

Student Feedback to Teachers

Guidelines for Schools and Districts



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Collaborating Organizations

The California Association of Student Councils (CASC) and the National Leadership Institute (NLI) will help schools implement programs for student evaluation of teachers, using the Classroom Compass technology.

CASC is a 501(c)(3) student-led non-profit organization that was founded in 1946 by the California Department of Education and the California Association of School Administrators. Since 1982, the organization has trained students and teachers to develop valid and reliable procedures for student evaluation of teachers. **The NLI** is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that offers leadership training to schools and organizations nationwide. **Classroom Compass**, developed by Aaron Feuer in 2010, with funding from Yale University, is a new web-based service to help schools and districts run student evaluation of teachers programs.

Contact

Primary Contact:

June Thompson

Executive Director, CASC

510.834.2272

cascmail@aol.com

<http://www.casc.net>

Technical support for Classroom Compass:

Aaron Feuer

310.916.8282

contact@classroomcompass.org

<http://www.classroomcompass.org>

I. Introduction

The California Association of Student Councils is committed to supporting schools in developing programs designed to provide valid and reliable student feedback to teachers. The recently developed Classroom Compass online service makes it easy for schools and districts to process data efficiently and cost-effectively.

The process is simple:

1. A committee of teachers and students meets to develop a questionnaire that will provide useful information to the faculty.
2. Student council members administer the surveys, and then scan and upload the forms to the Classroom Compass web site.
3. Classroom Compass emails detailed reports to teachers.

Guiding Principles

Student evaluation of teachers programs should be:

Designed to provide helpful information to teachers

- The purpose of student feedback is to help teachers improve by providing them with information that they cannot get any other way.
- Research confirms that students can provide helpful feedback to teachers through well-designed and well-administered surveys.
- Educators embrace student feedback when it is presented constructively.

Voluntary and confidential

- Student feedback should be confidential and available exclusively to the evaluated teacher.
- Teachers should elect to participate or have the option to opt-out.

Intended to improve communication and relationships between students and teachers

- Programs that encourage student feedback to teachers can stimulate dialogue between students and their teachers, and give students a greater stake in their education.

The Technology: Classroom Compass

Classroom Compass is a web-based system to power evaluation programs so that schools do not have to create their own technology. Student fill out paper questionnaires, but everything runs on the secure Classroom Compass servers. Features:

- **Helps organizers design, edit, and print questionnaires** – Organizers input questions and answer choices. The Classroom Compass servers generate customized questionnaire forms for each teacher and class.
- **Processes and tallies evaluations** – Organizers scan the completed questionnaires and upload the scans to our web site. Classroom Compass's servers will process the forms.
- **Sends detailed reports to teachers** – Classroom Compass will email each teacher a detailed, personalized breakdown of his or her results. Teachers' reports include results from previous years, and analyses for each question comparing the teacher's results with department- and school-wide averages.

Once a school is ready to use Classroom Compass, organizers should contact Aaron Feuer (contact@classroomcompass.org) to set up an account. Because Classroom Compass is web-based, there is no software to install. Organizers will be able to access Classroom Compass via a secure web site, using a username and password.

Implementation Guide

Getting Started

1. Establish a committee of students and teachers respected by the faculty to oversee the program.
2. The committee meets four times to:

1st Meeting

- Discuss and define the components of effective teaching.
- Discuss if personality traits affect effectiveness.
- Distribute sample questionnaires, summary of research and relevant articles.

2nd Meeting

- Review sample questionnaires and questions (see attachments).
The questions should measure effective teaching techniques and practices that enhance student learning.

Select student background questions to include in the survey, such as sex, GPA, ethnicity, expected grade in class, and number of missed class sessions.

Background questions should include factors that teachers believe might influence student responses to the questions.

- Choose one member, ideally a student council officer, to be in charge of using the Classroom Compass tools. (As the committee drafts the questionnaire, this person should input the questions into Classroom Compass to generate a preview of what the survey would look like. Review the *Survey Format* section below for survey design best practices, and technological limitations of Classroom Compass.)
- Establish a schedule for administering surveys. Mid-semester surveys may be useful to teachers so they can act on feedback while classes are still in session. Staggering administration over a week or two prevents the process from becoming tedious for students.
- Decide what, if any, data will be released to the administration. (This decision may be influenced by the number of teachers in a department, as maintaining confidentiality is critical). Sharing overall school and departmental results with school and district administrators will give them the opportunity to provide or recommend professional development resources related to the survey results.

