University of Johannesburg

Course evaluation journey – paper to Blackboard integrated Blue

Bluenotes EUROPE 2019

21 March 2019

UNIVERSITY
OF
JOHANNESBURG

Introductions

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Responsibilities:

• Student Portal - uLink

• LMS - Blackboard

• Learner Analytics

• Strategic Projects

• Innovations

Experience

• 5 years at CAT

• 14 Years in Higher Education

The primary purpose of the Centre for Academic Technologies (CAT) is to promote the use of innovative academic technologies, to provide a richer learning experience for our students, and fulfil our vision of 21st century skilled academia at the University of Johannesburg.

About UJ

Vibrant, multicultural and dynamic, the University of Johannesburg (UJ) shares the pace and energy of cosmopolitan Johannesburg, the city whose name it carries.

Proudly South African, the university is alive down to its African roots, and well-prepared for its role in actualising the potential that higher education holds for the continent's development. UJ has transformed into a diverse, inclusive, transformational and collegial institution.

- A student population of over 50 000, of which more than 3000 are international students from 80 countries.
- One of the largest contact universities in South Africa (SA) from the 26 public universities that make up the higher education system.

Session outline

This presentation gives an overview of our journey from paper-based evaluations to semi-automated and fully integrated with Blackboard (LMS).

Introduction – Why change, evaluation stats and audience size.

Pilot Implementation – "test run" in 2018 with small group of volunteers (although the Dean volunteered them): includes data prep and LMS integration.

2019 Full Implementation – How are we approaching the whole of UJ.

Lessons Learnt – What did we learn and what challenges are we still facing.

Introduction

Why change?

- The old system was ad hoc, paper based and cumbersome.

- Steady increase of evaluations.

- Reports focused on the academic and that's where it stopped unless they approached CASD.

- UJ management had no insights into this valuable data source.

- Module and lecturer evaluations did not contribute to the University's overall **strategy** to improve **student success** through **evidence-based** decision making.

- MEC decision:

     - all first year undergraduate modules have to be evaluated,

     - all priority modules have to be evaluated.

- Thus a new approach was needed:

     - efficient at handling high volumes of evaluations,

     - while also providing meaningful data to UJ as a whole was needed.

Statistics on evaluations and audience size

Legend:
- Teaching Evaluations
- Module Evaluations

2016: Teaching Evaluations 507, Module Evaluations 312, Total: 819
2017: Teaching Evaluations 834, Module Evaluations 399, Total: 1233
2018: Teaching Evaluations 1081, Module Evaluations 514, Total: 1595
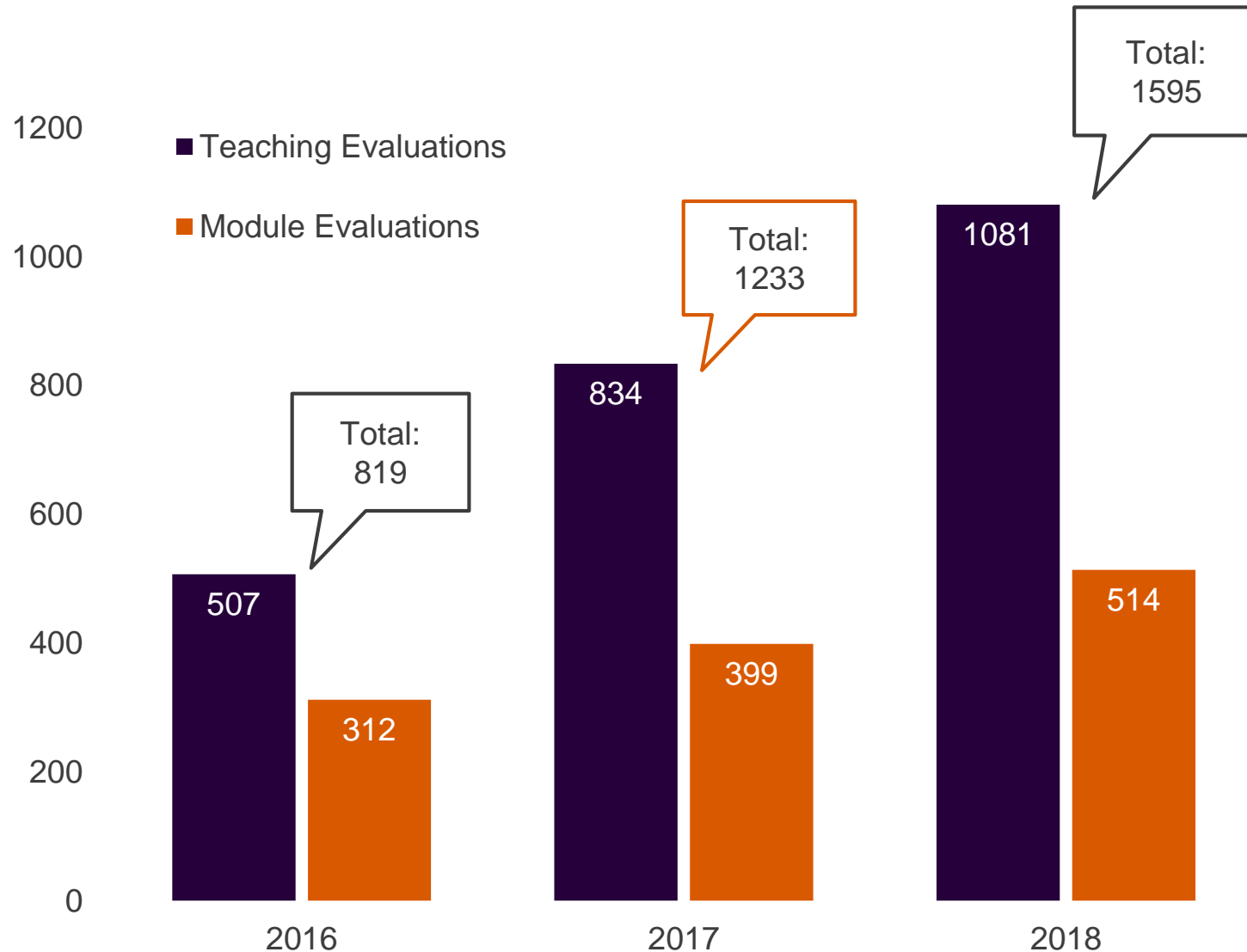
Landscape:

Total Courses: **5501**
Undergraduate: **3878**
Postgraduate: 1623

Undergraduate first years: **1752**

Consisting of:
407 – Year courses,
651 - 1st semester,
682 - 2nd semester,
12 - Short courses.

Pilot implementation

Evaluations at UJ

- Two categories:
  - Taught courses - Undergrad & Postgrad
    - Module evaluations
    - Teaching evaluations
  - Supervision programmes
    - different set of questions

- Taught courses – we built part 1 and a part 2 in 2018
- Supervision programmes – we will build in 2019

The Centre for Academic Technologies (CAT) and
The Centre for Academic Staff Development (CASD)

