Dear James,

Thanks again for inviting us to come with an advice concerning the evaluation of teacher quality and development. Here, the UCU Council has drafted an advice concerning the *course evaluations*, which will inevitably remain a major element of any new evaluation method.

Our advice is based on two surveys that were done:
In 2016, 20 UCU students were interviewed and asked to comment on the existing survey questions, and to provide suggestions for improvement. In February 2018, UCU teachers (mailing lists UCU Teachers Spring Semester-L & UCU Teachers Fall Semester-L) were asked to complete an online survey (using Likert scales and open questions) with the same aims. 31 teachers reacted. An extensive overview of the main findings is full of good suggestions and can be found at the back of this advice.

Based on these findings, we have distilled the following main considerations when designing new course evaluations.

(a) **Re-think the purpose of the course evaluation;** who is it for and what happens with the results? Based on this, a new format should be created and questions should be framed to reflect this.

(b) **Remove and adjust existing questions;** any new setup is likely to involve some or even many of the existing questions. Nothing wrong with that, but we advise to consider removing some questions (e.g. expert, genuine interest of teacher) or at least tweak most of these questions to avoid ambiguity, make them more appropriate (e.g. number of hours) but also consumerism. Perhaps some issues relate more to the entire track and focus groups can be somehow organised more effectively?

(c) **A new format should distinguish between course quality and teacher performance, and probe student investment.** Although they are clearly intertwined, questions should separate course quality and teacher performance. In addition, student should be triggered to consider and share their own investment before allowing them to comment on certain topics: did they read the course outline before the course and were their expectations correct, did they read the syllabus, did they go to the teacher for feedback, did they do the homework etc.
We could imagine a format dividing the evaluations into 3 sections:
(S) Student investment > I had done well in the prerequisite courses
(C) Course setup, materials, organisation etc. > The course prerequisites were appropriate and prepared me well for this course
(T) Teacher evaluation > The teacher showed awareness of the entry level of the students and acted accordingly

(d) **The 'overall course quality score' should be removed or converted into a more valuable number;** we have serious concerns over the use of the 'Overall quality score'. To summarise the quality of a course and its teacher in a single grade that is often not a good reflection of the other results does not befit an educationally innovative institute as UCU. If our college considers a single summarising number helpful for discussion and administration, it should be a more valuable number that is based on the outcome of all questions. For instance, the 'overall course quality' could be represented by a (weighted) average across all other elements.

(e) **Consider value of numbers and using only qualitative data;** there are serious concerns about the statistical validity of these evaluations, given there are only 28 students or less in the course, with on average only a small majority of students responding. Increasing the student respond rate is therefore crucial to be a fair reflection and avoid any bias. Before committing to a new setup, the option to get rid of all numerical evaluations and focus on qualitative data should also be considered. As UCU Council, we find the qualitative comments often back up the numerical data anyway.

(f) **Try to improve student response rates;** we advise to take the following into consideration: (1) the length of the course evaluation, particularly since students are asked to fill out 4 and sometimes also a tutor evaluation, (2) the timing: students are asked to complete them in the busiest period of the semester. Could this somehow be changed? (3) encourage teachers to schedule 20 minutes at the end of the semester, which has been proven to be a simple but efficient approach to increase response rates (4) teachers should be encouraged to explain in the first session of the following semester what they did with the course evaluations. This will increase the involvement of both teacher and students in the process.

Of course, course evaluations should be only part of a few set up to evaluate teacher quality and development. We can envision several factors that should be considered, including:
- Peer-to-peer evaluation > what would be the goal, and what practical setup can make it meaningful
- Midterm feedback > experiences in the SCI department and recently in the HUM department are generally positive, yet in the SSC it was not deemed a success. We think training of the moderators and transparency of why particular courses are selected is key in making it work.
- Peer-coaching ('intervisie') > Despite the community feeling on campus, teaching a course at UCU is quite an isolated job, in particular for external teachers. Where do teachers, notably new teachers, go with their questions about practicalities or student cases?
- Implementation > good intentions are not enough, how to arrange things to make sure it is actually done? What will motivate and enable teachers to attend classes from other teachers? How will it enhance their career prospects?

We think that the next step in the process, besides improving course evaluations, involves exploring how this is done in other faculties, and discuss with them what works and what does not. Despite initially welcoming the trust in us to come up with an advice on the entire project, with our time constraints and limited relevant expertise and network, the council does not feel equipped to deliver the quality this important topic deserves within a reasonable time. Our final advice is therefore that a small team of experts (e.g. in survey methods, psychology, educational research) take charge of this next step. We are willing to help wherever we can.

Kind regards,

The UCU Council

Attached:
- Summary of student evaluation (2016)
- Summary of teacher evaluation (2018)

Summary of students' survey on Course Evaluations

May 2016

Methodology
The following compilation was made by interviewing 20 UCU students and asking them to comment on the existing survey questions, and to provide commentary on the following questions/topics:
- What is your overall impression of the Survey?
- What could be added or changed in the Survey?
- Please provide any additional comments regarding your experience with filling in the survey

General Comments on the Survey

1. On Student Motivation
Students have little motivation to fill in the survey, mainly due to the following issues:
- Since students have to fill the survey 4 times per semester (5 if you would include tutor evaluation), its length is perceived to be too long.
- Students find the survey has little impact on their academic life and their actual classes, as it is held at the end of the semester.

2. On Assessing the Instructors
- The survey doesn't account for the situation in which a course is taught by multiple instructors. Suggestion: split the survey in order to assess multiple instructors.
- Evaluations are very instructor focused, which leaves less room to assess, for example, the books and materials used in the course.
- The survey is vulnerable to biased answers potentially caused by a student's negative experience with the instructor (e.g. he/she wasn't open to the student's ideas)

3. On Assessing the Course
- There is no room to express opinions about the place of a course in a given track or within UCU's Liberal Arts & Sciences philosophy, as all questions are course specific.
- There is no way to address whether the pre-requisites for a course are pertinent, or whether they provide enough background.
- The visualization of the results is helpful to assess where the mean lies

Comments On the Existing Questions

Note: All the questions of the survey have been included in this section. Only those in bold are the ones which received commentary or suggestions for improvement.