Between Meetings

- .Pre-test the survey with selected students to ensure instructions and questions are clearly worded.
- Present the survey and process at a faculty meeting.

Emphasis is placed on the voluntary and confidential nature of the program.

- In the event that members of the faculty are concerned that having their names on the outside of envelopes containing their data, the following steps can be taken: 1) assign a number to each participating teacher. 2) make only one copy of the master list and have the lead teacher be the only person with access to it. 3) have the teachers on the committee be responsible for scanning surveys or allow the individual teachers to scan their own.
-

The committee asks for written feedback on the survey and process.

- Inform the student body about the purpose of the program.
- Encourage teachers to stress to their students that they welcome the feedback.
- Inform appropriate district administrators about the survey so they can be prepared for teachers requests for recommended workshops and other support after receiving their data.

Third Meeting

- Review suggestions made by faculty members.
- Make necessary revisions.

Between Meetings

- Administer the survey.
- Solicit feedback from participants.

Fourth Meeting

- Review faculty feedback.

- Make revisions to process and/or survey.

Administering the surveys

1. Stagger the schedule so that students do not fill out more than one survey per day, i.e. period 1 on Monday, period 2 on Tuesday, etc.
2. Determine what student leader will distribute the surveys in each participating class.
3. Finalizes the survey questions on Classroom Compass and upload a list of participating faculty and their classes.
4. Download a package of PDF format survey forms, customized for each class. (Although the content of survey is the same, each class's form will have a different barcode.)
 - a. Make copies of each form to administer to the classes.
 - b. Distribute the surveys to the students in the class, collect and place the completed surveys in sealed manila envelopes. (Because each form has a unique barcode that identifies the class in which it was completed, the envelopes do not need to be labeled.)
4. Use a multifunction copy machine at the school or a nearby business to scan all of the collected surveys to PDF documents.
- 5.
6. Upload the PDF(s) to the Classroom Compass servers, which process surveys within 1-2 days.

Teacher Reports

- Individual teacher results are released only to the teacher being evaluated. Classroom Compass emails reports directly to teachers.
- For evaluation sections, teacher reports will include a mean score for each question (based on the numeric value assigned to each response), along with a breakdown of how many students selected each answer choice.
- For each question, data provided to teachers allows them to compare responses from their students to averages from students evaluating other teachers in the department (where available) as well as the total faculty.
- Teachers are able to compare their results on each question to results from previous years that they participated.

Encourage participants to review their data with selected students to help clarify the meaning of results.

Additional Reports

- Comparative Departmental reports providing aggregate data for all teachers in each department will be available. Schools with departments with less than three members may wish to request that their data not be included in the report in order to protect confidentiality.
- Analysis of student background information will be available to committees. The report will indicate if any of the sub-groups (i.e. males/females, freshman, sophomores, juniors, seniors etc) rated teachers significantly lower than other sub-groups).

Survey Format

- Survey questionnaires are limited to one page in length. Classroom Compass will design the survey. After an organizer types the sections, instructions, questions, and response categories into the Classroom Compass web site, the servers will lay out and generate the survey.

• Surveys should be divided into sections, with multiple questions in each section. There are two types of sections: *evaluation sections*, and *student background sections*. Surveys should have one section for “Teacher Evaluation,” and one section for “Student Background Questions.” Schools may elect to have additional evaluation sections, e.g. “Course Materials.” Each section can include its own set of instructions. The survey is limited to one-page when using Classroom Compass.

- **Evaluation sections** contain questions that all share the same set of responses, on a 5-1 scale (higher is better), along with a “Does not Apply” option. Schools may select the labels for each response choice. Some suggested scales:
 - **Frequency:** Always, Often, Sometimes, Seldom, Never
 - **Quality:** Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor
 - **Satisfaction:** Extremely Satisfied, Somewhat Satisfied, Neutral, Somewhat Dissatisfied, Extremely Dissatisfied
 - **Agreement:** Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
 -
- **Student background sections** also contain multiple-choice questions, but each question has its own set of response categories. Sample background questions include:
 - What is your gender?
 - What grade do you expect to earn in this class?
 - What is your GPA?
 - What is your ethnicity?
 - How often do you do the homework for this class?
 - How often have you been absent from this class this semester?
 -
- For student background sections, teacher reports show the percentage (and number) of that teacher’s students who selected each response. Overall school data related to background questions can be extremely useful to administrators and also validate results. For example. It can dispel erroneous assumptions that students who perform poorly academically automatically rate their teachers lower than those who earn high grades.

