Summary of Evaluation
Course: Learning in Higher Education, fall 2017
Teachers: Katarina Winka (responsible teacher) and Åse Tieva

The evaluation was conducted on 7 white-boards in the classroom. Each board had a question/statement at the top, the participants could write their own comments or agree/disagree (with a +/-) to other’s comments. The teachers were not there.

In the coffee breaks at my department, I have said this about the course...
The examples range from ‘I have had very interesting discussions with other teachers’ to ‘I told that the course is lengthy, could be summarized in two days’. There were some participants that had attended the course Teaching in Higher Education in the spring, and a few remarks stated that this course was similar to the previous one. There was one comment that one participant wrote that six participants disagreed to: ‘It lacks real world examples and focus much on theory’.

In one month, I will definitely remember this from the course...
The top themes listed on the board were multi-modal learning opportunities, students learn in different ways and formative assessment. Also, the pedagogical methods muddiest point, morning questions and the envelope exercise were mentioned. Other highlights were self-reflection on learning, the empowered student, generic skills, the importance of learning environments and the group of participants. One participant will remember the long group discussions.

The next time I teach, I will remember to...
The majority of comments concerned formative assessments (use CATS, evaluate simple but regularly), follow the rules, the importance of the learning environment (to redesign the room for active learning), and use of Google Apps and other collaborative tools. Some comments focused on making the constructive alignment of the course obvious to the students, giving clear instructions and talk slowly.

The next time I design/plan teaching, I will think about this...
The majority of comments concerned constructive alignment, making learning visible, continuous feedback and the exercises we have used in this course. Some other examples were: student’s needs, using previous feedback from courses, evaluation on whiteboards, learning environments, efficiency in using time.

I would like to bring these ideas up for discussion with my colleagues...
Several ideas were mentioned, such as formative assessments, improved handling of disabled students, redesign of problem sets to promote learning, total overhaul of some aspects of the methods used for teaching, meeting to discuss student feedback, improvement of ALC facilities, constructive alignment, flexibility, ‘choose your own adventure’ syllabus, update and ‘level’ our view on teaching and learning within the programme, introduce a bit of e-learning, and making learning visible.

How well has the course met your prior expectations (as described in exercise 1:1)?
On a scale from 0 to 5, most x:s were on the upper end (estimated mean 3,5). The responses are of course dependent on what their expectations were in the beginning of the course (high or low), and we do not know if the participants went back to exercise 1:1 to check this out.

In order to improve the course, I would suggest this...
About half of the participants commented that some of the group work was a bit too generous in time. It was not specified which activities this was related to. Also, the course book (Academic teaching) received some critique. Other suggestions (by individual participants) were to offer flexibility in attendance of course days, clearer instructions on tasks, get rid of morning questions and apply the learning techniques to authentic (their own) practice, not fictive examples. Some suggested new topics to include: rhetorics, discussions on funding, who gets to teach (and to include free lunches).

Final remarks from the teachers
We will keep the overall course design but based on the feedback above we will discuss how some of the tasks in the course can be made more realistic and authentic. We will also investigate if there is some other course literature available. This needs to be done in alignment with the course Teaching in Higher Education, since they share the same book. Rhetorics is not included in any of the basic courses, which is something we will look into.
During this course we have continuously reflected on the different teaching techniques that we have used. This was a request from a previous course and it is clear that this has worked very well. It was rewarding to see that the course has raised awareness and generated several ideas and suggestions that the participants can bring to their own teaching practice as well as for discussions with colleagues at their departments.

We see a conflict between the wish for a shorter course and the many constructive ideas on how to improve learning that has been the result of this course. One point that seems to have been forgotten already is that learning takes time, and reflection is necessary for deep learning.