

## Course Evaluations

# QUICK TIPS

## Tips for Interpreting Survey Results

### THIS IS A LEARNING OPPORTUNITY

- Providing constructive criticism is a skill that students need to learn
- Providing feedback on a course is a students' 'professional' responsibility to students who come after them
- Students will need the ability to provide constructive feedback in the workplace

*A Survey Tool may not be inherently bias, but may bring out peoples' bias based on their own culture, demographic, race, beliefs, etc.*

# Considerations when Reviewing Course Evaluation Answers

- Context is important.
  - A comment that says "a white man shouldn't teach this course" might be valid depending on the course content
  - A comment that says "instructor's accent makes it hard to understand content" may indicate a broader issue
- Racist content in comments are likely not intentional
- Bad or inappropriate jokes may just be that with no real intent

*If you remove extreme comments on the negative side, you need to do the same on the positive side to avoid creating a bias in the responses.*

*What is considered to be truly offensive is individually subjective however, the focus of course evaluation feedback should be "how can I use this to improve my teaching?"*

***Additional Resources:***

**[How to Deal with Negative Teaching Evaluations](#)**

**[The Role of Instructor Accent on Student Learning and Instructor Evaluation in a Digital Learning Environment](#)**

# Best Practices

- When evaluating comments made, try to identify a pattern rather than focus on individual comments
- Keep a record of all comments in case of appeals or for potential impact (positive or negative) on promotion
- Allow faculty to report comments they feel are unfair to their supervisor
- **REMEMBER:** 'Bad' comments are the *exception* NOT the rule

## References

Humm, G. (2019). Interpreting and Using Qualitative Student Feedback in a Meaningful Way. *Bluenotes Global Conference*. Chicago.

Centre for Teaching Support and Innovation (2018). University of Toronto Course Evaluation Interpretation Guidelines for Academic Administrators. Toronto, ON: Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation. University of Toronto.