

# TEVAL GUIDE: INTERPRETING YOUR REPORT

The Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning  
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*Although a vital component in the assessment of teaching effectiveness, student judgments are only one factor and should not be considered in isolation from other sources of information.*

The TEVAL Report is intended to provide an indication of your effectiveness in teaching a given class. It may also provide some clues as to your students' views of specific teaching practices. To facilitate a more accurate interpretation of the results, the Report also summarizes some information about your students and your teaching context, if you answered items A-L on the FIF.

## Course Identification Data

Course identification data appear at the top of the TEVAL Report. The number of students enrolled and the number and percent who responded to the survey form are noted. The closer the percent rating is to 100%, the more certain you can be that the results are representative of the total class. If 50 percent or less of your class responded, there is good reason to question whether the results are representative. However, research indicates that if 10 or more students responded, *and they were representative*, the results are generally reliable enough to be useful.

## Overall Effectiveness

Of the 14 items on the TEVAL form, three are intended as *overall measures of effectiveness*. These are:

1. Overall effectiveness as a teacher.
11. Increasing your desire to learn about this subject.
14. The amount you have learned in this course.

Although there is clearly some relationship among responses to these three items, they do reflect somewhat different aspects of instructional effectiveness. The literature on "student evaluation of instruction" suggests that students use two standards for judging teaching effectiveness. One reflects their impression of the teacher's interpersonal skill and adeptness in communicating both content and attitudes (reflected primarily in Item 1) and one relates to the student's sense of growth and accomplishment (reflected primarily in Items 11 and 14). It can be argued that both are important. Developing positive attitudes toward the academic enterprise is often as important as gaining understanding of a subject and its applications.

Two averages are presented for the three measures of overall teaching effectiveness -- *raw* and *adjusted*.

*Raw averages* are intended to describe the views of those who took the course. They answer the question, "Were overall ratings favorable?"

*Adjusted averages* are intended to estimate the degree to which the teacher was responsible for these ratings. After class size and student characteristics are taken into account, they answer the questions: "Was the teacher perceived as effective?" "Did the teacher appear to influence an increased desire to learn about the subject?" and "Did the teacher appear to influence the amount students learned?"

## Adjusted Averages:

The adjusted averages for Items 1, 11, and 14 take three factors into account:

1. The interest students had in the course before they enrolled (average response to Item 12).
2. Student academic effort (a residual score that represents student academic effort beyond the control of the teacher).
3. Class size (the number the teacher reports as enrolled in the class).

A major difficulty with overall ratings of "teaching effectiveness" is that they are often influenced by factors that are not under the teacher's control. Although the research literature has reported a large number of such factors (time of day the class is taught, physical characteristics of the classroom, number of times the teacher has taught the course, whether the course is required or elective, etc.), the most important have to do with characteristics of the students enrolled in the course.

Relatively high student ratings are usually obtained when enrollees are interested in the subject matter (Item 12) and are willing to work hard (Item 13). On the other hand, relatively low ratings are usually given by students who had little interest in being in the course or put forth little effort to do the academic work for the course. It seems desirable to adjust student ratings on the overall measures of effectiveness in a way that takes differences in these factors into account.

## Instructional Styles

While students differ in their effort (Item 13), their willingness is often influenced by the teacher. Adjustments should not be made to measures that are, at least in part, under the teacher's control. Thus, adjustments to Item 13 are made only after teacher influence on student effort has been taken into account.

This is done by considering the relationship between responses to Item 13 and responses to the items reflecting teaching behavior or technique (Items 2-10). Analysis revealed that three of these items were useful in estimating faculty influence on student effort: (6) *Stimulating you to think more deeply about the subject (for example, applying information, analyzing, solving problems)*, and (7) *Commenting on your work (tests, assignments) in ways that helped you learn*, and (8) *Using grading procedures that were fair and equitable*.

By "weighing" responses to these three items in an optimal way, it was possible to estimate the teacher's influence on student responses to Item 13. Because this prediction was based on students' perceptions of the teacher's behavior, it was called *teacher-induced student effort*. Teacher-induced student effort was subtracted from the obtained average on Item 13, leaving a *residual* score called *student academic effort*. Student academic effort was the portion of the Item 13 average not traceable to teaching methods and considered to be beyond the teacher's control.

Class size was the third factor taken into account. The literature suggests that, as a variable frequently beyond the teacher's control, class size may influence student perceptions. In general, students have been more favorably disposed toward smaller classes (i.e., they perceive greater progress and better instruction).

**Comparative Status:** These rankings should *not* be considered as definitive descriptors of a faculty member's overall effectiveness as a teacher. These "normative" categories for relative status describe *only the relative position among TEVAL users* at Kansas State University.

### Relevant Student Attributes

This section includes averages, standard deviations, and frequency distributions for the items that ask for student self-ratings: (12) *Your interest in taking this course before you enrolled*, and (13) *Your effort to learn in the course (for example--studying, doing the assignments, thinking about the ideas)*.

This section reports averages, standard deviations, and frequency distributions for student ratings of Items 2-10, which describe teaching behavior or technique.

These nine ratings are presented in two categories: A) Establishing a Learning Climate, and B) Facilitating Student Learning. The two categories are somewhat arbitrary. You may prefer to construct your own or simply to review results item-by-item.

The category of **Establishing a Learning Climate** includes items that reflect the teacher's preparation and organization: (2) *Making clear the goals and objectives of this course*, and (3) *Being well prepared for class*. Others reflect the teacher's responsiveness to students: (5) *Communicating interest in helping students learn*, and (10) *Being willing to help students outside of class*.

The category of **Facilitating Student Learning** includes three areas: **stimulation** (6) *Stimulating you to think more deeply about the subject (for example--applying information, analyzing, solving problems)*; **communication** (4) *Explaining the subject matter so that you understood*, and (9) *Realizing when students did not understand*; and **feedback** (7) *Commenting on your work (tests, assignments) in ways that helped you learn*, and (8) *Using grading procedures that were fair and equitable*.

## Instructor's Description of the Class

Student ratings should be interpreted within the context of the class. When you complete the *TEVAL Faculty Information Form (FIF)*, you have the opportunity to respond to items A-L on the *TEVAL FIF INSTRUCTIONS*. Your responses are reported in this section to describe some of your perspectives about the class. In space provided on the FIF, you also have the opportunity to include information to describe other circumstances that you think will be important for a more meaningful interpretation of the student ratings. Item L indicates whether or not you included such comments on your FIF.

## Additional Questions

If you asked the students to respond to ratings items in addition to the 14 TEVAL items, a second page of the TEVAL Report presents the averages and frequency distributions for those items. Open-ended questions are answered in the comments section on the survey form.

*Questions about the TEVAL Report or about procedures for using the TEVAL System should be directed to Dr. Victoria Clegg (215 Fairchild Hall, 532-7828, vclegg@ksu.edu).*