

In the fall of 2016 Dr. David Sutherland and I worked on devising an evaluation survey that we could send to students taking Physical Activity (PACT) classes at Hendrix College. This survey would serve not only to review the instructors' knowledge and teaching capabilities but also the department as a whole and the impact it is making on our students. We wanted to make sure also that the survey would give us a clear picture on whether or not we were lining up with learning goals: Content Knowledge, Social, Value Physical Activity and Fitness. Because this was the first time we had sent a survey to our students, we ran the first evaluation survey as a pilot to see the response we would get from students and get an understanding of how we would use the information. After researching different surveys, we came up with thirteen questions to use for the pilot survey. The questions included topics such as enjoyment and value of the class, increase in knowledge of rules/skills, instructors' knowledge of the course, and if equipment needs were met for the course.

After reviewing the evaluations, I was very pleased to see that the overall return rate was just over 80%. Of those evaluations our mean score was 4.21 out of 5 meaning we were reaching or exceeding most of our goals. I read through all of the comments and gained a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the classes and our instructors. I also saw a trend in numerous areas that needs to be addressed immediately in order to keep the PACT classes successful and the students engaged.

The lowest scores came from two questions. The first question that received low scores was "I feel more comfortable in the Wellness and Athletics Center because I took this course." I was very surprised by this rating until I read the comments. I believe that the results were skewed because many people commented that their class was not in the WAC. This led me to believe they marked "Strongly disagree" because of the location being different. The second comment that was repeated was that the students already felt comfortable in the WAC because they were an athlete or they used the WAC on a regular basis already. The second question that got a low score was "I value physical activity more because of this course." The comments on this question stated that the students didn't understand their need to take the PACT class as part of the mandatory curriculum. Also, it was mentioned frequently that students already valued exercise therefore would have continued in their regimen even without taking the course.

The highest scores came from three questions related to the instructors. These questions were as follows: My PACT instructor was prepared for class; My PACT instructor motivated me to participate fully in this PACT course; and My PACT instructor discussed proper form and safety for this PACT course.

I am a true believer that if you have a good instructor then students will have a higher success rate in exercise performance and improving their fitness levels. It is the goal of our department to have motivating instructors who teach get the most out of their students while remaining safe and performing proper movements. I believe that our instructors not only met these goals but exceeded the expectations.

Although the questions gave us a good overall look at the classes I believe the comments gave a more in depth look at our strengths and weaknesses. Two words that were repeated numerous times were “fun” and “equipment”. Students stated that the classes were a lot of fun which lined up perfectly with the three department goals I mentioned earlier. When someone is having an enjoyable experience in a class they are going to be more dedicated to showing up and learning the skills needed to improve. They will also value the things they are taught and improve on their fitness and/or health. Lastly, having “fun” often goes hand in hand with the social aspect of a class where students meet and interact with their peers in a positive atmosphere. The word “equipment” was unfortunately mentioned in more of a negative connotation where students felt like there wasn’t enough equipment to learn the skills needed or improve on their established skills. The students also made note that some of the equipment was not suitable for use any longer and that it was the one negative they had to say about the class.

I am excited to learn more in the upcoming surveys and hope that we can maximize on the things we already do well and improve on the things we are lacking.