

# Evaluation Aimed at Improving the Effectiveness of the Teaching

TLHE Project. December, 2015

Morten Nyboe Tabor

## Introduction

- Joint project with Jesper Rüdiger Sørensen from the Department of Economics and Lise Stenbæk and Lotte Sjøsted from the Teaching and Learning Unit of Social Sciences.
- Revise the midterm and end-of-semester evaluations in the mandatory 3rd year courses Microeconomics II and Econometrics II. Both courses are large classrooms with 200+ students signed up.
- Overall aim is to provide suggestions for how to improve the evaluations in the Economics program.

The end-of-semester evaluation were performed after the deadline for this project, so the following is based only on the midterm evaluation.

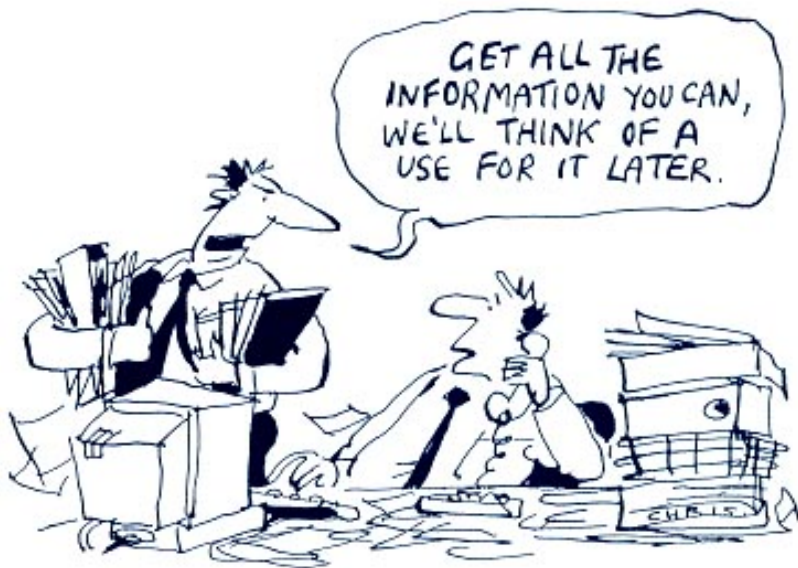
## What Did We Want to Achieve?

- Less focus on assessment of the teacher, the teacher's preparations, ability to communicate, etc. (external quality control).
- More focus on which learning activities have helped student learning and how they can be improved (internal use for the teacher).
- Facilitate reflections on the students' own learning process (student responsibility for learning).

# Four Challenges

*and how we tried to deal with them...*

# 1. Which Questions To Ask?



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- We made a “question bank” with questions on various topics.
- I selected those I found most relevant and added a few.
- Questions focus on:
  - ① Learning activities.
  - ② Preparations.
  - ③ Expectations.
  - ④ The teaching in general.
  - ⑤ Feedback.
  - ⑥ Assessment of the course overall.
  - ⑦ Suggestions for improvements.

## 2. Rating Questions or Open Questions?



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- Open questions with comments often more useful than ratings, but only open questions not feasible with 200+ students.
- Chose a combination of multiple response questions where students can select several options, rating questions, and comments questions.
- For multiple choice and rating questions, an “*Other*” option was added to allow students to add additional comments (32 comments in total).
- “*Do you have any additional comments you find relevant?*” as the last question (43 comments, two pages, some of the most valuable feedback).



### 3. How to Improve the Response Rates?

Did you hear the one  
about the respondent who  
completed our survey?

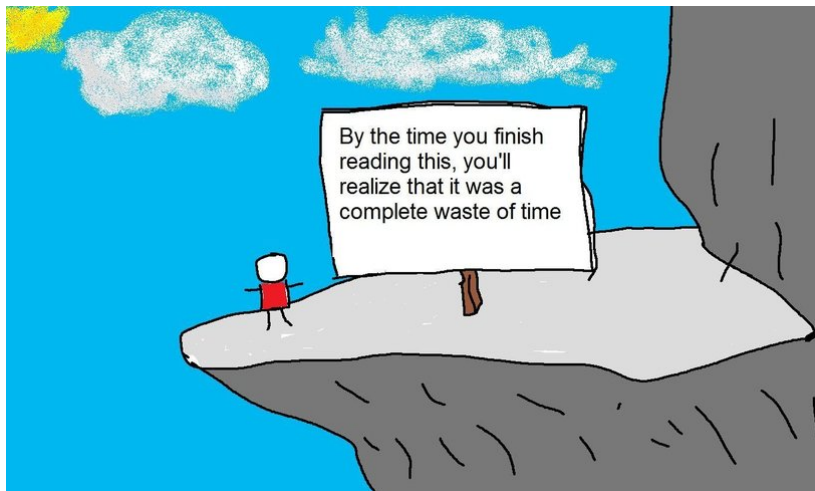
Yeah, neither did we.



### 3. How to Improve the Response Rates?

- Evaluations during the lectures, plus available on Absalon for a few days afterwards.
- 107 responses out of 132 students present at the lecture (some students replied in groups), plus 10 responses following the lecture.
- In total 205 active students – 225 students enrolled.
- Response rate of  $117/205 = 57$  percent.
- On average it took 7 minutes to complete the evaluation.

