



The Perceived Difficulty Assessment Questionnaire (PDAQ): What's it all about?

Nuno F. Ribeiro, M.S.

Xinyi (Lisa) Qian, M.S.

Careen M. Yarnal, Ph.D.

Youngjoon Choi, M.S.

Stephanie Lovell, M.S.

- 1) Introduction – What's the PDAQ about?
- 2) Theoretical framework
- 3) How does it work?
-----break-----
- 4) Case study – RPTM 120
- 5) Testimonies
- 6) Q&A

INTRODUCTION

The Perceived Difficulty Assessment Questionnaire (PDAQ) has its origins in a simple question most instructors ask their students after an examination...

How did it go?

Ahem...



Instructors often ask this question because they are interested in comparing four things:

- **individual perceptions** of student performance;
- **class perceptions** of student performance;
- **factors** affecting student performance;
- actual student **performance**;

The responses are not always forthcoming, nor are they always helpful for the instructor...

Student response	Actual performance
“It went great! I aced it!”	F
“Ahem...Fine, I guess.”	B+
“I bombed it.”	A-
“Not good. Not good at all. I didn’t study, but you should let us retake it.”	C
“Pretty good, I just didn’t finish Question #5.”	A-
“I’m so tired.”	D
“It was very difficult. Took me ages, too.”	B-
“Okay. I mean, I didn’t do great, but I didn’t do bad either.”	A

It is also difficult to survey large classes on a one-to-one basis...



What can we do?





Let's ask everybody!

Total – 100 points.

RATE THIS EXERCISE – please help increase the quality of this course by answering the following questions (circle the appropriate answer).
Answer them as truthfully as possible. Thank you.

Difficulty Very Difficult Difficult Fair Easy Very Easy

Length Very Long Long Just Right Short Too Short

Opinions/comments _____

We introduced the PDAQ in different courses...

RPTM 300Y – TOURISM BEHAVIOR (~15 students)
RPTM 210 – INTRODUCTION TO COMMERCIAL
RECREATION (~100 students)

Over several semesters...

SUMMER 2007
FALL 2007
SPRING 2008

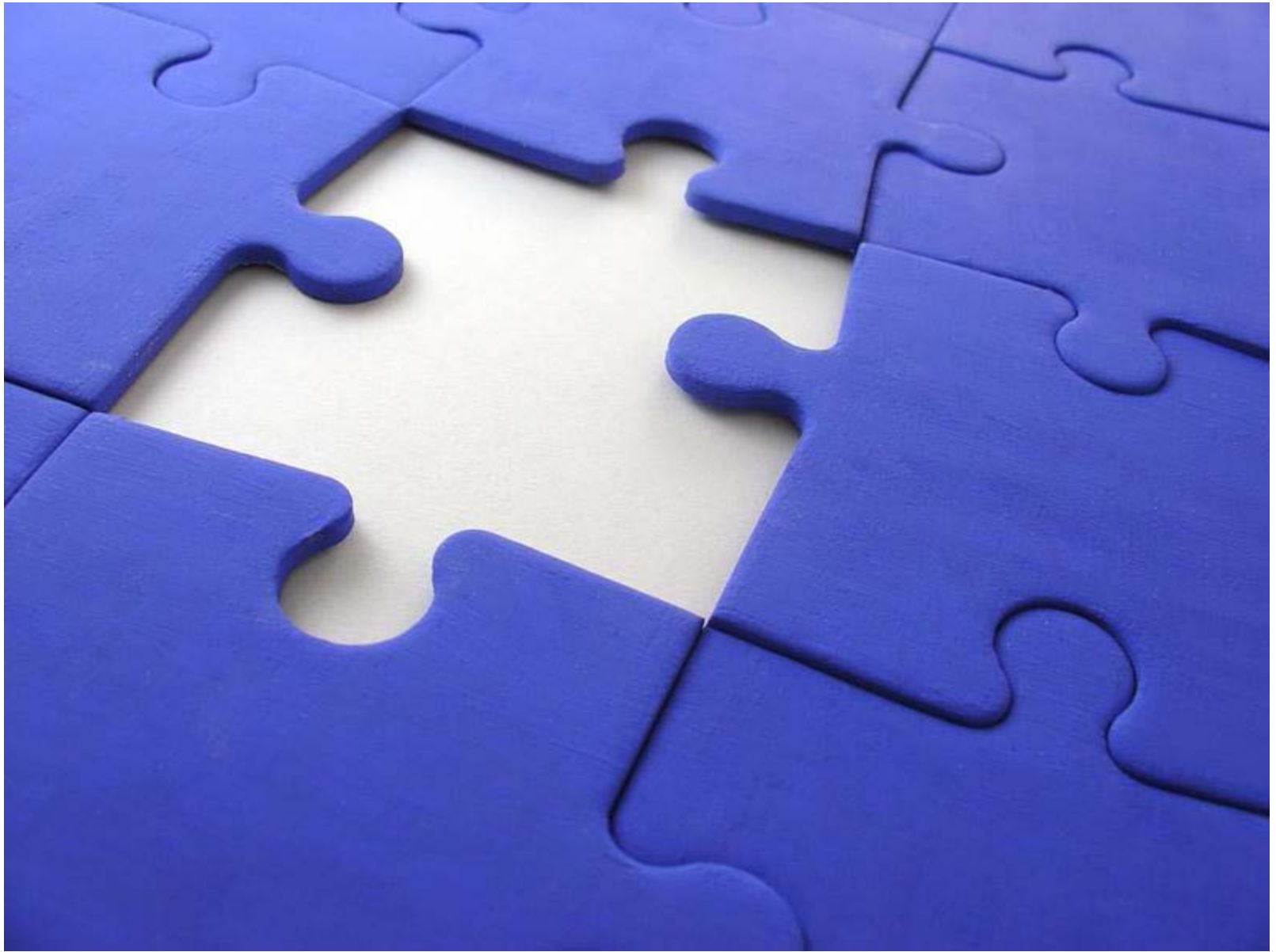
The results were encouraging... (Ribeiro & Yarnal 2010)