- ***The feedback on my performance is helpful:***

- o This question implies that some form of feedback existed in the first place and that is was accessible. Which need not be the case, given the fact that sometimes students need to ask the instructor repetitively in order to receive (valuable) feedback
  - o Suggestion: add one or two questions beforehand asking whether feedback is sufficiently accessible

- ● ***Active student involvement is encouraged***
  - o This concept differs per instructor. Sometimes it is the case that instructors force students to participate in order to fulfil the 10% participation grade (e.g. by writing down who asks questions, regardless of relevance, in class or during presentations)

- ● ***The instructor(s) is/are an expert in his/her field***
  - o Suggestion: maybe rephrase whether the instructor is able to communicate his/her expertise properly

- ● ***The instructor(s) explain(s) clearly***
  - o Suggestion: Possibly rephrase this as "The instructor is able to communicate clearly." In such way, the question goes beyond in class explanations but also addresses the way in which course manual is set up, expectation from assignments, etc.

- ● ***The instructor(s) illustrate(s) theory by using examples from research or daily events***
  - o Not necessarily applicable to every course. For some courses such examples are not expected.

- ● ***The instructor(s) is/are flexible enough to meet individual learning needs***
  - o Question is difficult to interpret. Suggestion: rephrase in a different manner

- ● ***The instructor(s) has/have a genuine interest in students***
  - o Needs rephrasing to provide more objectivity: E.g. How supportive/involved is the instructor with respect to a student's personal needs

- ● ***Outside of class hours, how much time did you spend on this course on average per week?***
  - o It is difficult to provide an objective answer to this question at the end of the semester. This is given by the fact that students are preparing for finals and time spent per course increases in comparison to preceding weeks. Additionally, most students no dot keep quantitative data on the amount of time they spend per course

Suggestions Questions for Addition

- ● Would you recommend this course to other UCU students and why?
  - o With the possibility of answering this question openly (through a text box) instead of providing a ranking
- ● How well did the course materials contribute to the course?

- How well does this course fit into the UCU Liberal Arts and Sciences curriculum/approach?
- A question allowing to assess accessibility of the instructor for questions/consultations outside of class hours.
  - Purpose of the suggestion: Some courses might need additional support which cannot be provided for during class hours. (Some instructors have this availability while others don't)
- A question on: *how the student evaluates his/her own contribution to a course and how well the student thinks he/she did in the courses.*
  - Purpose of the suggestion: to address potential biases towards the course caused by a student's low final grade.

Additional comments

- Students don't always know that the evaluation is also aims to assess the instructor. i.e. Some students think it only aims to improve the course.
- Students appreciate it very much when instructors straight-up ask the class what to improve.
  - Positive aspects of the suggestion: Teachers get direct feedback from the entire class and don't need to wait for the results
  - Negative aspects of the suggestion: Students will never be as honest as this method is not anonymous, and they might have less motivation to fill in the survey as it may feel repetitive.
- Students would like to have (better promoted) access to previous course evaluations
- Results of the evaluations provide students with very little information/insight.

Summary of teachers' survey on Course Evaluations

February 2018

Dear colleague,

Thank you for taking the time to help us with raising intellectual input to improve the course evaluations collectively.

Below, you are asked to give your opinion on whether we should remove (1) or keep (3) each particular question (enter 2 if you are ambivalent or indifferent). If you have ideas or suggestions to improve the value of a particular question, for instance by rephrasing or replacing it with a better question, we encourage you to tell us in the follow up to each question (no need to do this for every question).

At the end, you are kindly asked to list any elements (or better, questions) you feel are missing from the existing course evaluations, as well as to raise points that you feel should be taken into account during the re-designing of the evaluations.

We would appreciate if you could complete this survey by Friday March 2nd.

Thank you all,
Your UCU Council

31 reactions

Quick summary of opinion current questions (sorted on score)

Question	Average	Stdev
It was clear to me how I would be assessed	2.9	0.4
Active student involvement is encouraged	2.9	0.4
The instructor(s) explain(s) clearly	2.9	0.4
How would you evaluate the overall quality of this course?	2.9	0.4
The instructor(s) stimulate(s) thinking and my desire to learn	2.8	0.5
The course is well organized	2.8	0.6
The feedback on my performance is helpful	2.8	0.6
The instructor(s) illustrate(s) theory by using examples from research or daily events	2.8	0.6
The instructor's fluency in English is sufficient	2.7	0.6
Class activities offer extra depth/context to course readings	2.7	0.6
The degree of difficulty in this course was...	2.7	0.7
I learned a great deal in this course	2.7	0.7
My interest in the subject matter has increased as a consequence of this course	2.6	0.7
Outside of class hours, how much time did you spend on this course on average per week?s	2.6	0.8
The course's content and skill development connect well to those of the prerequisite course	2.5	0.7
The instructor(s) has/have a genuine interest in students	2.4	0.8
The instructor(s) is/are flexible enough to meet individual learning needs	2.3	0.8
The instructor(s) is/are an expert in his/her field	2.1	0.8

