



Tackling the challenges of course evaluation implementation using Blue

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About the National University of Singapore

- 3 campuses
- 17 Faculties & Schools
- 80 Departments
- 42,600+ students
- 2,000+ Modules each semester
- 8,000—10,000 Classes each semester
- 2 semesters + 1 special term each academic year



History of course evaluations at NUS

- 1992:** Introduction of paper and pen course evaluations
- 1996:** Used as a source of evidence for evaluation of teaching
- 2001:** Switched to online evaluations (legacy system)
- 2016:** Transitioned to Blue (university-wide roll-out)

Administered centrally

Course evaluations at NUS

Feedback on the teacher

- 4 university-wide questions: Likert-scale
- 2 open-ended questions
- Up to 3 department specific questions: Likert-scale (optional)
- Nomination for teaching awards: Yes/No with comments

Feedback on the module

- 3 university-wide questions: Likert-scale
- 2 open-ended questions
- Up to 10 module-specific items: Likert-scale + open-ended (optional)

Tackling challenges

Lessons we have learned in the last 4 years

Challenge #1

Boosting Response Rates

Increase in response rates

Before
BLUE

51%

AY 2016-2017
Semester 1

71%

AY 2016-2017
Semester 2

69%

What did we do...

- **personalised email** invitations
- **subsequent reminders**
- **improved access** (LMS integration, mobile devices, web)
- **real-time response monitoring** for teachers/administrators
- **Incentives** (points awarded for completion which are then used for course registration)

Email to students

Hello Liyan,

Now is your opportunity to provide feedback to your professors on their teaching. Your feedback is important, and sharing your fair and honest views about your experience of teaching in the modules you took will enable professors to know how they are doing and where they can improve.

Provide your feedback now >>



Your feedback counts

Your constructive feedback supports professors to improve their modules and is one source of evidence used in the university's appraisal decisions.



It's confidential

Your professors will never see your name; they will only receive an aggregate report, and only after the exam results have been released.

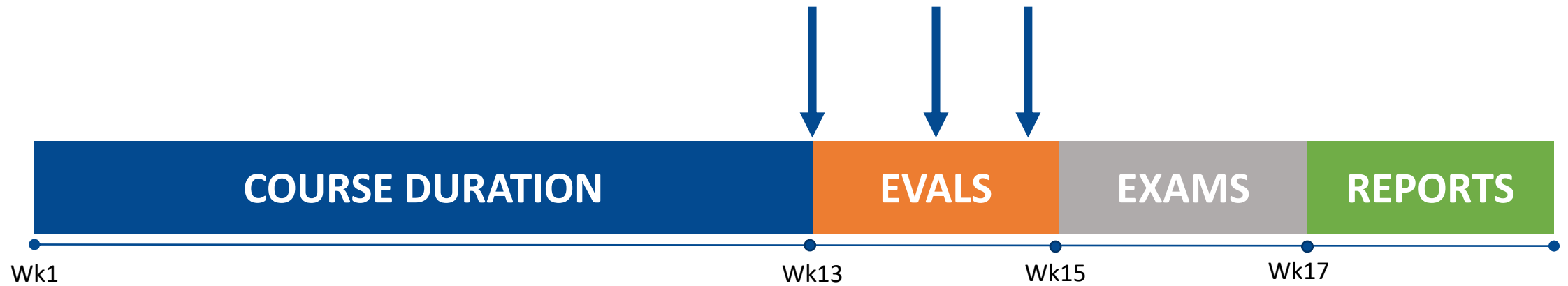


It's quick

You can complete your module feedback on campus, at home, or on the go! It is easy to use and compatible with mobile devices.

The student feedback exercise is available for a very limited time. Please provide your feedback now!

Communication to students



Response rates are dropping again!

