Ways to Increase Your Online Course Eval Response Rates

- Departmental plan – common method for all instructors in the department. Especially helpful when majors have multiple instructors in the same semester.

- Have students comment on their learning experience throughout the semester – perhaps at the end of each unit or before each exam. This lets them know that their opinions are important to you and that you value what they have to say. If you do this on BlackBoard, it gets them in the habit of going online to fill out a type of evaluation (as well as providing a metacognitive experience for your students). Response rates for instructors who employ this method averages in the mid 80% online eval completion rate.¹

- Build a good rapport and trusting relationship with students. Share with students on the first day – and then frequently throughout the semester how you’ve used previous semester’s evaluations to alter the course. Response rates for instructors who employ this method averages in the upper 80% online eval completion rate (some achieve 100% in smaller classes).²

- Give bonus points to those who fill out online eval (they must print off the completion receipt for your class and turn it in to you). Success rates vary widely with this method – ranging from around 50% to 100%. (It seems there is something else at play here, though research hasn’t ferreted this out, yet.)³

- Print off a little piece of paper to hand out to students that tells them the website to go to. Response rates for instructors who employ this method averages in the upper 70% online eval completion rate.

- Add humor to your personalized email reminders that go to students (works for those who use humor on a regular basis during the course). No response rate average.

- Consider showing results to students online (through your personal website). No response rate average.

- Remember, paper based systems don’t achieve 100%. Research suggests that the average response rate for paper versions (including those who weren’t present and those who elect not to complete the form) is around 75%.⁴

- Research also suggests that lower response rates don’t affect the scores. In multiple double-blind studies, even when online response rates are lower, the average score remains the same, but they get more useful and longer comments from their students with online versions than they do with paper versions.⁵

¹ Ku, 2002/2003
² Ha & Marsh, 1998
³ Dommeyer, et al., 2004
⁴ Avery et al., 2006
⁵ Ha et al. (1998) and Layne et al. (1999); Avery et al, 2006