
**POLICY ON THE ADMINISTRATION, PROCESSING,
AND USE OF STUDENT OPINIONS OF TEACHING
EFFECTIVENESS (SOTE)
FAM 820.5**

1. **Purpose.** The Student Opinions of Teaching Effectiveness (*SOTE*) process is designed as one of several sources of information to be used in performance review and periodic evaluation of faculty teaching. In addition, faculty should find SOTE information helpful in pursuing the normal professional goal of maintaining and improving instructional effectiveness.

2. **Forms to be Used.** There are three forms that could be used: A) SOTE Evaluation, B) SOTE Faculty Comment, and C) SOTE Teaching Improvement. Hereby referred to as Form A, B and C, respectively. Form A is required to be used in all classes being evaluated, and it shall contain the questions shown in Attachment #1. Forms B and C are optional; that is, the faculty member whose class is being evaluated will determine whether or not they are to be included in the SOTE process. Form B is available for use by faculty to describe significant circumstances that could potentially affect student course evaluations. Form C includes supplemental questions to help a faculty member improve his or her teaching.

3. **Classes to be Evaluated.** Written or electronic student evaluation shall be required for all classes that faculty teach, with the following exceptions:

- i. Classes with enrollments of fewer than five students;
- ii. Field experiences, thesis research, distance learning through interactive televised video, independent project/study, recitations, and internships; and
- iii. Team-taught classes.

Faculty members teaching classes in which SOTEs are not administered are encouraged to use alternative evaluation instruments.

No first quarter SOTE of a probationary faculty member shall be placed in his or her WPAF unless he or she requests that it be included.

4. Administration of SOTEs.

4.1. SOTE Forms A, B, and C for distribution to either students or faculty shall be contained in an envelope on the outside of which is attached written instructions as shown in Attachment #2. These instructions shall provide information for the faculty member, the student distributing the SOTE Forms A and C, and the students filling out the forms.

4.2 During the 7th week of classes, colleges/departments/schools shall prepare and distribute SOTE packages to the faculty members. Faculty members shall then, at a convenient time between the eighth and tenth week of classes, select a student in each class to administer the SOTEs in accordance with the written instructions. For hybrid/blended courses, SOTEs will be administered if possible in a face to face class session between the eighth and tenth weeks; if there is no face to face session scheduled in this period, the SOTE will be administered online. For courses offered under an alternative time format, SOTEs will be administered at an appropriate time during one of the last two class sessions. The Student will read the appropriate instructions to the class, distribute the forms, collect the forms, and return the sealed envelope with the completed forms to the appropriate administrative offices. Under certain circumstances, such as in the case of large-lecture General Education courses, a faculty member may request assistance from their college/department/school office in the administration of SOTEs. Failure on the part of faculty members to carry out scheduled student evaluations may be grounds for disciplinary action. As significant responsibility for the completion of SOTEs is placed upon students, disciplinary action should be taken only when it has been determined that faculty were derelict in their role in the SOTE process.

4.3 The faculty member teaching the class shall not be present during the administration of SOTEs. The faculty member shall refrain from discussing SOTEs with students in any manner that would tend to influence how the students would respond to the SOTE questions.

4.4 During the time that SOTE Forms are administered, students shall refrain from discussing with one another the teaching effectiveness of the faculty member being evaluated. Students shall be told (by the person administering the forms) that such discussion is inappropriate, should be reported to the Academic Personnel Office, and may result in invalidation of the SOTE results in the affected class. (See Attachment #2.)

4.5 Reports of any inappropriate behavior in the administration of SOTEs, whether on the part of faculty or students, shall be referred to the Academic Personnel Office. If, after consulting with the faculty member and thoroughly

investigating all such reports, the Associate Provost for Academic Personnel determines that such inappropriateness is indeed likely to have affected the SOTE results, the SOTEs in question shall be invalidated. All invalidated SOTE's forms and summary data shall be removed from the Personnel Action File (PAF). The Associate Provost shall submit a memorandum to the PAF indicating that the SOTEs have been invalidated, but not specifying the reason. The faculty member and the appropriate department chair shall be notified of this decision. Make-up SOTEs should be scheduled at the earliest opportunity to do so. Make-up SOTEs do not need to be in the same course in which the SOTEs were invalidated.

5. Processing of Completed *SOTE* Forms.

5.1 Once SOTE forms are collected, the designated person in the colleges/departments/schools shall forward completed forms to the Academic Personnel Office for analysis, along with a list of all SOTEs scheduled.

