COMPARISONS OF NEW STUDENT

EXPECTATIONS AND STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF

THE UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE

Louise Macniven¹, Anthony Mandal², Kate Phillips³, Robert Wilson⁴, Michael A. Wride^{5,6,} *

Note: Each of the authors contributed equally to this work.

Cardiff Business School¹, Cardiff School of English, Communication, and Philosophy², Cardiff School of Biosciences³, Cardiff School of Mathematics⁴ and School of Optometry and Vision Sciences⁵, Cardiff University, Cardiff, Wales, UK.

* Author for correspondence: M.A. Wride,
⁶Present address: Department of Zoology, School of Natural Sciences, Trinity College, Dublin, Dublin 2, Ireland.
Tel: +353-1-890-1036.
Fax: +353 1 677 8094.
E-mail: wridem@tcd.ie

SUMMARY

Expectations of entry-level students at a traditional research-led UK university were compared to staff perceptions of student attitudes. Questionnaires were organised around five themes: factors affecting choice of degree scheme; proficiency in key-skills; effectiveness of teaching methods; effectiveness of assessment methods; and usefulness of educational resources. 786 students and 69 academic staff completed questionnaires. The results revealed significant differences between staff and student opinions within the five themes. Of particular interest were the findings that students perceived themselves as having a greater ability in a range of key-skills, compared to staff opinions of their ability and that students were very driven by career prospects in their choice of degree scheme, whereas staff did not see this as a significant determining factor. The results are discussed in terms of the need for greater communication between staff and students and how to better align teaching practices with student perceptions and expectations.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, there have been many changes in the structure of Higher Education (HE) in the UK, perhaps the most significant being the dramatic increase in the number of students enrolling as a consequence of the Further and Higher Education Act (1992), the Dearing Report (1994) and the HE Act (2001), which proposed that 50 per cent of school-leavers should be entering HE by 2010. Furthermore, universities are under pressure to become so-called 'world-class' institutions and this has resulted in restructuring impacting on teaching and learning (Jobbins, 2005; Deem *et al.*, 2008). Yet, it is not clear that academics have adjusted their teaching methods and attitudes in conjunction with these changes. The huge increase in student numbers has contributed towards a perceived decline in the academic calibre of new undergraduates. Scott (1995) identified a reactionary culture in which academics perpetuate the traditional, elitist modes of practice under which they perceive themselves to have been successfully educated. In a similar vein, Biggs suggests that 'in the good old days' lower student numbers meant that 'it was the students who were doing the work and getting the results, not our teaching' (Biggs, 2003).

The payment of tuition fees has created enhanced expectations of students regarding their learning experience, resulting in a perception of themselves as consumers (Gibbs, 2004; Rolfe, 2001). Furthermore, this is occurring in the context of a global knowledge economy, the future of which depends on many of the skills provided via the HE sector. Such changes have led to concerns about the effects of a transforming student population on the efficacy and appropriateness of traditional teaching methods in HE. Therefore, it is likely that students' expectations of their time in HE have changed, as have academics' perceptions of their students' motivation and skills, for example.

In light of these developments, the identification of the variability between perceptions of staff and expectations of students regarding undergraduate learning is essential in coping with and developing approaches that minimise such differences. For example, there may be discrepancies between staff perceptions and student expectations of the generic skill-sets required for undergraduate teaching/learning, which are not necessarily discipline-specific. Indeed, the Higher Education Academy (HEA) in the UK has made it a priority to investigate the student learning experience and how to improve it by aligning students' varying expectations with the services and teaching that universities offer (Ramsden, 2006; Richardson *et al.*, 2007; Yorke and Longden, 2007). Such alignment would also be dependent upon the perception of teaching quality by students (Ginns *et al.*, 2007). To the best of our knowledge, no study has specifically and comprehensively compared new-student expectations and staff perceptions of the undergraduate experience. However, tutor and student perceptions, expectations and behaviours have recently been investigated in relation to reading lists (Stokes and Martin, 2008); notably, student and tutor opinions diverged in several respects in this study.

This paper sets out to examine both the attitudes and perceived skills exhibited by a new cohort of students at a traditional research-led university, questioning them within their first month after enrolment. Similar data were collected from academic staff regarding their expectations of students. In order to identify generic areas of divergence and convergence between staff perceptions and student expectations, the study was framed in six explicitly different academic disciplines (Business, Biosciences, English Literature, Mathematics, Psychology, and Optometry and Vision Sciences) in order to provide a broad cross-section of provision within the university. While there might be understandable differences between and within disciplines (the subject of further analyses), we aimed here to focus on results in a pandiscipline context; in other words, where representative perspectives held by staff and students can be located as belonging generically to the university as an institution and potentially to UK and world-wide research-intensive universities as a whole.

4

The questionnaires targeted the choice of degree scheme, the significance of different types of skill, the effectiveness of various methods of learning and assessment, the efficacy of learning resources, and demographic data. The results allow for an examination of the continuities and disparities between staff and students. The results suggest that there is a need for greater communication between staff and students in order to better align teaching practices with student expectations when constructing general programmes, specific schemes, and individual modules.

METHODS

Development and distribution of questionnaires

A questionnaire was developed for incoming first-year students for the academic year 2006– 07). A second (slightly modified) questionnaire was circulated among staff in each School, inviting them to record their opinions from the stance of the delivery of teaching. The context and subject areas remained the same as for students. The questionnaires were presented in a machine-readable format (see Supplementary Information). Approval for use of questionnaires was obtained from each School ethics committee.

The questionnaires were divided into six sections, each of which contained a number of attitudinal-style questions based on a four-point scale of opinion that gauged levels of agreement with the statement provided (Likert, 1932). These ranged from *not at all important* (1) to *extremely important* (4), where 'importance' also applies to 'ability' / 'effectiveness' in the appropriate contexts; a *not applicable* (0) category was also provided.

The six sections of the questionnaire concerned the following:

• why students chose their particular degree scheme (e.g. good career prospects, recommendation of others);

- the importance of particular skills for their respective discipline (e.g. oral presentation, problem solving, time management);
- the effectiveness of various teaching/learning methods (e.g. self-study, group work, large-group teaching);
- staff and student perceptions of the effectiveness of various assessment methods (e.g. self-assessment, peer assessment, individual and group coursework);
- the effectiveness of various educational resources for learning (e.g. private tuition, the internet, journals);
- demographic data (e.g. the degree scheme studied/lecturing in, gender, age).

Questionnaires were circulated among students within their first month of study. Staff questionnaires were distributed during the same time period by random sampling. Table 1 summarises quantities of returned questionnaires from staff and students across each School. 786 students responded with completed questionnaires, representing in total 67% of the student intake across the six Schools.

