



# (Putting) Teaching to the Test: How SENCER's Course Assessment Tool Protects Innovative Teaching

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# Evaluation of Teaching/Learning

- At nearly 80% of US colleges and universities, SETs (Student Evaluations of Teaching) are the primary means of evaluating teaching performance.
- At over 70% of US institutions of higher education, they are the **only** means of evaluating teaching.



## Pair-Share

Find a partner you haven't worked with before and discuss this question:

***What value do you and your students get from student evaluations of teaching?***

You have 2 minutes.

# Challenges with SETs

- Almost all SETs focus primarily on teacher behavior and/or student satisfaction
- Neither teacher behavior nor student satisfaction are necessarily related to course goals – they are ***not good proxies for actual student learning***
- SETs rarely provide any information that helps teachers make **specific improvements** in their teaching or courses

# Challenges with SETs

- The experience of filing out most student course evaluations offers little to nothing of value to students
- SETs punish instructors who step outside of traditional gender roles
- Most SETs ***punish innovative teaching even when students recognize that it works!***

# Learning Assessment for Courses

## Student Assessment of their Learning Gains (SALG)

Free Tools at [www.salgsite.org](http://www.salgsite.org)



 [www.salgsite.org](http://www.salgsite.org)

**A powerful new tool for faculty:** The Student Assessment of their Learning Gains (SALG) instrument is designed to help faculty improve their teaching. It offers useful feedback on how well aspects of your teaching helped your students learn and what progress they made toward your course learning goals.

**Focuses on learning gains:** The SALG is based on Elaine Seymour's finding that student's assessments of *what they gained* are more reliable and informative than their observations about *what they liked* about the course—or about you as their teacher.

**Puts pedagogy first:** The first part of the SALG instrument asks students how effectively aspects of the course helped them learn. Six sections cover course design, class activities, graded assignments, resources, information given to students about the course, and support for students as learners.

# Why SALG?

- SALG was designed specifically to avoid the problems mentioned above
- SALG provides **detailed, meaningful feedback** to teachers about the value and efficacy of their teaching and guides improvements in teaching and learning
- SALG is based on **learning research**
- SALG was designed to **promote metacognition** in students



# Why SALG?

- ▶ SALG **protects teachers from career damage** by SET instruments that focus on student satisfaction and have scant relevance to student learning gains
- ▶ SALG was created to **promote and support thoughtful, effective teaching** and its systematic, rational improvement
- ▶ SALG **provides meaningful evidence of student learning** that can be used to support cases for promotion and tenure



# Why SALG?

- SALG is a valid, reliable instrument that has been in use and ongoing development since 1997
- SALG is used by over 14,000 college and university instructors
- **SALG is FREE!**
- SALG is accepted as evidence of student learning by many accrediting bodies, including WASC

# SALG Basic Principles

- ▶ You measure teaching effectiveness in terms of the specific stated goals of the course
- ▶ ***Students have something valuable to tell us*** about what they learned in our class and what helped them learn it (and what didn't)
- ▶ Students should benefit from evaluating teaching: reflecting on their learning helps make them more conscious learners

# SALG Structure

- ▶ 2 Main parts:
  - Learning goals (4 question sections)
  - Pedagogy (6 questions)
- ▶ The first 4 questions focus on **learning goals**:
  - ▶ Understanding
  - ▶ Skills
  - ▶ Affective gains
  - ▶ Integrations (or Habits)(Mnemonic= USA-1)



# SALG Structure

- ▶ The second six questions focus on **pedagogy**:
  - ▶ Course design
  - ▶ Class activities
  - ▶ Graded assignments
  - ▶ Resources
  - ▶ Meta-information
  - ▶ Support for the individual learner

# Validity & Flexibility

- ▶ The stem questions and the scales they use are fixed to preserve the validity and identity of the SALG (and to make it useful as a research instrument)
- ▶ But since evaluation always has to be in terms of stated goals and those goals are always specific, the SALG was designed to **encourage instructors to adapt it specifically to their own courses.**
- ▶ It remains valid after you adapt it to your course and learning goals