IV. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Additional FAQs will be distributed to participating schools throughout the year.

1. Q: For what grade levels will this program be effective?

A: Research and experience shows that student evaluation of teachers can program can be used for any grade level, including elementary school. Of course, the questionnaires should be tailored to the age of the students.

2. Q: Will my school need to purchase Scantron forms or machines, or other special forms or equipment to run a program like this?

A: No, survey forms designed with Classroom Compass are printed on regular white paper, and students can write directly on the forms.

3. Q: I'm not sure if my school's copy machine can scan the forms, or I'm not sure how to use it. What should I do?

A: Send an email to the Classroom Compass team at contact@classroomcompass.org. We will help you figure out a solution, and we may even be able to scan the forms for you.

4. Q: My school isn't willing to pay to make copies of the evaluation form. What should I do?

A: Contact Dr. June Thompson of CASC for advice: 510.834.2272 or cascmail@aol.com. You may also reach out to the Classroom Compass team at contact@classroomcompass.org.

5. Q: I'm concerned about the comparative data within a department. If there are only a few teachers in a department, couldn't comparative data—the departmental average—compromise the confidentiality of individual teachers' evaluation results?

A: Classroom Compass is designed so that comparative data on a teacher's report is only available if there are three or more *other* teachers included in the average.

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Sample Surveys

Note: Questions can be grouped in like categories such as Creating and Maintaining an Environment that Supports Learning, Designing Learning Experiences for All Students, Materials etc. Several items can be left blank for Departments and/or individual teachers to dictate their own questions.

TEACHER EVALUATION SURVEY-Mountain View-Los Altos HS District

The questionnaire has been designed to permit you to express anonymously your opinion about the quality of instruction and course works you have experienced. To provide helpful information to the teacher, those questions will require careful consideration. Please evaluate the teacher only on the basis of your experience in this class.

PART I: STUDENT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The following student background information is for use in determining attitudes of different types of students. For example we would like to see if males or females rate teachers high or low, and if students who get high grades or low grades rate teacher high or low. Please be honest in your answers. THANK YOU.

Please circle only one answer per question on the answer sheet

A) What is your sex? 1) Female 2) Male

B) What is your grade level? 1) Freshman 2) Sophomore 3) Junior 4) Senior

Always Often Sometimes Seldom Never Does No Apply

5. Informs students of attendance and grading policies and class procedures early in the semester.
6. Has a fair grading policy and applies it consistently
7. Returns corrected homework and tests reasonably soon
8. Is available for individual conference outside of classroom time
9. Assignments work which helps you learn and understand the subject matter
10. Allows reasonable freedom to students in choosing report topics outside reading, etc.
11. Gives tests which cover only material assigned or discussed
12. Assigns a reasonable amount of work for the credits you earn
13. Is prepared for class
14. Gives clear explanation and instructions
15. Is knowledgeable about the subject matter
16. Provides constructive use of class time
17. Effectively uses methods and materials other than textbooks to present the course (i.e., visual aids, field trips, outside readings, etc.)
18. Stresses important ideas and concepts
19. Gives a balanced presentation of differing points of view
20. Shows how the course content can be useful, practical, and relevant to you

21. Maintains adequate class control while keeping the classroom a pleasant place in which to work
22. Encourages class discussions that are challenging and demand sound thinking
23. Encourages communication between the teacher and students during class
24. Encourages communication among student during discussions
25. Encourages students to express varied opinions
26. Is willing to admit an error
27. Gives honest constructive criticism about your work
28. Is thoughtful and considerate when you make a mistake
29. Makes you feel that your contributions are important and meaningful
30. Stimulates your interest and involvement in the course
31. Encourages creativity and originality in you
32. Respects you as an individual, seems to be interested in you as a person
33. Is respected by you

In his/her classroom performance, circle the degree to which you think your teacher is

34. Well organized

38. Warm/Friendly

35. Creative/Imaginative

39. Understanding

36. Unbiased/Fair

40. Enthusiastic

37. Flexible

Questions 41 – 50 are provided for use by individual teachers or departments

41.