Collation and data input

Machine-reading software was used to collate data from questionnaires (Remark Office Optical Mark Recognition (OMR) v5.5). Using this system, participants must 'fill in' circles on questionnaires when scoring their answers. The OMR software converted participants' responses into numerical values accompanied by basic descriptive fields. The output was then analysed via higher-level statistics. 1.6% of responses were removed, owing to multiple responses per question or no clearly identifiable response.

Statistical analysis of data

Non-parametric statistical tests were used here because they require no assumptions with regard to the distribution of the data, unlike parametric tests, and also the homogeneity of

variances need not be established (Seigel and Castellan, 2000). We sought to identify differences and similarities between two independent, and nominally categorised, variables; i.e. to establish whether differences of agreement were present between student and staff responses to the questionnaires.

For each question, responses were compared across conditions to establish whether there was a difference in the distributions. The analysis was completed in two stages. Firstly, for each question, we established whether the predominant (modal) response was different for staff and students. For example, when asked about the importance of career prospects in choosing a degree, the modal staff response was *not important* (grade 2 on the scale), whereas the modal student response was *important* (grade 3 on the scale). If the modal response differed, as in this example, a χ^2 test (1 df) was used to establish whether the distributions were reliably different. The results of those questions for which the modal response did not differ were not analysed statistically. This is because a significantly different distribution would be difficult to interpret in such cases. General trends in the data, which were not statistically significant according to the above criteria, are also described and discussed here. However, only the statistically significant results are presented in graphical form in the Figures in this paper.

RESULTS

The results are presented in a 'generic' fashion in which student expectations and staff perceptions are compared across all disciplines. Future papers will focus on within- and cross-discipline results. Full results for both students and staff are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Factors in choosing a degree scheme

Participants rated the importance of the following five factors in choosing their degree scheme (staff were asked what factors they felt their students deemed important): recommendation of others, interest in the subject, good career prospects, opportunity to gain work experience, and ability in the subject.

99% of the students questioned rated **interest in the subject** as either *important* (grade 3; 14%) or *extremely important* (grade 4; 85%). The corresponding opinion from members of staff (90%) was only marginally lower (*important* 35% (3), *extremely important* 55% (4)). These results suggest that the majority of students, on entering university, are intrinsically motivated towards their subject area and this is recognised by staff. Similar correlations were also recorded for the option **good at subject**.

By contrast, the lowest-rated factor was **recommendation of others**, with 57% of students stating that it was *not at all important* (grade 1; 17%) or *not important* (grade 2; 40%). The members of staff questioned did assign slightly greater importance to this factor; however, the student response should not be entirely surprising as very similar results were obtained in the recent Cardiff University 'Project Q' undergraduate student survey (*http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/studx/project-q/*), which rated encouragement by family and teachers at the middle-to-lower end of the scale (family: less than 60% important; teachers: less than 40% important).

The only factor in choosing a degree scheme that highlighted a significant difference in staff and student opinions was **good career prospects**. The difference is clearly illustrated by examining the corresponding distributions in Figure 1, which is supported by a statistically significant difference between these distributions ($\chi^2 = 108.66$, p < 0.001). Figure 1 demonstrates that the majority of staff (6% *not at all important* (1), 50% *not important* (2)) believes that good career prospects are not a determining factor to undergraduate students when selecting their degree scheme. In contrast, 86% of students rated the same factor as more important (41% *important* (3), 45% *extremely important* (4)).

There were no significant differences between staff and student responses regarding the **opportunity to gain work experience**; the results from the students were indifferent, with an almost symmetrical distribution. This somewhat contradicts the importance placed by students on good career prospects, although it may also be the case that this option is more discipline-dependent than other categories (i.e. in the contrast between vocational programmes, such as Accounting and Optometry, and non-vocational programmes, such as English Literature) and this will require further investigation.

Importance of entry-level undergraduate proficiency in key skill areas

Responses to the second and third sections evaluated opinions of both students and staff about skill levels required specifically for the student's discipline (Question 2) and an assessment of how good the students perceived themselves to be at various skills (student questionnaire; Question 3) and by the lecturers' of the skill level of an average student (staff questionnaire; Question 3) in their degree scheme across eight categories: communication, oral presentation, writing, problem-solving, time-management, IT skills, team-working, and research.

With the exception of **presentation** skills, the majority of students rated themselves as *good* (3) with respect to the seven remaining skills areas. With regard to four of these skill areas (**writing**, **problem-solving**, **time-management**, and **research**), however, the majority

staff response was consistently at least 1 grade lower than the student response (all $\chi^2 > 21.0$, all p < 0.001; Figure 2A-D). This was particularly noticeable in the area of writing, where 57% of students thought they were good (3), whereas only 4% of staff rated their students' writing skills this highly (Figure 2). In fact, 58% of staff scored their students as poor (2) with respect to writing. As 78% of students and 73% of staff identified writing as either important (3) or extremely important (4), this demarcates an area where, despite staff and student opinions demonstrating a high degree of congruence, the divergence between the two groups regarding students' abilities gives cause for concern. Regarding problem-solving, 56% of students thought they were good (3) and 21% very good (4), whereas only 4% of staff scored their students as very good (4) and 32% scored them as good (3) at problem-solving. For time-management, there was a general agreement from both staff and students that time management was not a strong area. However, at the top end of the scale, 17% of students felt they were very good (3), whereas only 1% of staff scored their students equally highly. Finally, the responses to research revealed that 51% of students felt they were good (3) and 12% felt they were very good (4). However, staff again scored lower, with 35% of staff rating their students as good (3) at research and 0% rating them as very good (4). Regarding the data collected with respect to staff and student views concerning the skills considered to be important for success within a particular discipline, the students rated time-management and research skills as significantly more important than staff (majority response: grades 4 and 3 respectively, $\chi^2 > 20.68$, *p* < 0.001; Figure 2E-F).

Effectiveness of teaching methods

Students and staff were also asked to rate the effectiveness of various teaching methods: large-group teaching (e.g. lectures), small-group teaching (e.g. seminars), student-led group working, one-to-one time with a member of staff, self-study, and practical sessions.

Students and staff were generally in agreement about the effectiveness of various teaching methods. Both staff and students agreed that large-group teaching was effective or extremely effective (grades 3 and 4 respectively; 66% students, 79% staff). However, there was a visible proportion of both staff and students who felt that large-group teaching was not effective (grade 2; students 32%, staff 19%). Small-group teaching was considered by both students and staff to be more effective than large-group teaching, and was rated as *effective* or extremely effective (grades 3 and 4 respectively; students 96%, staff 87%). The results regarding student-led group work were mixed for both staff and students (grade 3; students 43%, staff 35% and grade 2; students 40%, staff 32%). Sizeable minorities of staff also felt that student-led group work was either not at all important (grade 1; 9%) or not applicable (grade 0; 17%), whereas only small minorities of students felt that student led group work was either not at all important (5%) or not applicable (3%). One-to-one time with a member of staff was rated as extremely effective (4) or effective (3) by both staff and students (students 90%, staff 88%). Self-study was perceived to be effective (3) or extremely effective (4) by both staff and students (students 71%, staff 64%). Finally, where applicable, practical sessions were considered to be important (3) or extremely important (4) by both staff and students (students 71%, staff 62%).

