic or post-pandemic and return of normality.

Third, the study used self-reported data which is not considered objective measure of student learning. Therefore, the researcher could only report students' personal perceptions and attitudes which should not be misunderstood for indicators of their learning gains. As such, future research should use objective measures and compare how students' self-reported ratings compare to their actual learning measured through GPA, retention, and other academic outcomes. Fourth, the study utilized a quantitative research design which means that the researcher could only provide insights into students' rating or attitudes towards a particular variable measured in evaluations. Overall, more qualitative research is needed on this topic in the future where students could elaborate on their ratings and discuss their experiences and recommendations through qualitative data collection tools, such as interviews or focus groups.

Conclusion

This study creates an opportunity for Hinds Community College and other peer institutions to engage in conversation and customized research examining student course evaluations, to connect evaluation data to accountability measures, to examine existing course evaluation methodologies and instrumentation, and to emphasize the ways to access teaching effectiveness is through end of course evaluations. Customized research based on this study could assist other peer institutions in identifying best practices in online student course evaluations that maximize the use of faculty resources while effectively meeting the needs of their unique student populations. It is anticipated that the lessons obtained in this study will provide essential data for improving teaching effectiveness and, most importantly, propose how to make changes that will enhance and extend student learning.

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APPENDIX A

Hinds Community College Course Evaluation Instrument

Student Course Evaluations - Spring 2021

It is the policy of the Hinds Community College to evaluate each instructor, by course. Student evaluations are a critically important part of this process. The purpose of the evaluation is to give information for improvement and to assist the College's administration in assessing instructor effectiveness.

You are asked to respond to several statements regarding the instructor in this course.

Question Title

* 1. From which location (campus) are you enrolled for the majority of your courses at Hinds Community College?

Question Title

* 2. Please identify course subject by prefix (Ex. BIO, CST, ART)

Question Title

* 3. Please identify course by number (Ex. 0111, 1151, 1236)

Question Title

* 4. The instructor's effectiveness in teaching the subject matter in this course has been
(Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor, Very Poor)

Question Title

* 5. Choose the applicable course delivery method
(Face-to-Face, Online, Mixed)

Question Title

* 6. The instructor's efforts toward creating a good learning atmosphere in the classroom environment have been
(Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor, Very Poor)

Question Title

* 7. The instructor's ability to treat all students in the class with respect has been
(Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor, Very Poor)

Question Title

* 8. The instructor's ability to use the class time well has been
(Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor, Very Poor)

Question Title

* 9. The instructor made the objectives and expectations of the course clear, (course outlines, evaluation methods, exam dates, etc.)
(Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor, Very Poor)

Question Title

* 10. The instructor's knowledge of the subject matter of this course is
(Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor, Very Poor)

Question Title

* 11. Considering the nature of the subject matter in this course, the ability of the instructor to stimulate interest in or appreciation of the course content is
(Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor, Very Poor)

Question Title

* 12. The instructor's ability to answer questions about the course content and methods has been
(Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor, Very Poor)

Question Title

* 13. The instructor is accessible outside of regular class time for help of consultation
(Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor, Very Poor)

Question Title

* 14. As an aid to learning course material, the instructor's written or verbal comments on student work have been
(Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor, Very Poor)

Question Title

* 15. The degree to which the instructor is approachable to discuss course related matter is
(Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor, Very Poor)

Question Title

* 16. Your Overall rating of the instructor is
(Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor, Very Poor)

Question Title

17. Please comment on the instructional strengths of the instructor, particularly for questions above which you rated as good or very good.

Question Title

18. What suggestions for instructional improvement can you make to the instructor, particularly for the questions above which you rated fair, poor, or very poor?

Question Title

19. Additional Comments

APPENDIX B

USM IRB Approval

Tuesday, September 7, 2021 at 13:51:33 Central Daylight Time

Subject: IRB-21-218 - Modification: Modification - Expedited and Full
Date: Tuesday, September 7, 2021 at 1:32:15 PM Central Daylight Time
From: do-not-reply@cayuse.com
To: Kindalin Moses, Masha Krzmanovic
Attachments: ATT00001.png, ATT00002.png

Office of
Research Integrity



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Modification Institutional Review Board Approval

The University of Southern Mississippi's Office of Research Integrity has received the notice of your modification for your submission Student Course Evaluations: Instructor Effectiveness and Lessons Learned (IRB #: IRB-21-218).