- Incentives were removed (since 2019)

AY 2016-2017
Semester 1

71%

AY 2019-2020
Semester 2

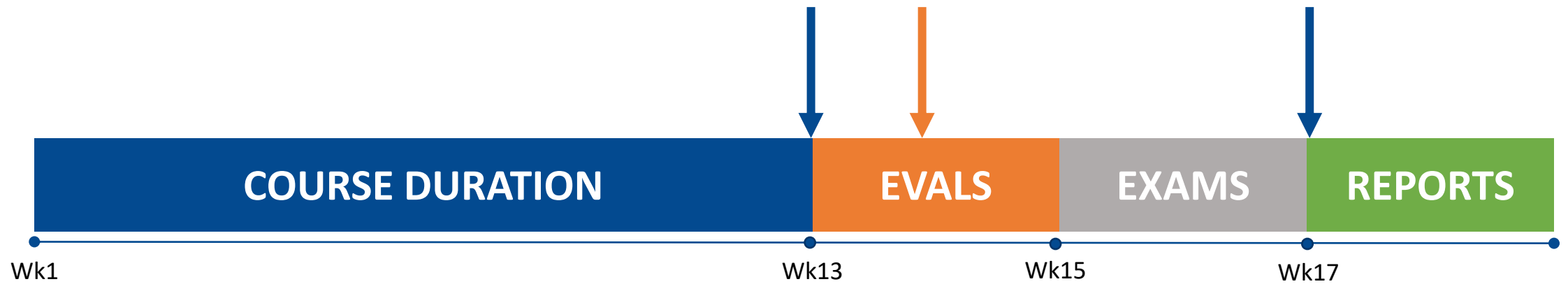
53%

What we plan to do...

Work with teachers:

- Get teachers to provide time in class for students to complete the evaluations
- Ask them to share on how they use student feedback to improve their teaching with their students
- Send a second reminder to the teachers for monitoring response rates

Communication to teachers



Challenge #2

Students' lack of understanding on the value and purpose of student feedback

What are we doing...

- Reminder emails emphasise the importance and purpose (since 2018)

What we plan to do...

- Get teachers to share informational materials in class
- Share an infographic to students at the start of every semester (sent by the Vice-Provost)
- Close the feedback loop (summary report for students)

Student Feedback Exercise: Your Voice Matters!



Be Constructive

Comments on your learning experience increases the value of your feedback.

Always focus on the learning and teaching issues and not on the teacher!



Be Specific

Provide examples of how you think your teacher or the way the module is organised has helped (or not helped!) your learning.



Be Considerate

Improper language or personal comments is highly inappropriate, and undermines your feedback.

Abusive comments are unacceptable.

