

Survey of Teaching Practices 1999-2000

Task Force on Undergraduate Teaching Excellence Report of the Sub-Committee on the Survey of Teaching Practices at AUB

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The Sub-Committee for the Survey of Teaching Practices at AUB was formed at a meeting of the Task Force on January 28 2000, following the discussion of a draft survey composed by Dr. Karma El-Hassan on January 21. The Task Force agreed that the purpose of the survey was to map current teaching practices at AUB in relation to contemporary theories and practices that are believed to lead to teaching effectiveness. The data from the survey would also be used to help determine what sort of workshops AUB requires.

The members of the Sub-Committee felt that the survey should focus on outcomes and development of objectives and student learning skills, rather than simply surveying current teaching practices. By filling in the survey, Faculty would become more aware of the variety of contemporary educational approaches, if they were not already aware. Members of the Sub-Committee examined examples of existing teaching surveys from universities in the USA, but it was felt that none of these provided a suitable format or questions for our purposes. An original format and questionnaire had to be developed.

The Sub-Committee also felt that anonymity should be guaranteed, and to ensure anonymity it would not be possible to analyze the data collected by department. Therefore the questions in the survey had to reflect general practices, and could not be tailored to meet the needs of individual departments or faculties. Initially it was proposed that the survey cover lecture type courses only, but at the Task Force meeting of February 18, 2000, it was decided that laboratories also be covered, by creating an additional questionnaire for laboratories only. In both cases the responses on the questionnaire would be divided into two categories, depending on whether the class was large or small (approximately 30 students being the watershed between the two categories).

Rather than having questions, the main part of the survey was designed as a series of statements about teaching practice, to which Faculty could respond that they either employed this practice or they did not. A five point grading system of responses, from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree', was entertained, but it was decided to classify the responses into three categories: 'yes'; 'no'; and 'not applicable'. The latter enabled the Sub-Committee to include questions that might not be appropriate to every sort of lecture course.

The format of the survey, discussed and approved by the Task Force members in the meeting of February 18, 2000, was as follows:

Part 1: *Knowledge of contemporary educational theories and practices.*

This part was divided into three sections:

a) Questions related to designing a course (i.e. setting course objectives and designing and distributing a syllabus)

b) Questions related to techniques used in the classroom or laboratory

c) Questions related to evaluation (i.e. tailoring the evaluations to give feedback about whether the course meets its objectives)

The main purpose of this structure was to see to what degree Faculty are organizing courses with clearly stated objectives and how they measure whether the courses meet those objectives.

Part 2: *Obstacles to effective teaching.*

This part listed some types of obstacles, but also left room for open-ended responses.

Part 3: *Faculty needs.*

This part enabled faculty to express an opinion about what they needed to make their teaching more effective. The feedback from this could prove very useful in determining the type of workshops AUB requires.

The lecture course and laboratory surveys were presented to the Task Force for further consideration at a meeting on March 3, 2000. A number of Task Force members suggested editorial changes to some of the statements. A pilot survey was then conducted. Task Force members were asked to fill in the survey, and request a colleague in their departments to fill it in as well. This pilot allowed the Task Force to give an average estimate of how long it took to fill in the survey and to invite comments from colleagues. These comments were reviewed at the Task Force meeting of April 14. As a result of this, some minor corrections were made. The survey was then submitted by the Chair of the Task Force to the Board of Deans for approval. A method for distributing the survey to Faculty was approved at the Task Force meeting of May 12, 2000

. Attached are copies of the survey forms that were approved by the Task Force and which were used in surveying the faculty:

1-Survey of Undergraduate Teaching Practices at AUB.

2-Survey of Undergraduate Science Laboratory-Based Teaching Practices at AUB.

A total of 247 responded, 45 of whom filled in the second form (Lab-Based Teaching). All data has been entered, and the comments typed and categorized. We are thankful for Miss Lamia El-Husseini for entering the data at short notice. The data is currently being studied and analyzed under the supervision of Dr. Fuad Abdel-Khalek of the Department of Education at AUB. We are very grateful to Dr. Abdel-Khalek for his valuable assistance and advice. Once the study and analysis of the data is completed the results will be included in a final report on the survey.