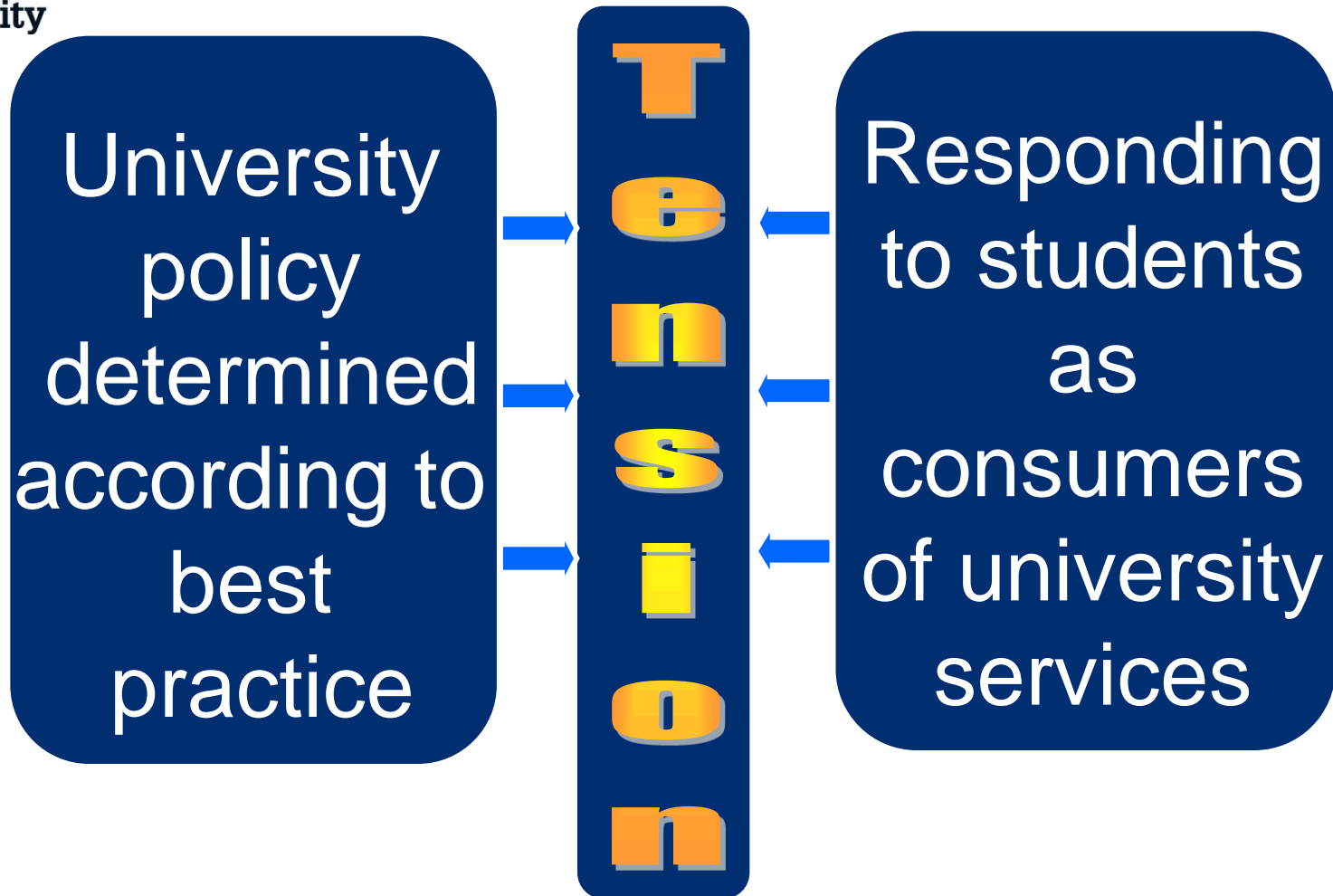# Student feedback on feedback

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Institutional Research Conference July 8-9, 2009
Sheffield Hallam University

Aim of the session

University policy determined according to best practice → **Tension** ← Responding to students as consumers of university services

We know a lot about good feedback

- **Constructive** so students are motivated to improve
- **Timely** so that they can use it for future learning;
- **Prompt** so they can recall what they did and thought at the time;
- **Supportive of learning** so that students have clear indications of how to improve;
- **Focused** on achievement;
- **Specific** to the learning outcomes**;**
- Fosters **student independence;**
- **Efficient** for staff.

Our Work

- Informing policy
- Research and evaluation
- Supporting institutions

Supporting learning

- Assessment
  - Feedback
    - Principles
    - Workshop
  - Assessment for practitioners
  - Assessment for managers
  - Plagiarism
  - Group work
  - Working with students
- Disability
- Enhancing Learning through Technology (ELT)
- Employability and enterprise
- Internationalisation
- Open Educational Resources (OER)
- Personal Development Planning (PDP)
- Personal tutoring
- Student Essay Competition
- Sustainability

- Professional development and recognition
- Disciplines and networks

Feedback

Student Enhanced Learning through Effective Feedback (SENLEF)

The SENLEF project is a resource for practitioners wishing to improve their feedback practice or get some exciting new ideas. We have explored feedback issues with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across Scotland. From this we have collated case studies, devised a set of principles for good practice and developed a range of resources including a literature review, web links and workshop materials.

Follow the links below to access the case studies page, the project page and the workshop page:

SENLEF Case Studies Page
SENLEF Project Page
SENLEF Workshop Page

Card Sort Task - What is Feedback?

