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Student Course Evaluations: Research, Models and Trends (Pamela Gravestock & Emily Gregor-Greenleaf, University of Toronto, October 2008)

Student Course Evaluations: Research, Models and Trends represents the first review and summary of existing research on student course evaluations from a Canadian perspective. The study aims to capture and synthesize the key issues and findings regarding the validity and utility of student course evaluations from the substantial body of scholarship in this area.

The paper finds that student course evaluations are a widely-used and generally reliable tool for assessing teaching quality. However, there are a variety of issues that persist around the use of student evaluation and prevent their more effective use: myths and misconception about results; unclear definitions of quality teaching; poor user education; poor presentation of results; and inconsistent policies for use.

By addressing these issues, the authors suggest student course evaluations can become better formative tools for improving teaching performance and assessing teaching quality at a system level.

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