



Comprehensive Reform Practice of Process Evaluation in Undergraduate Economics Courses

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Article Info

ISSN (online): 2582-7138

Volume: 06

Issue: 03

May - June 2025

Received: 10-04-2025

Accepted: 12-05-2025

Page No: 1232-1235

Abstract

Process evaluation is a dynamic evaluation, feedback, and improvement in teaching and learning. Actually it is not only feedback on teaching but also guidance on learning, and an important guarantee for achieving learning outcome. This article analyzes the design scheme, implementation plan, student learning behavior patterns, and the effectiveness of process evaluation reform practice relying on the Chaoxing online learning platform in undergraduate economics courses. It finally concludes that strengthening process evaluation is conducive to improving the achievement of learning outcome.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54660/IJMRGE.2025.6.3.1232-1235>

Keywords: Economics Course, Process Evaluation, Reform Practice

1. Introduction

In the new era of constantly emerging new technologies, undergraduate programs in universities are facing new opportunities and challenges on how to better cultivate their undergraduate students. Every single undergraduate course, as a fundamental unit of the undergraduate curriculum, is constantly undergoing teaching and learning reform in order to adapt to the new environment and requirements. The reform and improvement of undergraduate course includes the update of teaching content, the change in teaching modes and methods, and the reform of evaluation. Process evaluation is a category of evaluation and plays an important role in curriculum teaching. Process evaluation can be briefly defined as a timely and dynamic evaluation, feedback and improvement of teaching and learning during the course rather than near the end of it.

2. Problem Raising

Undergraduate economics courses which includes Microeconomics, Macroeconomics and etc. face many new challenges and opportunities just like other undergraduate courses. Firstly, "Student-centered" concept requires that teaching, learning and evaluation should focus more on how to support students' learning. Secondly, "Outcome oriented" construction requires teaching, learning and evaluation to pay more attention to the learning outcome. Thirdly, undergraduate courses are required to combine knowledge, abilities, and quality. They aim to impart valuable and technically advanced knowledge, while also cultivate students' abilities and qualities. The original evaluation in economics courses is relatively single, with less interaction between teachers and students, and more emphasis on final assessment which cannot meet the new requirements. It is necessary to change and improve it especially with a focus on strengthening and improving the process evaluation.

3. Process Evaluation Design

3.1 Basic Principles

The first principle of designing process evaluation is oriented to student centered. It should be designed from the perspective of how to better guide, support and facilitate learning. The process evaluation should keep pace with the teaching progress and frequency, such as conducting one process evaluation after each module, so that students can participate in the evaluation as soon as possible. Also the process evaluation should be convenient to contact and the results should be promptly fed back.

The Chaoxing online learning platform make it possible to arrange learning and evaluation time independently, and the system's automatic function can immediately feed back the evaluation results to students. In addition, students should be encouraged to correct and improve their work. For example, students are allowed to participate in the process evaluation for the second time after obtaining the feedback. And of course the higher evaluation score will be recorded if there is any.

The second principle of designing process evaluation is to balance process and outcome. The undergraduate program requires that each professional course should provide support for the graduation requirements. Therefore, each professional course has clear learning outcome objectives before it starts. And the achievement of these objectives is mainly measured through outcome oriented evaluation at the end of the course. Outcome oriented evaluation is a kind of inspection but itself cannot guarantee the achievement of learning outcome. It relies on the teaching and learning process, and only when the teaching and learning is completed to a high degree is it possible to achieve better outcome. The cycle of evaluation, feedback and improvement in process evaluation can really help improve the teaching and learning and ultimately improve the outcome.

The third principle of designing process evaluation focuses on cultivation of knowledge, ability, and quality. It requires that process evaluation should be organically combined with knowledge learning, ability cultivation, and quality development. Each module in the course includes clarifying learning objectives, conducting teaching activities, and implementing process evaluations. The learning objectives of the module are proposed by the teacher, known and recognized by the students; Teaching activities mainly focus on lecturing, discussions and interactive sharing; Process evaluations will be distributed on online learning platforms after each module and it helps students learn how to self-evaluation, self-learning, and self-development, which is beneficial for their lifelong learning and development in the future.

