HEARING THE STUDENTS’ VOICE: USING NSSE COMMENTS

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OVERVIEW

- Context and Changes
- Facts and Figures
- How to use student comments
- In the field
CONTEXT
OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

- End of survey
- Data provided to schools
- Source of additional information
- Valuable yet under-utilized
CHANGES TO THE NSSE PROMPT

**Default:** If you have any additional comments that you’d like to share on the quality of your educational experience, please type them below.

**Satisfaction:** What has been most satisfying about your experience so far at this institution, and what has been most disappointing?

**Learning:** Please describe the most significant learning experience you have had so far at this institution?

**Changes:** What one change would you like to see implemented that would improve the educational experience at this institution?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carnegie Category (N)</th>
<th>Most Popular New Prompt</th>
<th>Most Popular New Prompt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Highest (29)</td>
<td>Satisfaction (50%)</td>
<td>Changes (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Higher (37)</td>
<td>Changes (40%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Moderate (43)</td>
<td>Changes (37%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Large (173)</td>
<td>Changes (41%)</td>
<td>Changes (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Medium (80)</td>
<td>Changes (43%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Small (47)</td>
<td>Changes (57%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baccalaureate A&amp;S (96)</td>
<td>Learning (40%)</td>
<td>Changes (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baccalaureate Diverse Fields (92)</td>
<td>Changes (44%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Carnegie Categories (38)</td>
<td>Changes (48%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
31.74% of eligible US students provided a comment

On average,

- 51.2% of students receiving “Satisfaction” prompt left a comment
- 44.7% of students receiving “Changes” prompt left a comment
- 43.5% of students receiving “Learning” prompt left a comment
- 11.3% of students receiving the default prompt left a comment
## LENGTH AND CONTENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompt</th>
<th>Avg. Words (SD)</th>
<th>Avg. Characters (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Changes</td>
<td>48.4 (52.1)</td>
<td>277.8 (295.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Default</td>
<td>65.3 (82.1)</td>
<td>370.6 (464.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>42.3 (46.9)</td>
<td>240.5 (262.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>57.4 (62.9)</td>
<td>330.5 (354.5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **5000 character limit**
- Most comments were about 304 characters, or 53 words, in length
- What could you say about your institution in 1-2 tweets? Under 60 words?
USING COMMENT DATA
LIMITATIONS

- Analyses are always limited by data
- Text data are messy & complex.
- Comments provided to institutions have not been cleaned
  - 2.8% of students leaving a comment in 2017 administration replied with “N/A”, “no”, “nothing,” etc.
  - Sensitive information regarding professors, staff, administrators, other students
  - Vulgarity, insults, trolling, etc.
QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

- Focus on richness, depth of meaning, exploring phenomena across texts
- Reading comments
- Keyword or phrase searches
- Sentiment analysis
- Traditional conversation or text analysis
- Tools available:
  - Nvivo
  - Microsoft Word
  - Google's cloud-based NLP API*
  - Excel add-ins for Sentiment Analysis
  - Interns!
QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

- Focus on frequency of word occurrences, patterns, etc.
- Cleaning and preparation tends to be greater
- Counts of words or keywords
- Text mining, NLP, and computational linguistics
- Tools available:
  - SPSS Text Analytics
  - SAS Text Analytics
  - WordStat for Stata
  - R: tm, quanteda, ngram packages, etc.
  - Rapidminer
OR BOTH?

- Triangulation can better illustrate and add texture to survey data
  - Complementary methods
  - Adding student comments to infographics, charts, etc., of quantitative information
  - Use NSSE Institutional Report or Major Field Report as point of departure
Institutional Examples

How has your institution used students’ comments?
Sanchez, Copridge, Clark, & Cole. “It’s not me, it’s you’: An Analysis of Factors that Influence the Departure of First-Year Students of Color”.

BrckaLorenz, Yuhas, Zilvinskis. “Using Write-In Responses to Improve Survey Measures”.

FINAL THOUGHTS
THANKS FOR JOINING US!

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Resources
- Rapidminer: https://rapidminer.com/solutions/text-mining/
- NVivo: http://www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo/what-is-nvivo
- Excel Sentiment Analysis add-in (guide): http://sfmagazine.com/post-entry/may-2016-excel-sentiment-analysis/
- Google Cloud NLP API: https://cloud.google.com/products/