

## Coding & Analyzing Narrative Evidence: Actionable vs. Descriptive<sup>1</sup>

Narrative evidence can come from student letters, open-ended FCQ responses, interviews, focus groups, in-class surveys, etc. Some student comments identify specific behaviors or attributes of teaching and offer **actionable** feedback for change. Other comments offer **descriptive** insight into a student's quality of experience. Distinguishing between the two can inform both evaluation and continuous improvement. QTI in a Box offers tools and processes for evaluators to categorize, code, and analyze narrative student-voice evidence for better teaching evaluation; teaching improvement; and more consistent, equitable evaluation. Departments may consider these approaches or select others for how to use student-voice evidence in QTI plans.

**Outstanding Instruction--(Coded as "+"):** Respondents describe a powerful learning experience that transformed their thinking; a teacher who reached them skillfully and with multiple, different, and timely approaches; an engaging learning environment that allowed them to understand why the content is relevant for them. Student feedback is extensively positive across multiple voices. Simply stated, students experienced amazing instruction.

**Good Learning Experience--(Coded as "="):** Respondents describe a learning experience that helped them mature intellectually, that provided course content in a positive way, and that met expectations for a university course. Students could get help when they needed it, and assessments aligned with content delivered. Students felt respected and understood the material in the course. Simply stated, students experienced a good class.

**Negative Learning Experience--(Coded as "-"):** Respondents describe negative learning experiences, such as experiencing boredom, disconnection from the course material and other students, and instructional pacing that left them behind. The class environment was not welcoming, the instructor's techniques did not engage students, and assessment did not match content. The problems students describe fall within the instructor's control and are not personal attacks. Simply stated, students experienced a poor class.

**Random, Non-Evaluative Comments (Coded as "?"):** These responses might be personalized toward the instructor (good or bad); unrelated to teaching; inappropriate; and/or not relevant to evaluation. Often, evaluators can simply set aside these comments. In some cases, a pattern could emerge from such comments. Simply stated, students expressed something.

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**Quality of Experience--(Coded as "QE+"; "QE="; "QE-"):** Some narrative student comments describe *feelings*, good or bad, the student had about the instructor/course. QE comments offer insight into how an instructor reaches students, even when these comments offer weak evidence about actual teaching practice. Simply stated, students described a feeling about being in class with a given professor.

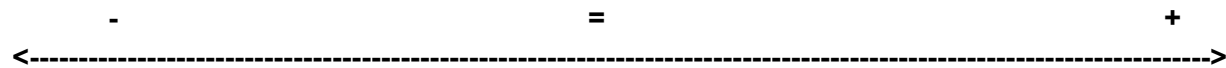
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<sup>1</sup> Developed by Heidi Loshbaugh as a resource for the A&S Quality Teaching Initiative

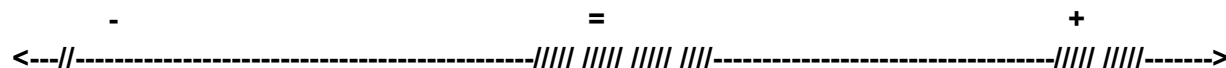
## Quality of Experience Descriptive Scale

This scale offers a “thermometer” for evaluators to quickly gauge students’ QE descriptions, such as, “Boring”; “Interesting”; “Awesome”; “Amazing”; “Such a great guy.”

### QE Scale



A completed scale might look like this:



Reviewers could offer a brief summary describing the number, range, and tone of QE responses. A synthesis of the responses could indicate potential for improvement.

### *Example Summary Statement:*

This evaluator reviewed student feedback for Dr. X’s Discipline Introductory Course, Section 1, Fall 2020. These data come from open-ended FCQ responses and were descriptive of the course experience but not specifically actionable. Responses ranged from “negative” (2 responses) to “outstanding” (10 responses). There were nineteen (19) “good” responses. Students described feeling challenged, learning a lot, and having enjoyed the course.

Of note for improvement: students described lectures to be sometimes disorganized and stated that Dr. X tended to start class late and also tended to run over the end time.