Joined forces to pilot the online system in the CBE.

```
VC & Principal
    |
DVC Academic
    |
  ------------------------
  |                      |
 CAT                   CASD
  |                      |
Riaan &              Kibbie &
Xolisa               Bongani
```
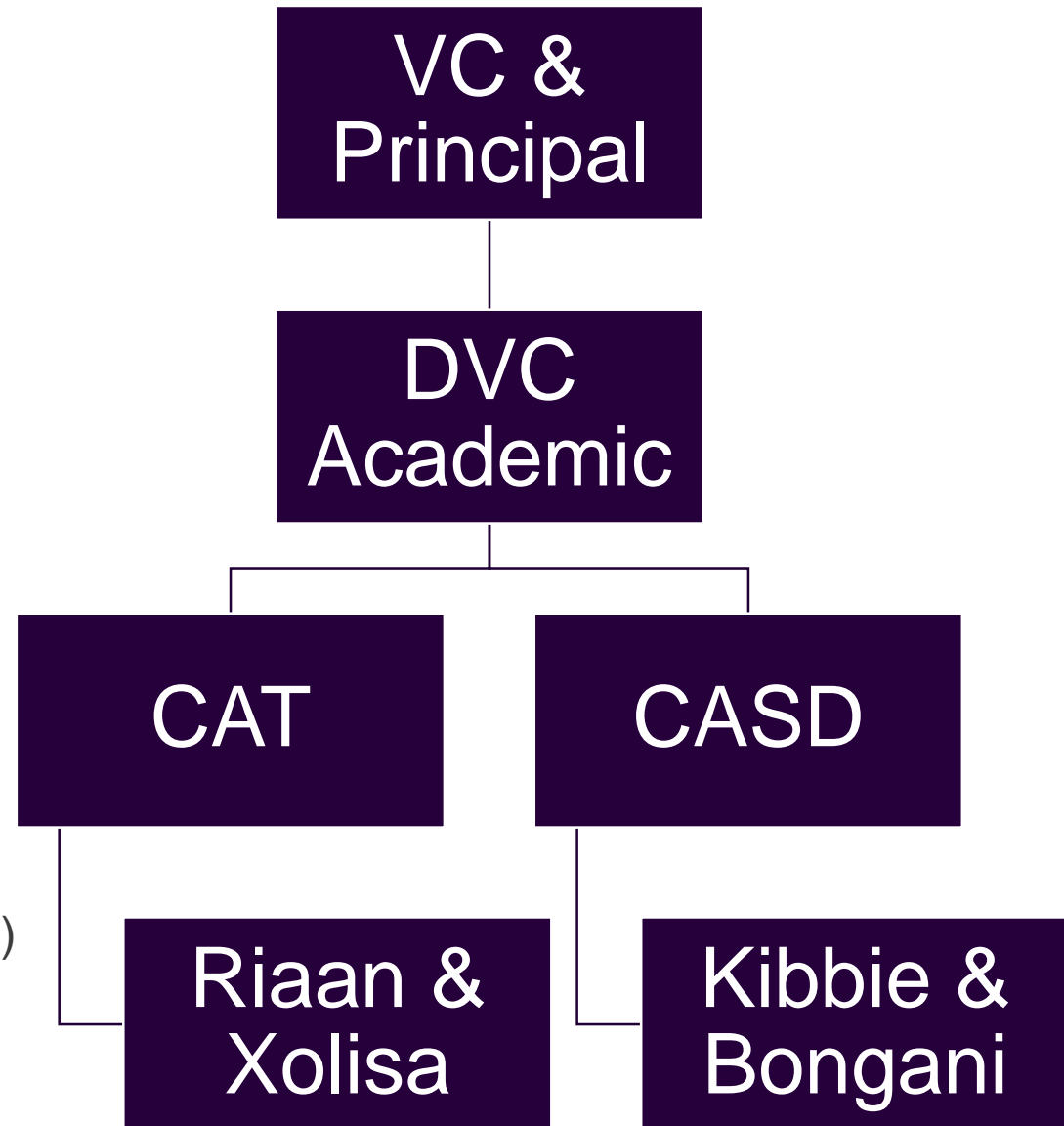
2018 Pilot – Semester 2

- The pilot yielded a response rate of just under 50%, in keeping with international data for first-time deployment from paper to online.

- Integrates with Blackboard:
  - Anonymous and easy-to-use interface,
  - Enabling strategies for increased responses,
  - Improved reporting,
  - Automating feedback,
  - Data analytics on feedback received.

22 Modules

42 Academics

6207 Students surveyed

6552 Evaluations deployed

47% Evaluations completed

63 Reports released to Academics, HODs, etc.

All in a two-week period
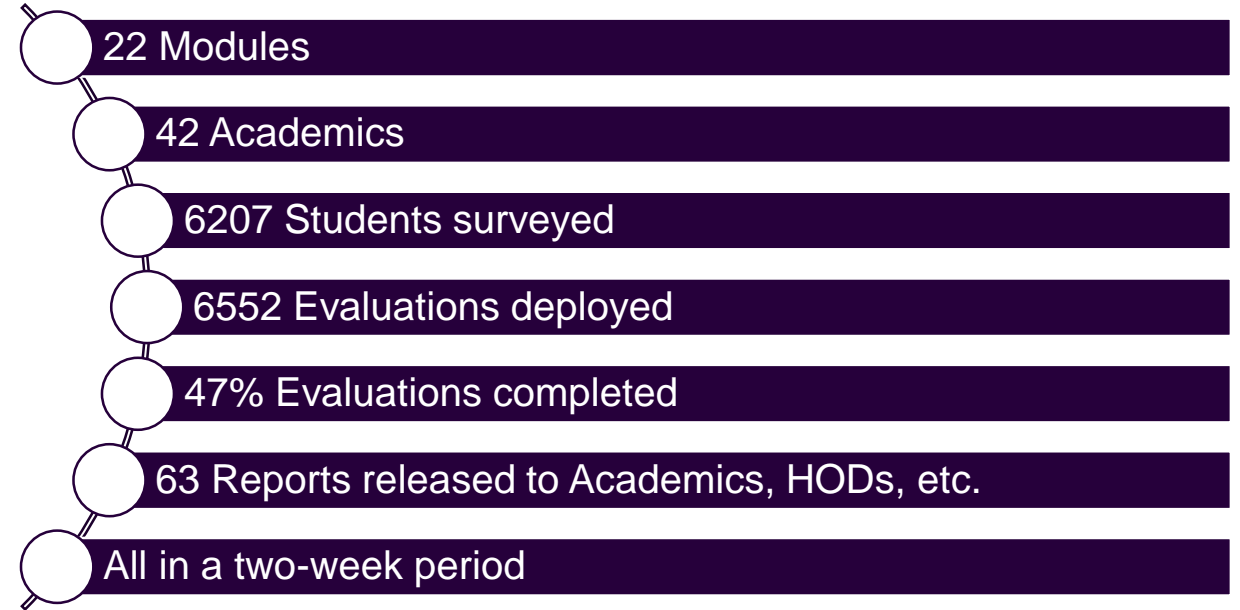
Blackboard learn+ **explorance.** **ulink**

University of Johannesburg
College of Business and Economics (CBE)

Pilot implementation – Step 1: Data

Data sources, preparation and clean-up

Identified data sources:

• LMS (Blackboard),

• HR (Oracle),

• MAMS (inhouse marks management system) and

• SIS (ITS)

Biggest data obstacles:

• "Equivalent" subject codes,

• Reliable instructor mapping,

• Accurate biographic info, specifically staff.

• "Supervisor" structures.

Overcoming data obstacles (keeping scalability in mind)

"Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can." - Arthur Ashe

Followed a structured approach to "clean" and re-align the data.

All these obstacles meant that we needed a "**staging area**" to prep our data before we could push it to Blue.

Starting point was the subject codes:

- If we have the correct subject codes the student course relationship is "sorted".

Subject codes

The first thing we had to do was identify all of the subject codes – the academic structure has multiple subject codes for students attending the same class.

- Class timetable was an option but Blackboard turned out to be the most accurate.

- Once we had the subject codes, we knew that:
  - Student course relationship and
  - Student person information was resolved

- We could focus on the real difficulty:
  - – lecturer information

LMS_Parent_Grouping	LMS_Course_Id	Course_Name
180FBO01Y1	180FBO01Y1	FOOD&BEVERAGE OPERATIONS 1
180FBST1Y1	180FBST1Y1	FOOD&BEVERAGE SERVICE 1(THEORY)
180MNS01Y1	180MNS01Y1	MANAGEMENT SKILLS 1
182BLB3B01	182BLB3B01	INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT 3B
182BLB3B01	182IVM03B3	INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT 3B
182BMA21B1	182BMA1B01	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT 1B
182BMA21B1	182BMA21B1	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT 1B
182CFM11B1	182BFB22A2	FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT 2A
182CFM11B1	182CFM11B1	COST AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT 1B
182CMN03B1	182CMN03B1	COMMUNICATION NETWORKS 3B

Lecturer Records

- HR Oracle: records were incomplete

- SIS: lecturer / subject assignment not maintained.

- MAMS: was another disaster, secretaries & admin staff was every where… *turned out lecturers don't do admin…*

- Blackboard was again the most reliable source of information.
  - There were still admin staff but fewer.

Hello Riaan

Look carefully. According to your message below, I am an instructor. I am responsible for uploading all information on BlackBoard for BAM11A1 and BMA1A01.

