IRAP Brief

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How Do Faculty Members Use Their Class Time?
An Analysis of FSSE Survey Results

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Recently, the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (CETL) has offered professional development opportunities to faculty members promoting more interactive pedagogies to engage students. To what extent are those teaching methods currently used?

The Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE), administered in Spring 2007 at Fresno State, includes 10 items related to the ways faculty use class time. 442 faculty members (86 who teach lower division classes, 232 in upper division and 124 in others) responded to the survey. This report analyzes faculty responses on these 10 items to get a general sense of the type of in-class activities faculty utilize in conducting their class. Results are categorized by lower (LD) and upper division (UD).

Findings

1.   Lecture is the major in-class activity. 49% of LD faculty and 38% of UD faculty reported spending 50% or more of their class time lecturing.

2.   Teacher-led discussion is the second most utilized in-class activity. About 38% of both LD and UD faculty members spend 20-49% of their class time using this method of instruction. About 46% of LD and UD faculty spend 1-19% of their class time leading discussions.

3.   Most faculty members (71%) spend 1-19% of their class time testing and evaluating.

4.   Most faculty members either do not use teacher-student shared responsibility, small group activities and student presentations or they do so less than 20% of the time.

5.   The majority of faculty in LD and UD do not spend any time in the following four in-class activities: performances in applied and fine arts (at least 82% of faculty), experiential (at least 60%), student computer use (at least 57%) and in-class writing (at least 55%).

6.   UD faculty members spend more time in experiential activities (labs, field work, art exhibits, etc) than faculty teaching LD classes. However, the majority of both LD and UD faculty members spend none of their class time on experiential components.

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(Faculty class time using.doc), Institutional Research, Assessment and Planning, Hongtao Yue, 5/14/2008

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Table 1: How Faculty Use Their Class Time*

In-class activity	Division	Respondent #	Response options**			
			0%	1-19%	20-49%	50% or more
Lecture	LD	84	2%	14%	34%	49%
	UD	221	3%	22%	36%	38%
Teacher-led discussion	LD	83	2%	46%	39%	13%
	UD	221	4%	47%	38%	11%
Teacher-student shared responsibility (seminar, discussion, etc.)	LD	80	38%	36%	20%	8%
	UD	208	40%	34%	21%	4%
Student computer use	LD	84	64%	25%	3%	7%
	UD	218	57%	25%	11%	8%
Small group activities	LD	83	28%	38%	26%	8%
	UD	221	30%	46%	19%	4%
Student presentations	LD	83	52%	39%	9%	1%
	UD	220	44%	39%	15%	3%
In-class writing	LD	84	56%	33%	6%	3%
	UD	217	55%	38%	5%	2%
Testing and evaluation	LD	86	9%	71%	14%	5%
	UD	224	11%	72%	15%	3%
Performances in applied and fine arts (e.g.,dance, drama, music)	LD	83	82%	10%	3%	4%
	UD	213	85%	8%	3%	3%
Experiential (labs, field work, art exhibits, etc.)	LD	85	72%	14%	10%	5%
	UD	216	60%	17%	15%	10%

Note:

* The question in 07 FSSE survey is "In your selected course section, on average, what percent of class time is spent on the following?".

** Refers to the four intervals of percentages of class time spent on an in-class activity. The percentages in cells are the percentages of faculty choosing a certain option.

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