This task enables individuals to articulate their views on what "feedback" might mean, discuss these views with colleagues and modify them if appropriate.
You can download the instructions and the card templates for the task below.

Card Sort Instructions
Card Templates

Bioscience Bulletin

The Centre for Bioscience have produced a special edition of their bulletin focussing on feedback and feed-forward. You can download it below.

Bioscience Bulletin: Feedback & Feed-forward

Assessment and Feedback Video Clips

You can view our assessment and feedback video clips below which highlight students opinions on the assessment and feedback experiences they have had. Alternatively, click here to download the video.

To view the video - You will need Flash Player 9

Enter search term   › Search

Subject Centres

- Select a Subject Centre -   › Go

Contact us

Assessment
› Email

Assessment Resources

› **The SENLEF Model Document**
› **MESA Document**
› **Assessment Experience Questionnaire (AEQ)**
› **AEQ Scoring Sheet**
› **Assessment Audit Tool**
› **Card Sort Task – Instructions**
› **Card Sort Task – Card Templates**
› **LTSN Assessment Series**
› **ASKe Assessment Manifesto**

Useful Links

› **Assessment Standards Knowledge Exchange (ASKe)**
› **Assessment for Learning (CETL AfL)**
› **Re-Engineering Assessment Practices in Scottish Higher Education (REAP)**
› **QAA Code of Practice page**
› **HEFCE Publications Page**

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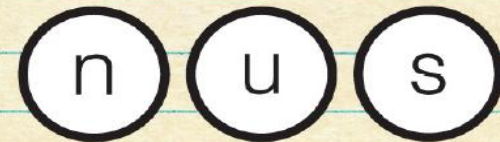
n u s
national union of students

Bournemouth University

"The moment that students are required to pay for some or all of their university education then we have created a market or quasi-market and certain forces begin to operate and leaders and managers have to manage very different sorts of institutions operating in a very different environment."

Jamieson. I. and Naidoo, R., 2004. How the market economy is undermining HE performance. *Management in Education*, 18, 13-16.

Positive perspective

"Teaching in a higher educational setting is analogous to service delivery in the business sector. Students, as consumers of professorial output, have needs and wants, which, if better understood, should result in an improved educational experience."

Desai, S., Damewood, E. and Jones, R., 2001. Be a Good Teacher and Be Seen as a Good Teacher. *Journal of Marketing Education,* 23 (2), August, 136-144.

Negative influence

"Academic dialogue and instruction does not provide the customer with a clearly defined product. It does not seek to offer what the customer wants, but attempts to provide what the student needs. That is why forcing universities to prove themselves to their customers fundamentally contradicts the ethos of academic education."

Furedi, F., 2009. Now is the age of the discontented. *Times Higher Education,* 4 June 2009.

"Students are concerned principally with the amount of time taken by lecturers to return work and with the quality of comment provided."

Williams, D and Kane, D., 2008. *Exploring the National Student Survey: Assessment and feedback issues.* York: HEA, p61

BU's analysis of its performance on feedback

- In 2005 NSS - 57% of BU students expressed satisfaction with assessment and feedback;

- Changing assessment practice through staff development, new technologies, and 'freeing-up' restrictive quality practices;

- New policy of 3 week turnaround for feedback on coursework introduced;

- Monitoring of implementation, unit by unit, reported by Schools to Senior Management Team annually;

- By 2008 NSS response raised to 65%

- However, in 2008 QAA Institutional Review, students still commented negatively on feedback.

- Drew on internal NSS analysis, reports and literature to develop questions;
- 3 focus groups were held with 27 students to explore their views on:
  - the quality of feedback provided
  - its timeliness
  - and usefulness.
- Discussions recorded and transcribed;
- Key descriptive themes indentified.

Key themes emerging - 1

- Difficulty reading handwritten comments and enthusiasm for electronic submission and feedback;

- Lack of clarity over follow-up opportunities to discuss work individually with markers;

- Generic feedback to group helpful, but needed personalised feedback as well;

- Confusion when comments did not seem to match the mark awarded or ways of improving were not specific:

  "I got 58%, the first marker said "good effort, a couple of problems with grammar" the second marker said "good solid essay", so why 58%? - as grammar can't bring the mark down that much".

Key themes emerging - 2

- Greater standardisation in approach across all units;
- Appreciate timely feedback to help with next assignment, but prepared to wait longer than 3 weeks if told in advance;
- With large groups, lecturers are not reading work in depth, just glancing over it;
- The amount of feedback had decreased, so lecturers should be given more time to give in-depth feedback

  "restricting feedback to three week is unfair on lecturers and they give bad feedback"

- Initial analysis indicates that students demonstrate a highly nuanced understanding of feedback, valuing timeliness of feedback and critical comment that helps them improve the next time;

- They are also prepared to tolerate a longer period for return if that results in lengthier feedback tailored to their individual progress

Do we accommodate consumer preference?

"Institutions view student engagement as central to enhancing the student experience, but more emphasis seems to be placed on viewing students as consumers and rather less on viewing students as partners in a learning community"

Little, B., Locke, W., Scesa, A. and Williams, R., 2009. *Report to HEFCE on student engagement.* London: Centre for Higher Education Research and Information. p 4.

So what next?

- The findings from this study, aimed at increasing understanding of the student experience, also hold implications for institutional policy and practice related to feedback –

- Should we review the 3-week turnaround policy?

- Are standard feedback forms useful?

- Further themes for analysis?