Effectiveness of assessment methods

Students and staff rated the effectiveness of six categories of assessment: computer-based assessment (CBA), peer assessment, self-assessment, individual coursework, group coursework, and practicals.

Traditional forms of assessment scored higher than less conventional methods. Both staff and students treated **peer-assessment** sceptically, with the majority perceiving this model to be *not effective* (grade 2; 49% students, 23% staff) or *not at all effective* (grade 1; 19% students, 22% staff). However, there was still a visible proportion of both the student and

staff cohorts that considered peer-assessment to be *effective* (Grade 3; 30% students, 24% staff). A notable proportion of staff (17%) saw peer-assessment as *not applicable* (0) to their discipline. A similar pattern of disinclination on both sides is evident as far as responses to **self-assessment** are concerned. A significant majority of students rated this as *not effective* (grade 2; 45%), while only 31% rated this as an *effective* (3) instrument of assessment. Staff figures correlate with student opinions (38% *not effective* (2), 19% *effective* (3)). Interestingly, as was the case with peer-assessment, a notable proportion of staff (18%) perceived self-assessment as *not applicable* (0) to their respective disciplines.

Both staff and students see that **individual coursework** is the single most effective mode of assessment, with an overwhelming proportion of students scoring this as *effective* (grade 3; 46%) or *extremely effective* (grade 4; 40%) — only slightly less assured than staff in their ratings (49% *effective* (3), 42% *extremely effective* (4)). While the interdisciplinary nature of this project inevitably means that certain disciplines perceive **practicals** to be *not applicable* (25% staff and 10% students, principally from Accounting and English Literature), this model of assessment was nonetheless seen by students as *effective* (grade 3; 44%) or *extremely effective* (grade 4; 26%), with a lower but nevertheless significant proportion of staff (28% *effective* (3), 28% *extremely effective* (4)) corroborating this perception.

Two key areas of (albeit muted) disparity, between students and staff relate to more 'modern' or progressive methods of assessment: **CBA** and **group coursework** (Figure 3). **CBA** was more enthusiastically received by students, 50% of whom rated it as *effective* (3), as compared with 32% of staff, while 35% of staff saw this as *not effective* (2), $\chi^2 = 8.42$, p < 0.05 (although this is borderline reliable when multiple comparisons are taken into account; Figure 3A). Similarly, while there is a roughly equivalent distribution by students and staff in relation to the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of **group coursework**, some divergences do arise. More students (45%) rated group coursework as an *effective* (3) mode of assessment

than did staff (30%), while comparably more staff (41%) saw this method as *not effective* (2) than did students (31%), $\chi^2 = 10.77$, p < 0.05 (Figure 3B).

Usefulness of educational resources

The questionnaires included a section that required participants to rate the effectiveness of ten types of educational resource: discussing problems with friends, books, private tuition, the internet, past exam papers, own class notes, own revision notes, journal articles, handouts, and worked examples.

In terms of the effectiveness of **books**, **private tuition**, and **worked examples**, the majority of both staff and students rated them as *extremely important* (grade 4; books: 45% staff, 50% students; private tuition: 39% staff, 50% students; worked examples: 51% staff, 58% students). For **students' own class notes** and **handouts**, the majority of both staff and students indicated that they perceived these to be *important* (3) resources (class notes: 46% staff, 43% students; handouts: 41% staff, 49% students).

Journal articles were in the main rated as *not important* (2) by both students and staff (32%, 40% respectively). This raises the question that as, in the main, the outcome of research by lecturers is journal output; and that students are traditionally deemed to be 'reading' for the award of a degree, why do journals not carry more significance?

Statistically different responses lay between the perceptions of students and staff in relation to the use of the internet and past exam papers (Figure 4). In terms of the **internet**, the majority of students rated it as *important* (grade 3; 45%), while the majority of staff rated it as *not important* (grade 2; 41%), $\chi^2 = 28.86$, p < 0.001. With regard to **past exam papers**, the majority of students rated these as *extremely important* (grade 4; 66%) while most staff respondents rated them as *important* (grade 3; 48%), $\chi^2 = 52.75$, p < 0.001. Therefore, it is conceivable that students see past exam papers as an opportunity to question-spot.

Demographic and additional data

The final section of the survey focused on some additional information relating to study time and demographics. The data are presented in full in Table 4.

There was no significant difference between staff and student responses when asked: How much of the scheduled timetable do you expect to attend during your first year? and How many hours each week do you expect to spend studying outside of the scheduled teaching time? (Note: staff were asked to comment on their own — rather than their perception of students' — expectations of student attendance/study-time). These results are presented in Figure 5.

The demographic data requested at the end of the questionnaires queried information about age, gender, highest qualification and whether or not a gap year was taken prior to attending university (Staff were only asked the first two of these questions).

The results indicate that the students surveyed came from largely traditional backgrounds; i.e. 91% of students had previously studied A-levels and were either 18 or 19 years of age (a total of 87%). There was also almost an exact 50:50 split between male and female students. A relatively large proportion of students (20%) had taken a gap year before coming to university.

DISCUSSION

The results are discussed in terms of the need for greater communication between staff and students. It is not the intention to provide an exhaustive examination of the results in which the within- and cross-discipline data are discussed (the subject of further analyses); rather, selected 'generic' staff versus student results are discussed and their implications are examined in the context of the educational literature and, where possible, in relation to current higher educational policy. We identify a number of important questions; e.g. relating to choice of degree scheme and in key skills, such as writing, in which staff versus student responses differed significantly. We also consider responses where staff and students agreed. Potentially fruitful areas for future exploration are suggested in order to achieve better alignment between staff perceptions and student expectations.

Key reflections arising from results

Student choice

Given that 99% of the students surveyed felt that having an interest in the subject was an important factor in choosing a degree, why do a significant number of students fail to attend classes regularly (Paisey and Paisey, 2004)? Do student expectations of a subject match the reality of what they are being taught at university? Do we inspire our students?

Similarly, if students are motivated by good career prospects, are students clear how the topics introduced during their degree can be applied to the working environment? What careers advice are students obtaining in schools and colleges, which lead them to believe that the course they choose is the best route towards future employment? (For instance, many Mathematics students want to go on to do accountancy, so why not do an Accountancy degree?). If future career prospects are an important factor in students choosing their degree,

should more be done to provide relevant work experience or skills? (For example, many Mathematics and English students go on into teaching, and yet do these courses offer sufficient vocational training in this field?)

