External Factors that Impact Online Instructor Performance

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Introduction

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Abstract

- In the field of higher education, online instructor evaluators are faced with many challenges when conducting and completing annual evaluations for adjunct faculty members. The evaluation process is detailed and requires the execution of technical skills in which the decision made by the evaluator is organized, initiated, controlled and executed (Abemethy, 1996). The position of online instructor evaluator requires the ability to make fast and accurate decisions, which is considered as important as executing skills proficiently. (Franks, Wiberg, & Fishburne, 1982) One of the challenges for an evaluator can be decision fatigue. A large number of options in the evaluation process can contribute to decision fatigue, and, accordingly, the evaluator may not consider all of the options that are available. This could negatively impact the review. The research explores the effect of external factors such as decision fatigue and Quality Matters™ recognition of course design on instructor evaluations and addresses possible solutions.

Park University Parkville Campus

Why research this topic?

- Instructor teaching positions can be impacted by negative or positive reviews.

- Inaccurate results can impact students adversely when good instructors are not rehired to teach classes.

- To identify external factors that enhance instructor performance.

Identifying External Factors

- ## What are external factors that may impact online instructor performance?

  QM Recognition of the Course?

  Decision Fatigue of the Observer?

  Poor Course Design/Textbook?

  Observer not of the same Academic Discipline?

Others? Please write in your answer to this question in the chatbox.

Perspective

Should we take these external factors into account?

If so, how?

Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.

— Albert Einstein

Jutta's Resources

- Abernethy, B. (1996). Training the visual-perceptual skills of athletes: Insights from the study of motor expertise. American Journal of Sports Medicine, 24, S89 – S92.

- Franks, I. M., Wilberg, R. B., & Fishburne, G. (1982). The process of decision making: An application to team games. Coaching Science Update, 12 – 16.

External Factor: Quality Matters Recognition of Course

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DISCLAIMER: INFORMATION PROVIDED IS NOT INTENDED AS LEGAL ADVICE AND DOES NOT CREATE AN ATTORNEY/CLIENT RELATIONSHIP.

What is Quality Matters Recognition?

- Description

Why would it be beneficial to instructor performance?
- Aman's 2009 Study
- Swan, Matthews, & Bogle's 2010 Research
- Wright's 2010 Research

Hypothesis #1: What do you think?

- Instructors teaching QM Recognized courses will perform better in teaching evaluations.

  - Poll of Audience:

  - Checkmark: Agree
  - X: Disagree

  - Comments are welcome in the chatbox.

Possible Variables to Consider

- Some courses at Park received QM Recognition more than 7 years ago. Perhaps these courses need updating?

- Should age of the course be a separate factor?

- Park uses an internal quality standards review process already, so perhaps most classes are excellent even without QM Recognition.

- Other?

Cathy's Resources

- "2007 QM Recognized Courses (Institution) – Higher Education." (n.d.) Retrieved from: https://www.qmprogram.org/qmresources/courses/grouped_by_inst.cfm?year=2007&program=2#2053

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- "Quality Matters Course Re-Certification." 2010. Retrieved from: https://www.qualitymatters.org/course-certification0/download/QM%20Course%20Certification%20Renewal%20Policy%20(3).pdfhttp%3

- Quality Matters' Impact on Online Learning. (n.d.) Retrieved from: https://www.qualitymatters.org/sites/default/files/QM%20Impact%20Research%20Summary%20FINAL.pdf

- Shattuck, Kay. (n.d.). "What We're Learning from QM-Focused Research: Research, Practice, Continuous Improvement." Retrieved from: http://www.qmprogram.org/learning-focused-research-paper0pdf/download/Learning%20from%20QM%20Focused%20Research%20Paper_0.pdf

External Factors: Decision Fatigue of the Observer

HANK ROEHRICH, PHD
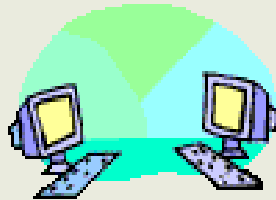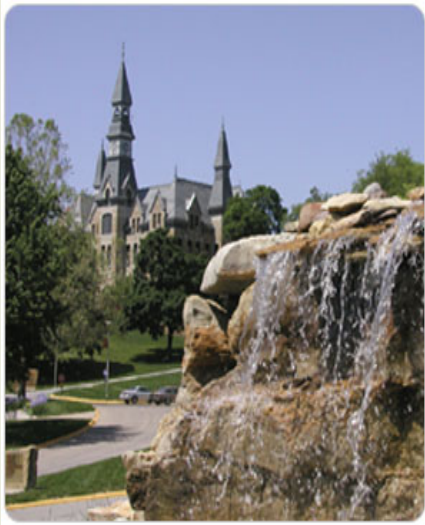
Online Instructor Evaluation

- ## Competitive environments
  - Can encourage organizations to operate more efficiently through increased productivity.

