Post-Lecture Interviews: Fast, Cheap Data about Your Course

Post-Lecture Interviews (PLI) (developed in EOS) are a way to obtain rapid and frequent feedback from students about their conceptual understanding and learning experiences. So far, PLIs have provided instructors with useful information about 4 EOS courses; EOSC 211, EOSC 220, EOSC 332, and EOSC 472.

Description: PLI's are 5-minute interviews carried out immediately following a lecture or lab with 1-2 students by someone who is NOT the instructors (e.g. a STLF). Students are chosen at random and asked if they have a few minutes to give feedback about the course. Over the term, effort is made to involve many different individuals.

Application of data: Interviews are shared with the instructor immediately so they can react with adjustments or explanations in the subsequent class. Data collected throughout the term can help track the course's evolution and whether response to student feedback has been successful. Examples of useful data include whether student understanding matches instructor intentions, success of a new activity, effectiveness of the course structure, etc.

Example interview questions:
- What was the main point of today's lecture?
- How was the pace of the lecture? Of the course in general? How clear was the lecture?
- Do you complete the readings? Are the readings useful to your learning?
- How are the labs? How are the assignments? How might they be improved?
- How was the midterm exam? Do you feel that it adequately tested your understanding of the course material?
- If you could change one thing about the course, what would it be? Do you have any other comments?

Example results from EOSC 211:
- 90% of students understood the main point of lectures at the level the instructor had intended.
- Pace and clarity of lectures are considered "just right" for a majority of students.
- Roughly half of the students are not completing the assigned readings.
- 100% of students appreciated newly developed in-class worksheets.
- Students overwhelmingly approved of a trial involving Pair-Programming (learning to program in pairs). Consequently, instructors implemented this learning approach as "standard practice" for the course.

Data collected with PLIs are both valuable and easy to collect. Any question on any course topic can be explored and quick feedback provided to the instructors. **Contact Josh Caulkins (caulkins@eos.ubc.ca) for information about setting up post-lecture interviews for your course.**