Dear Mr Davids,

You requested a module and teaching evaluation for Business Management 1A

However, you are not enrolled as an instructor for the course on Blackboard.

New roles for Blackboard

- Blackboard was still not 100% accurate but generally not bad.
- We still needed to solve two problems:
  - Who is the Course Coordinator?
  - Secretaries and admin staff loaded as instructors

- Created new roles:
  - For modules with multiple instructors – we asked who the course coordinator is. And assigned them the role
  - For admin/secretaries we created a new role called administrative assistant

- Instructor and supervisor problem solved: now we could export from Blackboard
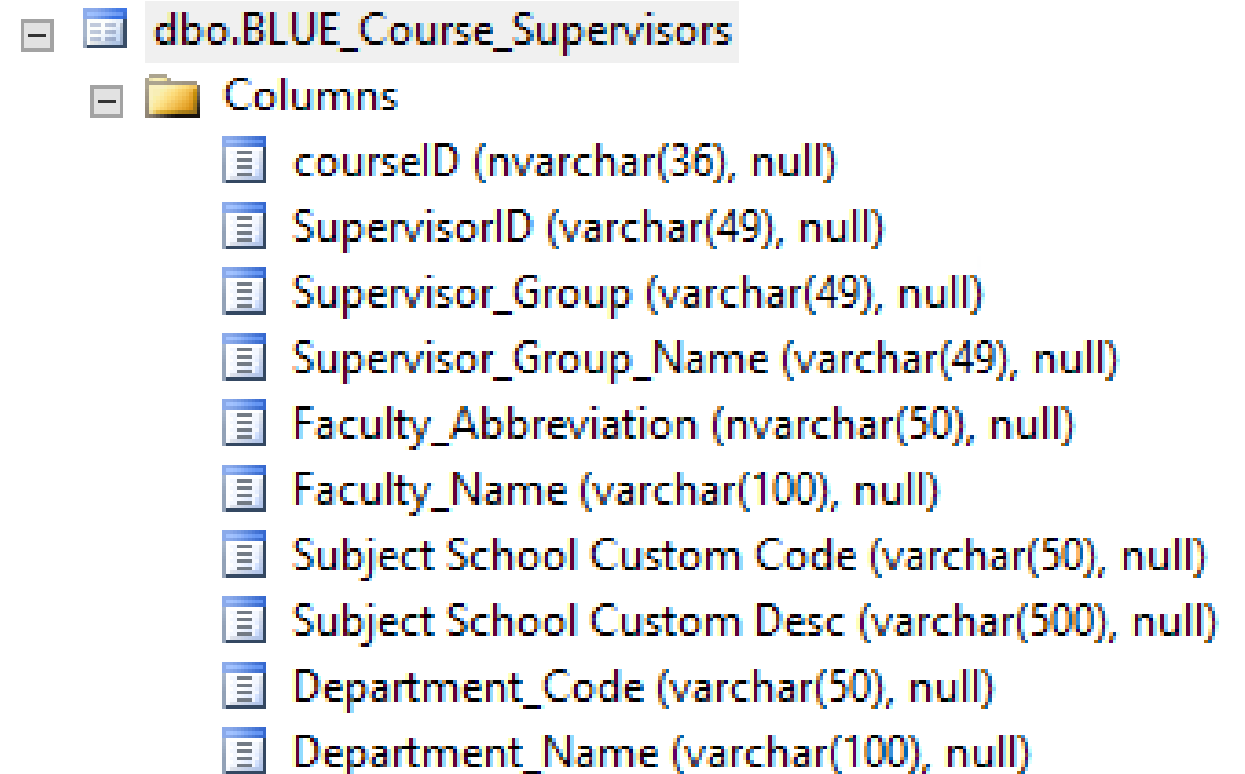
Role name in courses
Administrative Assistant
Course Coordinator
Head of Department
Instructor
Librarian
Marker
Retention Advisor
Student
Teaching Assistant
Tutor

Institutional Hierarchy

- One of the aims was to make the information available to the rest of UJ.

- To do that we need to know who these people are: same problem – came as no surprise there was no reliable data source

- Top Management, Deans, Heads of Schools – easy
- Heads of Departments – was problem

- Dilemma was we couldn't add them to Blackboard like we did the others. – Not only labour intensive but also not really an ideal scenario (A DVC in all courses??)

- Management, Deans, Heads of School went into a "supervisor" table:

dbo.BLUE_Course_Supervisors
Columns
  courseID (nvarchar(36), null)
  SupervisorID (varchar(49), null)
  Supervisor_Group (varchar(49), null)
  Supervisor_Group_Name (varchar(49), null)
  Faculty_Abbreviation (nvarchar(50), null)
  Faculty_Name (varchar(100), null)
  Subject School Custom Code (varchar(50), null)
  Subject School Custom Desc (varchar(500), null)
  Department_Code (varchar(50), null)
  Department_Name (varchar(100), null)

Institutional Hierarchy - HOD

- The HOS's also went into their own table.

- We were again depending on our staging area to create our an HOD structure
  - But the problem was solved

- We are effectively building and maintain our own HOD structure.

- Thus far it has scaled well - there's a few but we are managing the table without too much effort required.

	UserName	name	departmentcode	DepartmentDescription
1	aambala	aambala	1809	DEP OF MULTIMEDIA
2	aoldewage	aoldewage	2113	DEP OF ZOOLOGY
3	bbarnes	bbarnes	1616	DEP OF PSYCHOLOGY
4	benm	benm	3101	DEP OF ACCOUNTANCY
5	benm	benm	3711	ACCOUNTANCY (CEP)
6	bgray	bgray	1805	DEP OF GRAPHIC DESIGN
7	bmarx	bmarx	3101	DEP OF ACCOUNTANCY
8	charlottem	charlottem	1532	DEP OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
9	christellea	christellea	1417	DEP OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT&GOVER
10	clambert	clambert	1513	DEP OF SOMATOLOGY
11	eafredericks	eafredericks	4103	DEP OF PRACTICAL BUSINESS LAW
12	ecarleschi	ecarleschi	2112	DEP OF PHYSICS
13	fcrous	fcrous	1413	DEP OF IND PSYCHOLOGY&PEOPLE M
14	ggoldman	ggoldman	1412	DEP OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
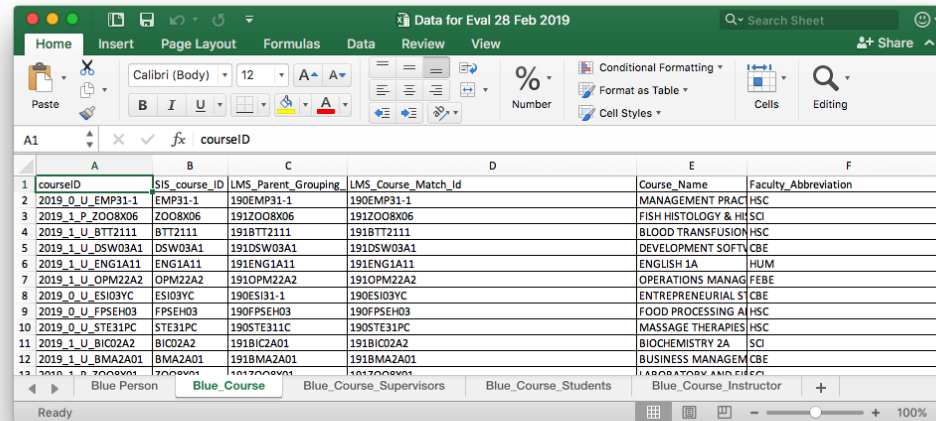
Staging Area

The staging area does a lots for us in terms of cleaning and grouping the data correctly.

