

The Office of  
**Adjunct Faculty &  
 Academic Support**  
 Programs

## Adjunct Faculty Academic Calendar

### November:

- 8 International Food Festival  
 11am – 1:30 Market Place at  
 Doan
- 11 Last Day to Withdraw with  
 “WP” or “WF” grade
- 23-27 Thanksgiving Recess, No  
 Classes

### Workshops:

- 3 Tools for Formative  
 Assessment  
 11:00 AM C 150
- 8 Teaching Table: Incorporating  
 Innovative Writing across the  
 Curriculum  
 12:00 AM Emeriti Room
- 18 Get Started with OneDrive  
 1:00 PM C 150

For a complete list of workshops offered  
 for the Fall/Winter Semesters please  
 visit [svsu.edu/workshops](http://svsu.edu/workshops)

## Course Evaluations

As the semester draws to a close, you may be starting to think about administering your course evaluations. The course evaluations used here at SVSU are summative in nature. They ask such questions as whether the faculty member was prepared for class, explained things clearly, or set high standards for the course. Although such questions can help you gain some insight into how students evaluate your teaching effectiveness, they don't necessarily demonstrate the students' learning experiences. Australian universities employ what is called, “Course Experience Evaluations” (Shadiow and Weimer, 2015). The intent of these evaluations is to shift the focus from faculty effectiveness to students' learning experiences and the faculty's role in creating these experiences. In essence, by utilizing this method, your students can become your course consultants.

The method is simple. Toward the end of the semester select a day to administer your evaluations. First, administer the University's mandated evaluations employing the best practices outlined in your handbook. Follow this by explaining to your students that you are asking for feedback which will assist you in understanding what you can do to help your future students learn more effectively. Interestingly, this challenge may motivate your students to take their role seriously because it asks them to use their learning experiences to help future students.

The following is a sample Course Experience Evaluation offered by Shadiow and Weimer:

*Your insights into your learning in this course can help me see our course from your side of the desk. Please respond to any three of the statements below (or more if you would like). Submit these anonymously; I will use them as I plan for my course(s) next semester.*

- *It most helped my learning of the content when...because...*
- *It would have helped my learning of the content if...because...*
- *The assignment that contributed most to my learning was...because...*
- *The reading that contributed the most to my learning was...because...*
- *The kinds of homework problems that contributed most to my learning were...because...*
- *The approach I took to my own learning that contributed the most for me was...because...*
- *The biggest obstacle for me in my learning the material was...because...*
- *A resource I know about that you might consider using is...because...*
- *I was most willing to take risks with learning new material when...because... (continued on the next page)*

The following are the winners of  
 the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual  
 Count the Candy Corn in the  
 Head Contest!

1<sup>st</sup> Place tie:

*Mikalya Gilbert*



*Helen Raica-Klotz*

2<sup>nd</sup> Place

*Rob Heyart*

3<sup>rd</sup> Place

*Garrett Glynn*

Each had fun and won prizes!  
 BTW, there were 1010 candies in the  
 head!

- *During the first day, I remember thinking...because...*
- *What I think I will remember five years from now is...because...*

The authors also suggest that you might want to ask another question along the lines of: *What is something covered in this course material that you can do now that you could not do or did not fully understand at the beginning of the term?*

So how do you go about understanding the students' meanings? First you should reflect upon and answer each of these questions yourself. Doing so will allow you to capture your students' point of view. Then, after reading the students' remarks reconsider carefully, your selection of readings, assignments, syllabus construction, etc.

The conclusion of the semester allows us an opportunity to not only discover how students judge our teaching effectiveness but also to gain insight into the students' learning experiences. Both can help us improve our teaching practices for the better!

Reference

Shadlow, L. & M. Weimer. (2015, November 23). A New Twist on End-Of-Semester Evaluations. *Faculty Focus*. Accessed from: <http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/philosophy-of-teaching/a-new-twist-on-end-of-semester-evaluations/>

## Less is Best

Ever notice that many of the textbooks we use have 16 chapters? Also, did you ever notice that a semester usually consists of 16 weeks? Is there a connection? Chances are the answer is "Yes," with the idea that faculty should cover a chapter a week leading to complete content coverage. Monahan in an online seminar titled, *"Taming the Monster: Rethinking the Role of Content,"* makes a comparison between faculty who are Content Experts as opposed to those who are Content Curators (2014). A Content Expert is a faculty member who employs information transmission as the basis for her teaching practices (as in teaching a chapter a week). A Content Curator, is a faculty member who carefully selects the best "artifacts" in a discipline to help students learn. We now live in what is referred to as the Information Age, where data and other information is readily available through a variety of sources. Faculty, therefore should work toward helping their students learn how to assess and evaluate sources and learn to gauge the validity of these sources. In doing so, faculty help their students develop the research and critical thinking skills necessary to avoid information overload.

By employing this model, faculty would change the way in which they teach. Instead of covering content, they would design their courses to assist students in developing the skills and techniques fundamental to their disciplines. Monahan suggests, for instance, that history students should be taught to use primary sources to think like a historian or biology students should be asked to use the scientific method for hypothesis testing. And in the process of changing from being a Content Expert to a Content Curator, the design of the faculty member's course would also change due to having to make decisions regarding the facilitation of learning instead of decisions regarding what to teach.

Finally, by being Content Curators, faculty select the most important ideas, theories, concepts, otherwise known as *threshold concepts*, which allow for the students to experience deep learning. Utilizing such concepts will also help the students reflect upon their increased ability to solve problems, be these Mathematical, Sociological, or Historical in nature by using the problem solving methods utilized in each discipline. This allows students to shift from being consumers of content to contributors to content.

So as you rethink your course for next semester, consider the idea that less is best. By concentrating on the fundamentals of your discipline, students will experience deep learning leading to increased success!

Reference

Monahan, N. (2014, September1). *Taming the Monster: Rethinking the Role of Content*. Magna Publications. Accessed from: <http://www.magnapubs.com/online-seminars/taming-the-monster-rethinking-the-role-of-content-13671-1.html>