

Online Reaction Surveys

Students in online courses do not have the opportunity to raise their hands to ask for clarification and at times may be hesitant to reach out directly to you for clarification. It is also difficult to gauge understanding, because online classes lack visual cues that indicate students may be confused. Therefore, you may want to consider using a short online reaction survey to gauge students' understanding of important instructions or key material before they move forward with the module content and activities.

Some learning management systems (LMSs) have a survey function that you can use to create a reaction survey. You can also use [Google Forms](#), [Qualtrics](#), [SurveyMonkey](#), or other online software, each of which offers templates and step-by-step instructions. If none of these options are available to you, simply email or post the survey (see examples below). Ask students to fill out the survey and post their responses to an anonymous discussion board.

Instructions to Students

Please complete this set of survey questions about this week's module activity or assignment. I will use your responses to answer any questions and clarify misunderstandings.

Scale: Please use the following scale to rank each of the statements below.

1 = *Agree* 2 = *Somewhat Agree** 3 = *Disagree**

*If you select "2" or "3" for any of the items, please offer an explanation or question related to the area of confusion. This will allow me to provide clarity to our class and adjust my instruction for future classes.

Below are three examples of online reaction surveys on directions for activities and assignments, video lectures, and supplemental resources.

Directions for Activities and Assignments:

To what extent do you agree with these statements?	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Explanation/Question
The purpose of the activity or assignment is clear.	1	2	3	
The connection between the activity or assignment and course learning outcomes is clear.	1	2	3	
I understand each step and feel prepared to complete this activity or assignment.	1	2	3	

Video Lectures:

To what extent do you agree with these statements?	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Explanation/Question
I understood the key concept(s) explained during the online lecture.	1	2	3	
The online lecture was divided into manageable chunks of information that were easy to follow.	1	2	3	
I understood all of the vocabulary the instructor used and defined.	1	2	3	

Supplemental Resources (Articles, Books, Examples):

To what extent do you agree with these statements?	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Explanation/Question
I understand the connection between the supplemental resource and the lecture, activity, or assignment.	1	2	3	
The supplemental resource material is easy to follow and understand.	1	2	3	

Results and Action

If one third or more of your students selected “2” or “3” for any of the survey items, you should address the concerns as soon as possible. Also, think about how to improve those areas in future classes. As you read through the explanations and questions that students shared, identify key areas of confusion. Below are some suggestions to help you respond to students’ needs.

Student Feedback on Directions for Activities and Assignments:

Survey Responses	Suggestions for the Current Class	Suggestions for Future Classes
The purpose of the activity or assignment is not clear.	<p>Send a follow-up email or video explaining the intention of the assignment. Invite questions for further clarification via email or a virtual meeting.</p> <p>Hold virtual office hours open to all students to review the assignment and clarify the purpose.</p>	<p>Explain the purpose of the activity or assignment both verbally (in a recorded video) and in writing.</p> <p>Create a discussion forum or send a group email, text, or chat and ask students to reply to the question: “In your own words, what is the goal of this activity or assignment?”</p>

<p>The connection between the activity or assignment and course learning outcomes is not clear.</p>	<p>Send a follow-up email or video explaining how the assignment or activity is connected to the course learning outcomes. Invite questions for further clarification via email or a virtual meeting.</p> <p>Hold virtual office hours (using videoconferencing software such as Skype or Zoom) open to all students to review the assignment and the course learning outcomes.</p>	<p>List the course learning outcomes aligned to the activity or assignment on your activity or assignment guidelines.</p> <p>Create a discussion forum or send a group email, text, or chat and ask students to reply to the question: “How do you think this assignment or activity helps you to achieve the course outcomes?”</p>
<p>I do not understand each step and do not feel prepared to complete the activity or assignment.</p>	<p>Send a follow-up email with written directions and a video recording explaining the directions verbally.</p>	<p>Provide detailed directions, one step at a time, in writing.</p> <p>Post a video explanation of each step in the instructions in a discussion forum, and ask students to post responses to questions to check for understanding.</p> <p>Model the steps via a live online session and record it for students who are unable to attend.</p> <p>Provide an example of the completed activity or assignment.</p>

Student Feedback on Video Lectures:

Survey Responses	Suggestions for Current Class	Suggestions for Future Classes
<p>I did not understand the key concept(s) explained during the online lecture.</p>	<p>Create a discussion board forum and ask students to post questions or identify the parts of the lecture that were not clear. Let them know that all students will benefit from their questions and your responses, so you will offer three bonus points for posting questions.</p> <p>Hold a virtual question-and-answer forum (using videoconferencing software such as Skype or Zoom) to clarify key concepts.</p>	<p>Provide organizational cues when explaining difficult concepts: forecast (“Today’s lesson will cover . . .”), highlight key points (“Write this down.”), signal transitions to a different focus (“Now that we’ve covered X, let’s discuss Y.”), and repeat main points or difficult information.</p> <p>Provide multiple examples, and scaffold from simple to more complex topics.</p> <p>Integrate appropriate visuals (e.g., diagrams, videos, or pictures).</p>
<p>The online lecture was not divided into manageable chunks that were easy to follow and understand.</p>	<p>Follow up with an outline of your lecture to make sure that students understand the main points. Invite questions for further clarification via email or a virtual meeting.</p>	<p>Create microlectures (5 to 6 minutes long) that only address one topic in each microlecture.</p> <p>Speak at a slower pace when the information is complex.</p> <p>Consider providing captions, a script, or a skeletal outline for your lecture.</p>

<p>I did not understand some of the vocabulary the instructor used and defined.</p>	<p>Provide a list of newly introduced words or terms from your lecture. Create an online bonus quiz to check for understanding of new vocabulary. Allow the quiz to be taken more than once, and offer bonus points for correct responses.</p>	<p>In a PowerPoint presentation, draw attention to the new word by highlighting it or writing in a color different than other text. Show the new word or term followed by a written definition, and then give an oral explanation with examples, if applicable.</p> <p>Create an online vocabulary sheet with the new words listed. Instruct students to listen for the new words during the lecture and fill in their definitions.</p> <p>When you are not introducing new terminology, use vocabulary or language that students generally understand rather than language you might use with colleagues in your discipline.</p>
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Student Feedback on Supplemental Resources (Articles, Books, Examples):

Survey Responses	Suggestions for Current Class	Suggestions for Future Classes
<p>I do not understand the connection between the supplemental resource and the lecture, activity, or assignment.</p>	<p>In a follow-up message, explain your rationale for each resource in connection to the module.</p>	<p>In the area of your course where you offer the additional resources, organize them by providing headings based on the topic or learning objective and listing the relevant resources underneath. Provide a brief description of each resource with an explanation of how it connects to the module learning objective(s).</p>
<p>The supplemental resource material was not easy to follow and understand.</p>	<p>In a follow-up message, recognize that the resource material was complex and might need extra time and attention. Provide that by creating an extra credit discussion board forum. Offer extra credit for thoughtful questions, comments, and responses that demonstrate students are engaging and working together to meet this academic challenge. Follow up with any clarification needed.</p>	<p>Provide a list of main points under each resource to help students identify what they should be looking for while reading.</p> <p>Review the resource to determine if it is fully aligned with your learning goals.</p>