

# FACULTY DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER

## MARCH 2011

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### Reponse Rates for Online Student Evaluations – Fall 2010

The Fall 2010 semester was the first opportunity for many faculty and students to use the new online evaluation system. Jim Jones provides detailed information regarding the resulting response rates.

### Ideas from IT

*Wimba Pronto* – an audio/video conferencing, instant messaging, and application sharing program available through Blackboard.

### Faculty Spotlight

*Engaging Students in Online Instruction* – presenters from the February panel discussion share a top technique they use to engage their students enrolled in their online courses.

### ITAS Colloquia Series

*Understanding Poverty and Its Effects on Literacy Development*, Scott Popplewell

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### Event Spotlight

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### Resources Spotlight

*Publications* – This page provides you with a variety of resources on teaching and learning.

### Upcoming Events

Workshops, seminars, and trainings throughout the month of March

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Innovation in Teaching, Assessment, & Scholarship

[www.bsu.edu/itas](http://www.bsu.edu/itas)

# Response Rates for Online Student Evaluations

## - Fall 2010

James A. Jones

Assistant Director – Research & Design

Innovation in Teaching, Assessment, & Scholarship



The Fall 2010 semester was the first opportunity for many faculty and students to use the new online evaluation system, and 55,384 evaluations were completed covering 4,112 classes and 1,400 instructors. This resulted in a median response rate of 55.66%. In comparison, Fall 2009 saw 61,972 completed evaluation forms for approximately 3,500 courses using a primarily paper-based evaluation system. Fewer forms were completed in Fall 2010 despite more courses being evaluated because the overall response rate for the online evaluation system was 56%, while the estimated response rate for the paper-based system was 80%.

Under the paper-based system, however, results were limited to those students who were in attendance on the day the evaluation was given. There was also a relationship between class size and response rate, with smaller classes having higher response rates. In contrast, under the online evaluation system, response rates are no longer correlated with class size, and all students in a given section have the same opportunity to respond since evaluations can be completed outside of the scheduled class time.

Although the response rate was not correlated to class size, there does appear to be considerably more variation in the response rate based on other factors. Although the overall rate was 56%, Honors College and Teachers College had overall response rates that approach 70%. At the departmental level, five departments boasted a 70% or higher median response rate: Art (70%), English (71.13%), Special Education (71.13%), Educational Leadership (74.18%), and Counseling Psychology (75%). In fact, 15 departments had response rates of 60% or more.

Response rates also varied based on course level. Graduate-level courses had response rates of 63%, while 400-level courses were at 50% overall. The response rates for 100- and 200-level courses were around 55% overall, while the overall for 300-level courses was 53%. Within specific departments, however, this pattern did not always hold. Some departments enjoyed greater success with their undergraduate response rates than with those for graduate students, or with upper-division courses as opposed to lower-division courses.

From a meta-analysis of electronic survey research, the number of contacts with potential respondents, the personalization of those contacts, and pre-contact efforts were the strongest predictors of response rates (Cook, Heath, & Thompson, 2000). With our online evaluation system, we are able to provide several e-mail notices and reminders to the students, but these messages can only give generic reasons why the evaluation may be important or useful. A personalized appeal that includes information on how the instructor will use the results would need to come from the instructor. Persuading students that evaluations are important to complete and will be used is a responsibility of the instructor (Nulty, 2008).

Based on anecdotal reports, a common characteristic of instructors who had very high response rates last semester appears to involve making an effort to demonstrate to students the importance of the evaluation. In some cases, the instructor asked that students bring laptops to class to allow time for the students to complete the evaluation. In other cases, it was just the instructor reminding the students and encouraging them to complete the forms. Merely listing the evaluation as an assignment on the course syllabus—even when no points are awarded—has been shown to improve response rates (University of Michigan, 2007). If students feel the evaluation is part of the course, then they are more likely to complete it.

## References

Cook, C., Heath, F., & Thompson, R. (2000). A meta-analysis of response rates in web- or internet-based surveys. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 60(6), 821-836.

Nulty, D. (2008). The adequacy of response rates to online and paper surveys: What can be done? *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 33(3), 301-314.

University of Michigan (March 28, 2007). Online Course Evaluations. Accessed at [www.provost.umich.edu/reports/online\\_course\\_evaluations.pdf](http://www.provost.umich.edu/reports/online_course_evaluations.pdf).

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# IDEAS FROM INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY

## *Wimba Pronto*

Yasemin Tunc

Director – Learning Technologies Consulting & Support  
Innovation in Teaching, Assessment, & Scholarship



Pronto is an audio/video conferencing, instant messaging, and application sharing program that is available at Ball State through Blackboard. With Pronto, you can

- hold virtual office hours or Q&A sessions with multiple students.
- demonstrate concepts or skills.
- conduct lively class discussions outside the confines of the classroom.
- hold class during bad weather or when you are away.
- create a community where students can help each other at all hours of the day.