5.2 The summary reports shall contain the statistical data shown in the table below for each of the questions on the front of the form. The total number of student respondents shall be printed once on the summary report.

TABLE OF STATISTICAL FUNCTIONS

FOR ANALYZING SOTE QUESTIONS, Table 1

<u>Instructor Data</u>	<u>College Data</u>
<i>Q1-3 numerical response frequency</i>	<i>Q1-3 response percentage</i>
<i>Q4-5 numerical response frequency</i>	<i>Q4-5 response percentage</i>
<i>Q4-5 frequency histogram</i>	<i>Q4-5 response histogram (percentage)</i>
<i>Q4-5 mean (12 or more responses)</i>	<i>Q4-5 mean</i>

NOTE: The instructor and college means shall be reported to one decimal point.

Q4-5 median

For instructor data, the numerical response frequency is the number of students responding to a particular question, and is included for all Form A questions. For

questions four and five solely, additional standard statistical functions to be reported are the trimmed mean, the median, and the frequency histogram. There shall be no statistical analysis of the questions collectively; there shall be no University-wide statistics; nor shall any other statistical data be reported other than those specified in this subsection (6.2). Attachment #1 is a sample summary report.

5.3 Whenever summary reports are ready, these shall be forwarded to Academic Personnel for distribution to faculty members whose classes were SOTE'd and to appropriate college deans and department chairs/school directors. The completed forms shall then be filed in respective faculty PAFs attached to a copy of the summary report.

5.4 On request, faculty members may review the completed forms in appropriate administrative office, once the forms have been filed.

5.5 Statistical summaries shall be prepared for each faculty member for each class SOTE'd after each quarter. These statistical summaries shall consist only of those statistics that are listed in Table 1. There shall be no new data that has not been distributed to the faculty member. In addition, for each SOTE administration, the summary shall include the number of respondents; the department/school, number and section of the class; and the time of day of the class.

6. Use of SOTEs (Completed Forms, Summary Reports, Cumulative Statistical Summaries, and Faculty to College Comparison).

6.1 Completed SOTE forms A and B, along with summary reports and cumulative statistical summaries, shall become part of the Working Personnel Action File of faculty members for the purpose of performance review and periodic evaluation and shall be considered in accordance with the guidelines of the Procedures and Criteria for Performance Review and Periodic Evaluation. Attachment #4 contains guidance on the interpretation of SOTE statistical summaries.

6.2 The faculty member shall have sole discretion to include Form C questions and some or all of the student responses in his/her Faculty Activity Report attachment.

6.3 At the beginning of each academic year, for each College, College summary statistics and histograms are to be produced based on the cumulative SOTE results from the previous year. College summary statistics will be stratified by lower division, upper division, and graduate courses.

6.4 College statistical summaries will serve for evaluators producing teaching evaluations during the retention, promotion, and tenure faculty evaluation process as the basis of comparison between a faculty member and a college. A faculty member can choose to make other comparisons depending on the availability of appropriate data. (For first year of the SOTE process implementation, the previous year's SETE statistics will serve as the basis of comparison, following the summary statistical guidelines described above as closely as possible.)

6.5 College statistical summaries will serve for evaluators producing teaching evaluations during the retention, promotion, and tenure faculty evaluation process as the basis of comparison between a faculty member and a college. A faculty member can choose to make other comparisons depending on the availability of appropriate data.

7. Monitoring and Revision of the SOTE process and forms. The Faculty Affairs Committee is responsible for drafting or reviewing recommendations for changing the SOTE process and/or forms and this policy, and for forwarding these recommendations to the Faculty Senate unless otherwise specified by the Faculty Senate.

FSD 87-25.R7

Approved by the Faculty Senate

Karen Kolehmainen, Chair

Date: 9/26/17

Reviewed by the Academic Affairs Council

Shari McMahan, Provost and
Vice President for Academic Affairs

Date: 9/27/17

Approved by the President

Tomás Morales

Date: 10/06/17

Attachment 1

SOTE FORMS

Form A

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO
Student Opinion of Teaching Effectiveness
5500 University Parkway, San Bernardino, CA 92407-2397

Name of faculty being rated

Class Description

Call Number

1. Rate your interest in the subject matter of this course before you took the class.

Very High High Moderately High Moderately Low Low Very Low

2. How many class sessions did you attend?

All Almost all More than half Less than half

3. Why did you take this course? Choose all that apply.

The course fulfills a general education requirement.

