

Report: Evaluation of the surveys on online teaching

Contents

- 1 Introduction
- 1 Comparison and summary of the surveys
- 3 Suggestions for improvement

Detailed evaluation of the survey among students

<https://md.farafin.de/KXqdFRtXS-O1XPAv2F3cAw>

Detailed evaluation of the survey among teachers

https://md.farafin.de/4_XTPxctSs6QUvCjT6n1dg

Introduction

This report serves to summarise the evaluation of the online teaching of the winter semester 20/21 and the surveys on online teaching conducted for this purpose. These surveys were created and conducted by the FaRaFIN with the goal to improve studies and teaching in relation to the current online semesters. 100 students (of which 31 fully, 69 partially) and 58 lecturers (of which 29 fully, 29 partially) took part in the surveys.

First, there is a summary of the two surveys and a comparison between the feedback from students and teachers. This will cover positive and negative aspects of the current online teaching and a summary of the general feedback. From the surveys, some suggestions for improvement can be derived for the future planning of online teaching. These will follow after the summary and are meant for students, lecturers and the OvGU.

Comparison and summary of the surveys

What stood out particularly positively?

Starting with the commonalities, it is immediately apparent that both students and teachers positively perceived and emphasised the great flexibility in terms of time and place. For both groups, this flexibility refers primarily to the timing of the day and the resulting improved scheduling during the online semester. Asynchronous courses in particular make it easy to work through and follow up on the courses and also support the time flexibility of students and teachers.

Students continue to praise the good preparation and the good quality of the work materials provided for many subjects. According to some students, this improved the working and learning atmosphere. At this point, it should also be noted that the students find it very helpful that more material is available online in the subjects, which is also available for longer periods of time. Another point that makes work easier, especially in group projects or for study groups, is the BBB rooms provided by the faculty.

Finally, the students positively emphasised that in some subjects the voting systems were adapted to the situation, which had a positive effect on the learning success and the admission of the students.

Teachers also add that the interactivity in seminars is very positively received. Furthermore, the good etiquette of the students in online lectures is praised. It is also seen as very positive when students switch on their cameras in lectures. It was also noted that conducting surveys during the lectures had a positive effect.

Finally, some teachers praise the commitment and understanding of the students.

What stood out in a particularly negative way?

Starting again with the commonalities, it can be said that both groups see the lack of personal contact with each other as very negative and perceive it as one of the biggest problems of the current situation. As a result, for example, agreements that otherwise went

without problems sometimes turn out to be difficult. Furthermore, the university's information policy, which is perceived as poor, causes further problems. Due to the weak communication, deadlines and information are often lost, which leads to a more difficult semester.

In addition, according to students and teachers, there are difficulties within the courses. Both groups report problems with the synchronous online lectures. The lecturers report lower participation in (additional) synchronous online appointments, but this varies depending on the subject. The students see the problem here that they can sometimes only follow these lectures with difficulty, e.g. also due to technical problems with the lecturer such as poor audio or image quality.

In the implementation of the courses, a further problem is raised by both sides. Both groups are displeased that conference tools are not used that comply with data protection regulations and that no or few data-saving solutions are available instead of, for example, Zoom.

To these previous problems, the students add that a hybrid form of presence and online within a module is very exhausting and energy-sapping and that it is better to implement only one of the two completely in a subject. Furthermore, the use of many different platforms causes confusion for the students as well as a great lack of clarity, which also leads to information being lost. This is exacerbated by technical difficulties in some subjects, making it difficult to follow some lecturers in both synchronous and asynchronous courses. Furthermore, the insistence on using a camera, as it was implemented in some modules, is perceived as very unpleasant by some students. Since many students do not have a separate study room from the private part of their flat, a camera may provide unwanted insights into their privacy.

Finally, students negatively remark on the sometimes large amount of work and the high demands of individual subjects. These are usually difficult to complete in parallel with other tasks.

The teachers also add that there are technical difficulties, for example with online platforms such as Moodle. This severely restricts or delays optimal support in some cases. In addition, asynchronous courses require a lot of time, for example, for post-processing the videos. Furthermore, synchronous event forms are made more difficult by the fact that it is often not possible to see who is being spoken to, as there are often no cameras switched on.

Finally, the teachers express several concerns. For example, there is a fear that students will postpone recorded courses and only deal with the material at a much too late stage. Furthermore, concerns are expressed that many things of a content-related and organisational nature are lost due to the lack of interaction.

What is the general perception of current online teaching?

From the students' point of view, the winter semester 20/21 has been pretty good so far and better than the previous semester. However, the stress factor and the psychological strain have continued to increase over the semester, as the separation of work and free time no longer takes place at home and thus it is difficult to create a restful balance to the daily study routine. Especially due to non-transparent communication in a few places, the strain is increased even further. Nevertheless, the switch to online teaching in the pandemic situation

was felt to be a good and sensible thing, since presence would be desirable but, according to many students, is not sustainable under the current conditions.

