



Curtin University

Notion of Quality: Student perceptions of what needs improvement

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Background

Lack of research – investigating the student evaluations to determine their experiences of teaching and learning in the online environment

For decades - student feedback has been collected to evaluate and monitor the quality of teaching and learning in higher education

Student feedback – used for quality improvement and assurance

Quality – ‘the organisations can consistently meet their own desired standards through their processes’ (e-Learning Quality Report, 2008; Nicholl, 2012)

Online Learning

- Types of environments – partly, wholly, MOOC's
- e-learning frameworks – pedagogy, learning activities
- e-learning platforms - design, interactions, learning processes, and course outcomes

- Debate about whether we judge quality using the same criteria and standards?



Instrument

eVALUate for Student Feedback



- eVALUate unit survey

Survey valid and reliable (Oliver, Tucker, Gupta & Yeo, 2008)

Available for every coursework unit every study period in:

Australia (11 campuses) and Offshore (9 campuses)

Asks students to report what helped or hindered their achievement of unit learning outcomes

- eVALUate teaching survey

Available on request

Survey valid and reliable (Tucker, Oliver & Gupta, 2012)

Students report on 7 teacher characteristics and to comment on teachers' strengths and how teacher can improve T&L in the unit.

Research questions – second part of larger study

1. Students' perceptions of the 'best aspects' of teaching in an online environment (Tucker B, Halloran P & Price C, 2013)
 1. Online interactions with the teacher – most important to the student
 2. Where feedback on their learning and assessments were not provided. this hindered their learning
 3. Findings consistent with university findings (face to face or blended modes)
2. What are the students' perceptions of their learning experiences in relation to assessment in units delivered online.

Methodology

- Ethics approval
- Feedback from Curtin OUA students using eVALUate during 2012 (both UG and PG)
- Qualitative analysis using CEQuery and IBM® SPSS® Text Analytics for Surveys 4.0

Outcomes	Staff	Unit design	Assessment	Support
Intellectual	Accessibility & responsiveness	Practical-theory links	Relevance	Library
Work application /career	Teaching skills	Relevance (to work/life/discipline)	Marking	Learning resources
Further learning	Practical experience (current)	Flexibility/responsiveness	Expectations	Infrastructure/ environment
Personal	Quality & attitude	Methods of learning & teaching	Feedback/return	Student administration
Interpersonal		Structure & expectations	Standards	Student services
Knowledge/skills				Social affinity/support

Table 1: The domains and subdomains within CEQuery

Results

- In 2012 Curtin University had 47,697 OUA student enrolments
- 14,184 females , 3,790 males
- 490 (244 unique) units (subjects) across 7 study periods
- 11,501 evaluation surveys (RR of 24.1%)

	≤ 20 years	21-25 years	26-35 years	36-45 years	46+ years
No. of students	1248	4488	6995	3714	1709
No. of respondents	184	859	2048	1420	767
Response rate (%)	14.7%	19.1%	29.3%	38.2%	44.9%

Table 2: Response rates by age group (UG)



eVALUate – quantitative data

Study Period	Number of Enrolments	Number of Responses	Response Rate	What helps achievement of the learning outcomes							Student motivation and engagement			Overall Satisfaction
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
				Outcomes	Experiences	Resources	Assessment	Feedback	Workload	Teaching	Motivation	Best use	Think about	Satisfaction
1	12820	4016	31.3%	96.5	87.8	84.9	89.5	83.7	90.1	80.7	88.4	84.8	90.7	89.3
2	11131	2093	18.8%	91.1	84.2	85.1	82.4	77.5	81.7	76.6	88.3	89.3	90.8	80.0
3	13721	3084	22.5%	92.6	87.0	87.1	85.5	79.1	87.0	79.9	90.4	91.6	91.7	84.8
4	9256	1979	21.4%	92.3	86.1	87.6	84.7	80.1	85.5	80.3	89.8	90.9	92.2	83.8
5	367	172	46.9%	91.4	84.6	85.7	83.0	75.7	86.0	77.2	87.9	89.8	90.6	82.3
6	350	137	39.1%	97.1	82.4	82.4	84.3	76.6	87.4	79.4	86.9	88.3	90.5	79.1
7	52	20	38.5%	90.0	80.0	65.0	75.0	70.0	85.0	70.0	85.0	95.0	90.0	85.0
All study periods	47,697	11,501	24.1%	92.0	85.4	86.2	83.9	77.8	85.5	78.4	88.9	90.3	91.2	82.9

