

LEARNING EXPERIENCES ASSESSMENT
& PLANNING (LEAP)



Methods

Twenty minute zoom interviews with a semi structured protocol (Appendix A) were employed. This methodology was selected due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



A range of GPAs were represented across high and low responders, with high responder GPAs ranging from 2.38-4.00 (median 3.17) and low responder GPAs ranging from 2.28-3.50 (median 2.83).

Results

1) Student Understanding of SETC Purpose

Students were probed about both what they thought SETC was currently used for as well as how they would like to see the tool used in the future. Student perceptions varied, with students generally falling into one of four groups:

Students who think SETC is

- designed to help instructors improve the learning experience for future students (35%)
- an assessment exercise, allowing department and university level administrators to conduct formal evaluations of instructors (35%)
- designed to help instructors and be an assessment exercise (15%)
- a program with no clear purpose (15%)

Notably, all students that were unclear on the purpose of SETC were of 1870 responders.

When students were asked about what the purpose of SETC to be, the majority of students wanted instructors and administrators to make actionable changes to course content and teaching feedback

2) Student Perception of Learning Experience Components

Students identified a variety of components that they felt made a significant impact, be it positive, or negative on their learning experiences. The five most discussed factors were used to inform and framed for a positive learning experience.

Instructor rapport

- o Informal relationship building with students was cited as a factor particularly if instructors conveyed that they were invested in student growth and academic success.
- o Approachability of the instructor outside of the classroom (i.e. over email, in office hours)

Instructor communication

- o Clear expectations, particularly with regard to how those expectations aligned with the course syllabus
- o An engaging communication style during learning activities and lectures were noted. It was important to students that instructors be able to maintain their attention throughout the class either through passion or enthusiasm for the course materials, or through the use of interactive activities.



Course workload

- o Manageable and appropriate workloads
- o Some students observed that the workload has increased since the beginning of the pandemic and has not returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Experiences with Teaching Assistants

- o Particularly in larger courses, some students discussed teaching assistants as being a critical factor in their learning experience.
- o Students highlighted organization and engagement styles of teaching assistants as being important, and also noted that the relationship between teaching assistants and instructors was essential to ensuring a smooth experience in a course.

3) Motivating Factors for SETC participation

Students were asked to reflect on when they had completed SETC surveys and what had motivated them to do so. The high-responder group, more frequently reported intrinsically motivating factors, such as a desire to help improve the learning experience for others. On the other hand, the low responder group often reported that they were more likely to complete SETC when incentives were offered (such as an extra percentage point in class time was given to complete the survey). However, students across both responder groups discussed that they were more likely to respond to SETC surveys when they had a strongly positive or negative experience in a course.

Participants across all response groups cited feeling too busy or getting to complete by the deadline as the main reason for skipping a SETC survey. The low-responder group also reported having a lack of understanding as to the purpose of such surveys as a barrier to participation (see above).

4) Student Opinion on Timing of SETC

When asked about when SETC surveys should be completed, the majority of students (70% of those interviewed) expressed a desire to participate after the final exam has been completed:

- Ability to provide feedback about the final exam
- More time to provide feedback

A subset of these students discussed completing SETC after the final exam while they were aware that SETC was anonymous, they would still feel greater freedom to provide honest feedback if they already received their grade in a course.

Other participants argued that pushing the survey period until after exams might decrease response as students will go on holiday. These students suggested that the last day of the course, and during class time, was ideal.

Two students favored taking SETC mid-course, which would allow participants to benefit from their own feedback. One student discussed a preference for taking SETC during the exam period, citing their memory of the course as being optimal at this time.

The spread of student preferences regarding timing are shown in the graph below:

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Due to the difficulty in recruiting participation, some groups (i.e. female students, domestic students, and students in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences) were overrepresented in the sample.



AppendixA Interview Protocol