

# Revisions to SJC's end-of-term class evaluation survey and Implications for FD policy.

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清泉女学院大学における学期末授業改善アンケートの改善及びFDポリシーの提案

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## 1. Introduction.

Nearly all educational institutions assess faculty effectiveness through end-of-term class evaluation surveys. Students' evaluations of classes, elicited through properly designed and implemented surveys, are an extremely important source of information. The resulting data can inform teachers of potential areas for improvement and can be used by administrators for personnel decisions. These evaluations, however, need to be interpreted with great caution and combined with other sources of information (Cashin, 1995).

In 2010, the FD committee at Seisen Jogakuin College (SJC) was responsible for reviewing and improving the end-of-term evaluation surveys. The purpose of this paper is to describe the literature and process used for revising these surveys and to discuss possible changes to FD policy to ensure their appropriate and effective use.

It is important to note that at SJC these surveys are used only for formative purposes (i.e. to improve teaching effectiveness) rather than for summative ones (e.g. personnel decisions such as promotion). It was decided to revise not replace the existing surveys for a number of reasons. First, the FD committee wanted to retain as many of the original statements as possible since many years' worth of data had been collected and second, many of the factors deemed important in the literature were already being addressed by the survey. As a result, only dimensions that had not been previously monitored were added. The next step was to reconsider how these surveys could be better implemented and used in conjunction with the other FD tools (e.g. peer observation). To achieve the above objectives, two highly-regarded FD Programs were examined: Kansas State University's Center for Faculty Evaluation & Development and the University of McGill's Teaching and Learning Services.

Before briefly describing how the surveys were revised, a model for Faculty Development and an explanation of SJC FD program will be given. This will be followed by a recommendation for better utilizing colleague ratings such as materials review and peer observation.

## 2. Improving Teaching through Formative Evaluation: A Model

According to Centra (1993, 9), there are four conditions that if met lead to significant improvements in teaching: *new knowledge, value, how to change* and *motivation*. First, the teacher must learn something *new* from the surveys. One weakness of the SJC surveys is that they have not changed for a number of years and as a result, teachers may not have received any new information recently. Second, teachers must find the new information *valuable* and from a trusted source. The teacher may feel (justifiably so) that there are aspects of teaching that the students are not qualified to assess (See Cashin 1995). At SJC, students are the primary

source of new information as very few peer observations are conducted. Third, a teacher may know what to change but may not know *how to change*. Cohen (1980) found that teachers who received student rating feedback and consultation were more likely to receive higher end-of-term evaluation than teachers who only received student feedback or no feedback at all (Cited in Cashin, 1995, 6). Therefore, it is necessary to determine how this consulting role can be fulfilled given the limited resources available. Finally, teachers must be motivated to improve their teaching.

### 3. SJC FD Program.

At SJC, there are three basic sources of information regarding teacher effectiveness (Diagram 1). The first is mid-term class evaluation surveys (授業評価中間調査). This is an open-ended survey in which students write anonymous comments about what they like about the class and what they would like to see changed or improved. In the following class, the instructor is asked to review and explain how these concerns will be addressed. ‘Progress’ is monitored on end-of-term surveys where students rate the degree to which the instructor addressed their concerns and if students were satisfied with the changes. End-of-term surveys (学期末授業改善アンケート), the second source of information, also include questions concerning student participation (e.g. number of hours students prepared for class), facilities, the instructor, course content, and overall impressions. There is also space for instructors to include three course-specific questions. (See Appendix A: Revised End-of-term class evaluation survey. Please note that five questions have been added (6, 12-3, 15-6)). The last source of information is peer observation. The teaching faculty is encouraged to observe their colleagues’ classes and send their appraisals to the FD committee. Currently, these appraisals are not utilized in conjunction with the other surveys and the PDCA checklist, which is described next. As of 2010, the instructor is required to submit a ‘PDCA checklist.’ In this form, the instructor describes how students’ concerns from mid-term class evaluation surveys were addressed, comments on the students’ evaluation of this response, and describes future plans to improve this course. Peer observation is not referred to on the PDCA checklist.