## 4. How To Get Students to Feel that it Matters?



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- Meta-communication about why we do it combined with an articulated promise that changes will be made based on the evaluation results.
- Student involvement in selecting questions to foster co-ownership.
- Openness: All results available on Absalon.
- Follow-up on results and changes made based on evaluations.

# Technicalities

*or why I did not use the Survey tool on Absalon...*

# Typeform

I used Typeform ([www.typeform.com](http://www.typeform.com)) and can highly recommend it!

- Free. Easy to use. Custom design. Works on all devices.
- Can be embedded directly on Absalon.

Why Typeform over the Survey tool on Absalon:

- Allows for “*Other*” option in multiple response questions.
- Gives me the results for each individual in an Excel spreadsheet.  
Makes it possible to dig into results.

Final report is 11 pages with graphs and comments.

# Example 1: Typeform Question

1 → Preparation

a. How do you prepare for the lectures?\*

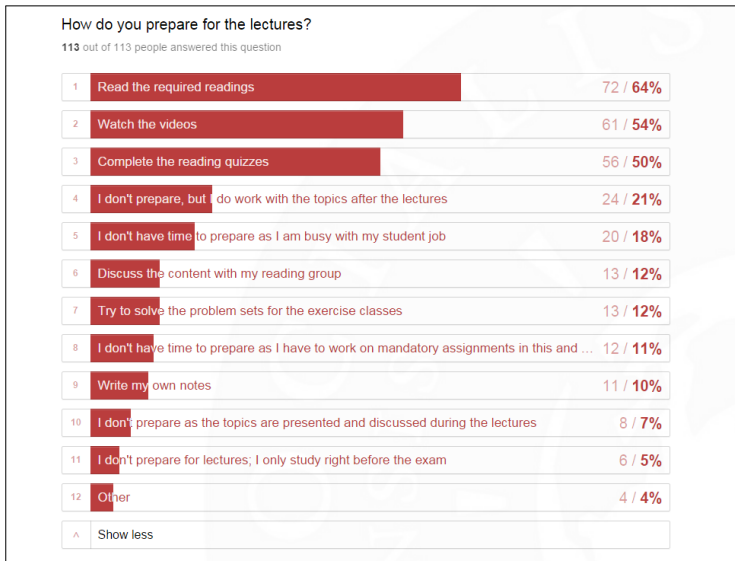
Choose as many as you like

- A Read the required readings ✓
- B Write my own notes
- C Discuss the content with my reading group
- D Complete the reading quizzes ✓
- E Watch the videos ✓
- F Try to solve the problem sets for the exercise classes
- G I don't have time to prepare as I have to work on mandatory assignments in this and other courses
- H I don't have time to prepare as I am busy with my student job
- I I don't prepare for lectures; I only study right before the exam
- J I don't prepare as the topics are presented and discussed during the lectures
- K I don't prepare, but I do work with the topics after the lectures
- L Other

**Ok** ✓ press ENTER

1 of 10 answered

## Example 2: Typeform Results





# What Did I Learn?

*And, more importantly, what did I change?*

# What Did I Learn?

## Student preparation:

- For the lectures 1/3 of the students are fully prepared, 1/3 partly prepared, and 1/3 not prepared at all (student jobs, work on mandatory assignments, etc.).
- Students do not solve problem sets before exercises!  
44 percent read the problem sets, 10-16 percent try to solve them. In the exercises the TA presents a complete solution based on the assumption that students tried to solve the problems at home.

## Learning activities:

- Reading quizzes and videos before lectures are useful despite that not all students use them (58 and 54 percent say they help their learning, higher percentages among those who say they use them).
- Students learn from Socrative Quizzes during lectures despite frequent bad results.
- Students find annotations on pre-prepared slides very helpful.

# What Did I Change?

## Some changes based on evaluations:

- More short videos, in particular with introductions to key topics and empirical examples with estimations. Currently 20 videos of max. 10 minutes with 4000+ views in total.
- Incorporate Socrative Quizzes better during lectures.
- Dropped short student presentations/discussions during lectures as students did not find them useful.
- More focus on articulating learning outcomes for the major topics.
- We did an experiment with the exercise classes, where students worked on solving the problem sets themselves instead of the TA giving a mini-lecture with a complete solution.  
Based on very positive initial feedback this change will be fully implemented from next semester by Rasmus Søndergaard Pedersen.

## What Did I Change?

The evaluation results changed my perception of how students work with the learning activities and what they gain from it.

Consequently that changed my perception of my role as a teacher:

- I offer the students various learning activities, but it is their responsibility to use them and learn from them.
- This is articulated directly during lectures to create co-responsibility between students and me as a teacher.

# My Recommendations

*Three good advices from my experience*

# My Recommendations

- 1 Spend time on evaluations in class to increase the response rate.
- 2 Meta-communication, student involvement in evaluation design, and openness about results and changes to make students feel that it matters and is being taken seriously.
- 3 Focus on the teaching and impact of learning activities.

Thanks!

Feel free to contact me: [morten.nyboe.tabor@econ.ku.dk](mailto:morten.nyboe.tabor@econ.ku.dk)