

A Few General Thoughts about Evaluations

I feel that I can evaluate my teaching in several ways, including course evaluation forms, responses to questions I ask in class or lab, and results on quizzes and exams.

In general, I think evaluation forms have been very useful, if painful to read. I try to take student concerns to heart. Sometimes I feel like I need to read between the lines they write, or to take their words with a grain of salt. Sometimes it seemed to me that one or two students in my sections felt personally slighted for not getting the grade they wanted, so wrote harsh words on the evaluations. On the other hand, one student in the botany class said I was a good teacher even though they did not understand the material. Although they placed the blame on themselves, to me this means I did not do my job well enough for that student.

For me, quizzes are also good evaluations of how I am doing as teacher—through grading, I can see directly how well students understand the material, or correct any widely-held misconceptions about the material (which I do at the beginning of the subsequent class).

I think that a video of my teaching would have been a great asset to this portfolio. I definitely have a sense of how well I teach (what I've done well and what I've done badly) after a class, but I realize that I may not perceive everything accurately. I regret not doing this, and I plan to videotape my teaching in the future.