Getting Pronto is easy:

1. Log into Blackboard and click Add Module button in the home page.
2. Navigate to bottom of Page 2 and click Add Button for Pronto and select OK.
3. Locate Wimba Pronto module in Blackboard home page and click Get Pronto link.

Pronto automatically builds “buddy lists” from course/community rosters. Just look for the green dot to see who’s online, double click on their name and start chatting.

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# FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

## Engaging Students in Online Instruction

On Wednesday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, a panel of Ball State faculty shared their insights on how to engage students in an online instructional environment. As a follow-up to the session, each was asked to share a favorite technique for engaging students who are enrolled in online courses.



KAREN FORD  
Elementary Education

**Snapshot Writing** is one of the activities that my students seem to enjoy. For this assignment, a snapshot is like a photo made of words focusing on ONE MOMENT in time not a whole baseball game or a whole trip to Disney World or the whole lesson, etc. Since most of my students are teachers, I typically ask them to write a snapshot paragraph describing an incident in their classroom, or an “ah-ha” moment for them, or a particularly meaningful moment for one of their students. They post this paragraph to a discussion board, then I let them have some “chit/chat” time for a couple of days (to look at one another’s snapshots) and finally we begin to discuss how this particular assignment could be transferred to their classrooms. Frequently I’ll have students who have tried it with their class and they bring in student work samples and discuss.



MARY SPILLMAN  
Journalism

**Setting the scene** - Keeping students engaged starts with first contact. Emerging Media Journalism Certificate instructors record an introductory video that welcomes the students to the class and outlines the course. The goal is to show students their instructor is engaged and available to answer their questions and concerns. The video can be simple – recorded using a computer camera. Or the

video can be more elaborate and include scenes from the Ball State University campus. This approach helps students feel part of a student body. The video is posted at the same time as a text-based welcome message that includes the times of the instructor's virtual office hours.



LINDA TAYLOR  
Elementary Education

One of my favorite techniques to engage students in the online environment is to post discussion questions that will spark an interest in replying. Sometimes these address political, personal, or community views on education and/or young children. In situations where students seem to be of “one mind” in their responses, I will often play devil’s advocate to get them thinking either about specific circumstances under which they may choose a different response or challenge their ideas directly.

ITAS provides support services for faculty members transitioning their courses to an online format. Go to [Online Teaching Support](#) for upcoming programming. Ball State faculty members preparing to offer courses online should contact [Staci Davis](#) in the School of Extended Education to begin the process.

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## ITAS Colloquia Series

Innovation in Teaching, Assessment, & Scholarship is sponsoring a spring colloquia series highlighting the 2010 award winners for Excellence in Teaching and the Creative Teaching Grant. On the last Wednesday of each month, an award recipient will discuss his/her dream course or grant project. Registration is not required.

### ***Understanding Poverty and Its Effects on Literacy Development***

Scott Popplewell (Elementary Education) – Excellence in Teaching

Wednesday, March 30, 2011

3:00-4:00 pm

TC 412

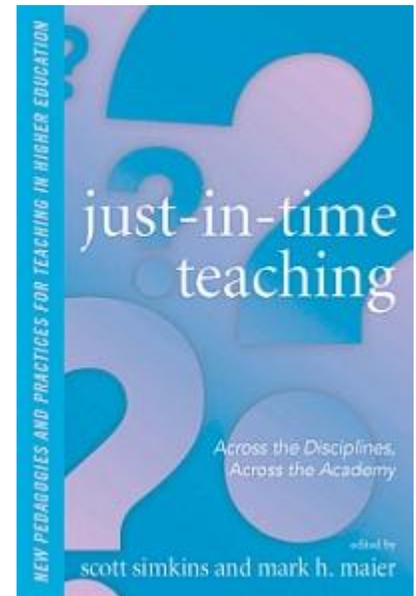
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# THE BOOKSHELF

## ***JUST-IN-TIME TEACHING: ACROSS THE DISCIPLINES, ACROSS THE ACADEMY***

Simkins, Scott, and Mark H. Maier, eds. *Just-in-Time Teaching: Across the Disciplines, Across the Academy*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2010.

**“For both students and teachers, JiTT requires rethinking the teaching and learning process . . . The reward for this transformation is that students and instructors are better synchronized in their expectations about what it takes to learn new concepts at a deep level. As a result, both teaching and learning improve.” (p. xv)**



Just-in-Time Teaching (JiTT) is a pedagogical approach that requires students to answer questions related to an upcoming class a few hours beforehand, using an online course management system. While the phrase “just in time” may evoke shades of slap-dash work and cut corners, JiTT pedagogy is just the opposite. It helps students to view learning as a process that takes time, introspection, and persistence.

Students who experience JiTT come to class better prepared, and report that it helps to focus and organize their out-of-class studying. Their responses to JiTT questions make gaps in their learning visible to the teacher prior to class, enabling him or her to address learning gaps while the material is still fresh in students’ minds – hence the label “just in time.”