For the instructors:

- gives individual and class perceptions of examination difficulty;
- helps identify “problem questions;”
- helps “fine tune” class assessments;
- provides both quantitative and qualitative data about examinations;
- provides immediate student feedback on examinations;
- becomes useful as a learning motivation tool;
- shows the students the instructor cares;
- can help “rejuvenate” the class;

And for the students:

- gives students an opportunity to reflect and comment on examinations;
- increases personal responsibility for learning;
- allows the students to do some evaluating themselves;
- becomes a useful tool to track progress;
- corrects misperceptions about examination difficulty, length, etc.;
- helps students prepare for future examinations;



But something was missing...

That was how the PDAQ started...



And now for some theory...

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

importance of **student self-assessment** for:

- motivation;
- interest/personal responsibility;
- academic progress;
- and more... (Bollag 2006; Boud 1995; Tan 2008)

self-assessment and actual performance (Tan 2004)

- not much literature exists;
- results seem to indicate a benefit for the students (higher motivation levels, more realistic expectations) and the instructors (improved course design, better evaluations);

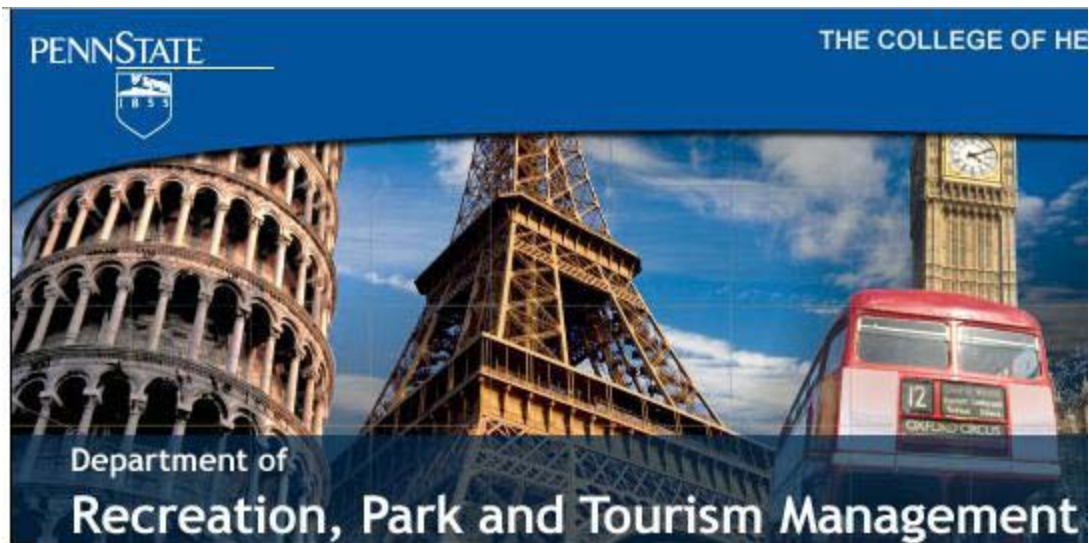
- no relevant literature in leisure studies (to our knowledge);
- existing literature only concerned with course grade (similar to mid-semester evaluations);
- *what is missing?*



other examination components
(e.g., length, difficulty, study
time, class attendance, etc.)

