May 2019 Volume 6, Issue 4

Journal for Academic Excellence

This edition of *The Journal for Academic Excellence* is a celebration of the excellence shown by our faculty and staff. The bulk of this edition reports on accomplishments of our faculty. However, there is much more from various parts of our campus. This last edition of the year is chock full of news and important, helpful information.

Check out Matt LeHew's reflection on using specifications grading, David Brown's news on instructional technology, and a scholarly article by several of our Wright School of Business faculty—plus some thoughts from the editor.

Most of all, enjoy the respite that summer brings.

IN THIS ISSUE

DALTON STATE FACULTY AND STAFF AWARDS, ACHIEVEMENTS, AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Dr. Susan L. Eastman, Assistant Professor of English, published a chapter titled "The 'Nam Comics: Remembering the American War in Viet Nam" in an edited collection, *Beyond the Quagmire: New Perspectives on the Vietnam War* (UNT Press, 2019). The book is available here.

Dr. Eastman also gave an invited research-in-progress talk, "Memorializing the War on Terror: Immediacy, Proliferation, and Forgetting," at Florida State University's Institute on World War II and the Human Experience in March 2019.

Susan Burran, Assistant Professor of Biology, successfully defended her doctoral thesis on "Approaches for Purifying Recombinant Proteins from Gram Negative Bacteria" at Georgia State University April 5 and graduated with her Ph.D. in Biology on May 6.

Brooklyn Herrera, Coordinator for Tutoring & Supplemental Instruction in the Dean of Students Office, completed the Master of Management program in December from Shorter University. She participated in her graduation in May.

Leslie Taylor, Associate Professor of English, successfully defended her dissertation, "Current-Traditional Rhetoric and the *Hodges Harbrace Handbook*: A Study in the Disconnect Between Theory and Practice." She will graduate with a Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Composition on May 6 at Georgia State University.

DALTON STATE FACULTY AND STAFF AWARDS, ACHIEVEMENTS, AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Dr. Marjorie Yambor, Associate Professor of Communication, was honored by the Broadcasting Education Association at their annual conference in Las Vegas in April. The Student Media Advisors Division recognized her with a plaque for creating the national, peer-reviewed Signature Station Competition. They also officially added Dr. Yambor's to the formal name of the award. She notes:

> It was important for me to leave a legacy for the division, so I designed and developed the Signature Station Competition as a means for student media advisors across the country (and now around the world) to provide peer-reviewed proof of a job well done.

In addition, Dr. Yambor gave two panel presentations at the BEA Conference. These were "Preparing for the Profession: How Success on Campus Leads to Success in the Business" and "Cleaning the Glass Ceiling: Women Negotiating the Nexus."

Associate Professor of Communication Mr. Jerry Drye competed in the International Speech Contest sponsored by Toastmasters International. Each year Toastmasters International conducts contests at the club, area, division, district, regional, and world championship level. Professor Drye won at the club, area, and division levels. He competed May 4 at the district competition being held in Marietta, Georgia. There are over 357,000 Toastmaster members around the world. Over 3,000 members compete annually in the International Speech Contest. Drye is a member of the Lingo Masters club in Dalton.

Dr. Christy Price, Professor of Health and Wellness, Dr. Marina Smitherman, Professor of Biology, and Dr. Barbara Tucker presented at the Southern Regional Faculty and Instructional Development Consortium, March 6, at the University of North Georgia. Dr. Price's topic was "'I Don't Want to Miss a Moment of This!' Creating Transformational Faculty Development Experiences." Dr. Marina Smitherman presented "Well Built by TILT: Guiding Transparent Assignment Design to Create Harmony for Students and Faculty." Dr. Tucker presented on gratitude research and the CTL.

DALTON STATE FACULTY AND STAFF AWARDS, ACHIEVEMENTS, AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Six faculty members in the Department of Communication presented at the Georgia Communication Association Annual Conference in February, held at Clayton State University.

Ms. Amy Mendes, Lecturer in Communication, presented twice. First, drawing from original research, she presented, "Plagiarism Behaviors in a Public Speaking Class: Measuring Undergraduates' Comprehension of Source Attribution Standards." Second, she gave, "Evaluating Teaching in the Public Speaking Classroom: A Review of the Literature."

Dr. Sarah Min, Assistant Professor of Communication, presented, "Movies and Intercultural Communication," discussing how contemporary films can help teach intercultural communication.

Ms. Cathy Hunsicker, Associate Professor of Communication, participated in the session on Great Ideas for Teaching Speech (GIFTS). Her presentation was entitled "Understanding the Parts of an Informative Speech."