We bring in the data from the several sources (automatically were ever we can)

Then run stored procedures on this data which populates the four tables needed by Blue:

1. Courses,
2. Course_Instructor,
3. Course_Student,
4. Course_Supervisors,
5. Person.

- dbo.Blackboard_Courses
- dbo.Blackboard_Courses_ParentChild
- dbo.Blackboard_Enrolments_Staff
- dbo.Blackboard_Users
- dbo.BLUE_Blackboard_Instructors
- dbo.BLUE_Course
- dbo.BLUE_Course_Coordinator
- dbo.BLUE_Course_Instructors
- dbo.BLUE_Course_Students
- dbo.BLUE_Course_Supervisors
- dbo.BLUE_Course_To_Evaluate
- dbo.BLUE_MAMS_HOD
- dbo.BLUE_Person
- dbo.BLUE_Supervisor_Groups

- dbo.P_BLUE_1_Course_Build
- dbo.P_BLUE_2_Course_Students_Build
- dbo.P_BLUE_3_Blackboard_Instructors_Build
- dbo.P_BLUE_4_Course_Instructors_Build
- dbo.P_BLUE_5_Course_Supervisor_Build
- dbo.P_BLUE_6_Person_Build

Still working on further expanding the "cleaning" and "exception catching" – each new scenario

Pilot implementation – Step 2: Blackboard & CAS (for email auth)
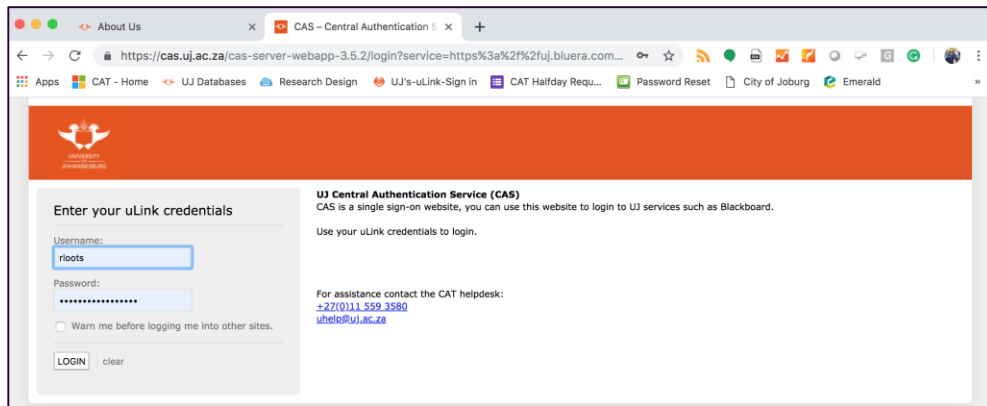
Authenticating users and integrating Blue with our LMS

- Had a few more setups to go before we could expose any surveys to students or QP tasks to academics

We needed to configure :

1. For **authentication** we chose to use our CAS server since we were already using it for some other external services.

2. For **Blackboard** we wanted the dreaded "Pop-Ups" and the option for course blocking:
   ➢ We had to install the Blue building block & webservices
   ➢ Configure LTI (BPI tool)
   ➢ Blue Connector – to connect Bb with Blue and push the tasks

**Dec 2018:** Upgraded to Bb Ultra Base Navigation, but kept the original course view.

   ➢ Now we only have LTI blocks in the courses
   ➢ We lost the "Pop-Ups" and the course blocking option
   ➢ *We moved the evaluation link to be the Bb course entry point. - Hoping it works*

Blue Connector & Blackboard

- The Blue connector allowed the pop-up by linking the building block in Bb with our blue data.

- Register a new LTI tool provider in Bb:
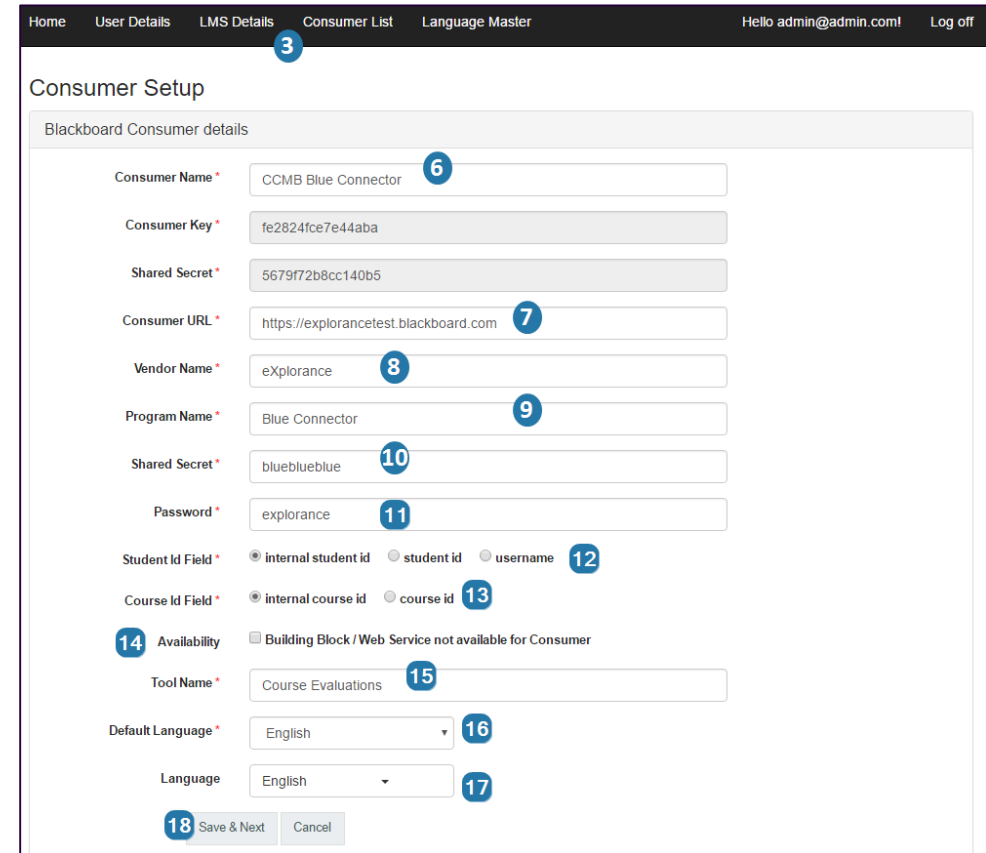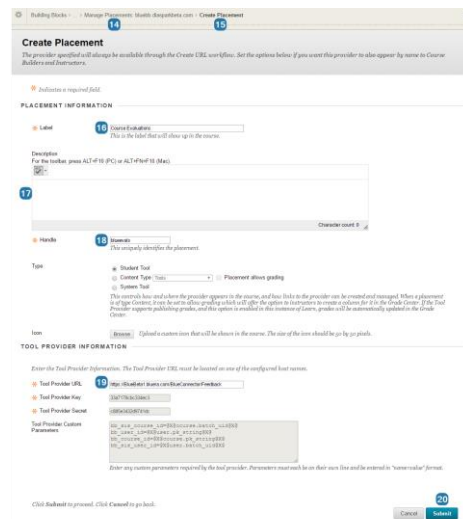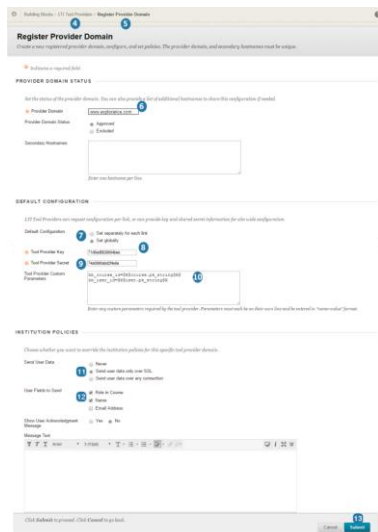
Blackboard - Webservices

Web services requirements:

- Content.ws
- Context.ws
- Course.ws
- CourseMembership.ws
- User.ws
- Util.ws
- Added the Explorance Webservice

OPERATION △
getCourseByCourseID
getServerVersion
getUserByStudentId
initializeBlueCourseEvaluationWS
PurgeBlueTask
SaveAdminSettings
SyncBlueTask

	Availability ⩗	Discoverability ⩗	
WEB SERVICE NAME △		**WSDL LOCATION**	**AVAILABLE**
Announcement.WS		https://uj.blackboard.com/webapps/ws/services/A...wsdl	Yes
BlueCourseEvaluation.WS		https://uj.blackboard.com/webapps/ws/services/B...wsdl	Yes

Blackboard - Building Block & Proxy Tools

- We needed to install the Explorance Building Block:

	NAME △	VENDOR	VERSION
☐	Blogs and Journals	Blackboard Inc.	3500.11.0-rel.10+071f567
☐	Blue Course Evaluation	eXplorance	1.0.0

Building Block	Blue Course Evaluation
Version	1.0.0
Description	Blue Course Evaluation
Vendor	eXplorance, Blue Course Evaluation tool by Explorance
Languages	en_US (default)

- We also needed to setup Proxy tools:

	VENDOR △	PROGRAMME	AVAILABILITY	TOOL AUTHENTICATION CONFIGURED
☐	eXplorance	Blue Connector	Yes	Yes

BPI – Blue Portal Connector

For course Blocks to work we needed to setup the Explorance "Blue Portal Connector" (BPI)

BPI Connector Setup

- Configure Pathway
- Give our Bb Course Block a name

BPI Connector Setup (Continued)

- Set the data field mapping between Blackboard and Blue

For course or user mapping, you must enter a column name.