3.2 Implementation Plan

The undergraduate courses of Microeconomics and Macroeconomics are planned to be taught through SPOC on the Chaoxing online Learning Platform, where students participate in process evaluation activities using homework, discussion, and other functions on their computers or mobile devices. The process evaluation of a course will be offered with high frequency, low comprehensiveness, immediate feedback, and friendly for students improvement.

Firstly, the frequency of process evaluation is relatively high, with at least one process evaluation for one module. Actually there are 12 process evaluations in the Microeconomics course, an increase of 8 compared to the situation before the reform. And there are 15 process evaluations in the course of Macroeconomics, an increase of 10 compared to situation before the reform. Due to the high frequency of process evaluation, the content involved in each process evaluation is relatively limited, the comprehensiveness is weak. The main purpose is to help students self-evaluate the achievement of

the learning objectives in each module of the course.

Secondly, there will be immediate feedback in process evaluations. Process evaluation is submitted online and students can receive immediate feedback. After receiving feedback, students can rely on self-learning, discussions with classmates, or seeking help from teachers to correct learning deviations and enhance the depth of learning. Teachers can also obtain quantitative data about students' learning engagement and effectiveness in time, rather than guess upon personal teaching experience. In this way, teachers can intervene more timely and specifically, such as to students with learning difficulties. Considering the need for immediate feedback, the specific forms of process evaluation mainly include choice making, true and false, and blank filling.

Thirdly, the process evaluation will be released on Chaoxing online learning platform which can better adapt to personalized learning needs. For example, students can independently choose the time for online learning and answering questions, decide whether or not to review short videos before entering process evaluation. After process evaluation, students can ask questions and discuss with teachers or peers online according to their personal needs. And finally students can choose to participate in this process evaluation again to improve their learning outcome.

4. Process Evaluation Reform Practice

One Microeconomics course from February to June 2024, and one Macroeconomics course from September to December 2024 for undergraduate in our business school has implemented the process evaluation designed as the above. Based on the accumulated data of the implementation, the process evaluation practice is summarized as follows.

4.1 Completion Status of Process Evaluation

In the second semester of the 2023-2024 academic year, there are 205 students in Microeconomics course for process evaluation reform practice. They underwent 12 process evaluations with participation proportion and average accuracy rates both exceeding 87% (see Figure 1). From the perspective of student participation proportion, at the beginning of the semester, the proportion of students participating in process evaluation is relatively high, around 95%. In the middle and later stages of the semester, the proportion of students participating in process evaluations decreased to lower than 90% (See sequence number 4, 7, 11 in Figure 1). It is mainly due to that these process evaluations happened to coincide with long weekends for public holidays. Therefore there was an increase in students who did not complete the required process evaluation in time. The students participation proportion in the rest of process evaluation activities is above 90% while with slight fluctuations. From the perspective of answers accuracy, the average accuracy rate is above 90%. And as the content becomes more hard in the middle and later stages of the semester, the corresponding accuracy rate of process evaluation decreases, which is consistent with the distribution of content difficulty during the semester.

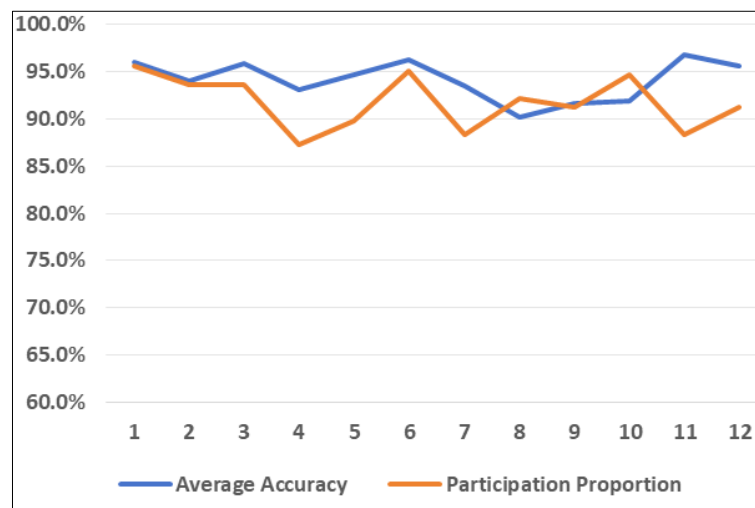


Fig 1: Average Accuracy and Participation Proportion of Process Evaluations in Microeconomics