Dr. Tami Tomasello, Assistant Professor of Communication, gave a presentation "How Audio-visual Portrayals Trivialize Climate Change: A Qualitative Analysis of *An Inconvenient Truth* and *An Inconvenient Sequel* Documentaries."

Mr. Matthew LeHew, Assistant Professor of Communication, presented "Virtual Communities: Assessing Important and Growing Areas of Research"

Dr. Barbara Tucker, Professor of Communication, presented "The Case for Gratitude" an argument for including gratitude research in the interpersonal communication curriculum.

DALTON STATE FACULTY AND STAFF AWARDS, ACHIEVEMENTS, AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Several faculty and staff won awards at the Leadership Awards Banquet held April 18 at the Mill Restaurant in Dalton. They were joined by several students whose volunteerism, service, and leadership were also recognized.

Dr. Kim Hays, Associate Professor of Biology, received the Truett Lomax Unsung Hero Award for Faculty/Staff.

Dr. David Williams, Associate Professor of Marketing, received the Advisor of the Year Award for his contribution to Alpha Sigma Tau .

Ms. Amber Lesicko was awarded the Tom Deaton Hall of Fame Award for her work with the Student Government Association.

The Department of Social Work was awarded the Program of Distinction Award for their "Make a Difference Day" Collection of Events.

Meagan Standridge, Coordinator of Testing, has published "Finding Yourself in *Lost*: Viewer Interpretation of the Series through Reader Response" in the March 2019 edition of the *Journal of Popular Television*. She co-authored this paper with the late Dr. Kris Barton. The article is available here.

DALTON STATE FACULTY TENURE AND PROMOTION

Eighteen faculty members earned either tenure or promotion or both this spring. Our heartiest congratulations on these well-deserved achievements.

Dr. John Asplund

Promotion to Associate Professor of Mathematics

Ms. Karren Bennett, Assistant Professor of Nursing

Tenure

Dr. Samantha Blair, Assistant Professor of Astronomy

Tenure

Dr. Alicia Briganti, Associate Professor of Psychology

Tenure

Dr. Susan Burran, Assistant Professor of Biology

Tenure

Dr. Sylvia Driver

Promotion to Professor of Nursing

DALTON STATE FACULTY TENURE AND PROMOTION

Dr. Kim Hays, Associate Professor of Biology

Tenure

Dr. Brian Hibbs

Promotion to Associate Professor of Education

Dr. Natalie Johnson, Associate Professor of Criminal Justice

Tenure

Dr. Sarah Mergel

Promotion to Professor of History

Dr. Jacquelyn Mesco

Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor of Education

Ms. Deb Richardson, Associate Professor of Nursing

Tenure

DALTON STATE FACULTY TENURE AND PROMOTION

Dr. Bonnie Semora

Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor of Criminal Justice

Dr. Marina Smitherman

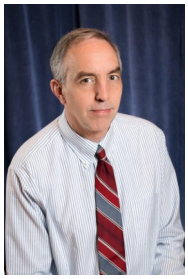
Promotion to Professor of Biology

Dr. Susan West

Promotion to Professor of Radiologic Technology

Dr. Chris Wozny, Associate Professor of Chemistry and Physics

Tenure



Dr. Marjorie Yambor, Associate Professor of Communication

Tenure

Editor's Column

Step Up to the Plate!

Barbara G. Tucker

Professor of Communication

With graduation on May 11, we put another academic year at Dalton State into the history books, as they say. Although the stereotype about us "ivory-tower-dwelling" college professors is that we spend three months at the beach in the summer, most of us are either teaching, finishing degrees, engaging in research, or trying to reconnect with family and community.

There are times in life when we have to transition, and I have been thinking about transitions and change a great deal lately. Change is inevitable, we are constantly told—as if we *had to be told*.

The Journal for Academic Excellence is a place for sharing either peer-reviewed research projects in college teaching and learning and for sharing the accomplishments of DSC faculty members. This last edition of the year, I am pleased to say, contains both types of sharing.

I have edited *The Journal for Academic Excellence* in its current form for six years, and before that for five years in its former iteration. I would like to ask my colleagues to consider whether they would like to take over the editorship of *The Journal* in the coming year. This responsibility might be a co-editor arrangement as well. I would be willing to mentor and assist with the transition. I would even be willing to proofread under the new editor or co-editors.

Mainly, I think a new editor would bring freshness to *The Journal* and to its sharing function on our campus.

