

Survey of educators' and students' experiences during the COVID-19 lockdown

COVID-19 teaching experience task force at CBS, 31/8 2020

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Introduction

As of March 11th, CBS campus closed down and moved all teaching to online platforms. This was of course a huge challenge for teachers who, without notice, had to familiarize themselves with new technical tools and to redesign learning activities accordingly. Thanks to a remarkable dedication and huge effort, teachers managed to complete the transition almost overnight. A great amount of success has thus been achieved thanks to all educators as well as students. At the same time, the transition has had a profound impact on everyone's professional and personal life, as well as on all aspects of teaching, research, studying and administration at CBS. Although the COVID-19 lock down has been a challenging and hopefully unique case, it is a relevant opportunity for learning about online teaching and learning and CBS should make sure to evaluate the activities from spring in the light of future strategies for blended learning.

Accordingly, the Dean of Education decided to distribute two surveys to teachers and students respectively to collect experiences from online teaching in the spring 2020 - good as well as bad – in order to learn as much as possible from this real time experiment.

A project group has been established to collect information, evaluate the process, and not least to provide insights for teachers and students to prepare for the next semester(s) partly lockdown. The group consists of Postdoc Sine Zambach, Ph.D. fellow Mette Franck, Research Assistant Michael Møller Nielsen, Student Assistant Sarah Koelemij Andersen and is led by Associate Dean for Technology-enhanced Learning, Annemette Kjærgaard. Additionally, interviews had been carried out by student assistant Stefani Konstanta and the team of Mette Dybkjær at administrative department Business Information and Analytics (BIA) has provided data and conclusions on the regular student evaluations.

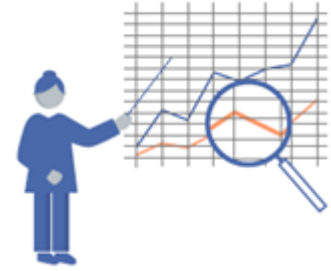
Data collection

Educators survey: On June 11, the group distributed a questionnaire developed by Sine Zambach to all full-time academic staff (VIP) and the part-time teachers (DVIP) who had taught during the spring semester (1075 respondents). Overall, the reply rate is 39% but of full-time staff that actually taught during the spring semester the response rate is 60%, which is quite satisfactory. Thus, the survey gave 414 fully and 47 partly answered questionnaires. Additionally, 14 interviews were carried out.

Students' survey: On June 16, the group distributed a questionnaire developed by Mette Franck to all students who have followed minimum one course at CBS in the spring semester. 1805 answered, which corresponds to 739 Bachelor students (11%), 772 Master students (2y, 11%), 109 HD-students (3%), 109 single course students (3%) and 76 Executive Master students (3%). This equivalents the regular annual evaluation among the students. Interviews are planned.



Administrative Data: In addition to the surveys, we used data on students and educators from Insight (CBS' data warehouse), grades from STADS and the student course evaluations, which are distributed to Bachelor, Master and Diploma students when the course terminates (10.000 unique evaluations from spring 2019 and 8000 from spring 2020) and, finally, results from the annual evaluation of the academic year 2019/20 for students at bachelor and master level (1726 answered). These data were collected with help from Business Information and Analytics (BIA).



Overall findings

This brief report is a compilation of experiences at Copenhagen Business School which has been carried out in the early summer 2020. Although these results presented here are significant, the relationships and correlations in the data are complex and needs further analysis. The most significant findings of this first preliminary analysis are:

- The majority of educators report that the COVID-19 lockdown has caused a decline in the teaching quality and in students' performances. At the same time, educators have spent more time on teaching. This corresponds with the students' reports on quality of teaching and the lack of motivation they felt by the switching to online.
- However, the assessment of the negative effects of the lockdown is somewhat dependent on the initial attitude to online/blended learning and to how much experience the educators have in using online teaching tools. In addition, the ordinary student evaluation on courses did not fall in average, probably because the students recognized the challenge of changing to digital format overnight. The educators found information and support for the transition overall adequate, given the circumstances.
- Finally, both the educators and the students mentioned flexibility and less time used on transport together with more efficient meetings as a positive effect.

Educators survey

Student engagement and performance

- Not being able to meet students – and therefore not having a clear picture of students' learning process – and low student involvement in the process have been the most challenging aspects in the transformation.
- Student performance with regards to grades have been negatively influenced by exam-change – in particular from oral to written. However, in absolute numbers more had actually passed exams, and the average among those who passed is slightly higher than last year (8.36 compared to 8.22 last year).
- Student performance was rated lower or much lower than normal in 53% of the courses. There is no correlation between courses where teachers rated students' performance as low and the courses where students actually performed lower in 2020 than in 2019.
- The most sought after area of competence development is building knowledge of how to increase students' active involvement in the learning process.

Work Conditions

- The lockdown has had a negative effect on the educators' work conditions. Educators with children are most negatively affected (in terms of reduced work hours and work efficiency). 75% of the middle-aged (40-49 years) have children, and median age for VIP is 45 years.
- If the respondent's home workstation does not provide a reasonable working position or allows a quiet and peaceful work environment, the work efficiency is also negatively affected.
- Female faculty's report to take responsibility for more than 60% of the childcare which is more than 3 times as high as that of male faculty. Although men less likely take on childcare, their work efficiency is just as negatively affected by having children as women's are.
- The COVID-19 health crisis also affected (mostly men's) work efficiency by raising concerns about family and own health. Non-Danish faculty report to be more worried for family and close relationships than Danes.