## The course's content and skill development connect well to those of the prerequisite course(s)

30 reacties
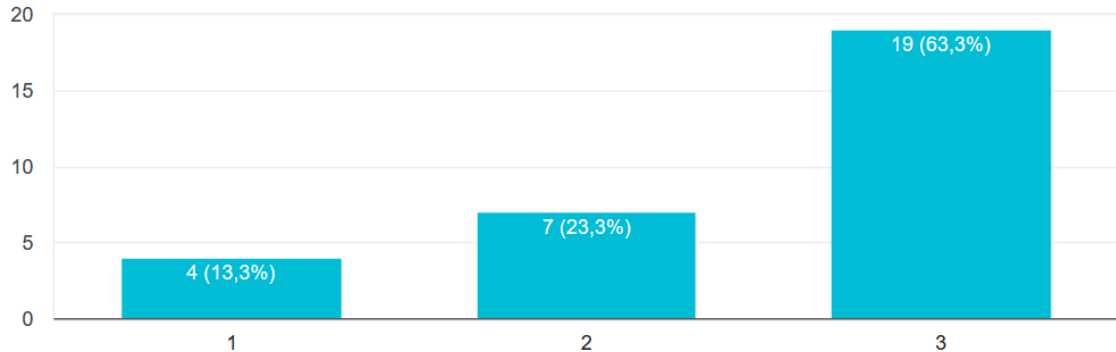
- Hardly students have a clue about how to perform this type of assessment. Even among teachers disagreements exist. There is no unifying method to safely assess the matter.
- Do not ask this question in level 1 courses.
- This question might either have to be re-phrased so that it also applies to interdepartmental courses (and level 2 courses with low-threshold entrance requirements). Also add a question asking the student whether she/he had sufficient information about course content/objectives and assessment - prior to taking the course.
- Only when followed up by the question "If not: why?" (there could be different reasons).
- This question should not be present in the beginners' course form. Most of the students do not pay attention to the message "Leave blank if not applicable" and they answer anyway. The answers are therefore not valid and should not be included in the overall evaluation.
- Ask the student if they see a link between the course they are currently taking and other courses in the track. Make the question more general. It may be that the prerequisite is the "odd man out" - not the course the student is currently taking.

## My interest in the subject matter has increased as a consequence of this course

30 reacties
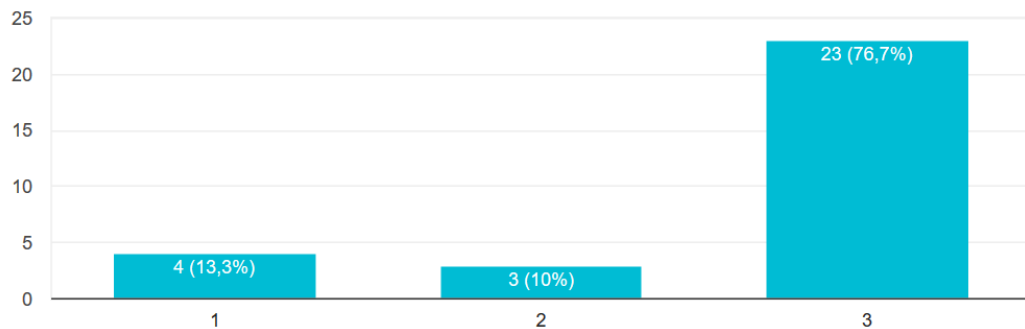
- Not really sure why this is a relevant question. What does it say about the quality of the course? Perhaps rephrase if course descripton matches with actual course
- The question is ambiguous: if I already love the subject, the course may not increase my love of the subject, and yet I ma enjoy the courses and its content.
- Comment: I am not quite sure what an answer to this question actually reveals. It seems to be the kind of student-centered question that I would ask as a tutor
- Did this course fail/meet/surpass your starting expectations?

I learned a great deal in this course

30 reacties
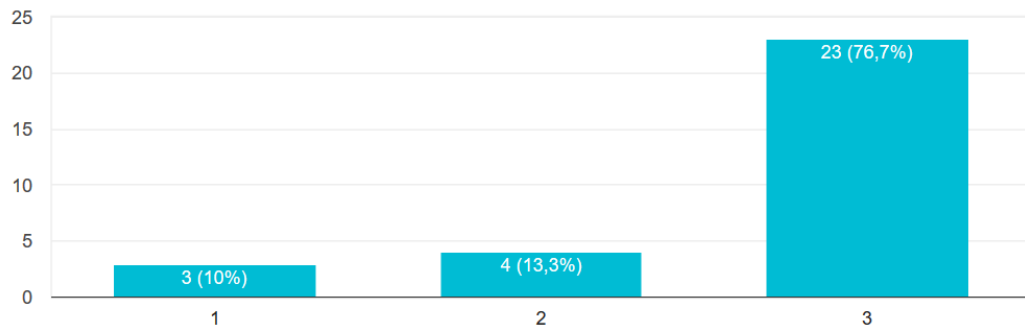
- I find this questions too vague
- too vague, perhaps spefucy based on course objectives
- Students can't judge this effectively (as studies have shown, I believe) and furthermore, how much a student learns in a course is related how much effort the student puts into the course, so this question is much more about the student than about the course itself. If evaluating the course is only one of the goals of the survey, though, a question that is overtly about student effort could be more meaningful -- e.g., "I made an effort to learn as much from this course as possible".
- How do we measure is any two students gauge this in the same manner?
- Rephrase: The course contributed to a better understanding of the topics addressed.
- Comment: It would be nice to supplement such a question with written commenst by the students -it would then trigger reflection. As it is now, the question is a bit vague.
- It could be more specific, e.g. related to the different learning goals (content, skills, interculture, etc.).
- Take out 'great deal' and split in two: my knowledge has increased / my skills have improved

## It was clear to me how I would be assessed

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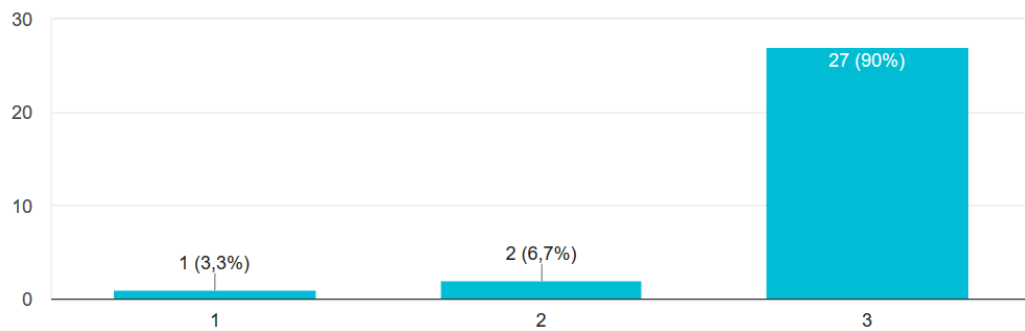
- It would be nice if we could ask as well if students have read the syllabus and the teacher's emails. See the tutor evaluation that starts by asking students if they have prepared themselves. By only asking them if it was clear to them what the assessment was the implied message seems to be that if it was not this was the teacher's fault, which may not be true.
- Addendum: "...and when it was not, I took initiative to get clarification from the instructor."
- Are the assessment criteria clearly spelled out in the syllabus or in the instructions?

