

Student Learning and Teaching Effectiveness Evaluations from Intro Bio Lab II Instruction (Spring 2013)

Overall

Biology & Neuroscience Lab Lab Questions		Dohn, Tracy											
		Responses					Individual						
		[SA]	[A]	[NA]	[D]	[SD]	Med.	Mode	Low	High	S.D.	N	Mean
Q1	The instructor was well prepared for lab each week.	9	9	1	0	0	4	4,5	3	5	.59	19	4.4
Q2	The instructor's grading was fair and timely.	1	5	2	9	2	2	2	1	5	1.13	19	2.7
Q3	The instructor was clear, understandable and engaging.	5	8	4	2	0	4	4	2	5	.93	19	3.8
Q4	The instructor was encouraging, supportive and involved in my learning the material.	6	10	2	1	0	4	4	2	5	.79	19	4.1
Q5	The instructor as available, responsive and helpful.	7	9	2	1	0	4	4	2	5	.81	19	4.2
Q6	The instructor demonstrated a respect for students and their points of view.	6	8	4	1	0	4	4	2	5	.86	19	4
Q7	Overall I would give a high rating to the instructor of this course.	3	4	8	4	0	3	3	2	5	.98	19	3.3

Primary Strengths of the Instruction of this Class

-	Instructor was engage and cared for the students work
-	There were rules and expectations, outlines of what had to be done each week and usually rubrics for every project.
-	She really helps keep the lab organized and entertaining. She was helpful whenever needed. She also has a lot of knowledge about biology.
-	Tracy expects a lot out of her students and is not willing to let them slide by with minimal effort. She cares about us actually gaining something from the course and does well to ensure we are learning both the material at hand and other material relating to the future in our differing fields of study.
-	The instructor was obviously well prepared for each day of class. The instructor made the course requirements very clear. The instructor provided constructive criticism and helpful comments before and after projects were graded.
-	Tracy genuinely cares about her students gaining real-world knowledge. She comes to class prepared with research journal articles chosen to expose us to certain scientific topics and procedures.
-	She is well prepared and knows the material well.
-	n/a
-	She really wanted to help us succeed after this class and had mini lectures on how to get involved in your major and different possibilities for jobs and other things.
-	The strengths were that instructions were clear and understandable.
-	Very hands on
-	The instruction in this class was very good. Before class everyday we would talk about recent science articles.
-	The instructor did a very well job at the beginning of class explaining science related topics and jobs outside of school. She was very helpful in influencing students who weren't sure what major they wanted to be yet.
-	Very interested in Biology
-	The book guides the class and is well put together.
-	I know group work is important to learn, but I think to much is based off of the group work. My group was did not work well together. One would not do anything at all. All of us had jobs and full time schedules. Also, I commute. It is too difficult to come to meet with my group while working 25 hrs a week and living 30 minutes away from campus. When our groups would meet. Not everyone would have all of their tasks done.
-	I definitely learned a lot from Tracy and she was very informative during the class, she also would talk to us about things outside of bio lab such as what to expect during med school and other things that could potentially help us with our majors, she did offer a lot of advice
-	She was well prepared and friendly, was open for suggestions from the class and sympathetic that most students were taking other classes and may have exams or other projects due so she was more lenient with due dates and grading of assigmentments.

Suggestions for Improvement

-	Maybe a little more organized, more fair grading for all labs
-	Grading is WAY too hard. We are given one week for our papers and they are graded way too hard. Also, when talking to other students with different TA's, they said their quizzes were very easy and ours were extremely hard. The worst case was our Anatomy quiz. She completely killed my grade with this quiz and many other people in the lab because she didn't give clear expectations as to what we would be taking a quiz over. It was our impression that we would have the rat in front of us and she would ask what a specific body part was and we would have to tell her and say the function. Unfortunately, this was not the case AT ALL. The quiz was probably the hardest one I have had in ANY lab my freshman year. My grade has suffered from the hard grading and quizzes. I am going to have to email Dr. Beyette because I feel the grading is definitely not fair. With the hard work I put in, I really feel as though I should be receiving an A. Instead I think I may get a B.
-	Tracy grades rather harshly for this course. She does not give any leeway with grades and expects almost too much out of her students sometimes. For one quiz she told us what was "going to be on our quiz" and then added a lot more of information. Everyone failed that quiz, and most people failed the competition ecology project.
-	There should be a different group for each project
-	A major problem with the teaching is that Tracy rarely gives out As as grades. While I respect her for having high expectations of us, I believe her style is more suited for upper level biology lab courses rather than freshman level if she insists on giving B-/C+ range for what she describes as "very good".
-	There is too much time spent on certain things in class. We would be sitting there talking with each other to kill time because we had accomplished what we needed to and were still waiting to move on. I felt as though the grading was a little too tough for a entry level lab. Even with full effort, second opinions and having reports reviewed by the instructor we still did not get a grade near what we felt appropriate.
-	n/a
-	Being more clear on what's expected in our reports.
-	Maybe doing more experiments then just analysis of pre-acquired data. We should also be allowed to leave early after all the work is done.
-	Give more notice of what will be on upcoming quizzes
-	Choose our group members
-	A couple of grading techniques to me seemed a little harsh lowering a lot of people's grades.
-	Making sure the rubrics are in the lab manual instead of "samples"
-	Different paper !
-	LESS GROUP WORK AND LESS FLUFF WORK
-	One thing that I would suggest is that to grade easier, I got an A in my Bio Lab last semester, and I felt like this semester was a lot strict on the grades, and maybe not recognizing the effort of what the students did. That would due my only suggestion of what to do
-	N/a, Instructor did a great job.

Plan to Address Student Concerns

Students seemed very receptive to teaching style. They enjoyed taking the first few minutes of class to discuss a journal article, general college level skills, or give other extra curricular information. This helped them to feel equipped for the class and demonstrated that I am open to questions and thoughts from the students. Many of the students felt comfortable asking me about research opportunities, graduate school options, and college majors.

Many students were unhappy about the harshness of the grading in the class. Their grade distribution lines up perfectly with the other sections of this lab (Average 85%) (6 A, 13 B, 2 C). Students also fell into these categories naturally, with a decent grade break between the A students and the B students, likewise between the B and C students. Therefore I do not feel these grades were too harsh for a freshmen lab course. However, I feel that I did not give the students sufficient information on how the course was graded and that their expectations were therefore disappointed. This course had a lot of “easy” points from homework and worksheet therefore I graded papers and reports strictly according to the rubric, giving less grace room. By grading the papers strictly, students learn more from their work and can see where they need to improve instead of thinking that their paper is fine and being discouraged in upper level courses. Some students also did not see there was a rubric until the end of the course, so making that apparent up front should help. Also students did not seem to work ahead on projects (ej. In a 3 week lab experiment students should have “Materials and Methods” and “Introduction” done by week 2, but students would write the whole paper the week that it was due and run out of time to do it well) although this was suggested to them in their syllabus, I should have made a larger effort to scaffold these projects for the students since as freshmen this might still be difficult for them. To address this problem, I will be upfront with the grading policy, give clear rubrics, scaffold projects to keep students on track to succeed, and perform midterm evaluations to make sure everyone is aware of how the course is going.