The course fulfills a requirement in my major.

The course will improve job/career opportunities.

I have enjoyed the professor's class(es) in the past.

The class sounded interesting to me.

Other: (Please specify)

4. How would you rate the overall quality of instruction in this course?

Excellent Very Good Good Fair Poor Unsatisfactory

Please provide reasons why you gave the above rating.

5. How would you rate your professor's specific contributions to your learning in this course?

Excellent Very Good Good Fair Poor Unsatisfactory

Please provide reasons why you gave the above rating.

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO
Faculty Supplemental Comment Form
5500 University Parkway, San Bernardino, CA 92407-2397

Class Description

Call Number

Filling out this form is optional. This form should only be completed in the event of an unusual circumstance(s) that you believe may influence the Student Opinion of Teaching Effectiveness (SOTE) responses in this class. **The faculty member must submit the completed form to Academic Personnel no later than the last scheduled class session of the quarter being SOTE'd. No forms will be accepted after that date.**

To Faculty: Using the space below, please describe the unusual circumstance(s) that you believe may influence the SOTE responses in this class.

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO
Teaching Improvement Supplemental Questions
5500 University Parkway, San Bernardino, CA 92407-2397

Name of faculty being rated

Class Description

Call Number

INSTRUCTIONS: Teaching Improvement Supplemental questions are designed to help faculty improve their teaching. Up to five (5) questions can be included for student response. These are to be open-ended questions. Questions will be drawn from an existing bank of questions maintained by the Teaching Resource Center, or submitted by faculty for inclusion as supplemental questions. Faculty must have an original question approved by the Instructional Quality Committee before using it.

Questions and responses will not be included in Faculty RPT file. If the faculty member desires, the faculty member may choose to include the questions and some or all of the student response material in his/her FAR attachment.

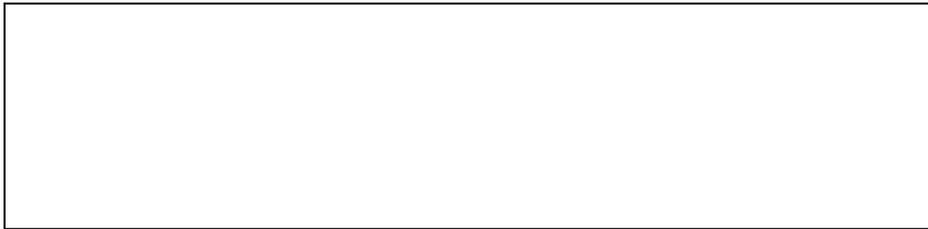
Q1.

Q2.

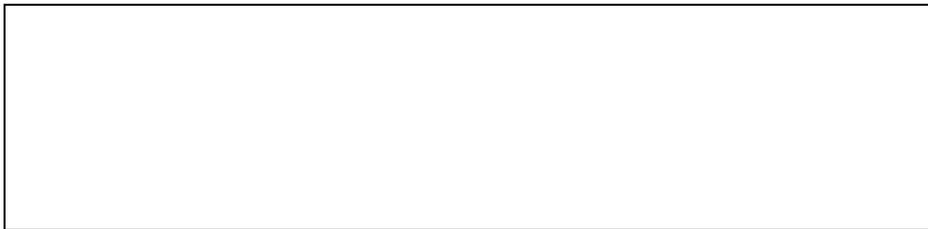
Q3.



Q4.



Q5.



Illustrative Faculty Statistical Summary
Student Opinion of Teaching Effectiveness (SOTE)

Instructor Name: **Smith, J**
Course Description: **Selected Topics in Geography**
Course + Section: **GEOG 390 01**
Call Number: **12345**
Year and Term: **2005 Spring**
Enrollment: **36**

1. Rate your interest in the subject matter of course before you took the class.

	N
Very High	8
High	10
Moderately High	6
Moderately Low	5
Low	2
Very Low	1
Total	32