So, I hope some of you will think about this over the summer and discuss with your dean or chair how it fits into your plan for promotion and tenure and your other responsibilities.

Speaking of which, I congratulate all the faculty who achieved tenure and/or promotion this spring. It's an impressive list, as is the (incomplete) list of faculty accomplishments in presentations, publications, and awards. In my defense, I am not psychic, so if your accomplishment does not appear here, it is because you did not send it to me. If it appears that one School or Department has more notices than others, it is only because those faculty responded to the emails.

Finally, another sheaf of Thank-a-Teacher letters will go out soon. As always, they are an inspiring read, and as always, they represent a fairly evenly divided cross-section of disciplines and male vs. female faculty.

I wish you a wonderful, restful, and productive summer.

Instructional Technology News:

David O. Brown

Editor's Note: For many years, David Brown has contributed a column to *The Journal for Academic Excellence* because of his position as Instructional Technologist. He has now moved to the Wright School of Business as a faculty member in Information Technology. We congratulate him for this new position! David is kind enough to contribute this edition's column on instructional technology issues to help his colleagues with navigating this fluid and dynamic field. Thank you!

New and Updated Quiz Tools for Faculty

Research shows that, for most topics, frequent low-stakes assessments are more beneficial than less frequent high-stakes assessments (Warner, 2013; Brown, Roediger, & McDaniel, 2014). Fortunately, faculty in higher education now have access to several free online tools that allow for quick and easy creation of low stakes assessments. At Dalton State, faculty now have access to the "New Quizzing Experience" in GeorgiaVIEW that includes easy creation of matching, fill-in-the-blank, multiple choice, and a variety of other question types. Faculty also have access to free online quizzing tools such as the new Kahoot spreadsheet and the new Quizlet experience.

The New Quizzing Experience in GeorgiaVIEW

The new quizzing experience provides faculty with a quick and easy way to create quizzes. Options to randomize and shuffle questions and answers ensure that students see different questions with different answer orders for multiple choice questions. Additionally, more open-ended, fill-in-the-blank answer options and easier ways to create matching questions are other options in the new quizzing experience. And with a simple check of a box, instructors can make the quiz automatically graded and/or automatically exported to the grade book. The Submission View tab in the Quiz properties provides instructors with options to allow students to see correct or incorrect answers immediately or at a later time following submission. If you would like to try the new quizzing experience, the Office of Instructional Technology can provide you with a "Sandbox" course for testing. And once you create the perfect quiz in your Sandbox, you can easily copy the quiz into your real course.

Kahoot Assessment Spreadsheet

Most faculty are familiar with Kahoot, but many are unaware that each Kahoot now comes with a free assessment spreadsheet. The spreadsheet includes data about student performance on each question in the quiz. One tab in the spreadsheet serves as a gradebook, including both the number of questions answered correctly and the time-related score on each question. Instructors can sort the grade book alphabetically, so

grades can quickly be transferred to Georgia-VIEW.

Quizlet

Quizlet is a free online tool that now includes interactive flash cards, tests, writing and spelling exercises, matching, and an Asteroid invasion game. Instructors simply create study sets with definitions and terms and Quizlet automatically generates every-thing else.

If you don't want to create your own Quizlet, you can choose from thousands of others already created. It is a quick and easy process for instructors to create the study sets required for the Quizlet. For students, it takes about one hour to complete a Quizlet study set with ten terms. One downside to Quizlet is that unless the students create an account, instructors don't have an easy way to record the grade. However, instructors can require students to take a screenshot of the last screen showing that the entire Quizlet was completed. Another option for grading is to require students to create a Quizlet account, thus allowing the instructor to see their grade on the Quizlet.

The new quizzing experience in Georgia-VIEW, Kahoot's assessment spreadsheet, and Quizlet's study sets provide faculty with free and easy opportunities to assess students. Other free assessment tools such as Plickers, Socrative, and PollEverywhere provide similar services. Faculty should explore these services to see which tool works best for their students and subjects. These tools all provide opportunities for frequent low stakes assessments that re-search shows works best for most subjects.

References

Brown, P.C., Roediger III, H.L., McDaniel, M.A. (2014). Make it stick: The science of successful learning. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Warnock, S.. (2013). Frequent, low-stakes grading: Assessment for communication, confidence. Faculty Focus. Madison, WI: Magna Publications.

Remember when?