JiTT questions differ from traditional homework problems in being designed not only to build cognitive skills, but also to help students confront misconceptions, make connections to previous knowledge, and develop metacognitive thinking practices. Students consequently spend more time on course concepts and ideas, but also read their textbooks in ways that result in more effective and deeper learning. Starting the class with students’ work also dramatically changes the classroom-learning environment, creating greater student engagement.

This book demonstrates that JiTT has broad appeal across the academy. Part I provides a broad overview of JiTT, introducing the pedagogy and exploring various dimensions of its use without regard to discipline. Part II of the book demonstrates JiTT's remarkable cross-disciplinary impact with examples of applications in physics, biology, the geosciences, economics, history, and the humanities.

from [styluspub.com](http://styluspub.com)

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## RESOURCES SPOTLIGHT

### Publications

Our [Publications web page](#) provides a variety of resources on teaching and learning. Bracken Library carries over 100 print and online periodicals dealing with higher education. Consider looking to some of these journals as resources for your teaching as well as potential publication sites for your own work.

In addition, the library staff has created a [subject guide](#) specifically designed for those teaching in higher education.

Of all the resources listed on this page, the following six are perhaps the most immediately useful for a wide range of Ball State faculty members. *The Chronicle* is in a weekly newspaper format, *Change* and *College Teaching* follow a typical journal format, and *The Teaching Professor* and *NTLF* take a more practice-based newsletter format.

- [\*The Chronicle of Higher Education\*](#)
- [\*Change\*](#)
- [\*College Teaching\*](#)
- [\*The Teaching Professor\*](#)
- [\*National Teaching and Learning Forum\*](#)

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# EVENT SPOTLIGHT

## Double Duty Assessment – Meeting Class Grading Goals and Programmatic Needs with a Single Learning Assessment

Tuesday, March 29<sup>th</sup> & April 12<sup>th</sup>, 3:00-4:30 pm, TC 411

Facilitator: Jennifer Bott (Marketing & Management)

Why create two separate assessments when one can do the job? In this 2-part workshop, participants will re-work an assessment tool to accommodate both a specific class grading objective as well as a larger programmatic assessment goal. Part 1: Introduction and Working Session (bring a current class/grading scheme to this session), Part 2: Review and Critique Session.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS - March 2011

### Tuesday, March 1

Visualizing Results with Tables in Microsoft Word      1:00-2:30 pm      TC 405

### Wednesday, March 2

Rubrics: Tools for Learning, Assessment, and Research (session 3 of 3)

9:00-10:30am      TC 411

Blackboard: Q&A      4:00-5:00pm      TC 413G

### Tuesday, March 15

Creative PowerPoint: Conference Poster      1:00-2:30 pm      TC 405

### Wednesday, March 16

Blackboard: Creating Tests      10:00-11:30 am      TC 412

Blackboard: Q&A      4:00-5:00 pm      TC 413G

## **Thursday, March 17**

Blackboard: Grade Center 9:30-11:00 am TC 405

## **Tuesday, March 22**

Teaching with Jing 10:00-11:00 am TC 405

Clicker Workshop – Introduction to Student Response Systems

11:00 am-12:30 pm TC 412

Blackboard: Grade Center

2:30-4:00 pm TC 411

## **Wednesday, March 23**

Blackboard: Creating Tests 11:00 am-12:30 pm TC 411

Blackboard: Blogs, Discussion Boards, Journals, and Wikis

1:00-2:00 pm TC 405

Blackboard: Q&A

4:00-5:00 pm TC 413G

## **Thursday, March 24**

WEBINAR – Hybrid Learning: Course Design and Faculty Development

1:00-2:30 pm TC 411

## **Friday, March 25**

Creative PowerPoint: Conference Poster 9:00-10:30 am TC 405

## **Monday, March 28**

Blackboard: Designing and Effective Course Site 10:00-11:00 am TC411

Blackboard: Grade Center 1:00-2:30 pm TC 411

## **Tuesday, March 29**

Easy Forms with Google 10:00-10:30 am TC 405

Blackboard: Content Management 11:00 am-12:30 pm TC 411

Blackboard: Creating Tests 3:30-5:00 pm TC 411

Double Duty Assessment – Meeting Class Grading Goals and Programmatic Needs with a

Single Learning Assessment (session 1 of 2) 3:00-4:30 pm TC 405

## Wednesday, March 30

ITAS Colloquia Series – *Understanding Poverty and Its Effects on Literacy Development*,

S. Popplewell	3:00-4:00 pm	TC 412
Blackboard: Q&A	4:00-5:00 pm	TC 413G

## Thursday, March 31

Blackboard: Blogs, Discussion Boards, Journals, and Wikis

	9:00-10:00 am	TC 405
Blackboard: Content Management	11:00 am-12:30 pm	TC 411

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### **Innovation in Teaching, Assessment, & Scholarship**

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