# Customizing your SALG

Question Title	Question Type	Move/Delete												
<b>Your understanding of class content</b>														
1. As a result of your work in this class, what GAINS DID YOU MAKE in your UNDERSTANDING of each of the following? <a href="#">Add sub question</a>														
1.1 The main concepts explored in this class <a href="#">edit</a>	<table><tr><td>no gains</td><td>a little gain</td><td>moderate gain</td><td>good gain</td><td>great gain</td><td>not applicable</td></tr><tr><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td></tr></table>	no gains	a little gain	moderate gain	good gain	great gain	not applicable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	↓ <a href="#">delete</a>
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1.2 The relationships between the main concepts <a href="#">edit</a>	<table><tr><td>no gains</td><td>a little gain</td><td>moderate gain</td><td>good gain</td><td>great gain</td><td>not applicable</td></tr><tr><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td></tr></table>	no gains	a little gain	moderate gain	good gain	great gain	not applicable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	↑ ↓ <a href="#">delete</a>
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1.3 The following concepts that have been explored in this class <a href="#">edit</a> <a href="#">Add sub question</a>		↑ ↓ <a href="#">delete</a>												
1.3.1 (Concept 1) [Fill in] <a href="#">edit</a>	<table><tr><td>no gains</td><td>a little gain</td><td>moderate gain</td><td>good gain</td><td>great gain</td><td>not applicable</td></tr><tr><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td></tr></table>	no gains	a little gain	moderate gain	good gain	great gain	not applicable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	↓ <a href="#">delete</a>
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1.3.2 (Concept 2) [Fill in] <a href="#">edit</a>	<table><tr><td>no gains</td><td>a little gain</td><td>moderate gain</td><td>good gain</td><td>great gain</td><td>not applicable</td></tr><tr><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td></tr></table>	no gains	a little gain	moderate gain	good gain	great gain	not applicable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	↑ ↓ <a href="#">delete</a>
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1.4 How ideas from this class relate to ideas encountered in other classes within this subject area <a href="#">edit</a>	<table><tr><td>no gains</td><td>a little gain</td><td>moderate gain</td><td>good gain</td><td>great gain</td><td>not applicable</td></tr><tr><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td></tr></table>	no gains	a little gain	moderate gain	good gain	great gain	not applicable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	↑ ↓ <a href="#">delete</a>
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1.6 How studying this subject area helps people address real world issues <a href="#">edit</a>	<table><tr><td>no gains</td><td>a little gain</td><td>moderate gain</td><td>good gain</td><td>great gain</td><td>not applicable</td></tr><tr><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td></tr></table>	no gains	a little gain	moderate gain	good gain	great gain	not applicable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	↑ ↓ <a href="#">delete</a>
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# SALG Scheduling

- ▶ Baseline survey near the beginning of the term assesses students' current level of achievement in relation to course learning goals
- ▶ SALG survey at the end of the term measures learning gains (improvements relative to course learning goals)
- ▶ Can also run SALG surveys as mid-term surveys



# Analytical Capabilities

- Detailed statistics about student responses: N, Mean, Std Dev, Mode, # at Mode, etc.
- Histograms for each question set
- Aggregated statistics for multiple instruments
- Cross-tabs
- Simple text coding for qualitative analysis
- Entire analysis can be downloaded into Excel

# Department SALG

- ▶ Department admin can make templates with locked questions related to departmental learning goals
- ▶ Faculty using templates cannot modify locked questions, but can control everything else
- ▶ After the survey, department admin gets data for locked questions only; instructors get all data back



# SENCER-SALG

- A department instrument
- Used by SENCER to collect data on the project
- The most advanced SALG in terms of collecting data on teaching



# Thank You!

[www.salgsite.org](http://www.salgsite.org)

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