Table 3: Quantitative results by study period

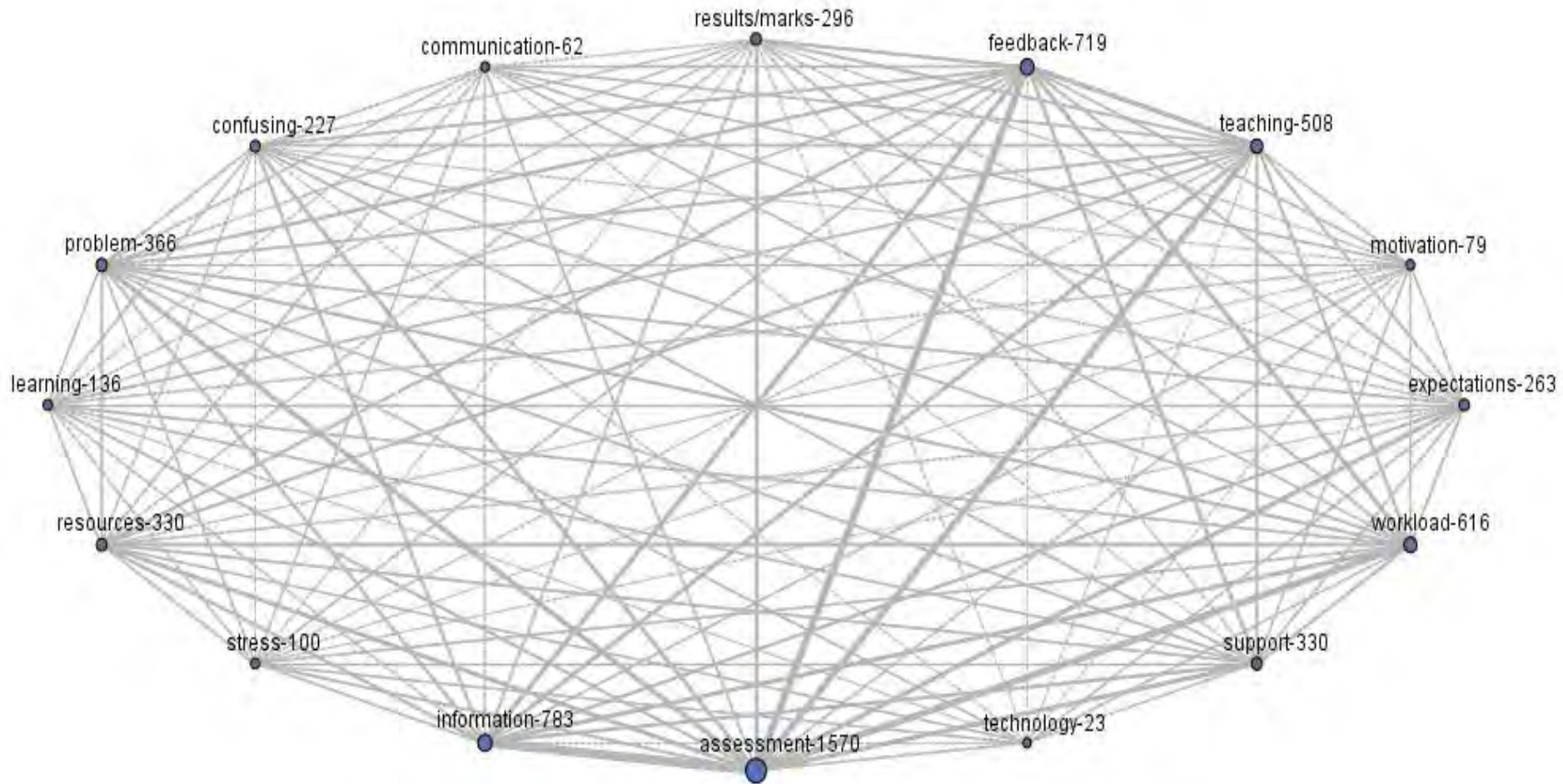


eVALUate – qualitative data

Best Aspects				Needs Improvement			
Rank	Sub-domain	Total hits	BA/NI odds	Rank	Sub-domain	Total hits	NI/BA odds
1	staff::accessibility	2227	2.2	1	support::learning resources	1188	0.8
2	staff::quality	1788	2.2	2	assessment::standards	1065	3.1
3	unit_design::methods	1704	2.0	3	staff::accessibility	1011	0.5
4	support::learning_resources	1582	1.3	4	assessment::expectations	967	3.3
5	assessment::relevance	853	1.5	5	assessment::feedback	878	1.7
6	assessment::feedback	532	0.6	6	unit_design::methods	849	0.5
7	unit_design::flexibility	526	0.8	7	staff::quality	805	0.5
8	staff::teaching_skills	503	0.6	8	staff::teaching_skills	782	1.6
9	outcomes::intellectual	458	9.0	9	unit_design::structure	750	2.7
10	outcomes::knowledge_skills	427	1.6	10	unit_design::flexibility	636	1.2

Table 4: The number, odds and rank of comments in each sub-domain

Figure 1: SPSS visualisation of assessment for Item 13 'How do you think the unit can be improved'



A large number of students commented on the frustrations felt through: poor assessment design, the timing of their assessments and feedback, and how this implicitly increased their workload and stress.

Results

How do you think this unit might be improved?

and sub-domains relating to assessment (standards and expectation)

The themes that emerged were :

1. Assessment information provided by teachers falls short of student expectations
2. Assessment feedback is often untimely, unclear and confusing
3. Students (and academics) are mostly unaware of the inherent workload when information is poor
4. Students are generally unclear of the 'standards' expected for their assessments.

Discussion

Institutional response

**Course Review Process
– Transforming
assessments and
student learning**

**Curriculum design
focusing on assessment**

**Course approach to
assessment**

1. Findings are consistent with university analysis
2. First year experience and orientation to assessment literacy (Kift 2009)
3. Principles of self-review and reflection through assessment and assessment standards linked to the discipline (Nicol 2007)
4. Evidencing achievement of graduate capabilities through assessments (Oliver 2011)



Conclusions

- Student feedback on what is helping and hindering their learning is essential for quality improvement
- Students report high level of satisfaction of their online experience
- Student comments – need for improvement around the assessment and feedback domains
 - Quality of information (confusing and unclear)
 - Provision and quality of feedback
- Institutional approach to the review and design of assessments at the course level is in progress