Your modification has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services regulations (45 CFR Part 46), and University Policy to ensure:

- The risks to subjects are minimized and reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered involving risks to subjects must be reported immediately. Problems should be reported to ORI via the Incident template on Cayuse IRB.
- The period of approval is twelve months. An application for renewal must be submitted for projects exceeding twelve months.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: IRB-21-218

PROJECT TITLE: Student Course Evaluations: Instructor Effectiveness and Lessons Learned

SCHOOL/PROGRAM: Educational Research and Admin

RESEARCHER(S): Kindalin Moses, Masha Krzmanovic

IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Approved

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: September 7, 2021

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ronald Bascoff".

APPENDIX C

HCC IRB Approval



APPLICATION REQUESTING EXEMPT REVIEW OF A RESEARCH PROTOCOL INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Research studies involving children or vulnerable individuals must be submitted for full review.

- All applicants must submit the following items to Hinds-Stewart 310, ATTN: IRB:
 - A complete, signed copy of the application (faculty advisor must also sign if applicant is a student or an adjunct)
 - Consent form or an Application for Waiver of Informed Consent
 - CITI Human Subjects Training Certificate

If applicable, these items must also be submitted with the application for it to be considered complete:

- An additional Consent form for participants being photographed or recorded via digital media
- Copies of all survey instruments, interview questions, recruitment letters, emails, advertisements
- Site permission (if applicant is conducting research anywhere other than Hinds CC)

Complete answers to all questions must be provided and all necessary documentation submitted. Incomplete applications will be returned without review.

General Information

Applicant (PI) Name*: Kindain Moses Today's Date: 5/13/2021

☒ Faculty ☐ Adjunct ☐ Lecturer ☐ Tenured/Tenure-Track
☐ Student ☐ Undergraduate Student ☐ Masters Student ☒ Doctoral Student
☐ Staff ☒ Full-Time ☐ Part-Time

Department (do not abbreviate): Speech, Journalism, Communications & Theater

Home Address: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED] Day Phone: [REDACTED]

Research Project Title: Student Course Evaluations: Instructor Effectiveness and Lessons Learned

Anticipated Start Date: 05/07/2021 Anticipated End Date: 05/07/2022

If project was initially denied and this is a resubmission, provide date of denial letter: _____

* Co-PIs must complete the Co-PI section. Students applying for IRB review must complete the student section. NOTE: Student applications and Adjunct faculty applications that are not signed by the Faculty Advisor will not be reviewed.

** Hinds Policy on the Use of Human Subjects in Research prohibits the start of any research activity (including canvassing and recruiting of subjects) that has not been reviewed by, and received written approval without provisions from, the IRB.

FOR IRB OFFICE USE ONLY

PROTOCOL #: _____ DATE RECEIVED: _____
 DATE REVIEWED: _____
 _____ APPROVED _____ APPROVED WITH PROVISIONS _____ DENIED

Guidelines for Exempt Review. There are eight specific categories of exemption. In order to receive an exempt review from the IRB you must fit into one of these categories. Common examples of exempt level research at Hinds Community College are anonymous surveys; surveys or interviews of adults about non-sensitive topics; educational tests; or observation of public behavior. *No research involving children or individuals from vulnerable populations is eligible for exempt status.*

Research exempt from IRB review MUST only involve one or more of the following research categories. Research that contains elements of exempt and non-exempt activities is NOT eligible for IRB exemption.

IRB Exempt Categories

☒ **XM1 Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings involving normal educational practices that is not likely to have adverse impacts on students learning, required educational content, or involving assessment of educators who provide instruction**, such as: (i) Research on regular instructional strategies or (ii) Research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

Examples of research NOT EXEMPT via this criteria

- Research that involves evaluation of a radically new instructional strategy or use of random assignment of subjects to different instructional methodologies is not exempt because the methods employed deviate from normal educational practices.
- Educational research that involves deception or withholding of information from subjects
- Exemptions are not granted for research on physical education that involves exercise if the activity is altered in a significant way for the purposes of the research.
- Research that involves possible "adverse effects" on student learning of the required education content and/or on the assessment of educators.