The feedback on my performance is helpful

30 reacties
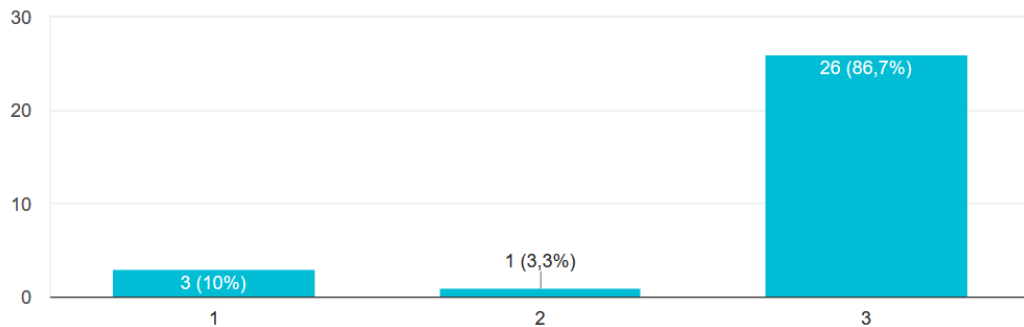
- Students want more and more feedback, this is not doable in the time we get for each student. I think this question should be specified in terms of what is stated in the course manual concenring feedback moments and the actual feedback given during the course
- Similarly here: add a question asking if students have asked for feedback or if they have asked for clarifcation of feedback. I see students complain about this but then hardly anyone comes to office hours or an inspection hour/Skype meeting after the semester if it concerns an exam that took place in the last week of the semester.
- Ideally the question is sensible. In practice, students generally have different ideas of feedback. It is hard to grasp what they expect, and what they are talking about when they use the word "feedback". Last but not least we are moving towards a situation in which the course is nothing but a succession of moments of feedback, and content evaporates before our eyes.
- Why use the present tense here? Stay consistent and continue with the past tense. ('was helpful.')
- Specify the feedback: (1) written papers (2) oral presentations (3) discussion leaderhip
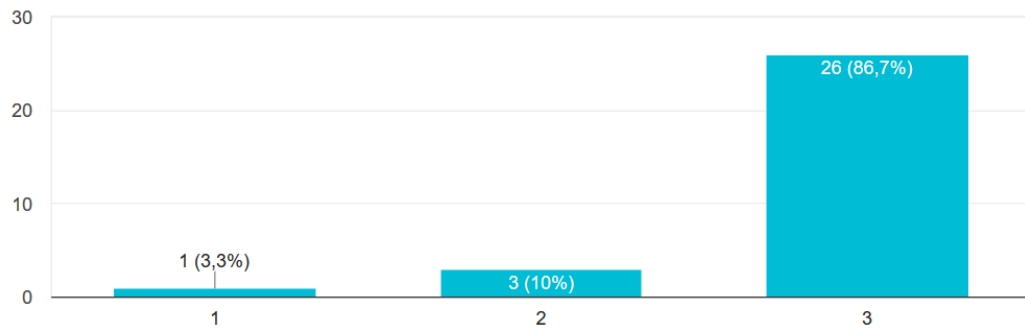
The course is well organized

30 reacties
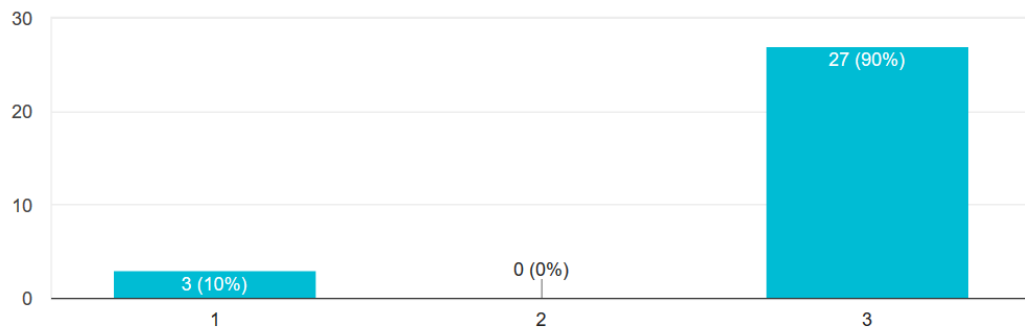
- too generic I guess
- Abnormalities & oddities can be reported by the students easily. There is no need of such a question: there are as many ideas of good organization as students.
- Not sure how to improve this.

## The instructor(s) stimulate(s) thinking and my desire to learn

30 reacties

- presupposes something of all students, which is not Always teh case I guess
- Add an open question: If so, how? If not, how could this be improved?
- Is this a question about a course, or about an instructor?
- Comment: double-barelled question. Thinking is not always the same as desire to learn. Also: why is the focus on the instructor, rather than on the course (contents)?