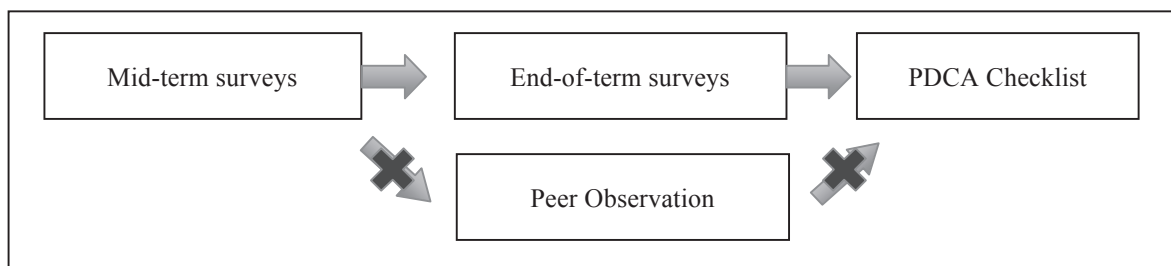


Diagram 1: Current Sources of Information concerning Teacher Effectiveness at SJC.

### 4. Revising SJC’s End-of-term surveys.

Surveys are extremely useful because they are multidimensional. In other words, they measure several different aspects of teaching. The factors that have been commonly found in student rating forms have ranged from simple general lists of six factors (Centra, 1993, 57) (Table 2) to rather detailed ones with 28 dimensions (Feldman, 1989). (For a brief summary, see Cashin, 1995). What follows next is a brief review of McGill’s

surveys. For more information regarding McGill's program, see McGill (2008), its policy, and McGill (2007), guidelines for interpreting survey results.

At McGill, surveys are 25 questions in length. The questions are answered on a 1-5 scale where 1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree and 3 = Neutral. Four core questions (Table 1) are common to all surveys and "are most useful in providing general impressions of overall instructional effectiveness (McGill, 2007).

- |  |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Overall, this is an excellent course.</li><li>2. Overall, I learned a great deal from this course.</li><li>3. Overall, this instructor is an excellent teacher.</li><li>4. Overall, I learned a great deal from this teacher.</li></ol> |
|--|

Table 1: McGill (2008): Core questions

Each academic unit may then select up to 21 additional questions from a pool of recommended questions. They fall into two broad categories: instructor-related and course-related questions. Within each category, there are eight themes common to each. There are also two course-specific themes (*Cohesion & Administrative / Content*), and one instructor-specific (*Interaction with faculty members*) (McGill, 2008).

The SJC survey questions were classified according to Centra (1993) and McGill's categories (See Table 2) and compared with McGill's list of recommended questions (McGill, 2008). As mentioned earlier, existing questions that corresponded to the above categories were retained to allow comparison with previous years' data. For categories not represented, questions appropriate for the Japanese context were chosen by the FD committee from McGill's list. Feedback was received from the faculty both before and after the questions were trialed in three different classes.

There are a number of things to point out.

- Some questions do not neatly fall into one category.
- It is sometimes unclear if a statement is referring to the instructor or the course.
- Some statements could not be classified. Question 10 concerns the class pace; 14, the teacher's efforts to reduce unnecessary classroom chatter; and 17 and 18, the instructor's response to the students' concerns elicited in mid-term surveys.
- Some categories were not represented.
  - 'Interaction with faculty members': This may not be a problem as SJC is a fraction of the size of McGill and SJC students likely have many opportunities to interact with the faculty.
  - Organization: Perhaps this is a weakness but it is inferred in many statements.

Another improvement made to the survey is that the space on the back of the card can now be used for written comments. This provides students with the opportunity to elaborate on their numerical ratings.

McGill's Recommended Pool of Questions.	Centra 1993	McGill		SJC	
		Instructor	Course	Instructor	Course
Respect for students		*	*	New #15	
Communicating expectations		*	*	New #6	
Active Engagement	*	*	*		New #12
Interaction with faculty members	*	*			
Evaluation / Feedback to students	*	*	*	New #13	New #16
Cohesion			*		#7
Enthusiasm / Interest		*	*		#20
Organization	*	*	*		
Clarity	*	*	*	#8	
Learning activities and resources	*	*	*	#9	#5, 11
Administrative / Context			*		#1,2

Table 2: SJC survey compared with Centra (1993) and McGill's (2008) categories.

**Drawbacks of an over-reliance on student evaluations.**

While class evaluation surveys are an extremely important source of information, there are areas which students are unqualified to assess (Cashin, 1989; Keig and Waggoner, 1994 cited in Hoyt and Pallett, 1999); namely:

- The goals, content and organization of course design.
- Methods and materials used in delivery.
- Evaluation of student work, including grading practices.

