

Summary and Reflection

September 30, 2014

Topic: Evaluations

This week we talked about formative and summative assessments. Specifically we talked about how the IDEA form and mid-semester evaluations fit into the context of evaluating TAs. After a brief lecture motivating the need for mid-semester evaluations as an important tool for improving teaching, we got to work creating evaluations. In small groups students came up with sample questions related to areas they wished to gain feedback in their classes. These were all posted on the board. TA's posted a variety of questions. Some examples include questions related to the structure of recitation, the connection between homework/quizzes/tests, and ranking the helpfulness of outside resources. We discussed ways to rephrase the question to make sure TAs got the kind of feedback they desired.

After a break, we administered our mid-semester evaluations. We plan to discuss the feedback with the class during the next session.

Using the questions on the board as a starting place, TA's worked in groups by teaching assignment to write a draft of mid-semester evaluation. TA's with grading assignments wrote an evaluation for a calculus recitation session. A final draft of a mid-semester evaluation was assigned for homework. In addition those with teaching assignments will need to administer the evaluation and reflect on the results. Those with a grading assignment will take the areas they addressed in the evaluation and reflect on what they plan to do in a future teaching assignment that will help them be successful in those areas.

We have tried to have every session include a practical component that TAs can take and use to improve their teaching immediately. Having the group time focused on creating a tangible product (rather than just discussion) really helped people be focus. I think we did a good job of motivating the assignment and people were engaged.