## Active student involvement is encouraged

30 reacties
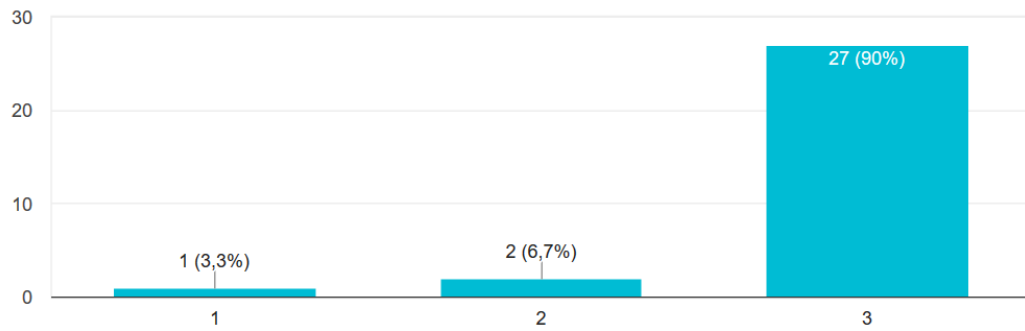
- I find this question a bit vague. It says little about the course in my view. Different groups of students respond differently to the same course qua student involvement.
- Why is active student involvement the responsibility of the teacher? And: again about teacher, not about course.

## The instructor(s) is/are an expert in his/her field

30 reacties
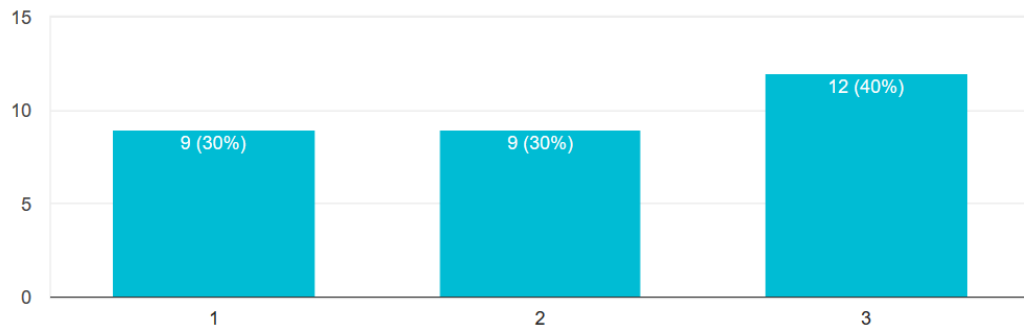
- I am not sure students can state whether instructors are experts in their field
- Students cannot assess this, as not necessarily the lecture being taught is the exact field of expertise of the instructor.
- Students can't really judge this. What they judge when they answer it is probably the instructor's personal confidence, rather than expertise. If the interpreters of the evaluation understand that, OK then.
- How would students know this? Very few have enough knowledge to judge this.
- It is a tricky question. On what grounds can student assess something of the kind? Usually it is mere sensation guiding their evaluation on this item.
- I'm not sure if students should be asked if instructors are experts or not. We know, for example, that such evaluations are biased qua gender. Although getting high scores appeals to our vanity, which is nice.
- How would undergraduate students be able to judge this?
- Just leave it out. Students can't judge this!
- The majority of students lack the qualification to respond to this question in a well-informed way. Most of the time student responses will be impressionistic.
- Comment: (1) this is NOT for students to assess. (2) Imagine that one would conclude that the instructor lacks expertise -that would imply they were exposed to an amateur. (3) Again, I think we a re mixing up a course evaluation with an instructor evaluation -I would like these different issues to be more clearly separated.
- Students are not in a position to assess this.
- Perhaps you can replace this question (because the students really DON"T know if we are experts in our field) with .... The instructor integrates material from outside sources in the lecture. The question should emphasize the fact that instructors rely upon more than just the readings in the book.
- Not up to the student to judge

## The instructor(s) explain(s) clearly

30 reacties
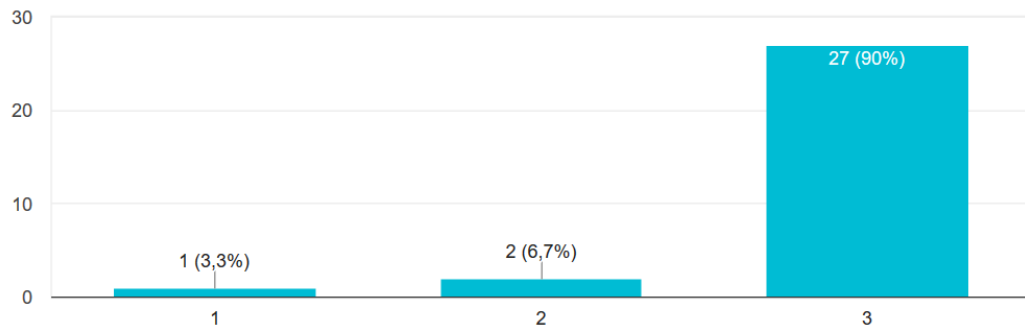
- Not about the course, but the teacher.
- Rephrase for clarity (e.g. instructor stimulated us to understand the underlying mechanism/theories and look for connections between issues...)
- Keep, but as part of an instructor evaluation (or a section in the evaluation that is labelled as such).

The instructor(s) illustrate(s) theory by using examples from research or daily events
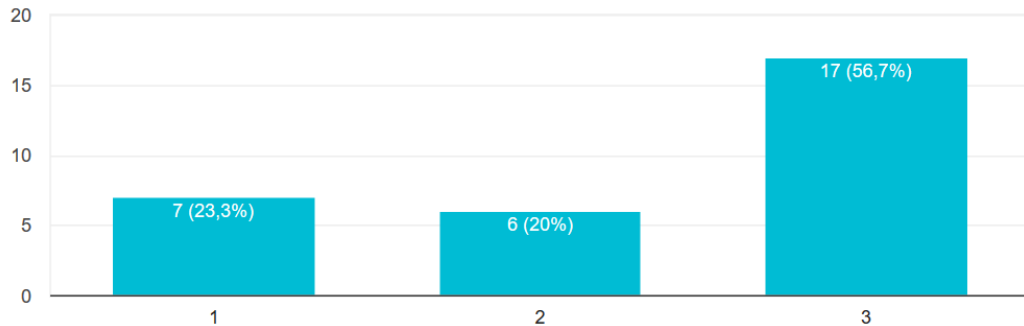
30 reacties
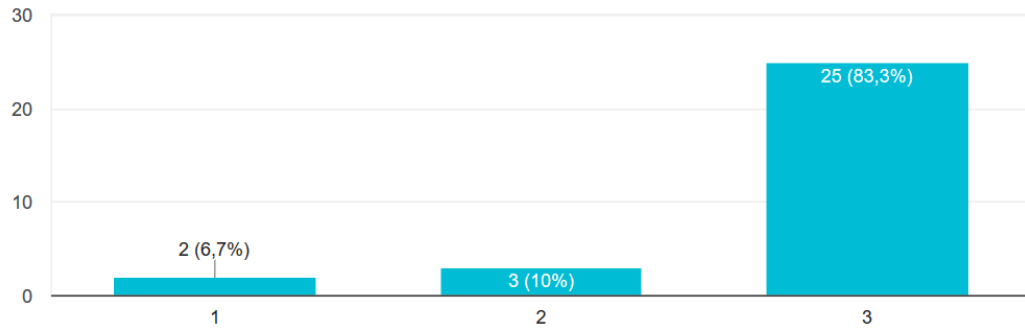
- depends on each course I guess perhaps add a box: N/A or not relevant
- About teacher, not about the course.

