

# Tools for Learning Effective Utilisation of the Module Information Booklet (MIB)

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## ABSTRACT

In the process of teaching and learning, both educators and students should have a clear direction on the objectives and learning outcomes of a particular module or module (Norton, 2009). It is a common phenomenon where the learning outcomes expected from the module are only familiar to the educator whilst students do not have an understanding of how the learning outcomes apply to them. Hence, the students may make assumptions about the knowledge that they have consumed or concepts understood. The failure to understand the relationship between what they have learnt and to map with the programme of study may result in failure to inculcate the desired graduate attributes. There is small number of research (Angelides *et al*, 2005, Campbell & Norton, 2007 and Norton, 2009) has been conducted to measure how MIB, helps the students to understand the learning process. The purpose of this study is to understand and analyse the effectiveness of utilization MIB as the tools for learning. The study is however limited to Taylor's University students where they are educated to understand their scope of learning. It is expected that the utilization of MIB may help students to understand and to achieve the learning outcomes, thus, increase the integrity in education profession, efficiency and unbiased. The finding may create positive impact; however, it may seem pointless if the educators and students are not committed to it.

## KEYWORDS

*Module Information Booklet, Learning outcomes, Efficient and effective teaching methods, Social interaction, Higher education, Campus environment, Teaching and learning assessment.*

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The educator is may have prepared dynamic approaches of teaching but if the relationship to the learning outcome is not illustrated, the desired outcomes would not have been achieved. The importance should then be on focusing the relationship between the objectives and the module taught and less on memorizing and regurgitating.

*Module information booklet (MIB)* is a guideline that defines the structure and content of a course. It helps to map out clearly how resources (e.g. books, equipment, time) and class activities (e.g. teacher-talk, group work, practical, discussions) and assessment strategies (e.g. tests, quizzes, homework) will be used to ensure that the process of learning meet it objectives of the course successfully. The MIB is usually an interpretation of a specification or syllabus and can be used as a guide throughout the course to monitor progress against the original plan. The MIB is the onset for the learning process whereby it is a pinnacle that can bestow an overview of the module that is being taught.

It is crucial for educators to have a comprehensive MIB, which to ensure the syllabus that will be taught is parallel to the objectives and learning outcomes. The right mapping of syllabus with sufficient context and hours of learning is play important part to rationalize the teaching and learning process. However, this may be incomplete if there is lack of evidence of clear understanding of the objective of this MIB as a tool for effective learning or insufficient enlightenment on the details.

In the era of education it is quite blatantly obvious that two way interactions has been recognized as the best policy in the teaching and learning process, therefore, both educators and students should have a clear direction on the objectives and learning outcomes of a particular module or module. It is a common practice where the mapping process between learning outcomes, objectives and modules taught are only familiar to lecturers and students may be disregarded on the relevance to their study. Hence, without understanding the crux of the module, it may create a fallacy of assumptions among students and they may trap conventionally in a less delinquent concept of learning. Thus, this may further result in diminishing critical thinking among the students and losing grasp of its effectiveness in lecturers' stewardship.

The purpose of this study is to identify and analyse the utilisation of the MIB as the tool for learning. The aim of this study is also to identify and to enhance mutual understanding in the benefits of using the MIB as an added tool of learning. The use of MIB as a tool of learning will also offer support to students to optimize the students' learning process, so as to eventually accomplish an actual transformative learning. Hence, to achieve the above the facilitator of the module has to be familiar with the operation of the MIB and to achieve this goal, the institution

has to orchestrate new training programs to prepare and support teachers to as to shift from a status of provider and deliver of module matter, to moderator and facilitator of learning within a student centered approach to learning.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

Learning is a process of achieving (forming and developing) certain competencies that can be defined as a dynamical combination of cognitive and meta-cognitive skills, knowledge, understandings and attitudes, as well as the development of social skills and growth in ethical values. The target of every educational system and every Higher Education study program, should be to enable its participants to achieve an optimal balance in the development of all the above. This calls for a new academic environment in which the teachers' capabilities such as competences, resources and their application under surrounding reality are focalized towards the learner in a transformative learning way (Herlo, 2012).

Most of the literature has preferred to study the effectiveness of teaching and learning using media, utilising architectural space, discussing case and practical approaches. However, many had been ignorant on the focus on the importance of MIB. Environment has contributed early perception to attract the students, where most of the university are utilising the physical environment towards technology driven approaches (Morgan, 2011) and architectural icons to be the pull factors that attract students (Jamieson, 2009). The lecture theatres and other instructional spaces of the traditional university has being the manifestation of particular power relationship between teacher and students, which suggests to multiple the characters and experiences to shape and identify the relationship within (Ceppi and Zini, 1998). Jamieson (2003) finds that the recent trend has encouraged university to create new and diversify teaching and learning facilities in campuses, which resulted in celebrated architecture that has proved to be educationally problematic.

