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How Do We Know How Students Experience Higher Education? : On the Use of Student Surveys /
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Abstract

How students experience higher education? What activities they conduct inside and outside
classroom? Are they satisfied with teaching, with learning environments and student services? These
questions are of central importance for university officials, for prospective students and their families,
and for the state as the main funder of higher education in Europe. Student surveys have become one
of the largest and most frequently used data source for quality assessment in higher education. The
widespread use of student survey data raises questions of reliability and validity of student survey
data used as evidence in higher education decision-making. This chapter addresses the development
of student survey instruments, and the use of student data analytics for the improvement of teaching
and learning practices and learning environments. First, we discuss policy context in which student

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survey research has proliferated. Next, we offer an overview of the most influential student survey designs and discuss their limitations. Third, we present different institutional approaches to student data analytics as part of institutional research. In conclusion, we offer recommendations to policy-makers regarding quality standards for survey design, and the use of student survey data as evidence in decision-making. Among other things we suggest that the advances in educational technology and students' universal use of technology offer new possibilities for data collection directly from students. Methods, such as digital ethnography, which seeks to adapt qualitative methods to digital use, are particularly promising. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)

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