Assisting Faculty with Formative Assessment

Students Assessing Teaching And Learning Program

Guadalupe Covarrubias, Matias Lopez, Andrea Presas, Adriana Signorini, Christian Urbina
crte.ucmerced.edu/satal

SATAL Program

SATAL supports faculty and programs with their assessment activities by collecting the student perspective on their learning in support of Student Learning Outcomes. Undergraduates in the program receive professional development in data collection, analysis and reporting.

How the Program Works?

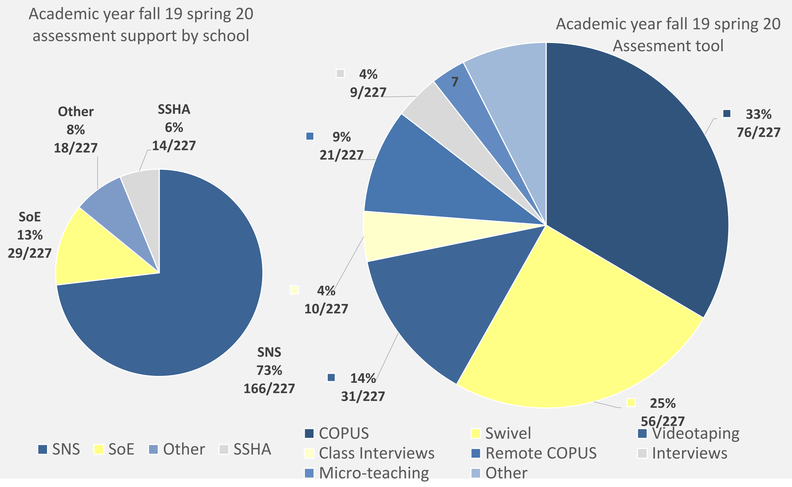
- SATAL collects qualitative data of the student learning to supplement other sources of data and provide a more holistic picture of the learning experiences student have in their courses/ programs.
- Tools are tailored to a course's particular assessment needs.
- Findings provide increased objectivity and confidence in the conclusions because students are more comfortable sharing their thoughts with trained peers who have no link to the course.

Impact on Student Experience

The data generated by SATAL has provided a number of courses and programs with actionable information about the student experience. For

Program	Findings
Biology	Sharing ideas with other students in a team makes it easier to learn and engage with the material. (n=81/167, Class Survey)
English	The critique of in-class topics allows students to provide their opinions in a critical way. (n=23/25, Group Interview)
Environmental Engineering	COPUS results during a 60-minute session revealed the following student behaviors: listened (L) to the instructor 62%, asked the instructor questions (SQ) 11%, participated in a group activity (OG) 10%, answered questions (AnQ) 8%, and presented to their peers (SP) 7%. Based on these results, students participated in active learning activities for 36% of the class time. (n=16/16)

SATAL brings students voices to course assessment efforts, generating insights into student needs and interests unavailable through conventional surveys.



Assessment Tools for Remote Instruction

Faculty, what is the learning experience in your course(s)? How is your course developing?

Ask your students!

Focus Group

Purpose: Gain students' perspectives on their courses and obtain specific information about the why and how of their responses.

Implementation:

Before
- Action plan to recruit participants
- Practice the questions
- Assign roles (moderator – note taker)
- Prepare material (handouts, recorders, etc.)

During
- Create a comfortable environment
- Facilitate a discussion among 6 - 8 participants.
- Record session

After
- Draft a summary report
- Identify trends in the participants' responses
- Keep students' identities confidential.
- Ensure a quick turnaround time for the report

Challenges:
- Gain sufficient student participation to have confidence in focus group conclusion.
- Faculty encouragement seem to be the most successful in gaining students participation.
- Gifts cards, drawings, and some extra points could help in student recruitment.

Sample Report:

Consider those outcomes for which you rated your abilities as "No change," "Weaker," or "Much weaker." What might UC Merced do to increase student achievement of these seven Learning Outcomes?

Most of the students agreed that effective communication was lacking between peers (11 or 69%). Several students agreed that UCM has the right amount of activities, but it is up to the students to participate in them (6 or 38%). Some of the students suggestions included: 1) Fliers may not be the right way to attract students (5 or 31%) ..."

Illustrative Comments

"Insert direct quotes of student responses recorded during the focus group."

Group Interview

Purpose: A quick manner of informing faculty about what should be improved, changed, or remain intact in the course.

Implementation:

This assessment option is administered through Zoom with demographic questions to provide a cross tabulation of the students' feedback.

During

Following the **Think -Share approach**, students complete an individual Qualtrics survey on the questions:

1) What helps learning in this class
2) What changes should the instructor make to help your learning
3) What actions would you take to improve your learning?

After

SATAL students interview the class and tabulate the group consensus highlighting trends in the results.

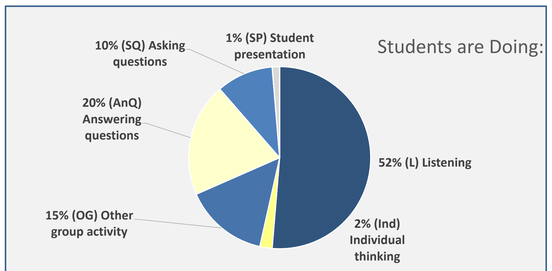
Challenges:
- The interview will take some time off class time to administer, usually 20 to 30 min.
- Findings are more general than using the focus group tool in which students have a chance to provide specific examples or explain the why to their responses.

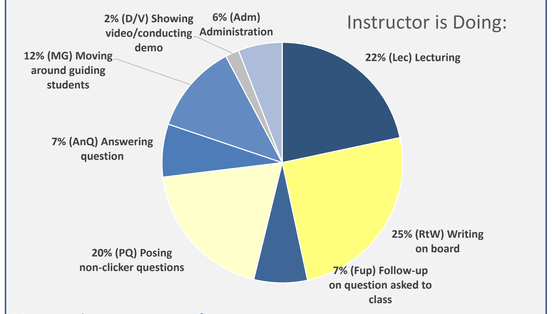
Sample Report:

What helps learning in this class	# of Students	% of Students
Homework assignments	10	33%
What changes should the instructor make to help your learning	**# of Students**	**% of Students**
More example problems	15	50%
What actions would you take to improve your learning?	**# of Students**	**% of Students**
Go to office hours	9	30%

COPUS

What is COPUS?: The Classroom Observation Protocol for Undergraduate STEM (COPUS) is a tool to collect information about what is happening in the classroom. Over the course of a class period, instructor and student behaviors and interactions are observed over two-minute intervals; these data help instructors identify how class time is spent.





How to interpret results:

1)Do these data match my conception of what occurs in my classroom?
2)How am I utilizing class time?
3)Instructors should aim for "student-centered" class periods when time is focused on small group work is a key instructional strategy.
4)Instructors should have more than one period observed to be able to draw conclusion of all class periods for the course.

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