Online SRTE Fall 2005 Semester Summary

What did we do?

During the spring 2005 a group representing various stakeholders in the SRTE process was gathered to research and develop specifications for a multifaceted, on-line tool that would incorporate the administrative, student, and reporting functions of the current paper SRTEs. The findings from this group regarding the process, operational expectations, and data analysis and reporting are fully outlined in its April 2005 report to the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. The primary focus for the fall 2005 offering of this tool was getting feedback from students. To accomplish this, departments that include varied groups of students and requirements were identified in the Colleges of Engineering and Science at University Park and at Penn State York. In total, 16 faculty teaching 8 courses (63 sections), with more than 1,700 expected SRTE submissions, were selected to participate.

What did we find?

Results

- Based on the number of expected responses, the overall response rate for the pilot was 62% – this number is significantly higher than the first attempt of most universities who are transitioning to an on-line evaluation
- Response rates across individual courses and sections ranged from 32% to 97% – see Chart 1 for aggregate by course (courses 6, 7, and 8 were administered in a computer lab)
- Response rates for courses where SRTEs were not administered in a computer lab ranged from 32% to 78%. The average response rate was 56%.
- Biology showed a 14% overall increase in response for the same course offered in fall 2004 where SRTEs were offered in a similar on-line environment
- Observations of trends for this pilot indicate:
  o peak hours for submission are 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. – see Chart 2 for response by hour
  o activity is at its weakest on Saturdays and Sundays – see Chart 3 for response by day
  o spikes in activity occurred when email announcements/reminders were sent – see Chart 3 for spikes when communicated

Surprising Discoveries

- ANGEL's database of courses from past semesters allows for "surveying" students from prior semesters on issues related to learning
- Colleges/Campuses can incorporate other needs for gathering feedback from students (e.g., accreditation questions) thus reducing the need for multiple surveys
- On December 13, 2005, an On-Line SRTE Pilot Project Web section was added to the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs' site. With little to no publicity to announce the site, statistics from the Web hits show that the site garnered interest from equal numbers of visitors from campuses and colleges not participating in the project.
Plans for Spring 2006

- Expand pilot group to additional courses offered in Biology, Engineering Science & Mechanics, School of Engineering Design, Technology, and Professional Programs, and at Penn State York
- Investigate opportunities to extend pilot group to include additional departments in the Eberly College of Science and those offered through World Campus that operate in tandem with the semester calendar
- Conduct focus groups with fall 2005 participants (faculty and students) to gather information regarding communication and motivation
- Develop training modules for department representatives