We needed help...

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HOW DOES IT
WORK?

Step 1:

The instructor(s) identify which variables are important that he/she wants feedback from the students about:

- *perceived length of assignment;*
- *perceived difficulty of assignment;*
- *class attendance;*
- *perceived importance of assignment;*
- *student preparation for assignment;*
- *etc.*

Step 2:

An assignment-specific PDAQ is constructed and pre-tested:

RPTM 101

Introduction to Recreation Services Spring 2010

Perceived Difficulty Assessment Questionnaire (PDAQ) – Quiz 1

Please help us increase the quality of the course by answering the following questions. Circle the appropriate answer. Answer as truthfully as possible. Participation is voluntary and confidential. Thank you.

1. How often did you attend class per week for this segment of the course?
Once a week Twice a week Three times a week
2. Did you read the assigned readings for this segment of the class?
Yes Partial No
3. Did you study for the quiz alone or with a partner or a group?
Alone Partner Group I did not study for the quiz

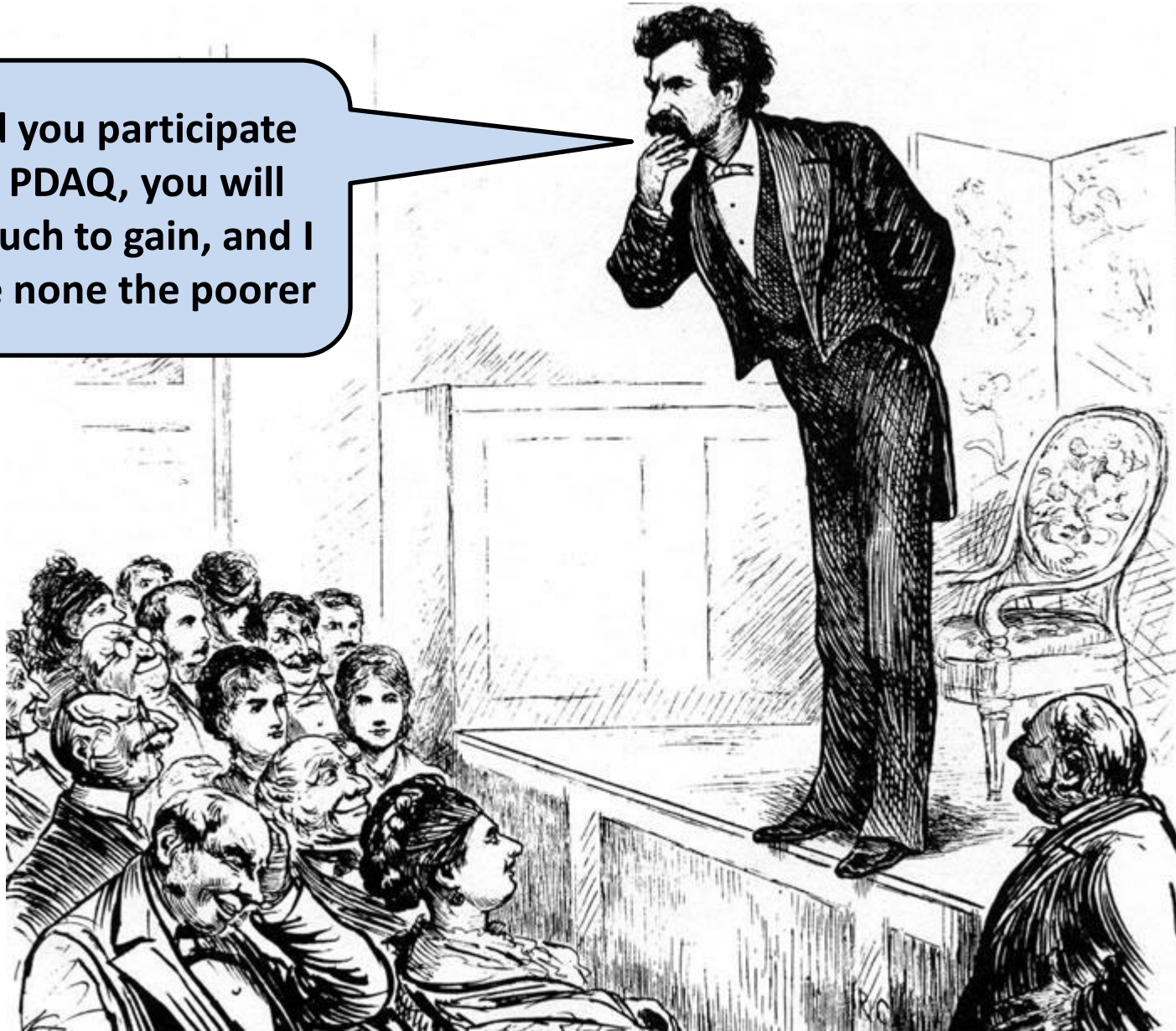
4. Rate the quiz for:

Difficulty	Very Difficult	Difficult	Easy	Very Easy
Length	Very Long	Long	Short	Too Short
Clarity	Very Unclear	Unclear	Clear	Very clear

Step 3:

Before the first assignment is given, instructor explains the purpose and function of the PDAQ to students and stresses that participation is voluntary and confidential (partial credit for participation can be given if desired):

Should you participate
in the PDAQ, you will
have much to gain, and I
shall be none the poorer



Step 4:

The PDAQ is given along with the first assignment/examination – it is important that students complete it as soon as the assignment ends.

Step 5:

PDAQ data is compiled, analyzed, and discussed between the instructor(s) and the teaching assistant(s):



Step 6:

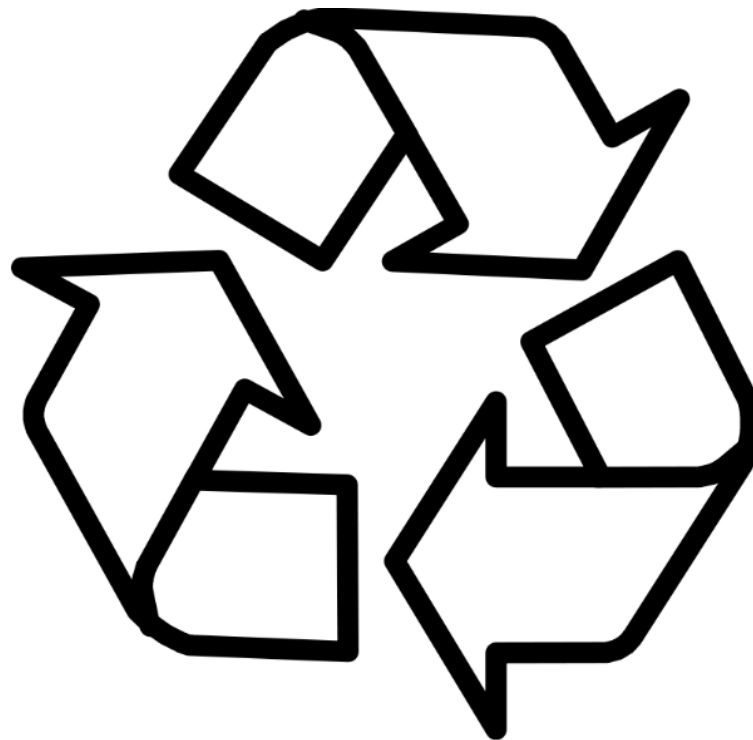
PDAQ data is communicated back to the students, in two distinct ways:

IN CLASS	INDIVIDUALLY VIA VLEs (e.g., ANGEL)
Class average <i>vs.</i> Class perceptions of average	Individual performance <i>vs.</i> Individual perceived performance (i.e., PDAQ scores)

“Now I would like to take two or three minutes to give you some feedback on the PDAQ scores. Those are the questions that you guys were so kind to answer after the quiz/exam/assignment. First I would like to thank you for answering them. They are of great help to us in making this a better course and design better exams, quizzes, and so on. Please provide as much detail as you can and if there is something that you would like to see addressed that’s not there, please let us know. I will remind you again that the results are absolutely confidential. Anyhow, here are the questions [**show slide with blank questionnaire**]. And here are your responses [**show slide with expected grades**]. And here are the actual scores [**show slide with actual grades**]. As you can see, there are a few differences/similarities [**talk for 1-2 min about what the data shows**]. Would you guys like to ask any questions? Do you have any comments? [**address questions if any**]. Again, I would like to thank you for your help.”

Step 7:

PDAQ data and student feedback is incorporated in the next assignment/examination, and the cycle starts again (steps 1-7).





PLEASE STAND BY

CASE STUDY – RPTM 120

Background Information

- Class size: ~120
- Class:
 - General Education course
 - Introduces students to role of leisure in their life
 - Assignments:
 - Time Diary
 - Class Exercises
 - Response Papers
 - Extra credit – PDAQ (5% of the total grade)



PDAQ Information on Syllabus

The Perceived Difficulty Assessment Questionnaire (PDAQ) has its origins in the question instructors often ask students upon completion of a given exercise, “How did it go?”

