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AUTHOR Handleman, Chester
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ABSTRACT

Student evaluations of an instructor who uses objective tests exclusively are here compared to evaluations of the same instructor using classroom tests which combine objective and subjective test formats. Class size and hour and manner of instruction were held constant; students were chosen at random by the computer registration process. The sample was comprised of four Western Civilization classes; two classes of 30 students each participated in each testing option. The instructor was evaluated significantly higher by students who took objective exams than by those who took combination objective/subjective examinations. In view of the students' stated preference for the objective test format, an instructor sensitive to his student evaluation score is likely to choose the objective test option. This tendency is often reinforced by ease in grading objective exams. However, many employers of community college graduates have long been critical of their employees' writing skills. The universal adoption of a combination objective/subjective testing format would tend to sharpen writing and organizational skills, as well as provide a more consistent basis for student evaluation of instructors. (NHM)

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OBJECTIVE VERSUS SUBJECTIVE CLASSROOM TESTS AND STUDENT EVALUATIONS OF THEIR INSTRUCTORS

by

Chester Handleman

A PRACTICUM PRESENTED TO NOVA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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PART I

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, especially, many institutions of higher education have adopted the practice of students evaluating the quality of the teaching which they receive in the classroom. In general, this practice appears to have some merit and is favored by the writer of this practicum. Yet there are, of course, legions of critics who maintain that it can have a deliterious effect on the teaching process itself. It is not the purpose of this study to discuss the various pros and cons of the practice of students evaluating instructors. The literature on the subject is copious, and is constantly increasing in scope. What the present study is concerned with, rather, is to find out if there is a correlation between the testing formats (objective-subjective) which instructors use to judge student achievement, and the ratings which instructors receive from their students.

The present writer has heard from many of his students that they prefer to take objective classroom tests rather than the "combination" objective-subjective ones which it has been his practice, generally, to use. Many students claim that they dislike writing out answers; that it is much more convenient and pleasant for them simply to choose a correct answer in a multiple-choice test format. They often admit that they are not "good at" spelling and sentence structure; that organizing ideas and material even for

"short answer" questions is a chore they prefer to avoid.

The present writer has noticed during the past decade and more of teaching history and political science at Broward Community College in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, that the average student is indeed weak in writing skills; and also in being able to put cognitive information into writing of almost any form. Many of the tests this instructor gives to his students are partly objective and partly subjective in nature. Giving such examinations allows the instructor to compare the objective and subjective parts of each test, and to notice that often the grade correlation between the two parts is not so high as one might expect. It is not unusual, for example, for a student to score high on one part and low on the other. Therefore, it would seem that the totally objective model used by perhaps 85% of all of the instructors in the Social Science Division might not be a true sample of a student's achievement.

This problem is very much involved with societal needs, since many employers of community college graduates have long been critical of their employees' writing skills and their very ability to put cognitive material on paper. The ability to choose the right answer from among four suggested ones is hardly the same as the ability to organize on paper one's knowledge of a subject, a skill often needed in the business world. It is not that multiple-choice tests are necessarily easy to pass; some can be quite difficult, even more so than written exams, sometimes. It is simply that the ability to

perform in one area does not guarantee an ability in the other.

One of the long-standing criticisms of the use of subjective examinations is that they take too much of an instructor's time to grade. Yet if a college administration suggested in a diplomatic manner at a faculty meeting that the students would benefit if at least one third of all classroom tests employed the subjective format, instructors who followed this suggestion would not become overburdened with grading tests---even if some of their classes were fairly large. It should be realized that in many colleges instructors use "blue book" tests exclusively, and grade all parts of their students' tests! In any event, instructors, especially in the areas of the humanities and the social sciences, might give two objective tests to one subjective; or, perhaps better yet, combine the two formats in each test. The choice could be their own.

The purpose of the present paper is to compare the student evaluation scores given to the instructor who uses objective tests exclusively with those given to the same instructor who uses the combination objective-subjective format for his test procedures. In order to make the teaching for all four classes of students as similar as possible, the writer of this paper gave objective tests exclusively to two of his Western Civilization classes; the other two classes were tested by the so-called "combination" test format noted above.