Course mapping	☑
Course ID Field	LMS_Parent_Grouping_ID

Note: Identify the field in the Blue course datasource that contains the course ID (optional).

User mapping	☐
User ID Field	

Note: Identify the field in the Blue user datasource that contains the user ID (optional).

	A	B	C	D	E
1	courseID	SIS_course_ID	LMS_Parent_Grouping_ID	LMS_Course_Match_Id	Course_Name
2	2019_0_U_MPP01Y3	MPP01Y3	190BBM441	190MPP01Y3	190MPP01Y3 - MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE
3	2019_1_U_BRM22A2	BRM22A2	191BRM22A2	191BRM22A2	191BRM22A2 - RETAILING 2A
4	2019_1_U_COM2AA2	COM2AA2	191COM2AA2	191COM2AA2	191COM2AA2 - COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT 2A
5	2019_0_U_ESI03YC	ESI03YC	190ESI31-1	190ESI03YC	190ESI03YC - ENTREPRENEURIAL STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION
6	2019_0_U_BBM441	BBM441	190BBM441	190BBM441	190BBM441 - MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE 4

BPI Connector Setup (continued)

- Set the sync schedule

Implementation – Pop-up vs Course Block

2018:

2019:

Pilot implementation – Step 3: Ready for QP

Email wording and UJ Branding

Had to create list server to be able to send emails to staff from outside
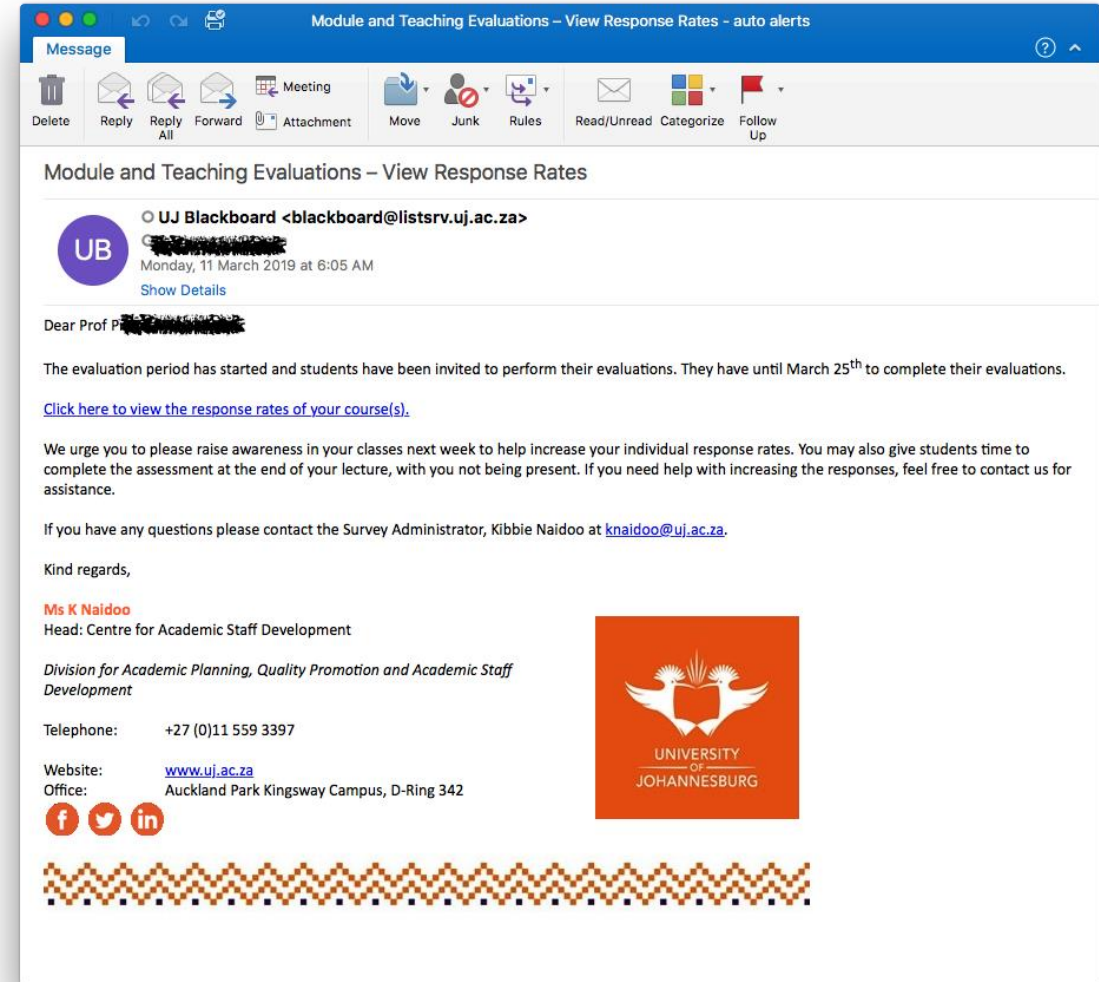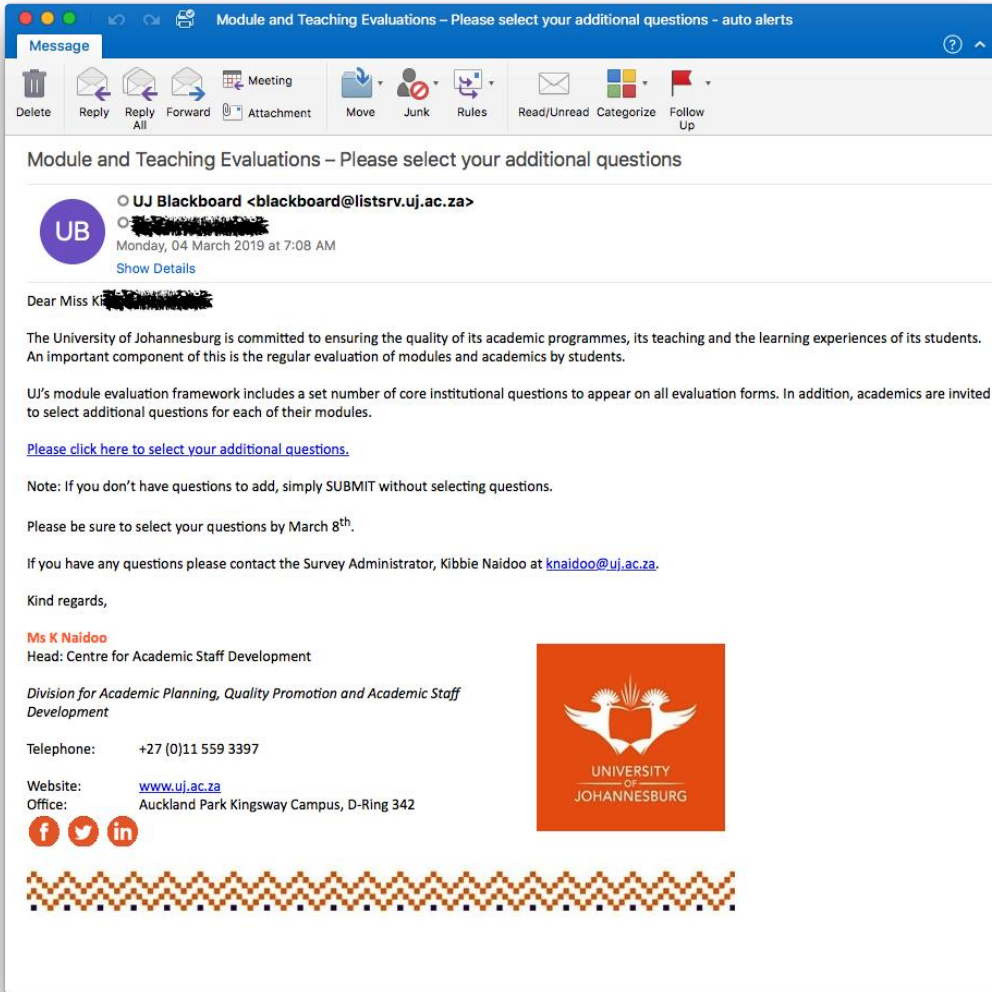
Staff Perception

For the Pilot, we communicated a lot and sent detailed emails to all academics.. To which we didn't get many responses.