Literature about assessment and good teaching practices suggests that course syllabi are important for a variety of reasons and the syllabi can be used as indicators of student learning outcomes (Imasuen, 1999). A profound syllabi identify learning objectives or expected learning outcomes, enumerate topics or subjects to be covered, and describe the learning activities in which students will engage. Logical syllabi link these so that they are mutually supportive. For example, the objective "to learn to work in teams" in a course that does not include any group assignments is hardly supportable. Walvoord and Anderson (1998) show how assignments and grading practices can be effective tools to foster learning for assessment beyond the student-specific level. Anderson (2012) have shared insightful information on grading and assessment measurement that may help teachers to minimise the biasness and collectively informed on the student's learning process. However, omission of information on a syllabus does not mean that students fail to acquire skills and broad knowledge in a course; however, omissions in the

syllabi of explicit information pertaining to these areas are flags that prompt further investigation (Bers, Davis and Taylor, 2000).

Ellis (2004) believes that teaching through digital referencing may help the student to enlighten the info seeking, besides, promoting knowledge extraction from multiple resources. Web 2.0 in education is one of the primary catalysts that motivate the seeking engine in teaching and learning process (Hicks and Graber, 2010).

In contrast, Bourner (1997) suggests that the search for better ways of achieving particular learning outcomes is better than widening the repertoire of teaching methods which means of diminishing the effectiveness and teaching efficiency. This would be the lead in this study to deeply engage the students with understanding of the modules taught and the learning outcomes. The quality assurance in course design, delivery, and evaluation begins parallel with instructors' first contact with students Grunert, Millis, & Cohen (2008). Several researchers have examined the structural and functional multiplicities with regard to purpose and content of a syllabus.

Based on their own personal experience, some scholars have identified four major uses of a syllabus: (1) a contract between the instructor and the students, (2) a communication device that would connect the instructor to the students, (3) an instructional plan for the instructor and (4) a cognitive map for the students (Matejkab and Kurke, 1994). Other researchers have focused on accountability, emphasizing the use of the syllabus as an administrative tool for the documentation of teaching effectiveness, which could therefore provide evidence for the accreditation of an institution or the performance evaluation of its instructors (Bers, Davis and Taylor, 1996). Related to this perspective, Cullen and Harris (2009) claimed that the syllabus might gauge the mindset of the instructor, assessing whether the instructor was influenced by an instructional or a learner-centered paradigm.

The second set of multiplicities concerned itself with content tightly connected to the purpose of the syllabus. One notable exception to the conventional syllabus design, which included course objectives, calendar, and grading, was the learner-centered model (Grunert, 1997). In the learner-centered model, the content of a conventional syllabus was extended to include learning tools that would help students succeed in the course in addition to a variety of mechanisms that would encourage student engagement in the course and interaction both with the instructor and among themselves (Grunert, Millis, and Cohen, 2008). In this model, the syllabus was an instructional aide and a motivational tool that would extend learning beyond the physical borders of a classroom and continue after the end of the class Parkes and Harris (2002). Several researchers have thence eschewed the idea that the syllabus is only to be used as a course outline.

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

This research is designed to investigate the level of utilization of MIB for first year students in tertiary education. The preparation of MIB and its contents may be different among other tertiary institutions. However the main contents such as learning objectives, learning outcomes, subject contents and assignment due date are crucial information to be interpolated. Therefore, the main focus is to recoup information on how efficaciously the first year students have utilised the prepared information such as the MIB in their learning process. To achieve this, the research employed the survey strategy whereby questionnaires were distributed to gather quantitative data on the participants' perceptions and other information related to the research objectives. About 150 first year undergraduate students had participated in this survey and the respondents for this study were selected through a convenience sampling.

The instrument used in this study is a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire (as per attached in *Appendix I*) consists three parts of questions for MIB user. Respondents were asked to rate the perception on a five- point scale as follows: 1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree. The last two questions were requested the respondent to insert any other important information that should be highlighted. The descriptive analysis is prepared in the second part to highlight the percentage importance of each MIB components for the MIB user.