Specifications Grading: Experimenting with a New Form of Student Assessment

Mr. Matthew LeHew
Assistant Professor of Communication

Introduction to Specifications Grading

Specifications grading was introduced by Linda B. Nilson, Ph.D., in *Specifications Grading: Restoring Rigor, Motivating Students, and Saving Faculty Time*, published in 2015. In the book, Nilson lays out an alternative approach to assessment and feedback meant to correct the shortcomings of "traditional" grading, including difficulties with fairness in assessing subjective work, the stress of dealing with students haggling over grades, and the limited correlation between numerical grades and later success. An alternative system, Nilson argued, should allow faculty to focus solely on whether students were achieving outcomes and let students earn the grade they want through demonstration of outcome mastery.

The system of specifications grading revolves around three central concepts. First, all assignments are graded in a pass/fail schema. Students are given a list of specifications for a given assignment, and all specifications must be met to receive the credit for the assignment. Nilson recommends establishing the specifications to the level normally found in "B" work, but this is up to the discretion of the faculty member. Specifications must be thorough, and it is best to give students examples of work that would be considered to be satisfactory. In this way, the specifications list can be seen as a sort of one-dimensional rubric, without the ambiguity sometimes found in multidimensional rubrics.

By assigning a rigid list of specifications at a "B" level and refusing to accept any less, specifications grading reinforces rigor in the classroom. Specifications can even be applied to objectively-graded assignments; for example, to receive full credit for a quiz, a student must answer eight out of 10 questions correctly. Otherwise, no credit is received.

The second tenet of specifications grading can be found in the token system. At the beginning of the semester, students are granted a small number of virtual tokens that can be used to resubmit assignments that did not meet requirements, submit assignments up to 24 hours late, excuse absences, or any other concession that may be allowed. The token system allows for a feedback loop wherein an assignment that did not meet specifications is returned to the student. Then the student can consult with the professor to determine what needs to be done to bring the assignment up to par, and the assignment is resubmitted (with the token) and awarded full credit. Tokens allow a student the benefit of complete resubmission of assignments with no penalty while limiting the possible number of occurrences. Tokens can also be utilized as an extra credit incentive in a system where "extra points" carries no meaning.

The final tenet of specifications grading is the concept of grading bundles. Ultimately, the mandate of the faculty member is to convert

the experience of the student into a final grade, and grade bundles provide a way to facilitate that process. Every letter grade in a course is tied to a list of requirements that must be met to achieve the grade. Assignments can be bundled into outcomes (e.g., in order to make an "A," outcome bundles 1-8 must be completed), or bundles can be arranged in order of progressing difficulty and/or quantity of work.

The grade bundles, laid out in the syllabus, are tracked throughout the semester by the student as he or she seeks to earn the desired grade. If a student meets the requirements for a "C" and is satisfied, the student can stop submitting work.

Looking at the operationalization of grades through bundles, many may see a similarity with contract grading. While the eschewing of numerical grades is similar, a significant difference is found in that the grade bundles are not negotiated separately with each student. Additionally, contract grading does not allow for the assignment specifications or virtual token economy.

Implementation of Specifications Grading

After a trial run during a summer course, I implemented specifications grading in all four of my Fall 2018 classes, which consisted of two freshman-level COMM 1110 courses, one junior-level public relations course, and a senior-level video production special topics course. All courses embraced all elements of specifications grading, and time was set aside during the first week specifically to discuss the new grading system. GeorgiaView was also customized to take advantage of the grading system: students could view the number of tokens they had available, and the grades for assignments were displayed in "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory" terms instead of numerical feedback.

Faculty Observations

The first thing I noticed during the semester was that specifications grading, while presented as a way to save faculty time, requires a significant amount of preparation work up front. To be fair to the students, the lists of specifications must be well thought out and anticipate mistakes or areas where students may cut corners (especially creatively-oriented assignments).

Additionally, feedback on assignments must be thorough, detailing exactly which specifications were not met with the initial submission. This thoroughness sets the student up for success with potential resubmissions, enabling them to more readily achieve outcomes. Happily, specifications grading frees the professor to provide detailed, constructive criticism without the normal associations of such criticism with grade reductions.

For example, after reviewing a video project submission and establishing that the submission meets the specifications for the assignment, I was able to review areas for improvement in detail with the student. The student, no longer concerned that my feedback was heralding a grade reduction, listened intently to the feedback and rolled it into improvements in future submissions.

