Using Course Committees for Student Feedback
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Chemistry 341: Global Challenges: A Chemical Perspective

Importance of chemistry in society. Detailed case studies drawn from modern chemistry: human health, energy, commodity chemicals, materials, green chemistry, agriculture.

- Course has undergone changes in recent years to include more in-class activities, group discussions, and a term-long research and communication poster project
- Required course for Combined Major in Science (CMS) students
- ~130 Students

Goals of the Project

- More consistent surveying to pinpoint problem areas, especially in regards to sections identified as having known student difficulty e.g. polymers
- Determine where additional resources may be effective?
- Assess demands of course on students
- Assess changes implemented to course (e.g. in-class activities)
- Student expectations and perceptions

Implementation

Students asked to volunteer in the formation of a "Course Committee". They would be given an opportunity to discuss their experiences and expectations with and provide feedback to improve the course.

Three streams of feedback:
1. Individual surveys filled out at the end of every class
2. Individual pre- and post- midterm surveys
3. Weekly group meetings

- 11 Students initially signed up, ~5 continued throughout term
- Weekly questionnaires were starting point for group discussion
- Informal, volunteer basis
- Start, Mid-, and End of term surveys distributed to all students in course

Class Surveys

Feedback collected for 28 individual lectures
- Use of Connect site
- Time spent on course work and term project
- Views on course material
- Levels of confidence with material and knowing what they were going to be assessed on

Group Discussions

Students provided feedback on all aspects of the course from delivery to content and resources, provided perspectives on in and out of class activities, and identified areas for review/adjustment.

Future Work

Feedback is still being collected as poster project and final group meeting are to come. Data is also being collected for Midterm III. The goal is to examine pre- and post- midterm surveys in regards to student expectation and confidence before and after each exam.

Identified Issues
- Concept map activity needs to be re-examined as it is not having the intended effect
- Plan to adjust the peer review aspects of the poster project as to increase the number of peer reviews each student performs.
- Addition of review activity focused on (pre-requisite) organic chemistry material may help students who traditionally struggle on midterm II