### 4.0 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Taylor's University programmes has embarked in utilizing MIB for all of it courses to facilitate students with pertinent and relevant information on all subject matters. The comprehensive efforts by lecturers compiling important information as such MIB to comprehend its benefits to students may not be achieved if students' perception is not at the par. The analysis of the MIB user will be refer to figure 1, 2 and 3 (*refer to Appendix II*).

*Figure 1* illustrates the depth of information inserted in MIB as a proper guidance throughout the semester. The depth information are referring to the detailed learning outcomes, assignment, topics in syllabus and datelines. More than 95 per cent of the students agreed that the provided information sufficiently informative and half of them agreed that they have received detailed information. Only 5 to 10 per cent of the students find that the outline of the activities component was explained briefly in MIB. This possibly may explain that there is a flexibility in the execution of class activities by the lecturers to ensure the class interesting and meet the outcomes requirement. In other words, crucial components such as learning objectives, learning outcomes, subject contents and assignment due date are included and have been explained clearly.

In *figure 2*, more than 60 per cent of the students agreed that the lecturer(s) have discussed all major components in MIB and how it can be utilized in the learning process. Explanation of learning outcomes and how the MIB is to be utilised received high disagreement of 10 per cent. This result may be reflecting on the transitional culture in first year university system, whereby, the students are still adapting with the new learning flow and the lecturer(s) tends to simplify the explanation in align with the student's adaptation reason. In addition, there are many challenges in an integration of full understanding measurement of learning outcomes (Moore and Gayle, 2010), although it can be useful litmus test for pedagogical practices (Olson, 2009). Almost 80 per cent of the students agreed lecturers have explained at the beginning of the class but only 60 per cent agreed that the lecturer(s) set reminder after the class. In addition, more than 73 per cent of the students agreed that the explanation of the class activities and assessments instruction is clear and followed religiously in all tutorials.

Although the lecturers are convinced that they have given in depth explanation, however what is crucial point is the students' level of understanding of the MIB. . In *figure 3*, although 50 per cent of the students able to understand both learning objectives and outcomes, there are 30 per cent of the students are indeterminate with the future learning process. Nevertheless, students are enlightened and have perspicuously understood with the list of the topics and are able to conform to available assessments and deadlines. However, the students still did not utilise the MIB to the optimum, whereby almost 30 per cent or more than 35 per cent of the students are unable to appreciate the benefits in utilising the MIB. This might be due to the result that the students may be indecisive on the activities that going to be conducted, and unable to relate the learning process with learning outcomes and thus unable to track the weak and the strength of each topic. Finally, although the majority of 60 per cent agreed that the MIB helped them in their learning process, but up to 40 per cent of students still being uncertain. This may indicates there may other tools which may help in learning process such as technology, environment, class space (Ceppi and Zini, 1998; Jamieson, 2003 and Morgan, 2011)

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

The finding indicates preliminary analysis on utilization of the MIB among first year students in Taylor's University. Majority has agreed the components provided in the MIB practically sufficient and clear. In addition, the lecturer(s) have utilized the first-day-of-class to explain the MIB. However, the enforcement to utilize the MIB depends on students and least in setting regular reminder to use it. Meanwhile, students only extracted few important information as such topics in syllabus, assignment components and its dateline. Whereas the learning outcomes and objectives, the application and other way to utilise the MIB is less being focused.

The MIB is designed to deliver comprehensive information to students in order to ensure that the preparation can be made prior to the class. It is more sagacious if the lecturers could take extra initiative to teach the students to utilise the MIB. It is presumed that the students are able to distinguish and create a better understanding in every module that they embark upon and the learning outcomes and objectives of every module taught is clearly explained by the lecturer to avoid misconception.

On other hand, the lecturer may find it user oriented while imparting the knowledge because the students are familiar with the objectives, learning outcomes and direction of the modules that they teach. This will enable the students to understand the application of each module to their job requirements and scope in future. Henceforth, a further research may be conducted in future to analyse the difference in learning process between a MIB user and the non-MIB user among private university in Malaysia.

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## APPENDIX I

### TOOLS FOR LEARNING: EFFECTIVE UTILISATION OF THE MODULE INFORMATION BOOKLET (MIB)

The purpose of this questionnaire is to elicit information about the students' perception of the use of MIB in every subject learnt and taught. We believe that it is critical to hear from you, the students, as key stakeholders of the university. We thank you for your participation in this survey.

