Back to 'Basics':

What can module level evaluation tell us about course, institution and HE policy?

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Outline of the presentation

1. Module Appraisal at LJMU

2. Qualitative data: interim findings from semantic and thematic analysis of 2014 institutional data set

3. Module experience: implications for the course level engagement and satisfaction

4.   Conclusions and observations so far…

Module Appraisal – challenging survey

- Key facet of institutional quality assurance and enhancement processes

- Multiple identical surveys received during the same, short period of time - survey fatigue

- *'Low response rates and free text comments that are not representative of the student population'* (Robertson 2004)

SURVEY FATIGUE
Please, no more questions!
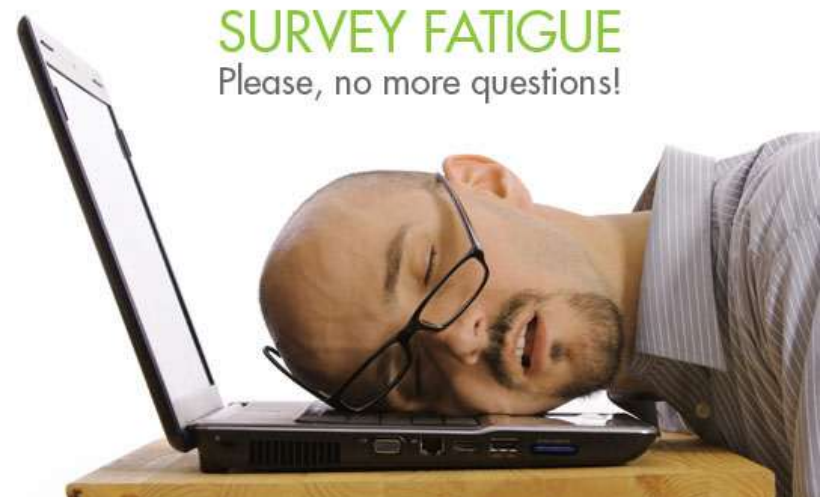
Module Appraisal – old

Q1. I have worked hard throughout this module.

Q2. Please provide any further comments about Question 1.

Q3. The module meets or exceeds my expectations.

Q4. The module is intellectually stimulating and inspiring.

Q5. I am satisfied with the quality of the teaching on this module.

Q6. The teaching team provide support when I need it.

Q7. The teaching team on the module are enthusiastic about what they teach.

Q8. My learning on this module is supported effectively by Blackboard.

Q9. The ways in which I would be assessed on the module were made clear.

Q10. The feedback on this module is constructive and shows ways to improve in the future (please mark 'Not applicable' if you have not received feedback).

Q11. Feedback on this module was available within 15 working days

Q12. Please make any further comments on the above, or on any other aspects of the module

Module Appraisal – new

Q1.I found the module interesting and engaging.

Q2. Please explain your answer

Q3.I understood the learning aims of the module.