In the first semester of the 2024-2025 academic year, there are 191 students of Macroeconomics course for process evaluation reform practice. They underwent 15 process evaluations, with student participation proportion and average accuracy rates both exceeding 91% (see Figure 2). From the perspective of student participation proportion, in the first half of the semester, the participation proportion is relatively high, around 98%. In the second half of the semester, the participation proportion decreased, especially

in the very last 3 process evaluation activities where the participation proportion dropped to around 93%. From the perspective of the answer accuracy rate, the average accuracy rate is above 90%. But sometimes there is a slight decrease (see sequence number 3, 10, 13 in Figure 2). It is mainly due to the requirement of quantitative calculation, which may pose certain barriers for some students and correspondingly reduce their accuracy rate.

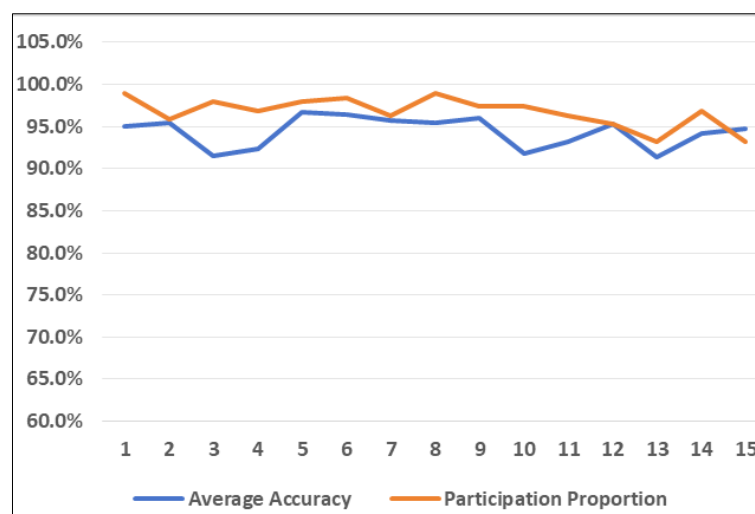


Fig 2: Average Accuracy and Participation Proportion of Process Evaluations in Macroeconomics

4.2 Time arrangement of process evaluation

The process evaluation in Microeconomics and Macroeconomics usually requires students to complete it within 5-7 days after the release. The time students chose to participate and complete process evaluation can be identified in three patterns: complete the process evaluation on the day of release, complete the process evaluation on the last day of the deadline, or complete the process evaluation during the middle time period. Statistics shows that about 50% of students chose to complete the process evaluation during the middle time period, while the other 50% choose to complete it on the day of the release or the last day of the deadline. Actually in Microeconomics, 52.6% of the students on average chose to complete process evaluation during the

middle time period, while in Macroeconomics, the proportion is 53.6%.

As to the trend of change, as the course progresses, the proportion of students who chose to complete the process evaluation on the day of release gradually decreases, while the proportion of students who chose to complete the process evaluation on the last day gradually increases (see Figure 3 and Figure 4). In Microeconomics course, in the first three process evaluations, 40.9% of students on average completed the activities on the day of release, compared to 23.8% in Macroeconomics. However, as the course progresses, the proportion continuously dropped and finally end in 8.5% in Microeconomics and 11.6% in Macroeconomics.