PART II

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Societal needs are very much concerned with the testing problem noted above. If a graduate of a two-year (or four-year) college can receive an equally good education regardless of whether his classroom tests are completely of the objective variety, or whether substantial parts include some written material, the concern for the above problem would be minor. Yet, as noted above, employers of these students and society as well have need for people who can express their cognitive knowledge in a meaningful way. Higher education should not "water down" its standards by omitting subjective testing simply to satisfy students who prefer objective tests, or faculty members who do not wish to grade written examinations.

Today many recently expanded colleges find themselves in the unenviable position of trying to keep up their enrollment figures by almost any means. Academic standards and course requirements have sometimes been reduced in the light of specious arguments such as "it is not what a student learns in college that is important (he will forget it anyway) so long as he derives proper attitudes, interests, and experiences." Of course, this position has long been taken by many public school educators, often with dubious results. It would seem that on the college level, finally, the learning of subject matter itself should be of a prime importance.

The purpose of the present paper is to examine one phase of the practice of students evaluating their instructors. The present

inquiry does not attempt to judge the overall value of the practice, even though institutions such as the University of Miami have recently dropped such evaluations; at least at those institutions they apparently served little overall purpose. In spite of this, it may very well be that student evaluations of their instructors, if properly administered, may be of definite benefit at many institutions.

An examination of the literature bears out the latter assumption---at least to some degree. Peter W. Frey, writing in Change Magazine, says that it is fairly clear that an instructional rating system, when properly developed, can provide reliable and valid information about teaching.[1] Frey points out that student instructional ratings can be reliable and valid, but he explains that it is an obligation of the faculty to insure that such is the case at their own institutions.[2]

The present paper addresses itself to the latter statement. There is not only the question of how useful such evaluations are; there is also the problem of how well these evaluations are administered, and whether they are evaluating the teaching process in a valid and reliable fashion. Nowhere in the literature which the present writer has examined is there a discussion of the

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[1]Peter W. Frey, "The Ongoing Debate: Student Evaluation of Teaching," Change, February, 1974, p. 64.

[2]Ibid.

relationship between objective and subjective student tests and student evaluations of their instructors. The present writer has always been well rated by his students during the entire four year period during which the student evaluation of instructors practice has existed at Broward Community College. Still, he has noticed that the majority of students in most of his classes have preferred to take objective tests rather than subjective ones; or those tests combining features of both formats, indicated above. These preferences have been mentioned both orally and in the "open end" question (#20) of the evaluation questionnaires.

Kenneth E. Elbe also generally supports student evaluations of faculty members, claiming that such a practice, properly administered, will not, as some critics believe, affect adversely a faculty member's teaching.[3] Elbe disagrees with arguments that such evaluations are potential weapons in the hands of administrators for use against the faculty, and that the enterprise "will somehow dehumanize or computerize instruction."[4] But he does point out a real danger---that the student rating of the faculty might be used as the sole index of an instructor's competence.

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[3]Kenneth E. Elbe, "What Are We Afraid Of?," College Review, January, 1974, pp. 453-455.

[4]Ibid.

Robert J. Menges likewise supports student evaluations of instructors; but at the same time he warns of some of the pitfalls of this practice, especially if the results are "seriously considered by the college administration on the subject of positive or negative rewards to the faculty."[5] Of the negative consequences, he is most concerned about a leveling effect on creative teaching. Says Menges:

> ... If evaluations are built from a narrow empiricist tradition, they are likely to be severely inhibiting. The most "useful" empirical results are sometimes the most dehumanizing.

While the above three writers generally support the idea of student evaluations of their instructors, they are all quick to point out some of the dangers and weaknesses of the practice---an area of consequence to the students, to the faculty itself, and to the administration in its relations with both the faculty and the students. The writer of this paper generally agrees with the above critics that student evaluations of their instructors can be useful; but possible problems, such as improper administration, are always a danger, of course.

One interesting possible offshoot of students evaluating their instructors is reported in a long article in the Miami Herald.[6] This report points out that while the average college grade a decade or

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[5]Robert J. Menges, "The New Reporters: Students Rate Instructors;" New Directions for Higher Education: Evaluating Learning and Teaching (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Winter, 1974, pp. 68-69.