By doing so the instructor is requesting immediate feedback from students upon completion of the exercise. Unfortunately, we found that not only is it impractical to ask every student individually for feedback on an exercise, especially in large classes, but also that we tend to obtain fairly bland responses (e.g., “Okay”, “Good”, “So-so”). Therefore, in an effort to improve the quality of our teaching through the inclusion of self-assessment measures, this project will implement, assess, and disseminate an innovative measure of student self-assessment, the PDAQ. PDAQ’s will be administered after submission of the Time Diary (2 points of extra credit) and after each exam (1 point of extra credit for each of the 3 exams), for a total of 4 PDAQ’s and 5 extra credit points.

Reminders about PDAQ

- Students were reminded about PDAQ via both ANGEL email and an announcement slide in class
- On the day of PDAQ, the instructor introduced the process and value of PDAQ to the students
- Questions were solicited from students before implementation



PDAQ: Heads-up

- Instructors can select components of the course to be surveyed: exam/test, project, assignment, etc
- Think through what you want to ask & what questions are relevant to the course
- Design & pilot test
- Example of an actual PDAQ

How we conducted the PDAQ

- Hand out the questionnaire at the beginning of class
- Fill it out upon completion of an exam
- Hand it back to TA/RA at the end of class
- TA/RA entered responses & performed analysis
- Instructors only know aggregated results, do not see individual submissions
- Compile result slides to show to the class

Example: presentation of
PDAQ results to students

Listen up!

- Grade you expect to receive for the exam:

On PDAQ, if you circled...	On ANGEL, it shows...
A	4
B	3
C	2
D	1
F	0

Your Answers (1)

Questions	Choices	% students who chose this answer	#students who chose this answer
How often did you attend class per week for this segment of course?	Once a week	1.7%	2
	Twice a week	15.3%	18
	Three times a week	80.5%	95
Did you read the assigned readings for this segment of course?	Yes	0%	0
	Partial	53.4%	63
	No	44.1%	52
Did you study for the exam alone or with a partner or a group?	Alone	78.8%	93
	Partner	15.3%	18
	Group	1.7%	2
	I did not study for the quiz	0.8%	1

Your Answers (2): Rate the Exam

Questions	Choices	% students who chose this answer	#students who chose this answer
Difficulty	Very difficult	3.4%	4
	Difficult	57.6%	68
	Easy	35.6%	42
	Very easy	1.7%	2
Length	Very long	4.2%	5
	Long	65.3%	77
	Short	29.7%	35
	Very short	0%	0
Clarity	Very unclear	0.8%	1
	Unclear	12.7%	15
	Clear	70.3%	83
	Very clear	15.3%	18
Complexity	Very complex	0.8%	1
	Complex	50.0%	59
	Simple	48.3%	57
	Very simple	0.8%	1

Your Answers (3)

Questions	Choices	% students who chose this answer	#students who chose this answer
Helpfulness of TEXT material in studying for the exam	Very helpful	10.2%	12
	Helpful	52.5%	62
	Unhelpful	27.1%	32
	Very unhelpful	5.1%	6
Helpfulness of CLASS material in studying for the exam	Very helpful	61.9%	73
	Helpful	33.9%	40
	Unhelpful	2.5%	3
	Very unhelpful	0.8%	1

Your Answers (4)

Questions	Choices	#students who chose this answer	% students who chose this answer
How long did you study for the exam?	Less than 1 hour	7	5.9%
	1-2 hours	36	30.5%
	3-4 hours	59	50.0%
	5-6 hours	12	10.2%
	Over 6 hours	2	1.7%
Were you multi-tasking while studying for the exam?	Yes	75	63.6%
	No	42	35.6%
	I did not study for the quiz	1	0.8%
What grade do you expect to receive from the exam?	A	23	19.5%
	B	61	51.7%
	C	29	24.6%
	D	0	0%
	F	0	0%

Contrast

		% students who EXPECTED to receive this grade	% students who ACTUALLY received this grade
Grade	A	19.5%	13.4%
	B	51.7%	32.8%
	C	24.6%	38.7%
	D	0%	12.6%
	F	0%	2.5%

Example key points emphasized based on PDAQ results

- Student empowerment:
 - Multi-tasking
 - Attending class
 - Reading the textbook
 - Study time
- Tool to encourage students to try harder
- Educational tool for the faculty: know strengths & weaknesses of the course →
Make improvements

TESTIMONIES

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS?

reading suggestions

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