

# Online SRTE Project

## HISTORY

- 2002-2004 Preliminary testing of online SRTE administration in two University Park departments (Biology and Integrative Arts).
- Fall 2004 Vice Provost for Academic Affairs commissions a group to investigate feasibility of online administration of SRTEs.
- Spring 2005 Specifications determined ANGEL Learning Corp. develops prototype.
- 2005-2008 Online SRTE Pilot Project: prototype used by small sample of courses; technical challenges prevent expansion.
- Spring 2007 Informational Report (Online SRTE update), University Faculty Senate.
- Fall 2008 Online SRTE program upgraded and available for pilot programs and departments. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) specifying programming and technical priorities.
- Spring 2009 First major expansion of Online SRTE program: all courses in the College of Health and Human Development and at the DuBois campus. New features: multiple-instructor capability, flexible offering dates, response rate (only) visible to instructor on ANGEL My Profile page.
- Fall 2009 Data analysis of HHD and DuBois data. New features: A, B, and C sections; set-up can be sorted by date, course, instructor; department defined questions section. New SRTE Web site: consolidated site for both paper and online SRTEs; information organized by user (department administrator, faculty/instructor, administrative support staff).

## BENEFITS

- Reduced staff time for setup and administration
- Reduced coding errors and processing time
- Earlier and timelier access to results
- No class time needed to administer SRTEs
- Thorough and meaningful responses to two open-ended questions (What helped you learn in this course? and What changes would improve your learning?)

## CONCERNS

- *SRTE System Capacity.* The risk of a temporary interruption in service is balanced by the extended amount of time students have to complete their SRTEs. The Online SRTE tool was moved to dedicated secure servers and separated from ANGEL servers in fall 2008. This diminished any risks associated with high loads at the end of the semester. No problems were recorded as we increased the number of submissions from 11,101 in spring 2008, to 18,983 in fall 2008, and 43,523 in spring 2009.

- *Response Rates.* As with paper SRTEs, response rates vary by instructor and section, but there does not appear to be a dramatic decrease in response rates with online administration. The average response rates for the 2003-2008 pilot phases varied from average of 60-64%, which is comparable to paper response rates. In spring 2009, with the expansion to HHD & DuBois, the average response rate increased to 70%. These response rates were achieved with no University wide advertisements or encouragement. Literature on student ratings discourages individual faculty from offering incentives to complete the ratings because the effort may be misinterpreted.
- *Scores.* Preliminary data from HHD and DuBois indicate slight differences, but these may not be significant when examined at the course and instructor levels.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT ONLINE SRTEs

- **How do students access the online SRTEs?**

Students access their SRTEs through their profile page in ANGEL. While the Online SRTE servers are separate from ANGEL servers, the transition is invisible/seamless for students.

- **How do students know when to complete the SRTE?**

Students see a list of courses for which Online SRTEs are available in on their ANGEL My Profile page. The system also sends email to students announcing the availability of SRTEs. Email reminder messages are sent to students who have outstanding forms to complete.

- **What will motivate my students to complete the SRTE on their own?**

In focus group interviews, students indicated that they are more likely to submit SRTEs if the information will be used to make improvements in the course. In general, it is good practice for faculty to communicate how they have incorporated past feedback into their courses (e.g., included more teamwork, added visual examples, reordered topics).

- **Will students who do not regularly attend be able to complete SRTEs for the course?**

Yes. If the number of students not attending is sufficient to impact your scores, then the feedback you receive from students may help you understand why. Alternatively, students who lack the motivation to attend class may not be motivated to complete the SRTEs.

- **When are Online SRTEs available to students?**

There is a preset period of time during which the SRTEs are offered. For the traditional 15-week course, SRTEs are offered the last two weeks of the semester. The traditional offering period ends on the last day of classes. For instructional durations less than a traditional semester, the offering period is equivalent to 1 day for every week of class.

- **Is there a time limit for completing SRTEs?**

The SRTE automatically times out at 90 minutes with a 5 minute warning. Students may save their SRTEs and return later to complete them.

- **Can students change their ratings?**

Students may save their ratings and return to complete them at another point during the offering period. However, once students have submitted their ratings, they may not be changed.