We had two "training sessions" for
any academic who needed help with
their QP. – nobody showed up

We thought our QP emails were very professional
and were even UJ branded.

When did the questions start?

Only when the Response Rate monitoring emails went out.

Make of that what you will… ☺
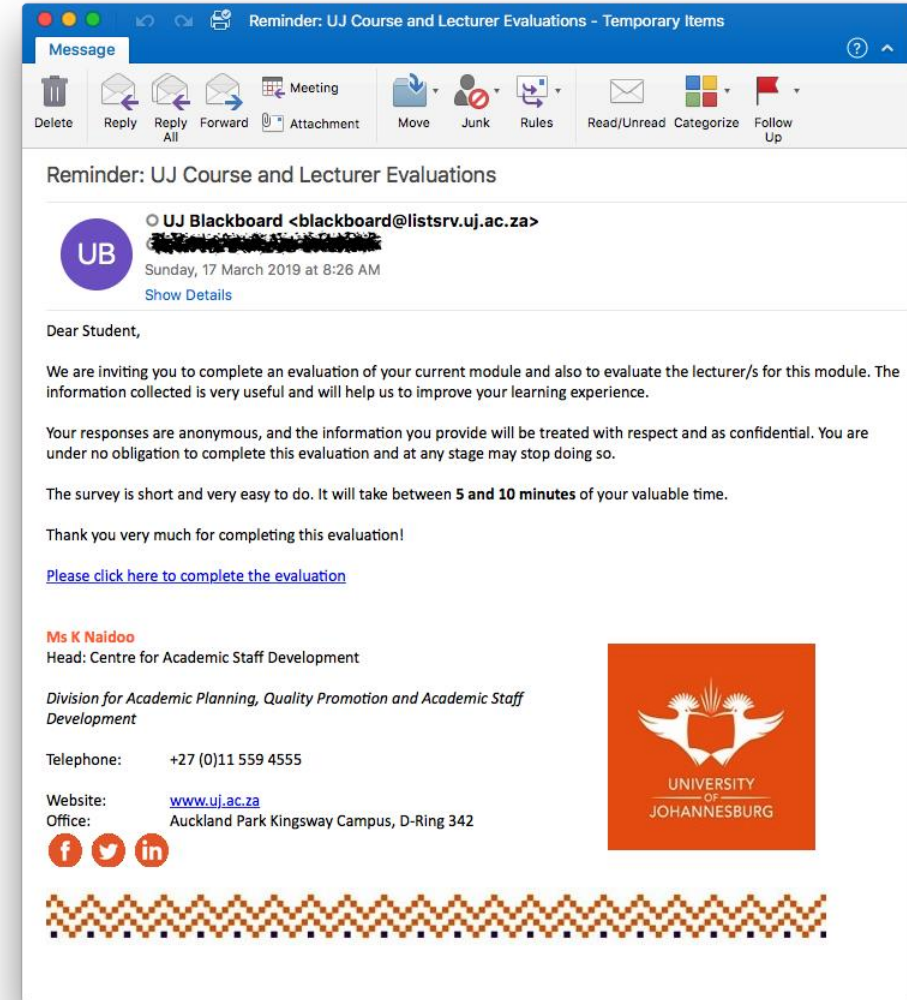
Staff Perception

Some of the questions we received, showed complete ignorance to any of the information already shared:

Good morning.

I would just like to know if my T&L evaluation will still be done physically in the class room as instructed?
I know this is a pilot, but will student only be able to evaluate my teaching by means of this electronic method only?

Please advise accordingly.

I have some additional questions pertaining this particular T&L pilot method of evaluation.
My biggest concern is in relation to my specific group of student that I alone am lecturing and those are the students that should/can evaluate me as a lecturer.
I am lecturing Group K for CFM11B1 SWC UJ. The other lecturers are al lecturing their own respective groups and together the six or seven groups make up the total registered students for CFM11B1 2018.

Obviously if ONLY my group of students from Group K is evaluating me than that is fine. Although, I cannot be evaluated by any of the other groups as I am not their lecturer. I hope this makes sense.

How are you going to ensure that the above is achieved?

At least we had a small arsenal of information to share which we could easily fall back on ☺

Pilot implementation – Step 4: Response Rate Monitoring

Responses and Response rates

- Student responses were initially slow… We had a spike when the first email was sent but then it slowed down.

With each reminder email we made some changes:

- We stopped personalising the email and made it more generic.
- Made the message shorter and emphasized anonymity.
- We turned off authentication.
- We turned the "Pop-Ups" on about halfway.
- For the last two days of term we enabled course blocking.

Overall Response Status   ⓘ

46.41%   **46.41%**   53.59%

■ Completed ■ In Progress ■ Not Completed
■ Not Ready ■ Expired
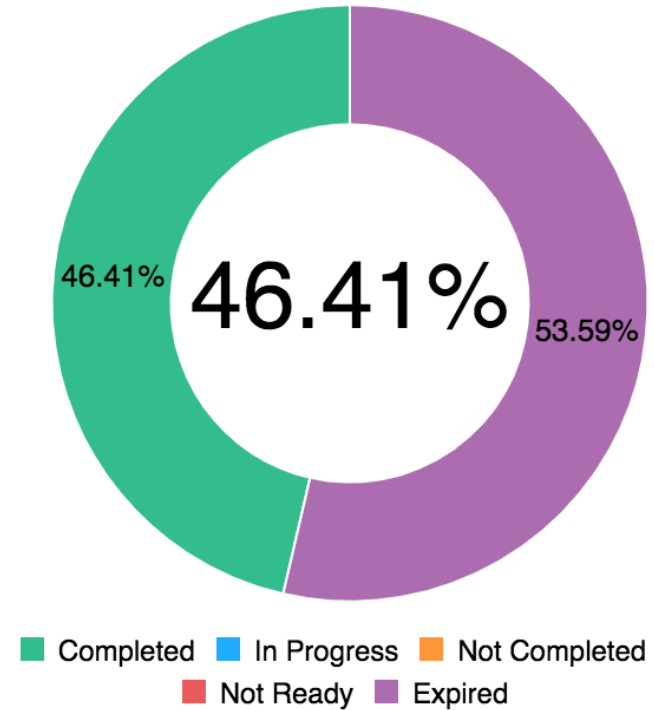
Monitor Progress