Does the student indifference regarding work experience suggest that many still see a degree as a sufficient tool to secure future employment? And from the perspective of learning provision, are we guilty of the same thing: are universities offering sufficient sandwich courses for students to gain work experience?

We need to include students in a two-way dialogue. Several studies, such as that of Schmidt and Moust (2000), have shown that specialist knowledge is often less important to students when asked to 'rate' staff. More important to the students is the academic's ability to demonstrate a high degree of social engagement with them. From the results obtained in this study, it is clear that there are often very straightforward examples where this could be effective. The student responses have indicated that career prospects were important to them: if we want our courses to have an increased relevance to these participants, ensuring our teaching includes brief, but more frequent, reference to future careers may be simple but effective.

Student skills

The results presented here have gone some way to highlighting perhaps where staff can focus on developing key student skills. Bone and McNay (2006) investigated the attitudes of academics in UK higher education painted a dismal picture, in which 86% of over 300 respondents felt that the pressure on universities to maintain their income had given rise to the 'admission of weaker students'. In March 2007 alone, the *THES* included articles on the school assessment culture and its creation of an assessment-driven, strategic learning undergraduate population (16 March); the 'appalling writing skills' of students (16 March); and 'Tutor despair over students' (30 March) — to select but a few. In this context, a study

examining student and staff attitudes about skills, and the interactions between these perspectives, appears particularly timely. Indeed, Tariq and Cochrane (2003) encouraged 'educators at all levelsto accept their share of responsibility in raising the skills competencies of future graduates' and Boscolo et al. (2007) provided an instructional interventionist approach to improving student writing, an issue of disparity between staff and students that has been highlighted here. Moreover, the fact that staff rated time-management and research significantly less highly than students suggests that reorganisation of the curriculum by creating specific skill-based modules for new students and/or provision of skill centres for students may greatly increased not only the students' awareness of and access to skills training, but also their self-confidence in such skills. This may also help raise staff awareness of what skills students believe to be important and create a debate between staff and students about key-skills required for academic success. However, more radical changes such as module restructuring may also be required, while bearing in mind that Scott (2005) reported that despite the deliberate embedding of the key skills outlined by Murphy (2001) into a Biosciences curriculum, many students did not recognise any specific teaching of skills as being delivered.

Teaching methods

On the whole, there was a high degree of congruence between staff and students with regard to the various teaching methods examined. One-to-one time with a staff member was perceived to be ideal by both staff and students. Interestingly, both groups agree that largegroup teaching is an important means of teaching, albeit with some reservations — perhaps accepting it as a 'necessary evil'. Indicative of this is that both staff and students view smallgroup teaching as much more effective than large-group teaching. Indeed, 96% of staff and 87% of students believe this to be the case, with a greater proportion of both groups rating small-group teaching more highly than one-to-one time with staff. Consequently, the first question to be posed is whether previous research has established the advantages of small-group over large-group teaching? It is widely recognised that small-group teaching offers the opportunity for improved communication between students and the teacher: in other words, 'talking about what you are thinking' (Gibbs and Habeshaw, 1989; Exley and Dennick, 2004). However, it is also acknowledged that smallgroup teaching is expensive, particularly in terms of human resources (Exley and Dennick, 2004). These authors point out (as previously mentioned) that changes in the UK's HE provision have led to a significant rise in student numbers without a concomitant increase in the number of staff to teach them. Nevertheless, there are proven methods available to break down large classes effectively, if temporarily, into smaller groups (e.g. syndicate work). However, these syndicates are usually student-led, which perhaps merits some consideration to ensure sustained interactions between staff and students when large classes are restructured in this way.

Therefore, given the evidence provided here, indicating a general preference for smallgroup teaching, it would seem appropriate that university teaching and learning committees actively encourage lecturers to employ such approaches as a standard practice. However, approaches to small-group study have to be clearly considered alongside the results pertaining to student-led group work: both staff and students expressed ambivalence regarding its effectiveness. Indeed, it is accepted as a matter of conjecture that discussions within studentled groups enhance the learning process and subjective indices of success, such as examination results and coursework marks for modules in which student-led group work is taking place, support its effectiveness (Kremer and McGuinness, 1998). Thus, we would recommend that universities prioritise investment in resources that provide more opportunities for small-group teaching. More broadly, it would be advantageous to investigate further the effectiveness of student-led group work (of the short-term syndicate type, as well as long-term coursework) to both staff and students.

18

Assessment

Here, the traditional summative modes of assessment (individual coursework and practicals) formed the most favoured approaches to assessment. The reason for this might well be that it is perceived as easy to assign a clear mark or classification to these kinds of assessment. Notably, students preferred group assessment more than staff did (staff continue to work according to the more traditionalistic model of the 'lone scholar' than students). Throughout their experiences in secondary and tertiary education, students are by contrast more open to assessment that builds upon interaction between peers.

Most significantly, innovative approaches to assessment, involving peer or self-review, were distrusted in this study by both students and staff. This lack of enthusiasm misses some of the benefits identified in social-constructivist models of learning, which posit that 'knowledge is shaped and evolves through increasing participation within different communities of practice' (Price, *et al.*, 2007). Interestingly, such scepticism of progressive models seems justified (to a certain extent) by the results of research projects involving peer-review systems, which 'have totally failed to demonstrate any tangible improvement as a result of ... peer-review intervention in terms of student marks or assessors' confidence in the efficacy of the intervention to improve performance' (Price *et al.*, 2007).

The disinclination towards such interactive practices of assessment (group assessment by staff; self- and peer-assessment by students) seemingly contradicts the importance attached to small-group teaching (as highlighted above). On the one hand, models of classroom learning that encourage group interactions are favoured; while, on the other hand, assessment practices, which might grow out of and clearly reflect the benefits of such practices are disregarded! It is worth keeping in mind the advantages to learners of *formative* models of assessment, which focus on *process* rather than *results*, as such approaches substantively improve both discipline-specific and transferable skills (Haggis, 2006). Nevertheless, as has been noted in other studies, the aims of assessment (as perceived by both staff and students) often counteract our aspirations towards inculcating deep learning: 'students do change their approaches to learning after hands-on experience with the formative assessment, but this is towards a more surface approach to learning' (Gijbels and Dochy, 2006).

Resources

In the main, both staff and students rated journal articles as unimportant resources. To some extent, this might be expected as the sample of students captured in this research was inexperienced towards journals as the *modus operandi* of HE learning. However, the same argument cannot be applied to staff, and this issue needs to be addressed. In order to effect learning and to reinforce key skills such as reading, teaching strategies should inculcate interaction with journal material at an early stage, so as to develop the students' aptitudes and understanding in later years. Further, this process is essential where evidence of 'wider reading' is implicit in the marking of assessed work.