☐ **XM2 Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior.** In order for research to be considered exempt under this category one of the three following criteria must be met:

- Information obtained is not identifiable, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects;
- Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation or
- Information obtained can be identifiable but the IRB has done a limited IRB review in keeping with 46.111(a)(7), which relates to there being adequate provisions for protecting privacy and maintaining confidentiality

Examples of research NOT EXEMPT through this criteria

- Surveys or questionnaires that ask invasive questions of a sensitive or private nature that might be deemed to cause the subject some discomfort or distress. This includes but is not limited to questions or inquiries about sexual preferences, sexual behaviors, substance use or abuse, or illegal conduct.
- Research where subjects can be identified as participating in the study. This can be, but is not limited to collecting personal info such as name, SSN, or student ID number.

**Important: Research on sensitive or personal topics which may cause stress to participants are not exempt from review.

☐ **XM3 Research involving benign behavioral interventions in conjunction with the collection of information from an adult subject through verbal or written responses (including data entry) or audiovisual recording if the subject prospectively agrees to the intervention and information collection and at least one of the following criteria is met:**

- The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects

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- (i) Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation; or
- (ii) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by § 46.111(a)(7).

For the purpose of this provision, benign behavioral interventions are brief in duration, harmless, painless, not physically invasive, not likely to have a significant adverse lasting impact on the subjects, and the investigator has no reason to think the subjects will find the interventions offensive or embarrassing. Provided all such criteria are met, examples of such benign behavioral interventions would include having the subjects play an online game, having them solve puzzles under various noise conditions, or having them decide how to allocate a nominal amount of received cash between themselves and someone else.

The methods of data collection allowed under exemption category #3 are limited to verbal or written responses from subjects (e.g., surveys or interviews, test responses, or data entry), observation, and audiovisual recording. Data cannot be collected via physical procedures such as blood pressure monitoring, EEG, activity trackers (e.g., Fitbit), eye trackers, and blood draws.

****Important:** Deception is allowed if certain criteria are met. This exemption is only for benign behavioral research with adults and is not applicable to children

☐ **XM4 Secondary Research for which consent is not required. Secondary research of identifiable private information or identifiable bio specimens, if at least one of the following criteria is met:**

- (i) The identifiable private information or identifiable bio specimens are publicly available;
- (ii) Information, which may include information about bio specimens, is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, the investigator does not contact the subjects, and the investigator will not re-identify subjects;
- (iii) The research involves only information collection and analysis involving the investigator's use of identifiable health information when that use is regulated under 45 CFR parts 160 and 164
- (iv) The research is conducted by, or on behalf of, a Federal department or agency using government-generated or government-collected information obtained for non-research activities, if the research generates identifiable private information that is or will be maintained on information technology that is subject to and in compliance with section 208(b) of the E-Government Act of 2002, 44 U.S.C. 3501 note

☐ **XM5 Research and demonstration projects that are conducted or supported by a Federal department or agency, or otherwise subject to the approval of department or agency heads (or the approval of the heads of bureaus or other subordinate agencies that have been delegated authority to conduct the research and demonstration projects), and that are designed to study, evaluate, improve, or otherwise examine public benefit or service programs, including procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs, possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures, or possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs.**

(i) Each Federal department or agency conducting or supporting the research and demonstration projects must establish, on a publicly accessible Federal Web site or in such other manner as the department or agency head may determine, a list of the research and demonstration projects that the Federal department or agency conducts or supports under this provision. The research or demonstration project must be published on this list prior to commencing the research involving human subjects.

☐ **XM5 Research involving taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies. This IRB exemption category applies to Federal research only.**

(i) If wholesome foods without additives are consumed OR if a food is consumed that contains food ingredients, agricultural chemicals, and/or environmental contaminants at or below the level and for a use found to be safe by the Food and Drug Administration, or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and

Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Examples of research NOT EXEMPT through this criteria

- Studies that involve consumption of alcohol, vitamins, or supplements such as protein powder, creatine, and glucosamine chondroitin sulfate should not qualify for exempt status.

