

# Evaluating evaluations

**At our first** staff meeting after the summer vacation, a few teachers expressed satisfaction: courses had received positive evaluations from students in spite of being taught online, and in spite of the issues with exams and lockdown fatigue among students. It's good to see that even after years in the classroom and the challeng-

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theless, I would like to see course evaluations done differently, at least in part.

**Now that I've** been coordinating a course myself for a couple of years, I know that teachers await the evaluations with bated breath. That includes me. But when I was a student myself, I saw course evaluations as a boring task, which I only did if I got lots of begging emails. I hope Wageningen students are more conscientious about it than I was, because now I find myself reading through the evaluations of my course as though the students carefully weigh up every word and grade before they write them.

es of teaching during a pandemic, teachers still genuinely care about how their courses go down with students. Never-



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**I still think** we should change our evaluation system, or at least add something to it. The problem is that the evaluations as we do them now just seem to reflect how easy students found the course or – even worse – how pleased they are with their grade. Don't get me wrong, these things can be important. But we should also evaluate things that you can only really ask about years after the ink has dried on the exam papers.

**I would like** to ask graduates who have been working for two years: do you look back with a smile? And people who've been working for five years: which teachers have influenced your career most, and why? I'd ask people in their first year after graduating: which skills acquired at university do you use the most? And most of all, I'd like to know: which courses do you look back on with the most pleasure? Time heals the wounds of those far too early morning lectures, tough exams or annoying group work. Only a few years down the line can you assess whether that really difficult course was worth the effort. My guess would be that the courses you loathe the most as a student are the ones you appreciate the most later. I'd like to see *that* being evaluated.

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