[6]Louise Montgomery, "Academic Grade Inflation--A's Easier Now," Miami Herald, June 10, 1974, p. 1A.

so ago used to be a "C," today it has virtually become a "B," and wonders why. Montgomery points out that to some degree this change has occurred nationally as well as in Florida. At Miami-Dade Community College 13.5 percent of the grades in 1969 were A's, while in 1973 a whopping 26.5 percent of the grades in all areas were "A." It is interesting to note that it was beginning with the 1969-1970 school year that students began to evaluate their instructors at Miami-Dade as well as at many other Florida colleges and universities. The increase of Florida Atlantic University's "A" grades during the same span of time has gone from 17.6 percent to 25 percent. Broward Community College's "A" grades in the same time period went from 11.8 percent to 17.2 percent; the University of Miami, 16.6 percent to 24.1 percent; and the University of Florida from 21.6 percent to 28.2 percent. Even Harvard has shown an upward trend in the number of high grades given in recent years.[7] As for Broward Community College's trend toward higher grades, this development can be corroborated by the present writer, who, as a faculty sponsor for Phi Theta Kappa, the Community-Junior College National Scholastic Honor Fraternity, has observed that the number of B.C.C. students qualifying for membership in this fraternity in the past five years has increased more than five-fold, even though the college enrollment figures have barely doubled during that time.[8]

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[7] Ibid, p. 18A.

[8] Ibid.

Dr. Bob Feinberg, a University of Florida researcher, asks, in attempting to respond to the above phenomenon, "Have you ever thought of the effect student evaluations have on professors?" Montgomery points out that at many colleges and universities today students' confidential ratings of their professors are entered into the professors' personnel files and are taken into account in promotion. Word gets around among students as to who is an easy or hard grader. Says Feinberg:

> It's hard to post grades if you have lots of C's and very few A's and B's when you have to compete with your colleagues for students. Can't you guess which professor students will sign up for if they can see that some give lots A's?[10]

It can now reasonably be asked just what are "societal needs" in the area of evaluation of students in general? This question may throw light on the importance of how faculty members evaluate their students, and how students, in turn, now often evaluate their teachers. Dr. Robert B. Mautz, Chancellor of the Florida University system of nine universities, is worried about the so-called "grade inflation" which has hit Florida's institutions of higher education and those of many other states as well. He wonders how much this grade inflation is caused by student intimidation of their professors resulting from students evaluating these same professors.

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[10] Ibid.

Says Mautz:

> Every day people make judgments about other persons and their work. These judgments aren't always that we are doing superior "A" quality work. To delude students by saying they have qualities they don't have is wrong.[11]

University of Florida officials point out that the trend toward easier grading confuses graduate schools, which now rely less and less on undergraduate grades in picking promising upper-level students; and it misleads parents who think they are paying the college to educate their child. The University of Miami's Associate Academic Dean, Dr. S. L. Besvinick, agrees, pointing out that life in the real world is competitive.

Dean Besvinick asks:

> Are we preparing people to be effective participants in the business of living? Students must come to grips with the notion of failing just as everyone must. A number of our faculty feel we'd be doing a disservice if we didn't help our students to recognize failure.[12]

The above arguments, of course, fly in the face of many educators in the community college field, who claim that students should be given the opportunity to experience success rather than failure in academic affairs; failure can only bring negative feelings, while success in itself brings more success. This argument is still raging in academic circles and certainly will not be resolved in the

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[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid, pp. 18-19.

present study. Yet this paper is concerned with instructor evaluations of their students and how they relate to student evaluations of their instructors---with the possible student grade inflation, noted above. This problem in turn is very much concerned with how certain instructor-made classroom tests (objective-subjective) will effect student evaluations of instructors.

Still another rather recent academic practice may be related to objective-subjective testing formats and college credits in general. At Broward Community College and at many other two-year institutions a student may now preempt a course if he can score in the upper 50 percentile of the so-called standardized "CLEP" (College Level Examination Program) test. A sizable number of students at B.C.C. recently took this test in order to try to exempt the English 101 (English Composition) course. Although about twelve students were able to achieve this rather modest score, only two were able to pass the written or subjective adjunct of this test, which was made up by the B.C.C. English Department. This is certainly a disappointing indication of the lack of writing and organizing skills which many high school graduates possess. This weakness should be recognized more specifically in the community college. If all humanities and social science instructors, at least, were to require more subjective or "combination" type testing, noted above, some headway might be made toward a resolution of the problem.