Progression Details

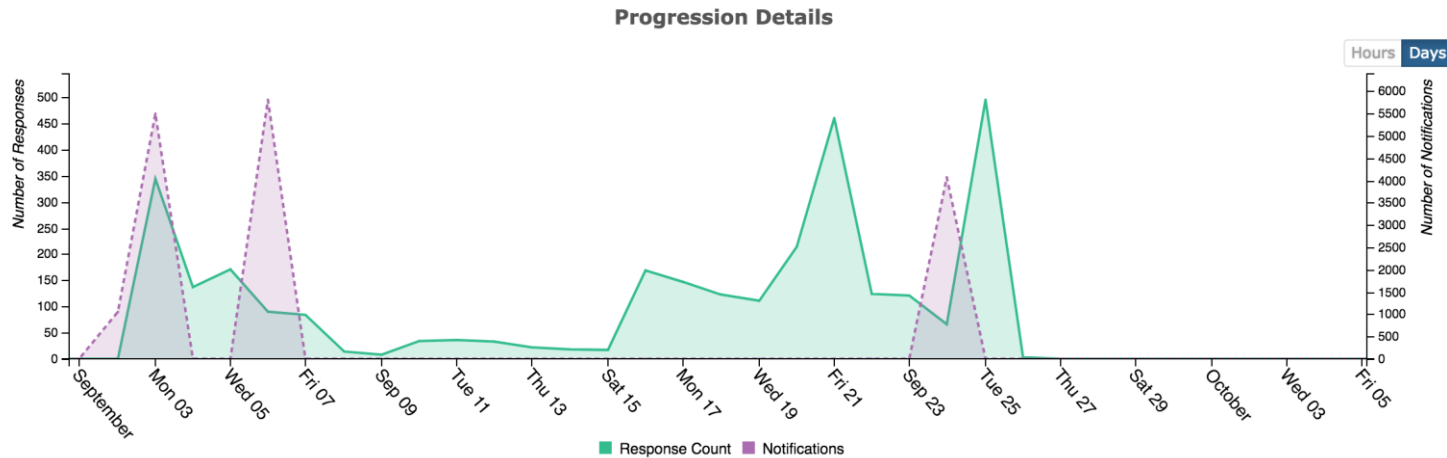| Name	Category	Response Rate
182DSW01B1 - DEVELOPMENT SOFTWARE 1B	Semester 2	90%
182IFS01B1 - INFORMATION SYSTEMS 1B	Semester 2	80%
182FAC3BB3 - FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING 3B	Semester 2	71%
182CMN03B1 - COMMUNICATION NETWORKS 3B	Semester 2	63%
182SSW01B1 - SYSTEM SOFTWARE 1B	Semester 2	63%
182FAC33B3 - FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING 3B	Semester 2	61%
182ITB2B01 - IT MANAGEMENT 2B - MODULE 1	Semester 2	58%
182EKN3B01 - ECONOMICS 3B(DEGREE)	Semester 2	52%

Monitor Progress

- Notifications & reminders
- In-class awareness campaigns
- Lecturers who wanted to be part of the pilot had good responses

Reporting at different levels

Reports are compiled and distributed to the following levels of staff and management:

- **Individual Reports**: Lecturers will receive an individual report.
- **Heads of Department**: will receive an aggregated report for the Department.
- **Heads of School**: will receive an aggregated report for the School.
- **Deans Office**: (or nominees) will receive an aggregated report for the Faculty or College.
- **ADS and CASD**: will receive aggregated reports with relevance to Student Success and Staff Development.
- **DVC Academic**: An aggregated report on all evaluations will be provided.

- Future reporting – import the survey results to our data warehouse

Feedback on Reports and outcome of the Pilot

- The Individual & HOD Reports were sent via Blue.

- The Heads of School and Dean's report were sent by the CAT director as a courtesy for the participating in the Pilot.

- We received good feedback, and constructive questions were asked.

- Overall the Pilot was a huge success – I have to mention the exceptional support we received from Elizabeth Guzman, our Blue Professional Support Services Consultant. It was and still is one of our best experiences in working with a vendor after the sale was made!

2019 – University wide rollout

Semester 1
Term 1: 4 February – 23 March
Term 2: 1 April – 24 May

Semester 2
Term 3: 22 July – 21 September
Term 4: 30 September - 1 November

Process in 2019

We decided to run the evaluations in periods:

- 11 – 25 March 2019: Undergrad / Taught Postgrad
- 6 – 20 May 2019: Undergrad / Taught Postgrad
- 9 – 23 September 2019: Undergrad / Taught Postgrad
- 21 Oct – 4 November 2019: Undergrad / Taught Postgrad
- 25 Nov – 9 December 2019: Postgrad supervision only

- The new process was presented at MECA and STLC
- A Circular was sent to all staff
- A step-by-step guide detailing the new procedure for evaluations was prepared and made available on the Student Portal.

- Decide on an evaluation period
- Submit your request through uLink
- Select your questions
- Students invited to participate
- Monitor and manage student progress
- Receive your report
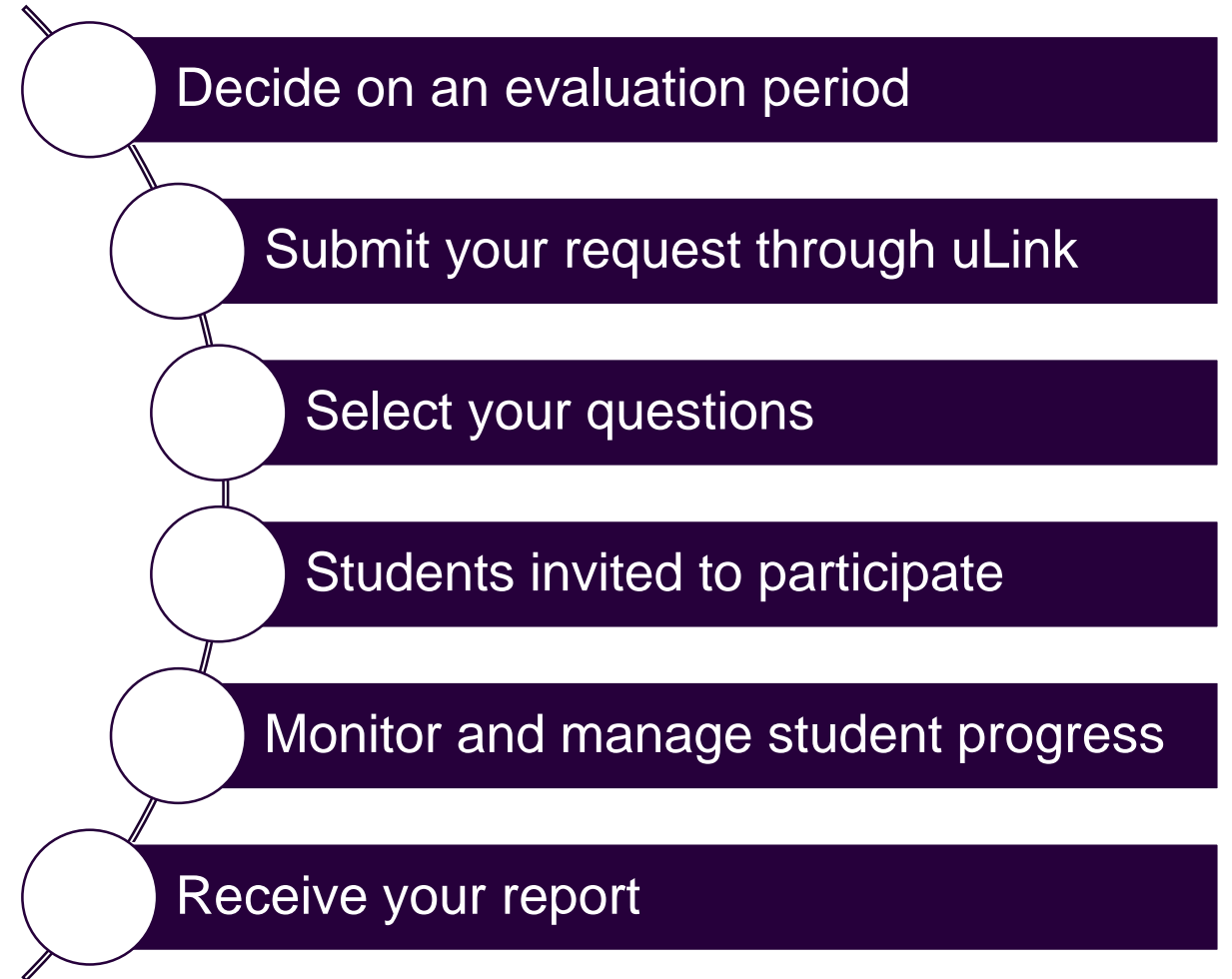
2019: Semester 1, Term 1: 11 – 25 March 2019

- Response rates vary drastically:

Name	Response Rate
191ZOO8X06 - FISH HISTOLOGY & HISTOPATHOLOGY	89%
191GEPB212 - IMMUNOLOGY	87%
191BIC03A3 - BIOCHEMISTRY 3A	80%
191ZOO8X01 - LABORATORY AND FIELD SKILLS	79%
190IMT01Y1 - IMAGING TECHNOLOGY 1	76%
191CMN03A1 - COMMUNICATION NETWORKS 3A	74%
190CDENV02 - COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT 1	71%
190BAFT5Y3 - FASHION DESIGN THEORY 3	69%
190PFBEE02 - PLANNING FOR BUILT ENVIRONMENT	67%
191PHS8X01 - LABORATORY SKILLS	63%

- Lecturers who generally opt in and apply for an evaluation have much higher rates.

