Surveys for Enhancement Conference 2014
The REP, Birmingham, 04 June 2014

Abstracts

10:15 – 11:00   Morning Keynote

Reviewing the higher education information landscape
Professor Janet Beer (Oxford Brookes University)

11:10 – 11:55   Parallel Sessions I

One size fits all: Implementing an institution-wide approach to module surveys.
Dr Heather Fotheringham (University of the Highlands and Islands)

This presentation will describe an initiative to implement standardised module surveys at the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI).
This presentation falls into three parts:
i. The University’s approach to a standardised survey: Design, underpinning theory and implementation
ii. Presentation and analysis of results from the survey’s first iteration
iii. Discussion of the University’s quality processes and how module survey data features as part of this process as a driver for enhancement.

It's not just about grades….Putting survey information together.
Professor Derek Raine (University of Leicester), Dr Sarah Gretton (University of Leicester)

We discuss the ways in which cross-correlation of results from a number of different student surveys may provide insight into how student engagement can be enhanced. In particular we report some results of a pilot based on the AUSSE survey instrument and look at how these can be understood using data from a CLASS attitudes to science questionnaire. We also look at learning gains from the implementation of some changes to curriculum delivery which may serve as a more general pointer. Although this work is at an early stage, it does point towards some interesting conclusions.

Attribution or retribution? Exploring the use of language in student survey feedback.
Dr Martyn Stewart (Liverpool John Moores University)

The language of student evaluation comments in satisfaction surveys can be highly complex. Comments can vary from cautious hedging to zealous venting of praise or frustration, and from considered opinion to wild exaggeration to assert a point. The grammatical devices used to express thoughts and experiences can tell us much about students’ attitudes and moods. This can enhance interpretations of evaluative commentary.
This presentation examines use of language in two experience surveys. Drawing on recent research in linguistics, analysis will highlight the different functions of language used and describe a framework to aid interpretation of complex student evaluative feedback.

**Students as partners in the Quality Enhancement process: the use of surveys as a stepping stone to action and intervention.**  
Nicola Poole (Cardiff Metropolitan University), Sophie Leslie (Cardiff Metropolitan University)

Increasing numbers of Higher Education Institutions are engaging students as partners in the quality enhancement process. This session will discuss the different places and roles that students can play in this process of enhancing the learning experience. The use of surveys and their results are just the starting point of this process. At Cardiff Metropolitan University a process has been in place for several years that has used the data from surveys to create action plans, over the last two years this has moved towards the use of student interns as partners with academic staff and a number of examples of this process will be discussed.

**12:20 – 13:05 Parallel Sessions 11**

**New approach to module evaluation: less questions, but more answers…**  
Dr Elena Zaitseva (Liverpool John Moores University), Dr Clare Milsom (Liverpool John Moores University)

This presentation will explore outcomes of a strategic institutional initiative designed to improve student and academic staff engagement with module evaluation. It will reflect on use of the VLE to embed the appraisal process within the module experience and discuss the potential of new survey instrument in the collection and analysis of student feedback. A case study of a large first year module will be presented. Evaluation outcomes will be compared using the new and established survey formats and tools. Specifically we will look at how the contextual information (free-text comments) delivered by two surveys differed and the implications of the new survey instrument for enhancement process.

**From Blended Learning to Blended Surveying: using Student Response Systems and traditional methods to collect and respond to student feedback.**  
Dr Fabio Riccardo Aricò (University of East Anglia)

The NSS is currently being reviewed by NatCen. This presentation is the summary of a project completed by 2 interns at University of East Anglia. They researched the student experience, and within that, looking into the NSS. This presentation is a summary of the responses from the academics they interviewed within the UEA Social Sciences Faculty. The questions look at perceptions of the NSS, response to the NSS, and communication of results to the student population. It ends with a discussion of similarities and differences of opinions.

**Surveys at the heart of enhancement for all – what the survey doesn’t tell us and how we are trying to find out.**  
Alison Ashby (The Open University), Laura Vella (The Open University)

Last year the Open University received 14,267 responses to the National Student Survey, well over 8000 more than any other institution. Despite good response rates in the many internal
and external surveys we run, we face a huge challenge in ensuring the lessons we draw about student satisfaction truly reflect the experiences our large and incredibly diverse population. This session will outline some of the work we are doing around surveys to build up a picture of our hard to engage groups and to refine our understanding of the student learning experience.

