

Evidence of Teaching Effectiveness

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This document presents summary statistics and student comments from 10 independently taught undergraduate courses; the History of Science courses were taught at the University of Pittsburgh (2005-2006), and the sections of Introduction to Philosophy and Symbolic Logic were taught at University of Nevada, Las Vegas (2008-2010) . Each mean is reported on a 5 point scale with **5** being “**Strongly Agree**”, and **1** being “**Strongly Disagree**”.

Table 1: Summary Statistics

Course	Course Average (John Anders)	Comparison Average
	“Overall this is an excellent instructor”	
Introduction to Philosophy (101 Summer09)	4	4.03
Introduction to Philosophy (101 Summer09)	4.4	4.03
Introduction to Philosophy (101 Summer10)	4.57	4.53
Introduction to Philosophy (101 Summer10)	4.63	4.53
Introduction to Philosophy (101 Fall13)	4.78	4.42
Symbolic Logic (114 Fall08)	3.96	4.08
Symbolic Logic (114 Spring09)	4.4	4.03
Symbolic Logic (114 Spring10)	4.65	4.53
	“Stimulated My Thinking”	
History of Science 1	4	3.79
History of Science 2	3.47	3.79

Note: Means are reported on a 5 point scale. Because the student response scale changed from a 4 to 5 point scale between 2009 and 2010, older responses are adjusted to 5 point scale by matching response entries (e.g. “Strongly Agree” was coded a 4 on the old scale and is converted to a 5 to match the new 5 point scale). The comparison average is the mean for all comparable course offered by the department in the given semester. The official names of “History of Science 1” and “History of Science 2” were “Myth and Science” and “Magic, Medicine and Science”, respectively. Because course evaluations at The University of Pittsburgh did not feature a response item such as “overall this is an excellent instructor”, I report means for “The instructor stimulated my thinking”.

Selected Comments From Student Evaluations

Table 2: Selected Comments (Overall)

Overall

“I enjoyed your class IMMENSELY. One of those classes I wish I hadn’t taken so I could enjoy it again for the first time.”

“He cares. He explains thoroughly. He’s smart.”

“Professor Anders is a very smart and professional teacher. I really appreciate him giving large comments on my paper (this shows that he takes the time and cares about every student’s work)

“... He is definitely my favorite teacher.”

“I’ve kept a list! ...

- He asks questions. When given a response by a student, he tweaks, corrects and further elucidates
- When asking a question, he *waits*. Thanks for giving me a chance to think about the answer.
- When we had a short HW assignment, John did not end class early like every other teacher I know. I paid for an education. Thanks for not short changing me.
- John was available for help outside of class several times and was very patient with me. I never felt rushed or hurried. ”

“Very good instructor. Class was informative and fun.”

“I am smarter for having taken this class”

“Helped me decide to major in [this field]”

Note: Hand written student comments from evaluations for the 10 courses reported above. These comments are chosen to illustrate overall instructor excellence.

Table 3: Selected Comments (Knowledgeable)

Knowledgeable Instructor

“The instructor is very knowledgeable. He knows his stuff.”

“He knew the subject extremely well.”

“Very intelligent, knowledgeable on all topics”

“Excited about material, knowledgeable, inspiring”

“Excellent discussions and reading choices. Very approachable”

“Good use of class time - was interested in and familiar with the material”

“Thorough understanding of material, patience, effective communicator”

“Knowledge of the material was excellent”

“Some of the readings were difficult and he did an excellent job of making sure everyone understood the material.”

“Knew the material thoroughly”

“Very smart guy, nice and personable, clarified concepts when need be”

“He was engaging, thoughtful, encouraging and adept at expose the subtleties of arguments.”

“He was very knowledgeable of the subject matter and open to students opinions and questions. rather he helped us to focus on our opinions in an effort to understand the material.”

“He has an extensive understanding not only the material for the course, but is well versed in many topics.”

Note: Hand written student comments from evaluations for the 10 courses reported above. These comments are chosen to illustrate that the instructor appeared knowledgeable.

Table 4: Selected Comments (Passionate and Accessible)

Passionate Instructor

“He had a real passion for what he taught. Nice dude.”

“Excited about material, knowledgeable, inspiring”

“Helped me decide to major in [this field]”

“He was often time excited for classroom discussion and to express and share his own thoughts

Accessible Instructor

“He offered help when needed”

“He took as much time as the student needed to talk with and discuss material.
Always available for help.”

“He is always readily available to explain anything ...”

“Available and willing to discuss course and papers. Useful and extensive feedback on assignments.
Great knowledge and familiarity of texts.”

“He was very accepting and accessible.”

Note: Hand written student comments from evaluations for the 10 courses reported above. These comments are chosen to illustrate that the instructor was passionate about teaching and made himself accessible to students.

Table 5: Selected Comments (Discussion Leader)

Discussion Leader

“Engaged in discussion, kept each class and topic in the right direction. The grading is fair”

“I liked the way the course made me question certain topics I wouldn’t normally question. It helped my reasoning skills and thinking skills.”

“The class discussions were extremely helpful in understanding the readings”

“We went through everything in great detail. We were urged to discuss what we thought about topics. It was more interactive then other classes”

“It was a very interactive course and I felt like I could comfortably state all of my thoughts and options. The work load was reasonable.”

“I thought he led the class discussions well and he allowed good argument to take place.”

“I like that the instructor encouraged us to think outside the box and stimulated discussions”

“Discussion based philosophy class is preferable to lecture-based since it exercises critical thinking and allows students to lead discussions.”

“Good facilitator of group discussion”

“Some of the readings were difficult and he did an excellent job of making sure everyone understood the material.”

“Major strengths - moving discussions forward and changing their directions when needed.”

“He was very knowledgeable of the subject matter and open to students opinions and questions.”

“Encouraged students to work through the readings and did not impose his ideas on the students; rather he helped us to focus on our opinions in an effort to understand the material.”

“Major strengths - patience”

“Allowed the class to flow at students pace. All questions were answered.”

“He was often time excited for classroom discussion and to express and share his own thoughts ...It stimulated my person thought and ideas”

Note: Hand written student comments from evaluations for the 10 courses reported above. These comments are chosen to illustrate how the instructor led discussion based courses well.