How can the weakness of student ratings be adequately addressed? Three commonly cited suggestions are self-reports, colleague ratings and ratings by department heads/chairs. This paper will focus on colleague ratings as it is an established but under-utilized aspect of SJC's FD Program, and research has shown that student feedback without consultation has no effect on improving teaching quality (Cohen, 1980). Therefore, given the limited resources available, it is hoped that colleagues might be able to fulfill this consulting role. (Further information on self-reports and department head ratings can be found in Hoyt and Pallett (1999)).

**5. Colleague Ratings.**

When considering the use of colleague ratings, it is important to distinguish between a peer (a faculty member knowledgeable in the subject area) and a colleague (someone familiar with working in the instructor's educational setting but not knowledgeable of the specific subject matter). The least demanding type of colleague ratings (and the least dependable) is personal contact with the instructor. This is followed by materials review and peer observation.

### **Materials Review.**

Although peer observation is preferred when the goal is instructional improvement (Hoyt and Pallett, 1999, 2), materials review is an attractive alternative. Its use might encourage greater participation in FD as it is not as time-consuming as peer observation. Another advantage is that it has not been formally used at SJC and therefore, might provide teachers with new information about their teaching from a trusted source. In general, three raters are asked to independently review the relevant teaching materials and, after discussion, arrive at a consensus. With respect to the form, I would suggest the one used at Kansas State University (Appendix B), since it has been trialed and used in a number of different subject areas (See Hoyt and Pallett (1999) for an unaltered version). Materials reviewed at Kansas State include a detailed course syllabus, copies of examinations, samples of student work along with the grading criteria and a distribution of final grades. Based on specific guidelines, reviewers are asked to rate the quality and appropriateness of these materials and indicate any concerns or provide specific recommendations for any item not given a rating of '5' on the 5-point scale. Given the detailed nature of the guidelines, it appears that at Kansas State, the reviewer is likely a peer familiar with the subject area. At smaller institutions, cooperative arrangements could be made with other local institutions (e.g. SJC Junior College) to find a suitable reviewer. Having someone who has a good overview of the entire curriculum, however, is preferable as a course may by itself appear satisfactory, but may not be if there is, for example, unnecessary overlap with other courses.

### **Peer Observation (PO).**

At SJC, peer observation has been encouraged but has not been strictly enforced or clear guidelines established. Observers are required to submit their comments to the FD committee after the instructor has had an opportunity to review them. While it is possible to use this form successfully, some of its drawbacks are that due to the absence of any clear guidelines, it offers no sense of priorities and is unlikely to be used consistently. Another problem with PO in general is that it may take up to 4 hours.

- Pre-observation meeting with instructor and a review of materials: 60 minutes.
- The class itself: 90 minutes.
- Report preparation: 45 minutes.
- Post-observation meeting: 45 minutes.

If properly implemented, however, PO can be an effective tool to improve teaching effectiveness provided certain conditions are met (DeZure, 1999).

1. The observer is trained: This includes what criteria to use, how to apply them, observation skills, record-keeping, and how constructive criticism can be given.
2. There is more than one observation and more than one observer.
3. The process is agreed upon.
4. The process is consistent for all instructors and observers.
5. The rules are known to all stakeholders.
6. The instructor has input into the process at several stages.
7. A validated observation instrument is used.

Provided these guidelines are followed, the instructor can be provided with feedback based on how the class is being taught rather than on the materials alone. Creating an original peer observation form and policy

can be an overwhelming job; therefore, Seldin (1999, 226) suggests that most universities can benefit from utilizing pre-existing ones as a starting point. These forms vary greatly but generally contain some combination of checklists with scaled responses and open-ended questions on a number of topics. Two excellent examples can be found in Seldin (1999, 236-8). The more versatile of the two, due to a reliance on open-ended questions rather than restrictive checklists, appears in Appendix C.

The observer is provided with the relevant materials beforehand, and then meets with the instructor to discuss the goals, content and teaching methodology of the class to be observed. Notes taken during the observation concern the instructor’s mastery of the content, teaching methodology, organization, and student participation. Afterwards, the observer meets with the instructor to discuss the observation and conclusion.

