

Student placements



Student Feedback Questionnaires – a different slant

**Ray Wallace, School of Science & Technology, Nottingham
Trent University**

Student Feedback Questionnaires – a different slant

(or, “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country”)

Feedback Form
Provide us feedback on our services

Excellent	Very Good	Average
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**We need
your help!**
Please answer our
quick questionnaire

The following have been taken from genuine websites and have not been tampered with in any way!

Quality, quality, quality!

How do universities deal with it?

Some have manuals

Teaching Quality Assurance Manual

INTRODUCTION

The Teaching Quality Assurance (TQA) Manual acts as the central repository of the processes that underpin the University's approach to the management of quality. It details a range of procedures and codes of good practice that help to order the University's approach to quality assurance in the following areas of activity:

- [Policies](#)
- [Definitions](#)
- [Design and approval of programmes](#)
- [Teaching and Learning](#)
- [Student Support](#)
- [Postgraduate taught and research students](#)
- [Assessment](#)
- [Monitoring and review](#)
- [Procedures relating to Collaborative Provision](#)

Others have Units & Committees



School of Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Working closely with all Sections of the School of Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education, the Quality Assurance Unit advises on, and facilitates, the development of quality management systems and ensures compliance with national standards as set out by the GMC and PMETB, Royal Colleges and COPMed. Representing the Postgraduate Deanery at the Wales Concordat, the Unit is also responsible for co-ordinating responses to the Wales Concordat Initiative via its questionnaires and scheduling tool. This work is underpinned by the Quality Assurance Committee which is co-ordinated and supported by the Unit and reports directly to the Postgraduate Board. Work is currently underway to develop a Wales Deanery Quality Strategy.

Some are shrouded in mystery



Quality Assurance Processes and Practice

[Educational Policy and Standards](#)

- ▼ [Local versus central responsibility](#)
- ▼ [Formal policy guidelines](#)
- ▼ [More formal procedures](#)
- ▼ [More explicit information for students](#)
- ▼ [Documentation](#)
- ▼ [Processes](#)

...and others are more blasé



Quality Assurance

This website holds the most up to date version of quality assurance procedures. Because there are often small changes to procedures from year to year the University no longer publishes a hard copy Quality Assurance handbook.

Unfortunately these days there is
another dimension to the quality
melting pot!



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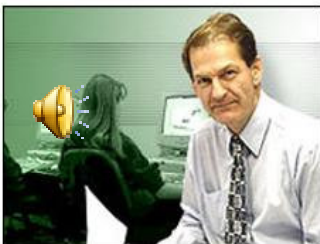
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Printable version

Students: Customers or learners?

By Mike Baker

Should university students be seen as learners or customers?



While you might argue they are both, the dividing line between the two has become dangerously blurred. This was underlined by two news stories this week.

First there was the allegation from a senior academic that league tables have put universities under pressure to mark too leniently and to overlook plagiarism.

Second there was the whistleblower who claimed that degrees are being awarded to overseas students who lacked basic English language skills because of the lucrative nature of the foreign student market.

There was a third story, a few weeks back, on a related issue. This was the discovery that two university lecturers had urged students to exaggerate the scores they gave to their institution in the National Student Survey because, they claimed, everyone else was doing so.

There is a common theme to each of these stories: the pressures on academics to make sure that their universities are marketable to

SEE ALSO

- ▶ Call for action on degree 'fraud'
20 Jun 08 | Education
- ▶ Whistleblower warning on degrees
17 Jun 08 | Education
- ▶ University staff faking survey
13 May 08 | Education

RELATED INTERNET LINKS

- ▶ Mike Baker
- ▶ Department for Children, Schools and Families

The BBC is not responsible for the content of external internet sites

TOP EDUCATION STORIES

- ▶ Big jump in top GCSE exam grades
- ▶ Languages still slipping at GCSE
- ▶ Results show regional variations

News feeds

MOST POPULAR STORIES NOW

E-MAILED READ WATCHED/LISTENED

- 1 Oliver criticises alcohol culture

Customers  **Learners**



Consumers
of a service



Active participants
in a service

A favourite contributor to the quality armoury is the good old 'student feedback questionnaire'

However student feedback questionnaires are either a blessing or a curse depending on how you view the world

- There are certainly many of them
- Can prove extremely useful and helpful
- They are beloved by university managers
- At the very least help one to 'tick the box'

However the trouble with questionnaires
is that by their very nature,
they often invite criticism of an activity,
where often it may not be justified

Student feedback questionnaires usually concentrate exclusively on the quality of the service provided often ignoring the input of the receiver of the service

Enter the “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country” approach!)