Student Feedback Exercise: **Your Voice Matters!**



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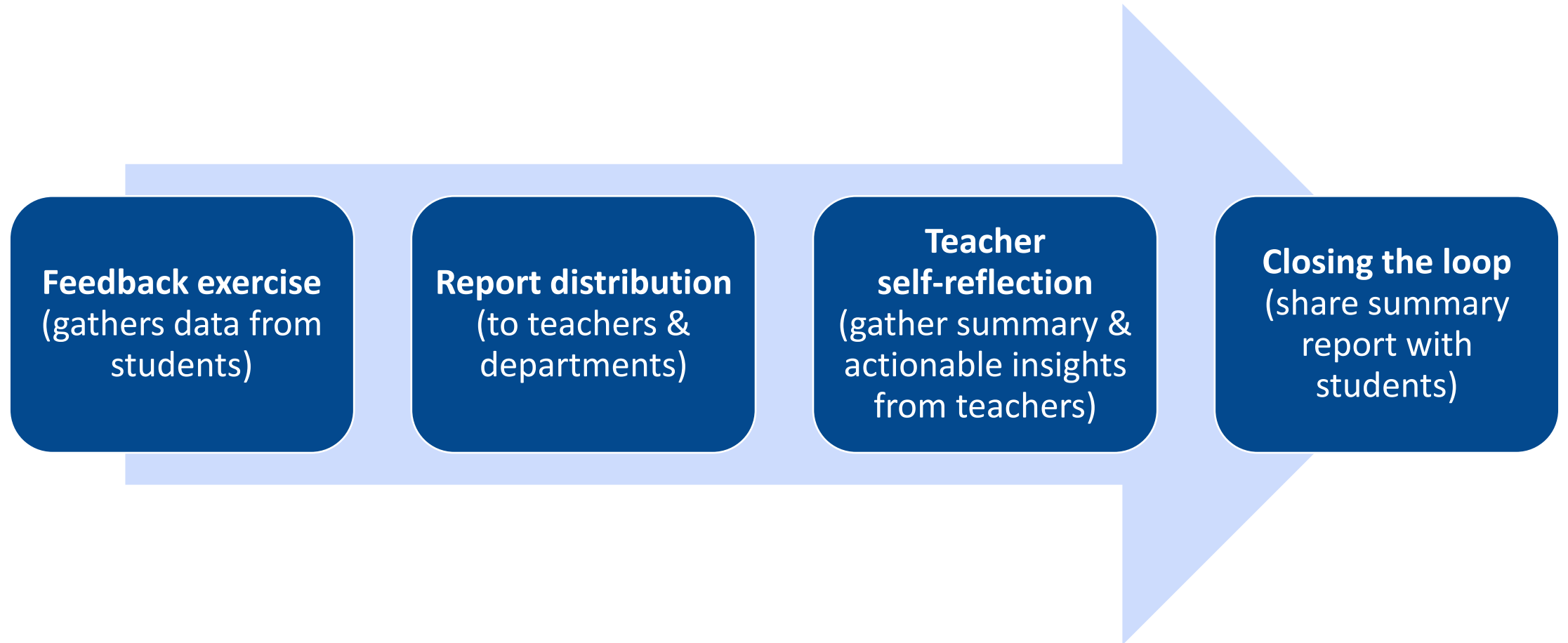
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Student Feedback Exercise: **Your Voice Matters!**

Provide your feedback now >>



Closing the feedback loop



Challenge #3

Providing Feedback Insights

What did we do...

- Improved reports for teachers
 - towards a formative report aimed to develop reflective teaching, and improvement over time
 - aggregated text analytics report for each teacher
- Better insights to Heads and Deans
 - summary reports + export reports

Teacher Report

A. GUIDELINES FOR INTERPRETING THE REPORT

The teacher evaluation report is for developmental purposes and is meant to help identify strengths and areas for improvement. Please consider the following recommendations that will aid in interpreting the results:

1. Examine the report by taking note of patterns in order to consider how best to act on the feedback your students have taken the time to provide. Use the reflection section at the end to reflect upon how you might act on the feedback.
2. These evaluations stem from student perception and thus constitute one source of evidence among others as to the quality of your teaching. Any response to the feedback should be based on the most representative results rather than on outlying responses.
3. Upon getting a general sense as to what has gone well, and which areas may require attention and improvement, it is important to drill down to the related questions. These questions can help guide future action if feedback from students suggest areas for improvement.
4. Keep both the likert scale and written comments in mind while reading through the report. High scores (4+) suggest student consensus indicating a strength. On the other hand, low scores (2-) should be considered as an area that requires immediate developmental focus based on student feedback.

Teacher Report

F. SELF-REFLECTION

1. When comparing these results to the previous year's results, what areas have shown improvement?
2. What areas remain to be improved and what are the necessary steps / actions to do so?
3. Are there colleagues who could potentially guide me?
4. Are there issues that require departmental or institutional support?

