

Abstract

When institutions administer student evaluations of teaching (SETs) online, response rates are lower relative to paper-based administration. We analyzed average SET scores from 364 courses taught during the fall term in 3 consecutive years to determine whether administering SET forms online for all courses in the 3rd year changed the response rate or the average SET score. To control for instructor characteristics, we based the data analysis on courses for which the same instructor taught the course in each of three successive fall terms. Response rates for face-to-face classes declined when SET administration occurred only online. Although average SET scores were reliably lower in Year 3 than in the previous 2 years, the magnitude of this change was minimal (0.11 on a five-item Likert-like scale). We discuss practical implications of these findings for interpretation of SETs and the role of SETs in the evaluation of teaching quality.

Keywords: college teaching, student evaluations of teaching, online administration, response rate, assessment

Credits for sample

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