Q4.Please explain your answer

Q5.I think that the module has contributed to my learning and development

Q6.Please explain your answer

Q7.I received the help and support I needed to complete this module

Q8. Please explain your answer

Pilot of the new MAS

Change management:
First semester pilot in December
36 modules

Outcomes:
Higher response rate
Much more contextual information received

This is really a substantial improvement on previous module evaluations. Whether that is a result of being administered via Bb or, more likely, the idea that comments are encouraged after every question it is difficult to say. However, the comments here are more substantial, detailed and useful.
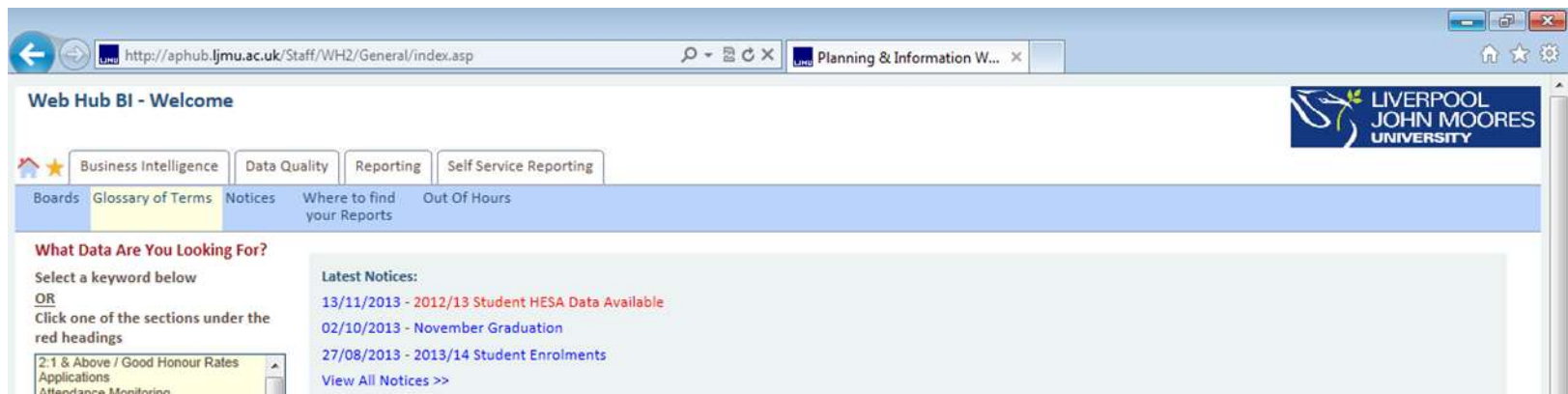
This is the most detailed feedback from students I've seen on any of my modules so definitely helpful…

I think the opportunity for comments after each question has generated too many comments/complaints for [my module]

Outcomes of the full implementation

Full implementation

28th March to 30th June 2014 (undergrad and postgrad)

Outcomes (undergraduate):

1. Equivalent response rate
2. 3 x volume of contextual data
3. Unexpected/resolved technical glitches
4. Semi- integration of two institutional platforms (intention is to move to full integration via a different survey instrument)

Research questions and methodology

1. What is the 'information value' of the feedback that students leave on the module level (new survey)?

2. What are the main institutional themes/messages emerging from qualitative comments in the MAS?

3. To what extent module level expereince might influence course experience and satisfaction?

Methodology: initial exploration via semantic analysis (Leximancer) and thematic analysis of selected concepts

MAS 2014 Concept map

Future (skills, knowledge, research)

1. Single positive learning experience: impact on students' career plans and inclination to do a postgraduate study:

I would strongly recommend this module to future students. The module inspired my future career choice and motivated me to apply for a masters …

It has helped me to distinguish which area I would like to work in in the future (not research!)

Fantastic module!! staff are very driven and that has rubbed off a lot on me and has helped me in my future plans and career prospects

Learning and development
(helped, understanding, important)

1. **'New' questions guided students to reflect on their development as learners:**

*I agree that it has contributed to my **learning and development**. This is due to the higher level of maturity surrounding the reading list and course material, and I believe that this year alone has made me more world-wiser and broadened my literature horizons.*

*I feel that the course has encouraged my **learning** as it relied on the **development** of our opinions of extremely controversial events in history. We were able to see multiple perspectives and therefore **develop** our understanding of cultures…*

*…I think we should have done a bit more practical work for it to have a more significant impact on our **learning and development**.*

Learning and development
(helped, understanding, important)

2. **Appreciation of difficult modules that led to an advanced level of learning. Critical of modules without intellectual challenge:**

Most difficult module on the course, but looking forward to the satisfaction of submitting it and having my most professional academic piece of work.

… the first assessment was quite easy…. I feel it wasted a lot of time which we could have spent on the second assessment.

3. **'Able' as an indicator of learning and development :**

I am now able to understand a lot about cultures in such a big city…

'Every module counts'

Responses are indicative of students 'investing' into their course.

