

CLASSE

Classroom Survey of Student Engagement

Executive Summary

What is the CLASSE?

The CLASSE is an experimental modification of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) enabling one to examine variation in student engagement at the classroom level. The CLASSE is composed of two instruments: the CLASSE_{Student} asks students how frequently they engage in various educational practices within a designated class; the CLASSE_{Faculty} asks the instructor of that class how important the various educational practices are in facilitating student success in the class. Student and faculty outcomes are then contrasted to identify important and valued educational practices that are occurring less frequently than desired or expected.

How is the CLASSE similar to the NSSE? How is it different?

The CLASSE_{Student} is composed of 49 items. The first 28 items are directly related to NSSE items; the remaining 21 items address other important issues related to success in a course such as attendance, study habits and classroom atmosphere. With the exception of the 3 demographic items, all items on the CLASSE_{Faculty} are identical to those on the CLASSE_{Student}.

On the NSSE, students report how frequently they engaged in various educational practices in all of their classes during the current school year while on the CLASSE students report frequencies within a designated single course.

On the NSSE, potential response options are qualitative in nature (e.g., never to very often, very little to very much). For many of the items on the CLASSE, students are asked to report how many times they have actually engaged in the educational practice (e.g., 1 or 2 times, more than 5 times) within the designated class.

On the CLASSE, the faculty instructor can create up to 8 unique items that address activities or practices perceived to be importantly related to student success in the designated class. Consequently, every version of the CLASSE is slightly different because of the course-specific items that are included.

Why would one want to administer the CLASSE?

Oftentimes veteran NSSE users will disaggregate their institutional findings to the college level in order to identify more precisely where variation in student engagement resides on their campus. This quest invariably extends to the department or program level. Areas of needed improvement often vary considerably from one academic discipline to another so different priorities for improvements are called for. The CLASSE allows the institution to reduce the unit of analysis even farther by measuring student engagement at the class level. When outcomes from the CLASSE_{Student} and CLASSE_{Faculty} are contrasted, the instructor can identify and focus on those educational practices he/she particularly values that are occurring at below-average frequency. Priorities for improvement are then established at the course rather than the department, college or institutional levels.

How is the CLASSE administered?

Once the end-user is authorized to administer the CLASSE (see pilot study participation below), it is the end-users responsibility to (a) produce the CLASSE_{Student} and CLASSE_{Faculty} instruments, (b) obtain local IRB approval, (c) administer the surveys either electronically or in hard-copy form, and (d) summarize, analyze and report CLASSE results to participating faculty.

The use of CLASSE in the 2009-2010 pilot administration is free of charge to those institutions that have participated in the national administration of NSSE within the past three years. To avoid overlapping survey recruitment, CLASSE should not be used

In freshman and senior level classes during the 2010 spring semester if the institution is participating in the national administration of NSSE. A special eCLASSE version is now available (also free) for those who use SurveyMonkey as a web-based, survey-software application (if interested, contact Bob.smallwood@ua.edu). A customized "Excel-based" analysis and reporting application will also be made available without charge. A version of this application is available for both SurveyMonkey users and those who either have another survey software application or are administering the CLASSE in hard copy form.

How does one participate in the 2009-2010 pilot administration of the CLASSE?

To participate in the pilot administration of the CLASSE, follow the five simple steps found at the following website:

<http://www.assessment.ua.edu/CLASSE/Overview.htm>

These steps include:

1. Learning more about the CLASSE
2. Determining the nature and scope of your institution's participation
3. Constructing optional course-specific items
4. Preparing drafts of your CLASSE_{Student} and CLASSE_{Faculty} instruments
5. Seeking authorization to participate in the CLASSE Pilot Study from Amber Lambert (adlambert@indiana.edu), NSSE Research Analyst, by including the CLASSE Item Usage Proposal (can be found at <http://www.assessment.ua.edu/CLASSE/Participation.htm>) and copies of the draft CLASSE_{Student} and CLASSE_{Faculty} surveys for each of the classes included in your pilot study.