The prestigious Princeton, New Jersey based Educational Testing Service's "College Entrance Examination Board" reports that it is not only in writing and in organizing skills that the present group of college students has lost stature compared to those of a generation ago. It is now reported that even the results of the objective national scores (both verbal and quantitative) for graduating high school students have steadily declined for the tenth year in a row.[13] A significant factor, however, is that the most serious drop is in verbal scores, showing more than a fifteen percent decrease. Previously, points out Time, the usual explanation for lower SAT scores has been that a larger and less selective group of students has been taking the tests. But for the last five years, Time says:

> ... as the number of students going to college has leveled off, the number taking the test has also stabilized, making this explanation no longer valid.[14]

Time then asks if American public schools, in spite of their many "innovative" teaching methods, are just not doing so good a job of developing verbal and mathematical skills as they used to; "or are American kids just getting dumber?"[15] It might further be asked if the problem is not really worse than is suggested in Time.

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[13] "Decline of the SAT's," Time, December 31, 1973, p. 45.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

Since even in secondary schools in recent years classroom examinations have been going in the direction of objective-type tests, it might seriously be asked whether the already sinking standardized scores would not be lower still if some "written" or so-called subjective-type questions, as well as objective ones, were included.

The above observations are not made to suggest that a more elitist academic stance should be taken by community colleges and institutions of higher learning in general. The "open door" admissions procedure, which exists at most community colleges, is indeed the correct one; any student who is willing and able to put forth reasonable effort should be allowed to study at a community college, regardless of financial or other disabilities. Editor George W. Bonham writing in Change Magazine is correct when he says:

> ... As many of the essays in this volume make clear, the old scholasticism is dying. A new view of learning springs from a fresh humanism, in which the student--rather than one's obeisance to a discipline--is the centerpiece. Underlying it all is the fundamental assumption that most people can benefit from educational opportunities, and that education ought not to be a selecting process. A far wider variety of people can develop themselves in the academic world than we had thought before.[16]

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[16] George W. Bonham, "On Learning and Change," article in volume. On Learning and Change, (New York: Change Magazine), 1973, p. 10.

PART III

PROCEDURES

A. Explanation of Technique

The purpose of this practicum, as noted above, is to find out if there is a relationship between student evaluations of their instructors and the format of classroom tests (objective-subjective) which the instructor gives to the students. The majority (at least 3 to 1) of the students in the present writer's classes at Broward Community College have stated either orally or in written form that they prefer taking objective tests rather than subjective ones, or a combination of both, the latter a practice usually employed by the instructor. They sometimes admit that they prefer objective tests, not necessarily because they think these tests usually yield a higher grade--although this may be true to some extent. Many say it is simply that they dislike the effort and challenge of writing out answers. In other words, for the vast majority of these students it is preferable to mark a bubble on a computer test card than to have to go through the effort of explaining an answer in words--with the consequent need to show cognitive, organizing, and writing skills.

The above problem has become so evident in recent years that the writer of this paper decided during the Spring Semester of 1974 to give two of his classes in Western Civilization (#I and #II) the usual four major tests, and for experimental purposes to employ an all-objective format in all of these tests. The second two classes in Western Civilization (#III and #IV) would also take four major

tests; but all of these would be of the instructor's regular objective-subjective format. Ample time was allowed for both types of tests. Computer test cards were used for the four tests taken by classes I and II; "blue books" for the second two. Test results for all four classes proved to be comparable.

Each class had thirty students, or 120 students in all four classes. In order to give all classes similar treatment, the courses were taught in the same manner by the same instructor. All classes were conducted in the morning, so afternoon drowsiness was not a factor to be considered. Student evaluation of instructor materials were distributed during the last week of the semester. As noted above, the instructor wished to learn if the two classes of students taking the objective tests only would rate the instructor higher than those taking the usual "combination type"-tests; and if so, to what degree. It should further be noted that all of the students were chosen at random--by the computer registration process. Copies of the twenty-item questionnaire which follows were distributed to the four classes. This instrument includes a five point rating scale for the first 19 questions (1 is lowest; 5 is highest), and an open-ended question (#20), which allowed students to comment on the teaching of the course.