My tenet is that if we concentrated a little more in questionnaires, in asking what the student had put in themselves, then they might think more pragmatically about the service they are judging

..... and hence students would think
twice before providing non-
constructive criticism

In the Science Placement Service at Nottingham Trent we have adopted such an approach over the last few years

Section 1: What the sandwich placement team has done for you

On a scale of 1 to 5, (1 being poor, 5 being excellent), how would you rate the support you received from the sandwich placement team in the following areas when searching for a placement during your second year (please make comments where possible whether positive or negative)?

Area of activity	Rating				
	1	2	3	4	5
Help with CV and availability to give guidance					
Help with covering letters and availability to give guidance					
Help with completing application forms and availability to give guidance					
Advertising of available placements					
General advice and guidance/availability to answer questions					
General encouragement (when applying/when unsuccessful in applying)					
Briefing meeting in year one					
Briefing meeting at the end of year two					

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	1		2		3		4		5	
Help with CV and availability to give guidance	0	0	3	2	2	5	13	9	12	13
Help with covering letters and availability to give guidance	1	1	2	2	6	4	13	13	7	8
Help with completing application forms and availability to give guidance	1	0	3	2	8	12	13	7	4	7
Advertising of available placements	0	0	1	1	3	6	5	8	21	14
General advice and guidance/availability to answer questions	0	1	0	0	5	6	4	9	21	12
General encouragement (when applying/when unsuccessful in applying)	0	1	5	4	3	4	7	9	14	10
Briefing meeting in year one	0	0	6	4	6	4	13	8	3	7
Briefing meeting at the end of year two	1	0	2	2	3	6	14	12	11	7

Section 2: What you did for yourself

1) On a scale of 1 to 5, (1 being poor, 5 being excellent), how would you rate your efforts in searching for a sandwich placement?

Area of activity	Rating				
	1	2	3	4	5
Responding to adverts quickly					
Following through signing up to apply for a placement with an application by the deadline given by the placement team.					
Applying for a large number of placements varying in their nature and location.					
Applying for placements early in the year					
Keeping the placement team informed of speculative applications made/offers or rejections received/interview dates.					

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Following through signing up to apply for a placement with an application by the deadline given by the placement team.	0 1	1 1	4 5	13 8	13 12
Applying for a large number of placements varying in their nature and location.	5 6	6 2	6 5	9 8	4 7
Applying for placements early in the year	2 4	6 3	5 3	11 8	7 9
Keeping the placement team informed of speculative applications made/offers or rejections received/interview dates.	1 1	3 1	7 4	7 11	13 10

So what did we observe?

- In general the students were pleased with the service offered by the Placement Office and that satisfaction has increased in 2008 compared with 2007 with students more likely to rate us 4 & 5 rather than 3 & 4

