

**University of Puerto Rico
Mayagüez Campus
College of Agricultural Sciences**

Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology

Student Learning Assessment Report 2006-07 (Spring '07)

Section I

The Mission of the department is to educate in the disciplines of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology through formal education, scientific research, and public outreach and to contribute to the sustainable development of the agricultural sector, the development of students, the development of agribusiness and the rural sector and thus, fulfilling the obligation of better service to the people of Puerto Rico within the context of a global economy.

Section II

The Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology in an effort to improve the student learning process decided in a departmental meeting to implement an assessment tool for all its course offerings. After several discussions and going over various versions, a final edition was chosen after we felt the tool would help assess several dimensions of the courses. For the Spring Semester 07 we decided to focus on one course only. Our focus for this semester was **ECAG 4028 Agricultural Finances**. The tool consisted of a questionnaire to be distributed to students taking courses in the department (see Appendix). The questionnaire was given twice, first in the beginning of March and the second one in the last week of classes in May in order to measure changes. These were given anonymously to protect the identity of the students. A total of 10 students participated in the exercise. The content of the questionnaire consists of ten questions regarding the course, its objectives, teaching techniques, and if the course is relevant to global events, among others.

Initial Outcomes.

The first positive outcome is that the results show that there was improvement on the outcomes of the course by looking at the results between the first test and the second test. The first test was given in early March. This was done on purpose (as opposed to giving it at the start of the semester) because by March the students had as idea of what the course and its objectives were and they had already been tested with a midterm exam (See tables 1 and 2). The tables below show the results of the study. I will discuss some of the positive outcomes.

Pregunta\	Totalmete de acuerdo	Bastante de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Algo de acuerdo	Nada de acuerdo
Utilidad	4	2	2	2	0
Espectativas	0	3	1	3	3
Objetivos	1	2	3	1	3
Mejora	5	1	1	1	2
Conocimiento	2	2	0	2	4
Nivel	2	1	4	1	2
Metodología	1	1	1	3	4
Claridad	0	2	2	2	4
Relevancia	1	1	4	2	2
Recomendación	1	2	2	4	1

Table 1. Results of first questionnaire given in March.

Pregunta\	Totalmete de acuerdo	Bastante de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Algo de acuerdo	Nada de acuerdo
Utilidad	5	3	1	1	0
Espectativas	2	4	3	0	1
Objetivos	2	4	3	0	1
Mejora	5	3	1	0	1
Conocimiento	3	3	2	1	1
Nivel	3	3	3	0	1
Metodología	3	2	2	2	1
Claridad	2	4	1	2	1
Relevancia	3	4	2	1	0
Recomendación	3	2	3	1	1

Table 2. Results of second questionnaire given in May.

After the first test there was an intervention with the professor to show him the results and comments by the students. The professor took the results in a positive manner because he was really concerned about the class and the students. One of the comments was that the course needed more local examples (case studies from the PR and the US as he is an international scholar). Next, I would like to highlight some of the positive changes that show that the professor took steps to improve the course. On question number 2 (see table 3) if the course fulfilled the students expectations, 60% were in total or almost total agreement in May as opposed to only 30% in March.

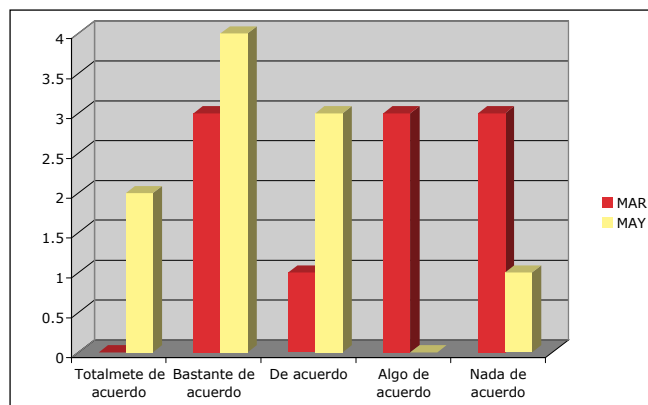


Table 3. Question 2 “Este curso llenó mis expectativas”

Question number 5 (Table 4) was about how knowledge about the field increased because of the course. 60% were in total or almost total agreement in May as opposed to only 40% in March.

