Chapter 45
Formative Evaluations of Teaching:
Involving Students in the Assessment Process

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ABSTRACT

Students engaging in the assessment and evaluation process is becoming increasingly popular because it helps students become active participants in their own learning. In this chapter we discuss ways to involve students in the assessment and evaluation process in the classroom. It brings together multiple perspectives on critical thinking, metacognition, interteaching and student evaluations of teaching (SETs). The commonality between these four key elements is the importance of engaging students to become active participants in their own learning because they can help improve student learning outcomes. This chapter goes on to examine how these assessments and evaluations play a role in developing critical thinking skills and metacognition in students.

INTRODUCTION

Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn. This often-used quote is the backbone for the use of student evaluations of teaching (SET) because students become active participants in their own learning. They become *involved* in classroom assessment. In this chapter we discuss ways to involve college students in the assessment and evaluation process in the classroom. It brings together multiple perspectives on critical thinking, metacognition, interteaching and student evaluations of teaching (SETs). The commonality between these four key elements is the importance of engaging students to become active participants in their own learning because they can help improve student-learning outcomes.

This chapter begins with a discussion of critical thinking skills and metacognition and their importance to student assessments. The chapter then evolves into a discussion of the use of interteaching as a daily student self-assessment and how it can build skills. It then examines relevant and often controversial areas of SETs, which include lack of student participation, quality of student feedback, student perceptions of how instructors use SETs, instructors' perceptions and use of SETs, bias within SETs, and the relationship between SETs and student learning outcomes. Each of these areas are unique and important because they involve students in the assessment and evaluation process.

The use of formative evaluations (mid-semester evaluations) throughout the semester/term has been an area of increased research in the past few years. Research has found that more frequent SETs can be more useful to improving teaching quality (Brown, 2008; Diamond, 2004). They have also been found to improve student attitudes and alter students' perceptions of instructors (Brown, 2008). Effective formative assessments include instructional processes that are ongoing (Hudesman et al., 2013). By assessing students through this process, the information gained from the assessments not only betters the content of the courses, but also aids students in learning how to learn (Hudesman et al., 2013). These assessments differ from typical assessments by having professors expand and transform their teaching techniques while also offering students constructive comments as well suggestions to aid students in improving their learning strategies (Hudesman et al., 2013).

This chapter concludes with a discussion regarding how critical skill building, metacognitive skill building, interteaching and SETs can be useful for both teachers and students. While end-of-semester evaluations are used frequently and can provide valuable information, frequent evaluations along with in-class assessment such as through the use of interteaching assignments have several advantages. First, they provide an opportunity to improve a class in progress and assess student learning through involving students in the process. Second, students may become more involved and experience greater satisfaction with the course when they are given the opportunity to provide mid-semester feedback. The information gathered from student evaluations can be useful for all teachers and students because they actively *involve* students in shaping the courses. Third, and perhaps most importantly, students may learn more from classes that are improved through the use of mid-semester evaluations. Instructors can use student feedback to help shape the course because they will have a better understanding of how the students perceive the course content because students are directly *involved.*

Interteaching and SETs can be used to modify and shape a course, thereby encouraging students to become part of the assessment process. This chapter reviews current research on critical thinking, metacognition, interteaching, and SETs while highlighting ways to effectively use the information gained to help students become active participants in their learning by better understanding student perceptions

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