In this technological age, perhaps the most significant finding in this area is the disparity of views between staff and students of the use of the internet as an effective resource. However, it is possible that plagiarism might be one of the causes of staff scepticism: indeed, this was found in previous studies. For example, McDowell (2002) showed that staff articulated a core anxiety with respect to electronic sources, with one interviewee stating: 'If a student has copied something out of a book, I would probably know where that has come from or be able to recognise it ... but if it was copied from an internet source ... then I would not be able to trace that'. Therefore, it is possible that, while the vast amount of information provided on the internet is perceived as a credible aid to learning, it is considered by staff to be disadvantageous for the purposes of verifying independent work.

Szabo and Underwood (2004) investigated students' attitudes towards the internet as a facilitator for plagiarism. From their questionnaire, distributed to 291 students, they found

that 32% of respondents admitted that they would use the 'copy / paste function to embed information from the internet into their assignments without referencing' and therefore commit plagiarism to 'fulfil their academic goals'. The main drive for undertaking such practice was the fear of failing a module. Also, 31.9% of respondents recorded their opinion that lecturers did not have enough expertise to catch them out! The only way that plagiarism can be avoided is by the setting of the traditional unseen exam, although as Szabo and Underwood point out: 'It would be a sad day for higher education if we had to return to a total reliance on the traditional examination system, but a laissez faire attitude to cheating will not only ensure that "qualified" cheaters outperform hardworking students, it will eventually lead to less rich and diverse assessment systems'.

The reliability of the internet must also be questioned. Indeed it is entirely possible that academic staff — working in an environment based on peer-reviewed research — do not trust the fluidity of internet content. Wikipedia is a particular case in point as, while it offers the benefit of being more up to date than the 'printed word', it can be edited on a voluntary and subjective basis. This weakness is pointed out by Wikipedia itself as it states that it can be 'subject to subtle vandalism and viewpoint promotion than a typical reference work' (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:About#Strengths.2C_weaknesses.2C_and_article_qu ality_in_ Wikipedia, visited on 29/05/07 21.11). Thus, its objectivity cannot be relied upon and this might be one of the reasons for the dissonance between staff and students perceptions.

Study time and demographic data

The responses in the demographic data relating to attendance and additional study again support the notion that new undergraduate students are motivated and have an understanding as to what is required of them in order to be successful during their studies at university. The question remains then why the public accounts committee recently reported (February 2008) that the UK figure for total drop-out rates of university students was 22% (House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, 2008)? A recent study (Harrison, 2006) showed that nearly half of students withdrawing from university during their first year cited reasons related to their course. Perhaps we could do more to inspire our students and enhance their learning experience? It is hoped that some of the areas highlighted in this paper are amenable to further analysis in order to help understand where these developments can be made.

CONCLUSIONS

In this era, it is no longer sufficient for researchers to turn up, teach, and return to their labs or offices. The job of any university educator has to be evidence-based, reflecting not only the burgeoning body of pedagogic and andragogic research, but also recognising that effective teaching results from informed, reflective, and reactive practice. This is a time-consuming process, which for many researchers conflicts with the pressures to secure new grants, issue publications, and (currently in the UK) to be RAE-returnable. In sympathy with these demands, it is not unheard of for universities to attract high-profile researchers by offering them varying degrees of 'protection from teaching'.

Whilst this is understandable, it perpetuates the negative image of time spent on teaching as wasted or less important time. However, for example, the 2006 annual financial report for Cardiff University clearly demonstrated the importance of teaching to the lifeblood of HE, showing that, whilst 21% of the university income was derived directly from research funding, 54% was generated by Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) monies and student fees (Cardiff University, 2006). The issues of student retention discussed above are therefore particularly pertinent. Indeed, one of the main intentions of this study has been to gain insights into 'what makes our new students tick?', which will help to inform our teaching and enhance their learning and hopefully lead to reduced drop-out rates. An

improved dialogue about both continuities and disparities between student and staff perceptions of pedagogic and andragogic practices might very well encourage dynamic, innovative approaches to the sustaining and promotion of a truly rewarding undergraduate learning community.

REFERENCES

- Biggs, J. 2003. *Teaching for Quality Learning at University*, 2nd Ed. The Society for Research into Higher Education.
- Bone, J. and I. McNay. 2006. *Higher Education and the Human Good*. Bristol: Tockington Press Ltd.
- Boscolo, P., B. Arfé and M. Quarisa. 2007. Improving the quality of students' academic writing: an intervention study. Studies in Higher Education 32: 419–438
- Cardiff University. 2006. Report and Financial statement, 31 July. http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/fince/otherservices/index.html
- Deem, R., Ho Mok, K., and L. Lucas. 2008. Transforming Higher Education in Whose Image? Exploring the Concept of the 'World-Class' University in Europe and Asia. Higher Education Policy 21: 83–97.
- Exley, K. and R. Dennick. 2004. *Small Group Teaching: Tutorials Seminars and Beyond*. London: Routledge-Falmer.
- Gibbs, G. and T. Habeshaw. 1989. *Preparing to Teach: An Introduction to Effective Teaching in Higher Education*. Bristol: Technical and Educational Services Ltd.
- Gibbs, V. 2004. A study of consumer expectations and perceptions in undergraduate higher education. *Journal of Diagnostic Radiography and Imaging*. 5: 69–78.
- Gijbels, D. and F. Dochy. 2006. Students' assessment preferences and approaches to learning: can formative assessment make a difference? *Educational Studies* 32: 399–409.
- Ginns, P., Prosser, M. and S. Barrie. 2007. Students' perceptions of teaching quality in higher education: the perspective of currently enrolled students. *Studies in Higher Education* 32: 603–615.
- Haggis, T. 2006. Pedagogies for diversity: retaining critical challenge amidst fears of 'dumbing down'. *Studies in Higher Education* 31: 521–35.

- Harrison, N. 2006. The impact of negative experiences, dissatisfaction and attachment on first year undergraduate withdrawal. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*. 30: 377–391.
- House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts. 2008. *Staying the course: the retention of students on higher education courses* Tenth Report of Session 2007–08.
- Jobbins, D. 2005. Moving to a global stage: a media view. *Higher Education in Europe* 30: 137–145a.
- King, M., I. Morison, G. Reed and S. Stachow. 1999. Student feedback systems in the Business School: a departmental model. *Quality Assurance in Education* 7.2: 90–100.
- Kremer, J. and C. McGuinness. 1998. Cutting the cord: student-led discussion groups in higher education. *Education & Training* 40.2: 44–49.
- Likert, R. 1932. A technique for the measurement of attitudes. *Archives of Psychology* 140: 5–55.
- McDowell, L. 2002. Electronic information resources in undergraduate education: an exploratory study of opportunities from student learning and independence. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 33.3: 255–56.
- Murphy, R. 2001. *A Briefing in Key Skills in Higher Education*, Assessment, Series 5. York: LTSN.
- Paisey, C. and N. Paisey. 2004. Student attendance in an accounting module: reasons for nonattendance and the effect on academic performance at a Scottish University. *Accounting Education* 13, Supplement 1: 39–53.
- Price, M., B. O'Donovan and C. Rust. 2007. Putting a social-constructivist assessment process model into practice: building the feedback loop into the assessment process through peer review. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International* 44: 143–52.

