



Guidelines for Annotating Your Student Ratings

Course Data

Course Title & Number
Instructor
Term(s) and year(s)
Enrollment
Respondents (#, %)

Course Description

- brief description of course content, goals, assignments, etc. (1 short paragraph)
- primary teaching methods (1-3 lines)
- class format (in person/virtual, a/synchronous, sessions/week)
- brief description of students (e.g., primarily sophomores, non-majors)

Analyzing Your Student Ratings

- Is the response rate likely to be representative?
- What were the primary issues raised by students?
- Identify the most common themes (most frequently mentioned) in the student comments. This is your opportunity to direct reviewers' attention to particular results or comments that are most useful or informative. Help reviewers read and interpret your results, rather than leaving it up to others to identify significant themes and appropriate responses in your course.
 - strengths (2-3 themes)
 - challenges (2-3 themes)
- What changes did/will you make to address student concerns?

Identify areas that students see as needing improvement in your quantitative results. Compare these to themes that appear in students' written comments. A quick approach for identifying themes is to build a list of topics that repeatedly arise as you read students' comments. Keep a cumulative tally of the comments that could be assigned to each theme. Let the frequency of the comments under each theme guide your course revisions; i.e. focus on the top 2-3 issues collectively raised by students.

Another method is to create an electronic document with all of the students' answers to each question. Sort student comments into groups based on similarity and label the group with a subject heading. Then rank the groups based on the frequency of comments in each. Some common themes include Homework, Group Work, Labs, Lecture, Active Learning, Grading, Textbook, and Exams.

Your annotation should no more than 1 page in length.



Student Ratings Annotation Example

ME 346: Advanced Mechanical Engineering Analysis

Fall Semester 2022

<i>Enrollment</i>	60
<i>Respondents</i>	32 (53%)

Course Description

Mathematical modeling, analysis, and design of physical dynamic systems involving energy storage and transfer by lumped-parameter linear elements. Time-domain response by analytical methods and numeric simulation. Laboratory experiments. Prerequisites: Linear Algebra, Differential Equations, Probability & Statistics, Engineering Dynamics.

This is a 15-week advanced lecture and laboratory course that meets in three 1-hour time blocks and one 2-hour lab (taught by TAs). The 1-hour sessions include lectures about the primary theoretical material of systems dynamics, with derivations of fundamental principles, followed by worked examples similar to assigned homework problems. The lab sessions include seven lab assignments and seven discussion sessions. The lab assignments require students to conduct hands-on experiments related to problems discussed in the large class sessions. Students are also required to devote time outside of class to assigned readings, lab write-ups, and homework.

Students: The course is a required undergraduate course for mechanical engineering majors and is a prerequisite for many of the required capstone sequences. About 50% of the students were juniors, 45% seniors, and 5% new graduate students.

Student Ratings

Students appreciated that expectations were clear and grading processes were systematic and implemented fairly. They also took advantage of my frequently scheduled office hours and those of my Teaching Assistants. Students' written comments provide similar information. For example, "Availability of Prof & TA is good" "Office hours & e-mail help a lot; lots of communication with students," "very approachable, very positive attitude."

Students wanted more opportunities to practice analysis and evaluation. In their written comments, students requested more time in class to practice solving problems similar to those in their homework assignments. For example: "More interaction, but not as intense/involved as lab" and "More interaction w/ lecture notes prior to class, so we can expect more out of lecture."

Changes

One change I plan to make in this course is to decrease the amount of time I spend lecturing and provide time at the end of each session for student questions. Rather than solving every derivation in class, I will leave a portion of it incomplete and revisit it during the next class when I will ask students to help complete the solution. A number of the topics covered in this course are particularly challenging for students, thus I will occasionally provide opportunities for students to work tough problems in class, when the TAs and I are there to provide guidance.

Summary of Student Comments

This is a template for analysis of student comments.

The themes below are examples of the issues commonly raised by students—they are not inclusive. Different themes will emerge for each course and instructor. This format can also be used with other open-ended questions.

1. What aspects of this course helped you learn?

Identify common themes and use them as headers with student comments listed below each header. Order the themes from those with the most comments to those with the least as a way to identify the most critical issues for the most students.

Instructor Knowledge

-
-
-

Class Discussion

-
-

Teaching Methods

-

Instructor Style / Enthusiasm / Approachability

Groupwork/Teamwork

Projects

Homework

Readings

Misc.

2. What changes to this course could improve your learning?

Organization

-
-

Workload

-

Assignments

Grading/Grading Criteria

Clarify Expectations

Lectures