42.

43.

44.

45.

46.

47.

48.

49.

50.

Part III: Materials Evaluation

Please Circle Only One Answer Per Question On the Answer Sheet

Evaluate the materials used in this course.

Excellent Good Fair Good Does Not Apply

51. Quality of the textbook used

52. Quality of visual aids used (films, tapes, etc.)

53. Quality of reading materials (other than textbooks) used.

54 Condition of the materials used.

55. Condition of the equipment used

Sequoia Union HS District

Sample Reports

My Classes: By Period

Part I: Teacher Evaluation

Question	Count	Mean (higher=better)					
		Overall	Per. 1	Per. 2	Per. 3	Per. 4	Per. 6
1. Assigns work which helps you learn and understand the subject.	150	4.3	3.2	4.0	5.0	4.9	4.3
2. Shows how the course content can be useful, practical, and relevant to you.	149	2.2	2.0	1.7	2.9	2.2	2.1
3. Encourages class discussions that are challenging and demand sound thinking.	149	3.1	3.2	1.8	4.0	4.1	2.3
4. Maintains adequate class control while keeping the classroom a pleasant place in which to work.	150	2.8	2.1	2.2	2.9	2.7	4.1
5. Stimulates your interest and involvement in the course.	150	4.0	4.3	4.8	2.1	4.5	4.3
6. Has a fair grading policy and applies it consistently.	150	3.1	1.8	2.8	4.2	4.9	1.6
7. Encourages creativity and originality in you.	147	3.3	1.5	4.5	3.4	4.3	2.4
8. Is respected by you.	150	2.2	1.8	2.2	3.3	1.6	2.3
9. Provides constructive use of class time.	149	3.5	3.3	3.0	2.1	4.4	4.7
10. Is prepared for class.	150	3.1	2.9	3.3	3.0	2.1	4.0
11. Gives clear explanation and instructions.	149	3.3	2.0	4.7	3.0	4.6	2.1
12. Encourages students to express varied opinions.	149	3.4	3.1	3.0	3.3	3.0	4.8
13. Gives tests which cover only material assigned or discussed.	150	3.0	2.2	1.5	4.9	3.3	3.0
14. Is knowledgeable about the subject matter.	150	3.9	1.7	3.2	4.7	4.9	4.9
15. Is available to meet with students outside of classroom time.	150	3.8	4.9	4.3	2.8	4.2	2.8
16. Makes you feel that your contributions are important and meaningful	148	2.9	1.7	4.2	2.8	3.1	2.7
17. Effectively uses methods and materials other than textbooks to present the course (i.e., visual	150	4.1	4.8	4.7	2.0	5.0	3.2

My Classes: Compared to the Department

Part I: Teacher Evaluation

Question	Count	Mean (higher=better)		
		Teacher	Dept.	Difference
1. Assigns work which helps you learn and understand the subject.	149	3.8	2.9	+ 1.0 ★★
2. Shows how the course content can be useful, practical, and relevant to you.	150	4.7	2.7	+ 2.0 ★★
3. Encourages class discussions that are challenging and demand sound thinking.	150	1.8	3.6	- 1.8 ★★
4. Maintains adequate class control while keeping the classroom a pleasant place in which to work.	149	3.9	3.6	+ 0.3
5. Stimulates your interest and involvement in the course.	149	3.1	3.0	+ 0.1
6. Has a fair grading policy and applies it consistently.	149	4.8	2.9	+ 1.9 ★★
7. Encourages creativity and originality in you.	146	3.7	3.2	+ 0.5 ★
8. Is respected by you.	149	3.6	2.6	+ 0.9 ★★
9. Provides constructive use of class time.	150	3.5	3.4	+ 0.1
10. Is prepared for class.	148	3.4	3.7	- 0.2
11. Gives clear explanation and instructions.	149	3.5	3.4	+ 0.2
12. Encourages students to express varied opinions.	149	4.9	3.3	+ 1.6 ★★
13. Gives tests which cover only material assigned or discussed.	150	3.6	3.2	+ 0.4 ★
14. Is knowledgeable about the subject matter.	150	4.4	3.4	+ 1.0 ★★
15. Is available to meet with students outside of classroom time.	150	3.3	2.8	+ 0.5 ★
16. Makes you feel that your contributions are important and meaningful	148	3.9	3.6	+ 0.3
17. Effectively uses methods and materials other than textbooks to present the course (i.e., visual aids, field trips, outside readings, etc.).	150	3.4	3.1	+ 0.3
18. Stresses important ideas and concepts.	150	2.3	3.6	- 1.3 ★★
19. Returns corrected homework and tests reasonably soon.	147	4.6	3.4	+ 1.2 ★★
20. Gives a balanced presentation of differing points of view.	149	4.5	3.6	+ 0.9 ★★
21. Encourages communication between the teacher and students during class.	150	3.9	3.6	+ 0.2

