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Section III: Listening to Each Other

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Section III

Listening to Each Other

As instructional developers, we need to remain constantly aware of what faculty and students are really experiencing in the classroom. Olsen and Simmons report the results of a study of 114 faculty at a research university. The study sought to identify “Faculty Perceptions of Undergraduate Teaching.” While the participants “devoted the largest percentage of their time to teaching (44%),” they improved their courses “based on changes in the discipline (e.g., newly published articles, texts, etc.), student evaluations, and discussions with other faculty.” Few faculty read about or attended workshops about teaching.

In “Creating Teaching and Learning Partnerships with our Students: Helping Faculty Listen to Student Voices” Helen Rallis suggests ways faculty can assess how students are responding to their classroom. Based on surveys done in her own courses, Rallis also points to some specific things faculty can do to improve their teaching.

Students prefer faculty who are “fair.” Fairness includes handing graded assignments back in a timely manner, applying rules equally, taking effort into consideration as part of grading, and grading students on their individual rather than group contributions. In a study of 300 undergraduate students, Rodabaugh found that “College students are more concerned with fairness in the classroom than with easy grades or brilliant lectures. Students do not object to strict rules as long as the rules are fair and administered equally.”