- ## Evaluation system
  - Recognize and reward those who contribute to meeting the objectives and goals of the organization.

- ## Evaluation process can be extensive and repetitive
  - Could cause fatigue for the evaluator if certain conditions are present.

Online Evaluation Challenges

- One of the challenges for an evaluator can be decision fatigue.
  - Influence critical thinking, problem solving and communication skills.

- Online instructor evaluator responsibilities
  - Conduct evaluations
  - Teach courses
  - Participate in service activities
  - Meet scholarship expectations

Evaluator Decision Making

- Requires a process of selecting the appropriate evaluation responses.
  - Ratings range
    - Needs improvement, meets expectations and exceeds expectations

- Evaluation process
  - Detailed and requires the execution of technical skills
  - Organize, initiate, control and execute
  - Complete within university timelines

Evaluator Decision Fatigue

- Fatigue can impact decision making and execution.

- Contributors to decision fatigue
  - Extensive period of analyzing data
  - Making decisions as to what the data indicates
  - Large number of options

- Expansion in higher education has created concerns about mental fatigue.
  - Work behavior
  - Longer hours
  - Repetitive tasks

Evaluator Productivity

- Evaluator should consider completing the evaluations during the most productive period of time.
  - Communicate schedule in order to eliminate distractions.

- Most productive days of the week for the evaluator should be utilized for evaluations.
  - Productive days may change based on internal and external factors.
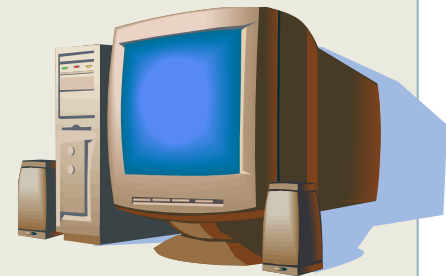
Evaluation Submission

- Submit evaluations during the first three days of the week for those who need improvement.
  - Provide adequate response time to field questions concerning instructor performance and where improvement is required.

- Submit evaluations for those who meet expectations during the first four days of the week.
  - Show areas of success.
  - Provide examples of what it will take to reach an exceptional rating.

- Exceptional evaluations should include goals to maintain level of performance.

Avoiding Decision Fatigue

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Hypothesis #1: What do you think?

- Avoidance of decision fatigue by observers can affect an instructor's performance on an evaluation.

  - Poll of Audience:

  - Checkmark: Agree
  - X: Disagree

  - Comments are welcome in the chatbox.

Timetable

- The evaluator should establish a structured timetable to complete evaluations in order to meet job and personal responsibilities while avoiding decision fatigue.

- An evaluator should have a period for family and personal responsibilities.
  - Routine
  - Evenings and weekends

Evaluator Work Schedule

- ## Contributes to time management
  - Can reduce stressful situations in meeting deadlines and managing other responsibilities.

- ## Establish office hours
  - Posted

- ## Schedule lunch breaks
  - Away from the desk
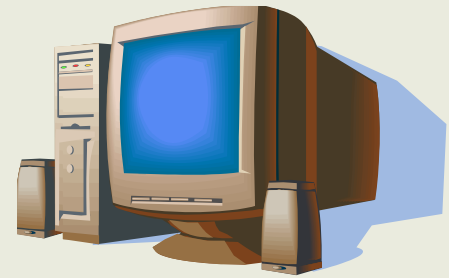
- ## Maintain an exercise or relaxation period

Office Setting

- Professional work environment
  - Comfortable and organized

- Ergonomically correct work space
  - Furniture
  - Lighting

- Current technology
  - Maintenance and replacement schedule

- Distance from living space

Time Management Techniques

- Practice daily

- Determine a schedule

- Conduct effective research practices

- Complete accurate documentation

- Efficient filing and storage system

Resources

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Conclusion: Q & A