## The instructor(s) is/are flexible enough to meet individual learning needs

30 reacties

- I find this too idealistic and even impossible in teh day-to-day teaching with section meetings of almost 30 students
- The question implies that instructors should be flexible enough to meet individual learning needs, but we offer group classes not individual classes. Sets unrealistic expectations.
- Ambiguous: if the teacher refuses an extension, is that inflexible to students' learning needs? And: about the teacher, not the course.
- Unnecessary question. A) Must instructors meet (each) individual's learning needs? And to what extend? I would like the director of education to clarify and specify. B) The underlying assumptions and criteria to be evaluated with this question can already be inferred from answers to previous questions.
- I am not sure what this refers to. There is a certain flexibility that instructors must demonstrate (learning accommodation, for example). Other flexibility may or may not address "needs".
- This question could refer to many (perceived) needs, which makes the (average) answer meaningless.
- I would like to see this question rephrased, and take out the 'flexible enough'.

## The instructor(s) has/have a genuine interest in students

29 reacties
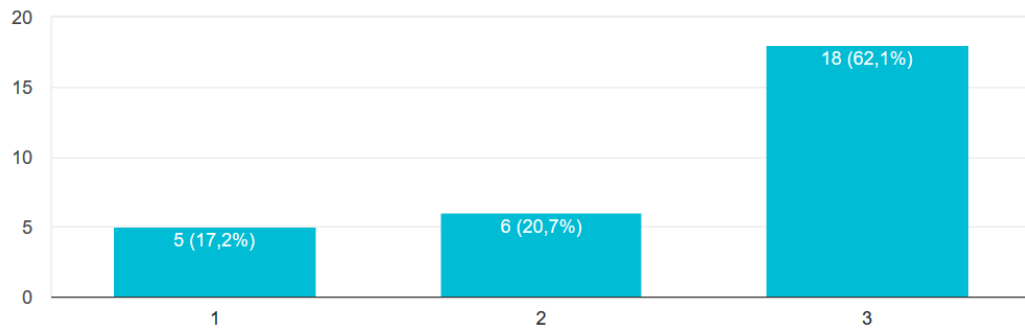
- Unclear what 'genuine' entails
- I find it too vague i would consider replacing with The instructor(s) show(s) care of students' needs, is/are appreciative of students
- why is this relevant?
- Another tricky question for the students. They answer on the basis of mere sensation.
- Not about the course, but the teacher. And: what does this matter?
- Phrased like this, it will only provoke impressionistic responses. And yet I do think it is important to ask about the instructor's motivation and enthusiasm.
- Comment: What "genuine interest" are we supposed to display? Isn't this just asking if the student likes the instructor?

## The instructor's fluency in English is sufficient

30 reacties
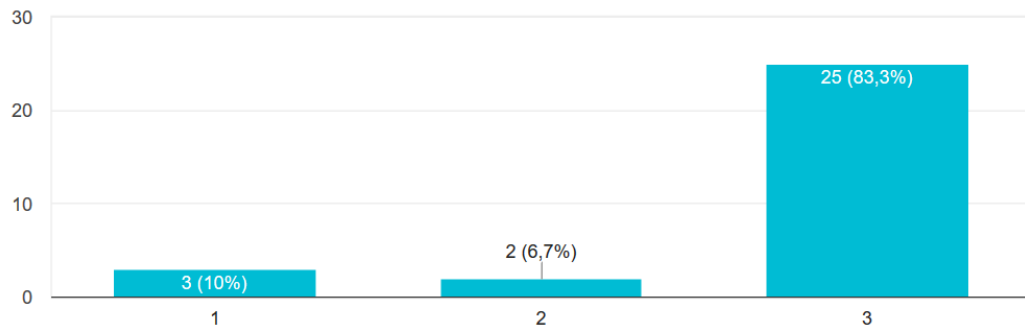
- Students have a tendency to judge accent rather than actual fluency, and regardless may use some kind of absolute standard of fluency that is not relevant for effectiveness in the classroom. Perhaps a question that would serve purposes better would be "The instructor's fluency in English is adequate for the purposes of the course."
- It is true that students cannot be the best judges in this matter. On the other hand many of us are sloppy as far as the use of language is concerned. So having indications in this area is still useful.
- But: again about the teacher, not the course.
- Already covered in the "explains clearly" question
- I would include this question but we should specify it more.
- Comment: Comment: (1) this is NOT for students to assess. (2) Imagine that one would conclude that the instructor's fluency is insufficient. That just should not be possible. It is up to the fellows, heads, of DoE to make sure that instructors are qualified on all relevant aspects.
- 'proficiency in English' is better
- Possible replace this question with: the teacher communicates clearly