IT-skills and attitude

- Good technical IT skills increase the propensity to have a positive attitude towards online teaching tools and make more use of them.
- DVIP exhibit better IT skills, a more positive attitude towards and more experience of using online teaching tools than VIP faculty do.
- More senior faculty report better IT skills and are slightly more experienced in the use of online teaching tools than younger faculty.
- Male respondents assess their IT skills slightly better than female respondents do but female respondents have a more positive attitude towards online teaching tools.

Digital Tools and the process switching to online

- In general, educators are quite satisfied with the tools available for online activities. The most used tools are Canvas, Microsoft Teams and Panopto.
- Two thirds of the educators report that the process of transforming the teaching to online teaching to a high or very high extent was characterized by pragmatic solutions.
- Nevertheless, most educators seem to be motivated to increased use of digital teaching tools in the future. The long run effect of the lockdown seems to be that there will be more use of own produced videos, quizzes and online forums in the future teaching at CBS.

Information and Support

- Educators are overall satisfied with the amount and timing of information about switching to online teaching. Information on exams was the one mentioned most negatively.
- The support units are widely used, and the users are quite satisfied with the support received.
- Most educators have been in touch with colleagues to exchange experiences and ideas. However, 25% of the educators without experience in online teaching did not seek support from colleagues.
- VIP are more disturbed by the lockdown than DVIP are. In the comments, however, some DVIPs emphasize that they would have wanted more information.

Students survey, preliminary findings

From the student survey as well as the COVID-19-questions asked in the annual evaluation, following preliminary findings were:

Motivation and personal factors

- On average, Bachelor students reported having had a poorer learning outcome during the lock-down and had a more negative assessment of online teaching than Master students.
- 1/3 of the respondents did not have contact with their instructors/supervisors and the assessment of online supervision was in general lower than normal
- Motivation was rated much lower than normal among students in the survey as well as in the yearly evaluation.
- Students reported to have had much less contact with fellow students, but only slightly less contact with family and friends.
- Students reported feeling down and lonely to a higher degree than previous years (60% of the students). ~45% of the students felt more anxious and stressed compared to normal. Less than 10% felt less down, lonely and stressed compared to normal.

Information and quality

- The quality of the online teaching was assessed lower or much lower than ordinary teaching among Bachelor students (70%) as well as Master (2y) students (50%).
- HD students were on average more positive of the new format, and ranked it above normal, while students at the Executive Masters were the most negative to both the change and format.
- 70% Bachelor students and 75% Master student found the information regarding the lock down to be sufficient. They mostly received information from *my.cbs* and Canvas, but 18% mentioned they found information other places such as social networks or emails. In *comments*, a few suggested more direct mails with information and they complained about the missing calendar function.
- On the positive side, the majority of students reported they participated in groups or other student-driven activities during the lock down.
- The students mentioned flexibility and videos that can be revisited as a positive aspect.
- Of the content parts, videos, streaming and quizzes were popular, and to less degree discussion forums and document collaborations.

Regular course- and annual evaluations

From the regular evaluations sent out to the students on a yearly basis, we found that the average from regular course evaluations was not changed significantly on the question of students' overall impression of the courses.

Of the five evaluation indicators from the annual evaluation used at CBS in e.g. the annual report, most were unchanged. One exception was the question "*Overall, the classes have been able to involve and motivate me whilst maintaining my interest*", Also called *Teaching activities*, which was 4% lower than last year. Also replies on the question whether one would recommend CBS was significantly lower, though not as much as *Teaching activities*.

Related work on teaching and COVID-19

Many higher education institutions have conducted similar evaluations in the spring and summer in order to collect experiences from educators, management and students. Some preliminary results have already been shared on surveys and studies among educators and students¹²³, while further research is still being

¹ R. Hjelsvold et al. *On-line teaching and learning: First impressions from educators and students as NTNU transitions to an online only mode of learning*. Technical Report, 2020

² J Kristian. *Suggestions for Moving Teaching Rapidly Online in the Face of the Corona Crisis*. Roskilde. 2020.

³ Mol and Cennamo: Experiment shows limits of a digital university, Financial Times, May, 2020

conducted in the respective research teams. In Denmark, a group led by University College UCN are looking for the same factors on a range of higher institutions (results are not available yet).

The overall common challenge identified from these studies show that student engagement, the communication and mutual feedback among students and educator as well as the communication among the educator and management and support units are all of major importance. Positive outcomes mentioned are flexibility and familiarity with blended tools. CBS will share data and insights with other institutions of relevance, not least other Danish institutions.

Further actions at CBS to prevent negative consequences of possible future COVID-19 restrictions

- Interviews with teachers and students are being carried out and analyzed in the early fall.
- Student survey focusing on COVID19-effects is being further analyzed in the early fall.
- Data is being used in research projects by Mette Franck and Sine Zambach and peer reviewed publications are planned to be published later.
- Codex for Responsible Online Learning has been developed by Teaching and Learning and CBS Students.