149 Courses

194 Academics

15,853 Students surveyed

20,074 Evaluations deployed

?? Evaluations completed

?? Reports released to Academics, HODs, etc.
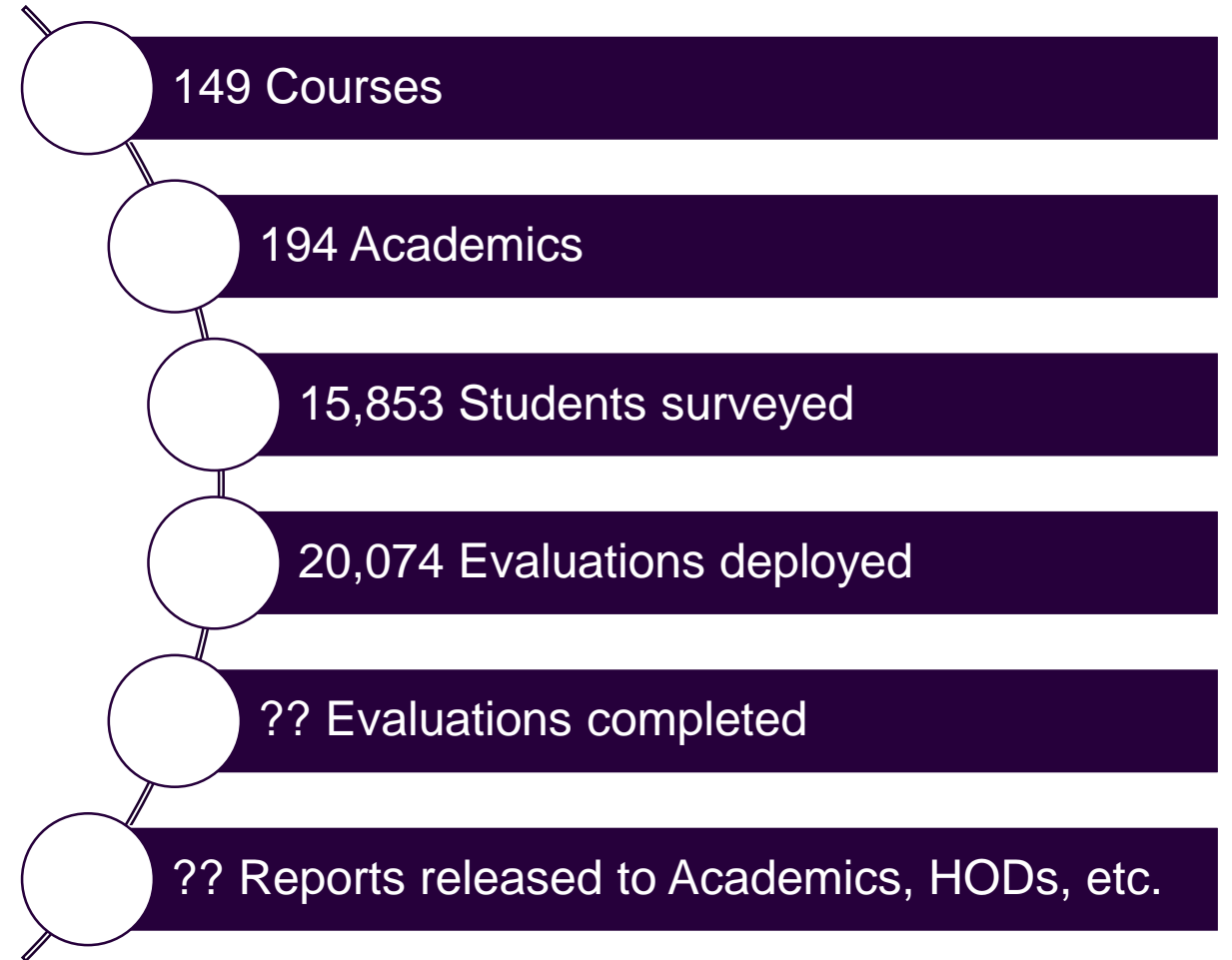
Lessons Learnt

Lessons learnt

- Verify the data - if the subject code and the lecturer has been confirmed: 99% there

- Change management - Change is painful

- Communication - academics really only listen when its too late

> Good Morning Ms K Naidoo
>
> I am not teaching the module that you sent me this year. I think it is offered in SWC. Please ask Fikile Simelane or Ally Cassim I think they can be able to assist.
>
> Regards,
> Nomusa Sibiya

> Dear Riaan
>
> Thank you for the reply. I didn't ask to be removed. I was simply asking how it works when there are 5 lecturers in the group. I now completely understand with the fact that the students pick which lecturer they evaluate.
>
> That helps a lot. We were all just very confused. I'm planning on doing my evaluation next term.
>
> Thank you for the clarification.
>
> Kind Regards,

> Dear Kibbie
>
> Hope you are well.
>
> I have a question with regards to the teaching and module evaluations new system. We have 5 lecturers for Commercial Law 1A (COL41A1/KMR1A11). The lecturers each take different sized classes on different days. I believe that two of our lecturers have applied for teaching evaluations and Mr Reddy also requested a module evaluation for Commercial law.
>
> However, I have also received the blackboard notifications requesting to pick questions for a teaching evaluation and I keep getting the reminders from blackboard. I did not apply for a teaching evaluation this term. My concern is that the evaluations for the two relevant lecturers are open to all 1184 students and how can we make sure that we are going to be evaluated by our own students? I am worried that other lecturers students will evaluate the wrong lecturer and then we will sit with a situation where the teaching evaluations are not accurate.
>
> Please can you provide me with feedback on this.
>
> Kind Regards,
>
> www.uj.ac.za
>
> Dr S
> Lecturer: Department of Mercantile Law
> Faculty of Law

- Response rates – still working on that, I do miss those dreaded "Pop-Ups" and timing is very important
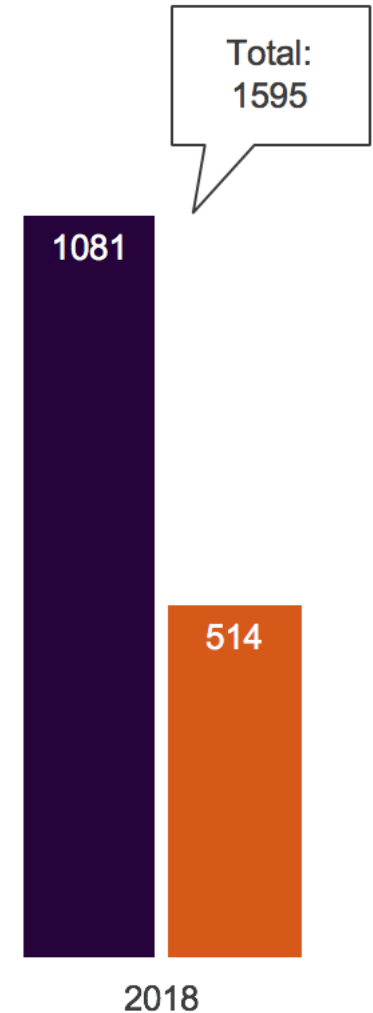 - 2018 we ran the evals during "study break" when students had more time on their hands.

Challenges for 2019:

- Communicating the new process in such a way that the academics actually listen…

- 1st years subjects are compulsory from 2019 – now consider again the accuracy of our lecturer information…

- Supervision evaluation – new

- New question sets for 2020 – questions were last revised in 2013

- It's a process but next year this time, online evals will hopefully be business as usual with everyone fully onboard.

Those stats again

Undergraduate first years:
1752

Consisting of:
407 – Year courses,
651 - 1st semester,
682 - 2nd semester,
12 - Short courses.

Total: 1595

1081

514

2018

Thank you

Any questions?

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