2. How many class sessions did you attend?

	N
All	12
Almost All	15
More than Half	3
Less than Half	2

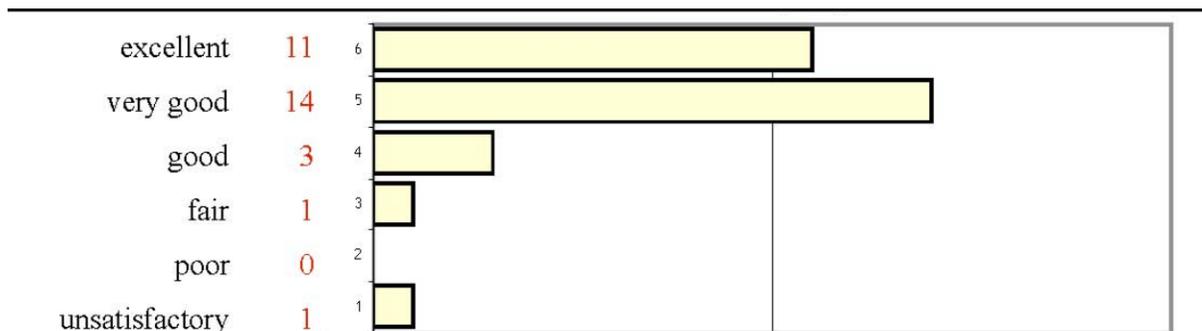
Total 32

3. Why did you take this course? Choose all that apply.

	N
The course fulfills a general education requirement.	26
The course fulfills a requirement in my major.	19
The course will improve job/career opportunities.	17
I have enjoyed the professor's class(es) in the past.	10
The class sounded interesting to me.	26
Other: (Please specify)	3

4. How would you rate the overall quality of instruction in this course?

N = 30 Mean= 5.1 Median = 5.0



5. How would you rate the instructor's contributions to your learning in this course?

N = 32 Mean= 5.2 Median = 5.0



Illustrative College Comparison Summary

Student Opinion of Teaching Effectiveness (SOTE)

Comparison Group: *Social & Behavioral Science*

Additional possible comparison groups:
 • General Education Courses

1. Rate your interest in the subject matter of this course before you took the class.

Percentage	Lower	Upper	Grad	Total
very high	20	25	17	22
high	25	31	33	30
moderately high	20	19	23	20
moderately low	20	16	17	17
low	5	6	7	6
very low	10	3	3	5
Total	100	100	100	100

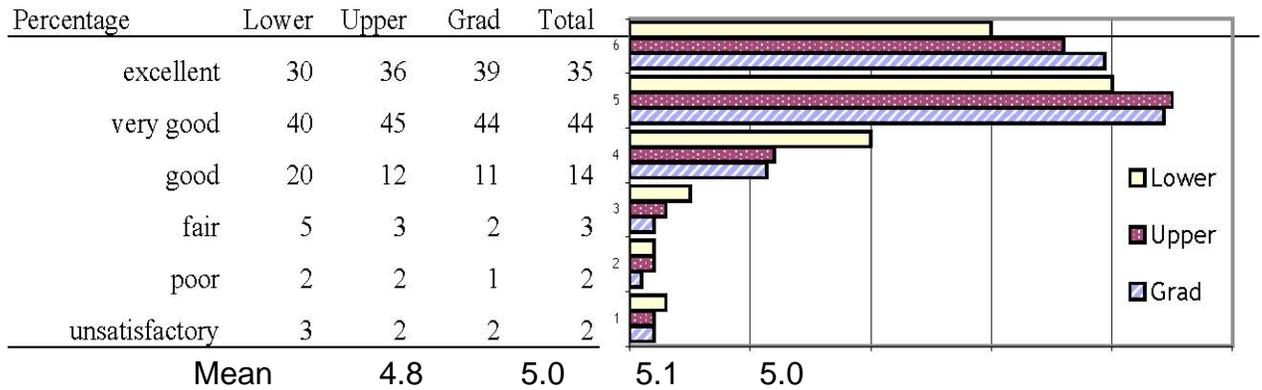
2. How many class sessions did you attend?

Percentage	Lower	Upper	Grad	Total
all	35	38	33	36
almost all	50	47	50	48
more than half	10	9	13	11
less than half	5	6	3	5
Total	100	100	100	100