(#) = Number of Responses for Each Answer

(%) = Number of Responses Divided by Number of Students Responding

B. Four Questionnaires Distributed to Four Classes of Students in Western Civilization

CLASS #I - STUDENT EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTOR (ALL OBJECTIVE TESTS)

(#) = Number of Responses for Each Answer
(%) = Number of Responses Divided by Number of Students Responding

	Choice 1		Choice 2		Choice 3		Choice 4		Choice 5		Item Average
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
1. Achieves course aims	0	0	0	0	1	3	7	21	22	73	4.72
2. Well organized presentation	0	0	0	0	1	3	9	31	18	62	4.67
3. Stimulates interest	0	0	2	7	2	7	8	17	18	62	4.47
4. Adjusts pace to needs of class	0	0	2	7	3	11	7	25	18	57	4.49
5. Allows students varying points of view	0	0	0	0	3	11	6	21	21	68	4.78
6. Student prefers objective tests	0	0	3	10	3	10	7	22	17	57	4.73
7. Student does not prefer "combination" tests	0	0	3	10	2	7	8	24	17	57	4.74
8. Has pleasant class attitude	0	0	0	0	2	7	6	21	22	73	4.80
9. Speaks clearly	0	0	1	4	4	14	4	14	21	72	4.78
10. Answers questions clearly	0	0	1	4	2	7	5	17	22	73	4.79
11. Clearness of assignments	0	0	0	0	1	3	7	24	22	73	4.84
12. Reasonable assignments	0	0	1	4	0	0	8	24	21	72	4.81
13. Returns graded material quickly	0	0	1	3	0	0	5	18	24	81	4.86
14. Opportunity to learn much in class	0	0	0	0	1	4	6	21	23	79	4.84
15. Grades fairly	0	0	0	0	4	14	7	22	19	65	4.72
16. Demands high standards of student performance	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	21	23	70	4.84
17. Explanation of grading system	0	0	0	0	3	10	8	17	19	65	4.72
18. Available to students outside class	0	0	0	0	2	7	8	29	20	71	4.78
19. Meets classes regularly	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	17	25	86	4.87
20. Subjective comments by students (in explanation below)											
							CLASS POINT AVERAGE				4.74

CLASS #II - STUDENT EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTOR (ALL OBJECTIVE TESTS)

(#) = Number of Responses for Each Answer
(%) = Number of Responses Divided by Number of Students Responding

	Choice 1		Choice 2		Choice 3		Choice 4		Choice 5		Item Average
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
1. Achieves course aims	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	24	23	78	4.78
2. Well organized presentation	0	0	0	0	1	3	9	30	20	67	4.68
3. Stimulates interest	0	0	0	0	3	10	8	29	20	67	4.63
4. Adjusts pace to needs of class	0	0	2	7	2	7	7	30	19	57	4.68
5. Allows students varying points of view	0	0	0	0	3	11	4	21	23	72	4.76
6. Student prefers objective tests	0	0	3	10	2	7	8	29	17	59	4.74
7. Student does not prefer "combination" tests	0	0	1	3	3	11	8	29	18	63	4.78
8. Has pleasant class attitude	0	0	1	3	2	7	5	18	22	75	4.73
9. Speaks clearly	1	3	1	3	1	3	6	21	21	72	4.68
10. Answers questions clearly	0	0	2	7	3	11	5	19	20	68	4.67
11. Clearness of assignments	0	0	1	3	1	3	9	30	19	68	4.70
12. Reasonable assignments	0	0	1	4	0	0	7	23	22	71	4.84
13. Return graded material quickly	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	25	23	77	4.71
14. Opportunity to learn much in class	0	0	0	0	1	3	5	18	24	80	4.75
15. Grades fairly	0	0	0	0	3	11	9	31	18	62	4.67
16. Demands high standards of student performance	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	24	25	77	4.84
17. Explanation of grading system	0	0	0	0	2	7	8	27	20	71	4.66
18. Available to students outside class	0	0	0	0	2	7	5	29	23	77	4.81
19. Meets classes regularly	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	14	26	88	4.88
20. Subjective comments by students (in explanation below)											