Ramsden, P., Ed. 2006. Editorial. Academy Exchange, 4: 3.

- Richardson, J.T.E., J.B. Slater and J. Wilson. 2007. The National Student Survey: development, findings and implications. Studies in Higher Education 32: 557–580.
- Rolfe, H. 2001. The effect of tuition fees on students' demands and expectations: evidence from case studies of four universities. *NIESR Discussion Paper No. 190. http://www.niesr.ac.uk/pubs/dps/dp190.pdf*.
- Schmidt, H.G. and J.H.C. Moust. 2000. Factors affecting small-group tutorial learning: a review of research. In *Problem-Based Learning: A Research Perspective on Learning Interactions*, Ed. D.H. Evenson and C. Hmelo. London: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Scott, J. 2005. Students' perceptions of skills acquisition in the undergraduate Bioscience curriculum. Bioscience Education E-Journal, 6. http://www.bioscience. heacademy.ac.uk/journal/vol6/beej-6-1.htm.
- Siegel, S. and N.J. Castellan. 2000. *Nonparametric Statistics for the Behavioural Sciences*, 2nd edn (1988). New York: McGraw-Hill Inc.
- Stokes, P. and L. Martin. 2008. Reading lists: a study of tutor and student perceptions, expectations and realities. *Studies in Higher Education* 33: 113–125
- Szabo, A. and J. Underwood. 2004. Cybercheats: is information and communication technology fuelling academic dishonesty? *Active Learning in Higher Education* 5.2: 180–89.
- Tariq, V.N. and A.C. Cochrane. 2003. Reflections on key skills: implementing change in a traditional university. *Journal of Education Policy* 18.5: 481–98.
- Yorke M and B. Longden. 2007. The first-year experience in higher education in the UK Report on Phase 1 of a project funded by the Higher Education Academy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Lewis Bott for advice on statistics and assistance in collating data from the School of Psychology and to the following people for invaluable discussion, assistance, guidance, and feedback: Clare Kell, Anne Alston, Rhiannon Barry, Sue Bartlett, John Bedwani, Ellie Breeze, Martin Coyle, Rob Gossedge, Louise Harrington, Ian Jenkins, Matthew Jones, Robert Magnani, John Peck, Mair Rigby, Vippal Savani, Janet Williams, and Heather Worthington. This work was performed as part of module 1 of the Cardiff University Postgraduate Certificate in University Teaching and Learning.

Tables

TABLE 1: OVERVIEW OF NUMBER OF RESPONSES BY SCHOOL

	Business	Bio-sciences	EnglishLiterature	Mathematics	Optometry	Psychology	Un-specified	Total
Student	83	262	149	160	82	35	15	786
responses								
Staff	7	7	8	20	19	7	1	69
responses								

TABLE 2: PERCENTILE SUMMARY OF STUDENT RESULTS BY

CATEGORY

Student responses

N = 786. Scores are percentage of participants making each response. Rows do not necessarily sum to 100 because spoiled responses are not included.

Question / Category	N/A	1	2	3	4
1. Please indicate the importance of each	of the following	factors in choo	sing your partic	ular degree.	
Recommendation of others	3	17	40	34	6
Interest in subject	0	0	1	14	85
Good career prospects	Ő	3	11	41	45
Opportunity to gain work experience	3	12	36	37	11
Good at subject	1	1	7	50	37
2. Please rate how important you belie	eve each of the fo	llowing skills ar	e to your partic	ular discipline.	
Communication	0	1	13	43	41
Presentation (Oral)	1	5	29	45	19
Writing	0	2	17	40	38
Problem Solving	1	3	15	26	54
Time Management	0	1	9	42	47
IT Skills	0	3	28	55	13
Team Working	1	6	26	42	23
Research	0	1	9	36	53
2 How good do you think you are at the	following skills?				
<u>S. How good do you think you are at the</u> Communication	<u>n</u>	2	17	63	17
Presentation	0 0	10	42	40	8
Writing	0 0	4	21	57	16
Problem Solving	0	3	21	56	21
Time Management	0	9	20	45	17
IT Skills	0	6	27	49	19
Team Working	0	2	14	58	25
Research	0	2	22	51	12
Research	1	5	55	51	12
4. Please rate the effectiveness of each of	the following tea	aching methods	in vour own lea	rning.	
Large-group teaching e.g. lectures	1	2	32	54	12
Small-group teaching	0	0	3	26	70
Student-led group working	3	5	40	43	7
One-to-one time with member of staff	2	1	6	28	62
Self-study	0	3	24	48	23
Practical sessions	10	2	16	39	32
5 II		(1		0	
5. How effective do you consider the vari	ous teaching me	thous of assessin	28	50	0
Peer assessment	1	4	20	24	0
Salf assessment	1	21	49	24	4
Individual coursework	1	1	45	25 16	40
Group coursework	2	0	31	40	40
Practical	10	2	15	43	26
Tactical	10	2	15		20
6. Please rate the effectiveness of each of	the following ed	ucational resou	rces with regard	to your own lea	arning.
Discussing problems with friends	0	1	9	39	50
Books	0	1	6	42	50
Private tuition	8	1	10	29	50
The internet	0	2	25	45	26
Past exam papers	0	1	5	27	66
Your own class notes	0	1	12	43	42
Your own revision notes	0	1	10	39	48
Journal articles	2	9	40	37	9
Handouts	0	1	10	49	38
Worked examples	1	1	7	32	58

CATEGORY

Staff responses

N = 69. Scores are percentage of participants making each response. Rows do not necessarily sum to 100 because spoiled responses are not included.