Overwhelmingly, most of my time spent managing the grading system was managing student expectations. Students who had never been exposed to an alternative grading system before were fearful and even suspicious of the system, worrying that their lack of understanding would result in lower grades than that to which they had become accustomed. Despite my explanations, students seemed to resist buying in to the system until they had experienced it in action, either

through redeeming tokens or seeing how they could predict their grade by checking to see if the specifications were met before submitting an assignment.

Student Feedback

Two-thirds of the way through the course, I disseminated an anonymous survey to all of my classes using Microsoft Forms. Because I could not tell who had submitted responses, no incentives were offered. I explained to my classes that their feedback was valuable and would allow me to see how they viewed the specifications grading process. To establish trust, I showed them my side of the survey, including how it was truly anonymous.

I received 56 responses. These results are given on page 15. Overall, students seemed to believe that specifications grading allowed them more control over their grade, allowed them to have a better understanding of faculty expectations for assignments, and made classes more difficult. Interestingly, students were almost evenly split on their preference for a grading system in the future. All students responded that they had never experienced specifications grading before.

Students were given the opportunity to provide open-ended feedback about specifications grading. Many students echoed each other in saying that they were unsure about the system at first but grew to like it:

> It was really confusing when the class first started simply because it was something I was not used to. I definitely like it now. I do think it is a little harder, but only because there seems to be more than what I normally have to do to get an A. I do actually think other professors should adopt this style of grading. I like the clear outline of what all I have to accomplish to achieve the grade I want.

Students who disliked specifications grading tended to take issue with the perception that any slight mistake can cost them a letter grade:

> While I thought specs grading was a good idea at first, it eventually has brought me a lot of stress. It stresses me out that if I miss one small aspect of a speech or an assignment that it will drop me one letter grade.

Reflecting on this feedback helped me realize a shortcoming in how specifications grading was being explained. While it is true that in my classes, earning an "A" requires successful completion of *every* assignment and quiz, thereby accomplishing *every* specification, this does not require completing every assignment correctly *the first time*. Students seemed to think that using a token to resubmit the assignment would result in the assignment somehow being worth "less" than if it was correctly submitted the first time, but that is not how the grading system works.

Conclusion

Fully embracing specifications grading worked well enough for me to continue implementation through the Spring 2019 semester, after which I will choose whether I want to utilize it in the next academic year. However, my results so far leave me feeling hopeful about the grading system, hoping that I can better document accomplishment of outcomes and save time with grading and administrative tasks. My perception thus far is that student dissatisfaction with specifications grading stems mostly from miscommunication about how the system works on my part, and students tend to enjoy and appreciate the grading system the more they experience and trust it.

Table 1. Student responses to Specifications Grading

Do you think specs grading is making this class harder or easier than "traditional" grading?	
Much easier	8
Slightly easier	13
No change	6
Slightly harder	27
Much harder	2

Do you feel like you have an increased or decreased understanding of your instructor's requirements for assignments with specs grading as compared to "traditional" grading?	
Significantly decreased understanding	0
Slightly decreased understanding	1
No change	8
Slightly increased understanding	18
Significantly increased understanding	29

Do you feel the specs grading system does a better or worse job of helping you learn and achieve the outcomes of the course compared to "traditional" grading?	
Much worse	2
Slightly worse	7
No change	15
Slightly better	18
Much better	14

If you had a choice, would you prefer a course with specs or "traditional" grading?	
Specs grading	17
Traditional grading	20
No preference	19

Student Evaluations of Teaching Effectiveness:

A Literature Review and Future Avenues of Research

Abstract: Since educating students is a key element of the mission for all institutions of higher learning, evaluating faculty's teaching effectiveness is an important element of reviewing faculty performance. Student evaluations of teaching effectiveness (SETE) surveys have long been considered in evaluating teacher effectiveness for many universities and colleges. In this paper we review the current literature addressing SETE; this literature raises significant concerns regarding the validity of SETE. We also propose avenues for future research.

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Educating students is a key element of the mission for all institutions of higher learning. As such, performance evaluations of faculty attempt to assess a faculty member's effectiveness in teaching. One common measure of teaching effectiveness used at many colleges and universities is the student evaluation of teaching effectiveness (SETE) survey approach, also referred to as student evaluation of teaching (SET) or student rating of teaching (SRT) (Kulik, 2001; Penny, 2003; Spooren, Brockx, & Mortelmans, 2013). In this paper we focus on a literature review concerning the validity of SETE and then examine potential avenues of new research concerning SETE and the evaluation of teaching effectiveness. We begin by examining the concept of the validity of any measure through the lens of measurement theory.