Furthermore, praise is given to the teachers for the time and effort that is put in and that the predominantly good structures have been well adapted to the current situation.

From the teachers' point of view, the semester was rather difficult. In many places, the work was perceived as very time-consuming and exhausting, including the preparation of online events, video calls and uncertainty in the planning of the semester, for example, in the planning of exams. This was also negatively influenced by generally more difficult communication channels.

One of the biggest problems overall was also the lack of feedback from the students. The cameras were often switched off, which created the impersonal feeling of talking to a wall. It was therefore difficult or impossible to assess whether the content was understood at all.

However, not everything was perceived as a problem this semester. For example, the flexible time allocation due to asynchrony was seen as positive by many teachers. Although the effort is sometimes higher, the possibility of recording lectures was a good alternative, according to some lecturers, who found this more relaxed than attendance and, above all, that it could also be done from home.

Overall, according to the survey results, it can be said that from the teachers' point of view, online teaching works well under the circumstances and situation. Presence would be more desirable, but given the situation, the online alternative is necessary.

In summary, it can be said that teachers and students have a similar or, in some places, the same view of online teaching.

Suggestions for improvement

For teachers from students

** Recorded lectures*

Among students, the desire for asynchronous or live recorded lectures has been expressed particularly frequently. This type of learning and teaching allows students to be flexible with their time and to review the recording when studying for exams to re-explain concepts they did not understand.

** Admission requirements*

It was positively pointed out that some teachers have somewhat lowered the requirements (voting system; admission targets that have to be reached;...) for exam admission in their courses. The pandemic situation can also be an additional psychological burden, e.g. through loss of job and financial hardship, worries about family members, loneliness. The suggestion at this point would be to lower these requirements a little and thus also give students a chance to be admitted to exams who also have many other worries on their minds due to the circumstances.

** Sample solutions*

Sample solutions could be made available for reworking exercises and as a learning aid or for self-evaluation. Some courses have already done this in the winter semester, which was found to be very helpful, especially if there is no exercise held accompanying the lecture.

** Timely communication*

** Uniform use of existing platforms*

In the two online semesters, many different tools and platforms were used in the individual courses. This can be very time-consuming and confusing if several courses all use different methods. A discourse or agreement among teachers could help to limit this large number of tools and platforms.

For students from teachers

** Discourse in events*

In online teaching, some teachers have noticed a decline in the communication between each other during courses. In order to create more regular and active discourse, it would be nice if more use were made of the camera and microphone by the students. Only then can the teacher get a better picture of the students' understanding of the material and respond to it.

** Cameras in events*

Students should be more willing to switch on the webcam during online courses. Since this topic was discussed quite controversially among the students, we would like to ask for a willingness to compromise from both sides. For example, a concept could be conceivable in which during every lecture a different group of students could switch on their camera. That way, you don't have to do it if you feel uncomfortable with it, but the teacher also doesn't sit in front of a completely black wall.

** Contact us*

If something is unclear in terms of organisation or subject matter, please contact the teacher at any time. Both during events and by email. In general, it is good to check your mails regularly, read websites and contact them in good time. Feedback on online teaching, events or the tools used should be provided at any time. Only then can criticism be heard and implemented.

General

** Other teaching formats*

Suggestions from the teachers also deal with possible alternatives to the classic courses. More interactive formats could be created that take place in smaller groups. Shorter courses that move away from the standard one-and-a-half-hour frontal teaching are also conceivable and may be more compatible with online teaching.

** Create exchange between teachers and students*

The desire for feedback from students on the tools used was also expressed by teachers. A channel, platform or event could be organised to provide a discussion round where this exchange can take place. This way, students and teachers can support each other and give feedback on what has worked well or badly in the last semesters.

Another suggestion is a regular meeting between representatives of teaching staff and the student body on the topic of online teaching. In this way, feedback could be collected and communicated more quickly and contribute to the improvement of online teaching.

** Understanding for each other*

Students and teachers are asking each other for more mutual understanding due to the current situation.

Proposals on the technical side

** Online teaching*

Especially on the technical level, teachers generally wish for more support. How do you create good teaching materials for online teaching? Advice, training, exchange on the technical implementation of online teaching. Which devices are good for this? Which programmes for video editing? Therefore, more technical advice or training with specific programmes would be helpful to improve online teaching.

** Support from the OvGU*

Both students and teachers would welcome technical support from the university for their staff. Since some teachers had to purchase new equipment to conduct good online teaching, according to the survey results, this was partly paid for out of their own pockets or taken over by the chair. In order to take a step towards digitalisation and to relieve the teachers, the OvGU could agree to make online teaching aids such as headsets, tablets, webcams, microphones, etc. available to its employees.

There are also uncertainties regarding the legal side of online teaching. More proactive support and advice from the OvGU in this aspect could also help to improve online teaching and reduce the workload of teachers.