Enhancing NSS reputation by embedding the 5 ‘C’s’.
Dr Deeba Gallacher (Middlesex University), Jacqui Boddington (Middlesex University)

The NSS is increasingly seen as a measure of institutional performance. However, looking at NSS data in isolation is more than a little troubled. Research at Middlesex explored ‘good practice’ in programmes identified as having 100% student satisfaction in 2012/3. From this body of work five clear themes were identified as contributing to their high score. These were: coherence, communication, context, community and continuity. These themes were by no means entirely distinct from one another and did overlap but clear principles and practical ideas to embed these themes in programmes were identified.

Using NSS data with other evidence and ‘employer’ feedback to enhance students’ placement experience and professional skills development.
Prof Judy Donnelly (Leeds Trinity University), Ms Karen Howden (Leeds Trinity University)

All undergraduate programmes at Leeds Trinity University feature compulsory work placements. To enhance the student experience and facilitate student engagement, we are keen to continue to learn about the placement experience from a range of sources. We need to collate and analyse data to identify how we can work better with our students, our staff and ‘employers’ in host organisations to provide a high quality experience for all students. In this interactive workshop we will explore the use of the additional questions (statements) on the NSS survey on placements in triangulation of data and the development of action plans to enhance employability skills development in the curriculum.

13:55 – 11:00    Afternoon Keynote

Metrics that matter: Student expectations and effective educational practices
Dr Camille Kandiko Howson (King’s College London)

14:50 – 15:35    Parallel Sessions 111

Using Student-Led Focus Groups to Evaluate Modules.
Dr Sarah Townley (Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine)

Like many other HEIs, the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM) generally receives low response rates to anonymous on-line module evaluation questionnaires. To address this problem, LSTM has introduced a series of regularly convened student-led focus groups. This has enabled a greater level of student engagement with course representatives taking the lead as facilitators and all students invited to attend the focus group for their programme. This presentation will illustrate how student-led focus groups have improved the dialogue between staff and students at LSTM and how, in turn, they have refined and strengthened the MSc module evaluation process.
**Using the framework of engagement surveys to evaluate institutional student enhancement initiatives.**
Prof. Rhona Sharpe (Oxford Brookes University), Berry O'Donovan (Oxford Brookes University), Dr. Metaxia Pavlakou (Oxford Brookes University)

This year we have devised, piloted and run a student engagement survey suitable for our institutional context. This has included selecting appropriate scales from the US National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), and writing new scales focused on key institutional initiatives: embedding graduate attributes into the curriculum, the Assessment Compact and the newly revised role of Academic Advisers. We invested significant time in the design and trailing on the survey, primarily using cognitive interviewing techniques. This workshop will be useful to those developing survey tools which to evaluate the impact of university wide projects designed to improve the student experience.

**Analysis of PRES 2013 qualitative results.**
Ms Katharine D’Souza (University of Birmingham)

The 2013 PRES survey included optional free text responses for the first time. A method to analyse these was developed by categorising comments to draw out trends identifying areas in which the institution was perceived as doing well or less well by our postgraduate researcher community. This presentation describes the methodology developed and summarises the key conclusions drawn from the results. It also considers how these were used in context of the quantitative PRES data to indicate the quality of and also support enhancement of postgraduate research provision at the University of Birmingham.

**Student Centred Engagement: Strategic enhancement across the whole institution.**
Katie Hartless Rose (Coventry University), Alun Evans, (Coventry University), Stacey Tilling (Coventry University)

This presentation will explore the refinements made to the institutional, strategic enhancement approach to improving student satisfaction that Coventry University adopted in 2010. Using student support staff to distribute a standardised satisfaction survey, we collect and analyse data for every module and course all faculties complete the same internal module / course questionnaire in-class. Since our prior presentation on this process the project has evolved and, using empirical evidence, we would like to share the benefits, drawbacks and fallout of adopting such an approach. During the session, we would also encourage discussion and feedback from delegates from other institutions.