- 0 0	Not challenging The right level of challenge for me Too challenging
	2a. Why did you rate [course name] as not challenging?
	I had already learned the course concepts in a different course. It was easy for me to do well on the assessments (i.e., assignments, tests, essays). I found the course concepts to be clear or straightforward.
	I thought that the course concepts were taught too slowly or
	repetitively.
	I am very interested in the topic.
	Other:
	othor
	2b. Why did you rate [course name] as too challenging?
	The course concepts were too difficult/abstract for me.
	I did not understand the connections between course concepts.
	I found the course readings difficult to understand.
	I think the course concepts were taught too fast for me.
	I did not have the pre-requisite knowledge.
	The course assessments (i.e., assignments, tests, essays) were difficult
	for me.
	My classmates made it difficult for me to learn (i.e., group work,
	discussions).
	Other:

- 3) How comfortable did you feel approaching your instructor (in person or online)?
 - Not at all comfortable
 - Somewhat comfortable
 - Completely comfortable
 - o I did not contact the instructor, but the reason had nothing to do with the

3a) You responded as having felt <u>not at all comfortable</u> approaching [instructor name]. Please explain your response.

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3b) You responded as having felt <u>somewhat comfortable</u> approaching [instructor name]. Please explain your response.

3c) You responded as having felt <u>completely comfortable</u> approaching [instructor name]. Please explain your response.

3d) You responded that you <u>did not contact [instructor name]</u>, <u>but the reason had nothing to do</u> <u>with their approachability</u>. Please explain your response.

4)

- o Almost never
- o Rarely
- o Sometimes
- o Often
- o Almost always
- 5) I think [instructor name] _____ tried to support student learning (i.e., used a variety of learning activities, invested in my success, invited and responded to student feedback).
 - o Almost never
 - o Rarely
 - o Sometimes
 - o Often
 - o Almost always
- 6) I ______ felt engaged by [instructor name] teaching approach (i.e., activities, lectures, discussions).
 - o Almost never
 - o Rarely
 - o Sometimes
 - o Often
 - o Almost always
- 7) Was it clear to you how your work (i.e., assignments, essays, tests, learning activities) would be graded?
 - Not at all
 - o Alittle
 - o Somewhat
 - o Mostly

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Т	

In Summer 2021, the Vice-Provost, Learning and Teaching, with the Learning Experiences Assessment and Planning (LEAP) group launched a project to review the end of course student survey program which at the time was called Student Experiences of Teaching and Course (SETC). One of the aims of the project was to review the questions and ensure they align with the purpose of understanding and improving the student learning experience. The final report was presented in Summer 2022. Based on the following two recommendations, LEAP undertook a review of the current University-level questions and proposed an edited set for the Common Core question set.

Recommendation 2: Align survey items with the purpose of the end of course student survey program.

Recommendation 7: Review common core question set to include aspects of the learning experience that are important to students.

SETC as a program was retired at the end of Summer 2022 and replaced with CES (Course Experience Surveys in Fall 2022.

<u>Strategies to Value Effective Teaching</u> recommended ways to review

Rationale for CES Common Core Questions

Report readers do not have access to row-level or individual response data. Thus, they cannot make connections between responses, leaving them with only assumptions when interpreting the data. There

The proposed new question set includes 6 wording changes to the SETCitems, 3 additions, and 6 removals.

Below is a summary comparison of items that were edited to align with the <u>purpose</u> of the ŒSprogram (i.e., remove evaluation or judgment statements).

SETC question:

The assessments in this course (tests, assignments, essays, etc.) allowed me to demonstrate my understanding of the course content.

- o Strongly agree
- o Agree
- o No Opinion

• Strongly disagree

There are two issues with this question as it is presented: 1) students are asked to provide an evaluation/judgement of the instructor and, 2) an agreement scale may be inappropriate and prone to acquiescence bias. This question is about capturing the stud

fluctuation phenomena. Respondents are asked to reflect on multiple occurrences and then, using various strategies, average them (Tong et al., 2020). Agree

select it to mean I

. Thus, the agreement scale may create challenges

- o **Disagree**
- o Strongly disagree
- o I did not contact the course instructor

As

not a reflection of their experience with the instructor. Another issue with the question framing is that it limits the inquiry scope. A comfortable rapport and having meaningful relationships extend beyond situations in which a student needs help. Instructor-student interactions also include coaching, advising,

s

meaningless information to the results because it is analogous to providing no response at all. The ordering of the scale can mislead respondents and report readers into thinking of it as part of the interval scale.