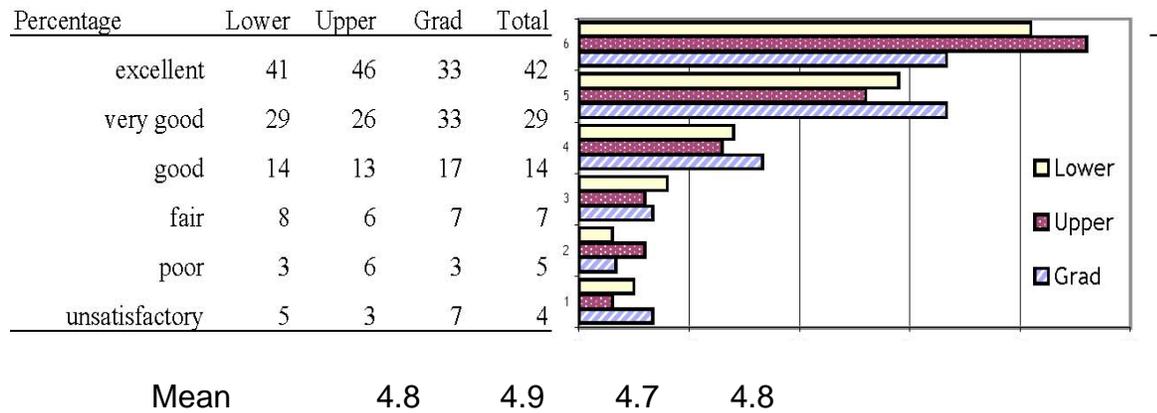
3. Why did you take this course? Choose all that apply.

	Percentage			
	Lower	Upper	Grad	Total
The course fulfills a general education requirement	50	30	0	28
The course fulfills a requirement in my major	19	40	80	45
The course will improve job/career opportunities	19	20	75	34
I have enjoyed the professor's class(es) in the past	13	20	25	20
The class sounded interesting to me	20	5	20	13
Other	3	10	5	7

4. How would you rate the overall quality of instruction in this course?



5. How would you rate the instructor's contributions to your learning in this course?



Attachment 2

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF SOTE'S

TO THE FACULTY MEMBER:

I. Forms A and C (C is optional):

1. Since SOTE's are an important element in the evaluation of faculty, it is essential that these be administered between the eighth and tenth week of classes in order that they may be processed and included in your Faculty Personnel File. **Failure on the part of faculty members to carry out scheduled SOTE's can be grounds for disciplinary action.**

2. If you perceive special circumstances with your classes, such as in the case of large lecture courses, you should contact your department office to request assistance in administering the SOTE. This request should be made in a timely manner.

3. Otherwise, at a convenient time during the weeks of (_____), select a "mature and responsible" student to distribute SOTE forms, read aloud the following statement to the class,

"YOUR CLASS WAS SELECTED TO DO THE STUDENT OPINION OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS. THE STUDENT OPINION OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS IS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN THE EVALUATION OF FACULTY, AND YOUR WRITTEN COMMENTS ARE PARTICULARLY VALUABLE, SO PLEASE WRITE THOROUGHLY, THOUGHTFULLY AND CLEARLY."

Then give the complete SOTE packet to the student **AND LEAVE THE CLASSROOM.**

4. Aside from arranging for the student to distribute the SOTE forms, you shall refrain from any discussion of the SOTE process during the class session.

STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF SOTE's

TO THE STUDENT DISTRIBUTING SOTE FORMS

1. Clearly print your name: _____

2. Distribute SOTE forms ~~and pencils~~.

3. Announce that pens with black or blue ink are preferred to pencils. If pencils are used, please ask the students to press firmly to make the writing as dark as possible.

4. Read aloud to the class the following statement:

“UNIVERSITY FACULTY EVALUATION COMMITTEES CAREFULLY CONSIDER YOUR RESPONSES WHEN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE REAPPOINTMENT, RETENTION, PROMOTION, AND TENURE OF FACULTY.

YOUR RESPONSES ARE CONFIDENTIAL AND WILL NOT BE MADE AVAILABLE TO YOUR INSTRUCTOR UNTIL AFTER GRADES ARE RECORDED. DISCUSSION OF THE INSTRUCTOR WHILE COMPLETING THE SOTE FORMS IS INAPPROPRIATE, WILL BE REPORTED TO THE APPROPRIATE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE, AND MAY RESULT IN THE INVALIDATION OF ALL SOTE FORMS FOR THE CLASS.”

4. After students are finished, collect the SOTE forms and place them in the envelope.
SEAL THE ENVELOPE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE CLASS.

5. Promptly return the sealed envelope to one of the following locations:

Department Office _____ (if before 4:30 p.m.)

College Office _____ (if before 5:00 p.m.)