Measurement Theory and Validity

We know from measurement theory that a measure has validity if it measures what it purports to measure (Allen & Yen, 2002). The validity of a measure can be assessed in several ways, the three major types being content validity, construct validity, and criterion-related validity. Content validity is determined based on a rational, subjective determination as to whether a measure captures what the measure is intended to measure. Construct and criterion-related validity, in contrast, are validated via statistical tests such as convergent and discriminate validity. In this paper we focus on the concept of face validity.

A Literature Review of the Validity of SETE

Despite the near ubiquitous use of SETE as an element of evaluating faculty's teaching effectiveness, numerous concerns persist as to the validity of SETE. A recent literature review examined 158 peer-reviewed journal articles published since 2000 and available through Web of Science, EBSCO and ERIC, along with two recent book chapters, and drew several interesting conclusions regarding the validity of SETE (Spooren, et al., 2013). We use this article and other recent articles to review the literature concerning the validity of SETE.

Research notes that many SETE instruments are constructed without any clear

theory of effective teaching (Ory & Ryan, 2001; Spooren, et al., 2013). Such instruments therefore lack any evidence of a basis for content validity. Having a clear, theory-based understanding of what constitutes effective teaching is a prerequisite for developing a valid SETE instrument. The question also arises as to whether there is more than just one way, and one set of associated characteristics, to be an effective teacher.

There are also faculty concerns regarding multiple, varying perspectives as to what constitutes effective teaching. As indicated in research, (Spooren, et al., 2013),

> one of the major concerns involves the validity and reliability of student opinions (i.e., the extent to which students are capable of providing appropriate teacher evaluations). Faculty concerns also include the differences between the ways in which students and teachers perceive effective teaching, as well as the relationship of these perceptions to factors that are unrelated to good teaching. (p. 2)

There are concerns that SETE stakeholders, including faculty, students, and administrators, may differ in their conception of what constitutes good teaching.

There is also concern that SETE is influenced by the biases of the student raters that are unrelated to effective teaching. The results of research attempting to examine this issue, however, have contradictory findings with some finding an influence of student biases on the SETE results while others find no such evidence of these biases. In terms of studies that did find effects from biases, one study examined the impact of student gender and instructor gender. This study found that:

> Female students rated their female instructors significantly higher on pedagogical characteristics and course content characteristics than they rated their male instructors. Also, male students rated male instructors significantly higher on the same two factors. (Young, Rush, & Shaw, 2009, p. 9)

Another study (MacNell, Driscoll, & Hunt, 2015) that attempted to examine the effect of gender biases conducted an experiment with online courses where a given instructor could be presented as a male in some classes and then as a female in others regardless of their actual gender; this study found that:

> Students rated the male identity significantly higher than the female identity, regardless of the instructor's actual gender, demonstrating gender bias. (p. 1)

In another experiment, students were asked to rate the instructor effectiveness and then take a quiz on what they learned from watching a short engineering lecture given by a computer-animated professor (Basow, Codos, & Martin, 2013). The same lecture was given to all students but the computer-animated professors were varied by gender (male or female) and race (African American or White). The results of the experiments were very interesting:

> Contrary to predictions, male students gave significantly higher ratings than female students on most teaching factors and African American professors were rated higher than White professors on their hypothetical interactions with students. Quiz results, however, supported predictions: higher scores were obtained by students who had a White professor compared to those who had an African American professor, and by students who had a male professor compared to those who had a female professor. These results may be due to students paying more attention to the more normative professor. (Basow, et al., 2013, p. 352)

In stark contrast to these preceding studies, however, a meta-analysis found that SETE's appear to be "largely free from gender bias" (Wright & Jenkins-Guarnieri, 2012, p. 683). Unfortunately, scholarship reaches contradictory conclusions on this important topic.

Research also suggests that SETE is more of a measure of student satisfaction with their experience in the class relative to the student's individual expectations than a measure of the extent to which learning has occurred (Beecham, 2009; Penny, 2003; Spooren, et al., 2013). Some scholars have criticized SETE surveys as being no more than customer satisfaction surveys and note that many teachers use the derogatory term "happy forms" when referring to SETE surveys (Penny, 2003). In reviewing the questions on SETE across multiple institutions it is clear that students are being asked to rate their individual perspective of their satisfaction with the learning experience relative to what the instrument developer(s) considered to be the characteristic attributes of good and effective teaching.

