

**EVALUATION FORM B
COMPLETED BY OBSERVER**

Department of Psychology

Faculty member observed: Shawn Gallagher

Faculty observer: Shaun P. Cook

Date: September 1st, 2017

Course: PSYC 212 (Statistics and Research Design II)

OBJECTIVES

The covered material during this class meeting corresponded well to the topics identified in the syllabus as well as the learning outcomes specified for this course. Specifically, Dr. Gallagher was discussing terminology such as value and variable, central tendency, as well as frequency distributions and histograms, all of which are review of material from the course prerequisite, PSYC 211. This is eminently appropriate as this class session was during the first week of the semester, and, without such review, the students would have a very difficult time mastering the new material to come later in the semester.

PROCESS (Instructional Organization, Strategy, Materials)

Complex statistical concepts were excellently presented by Dr. Gallagher, who employed various teaching techniques. These techniques included class discussion, problem-based learning, lecture-style presentation of materials via the overhead and chalkboard, and solving example problems (a deftly handled mix considering this was all accomplished in a 50-minute period). Dr. Gallagher prepared an assignment sheet for the students, which he passed out and used throughout the course. This sheet had data and example problems for the students to solve throughout the class period, which highlighted the points of the class discussion. Dr. Gallagher emphasized active learning techniques, including student volunteering and student questioning. Dr. Gallagher was extensively, and well, prepared for this class.

CLASS RESPONSE (Attentiveness, Questions Raised, Responses to Inquiry, Discussion)

The class was well-attended. All of the registered students were present. It is noteworthy that, while a number of students possessed devices, none were using them during the class. Sitting in the back, I could see that all students were appropriately engaged in the course activities.

Impressively, by the end of the meeting, numerous students had contributed by either asking or answering questions. The students were obviously very comfortable in asking or answering questions, even when their answers were less than accurate. Dr. Gallagher answered the

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questions well, often using them as a launching point to lead the students to other, relevant points.

TEACHER RESPONSE (Enthusiasm, Motivation, Attitude, Quality of Communication, Other)

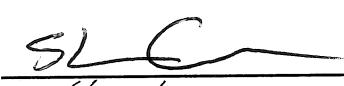
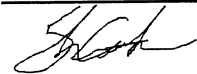
Dr. Gallagher is an excellent instructor. He uses a variety of techniques to keep the students engaged. A simple, yet effective technique is movement – he moves around the class well, using movement to keep the students engaged via proximity. He demonstrates a high level of enthusiasm, which translates to the students and the class atmosphere (which is laudable given this is a statistics class.). Other tools that Dr. Gallagher uses well is pacing – he provides difficult concepts with examples, and provides time for these concepts to be understood. Then, he applies the information through the solving of example problems – all of this is paced well so that the students can grasp the concepts and ask questions, when appropriate. Finally, Dr. Gallagher does an excellent job using facial expression and the character in his face to stress and augment his points.

Dr. Gallagher does well in using a myriad of effective pedagogical techniques throughout the class session. These include his encouragement of note taking as well as his use of humor. Dr. Gallagher uses humor effectively to grab student attention and relate the material. He also addresses students by name, which helps him connect to the students and helps connect students to the class. He knows their names, so early in the semester, as he provided name cards which are sitting in front of each student. Such planning demonstrates his commitment to his students and their learning.

It is obvious that Dr. Gallagher is a dedicated and motivated teacher. He encourages questions from the students, answering them clearly and effectively. He consistently refers to past experiences from the course prerequisites, to relate the current material to knowledge (he knows) the students already possess. He also regularly dovetails his presentation of the information with applications of the material, demonstrating the importance of the material for the students.

CONCLUSIONS

This is a required, four-credit statistics lab for Psychology majors. This is one of the most challenging course in the department, in part because it simultaneously demands mastery of content and skill. Dr. Gallagher masterfully addresses the content and the skills. Despite this being statistics, I have no doubts the students would report on how much they learned (and understood), as well as how much they enjoyed the class. This course is critical for success in future Psychology courses, some of which I teach. From that perspective, I am confident that Dr. Gallagher's students are prepared to succeed in these courses.

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CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

Department of Psychology

Faculty Member Observed: Shawn Gallagher

Faculty Observer: Karena Rush


Date: 8/29/17

Course: Psyc 211 Statistics and Experimental Design


Class objectives:

1. To introduce the concept of validity
2. To discuss various disciplines in psychology
3. To have students generate database to be used throughout the semester

I had the pleasure of observing Dr. Gallagher teach a Statistics and Experimental Design lab to twelve of our Psychology majors and minors. Dr. Gallagher started the class by effectively defining the concept of validity using practical, easy to understand language paired with multiple examples. He then furthered the students understanding of validity by having students engage in an activity that he developed in his area of expertise. Dr. Gallagher described Prosopagnosia, a disorder of facial recognition, and then had students engage in an activity to determine their own ability to recognize faces by showing the students faces of famous people from when they were children. Following this activity, he discussed the validity of the activity as a means for identifying individuals with prosopagnosia. He then had the students do a second facial recognition activity with current pictures of the same famous people. To introduce the concept of confounding variables, the students were instructed to compare their results from Activity 1 to Activity 2 and consider other variables that may have influenced their performance. This hands on activity gave the students a direct experience with the concepts of confounds and validity. All of the students were actively engaged throughout the activities with over 75% of the students asking or answering questions during this activity alone. Next, Dr. Gallagher had the students engage in a data entry activity. The data from this activity will reportedly be used throughout the

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semester to provide students with additional real life examples of statistical concepts to be covered. During this activity, Dr. Gallagher walked around the classroom and helped students individually as needed. This one-on-one approach allowed each student to work at their own pace and was particularly helpful for one student who was having difficulty. Overall, Dr. Gallagher used a perfect blend of methods for teaching including lecture, class discussion and activities. His use of both technology and the chalk board kept students actively engaged in note taking and participation.


Dr. Gallagher's easy going teaching style led to 100% participation from students by the end of the class. At the beginning of the class, one student stated, "Just a random question..." to which Dr. Gallagher enthusiastically responded "Yes! Give me a random question, we are just talking here!" This response set the stage for strong class participation and is a perfect example of how Dr. Gallagher encourages his students to discuss the information at hand. I believe Dr. Gallagher's use of humor paired with his ability to develop relevant hands-on activities using his expertise also contributed to the high level of class engagement and student focus.

Conclusion

Dr. Gallagher is one of our most sought out instructors. In observing this class, I can see why he is so well liked by our students. While he is known for having high expectations and his classes are known for being challenging, he is also known for being a highly competent instructor who can make even the most challenging concepts easy to understand. He is highly visible and accessible to students. Given his laid back personality, students find him easy to talk to. In addition, his expertise paired with humor allows him to engage his students using real life examples further assisting students' competency in our statistic and laboratory courses. In summary, Dr. Gallagher is an exceptional instructor who is well respected by both his colleagues and students. He teaches some of our most challenging courses and this observation clearly demonstrates his effectiveness as a teacher.

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