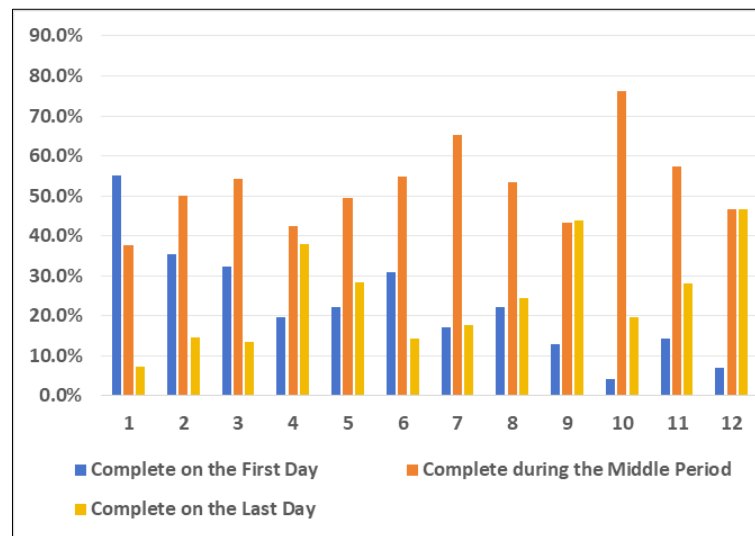


Fig 3: Time Arrangement of Process Evaluations in Microeconomics

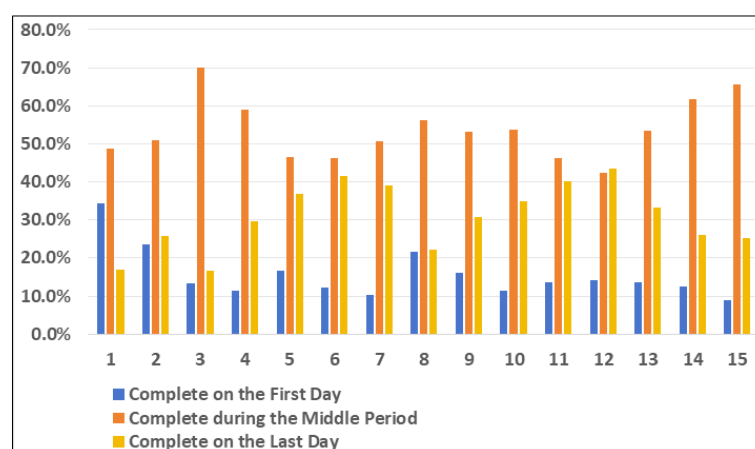


Fig 4: Time Arrangement of Process Evaluations in Macroeconomics

The distribution and trend of time arrangements for students to complete process evaluation are in line with the general characteristics of students' learning behavior. In the initial stage of the Microeconomics course, the "freshness" of the course is high, and the learning content resonates with personal life experiences of daily consumption choices. Students have a high interest and enthusiasm for learning, and there are many students who click to open the evaluation activity early. As time goes by, the freshness of the course decreases, and the theoretical analysis content gradually increases, the difficulty also gradually increases. Students need to invest more learning time in order to successfully complete the evaluation, and the proportion of students who complete it on the first day will naturally decrease. Situation in the macroeconomics course is similar, but as its learning content is relatively more abstract and theoretical, the proportion of students who complete process evaluation on the first day will be relatively lower.

4.3 Effectiveness of Process Evaluation

As to the achievement of course objectives in Microeconomics and Macroeconomics, it shows that the implementation of process evaluation reform has achieved positive effect. During the 2020-2022 years, part of economics courses were taught and tested online, which is not comparable to normal situation. Therefore, only the latest two years are taken into comparison. In the 2024-2025

academic year, when the process evaluation reform is fully implemented, the achievement rate of the Microeconomics course objectives has reached 90.3% by 0.8 percentage point increase compared to the previous academic year. And the achievement rate of the course objectives in Macroeconomics has reached 92.1% by 0.9 percentage points increase compared to the previous academic year.

5. Conclusion

From the analysis above, it is concluded that process evaluation reform in the courses of Microeconomics and Macroeconomics is valuable and the reform practice show that it has positive effect on enhancing learning outcome. And in the coming future, as more and more artificial intelligence will be used on online learning platform, process evaluation will usher more possibilities and feasibility.

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