## Class activities offer extra depth/context to course readings
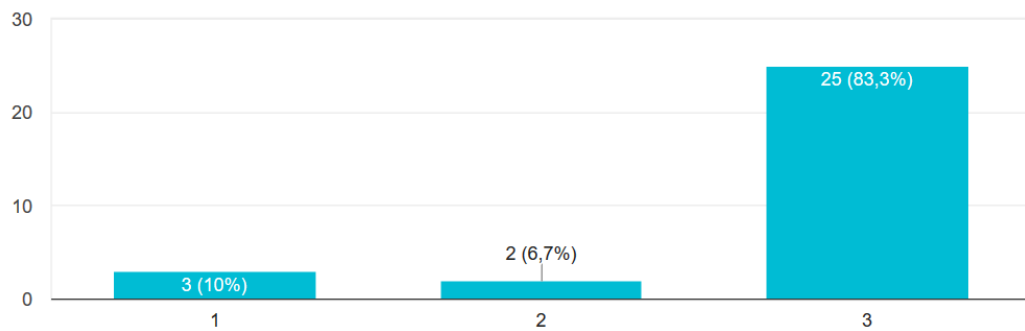
- Not sure all students can judge this equally well (and not sure all students even do the course readings, which makes it even harder to judge whether the activities offer extra depth or content). Shouldn't students somehow be asked to reflect on how much of the course readings they genuinely did?
- The question implies that all that is said that does not offer extra depth/context to course readings is, or might be, superflous or irrelevant. This is not the case often. Windows can be usefully open that are not directly linked to the readings prescribed.
- Delete this question entirely.

Outside of class hours, how much time did you spend on this course on average per week?steps from left to right: 1: < 6 hours 2: 6-10 hours 3: 11-14 hours 4: 15-18 hours 5: > 18 hours

28 reacties
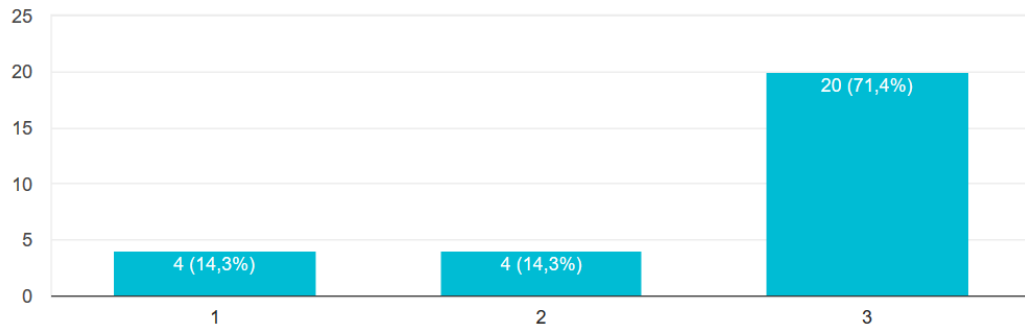
- Suggests quantitative answer but really is not.
- redefine the ranges, to that 10 hours is in the middle of a range and at 3, e.g. <6, 6-8, 9-11, 12-14, >14
- Completely useless question: no one has ever understood what can be done with the results of this question.
- I never look at the results of this question.
- What does this have to do with the quality of the course?
- Not a very useful question. The next one is more important

## The degree of difficulty in this course was...

29 reacties
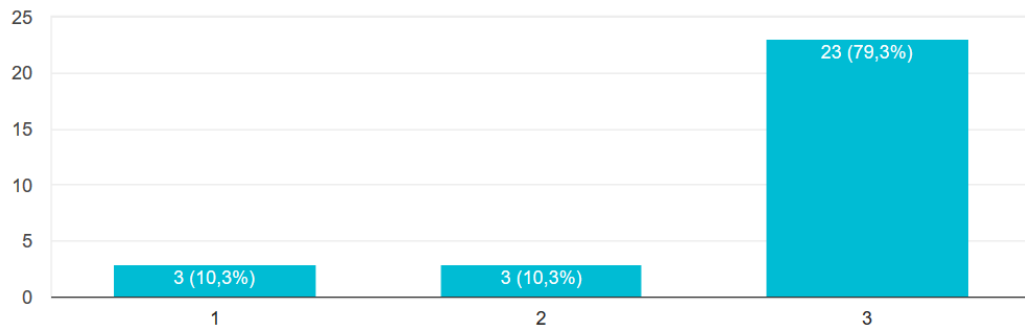
- I think this question should be proportionate to the level of students' learning, so I would suggest something like Is the level of difficulty proportionate to the learning goals expected in your year of studies?
- too generic, difficult readings can be beneficial sometimes
- Too many ambiguities and mental reservations can affect the answers. Again what conclusions can be drawn from a question of the kind. There are some courses that are extremely easy but popular. The inflation of A pushes some students to say that the easy course, where it is easy to get an A, was...difficult.

How would you evaluate the overall quality of this course?

29 reacties
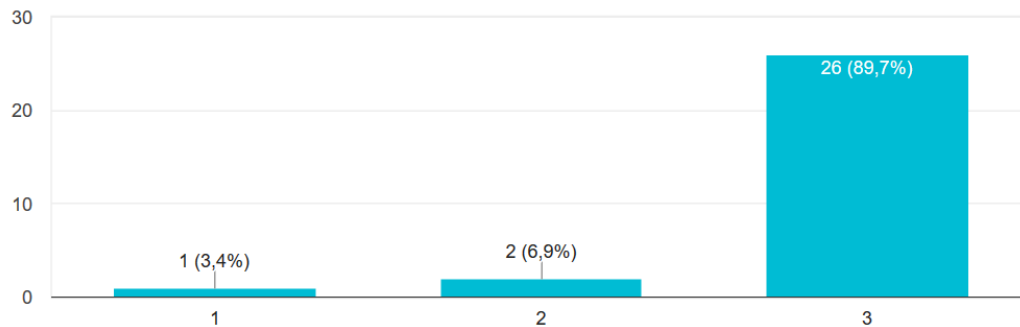
- What context determines "overall quality" ? Is this just a summing up of the previously answered questions? Is it a comparison to other courses taken in the same semester? A comparison to another kind of standard?   Maybe value of question could be improved by making this context explicit.
- This question is used as the de facto overall judgement of instructor performance, even though it is really about the course, not the instructor. Perhaps a separate item could be added addressing overall instructor quality, so that the two are not conflated, as they currently are. Of course it often happens that an instructor does not have complete control of all aspects of the course but rather inherits or works within an existing course structure fixed by others. Hence the quality of the course is partly outside his or her control.
- This question incorporates all of the above. It would actually be sufficient to just ask this, and subsequently leave space for the student to explain the score
- Comment: "overall quality" is a pretty vague concept. It could be interesting to see how answers to specific questions correspond to this "overall quality" thingy. That would be a reason to keep it in. For me, a reason to do away with it is that I fear this one vague question is effectively all that is really looked at by the management.
- This is a very ambiguous question, which seduces the management to consider this as the primary outcome of the evaluation. An overall quality should be derived from the answers to all questions.
- It might be added: this question is not about how much fun you had in the course but about how successful the course was in teaching you the methodology, the core concepts and theories needed to make you progress in this discipline

