# IE3 Pilot Courses – Feedback

## On using videos/articles from companies

There are good reasons to use material written by people from the industry. Knowledge cemented by real world experience and feedback is a good thing. Therefore, it’s a good thing if one can find reliable material from industry people.

However, there can also be incentive problems with industry material. The last years *(at least)* there have been a market trend in where companies seek to make their website “a destination” for more than just sales details. There has been a push to drive website traffic via writing business articles. Partly for Search Engine Optimization, and partly to brand the website as more than a sales website. Either way, a lot of articles have been written by PR departments or people that may not be experts in the subject. So, we feel that one must be cautious of these types of articles.

We felt that perhaps some courses relied too heavily on these types of sources. Since, we’re on the inside of this, we’re naturally wary of these types of articles. Particularly when the author is also pushing a product that’s aligned with the message of the article. There’s a lot of sales people out there!

## Tests, Quizzes, and Assignments

As for frequency of quizzes as well as practical assignments, we believe that a good combination that allows the student to redeem their knowledge is strengthening the overall aspect of the intended learning. Some quizzes were structured in ways that challenged the overall comprehension of the material and involved the application of mathematical equations that the students had learned in the exercises and online lectures in the modules. We did, however, think that some “fill-in-the-blank" questions were not specifically looking for the comprehension of the material, but more so looking for the memorization of sentences.

As for videos and PowerPoint (PDF) presentations of material, the generic content produced specifically for the courses leads to a more involving and comprehensible understanding. Aside from the risk of falling into the trap of marketing, as mentioned above, we do agree that the content and material provided was sufficient information to complete the assignments and quizzes.

The challenge with online learning is probably to figure out how courses can be designed that engage the student. With courses in for instance math, or programming, the student can engage in an activity which has a very clear feedback loop of learning. One can attempt solutions, learn why their solution didn’t work, learn, attempt again. Such a feedback loop doesn’t exist in all areas. The substitute is often teamwork, forums in which discussion and reasoning can take place amongst peers. This naturally happens in seminars or group assignments in in-person education. How do we recreate this in online courses?

## A bit of industry perspective

The courses are specifically intended to narrow down some of the improvement areas of the overall education system for European Industrial Engineering Programmes. We do believe that the learning material provided involves valuable knowledge for future graduates from the program as it enhances the understanding of the overall functions of the industry. What the IT-industry is asking for in a newly graduated Industrial Engineer is not only the technical knowledge of understanding processes and business logic, but also the so called “Soft skills” that involves teamwork, critical thinking, work ethics, and rhetorical speaking etc.

We have recruited heavily from Industrial Engineering program. A big reason for this have been that we are confident in that these students know teamwork, have soft skills etc. Not because this is the pool of students at the peak of some narrow technical skillset. This might be somewhat colored by the fact that we’re a consulting firm though. For us it is particularly important to hire people we can trust to send out to customers early on.