Course analysis
Advanced Topics in Brain Science (FDD3403)

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No. of students registered: 12

We started this course in 2021 as we noticed that there is no advanced course in brain science at KTH. By observing the PhD students who work in brain science I realized that they do not read much about topics which are not related to their research topic directly. This meant that their education was full of holes. And surprisingly they were pretty much unaware of classic papers in the field of brain science. So, we started this course where each student was assigned a topic which is not directly related to their Phd topic. They were supposed to read ~10 classic and modern papers on that topic and make a 45 min presentation.
To my utmost surprise the discussions were intense, and every presentation lasted for at least 120 min. We had 12 students taking the course.

Key Challenge

Challenge	Our approach
Selection of topics: In retrospect I realize that the set of topics that I proposed to the students were also restricted to my own biases and preferences.	In the next round I will ask my colleagues to suggest more topics. Also I will try to invite fellow researchers to the student seminars.
Student diversity: Some students who are not doing research in brain science also took the course but this being an advanced course, it was rather difficult for them and there was no way to bring them up to speed. This meant that a couple of students dropped out after the first few seminars.	Depending on the composition of students in the next round, I will offer a refresher course for non-brain science students to bring them up to speed.

I have not added the course feedback because I think that the feedback is useless. First, only a handful of students respond, and they are usually not the representative samples. I once received rather harsh feedback from a student (as a comment to LEQ) and I discussed it with my colleagues, and they simply advised me to ignore that. Second, the questions that we have in the standard LEQ are pretty much meaningless. I would like to revise that but to hope that same questionnaire can apply to every course is a fallacy. I prefer to take feedback from students who are regular in the course, and they do provide useful feedback which reflects in our teaching on lecture-by-lecture basis.