Question / Category	<u>N/A</u>	1	2	3	4
1. Please indicate how important you	believe each of	f the following	factors is	considered to be b	y students when
choosing their particular degree scheme					
Recommendation of others	0	3	30	46	19
Interest in subject	0	0	7	35	55
Good career prospects	0	6	51	41	0
Opportunity to gain work experience	1	19	42	29	7
Good at subject	3	1	14	39	36
2. Please rate how important you belie	ve each of the	following skills	is for stu	dents to be successf	ful studying your
particular discipline.					
Communication	0	9	14	41	35
Presentation (Oral)	0	13	30	48	9
Writing	1	3	23	38	35
Problem Solving	1	1	12	19	67
Time Management	0	3	20	51	26
IT Skills	0	6	41	51	3
Team Working	1	28	42	25	4
Research	1	6	23	38	32
		() 1/1			
3. Please rate the <u>average</u> student on you	r degree schem	e(s) with respec	t to each of	these skills:	1
Communication	1	6	41	51	1
Presentation	7	3	54	35	l
Writing	9	58	29	4	0
Problem Solving	1	6	54	32	4
Time Management	3	4	48	42	1
IT Skills	9	0	22	64	6
Team Working	14	6	35	43	0
Research	4	19	41	35	0
4. Please rate the effectiveness of each	of the followin	g teaching met	hods with	respect to student l	earning on your
degree scheme(s):					
Large-group teaching e.g. lectures	0	0	19	59	20
Small-group teaching	4	0	7	36	51
Student-led group working	17	9	32	35	6
One-to-one time with member of staff	6	1	1	26	62
Self-study	4	4	25	39	25
Practical sessions	22	0	12	26	36
5. How effective do you consider the v	arious methods	of assessment li	isted below	?	
Computer-based assessment	14	9	35	32	10
Peer-assessment	17	22	23	30	6
Self-assessment	19	20	38	19	4
Individual coursework	0	0	9	49	42
Group coursework	9	12	41	30	9
Practical	28	0	17	28	28
6. Please rate the effectiveness of each	of the following	educational re	sources wit	h regard to student	learning:
Discussing problems with friends	0	0	16	42	41
Books	0	0	12	42	45
Private tuition	12	1	19	22	39
The internet	1	9	41	39	7
Past exam papers	0	3	20	48	28
Your own class notes	1	1	10	46	41
Your own revision notes	4	0	9	48	39
Journal articles	10	12	32	30	16
Handouts	1	1	17	41	30
Worked examples	7	0	7	35	51

Student Responses

N = 786. Scores are percentage of participants making each response. Rows do not necessarily sum to 100 because spoiled responses are not included.

Question					
How much of the scheduled timetable do	0-19%	20-39%	40-59%	60-79%	80-100%
you expect to attend during your first					
year?					
% response	0	0	1	4	95
How many hours each week do you expect	0–5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20+
to spend studying outside of the scheduled					
teaching time?					
% response	8	38	37	12	4
Age Today	18	19	20	21	Over 21
% response	59	28	5	2	5
Gender	Male	Female	-		
% response	49	51	-		
Did vou take a gan vear?	Ves	No			
⁰ / ₂ response	20	70			
70 response	20	13	-		
Highest Qualification	HND	A-level	IB	Degree	Other
% response	0	91	2	2	4

Staff Responses

N = 69. Scores are percentage of participants making each response.

Question					
How much of the scheduled timetable do	0-19%	20-39%	40-59%	60-79%	80-100%
you expect your students to attend during					
their first year?					
% response	0	0	1	14	83
How many hours each week do you expect your students to spend studying outside of the scheduled teaching time?	0–5	5–10	10–15	15–20	20+
% response	6	32	32	19	10
Age Today	25–34	35-44	45–54	55–64	Undis-closed
% response	17	33	23	19	6
Gender	Male	Female	-		
% response	67	32			

Figures

FIGURE 1: STAFF VS STUDENT PERCEPTION OF IMPORTANT FACTORS IN CHOOSING A DEGREE SCHEME. GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF DATA WHERE THERE WAS A STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE.



FIGURE 2: STUDENT VS STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT ABILITY IN KEY SKILLS.
GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF DATA WHERE THERE WAS A STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT
DIFFERENCE. A-D. Assessment of how good the student perceive themselves to be at various skills (student questionnaire; Question 3) and by the lecturers' of the skill level of an average student (staff questionnaire; Question 3) in their degree scheme. E-F. Perceptions of staff and students regarding skill levels required specifically for the student's discipline.













FIGURE 2: STUDENT VS STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVENESS OF ASSESSMENT METHODS. GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF DATA WHERE THERE WAS A STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE.



FIGURE 4: STUDENT VS STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF USEFULNESS OF EDUCATIONAL

Resources. Graphical representation of data where there was a statistically significant difference.



2

Rated importance

3

4

1

0

N/A



FIGURE 5: STAFF VS STUDENT EXPECTATIONS OF FIRST YEAR





SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: SAMPLE STUDENT AND

STAFF QUESTIONNAIRES

Student questionnaire

We are delighted to see you here in Cardiff and hope you will enjoy your time with us. To help us support you in your learning, we'd find it really useful if you could spend about 10 minutes telling us little bit about your opinions and attitudes related to education. Don't agonise over your responses, your initial gut reaction is generally the best answer. Don't forget: there are no right or wrong answers and your responses will remain completely anonymous.

Please fill in the appropriate bubbles for each of the following questions, using the pencil provided.

1. Please indicate the importance of each of the following factors in choosing your particular degree scheme.

	Extremely important			Not at all important	Not Applicable
Recommendation of others	(4)	3	2	1	(1)
Interest in subject	(4)	3	2	1	(\mathbf{H})
Good career prospects	(4)	3	2	1	(\mathbf{H})
Opportunity to gain work experience	٩	3	2	(1)	(1)
Good at subject	(4)	3	2	1	(\mathbf{H})
Other, please state:					

2. Please rate how important you believe each of the following skills are to your particular discipline:

	Extremely important			Not at all important	Not Applicable
Communication	(4)	3	(2)	1	(1)
Presentation (oral)	(4)	3	2	1	(1)
Writing	(4)	3	2	1	(1)
Problem solving	(4)	3	2	1	(1)
Time management	(4)	3	2	0	(1)
IT skills	(4)	3	2	1	N
Team working	(4)	3	2	1	(1)
Research (looking at new topics or in greater depth at course material) Other skill, please state:	(4)	3	٢	1	(1)

3. How good do you think you are at the following skills?

	Extremely good			Poor	Not Applicable
Communication	(4)	3	2	1	(1)
Presentation (oral)	4	3	(2)	1	(1)
Writing	(4)	3	(2)	1	(1)
Problem solving	4	3	(2)	1	(1)
Time management	(4)	3	(2)	1	(1)
IT skills	4	3	(2)	1	(1)
Team working	(4)	3	(2)	1	(1)
Research (looking at new topics or in greater depth at course material)	٩	3	(2)	1	(1)
Other, please state:					

4. Please rate the effectiveness of each of the following teaching methods in your own learning:

	Extremely effective			Not at all effective	Not Applicable
Large group teaching such as lectures	(4)	3	2	1	(1)
Small group teaching	(4)	3	2	1	(1)
Student-led group working	(4)	3	2	1	(1)
One to one time with a member of staff	(4)	3	2	1	(1)
Self-study (where you research the topic yourself)	(4)	3	2	1	(1)
Practical sessions	4	3	2	1	(1)

Other, please state:

5. How effective do you consider the various methods of assessment listed below?

	Extremely effective			Not at all effective	Not Applicable
Computer-based assessment	(4)	3	2	1	N
Peer-assessment (where you mark your fellow classmates)	٩	3	2	(1)	(\mathbb{N})
Self-assessment (where you grade yourself)	٩	3	2	(1)	(1)
Individual coursework	(4)	3	2	0	(N)
Group coursework	(4)	3	2	1	(\mathbb{N})
Practical	(4)	3	2	1	N
Other, please state:					

6. Please rate the effectiveness of each of the following educational resources with regard to your own learning:

	Extremely useful			Not at all useful	Not Applicable
Discussing problems with Friends	4	3	2	1	(1)
Books	4	3	2	1	ı
Private tuition	4	3	2	1	ı
The internet	4	3	(2)	1	ı
Past exam papers	4	3	2	1	(II)
Your own class notes	4	3	2	1	N
Your own revision notes	4	3	(2)	1	N
Journal articles	(4)	3	(2)	1	N
Handouts	(4)	3	2	1	Ю
Worked examples	(4)	3	2	1	U
0#					

Other, please state:

About you

I. Flease I		un degre	se schei	ne you wiii	be studying	at Onive	i Sity.	
Accounting	Biosciences scheme	Englis Literatur	sh e	Marine Geography	Mathematics	s Opt	ometry	Psychology
7	6	6	1	4	3		٢	1
A)			100-80%	79-60%	59-40%	39-20%	19-0%	
How much of timetable do during your fi	the scheduled you expect to rst year?	d attend	6	4	3	٢	1	
B) How many ho	ours each wee	k do	0-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20+	
you expect to outside of the time?) spend studyn 9 scheduled te	ng aching	6	4	3	2	1	
C)	18	19	20	21	Over 21	und	isclosed	
Age today	6	4	3	2	1		0	
D)						Male	Female	
Gender						(5)	(4)	
E)						Yes	No	
Dia you take	a gap year?					6	4	
F)		Interna Baccala	ational aureate	A-level	HND	Degree	Other, please state	
Highest quali date	fication to	()	(4)	3	2	1	

7. Please indicate which degree scheme you will be studying at University:

Staff questionnaire

I am part of a group of staff from 7 different schools, carrying out a PCUTL research project. The main focus of the study is to gain a greater understanding of student attitudes to learning, gained from their pre-university experiences. A smaller but none the less important additional feature of this study is an exploration of the congruence (or otherwise) of staff and student attitudes towards learning. Analysis of the data we hope will be used to inform our teaching of undergraduates, particularly in the first year, thus I would greatly appreciate you taking 5 minutes to complete this questionnaire.

Please fill in the appropriate bubbles for each of the following questions, using the pencil provided.

1. Please indicate how important you believe each of the following factors is considered to be by students when choosing their particular degree scheme.

	Extremely important			Not at all important	Not Applicable
Recommendation of others	(4)	3	2	1	N
Interest in subject	(4)	3	2	1	N
Good career prospects	(4)	3	2	1	N
Opportunity to gain work experience	(4)	3	٢	(1)	(\mathbb{N})
Good at subject	(4)	3	2	0	N
Other, please state:					

2. Please rate how important you believe each of the following skills is for students to be successful studying your particular discipline:

	Extremely important			Not at all important	Not Applicable
Communication	(4)	3	2	0	N
Presentation (oral)	(4)	3	2	1	N
Writing	(4)	3	2	0	(1)
Problem solving	(4)	3	2	()	(1)
Time management	(4)	3	2	()	(1)
IT skills	(4)	3	2	0	(1)
Team working	(4)	3	2	1	(1)
Research (looking at new topics or in greater depth at course material) Other skill, please state:	(4)	٩	٤	0	(1)

3. Please rate the **average** student on your degree scheme(s) with respect to each of these skills:

	Extremely good			Poor	Not Applicable
Communication	4	3	2	1	Ю
Presentation (oral)	4	3	2	1	Ш
Writing	(4)	3	(2)	1	N
Problem solving	(4)	3	(2)	1	N
Time management	4	3	(2)	1	Ш
IT skills	4	3	(2)	1	н
Team working	(4)	3	(2)	1	N
Research (looking at new topics or in greater depth at course material)	۲	3	(2)	1	(1)
Other, please state:					

4. Please rate the effectiveness of each of the following teaching methods with respect to student learning on your degree scheme(s):

	Extremely effective			Not at all effective	Not Applicable
Large group teaching such as lectures	4	3	2	1	(1)
Small group teaching	(4)	3	2	1	(1)
Student-led group working	(4)	3	2	1	(1)
One to one time with a member of staff	(4)	٩	2	1	(1)
Self-study (where you research the topic yourself)	(4)	3	2	1	(1)
Practical sessions	(4)	3	2	1	(1)
Other, please state:					

42

5. How effective do you consider the various methods of assessment listed below?

	Extremely effective			Not at all effective	Not Applicable
Computer-based assessment	(4)	3	2	1	(\mathbb{N})
Peer-assessment (where you mark your fellow classmates)	٩	3	(2)	1	(1)
Self-assessment (where you grade yourself)	٩	3	(2)	1	(1)
Individual coursework	(4)	3	2	1	(\mathbb{N})
Group coursework	(4)	3	2	1	(\mathbb{N})
Practical	(4)	3	2	1	(\mathbb{N})
Other, please state:					

6. Please rate the effectiveness of each of the following educational resources with regard to student learning:

	Extremely effective			Not at all effective	Not Applicable
Discussing problems with Friends	(4)	3	2	1	(1)
Books	4	3	2	1	(\mathbf{N})
Private tuition	4	3	2	1	(\mathbf{N})
The internet	4	3	2	1	(\mathbf{N})
Past exam papers	4	3	2	1	(1)
Your own class notes	4	3	2	1	(1)
Your own revision notes	4	3	2	1	(1)
Journal articles	4	3	2	1	(\mathbf{N})
Handouts	4	3	2	1	(\mathbf{N})
Worked examples	(4)	3	2	1	(\mathbf{N})
Other, please state:					

43

About you

Please inc	licate which	degree schem	e you	teach or	n:			
Accounting	Biosciences schemes	English Literature	Mar Geogr	ine raphy	Mathematics	Optometr	у Г	Psychology
\overline{O}	۲	6	(Ð	3	٢		1
A)		1.6 1.1 1		100-80%	79-60%	59-40%	39-20%	19-0%
How much o expect stude	ents to attend o	d timetable do yo luring their first ye	u ear?	5	4	3	2	1
B) How many hours each week do you expect				0-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20+
students to s scheduled te	pend studying aching time?	outside of the		(5)	(4)	3	2	1
C)			25-34	35-4	4 45-54	55-64	un	disclosed
Age today			6	4	3	2		1
D)						Male		Female
Gender						6		(4)

Word Count: 6,938 (Full text including summary plus references, acknowledgements)