This research therefore concludes (Spooren, et al., 2013):

> This review of the state of the art in the literature has shown that the utility and validity ascribed to SET should continue to be called into question. [...] Because conclusive evidence has not been found yet, such evaluations should be considered fragile, as important stakeholders (i.e., the subjects of evaluations and their educational performance) are often judged according to indicators of effective teaching (in some cases, a single indicator), the value of which continues to be contested in the research literature. (p. 32)

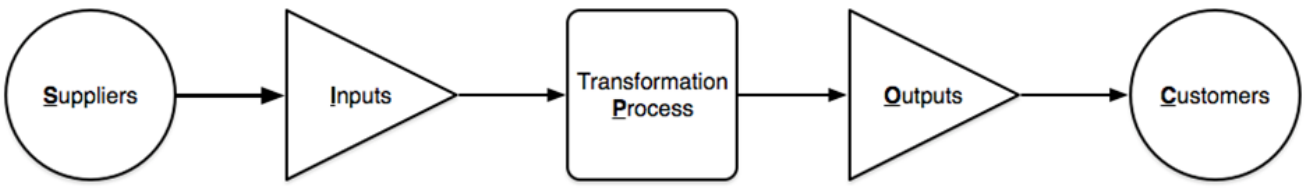
Based on our review of the current literature on SETE, we come to two key conclusions regarding the use of SETE. First, we conclude that SETE is most likely not an effective measure of teaching effectiveness; it certainly does not appear to measure whether, or the extent to which, learning has occurred. Second, we conclude it makes a great deal of sense to think of SETE as a measure of student satisfaction with their learning experience. What then do our conclusions from the literature review suggest regarding potential avenues of future research?

Examining Learning as a Transformative Process

One possible avenue for future research is to examine the effectiveness of teaching (or, said another way, whether the desired learning has taken place) from a new, fresh perspective. One way to do so is to examine the phenomenon through a new lens. Since higher education is ideally to be a transformative learning process for students, we suggest it might make sense to examine the issue through the theories and frameworks of operations management (OM).

OM is defined as "the set of activities that creates value in the form of goods *and services* by transforming inputs into outputs" (Heizer & Render, 2010, p. 4). Total Quality Management (TQM) is an integral element of OM and includes disciplines such as Six Sigma. The Six Sigma SIPOC model, provided as Figure 1 (bottom page 18),

Figure 1. The OM Six Sigma SIPOC Model



illustrates well a fundamental concept of OM regarding how to think of the key elements of a transformative process (Six Sigma Academy and GOAL/QPC, 2002, p. 49).

In relating Figure 1 to the teaching/learning process in higher education for a specific course, the primary suppliers include the prior teachers, faculty and life experiences which have supplied each student with his or her accumulated knowledge and skills which he or she has acquired prior to entering the course in question. Other suppliers include those parties which provide expertise and resources for the course, such as the faculty member and the textbook publishers. The next element of the SIPOC model is the input to the process. The primary input of the teaching/learning process is the set of students entering the course. Other inputs include resources such as the class textbook as well as, most importantly, the knowledge and skills of the faculty member. The next element, the transformation process, is led and managed by the faculty member. It includes all the steps and activities in the course through which the students are to learn and acquire new skills and knowledge. In this transformative process, however, the students should ideally be active, rather than passive, participants in the process.

The subsequent element, the outputs, are the students themselves once the course is completed. These students have hopefully acquired new skills and knowledge that make them more valuable to the customers of the process. The final element of the SIPOC model, the customers, include: (1) the faculty of the students in subsequent courses; (2) the ultimate employers of the students; (3) the communities in which the students live and interact, as well as, (4) the students themselves.

While the concepts of OM are frequently thought of and illustrated in the context of creating inanimate goods and products which are ultimately sold to a customer, OM concepts also apply directly to service management (SM) where the result of the process is not an inanimate product but is rather a service. Further, in SM, the customers and other key stakeholders are active participants in the transformation process. In the case of the higher education transformative process, the students are not inanimate widgets in a production process but rather are a key, integral participant in the transformation process. Thinking of the student as the output of this process does not diminish their importance nor the importance of their active participation in the process. Thinking of the customers, however, does help crystalize the understanding of just who is dependent upon, and impacted by, the quality of students in terms of the knowledge and skills they have acquired.

As OM entails designing, executing, monitoring and controlling processes so as to achieve the desired results, OM therefore not surprisingly relies upon many different types of process measures (Heizer & Render, 2010). These include measures such as:

- process capacity (the maximum number of units per time period a process can produce);
- whether a process is in control (that is, is the process consistently producing the same output with only normal variation);
- the process capability (which determines the proportion of output units produced by an in-control process that fall within the acceptable upper and lower specification limits, often measured by the process capability index [Cpk]);
- process productivity (the ratio of units produced divided by the inputs used);
- process time (the average time between successive units at the output of a process); and
- cycle time (how long it takes, from start to finish, to produce a unit of output).