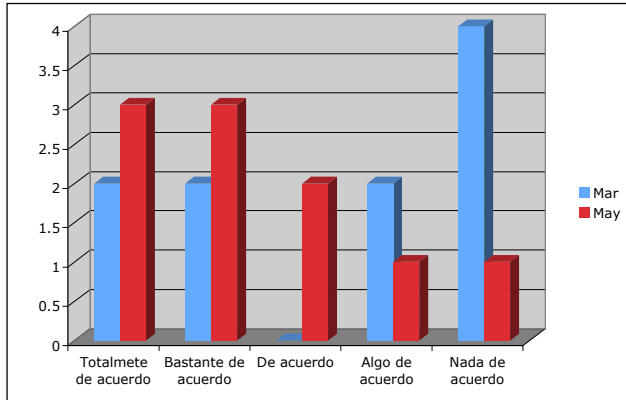


Table 4. Question 5 Entiendo que mis conocimientos en la materia se han incrementado gracias a este curso.

Question number 7 was if the teaching methodology was appropriate for the group of students. 70% were in total or almost total agreement or agreed in May as opposed to only 30% in March.

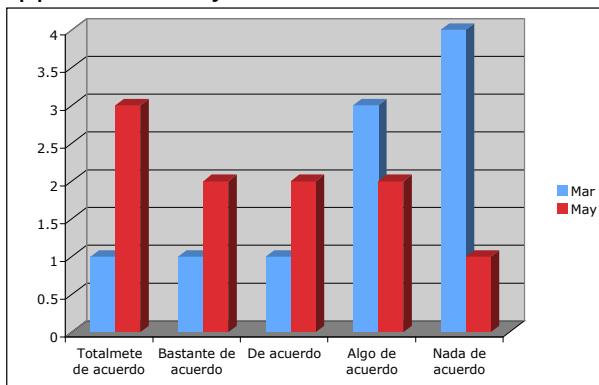


Table 5. Question 7, La metodología de enseñanza es apropiada para el grupo de estudiantes.

We believe that the professor had a positive outcome in part for the mid term intervention as opposed to waiting for class evaluations after the fact.

Work Ahead

We feel that the tool we have developed is an excellent starting point for the department to become more aware of our effectiveness as educators and to begin to internalize the culture of assessment as a way to set a new epistemological basis in which to ground all the theory and all new developments in the world of knowledge.

The department is committed to continuing improving the student learning process in future assessment activities and reports. Next academic year we will continue our assessment plan as we continue looking for ways to incorporate innovative ways to prepare the future professionals to Puerto Rico and elsewhere.

Submitted by,

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Assistant Professor

APPENDIX A
 Recinto Universitario de Mayagüez
 Colegio de Ciencias Agrícolas
 Facultad de Ciencias Agrícolas
Departamento de Economía Agrícola y Sociología Rural

Cuestionario Avalúo Curso y Profesor

Este cuestionario tiene el objetivo de medir el desarrollo y los logros de los estudiantes en los cursos que toman en el Departamento de Economía Agrícola y Sociología Rural. Solicitamos al estudiante que conteste el mismo con la mayor objetividad posible.

Curso: _____

Profesor: _____

Semestre: _____

Fecha: _____

Observación	Totalmente de acuerdo	Bastante de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Algo de acuerdo	Nada de acuerdo
1. Según mi mejor entender este curso será útil para mi futuro desempeño profesional.					
2. Este curso llenó mis expectativas.					
3. Se lograron los objetivos del curso.					
4. Entiendo que este curso me mejora o ayuda profesionalmente.					
5. Entiendo que mis conocimientos en la materia se han incrementado gracias a este curso.					
6. El nivel del curso está de acuerdo con el grupo de estudiantes.					
7. La metodología de enseñanza es apropiada para el grupo de estudiantes.					
8. El profesor explica con claridad la materia del curso, de modo que sea posible entenderla, comprenderla.					
9. La materia y temas discutido en el curso están al día con lo que está sucediendo en el mercado/ la economía.					
	Lo recomendaría mucho	Lo recomendaría bastante	Lo recomendaría	Lo recomendaría poco	No lo recomendaría
10. Según mi experiencia con este curso _____ a los demás estudiantes.					

Recomendaciones para el curso o el profesor: _____