☐ **XM7 Storage or maintenance for secondary research for which broad consent is required: Storage or maintenance of identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens for potential secondary research use if an IRB conducts a limited IRB review and makes the determinations required by §46.111(a)(8).**

☐ **XM8 Secondary research for which broad consent is required: Research involving the use of identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens for secondary research use, if the following criteria are met:**

- (i) Broad consent for the storage, maintenance, and secondary research use of the identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens was obtained in accordance with §46.116(a)(1) through (4), (a)(6), and (d);
- (ii) Documentation of informed consent or waiver of documentation of consent was obtained in accordance with §46.117;
- (iii) An IRB conducts a limited IRB review and makes the determination required by §46.111(a)(7) and makes the determination that the research to be conducted is within the scope of the broad consent referenced in paragraph (d)(8)(i) of this section; and (iv) The investigator does not include returning individual research results to subjects as part of the study plan. This provision does not prevent an investigator from abiding by any legal requirements to return individual research results.

Subject/Participant Number: # 9,100 Adults (18 or older) # 4,936 Minors (under 18)

Research site(s): State where project will take place: Hinds Community College

Time commitment for each subject/participant: 5 to 10 minutes

Project Attributes (check all that apply)

- ☐ Use of recruitment materials (flyers, emails, letters, advertisements)
☒ Questionnaires or Surveys ☐ In-person ☐ Phone ☐ Mail ☒ Email ☐ Online
☐ Interviews ☐ In-person ☐ Phone ☐ Skype (or similar)
☐ Observation
☐ Focus groups
☐ Administration of tests, inventories, self-reports, measuring instruments, etc.
☐ Photography, Audio or Video recording (separate Informed Consent form is needed for the participant to indicate consent for digital recording)
☐ Use of existing/secondary data
☐ Other (explain) _____

Co-PI (complete if applicable)

Co-PI Name: Dr. Emily Johnson

☒ Faculty ☐ Undergraduate Student* ☐ Graduate Student* ☐ Staff

Department (do not abbreviate): Educational Research and Administration

Home Address: 116 College Drive, Hattiesburg, MS 39406

Email Address: emily.a.johnson@usm.edu Day Phone: 713-591-8378

☒ Proof of successful completion of CITI Human Subjects Training is attached.

Student Applicants - Complete this section

Is this research/student project required to fulfill requirements of a course? ☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, course title Higher Education Capstone and course ID HE-794

Will this research/student project be published or presented? ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Faculty Advisor Name: Dr. Emily Johnson

Department (do not abbreviate): Educational Research and Administration

Email: emily.a.johnson@usm.edu Office phone: 713-591-8378

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Signatures:

The undersigned accept(s) responsibility for the study, including adherence to DHHS regulations, Mississippi law, and Hinds Community College policies relative to the protection of the rights and welfare of subjects/participants in this study. In the case of student applications, the Faculty Advisor and the student share responsibility for adherence.

By signing this form, I certify that I am familiar with Hinds Community College policies and federal and state regulations regarding the protection of human subjects in research. I will not begin this study until I receive a written notice of approval, without provisions, from the IRB. I will conduct this study following the approved protocol. I will report any adverse events or emergent problems to the IRB; will obtain IRB approval before implementing any modifications of protocol; and, will request continuing review and approval for any activities beyond the study end date.

Kendall S. Moore 5/13/2021
Signature of Applicant Date

Emily Johnson 05/14/2021
Signature of co-PI (if applicable) Date

By signing this form, I attest that I have read/reviewed this application for quality, completeness, and accuracy. I certify that I am familiar with Hinds Community College policies and federal and state regulations regarding the protection of human subjects in research. This study meets the guidelines and requirements of the IRB and has my endorsement.

I agree to provide appropriate education and supervision of the advisee/applicant and any listed co-PI and also monitor the progression of the study for the entire duration.

Signature of Faculty Advisor Date

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