1. **'Value for money' is getting more prominent:**

I felt like it wasn't what I signed up for… 20% of my second year modules and therefore 20% of my course tuition fee…

2. **Assessment management (by staff) important:**

I get the impression … that tutors on this module set the deadlines for their own benefit and convenience of marking … This doesn't help students achieve the best outcome and improved marks given the marks will inform our final degree award …

Every module 'counts'

4. Students value modules where efforts are rewarded

*... if you put the work in, you will get the results...*

5. Inconsistent delivery impacts on the overall satisfaction:

The first semester of this module was interesting and beneficial. The second semester was not enjoyable at all … I felt that I did not learn anything of great importance which would aid me in my studies or to my overall degree. Very disappointing overall …

Implications for the course level satisfaction

1. **'Module-course-university' triangle**

Excellent module, tutor very supportive and offered a lot of guidance. She has made the course and the whole university experience more enjoyable and gives you the confidence to carry on.
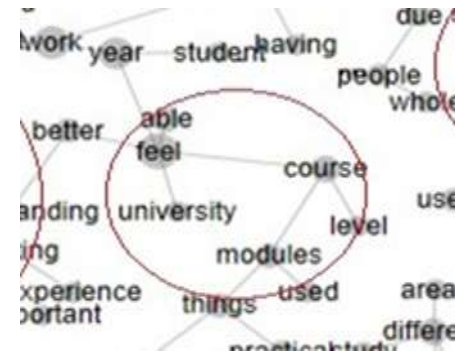
2. **Successful module – course marketing vehicle**

A fantastic module that does not receive enough credit or attention in the overall selling of the course...

[This module] should be pushed to the forefront of the LJMU prospectus.

Implications for the course level satisfaction

1. **Timing:**

 The module rushes everything into the last semester, not only this module but the whole course...

2. **Integration into the course:**

I can see the relevance of some of the teaching content, however, it was not integrated at all into the course and has given the module a very disjointed and confusing feel.

3. **Learner relevance:**

The module was interesting, however being a mature student, I thought most of the content was mainly aimed at those students attending university straight from school. I am aware that it is impossible to tailor whole modules to suit differing ages but as a fee paying student I look for beneficial outcomes to my investment into the course.

NSS 2014

Increase in module-level comments (especially negative)

Career: (new concept) is being mentioned more frequently in student comments, mainly in relation to course's ability to broaden or limit career opportunities

Market value: stronger emphasis including competitiveness of the **degree** (unfavourable concept).

Limited reflection/details on learning, development or course engagement.

Findings and observations…

1. Survey design can drive institutional educational messages students receive

2. New MAS delivers much more than a localised, single module feedback and provides an opportunity for students to reflect on their learning

3. Module and programme teams are gaining a better level of understanding of students expectations and how they have/haven't been realised

4. Module feedback fluctuates/heterogenous. New approach provides more informational on non traditional learners.

5. Impact of a particular module on the course satisfaction and the whole university experience is often seen in the MAS

6. The survey is a much better tool for identifying pre-final year issues than 'NSS mirror'

Successful module is a micro-model of a successful course…

The structure of the module was great. The ongoing assessments encouraged me to keep up to speed with the project. The independent learning aspect of the project produced greater accountability and enabled me to work at my best. The assessments were clearly outlined by tutors. This created minimal confusion and enabled me to achieve my best. Great variety of teaching techniques and tutors successfully integrated both practical and theory aspects which I found to be very stimulating. Lots of support and encouragement from both tutors whenever it was needed. The sessions are very enjoyable and I feel I have developed the skills … to take forward to the PGCE…

Implications for the institution

1. Need to make MAS 'count' more, improve response rates

2. More control to be given to module leaders over timing of launching and reminders

3. Transparency and sharing of the module level data - to develop programme as whole

4. Improved feedback to students - results posted on Bb module sites, following by information on actions

5. Focus on the MAS and NSS as the key institutional surveys (supported by 'student voice week')

Robertson (2004) Student perceptions of student perception of module questionnaires: questionnaire completion as problem solving, *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education,* 29 (6) 663-679.