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Name of the article: Face-to-Face versus Online Course Evaluations: A "Consumer's Guide"
to Seven Strategies

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   While distance courses are common within the majority of universities, it is important
to consider how distance education can be improved. Through the article "Face-to-Face versus
Online Course Evaluations: A "Consumer's Guide" to Seven Strategies" by Ronald A. Berk,
the evaluation systems for distance courses are studied in order to provide a foundation for
improvement. Course evaluations are completed in many ways, but one important resource
includes the student rating system.

   As student evaluations of courses have not been as prominent within distance
education, Berk questions if it is necessary to begin putting new measures in place. He first
examines the differences and similarities of the two educational settings. The best practices
that are considered equal in both environments include student and professor interactions,
instructor support and mentoring, lecture and content quality, course content, and course
structure. The differences include the delivery of content, social networking tools,
asynchronous activity, non-linear discussion and the instructor's role in student learning.

   Berk proposes seven concrete measurement systems to begin equivalent student rating
evaluations within distance education. These include utilizing instructor developed scales,
traditional face-to-face student rating scales, additional items added to the face-to-face scale,
revisions of the face-to-face scale, developing a new rating scale, using a commercially
developed rating scale, and adopting or adapting a published scale. Furthermore, Berk

questions if online courses should be measured based on uniqueness, if the student rating options should depend on the field of study, and if the ratings should be criterion or norm-referenced interpretations.

As I complete a Masters of Science in Educational Technology and plan to continue my career as teacher, this article is relevant to the current outlook of education through face-to-face settings and distance courses. Feedback from students is important when looking to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of any course. I am open to teaching in an online setting, so this article provides insight on how student rating evaluation can move from the traditional format to an online format while remaining useful and unique.

I will use this information in my work as I continue to find new ways to gain feedback from students. When teaching an online course, I can research further into the possibilities of student rating evaluations that are fit to my field of study. I want my students to feel as though their feedback is useful for the next semester of class. These questions could be specific to the format of online classes.

As a student I have found the instructor and course evaluations to be useful in sharing my thoughts on exceptional and useful areas of each course as well as areas that can be improved upon. Currently, I have found that face-to-face classes and online courses use the same evaluation, but I would find it beneficial to adapt the evaluation for the uniqueness of distance education. As education evolves in both settings, it is crucial that we continue to evaluate how well our courses are working for the student purposes. Evaluations provide insight to the effectiveness of how the content is delivered, applied and discussed. When an instructor is accepting of student feedback in a respectful manner, the course can only improve for further learning.

References

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