A key measure is the value added by the process; this requires assessing whether the process has transformed the original input of the process into an output that has acquired the more valuable, desired characteristics. Thus, future research could utilize these measurement principles in developing a direct test of the extent of learning that has taken place. Future research could therefore measure the learning occurring within a course by comparing pre-test and post-test results regarding the key learning objectives

of a course administered at the beginning and end of a course, respectively.

Relationship Between Process Participant Satisfaction and Process Performance

We can also build upon prior management and marketing research which has long examined the relationship between process participant satisfaction and retention as well as organizational performance. For employee satisfaction this relates to (1) whether the employee remains with their employer (captured by measures such as turnover or employee commitment) and/or (2) positive organizational outcomes and performance (Anderson, Fornell, & Lehmann, 1994; Chi & Gursoy, 2009; Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Kim, Lee, Lee, & Kim, 2010; Simons & Roberson, 2003; Tepeci, 2001). For customer satisfaction this relates to (1) whether the customer remains with the firm providing their good or service (measured by measures such as customer churn) and/or (2) positive organizational outcomes and performance (Barry, Dion, & Johnson, 2008; Chi & Gursoy, 2009; Eskildsen & Kristensen, 2008; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Simons & Roberson, 2003). Given these studies that examine the positive outcomes of employee and customer satisfaction, future research may wish to examine the impact of student satisfaction, as measured by SETE, on college and university results regarding retention and graduation.

Conclusion

While significant doubts remain regarding the ability of SETE to validly measure teaching effectiveness, institutions of higher learning certainly need to assess teaching effectiveness. Further, universities and colleges also need to identify antecedents to institutional performance in terms of retention and graduation. While SETE may not measure teaching effectiveness, it may, as a measure of student satisfaction, be an important measure for colleges and universities to monitor as an antecedent of institutional retention and graduation performance. Finally, using the theories and frameworks of operations management (OM) and service management (SM), future research may be able to develop valid measures to determine whether the desired educational transformational process has been executed such that the learning regarding the intended objectives has occurred within a course.

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See you again

August 8!

Journal Submission Guidelines and Editorial Policies

1. Faculty members and professional staff may submit the following:
    - Book reviews on scholarly works on higher education administration or issues, college teaching, or adult learning published within the last two calendar years.
    - Scholarship of Teaching and Learning research. This is defined as a study in which an activity, strategy, approach, or method that reflects best practices or evidence-based research is tried in the classroom. The faculty member sets up an intervention, executes it, and assesses the impact, employing quantitative or qualitative methods. Articles should indicate that IRB process was followed where applicable, with documentation.
    - Literature review that synthesizes, in a relevant and interesting way, the evidence, theory, and/or research on a particular aspect of higher education, college teaching, adult learning, brain research, etc. Professional staff could write about issues in student services or advising, for example.
    - Essay of personal reflection of a classroom incident or phenomenon with an evidence- or theory-based approach to interpreting the incident or phenomenon.
    - Articles should have applicability across disciplines.
2. Style Sheet
    - Submissions should be in APA VI format and Times New Roman 12 pt. font. Use APA guidelines in terms of margins. The writer should try to preserve his or her anonymity as much as possible. The editor will redact the name of the writer from the document's title page before sending to reviewers.
3. Review Process
    - The submissions will be peer reviewed by three faculty members, whose identity will be known only to editor and not to each other. One member of the review committee will be a faculty member in general discipline represented in the article, one will be a faculty member with an advanced degree in education, and one will be drawn from the advisory committee or other volunteer reviewers. The peer reviewers will likely be from other institutions.
    - Articles will be returned to the writers in a timely manner with an indication of rejection; conditional acceptance (revise and re-submit, with suggestions for doing so), and accepted (possibly with request to edit or make minor changes). A rubric will be used for assessing the articles. It will be available to potential submitters upon request. If none of the members approves the article, it will be rejected. If one of the members approves the article, it will be considered a conditional acceptance. If two approve it, it will be returned for the necessary editions and published when finished. If three approve it, it will be published as is or with minor corrections.
4. Submissions should be sent as Word files to cae@daltonstate.edu
5. Published articles will appear in the *Journal for Academic Excellence*, which will be available on the Center for Academic Excellence's website.