



Lessons Learned from Student Evaluation Literature:

The gender of an instructor can affect student perceptions of the instructor and how students evaluate that instructor

- Students have expectations for their instructors and also ideas about gender roles. An instructor's ability to meet both the expectations for their occupation and their gender will affect their evaluations. This is a more difficult task for female professors since the expectations of instructors (to be assertive and knowledgeable) are more likely to correspond to ideas about traditional male characteristics and conflict with the expectations of women (to be nurturing and emotional).
- Students with more traditional views of the roles of women are more likely to give their female instructors lower reviews than those who do not hold traditional views of women.
- Female faculty members are more likely than male faculty to have qualitative comments on their student evaluations about their bodies, dress, and overall appearance.
- Pregnancy can have a negative effect on the evaluations of female faculty. Students may think that a professor is more biased, emotional, and irritated during her pregnancy and make comments about these items in their evaluations.

Student gender can have an effect on their evaluations of male and female instructors.

- Female students tend to rate female instructors higher than male instructors, while male students tend to rate female instructors lower than male instructors. There is not typically a significant difference between the evaluations of male and female students of male instructors.

The race, ethnicity and sexual orientation of an instructor can affect student perceptions of their instructors and student evaluations.

- African American and Asian instructors tend to be evaluated more negatively than white faculty on characteristics such as overall quality, helpfulness, and clarity. They also are generally considered to be "easier" instructors than white faculty members.
- African American female faculty are often rated especially negatively compared to their colleagues.
- Latino instructors tend not to be rated significantly differently from white instructors.
- African American faculty members were rated as being less legitimate than white, Asian, and Latino faculty members.
- Gay instructors receive more critical comments than straight instructors.

On the whole, faculty in STEM disciplines tend to be rated more negatively than faculty in other academic disciplines regardless of gender.

Selected References (*additional references available upon request*)

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