

WORKSHOP

What do we learn by breaking the course experience survey?

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OVERVIEW OF WORKSHOP

It is standard practice for universities to collect feedback from students on their experiences participating in a course (a.k.a. unit of study, subject or paper). Whilst the format varies, Likert scale responses to a set of standard questions followed by open text feedback delivered as a survey is common; for the purposes of this workshop this will be called the course experience survey.

Beyond providing feedback to academic coordinators, the qualitative component of the course experience survey can be used as a measure of learning and teaching 'performance' and may be used as part of academic promotion or learning and teaching award applications. The value of the course experience survey to measure educator performance is questionable, with stories of academics changing their teaching to maximise scores at the expense of student learning and academic integrity.

So, what happens if we try to break the course experience survey by designing a course specifically to maximise scores without considering educational outcomes? What do we learn from this process and how might it affect the way we consider our own teaching practice? Join this workshop to find out.

ACTIVITIES

This workshop is half game, half thought experiment, and a whole lot of fun. Activities are a gamified adaptation of the TRIZ theory of the Ideal Final Result. No materials or specialist equipment is needed.

In the first phase, participants will be given a set of boundary conditions representing university policies (e.g. limits on staffing loads and number of assessment items) and academic integrity (e.g. you can't bribe students). Working together, participants must devise the delivery of different hypothetical courses that they believe would result in high marks on a course experience survey. In the second phase participants will again work together to break down the teaching practice with respect to the Ideal Final Result, specifically trying to increase benefits, whilst decreasing costs and decreasing harm. Participants will then be guided through a critical reflection process to determine what outcomes from the workshop process might inspire teaching practice.

TARGET AUDIENCE

All welcome, no previous experience required, although both course coordination experience and hatred of the course experience survey may be beneficial. The Chatham House Rule will apply.

OUTCOMES

No outcomes are guaranteed; however participants should leave with a different perspective of their own teaching practice and ideas for evolving course delivery.

KEYWORDS

Student experience; thought experiment; gamification

PRESENTERS' BACKGROUNDS

Nick Brown is an engineering educator an experienced workshop facilitator. He is interested in looking at motivations and capabilities in engineering education.