**Please tick [√] your answer.**

1. Components of the MIB	Brief	Average	Detailed
Learning Objectives are stated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning Outcomes are stated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All topics in syllabus are stated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assessments are stated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All activities are stated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All deadlines are stated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Instructions on activities are stated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Discussion of the MIB	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Lecturer has explained the component of the MIB	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Lecturer has explained how to use the MIB	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Lecturer has explained clearly the learning outcomes/objectives in the MIB with syllabus topics	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Lecturer has highlighted assessments and dateline in the MIB	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Lecturer instructed the students to refer the MIB beginning of the class	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Lecturer has instructed the students to refer the MIB after the class	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Lecturer has explained clearly assessments' instruction in the MIB	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Lecturer has followed thoroughly the activities in the MIB	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Lecturer has followed the topics as listed in the Scheme of Work	<input type="checkbox"/>				
All tutorials are conducted as planned in the MIB	<input type="checkbox"/>				

3. Student perception on the MIB	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Understand the Learning Objectives	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Understand the Learning Outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Well informed with all the topics	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Well informed with the assessments	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Well informed with all activities	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Well informed with all deadlines	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Learning process is more application oriented	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Able to make an early preparation for the next activities/ assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Able to keep track on the topics in syllabus	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Able to relate the learning objectives/ outcomes and the topics in syllabus	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Able to identify the weakness/ strength of each topics	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Has improved the learning process	<input type="checkbox"/>				

6. In your understanding, would you encourage the lecturers to share the MIB? Explain why?

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7. What is your suggestion to improve the MIB as a platform of learning process?

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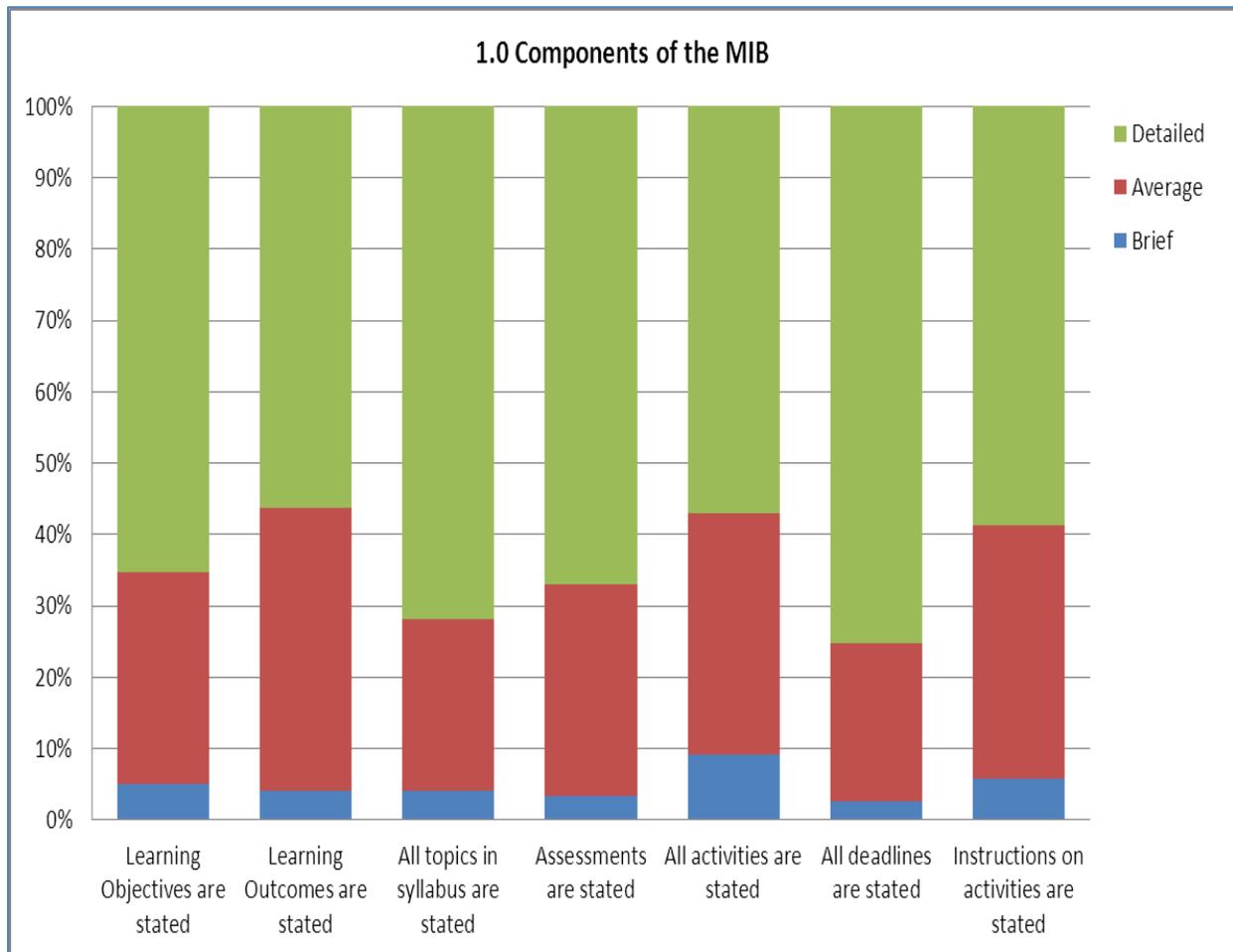