CLASS POINT AVERAGE 4.72

CLASS III - STUDENT EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTOR - COMBINATION TESTS
(OBJECTIVE-SUBJECTIVE)

(#) = Number of Responses for Each Answer
(%) = Number of Responses Divided by Number of Students Responding

	Choice 1		Choice 2		Choice 3		Choice 4		Choice 5		Item Average
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
1. Achieves course aims	0	0	0	0	4	13	6	20	20	67	4.54
2. Well organized presentation	0	0	0	0	9	30	5	17	16	53	4.24
3. Stimulates interest	0	0	3	10	7	23	8	29	12	30	4.11
4. Adujsts pace to needs of class	0	0	2	6	6	21	7	24	15	52	4.21
5. Allows students varying points of view	1	3	2	7	5	17	10	33	12	40	4.00
6. Student prefers objective tests	1	3	3	10	5	16	5	17	16	53	4.64
7. Student does not prefer "combination" tests	1	3	3	10	5	16	5	17	16	53	4.64
8. Has pleasant class attitude	1	3	2	7	2	7	4	13	21	70	4.40
9. Speaks clearly	0	0	4	14	6	21	10	33	10	33	4.15
10. Answers questions clearly	0	0	0	0	5	32	3	21	7	50	4.16
11. Clearness of assignments	0	0	4	14	4	14	6	21	16	53	4.25
12. Reasonable assignments	2	14	0	0	2	14	8	29	18	60	4.23
13. Return graded material quickly	0	0	4	14	5	16	5	17	16	53	4.28
14. Opportunity to learn much in class	0	0	4	14	4	14	6	21	16	53	4.25
15. Grades fairly	2	14	2	14	4	28	4	21	18	64	4.21
16. Demands high standards of student performance	0	0	4	28	2	14	4	28	20	66	4.36
17. Explanation of grading system	0	0	4	14	4	14	6	21	16	57	4.19
18. Available to students outside class	0	0	3	21	2	14	5	17	20	70	4.25
19. Meets classes regularly	0	0	2	14	4	14	6	21	18	75	4.27
20. Subjective comments by students (in explanation below)											
									CLASS POINT AVERAGE		4.29

CLASS IV - STUDENT EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTOR - COMBINATION TESTS
(OBJECTIVE-SUBJECTIVE)

(#) = Number of Responses for Each Answer
(%) = Number of Responses Divided by Number os Students Responding

	Choice 1		Choice 2		Choice 3		Choice 4		Choice 5		Item Average
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
1. Achieves course aims	0	0	0	0	5	17	6	20	19	63	4.50
2. Well organized presentation	0	0	0	0	9	30	5	17	16	53	4.24
3. Stimulates interest	1	3	2	7	7	23	11	37	9	30	3.84
4. Adjusts pace to needs of class	0	0	1	3	15	52	7	24	7	23	3.67
5. Allows students varying points of view	1	3	2	7	5	17	10	33	12	40	4.00
6. Student prefers objective tests	1	3	2	7	3	10	9	31	15	50	4.63
7. Student does not prefer "combination" tests	1	3	3	10	2	7	9	31	15	50	4.67
8. Has pleasant class attitude	1	3	3	10	4	14	6	20	16	53	4.29
9. Speaks clearly	1	3	5	17	4	14	8	27	12	40	4.21
10. Answers questions clearly	0	0	2	7	4	14	8	27	16	53	4.27
11. Clearness of assignments	0	0	2	7	2	7	7	24	19	66	4.29
12. Reasonable assignments	1	3	2	7	4	14	4	14	19	66	4.19
13. Return graded material quickly	0	0	1	3	6	21	8	28	15	52	4.16
14. Opportunity to learn much in class	0	0	0	0	3	10	9	31	18	62	4.56
15. Grades fairly	0	0	0	0	3	10	8	24	19	66	4.41
16. Demands high standards of student performance	0	0	0	0	3	10	9	31	18	63	4.39
17. Explanation of grading system	0	0	0	0	5	17	10	34	15	50	4.27
18. Available to students outside class	0	0	1	3	2	7	10	34	17	59	4.28
19. Meets classes regularly	0	0	0	0	3	10	6	21	21	70	4.34
20. Subjective comments by students (in explanation below)											
									CLASS POINT AVERAGE		4.25

