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A quick way of getting a lot of information about an implementation: data gathering is efficient and collection and analysis can be automated. Although the data gathered is rather low level there can be lots of it.

### Uses

- ◆ Checking whether a range of materials fit certain standard criteria
- ◆ Measuring how well you have matched your materials to your students' needs
- ◆ Obtaining feedback from large population samples

### Process

#### 1. Planning

Make sure a checklist is appropriate for the type of analysis you wish to carry out; on the one hand, checklists are good for quickly identifying issues, but they may not provide enough information to allow you to rectify any problems.

Look at the material that you want to analyse with the checklist; did you have objectives which you can specifically test to see if they have been met? Can you do the same with previously unstated objectives?

#### 2. Identifying your population sample

Decide who your population is and whether there is any information about their previous experience – for example, qualifications, previous courses, expectations etc. – which may help you interpret the information they provide. You can ask for this information in the checklist.

#### 3. Design

Carefully choose the best question type. Often, you may want a simple yes/no answer, e.g. did you find **X** useful, was it easy to carry out **Y**, etc. However, sometimes supplementary choices are appropriate. For instance, when assessing whether objectives have been met it might be useful to determine whether the respondents felt the objectives had been fully or partly met. Whether respondents had prior knowledge of the material might also modify the meaning of their answer.

As closed questions are easy to answer you can ask many questions at once without risking overloading the user.

Keep the wording clear, trying not to introduce terminology. Rather, try to directly relate the question to specific parts of the materials, such as objectives.

Try to group questions logically. Use subheadings and clear instructions to lead the users through the questions.

Pilot the checklist with someone who knows the material. As well as comments on clarity etc., they may be able to comment on the balance of the questions.

#### Example Checklist

Which of the following elements of the course did you find useful? Please tick all that apply:

- | Week One                                     | Week Two                                     | General                               |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Course text         | <input type="checkbox"/> Course text         | <input type="checkbox"/> Submit a URL |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dialogue discussion | <input type="checkbox"/> Links               |                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Digest              | <input type="checkbox"/> Mailing list        |                                       |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Dialogue discussion |                                       |

Use checklists to give you quick feedback on a new implementation.

When using the same materials with different groups of students, an evaluation checklist can quickly highlight whether the needs of one group are not being properly met.

Asking the same question in more than one way can help to reduce ambiguity in the final analysis.

Vary the wording of questions so that respondents aren't always providing the same response. They'll get bored and won't pay due attention.

If you set aside class time for completion of the checklist, it is more likely to get done; otherwise your students will find something more pressing to do.

#### 4. Delivery

Paper or electronic delivery of the checklist evaluation is possible. WWW based forms can be used to collect responses efficiently, but should only be used where appropriate – for instance when the materials being evaluated have already been delivered electronically or possibly when face-to-face collecting of checklist feedback is not practical.

Low response-rate is a considerable problem with checklists as with other form-filling evaluations. You might want to consider how you can make completion of the checklist more relevant to the students - by making them feel that they will get something out of the exercise. For instance, you may make the questions relevant to revision by reiterating the objectives and asking the students to indicate whether or not they felt they had been met. You could also include ideas for further study/reading for each objective.

Time your evaluation carefully – should your checklist be delivered directly after the implementation, whilst the class mind is focused (and the whole class is captive) or after a period of time (when concepts have been strengthened but individual details lost)?

For electronic forms, values can be assigned to responses, enabling automation of the tallying process. Electronic submissions can often be formatted for direct import into an appropriate analysis program.

#### 5. Analysis

In addition to a collective analysis i.e. what proportion felt that a particular objective had not been met, you may want to relate different answers from the same respondent. Alternatively you could group students according to their responses to one particular question.

A checklist can often be used very effectively as one component in an evaluation – possibly to identify specific issues that can be investigated further in a focus group or structured interview.

Try to feedback your results to your students and to follow-up any recommendations.

#### Variation

Checklists can also be used by lecturers while selecting resources to enhance teaching. Use a list of attributes that you think are required for a successful implementation to provide some guidance when looking at new software. Attributes might include: the software is cheap, the subject content is accurate, or the software engages the user in activities which are relevant to the learning objectives.

#### Other Relevant Pages

##### Recipes

- Designing experiments
- Split screen video
- Cost effectiveness
- Trials
- Pre and post testing
- Resource questionnaires
- Interviews
- Focus groups

##### Information Pages

- Likert scales
- Statistics questions
- Pre and post testing
- Questionnaires
- Guidelines for questionnaires
- Student sample

##### Serving suggestions

##### References