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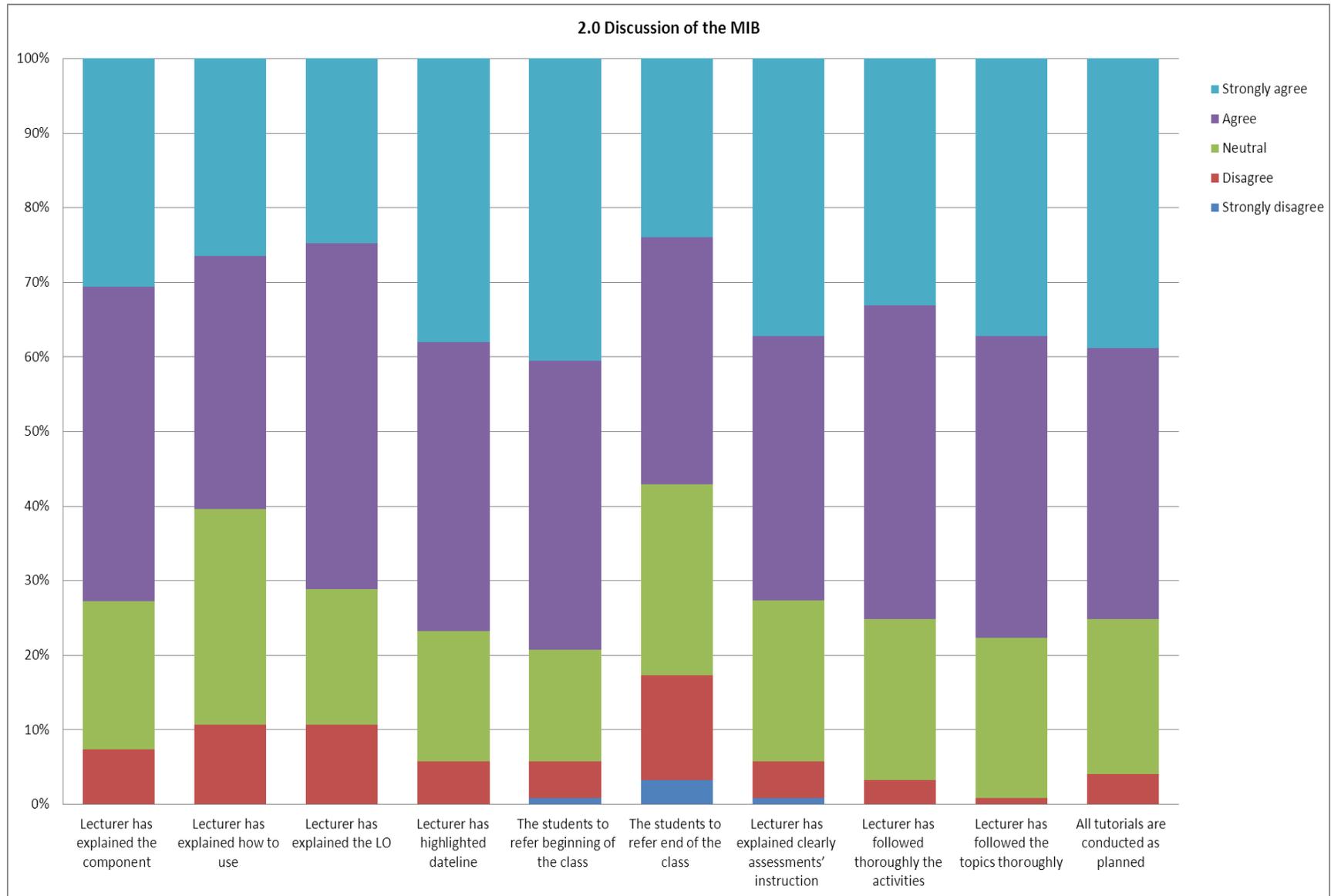
Thank you very much for your kind cooperation

## APPENDIX II

Figure 1



**Figure 2**



**Figure 3**