**6. Conclusion**

The FD committee was initially responsible for revising the end-of-term class evaluation survey. It was also necessary, however, to consider how these surveys fit into the overall FD program as revising the survey alone would not meet the conditions required to improve teaching (Centra, 1993). Based on McGill (2008), the survey was revised in the hope of providing teachers with new information. An equally important yet under-utilized source of information at SJC is colleagues. Materials review was suggested as a trusted colleague is more qualified to assess certain aspects of a class. Furthermore, it was hoped that a peer could not only provide the instructor with new insights, but also be available for consultation. In addition, the advantages offered by properly implemented peer observation should also be exploited. Finally, the PDCA Checklist should not solely rely on student voices, but should be informed by colleague rating. With new information from a variety of sources, a motivated instructor should be able to improve their teaching, the goal of Faculty Development at SJC.

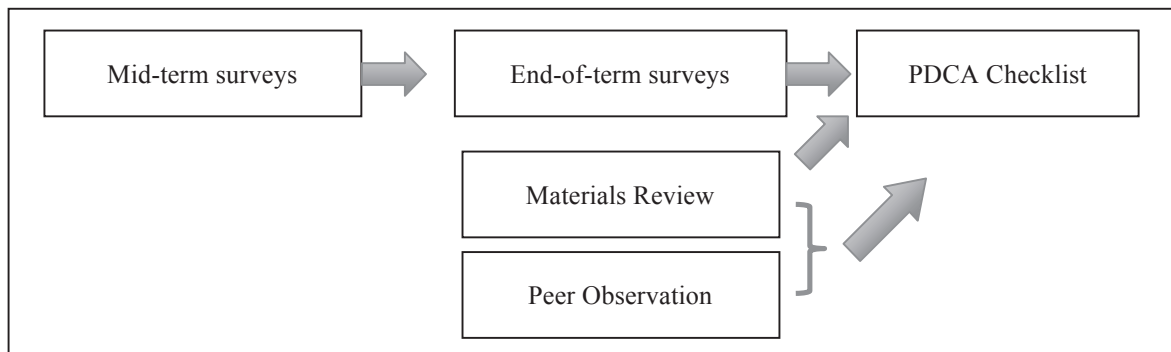


Diagram 2: Sources of Information for Teacher Effectiveness at SJC: Suggestions.

Appendix A: Revised End-of-term Class Evaluation Survey\*.

\*Highlighted questions are new.

この授業について該当する選択肢の番号を選んで下さい。

Regarding this class, please choose the most appropriate response.

科目選択理由: Reason for choosing the course

1. あなたが、この授業を履修した理由を選んでください。(必修の場合は①を選択)

Please select the reason you chose this course. (For required course, choose #1).

⑤都合のよい時間帯 ④内容に関心 ③将来 ②担当教員の人柄 ①その他  
に開講されている。 があった。 役にたつ 研究に惹かれた

⑤ It fit my ④ Interested ③ Useful in ② Attracted to teacher's ① Other  
schedule. in content. future. research area.

授業参加度: Class Participation.

2. あなたは、この授業をどのくらい休みましたか?

How often were you absent from class?

⑤4回以上 ④3回 ③2回 ②1回 ①0回

3. あなたは、毎回平均してどれくらいこの授業の予習復習を行いましたか?

How much preparation on average did you do for each class?

⑤2時間以上 ④1時間半程度 ③1時間程度 ②30分程度 ①0時間

4. あなたは授業について担当者に質問をしましたか?

Did you ask the instructor questions about the class?

④よくした ③ときどき ②したことはある ①全くしない

★以下の設問では以下の選択肢の番号を選んで下さい。For the questions below, please  
choose from the following responses.

⑤そう思う ④どちらかといえば ③どちらとも ②あまりそう ①そうは  
Agree そう思う If I had いえない. 思わない. 思わない  
to choose, agree. Not sure Don't really agree Disagree.

施設設備満足度: Facilities/ Equipment

5. 教室の大きさや設備は適切だと思いますか?

I think the classroom size and facilities were appropriate.

授業運営満足度 (12, 13については該当する場合のみ記入して下さい。)

Class management: (Answer questions 12, 13 only if applicable.)

6. 教員は達成可能な適切な目標を示して指導しましたか?

The instructor set high but attainable expectations for this course.

7. 授業はシラバス通りに実施されましたか?

The course outline was consistently followed.