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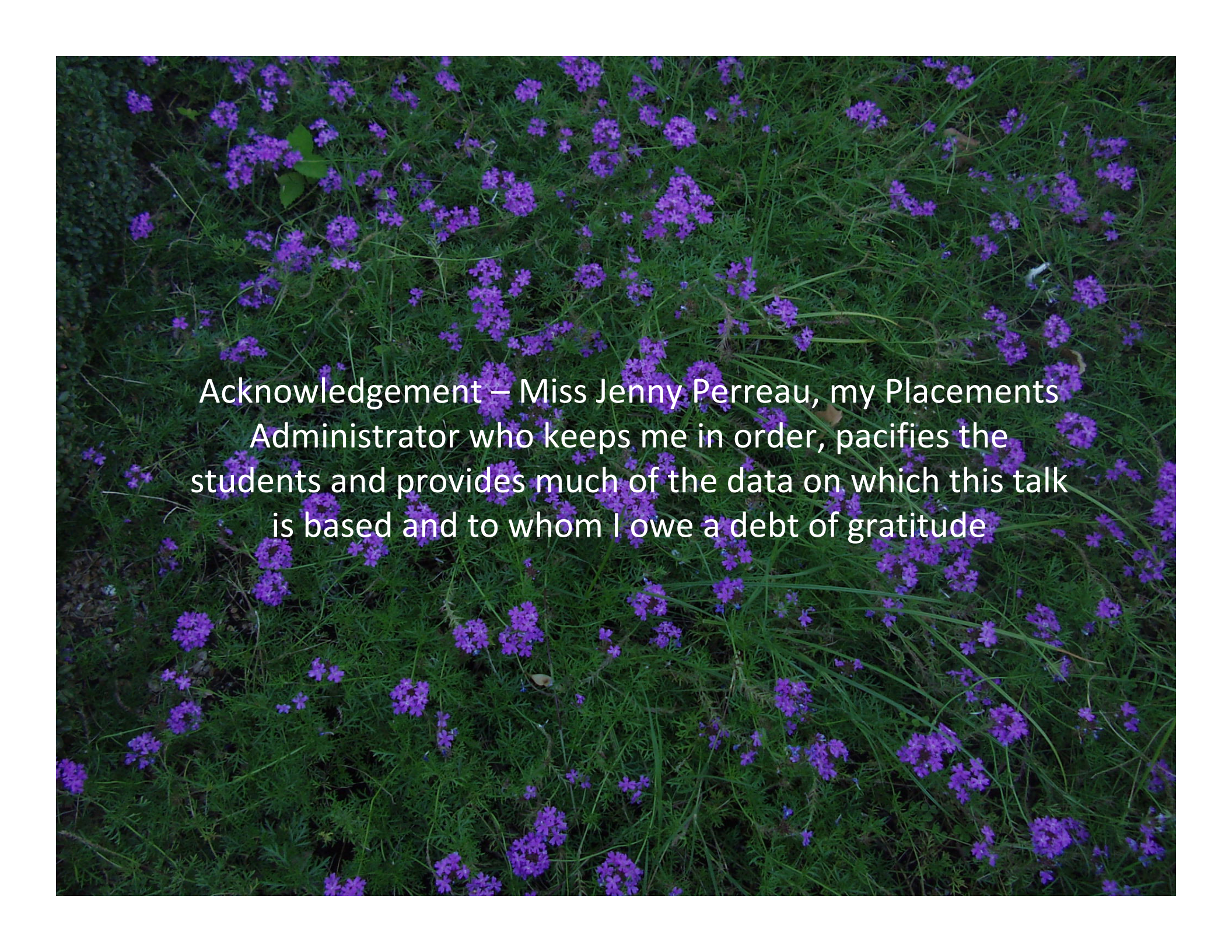
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- The facility to reflect on their own efforts has (forced?)/prompted them to justify their actions (or lack of them) – aided by comments/reasons boxes incorporated in the activities table
- The latter has helped us gain a better understanding of some of the preconceptions which students hold concerning what they consider is appropriate to them, when they consider undertaking a sandwich year, which wouldn't have been the case if we had only asked them about the service we provide
- The exercise has reaffirmed our belief that to be meaningful a feedback questionnaire has to invite comment on the quality of the provision AND the interaction /contribution of the recipient with/to the process

This presentation has only scratched the surface on examining this 'flip side' to feedback questionnaires in a not particularly rigorous way. However its purpose goes back to the beginnings of 'Variety' where a seed of an idea can be aired in public for others to think about and perhaps pursue

Thank you for your
attention

A photograph of a field of purple flowers, likely verbena, growing among green grass. The flowers are small and numerous, scattered across the frame. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

Acknowledgement – Miss Jenny Perreau, my Placements Administrator who keeps me in order, pacifies the students and provides much of the data on which this talk is based and to whom I owe a debt of gratitude