

Sociology 212 Sociological Analysis Exercise on measurement

Please do this brief exercise and write up your findings and bring them to class to hand in on Tuesday October 2nd. This assignment won't be graded, but we will give it a plus, a satisfactory, or a minus, and it will count as part of the short exercises for the course. You should be able to do this in a very short time – it's an exercise, not a paper, and should be no more than one page.

Comparing different ways of measuring how well faculty members are teaching

The two websites below present different attempts to evaluate faculty and courses at Queens College. The first site gives the results of the formal course evaluation questionnaires sponsored by the Academic Senate, which are handed out every third semester to all faculty. This questionnaire has a space for comments, but they are not reported on the website – instead, only the numerical results are presented.

The next site also presents quantitative ratings, but the emphasis and focus are on the prose comments – and since this is an off-campus rating site not connected in any way to the college, students express themselves quite freely.

For a faculty member whose course you have taken, compare what these two sites say about the faculty member's teaching performance in that course (no names please). If you're a transfer student who is just starting, do it for a course you're taking now.

Your summary should include the following four items:

1. **Validity:** What evaluation criteria are used by the Senate evaluations? What criteria are used by ratemyprofessors.com? Which set of evaluation criteria seems more complete?
2. **Representativeness:** How many students evaluated the course? What share of all the students in the class filled out the evaluation?
3. **Reliability:** how consistent are the evaluation results? Is the evaluation of the course based on evaluations from one semester, or from more than one? If more than one, are the results similar from semester to semester?
4. **Comment on the relative helpfulness of the two evaluations.** Which one seems to you to be more valid? More reliable?

A. Queens College Course Evaluation results from the Academic Senate course evaluations. These are available in a new format created by a QC undergraduate at:

<http://dharma.soc.qc.cuny.edu>

This is an unofficial test site, but it presents the real data from the course evaluation surveys for the past several years.

B. Informal evaluations of faculty by students – this is a national website which invites evaluation of faculty by students, and includes lots of evaluations of QC faculty & courses:

www.ratemyprofessors.com

You will need to register to use this site, but it's free, and only takes a minute. You don't have to give friend's names or add professors to use the site, although the website may seem to require this at first glance.