8. 教員の授業での話し方や説明は理解しやすかったですか?

The instructor's explanations were easy to understand.

9. 板書、パワーポイント、OHC、ビデオなどはわかりやすかったですか？

Whiteboard use, PowerPoint, OHC, videos etc. were easy to understand.

10. 授業を進めるスピードが適切だったと思いますか？

The pace of the class was appropriate.

11. テキストや配布資料などの分量・内容などは適切だったと思いますか？

The length & content of the textbook or handouts etc. were appropriate.

12. この授業で求められる提出課題等の内容や量は適切でしたか？

The number and content of the assignments were appropriate.

13. 提出した課題等に対して、適切な評価や助言がタイミングよくもどってきましたか？

With respect to the assignments, appropriate feedback and grades were given in a timely manner.

14. 教員は私語を防止するなど授業に集中できるように配慮していたと思いますか？

The instructor created a class atmosphere where students could concentrate (e.g. Prohibited private talk).

15. この授業での学生間の良好な人間関係や雰囲気に教員は配慮していましたか？

The instructor created a classroom with a friendly atmosphere and good student relations.

16. この授業での学生に対する評価は公正で適切なものだと思いますか？

The evaluation methods used in this class were fair and appropriate.

17. 授業改善についての要望を教員に出す機会が与えられましたか？

The instructor addressed student suggestions for improving the class.

18. 授業改善についての要望に対する教員の対応に満足しましたか？

I am satisfied with how the instructor responded to our suggestions for improving the class.

#### 総合評価 Overall Evaluation.

19. 授業に対する教員の意欲を感じましたか？

I felt that for this class, the teacher was very knowledgeable.

20. 授業によって知的な興味や関心を刺激されましたか？

(The instructor) stimulated my intellectual interest in this course.

21. 以上を総合的に判断してこの授業に満足しましたか？

Overall, I am satisfied with this class.

22. 友人や後輩にこの授業を履修するように勧めたいと思いますか？

I would recommend this class to my friends and juniors.

#### 担当者設定項目 Questions from instructor

23~25



APPENDIX B: FACULTY ASSESSMENT OF SPECIFIC COURSES\*

The IDEA Center, Kansas State University.

\* Space for written comments deleted. See Hoyt & Pallett (1999) for complete version.

You have been supplied with the following information about the course listed:

1. Course syllabus, including:
  - a. list of objectives
  - b. course content and organization
  - c. identification of reading materials and assignments
  - d. description of projects, non-reading assignments
  - e. methods of appraising student achievement
2. Copies of examinations, together with an indication of the specific objective(s) being assessed by each item/exercise and the grading standards employed with each.
3. Samples of the best student projects, the instructional objectives relevant to the project, and the instructor's appraisal of the work.
4. Distribution of final grades.

Using a 5-point scale, rate the features of the course. A rating of "1" is used to indicate a serious concern and a rating of "5" is used to indicate an exceptionally strong aspect of instruction. For features rated less than "5," specify concerns/recommendation.

After your ratings have been made, please discuss them with the other two reviewers. On the basis of this discussion, the group should compile a consensus report for use of the faculty member and the department chair/head.

**Ratings**

1. Objectives.

- a. Are the objectives clearly expressed? Rating: \_\_\_\_ If the rating is less than "5," identify the specific objective(s) which should be restated to remove ambiguities.
- b. Are the objectives appropriate for this class? Rating: \_\_\_\_ If the rating is less than "5," identify the specific objectives which are:
  - overemphasized
  - overly ambitious (unrealistic)
  - lacking in challenge/importance
  - underemphasized or omitted
  - needlessly redundant with objectives pursued in other classes

2. Reading materials and assignments.

- a. Are reading materials well chosen (up-to-date; written at an appropriate level; highly authoritative; provide balanced coverage)? Rating: \_\_\_\_ If the rating is less than "5," identify the specific concerns you have about the readings (e. g., outdated; biased; too advanced):
- b. Are reading assignments appropriate? Rating: \_\_\_\_ If the rating is less than "5," identify specific reservations about the appropriateness of reading assignments (i. e., too extensive; unrelated to course objectives; uneven pace from week to week; etc.).