Biology Building (BI 132) SOTE Drop Box
Faculty Office Building (Stairwell area between the Colleges of Education and Social and Behavioral Sciences) SOTE Drop Box

Jack Brown Hall (2nd Floor Lobby) SOTE Drop Box

University Hall (U-Hall 124) SOTE Drop Box

Library Bldg (end of bldg towards the mountains) SOTE Drop Box

6. Unless totally unavoidable, **DO NOT TAKE THE ENVELOPE OFF CAMPUS.**

7. If your class meets at an off-campus location be sure to use the postage-paid envelope that is included with your package. **PLEASE MAIL THE SAME DAY IF POSSIBLE.** In case of off-campus evening classes, make sure to mail the envelope in the morning of the following day.

8. Write a report of any discussion of the instructor's teaching effectiveness during SOTE administration using the back of this instruction sheet and turn it in with the SOTE packet.

Attachment 3

SOTE FORMS WITH STUDENT COMMENTS FOR PROBATIONARY FACULTY, TENURED FACULTY AT THE RANK OF ASSISTANT/ASSOCIATE, AND

FULL-TIME LECTURERS ARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW IN THE ACADEMIC PERSONNEL OFFICE, AD- 102.

SOTE FORMS WITH STUDENT COMMENTS FOR TENURED FACULTY AT THE RANK OF PROFESSOR AND FOR PART-TIME LECTURERS ARE AVAILABLE FOR

REVIEW IN THE SCHOOL OFFICES/DEPARTMENT OFFICES.

NOTE: WHEN THERE ARE TWELVE (12) OR FEWER RESPONSES FOR QUESTIONS 4 and 5, ONLY THE INSTRUCTOR HISTOGRAM, RESPONSE NUMBER, AND MEDIAN-WILL BE REPORTED.

Attachment 4

GUIDANCE ON THE INTERPRETATION OF SOTE STATISTICAL SUMMARIES

The Old SETE Statistical Summary

The old SETE statistical summary included item frequency distribution, instructor means, and instructor medians. In addition, the school mean and standard deviation are included.

The New SOTE Statistical Summary

The new SOTE statistical summary includes the following for Form A:

For instructors:

Item frequency distribution, item frequency distribution represented as a histogram for questions four (4) and five (5), trimmed mean (ten percent trimmed mean), and median.

For the college:

For all questions, frequency distributions are given as relative frequency reported as a percentage; for questions four (4) and five (5), frequency distributions are presented as histograms of relative frequency reported as a percentage, with means also included. In addition, the numerical and graphic representations of college results will be broken down by lower, upper, and graduate level courses. Results are reported both numerically and graphically (histogram). The college level measure is used for comparison with faculty in the college.

A brief explanation of each of the statistics to be used is given below.

Frequency Distribution

A frequency distribution is the collective listing of the frequency (count) for each particular item/question.

Frequency Histogram

It is a bar graph of the frequency distribution. It shows as a bar the frequency with which each response occurs, typically as a count or a relative frequency. The bars, collectively, give a graphical representation of all the responses, which is defined as the frequency distribution of the data.

Instructor Mean and Instructor Median

The mean and median are two methods that are commonly used to measure central tendency; that is, they are measures that represent the location of the center of the distribution. The mean, sometimes called the "average," is found by adding up all the scores for a particular item and dividing by the number of responses.

The median is sometimes called the "50 percentile". Half of the scores are larger than the median, and, half of the scores are smaller than the median. The is defined by position, not necessarily a score, therefore it is possible to have a fractional value for the median although the scores are all whole numbers.

The mean is a good estimate of the average when the scores are normally distributed. The median is preferred over the mean when the distribution of scores is significantly skewed or the dataset is small, because the median, unlike the mean, is unaffected by extreme scores that commonly occur in small datasets and non-normal distributions.

Differences in SOTE means should be interpreted cautiously. In data that are collected in groups (ie. courses), most of the variability in means is due to characteristics of the students and not due to characteristics of the course and instructor.

Relative Frequency As Percentage

The relative frequency is the proportion that each response category makes up of the total responses for a particular item/question. For example, if 125 people responded to a particular question that had three response options, excellent, good, and fair, with 50 respondents selecting excellent, 60 selecting good, and 15 selecting fair, the relative frequencies would be 0.40, 0.48, and 0.12, respectively. To turn these fractions into a percent, multiply each by 100. The result is the relative frequency reported as a percentage.

College Mean

The college mean is the average score for the entire college. The measure is used for comparison purposes. It is used to determine the relative position of the instructor in relation to the average score of his or her peers in the same college.