

Report on the Linda Emanuel TLC 2003 Survey Assessment of LHU Faculty Teaching and Research Activities

In spring 2003 the Emanuel TLC conducted an online, anonymous, comprehensive survey of the teaching, research and professional activities of the LHU faculty. This periodic survey is conducted to enhance the ability of the TLC to measure the continuous improvements in faculty instruction and research and to prepare a variety of professional development projects and programs for the future. One hundred faculty members out of a total of two hundred seventy one completed the survey, a response rate of thirty seven percent. It is not possible to determine whether the present survey is an unbiased sample of the total population. Nevertheless, a wide range of disciplines and levels of experience were sampled and it would not be totally unwarranted to conclude that the sample was fairly representative of the population at large. Faculty respondents were asked to reflect on their activities "during the present academic year."

LHUP faculty members are very involved in modern, multi-modal instruction and active learning methods.

Modern instruction theory stresses the importance of student active involvement in the learning process. 60% of the sample reported using methods of cooperative learning where students help each other. This form of instruction is hard to execute properly and reflects the desire of faculty to take risks to achieve learning gains. "Problem focused" teaching where real world problems are used as a vehicle for learning was reported by 53% of the faculty. It should be noted that "problem focused" learning is used by some of the top universities in the country (Purdue's business school relies almost exclusively on this approach). Service learning was used by 29% of the sample and action research by 18%. The use of games, role-playing, and simulations was reported by 61% of the sample. There is a movement toward competency based or mastery learning in higher education possibly due to the stress on accountability and outcomes assessment. In this regard, 39% of our sample reported the use of performance-based assessment (portfolios, projects, productions, etc.). This is a more time consuming form of instruction and assessment but one in which competencies are more reliably and realistically assessed. 56% of our sample reported the use of comprehensive final exams. Entry testing was reported by only 26% but fits nicely with the comprehensive testing approach. For faculty who are doing both entry and exit testing there are many positive consequences since the comparison of student performance data in these two distributions gives a nice measure of student achievement. The use of technology as a tool for teaching and learning is well established in the present sample. 69% reported using email to communicate with students. 47% reported using power point presentations and 29% reported using the smart board. 38% used their web page to provide information to students. 17% reported using the e-companion to facilitate classroom instruction. 10% reported having used video-conferencing and 7% have done an online course. These percentages can be expected to increase in the years ahead as LHU faculty become more comfortable in using a

variety of kinds of technology and these methods become more accessible to faculty through implementing the University's technology plan.

Faculty respondents were very concerned with developing core skills and competencies needed by all students for their professions and for productive citizenship.

68% of the sample reported that they teach writing skills and give feedback on writing. 29% reported that they teach math applications and skills in their coursework. 79% report teaching critical thinking skills relative to the practice of their discipline or generally in their coursework. Learning how to learn is a major skill acquisition for all college students. 29% of the faculty sampled reported teaching study and memory skills. 46% reported using mastery learning methods whereby students are required to improve their work to some criterion level (such as drafting in writing). In the area of technology skills, 69% of the faculty reported that they require students to practice inquiry skills in the acquisition of library materials. 55% of respondents gave internet assignments of various kinds. It is old news that the classroom is now the entire world. 11% of the sample required students to use computerized tutoring. It is likely that as this modality is developed to yield "intelligent tutoring" there will be many new possibilities for intensive learning, possibly freeing instructors to promote more complex learning in and out of the classroom.

The "student focus" of the present faculty sample is evident in a variety of indices.

Faculty members in the present sample had an average of 19.8 advisees and reported mentoring an average of 5.6 students during the year. The latter statistic is very interesting because the mentoring relationship is so powerful in developing students professionally and personally. To qualify for this statistic the faculty member reported only those students who took several courses with them, did independent research, etc. Do our faculty members think about adjusting their teaching to help students of differing learning styles or levels of preparation? 25% of the faculty reported using some kind of learning style assessment. 46% reported studying their student evaluation form feedback to improve instruction (summative) and 54 % reported asking students for various kinds of feedback during the term (formative). Continuous feedback is so important to both teaching and learning. It would be desirable to see both the formative and summative data used more by faculty members. A recent TLC workshop focused on this issue. 51% of the faculty respondents reported giving students extra instructional support such as review sessions. Many students come unprepared for college and require various kinds of instructional support. That LHU faculty members are aware of this problem and that such a large percentage give this support is a tribute to the dedication of the faculty. 16% reported asking students for feedback on their advising. There are presently few structured surveys used locally for this purpose but such instruments can be expected to be developed as a aid to faculty in continuous improvement of advisement.

Faculty members in the sample are involved in teaching development activities and in the professional activities of their disciplines.

39% of the sample report going to a teaching conference during the past year. 18% reported presenting a poster in teaching. 24% report having attended a workshop on some aspect of college teaching. 34% report having attended a teaching workshop at LHU and 20% attended one elsewhere. 38% report having applied for a teaching grant from the State System, TLC, or some other source. 38% belong to a professional teaching division in their discipline and 29% report subscribing to a discipline based teaching journal. 30% report having searched the internet for teaching-related materials and 24% report having read a book on college instruction. 86% report belonging to a professional society. 75% subscribe to a discipline journal and 36% report having attended a professional conference during the year. 20% reviewed for a journal and 29% held an office in a professional society. 13% published an article in a peer-reviewed journal. 9% report either having published an original book or an edited one. 39% reported receiving a grant from LHU, the State System or some external source. 34% reported presenting research with students in posters, journal articles, or at student conferences. Only 5% report having worked with a teaching coach or mentor, but 18% report being a mentor to a younger faculty member. 24% reported conducting a departmental outcomes assessment assignment. 19% reported using embedded assessment instruments for their department or program. It is anticipated that these indices will increase over time as outcomes assessment practices become more routine in all programs.

Note: the results of this study confirm various aspects of the data given in the National Survey of Student Engagement conducted on LHU freshmen and seniors recently. For example, a high percent of seniors report having participated in various kinds of experiential learning, corroborating what was found in this TLC study. Seniors report that the quality of their relationships with faculty was high (6.07 on the 7 point scale), again stressing the close working relationships between students and the LHU faculty. Both freshmen (68%) and seniors (85%) report a high rate of “practical problem based learning,” replicating what was found in this TLC study.