3. Non-reading assignments/projects.

- a. Are non-reading assignments/projects relevant to course objectives? Rating: \_\_\_\_ If the rating is less than “5,” identify specific concerns about the relevance of non-reading assignments/projects (i. e., failure to address certain objectives; relationship to objectives is too tangential; focus is on objectives not identified as course objectives; etc.):
- b. Are non-reading assignments/projects designed to attract student interest and involvement? Rating: \_\_\_\_ If the rating is less than “5,” suggest specific concerns about the power of the assignments/projects to motivate students (e. g., practicality is not apparent; assignments/projects not clearly described; students unable to identify with the task; requirements/expectations are ambiguous; etc.).
- c. Are the non-reading assignments/projects reasonable in terms of their demand on student time and energy? Rating: \_\_\_\_ If the rating is less than “5,” suggest specific reservations about the reasonableness of the assignments/projects (i. e., time requirements; availability of needed resources; adequacy of student background; demands on student creativity)

4. Course organization.

- a. Are topics presented in a coherent, logical manner? Rating: \_\_\_\_ If the rating is less than “5,” identify ways in which coherence could be improved.
- b. Are topics integrated (related meaningfully to each other)? Rating: \_\_\_\_ If the rating is less than “5,” suggest how integration could be improved.

5. Methods of appraising student achievement

- a. Do the instructor’s appraisal methods adequately address all course objectives? (Do exams cover all objectives in a balanced way? Do exam questions focus on objectives not included in the course syllabus? If examinations omit or underemphasize achievement on certain objectives, are there alternative appraisal processes which restore balance?) Rating: \_\_\_\_
- b. Do students have sufficient opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of course objectives? (Are exams given with enough frequency to keep students informed of their status? Are alternative assessment methods employed to supplement exams? Do assessment procedures over-stress achievements which are easiest to appraise and under-stress those which are most difficult to appraise? Does the attention directed to appraisal of a given achievement reflect the amount of instructional time devoted to it?) Rating: \_\_\_\_
- c. Is information available about the reliability of assessment procedures (statistical reliability of examination results; agreement among raters or judges; etc.)? Rating: \_\_\_\_
- d. Are the achievement demands which appraisal methods make on students appropriate to the nature of the course and the characteristics of enrollees? (Are exams too difficult/easy? Are projects too difficult/too simple? Do appraisal methods permit accurate appraisals of all levels of achievement, or do they focus more on high or low achieving groups?) Rating: \_\_\_\_
- e. Is feedback from appraisal results appropriately employed as a teaching device? (Is feedback timely? Does it correct student errors/misunderstandings? Does it offer clues as to how students might improve their achievement?) Rating: \_\_\_\_
- f. Are appropriate grading standards employed? (Do the instructor’s achievement standards appropriately reflect the department’s and institution’s expectations?) Rating: \_\_\_\_
- g. What is the apparent level of student achievement of course objectives? Rating: \_\_\_\_ Identify both evidence which supports this rating and that which is inconsistent with it.

Appendix C: Classroom Observation Report (Adapted from Seldin, 1999, 238)

**Instructions:** Several days prior to the classroom visit, the instructor should provide the observer(s) with a copy of the course syllabus containing course objectives, content and organization.

**Procedure:** The observer(s) should meet with the instructor several days **in advance** of the visit to learn the instructor's classroom objectives as well as the teaching methods to be used. Within several days **after** the visit, the observer(s) should meet with the instructor to discuss observations and conclusions.

1. Describe the instructor's content mastery, breadth, and depth.
  
2. Describe the method(s) of instruction.
  
3. How clear and well-organized is the presentation?
  
4. Describe the form and extent of student participation.
  
5. What specific suggestions would you make to improve this instructor's teaching?

Please feel free to use the reverse side of this page to elaborate on your comments.

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要旨

本論の目的は、次の2点である。清泉女学院大学における学期末授業改善アンケートを改善するための参考文献とプロセスを紹介し、本調査を適切かつ効果的に遂行するために、FDポリシーをいかに変更すべきかを検討することにある。本調査法はマッギル大学及びカンザス州立大学のFDプログラムに基づいている。

学期末の調査の主たる変更は、(1)例えば評価方法を含む教授法などの以前になかった観点の質問(2)自由記述の欄、以上二点の追加である。評価に値するか等に関しては同僚教員の意見も尊重した。従って、筆者は調査項目やピア観察のための明瞭なガイドラインの追加を推奨する。また、PDCAのチェックリストは学生の評価に依拠するだけでなく、ピアの評価も勘案したい。