PART IV

RESULTS

An examination of the responses to the above questionnaire indicates that there is a considerable difference between the scores of classes I and II compared with classes III and IV in evaluating the instructor. This confirms the examiner's suspicion that the difference between the two groups of scores probably came as a result of the two different test formats used by the instructor. The student evaluation of the instructor scores by class averages were as follows (out of a possible 5.00 grade):

Class I = 4.74	Objective Testing Only
Class II = 4.72	
Class III = 4.29	"Combination" Testing (Objective-Subjective)
Class IV = 4.25	

Although the writer of this paper has always received good ratings from the college-wide student evaluation of instructors practice, he has not yet scored in the very top echelon of these faculty ratings. This fact, together with the remarks made by students in the above-mentioned classes that they preferred objective tests only ("like most of the other instructors give") motivated this instructor to conceive of the above inquiry. It is rather clear from the above results that what he suspected did indeed occur. The first two class averages, 4.74 and 4.72, (objective tests only) placed the instructor in the very top echelon of student evaluation of the instructor test scores. This questionnaire

is similar to the one used by the B.C.C. faculty. The latter two class averages (classes III and IV), where objective-subjective classroom testing formats were employed, had class averages of 4.27 and 4.25, representing just above the mid-point ratings of faculty averages in general.

The present instructor has always put a great deal of time and effort into his teaching and is popular with his students. Yet he usually scored in student evaluation ratings about the same as did many instructors with apparently less concern for their students, but who gave objective tests exclusively.

An examination of the various test item averages shows fairly consistent results in relation to each other. What is most noticeable is the definite similarity between classes I and II on the one hand and between classes III and IV on the other. Items 5 and 6 averages in all four classes (concerning student preference for objective tests) were similar among all four classes--a unique situation. It may be assumed from the evaluation results generally, as noted above, that the students in classes I and II, where only objective tests were given, gave higher overall ratings than did classes III and IV because of preferred (objective) testing formats used with the first two classes.

Responses to question #20 in all four classes were perhaps the most interesting. Many students praised the classes for their thoroughness and interest. A number stated that they learned more than they had in any previous class--history or otherwise. The major

note of criticism concerned the testing format in classes III and IV. A number here said that they would have preferred completely objective testing to the "combination" format which was employed in the latter two classes. Otherwise, with few exceptions, the comments about the course were most favorable. This is an additional reason that the assumption made above concerning the reasons for the class average differentiations may be valid.

The question can now be asked if perhaps a virtually all-objective testing format would not be a good plan to follow. It certainly would satisfy more students, although it must be admitted that a number of the best students in the classes actually preferred the combination-type format. Also, objective testing does require much less instructor time and effort to grade. Yet it still appears to this writer that the "combination-type" test offers more towards a student's education than the all-objective format. There are, of course, alternate testing methods other than the two mentioned in this discussion, but they will not be considered in this paper.

Therefore, with occasional modifications, the writer of this practicum will probably continue to place greatest emphasis on the "combination" test format as previously; unless, of course, new and relevant information comes to his attention on this matter.

PART V

RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the above research would indicate that community college faculty members, at least in the humanities and in the social sciences, should be urged to include some written as well as objective material in their tests. The validity and reliability of student evaluations of their instructors' teaching may be less accurate if such change does not occur.

It is readily admitted, of course, that the above research sample is a small one--of only 120 students in four classes. Therefore, one may not be able to make definitive requests for change from the findings of this practicum alone. Still, this study can help point the way to more research on this subject--and on a larger scale. If the results of such a study confirm the present one, they certainly could make an impact on the "student evaluation of instructor process."

The above suggested change would in no way interfere with the instructor's right to teach in a manner suitable to his own philosophy of education. It would simply allow students better to compare "apples with apples." Also, the results of this limited study would in no way interfere with some of the new teaching techniques which have appeared on campuses in recent years. Recognition of the problems of disadvantaged students, the use of audio-visual materials, and the interpersonal approach to teaching would not be

affected. What might result from an implementation of this study, it is hoped, would be a better basis for student evaluation of instructors, and some improvement in student writing, organizational skills--and cognitive learning itself.

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