

Improving university courses to enhance student learning through conversations about student feedback: the newly piloted system at University of Economics in Bratislava

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Interviews with Teachers...

- As part of the pilot – teachers and students from the Student Parliament had conversations about their courses of the winter semester
- Part of these conversations were based on a survey that students completed about that course.
- In June 2022, Roisin Curran and Vicky Davies, representing SEDA, UK interviewed five teachers from EUBA to ask them about their experience of these conversations
 - A total of seven questions were asked. Interviews were recorded and the transcripts were analysed using Braun & Clarke (2006) approach to thematic analysis
 - The findings will be presented under each question



1. How meaningful was the conversation between you and the students/teacher about the course(s) of the winter semester?

- Overall, all teachers thought the concept or the idea of the conversation between teacher and students was/potentially meaningful
- However, from the actual experience itself:
 - One said, 'it was okay', 'the students were very nervous'
 - Another said 'it would be better if the students I spoke to had actually taken the course that was being discussed'
 - Another teacher revealed that because the results of the survey were good the conversation was quite limited.
 - One teacher had a conversation with just one student and because the fact that the results of the survey was positive, they felt they were evaluating the course themselves rather than 'with' the student.



2. How useful was the conversation in relation to improving the course for the future? Was it focused as a forward-looking process?

- Three participants felt the conversation was useful or very useful whilst
- one felt it wasn't useful as they hadn't learnt anything new - however this was because they had already sought feedback from students and were responding to that in a separate process.
- One participant felt the conversation was limited and it was through their own reflections that they were coming up with ways to improve



3. How useful was the questionnaire survey and its results for your conversation with the students from the course/teacher of the course? Did it help you to identify clearly the areas where the course should be improved?

- Three participants felt the questionnaire results were useful for the conversation – this was qualified by comments such as:
 - As only one student took part in the conversation, the survey provided the basis for the evaluation part of the conversation
 - The qualitative comments in the survey were the most useful in the conversation
 - The students need to analyse the survey results better before the conversation.
- Two participants were neutral about the usefulness of the survey
 - One felt that as the return rate is poor (between 10-15%) this limits the usefulness of the results
 - The other felt that because the student in the conversation was undergraduate and the course in question was postgraduate – this limited the use for the survey conversation. Suggestion is that the students in the conversation should be representative of the course being discussed.



4. How useful was the analysis of the survey results that the students from the Student parliament carried out for the conversation with the teacher?

There was less positiveness about this aspect of the process

- Two found the analysis useful
- Three participants felt that no/limited analysis had taken place and comments/suggestions included:
 - Answers in surveys were copied and pasted rather than any analysis taking place
 - No analysis was presented in the conversation rather 'we went through the questions together one by one'
 - 'only basic results shared'. 'Surveys should be analysed and compared with other teachers in the same department' Then these findings could be discussed at departmental level.



5. Do you think a) the questionnaire b) the whole process with the conversation about the results of the survey was better or worse than the previous system of student feedback evaluations?

The teachers were unanimous and felt that this whole process was *better* than the previous system of student feedback evaluations

- Some qualifying comments:

‘I enjoyed the fact that the students themselves did it with us. Right. So that was that was an improvement’.

‘I mean, in the previous questionnaire, sometimes, like, it was not easy, even figure out whether five is good, and one is bad or otherwise around’.

‘Now it's more on the feelings of the students... it includes also the good feelings..., so I think that this is better than before’.

‘I think it's definitely better when you can talk to someone about it and usually, even better when someone has completed the course so yes, it I think it was better than just I read some very short answers’.

‘So I think it is more oriented, to...the learning of students. In the past, I think it was mainly about teach their way of speaking or way of explaining... So, I think now it is it is better’



6. Did you get any new ideas about possible improvements to teaching from the survey responses and/or from the conversation?

- Responses were split here 50/50 with one not directly answering the question.
- Of the two that responded 'Yes'
 - One had got some ideas about how to grade groupwork more fairly
 - The other one felt that the conversation prompted discussion on how teachers and students can talk about issues that can be enhanced.
- Of the two that responded 'No'
 - One felt that nothing new came from the survey or the conversation
 - The other felt that no new ideas emerged as the results were all ver



7 (i). Would you recommend continuing with this new system?

7 (ii) If so, would you suggest some changes that you find important (e.g. were there questions in the questionnaire that were unclear/without informative value, did you miss anything in the questionnaire, would you change anything in the process of follow-up conversations)?

7 (i) All teachers responded Yes

7 (ii) The suggested changes included:

- Share the survey with the teachers in advance and allow them to comment on the methodology prior to it being administered.
- It would be helpful to have students from the course being discussed in the conversation
- The Student Parliament should do an analysis of the survey results prior to the conversation.
 - ‘I’d like to see a helicopter view of my course’s results’
- More focus on compiled results for a department rather than individual results
- Rather than just the Student Parliament – invite other student volunteers to participate in the conversations – avoid having just one student.
- Encourage more teachers to get involved in these conversations about enhancements.



Emerging themes arising from the pilot

Created Opportunities for

- Teachers' self-reflection
- peer discussion between teachers
- added value for the students in terms of their reflection on their learning experience
- changing T&L approaches beyond individual practice

Criticisms/Areas for consideration

- More careful selection of the most appropriate students to be part of the survey analysis and the conversations
- More detailed analysis of the survey responses
- Low return rate of the survey and the impact of this on subsequent conversations