Text analytics report for teachers

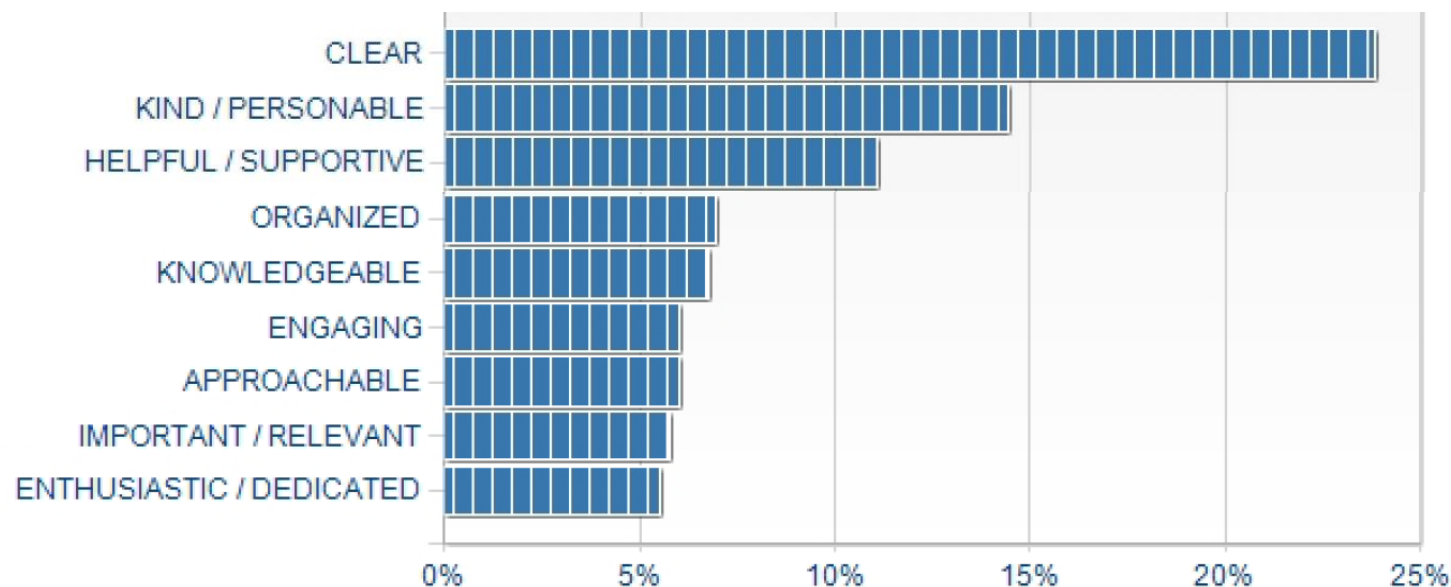
AGGREGATED TEXT ANALYTICS REPORT

This report provides an analysis of student comments received in response to two questions: "What are the teacher strengths?" and "What improvement would you suggest for the teacher?"

- The text analytics reports provide an overview of student comments for all of your teaching over the past semester.
- The reports are useful primarily for **formative purposes**. They can help with quickly identifying perceived strengths and opportunities for development in one's teaching based on the frequency of keywords and keyword combinations that appear in student comments. The corresponding attributes are derived from a dictionary that has been compiled on the basis of hundreds of thousands of student comments from multiple universities in North America, Australia, and elsewhere.
- The reports are especially useful for modules with large class sizes given the high volume of free-form comments, as they provide instructors with a quick summary of massive amount of data by categorisation. That said, it goes without saying that given enough time, humans tasked with reviewing free-form comments will always produce better results than even the most powerful computers. For example, if you have fewer than 50 comments then it might be a lot easier to read the actual comments than relying on categorisation. Thus, text analytics reports are not used for judging the quality of teaching, but are **meant only for the eyes of teachers themselves to reflect on** and, where necessary, improve their own teaching.

Better Insights to Heads/Deans

- real-time response monitoring during SF exercise
- summary report
 - an overall summary on modules and teachers
 - text analytics on open-ended questions



Challenge #4

Distributing reports

What are we doing...

Static view for teachers

Dynamic View Access to provide access for:

- Department/faculty administrators
- Heads and Deans

However, still challenging to quickly provide access for:

- all staff and students in a department or faculty



Q & A

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