Proposal: new question

How comfortable did you feel approaching your instructor (in person or online)?

- o Not at all comfortable
- o Somewhat comfortable

CESquestion

How challenging you find a course is related to how much effort you have to put in to be successful. This can depend on many factors, such as how fast or slow topics are covered or how much you know about the topic already.

- Not challenging
- The right level of challenge for me
- o Too challenging

a. Why did you rate [course name] as not challenging?

I had already learned the course concepts in a different course. It was easy for me to do well on the assessments (i.e., assignments, tests, essays).

I found the course concepts were clear or straightforward.

I thought tlagh92 rei(en)2QsJE5(r)3(i)-3(792 re1(b)12(e)as)912 0 W* nBT/F1 11.04 Tf1

These questions also allow students to reflect on their own learning a key element of the CES

metacognition and self-awareness skills and gain insight into which learning strategies work well for them. Both questions also elicit information that instructors have repeatedly communicated that they are the most interested in receiving.

1. Workload

The workload for a course is the amount of time and effort expected of or assigned to the student. Having an appropriate workload for the course is important to students, Leadership, and instructors.

During the interviews, students described how the course workload has a large impact on their learning experience. This is supported by literature that states having a sense of control over workload in a higher education setting can make a valuable contribution to feelings of well-being (Harter et al., 2003; Morrison & Kirby, 2010; Hammond, 2004). Well-being is an important factor for success and retention (Caulfield, 2007; El Ansari & Stock, 2010; Larson, 2009; University of Minnesota, 2008) and as such, is integral to learning and teaching.

Leadership is interested in investigating student perceptions about workload as it is one of the most common question topics on SETC surveys. An item about workload appears on all Health Science surveys, most Science surveys, and surveys in several other units (e.g., Economics, Interactive Arts and Technology, Mechatronics).

Instructors would also benefit from student feedback about course workload as they are often the ones who design the course, assignments, learning activities, etc. Instructors often use their instructorselected questions to inq

learn more about unexpected grievances over high workload. One finding from the student interviews as well as from the Learning Experiences Transition Survey is that many students believe that their workload has increased during the pandemic. It is possible that instructors tried to design remote courses in ways they thought would alleviate stress such as breaking up large assignments into smaller ones. However, this was experienced by students as overwhelming. Continuous low-stakes assessments may have left students thinking that the workload was high, compared with a course with a more conventional distribution of work

Lastly, the SFU Senate approved of a <u>new interpretation</u> of a unit (credit) on March 3, 2022. Framing this question using the Senate approved interpretation allows for better alignment among instructor expectations, student experience, student response and report reader interpretation. It can also serve as an educative piece for students completing CES who may not have heard of the new interpretation previously.

CESquestion

This question is about course workload.

SFU expects a student to spend 2-3 hours each week (both in class time and out of class work) per course credit. For example, if Physiology 101 is a 3-credit course, it would take 6-

I spent _____ time on [course name] than expected based on its number of credits.

- o Less
- The same amount of
- o More
- a) You responded as having spent <u>less</u> time on [course name] than expected. Please explain your response.
- b) You responded as having spent <u>the same amount of</u> time on [course name] as expected. Please explain your response.
- c) You responded as having spent <u>more</u> time on [course name] than expected. Please explain your response.