<u>Are there any (other) questions or elements that you would like to add to the course evaluations?</u>

- I think it is important to test students' evaluation as to the general responsivness of the class to instructors' questions and inputs
- Questions asking students to reflect on their own investment in the course would be valuable
- split for different teachers
- Add: Have you contacted the teacher outside of class, office hours or otherwise? and: Have you prepared well for this class? Did you do the work for the majority of the classes ?
- Students keep on evaluating teachers, rather than courses. We should invest in communicationg more clearly our purposes.
- I would like two open questions like "For which reason(s) did you take this course?" followed by "Were your expectations fulfilled?"
- Also, there should be a question about the quality of the course material (syllabus, textbook, schedule, etc.)
- Comments: I woudl suggest to clearly distinguish between true course related questions, and questions that pertain to the instructor(s). I would also be in favour of questions for the instructor to put things into perspective.
- The evaluation of a course with more than one teacher should automatically include questions about the separate teachers. Otherwise the result is uninterpretable and cannot serve as a basis to improve the course (nor conclusions at teacher level can ever be drawn).
- In the open questions: "what is the thing (concept, theory, etc.) you learned in this course that you will never forget?"; "how has this course informed your curriculum choices?"
- self-rating of involvement/commitment/preparation of student

Do you have any other issues you would like to be considered when re-designing the course evaluations? e.g. timing, format, how to improve student response, the way course evaluations are dealt with, or alternative ways of evaluating course quality?

- Is the timing and content proprtionate to the number of credits allocated to this course?
- perhaps flip the positive comments and negative comments. State first what needs to be improvement and then what is working well?
- even when student response is high small class sizes mean the results for individual courses evaluations are not very meaningful. perhaps more qualitative evaluation of quality would be more appropriate for our small class sizes.
- My main concern is that the evaluation seems to be taken seriously by those in power even when to few people have filled it in to be statistically valid. We need to find a way to increase the response rate. Maybe link viewing the grade to filling in the evaluation? You only get to see the grade for the course if you fill in the evaluation. Don't know if this is possible with our software
- In some tracks on avg. the percentage of responses is between 50 and 60. Are the evaluations representative? Evaluations on paper, rather than electronical, provide optimal responses.
- Course evaluations should ask the students to evaluate the course and not the instructor. I understand that the two will sometimes be intertwined. Thus, I suggest that the evaluation format strictly separates the section on the course and its content, from the section on how the instructor performed. Further, the 'overall quality of the course' question is typically the only 'value' that is used in the evaluation of teachers. This is shallow, and given the time constraints we are all subject to, including the supervisors, probably inevitable. It would seem reasonable then, to find a way to apply a bit more nuance to the process. These evaluations should not play the enormous role they do at UCU (and the UU). International research show the biases, unreliability, and pedagogically dubious standing of such evaluations. A self proclaimed innovative institution such as UCU should not slavishly follow the corporate trend here, but respond with a suitable alternative. Lip service to innovation is simply not enough to actually be innovative...
- It would be good to allow students to comment on anything they'd like to comment on during the course, in an anonymous fashion, and for the eyes of the instructor only. This way, adjustments can indeed be made "on te fly".
- A second issue is that the evaluations are usually only dealt with by looking at the "overall quality" score. If we keep doing this, my remark there makes even more sense.
- Finally, evaluations like these are only relevant when at least 80% of the students have been allowed (during class!) to fill them in, especially if this is the only instrument used to judge the quality of teachers (which it is now). As a matter of fact, course evaluations should be used to judge the quality of the course material, and not so much of the teacher.
- Add a question asking the student whether she/he had sufficient information about course content/objectives and assessment - prior to taking the course (= expectation management).
- See a few comments above. In general, I think the balance between peer consultancy / peer evaluations on the one hand and student evaluations on the other is absent. Collecting numerical information is quick, but dirty. I would favour qualitativem, rather than quantitative data here -particulalry because the response rate is sometimes very low. Numbers can make sense, but not if the sampling is as crappy as it is in our evaluations. So

where I suggested to "keep questions", I would prefer to keep these as issues to be commented on, rather than as items on a Likert scale.

- Peer review is usually a more effective evaluation method.
- I believe a system should be in place that calculates the average 'score' of all questions. At this moment the head of department congratulates you (or not) on the base of one single score "How would you evaluate the overall quality of this course?". It should be possible to let computers spit out a score which takes all partial scores into consideration. This would be the most important modification of the existing system, according to me.
- This is not the way to redesign course evaluations. All the questions need to be removed, and we really need to think about what we want to measure, and what the best way to measure it is. Use the members of staff that actually have professional knowledge of questionnaires, like psychologists and statisticians.
- students could be encouraged more to fill in the questions: not filling in may have negative consequences such as ... not able to read the feedback from the teacher
- I would like to think if a way in which we can communicate more about what is done with course evaluations. Not necessarily on an individual course basis, but perhaps some more transparency for staff and students how these evaluations are used.