School: Past Five Years

Part I: Teacher Evaluation

Question	Mean (higher=better)				
	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
1. Assigns work which helps you learn and understand the subject.	3.3	2.2	2.2	4.7	2.2
2. Shows how the course content can be useful, practical, and relevant to you.	4.2	4.0	4.9	4.8	4.5
3. Encourages class discussions that are challenging and demand sound thinking.	3.0	1.8	4.8	3.9	3.3
4. Maintains adequate class control while keeping the classroom a pleasant place in which to work.	2.8	4.9	1.8	4.7	2.9
5. Stimulates your interest and involvement in the course.	4.5	2.8	4.5	2.9	4.7
6. Has a fair grading policy and applies it consistently.	3.2	4.8	2.9	4.7	1.7
7. Encourages creativity and originality in you.	4.5	1.9	4.3	4.6	4.4
8. Is respected by you.	4.4	1.8	1.9	3.1	2.3
9. Provides constructive use of class time.	1.8	1.8	2.1	2.4	4.2
10. Is prepared for class.	4.4	1.9	2.7	2.8	2.0
11. Gives clear explanation and instructions.	2.3	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.8
12. Encourages students to express varied opinions.	4.6	1.7	1.6	2.3	4.3
13. Gives tests which cover only material assigned or discussed.	4.9	4.3	4.1	2.1	1.7
14. Is knowledgeable about the subject matter.	3.1	3.4	3.3	2.6	4.8
15. Is available to meet with students outside of classroom time.	3.0	2.9	4.3	1.6	4.4
16. Makes you feel that your contributions are important and meaningful	4.5	2.7	4.8	4.8	2.1
17. Effectively uses methods and materials other than textbooks to present the course (i.e., visual aids, field trips, outside readings, etc.).	2.4	2.7	3.0	2.9	3.7

Question	Mean (higher=better)					
	Social Studies	Mathematics	English	Foreign Language	Science	School
1. Assigns work which helps you learn and understand the subject.	4.12	4.13	3.60	4.42	3.93	4.03
2. Encourages class discussions that are challenging and demand sound thinking.	4.22	4.05	3.57	3.38	3.56	3.43
3. Maintains adequate class control while keeping the classroom a pleasant place in which to work.	4.49	3.89	3.46	4.29	3.88	3.69
4. Stimulates your interest and involvement in the course.	3.61	3.65	2.92	3.63	3.28	3.21
5. Has a fair grading policy and applies it consistently.	4.07	4.28	3.91	4.67	4.21	4.27
6. Provides constructive use of class time.	4.39	4.11	3.70	4.21	4.16	4.29
7. Is prepared for class.	4.71	4.50	4.13	4.67	4.56	4.78
8. Gives clear explanation and instructions.	4.22	4.11	3.48	4.21	3.93	4.05
9. Gives tests that reflect the content and materials provided.	4.15	4.00	3.69	4.30	4.18	4.57
10. Is knowledgeable about the subject matter.	4.66	3.82	4.11	4.42	4.53	4.72
11. Is available to meet with students outside of classroom time.	4.12	4.11	3.90	4.75	4.17	4.41
12. Stresses important ideas and concepts.	4.30	3.95	3.75	4.46	4.09	4.27
13. Returns feedback on assignments reasonably soon.	3.88	3.95	3.44	3.83	3.99	4.16
14. Respects you as an individual.	4.41	4.37	3.83	4.58	4.25	4.17
15. Is willing to admit an error.	4.38	4.32	3.98	4.63	4.17	4.25