The response scale for this question was reduced from a 5-point to a 3-point scale because of the results from the Student Interview Analysis. The original 5-point scale options were: Much less, less, About the same, More, and Much more. Interviewed students discussed that they saw very little difference

was noted in responses that accompanied this question on the Pilot survey. This suggests that this question would benefit from being reduced to a three-point the same amount of

2. Engagement

The level of engagement students experience was identified in student interviews as having a large impact on their learning experience; it also was frequently commented on in the open-comments. (2010) review suggests that student engagement is one of the primary components of effective teaching and that engagement is vital for learning as well (Barkley, 2009; Carini et al., 2006; Coates, 2006). Engagement is a complex and multifaceted construct (Christenson et al., 2012; Fredricks et al., 2004; Shernoff et al., 2016), and its definition is unsettled in the literature (Henrie

et al., 2015; Kahu, 2013; Reschly & Christenson, 2012). Some define it as an investment or commitment (Marks, 2000; Tinto, 1975) and effortful involvement in learning (Astin, 1984; Reschly & Christenson, 2012), while others refer to it as demonstrating high levels of activation and energy (Balwant, 2018; Burch et al., 2015). However, a common method to capture levels of engagement are self-reports (i.e., degrees of focus, attention, and concentration (Burch et al., 2015; Rich et al., 2010)).

Data about student engagement has the potential to help instructors understand whether students are reacting to course experiences that are likely to generate high quality learning outcomes.

CESquestion

I _____ felt engaged by [instructor name] discussions).

(i.e., activities, lectures,

- Almost never
- o Rarelv
- o Sometimes
- o Often
- Almost always

It must be acknowledged that t(Shernoff et al., 2017)he concept of student engagement is based on a constructivist approach and assumes that agency is required on the part of the student to purposefully participate in learning (Coates, 2005; Krause & Coates, 2008).

3. Supportive learning environment

Emotions, such as anxiety and unease, can influence motivation, cognition, and performance (Km & Pekrun, 2014; Pekrun, 1992; Schussler et al., 2021) and thus have a large impact on the student learning experience. It has been proposed that instructor-student relationships can influence student emotions (Kool et al., 2018) and that various types of instructor practices, both verbal and nonverbal, have been shown to decrease anxiety and increase engagement. As student perceptions of instructor support increase, student self-reports of anxiety levels decrease (Schussler et al., 2021).

For example, argumentativeness and verbal aggression can aggravate and heighten student anxiety in the classroom (Lin et al., 2017). On the other hand, instructor practices that generate a feeling of psychological closeness between the instructor and student, or immediacy, can decrease student anxiety. Instructor behaviors that promote immediacy include using appropriate humor, learning names, smiling and making eye contact (Schussler, et al., 2021).

Other instructor behaviors that generate feelings of support for learning are open communication with students, demonstrated helpfulness, and teaching with characteristics that show they are attending to student learning (such as answering student questions, watching their pace, etc.). Students use these (Titsworth et al., 2013; Goldman &

Goldboy, 2014).

Course activities/ components encompass many aspects of the course and vary tremendously from one course to another. Also, students in the class may be inconsistent in which aspects of the course they consider to be course activities. For example, some may include assigned readings as course activities, while others may not. We recommend that questions about specific course activities, if they are of interest, be asked by course instructors as part of their own question set.

2. Course components connected

as an important attribute for course design. The report references the <u>Undergraduate Student Survey</u> <u>2013</u> in which 38% of students responded selected it as an important quality. However, in that survey, participants were asked to select the most important qualities of a course instructor, not course design.

SETC question:

The different course activities/components (lectures, discussions, assignments, etc.) were connected.

- o Strongly agree
- o Agree
- $\circ \quad \text{No Opinion} \quad$
- o Disagree
- o Strongly disagree

Connection between the different course components was not cited in the SP student comment analysis nor during the student interviews as an important factor in having a positive learning experience. Courses at SFU have vario

out groups) and as such, students may not have a consistent conceptualization of course components (same rationale as above).

3. Learning materials

Using materials that help students meet course objectives is another attribute the TCEP report identified as contributing to a positive learning experience. The TCEP report used survey results to understand which aspects of teaching SFU instructors wanted to receive feedback about. Eighty-two percent of respondents wanted feedback about course materials.

SETC question:

Course materials (textbooks, library articles, and website links) improved my understanding of the course content.

- o Strongly agree
- o Agree

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