




MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK:

Student and Staff Perspectives on Teaching
and Learning at Unitec

USU's Quality Education Project Report

April 2009



'Because students see a great deal of teaching, they are in an unrivalled position to comment on its quality. Moreover, nonexperts in a subject are uniquely qualified to judge whether the instruction they receive is helping them to learn.'

(RAMSDEN, 1991, P.306)

'Unitec is committed to teaching and learning of the highest possible quality and relevance.'

(UNITEC'S INVESTMENT PLAN, 2008-10, P.4)

An independent USU report, 2008.

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Guide to this report

Recommendations, with rationale, are contained in the Executive Summary. Quotes from students begin with an 'S' and are then coded with a number (i.e. S42:). All quotes from staff are prefixed only with a number (i.e. 21:). When the interviewer speaks the prefix 'L' is used. The prefix X is sometimes used to denote a participant where their identity requires further concealment. Appendices include all the questionnaire scripts and interview formats. Further data from interviews is contained in USU's 'Quality Education Project Report: Volume 2', which can be requested from USU's Education Office by emailing the Education Coordinator (*usueducation@unitec.ac.nz*)

Acknowledgements

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Contents

	1. Executive Summary and Recommendations	7
Part One	Method, Literature Review and State of Play	15
	2. Giving Students a Voice (method)	17
	<i>Summary</i>	22
	3. Theoretical Issues in Evaluation (literature review)	23
	<i>Summary</i>	32
	4. Quality Assurance at Unitec (snapshot)	33
	<i>Summary</i>	50
Part Two	The Student Experience of Teaching and Learning	51
	5. The Whole Learning Experience	53
	<i>Summary</i>	59
	6. Assessment Anxiety	60
	<i>Summary</i>	66
	7. The Māori Student Experience	67
	<i>Summary</i>	69
	8. Effective Lecturing	71
	<i>Summary</i>	73
	9. The Evaluation of Teaching	75
	<i>Summary</i>	85
	10. Future Directions	87
	Index of acronyms	88
	References	89
	Appendices	93

1: Executive Summary

Rationale

The recommendations in this report have been made with the intent that USU and Unitec work together on the issue of quality education for the benefit of students. USU highlights here its future involvement in quality assurance processes at Unitec. Some of USU's quality assurance processes will start from 2009. However, USU also hopes to collaborate constructively with Unitec on quality assurance and on the evaluation of teaching and learning. USU has confidence in Unitec's desire and ability to improve the experience of its students and believes that, through a joint approach to achieving this goal with USU, using a blend of initiatives around teaching practice and evaluation, Unitec could become an outstanding example of good practice and, as such, out-perform other tertiary institutes in terms of student experience and student achievement.

It has been a tradition amongst students' associations to be reactive to the movements of a tertiary institution. Just as it is important for a tertiary institute to act, so is it important for a students' association to do the same. Tertiary organisations and students' associations are equally answerable to the students who pay fees to both parties. The quality of the student experience should be at the forefront of the work of a students' association. By establishing an education office, and undertaking research into the quality of teaching at Unitec, USU is moving into pro-active territory. USU has established stronger links with external tertiary bodies, such as the TEC¹. USU is also developing an increasingly effective educational profile through initiating its own quality assurance strategies and research projects.

The quality of tertiary education is currently of major concern in New Zealand. Since the inception of the tertiary reforms many initiatives across the education sectors have been establishing momentum. The TEC has changed the shape of its relationship with tertiary education organisations (TEOs), is strengthening its links with student bodies and students' associations across the country and has established new guidelines for the accountability of tertiary institutes to their students as key stakeholders. How tertiary institutes perform in relation to their students will be a key factor in determining the government's future financial investment in tertiary institutes. The initiative USU has begun with the Quality Education Project (QEP) signals the way of the future in the tertiary education sector, and has

¹ There is an index of acronyms on p.88.

the potential to be beneficial for students, students associations and TEOs.

This project, a comprehensive study of the quality and evaluation of teaching at Unitec by USU, was instigated by the 2007 USU student executive, funded by USU, and conducted by the USU Education Coordinator in 2008. The research emerged in response to concerns about the quality of teaching, and the methods used to evaluate teaching, at Unitec, voiced by students in surveys conducted by USU in 2007. Research questions were based around the student experience of learning and student and staff impressions of one quality assurance mechanism in place at Unitec - the SEQUAL evaluations.² The methodology consisted of questionnaires, and interviews, involving students and staff at Unitec, a literature review, and an evaluation of the quality assurance mechanisms in place at Unitec at the time of writing.

Summary of Findings

This report presents the findings of USU's 2008 Quality Education Project. The research concludes that students sometimes suffer unnecessary levels of assessment anxiety and so recommends that procedures around assessment and feedback on student assignments be strengthened and made consistent across the institution; this would bring Unitec in line with best practice in other NZ TEOs.³ The research finds that due process is often not followed in the election of Student Representatives and that some Student Representatives are in employment relationships with Unitec (leading to conflict of interest). The research also finds that understanding the Māori student experience needs attention in terms of evaluation processes. The research suggests that lecturers and students have very similar ideas about what constitutes good teaching practice and successful evaluation.

Evidence suggests that methods of quality evaluation at Unitec need strengthening to become more in tune with what students want, and that the quality of education at Unitec should be monitored more closely and more formally across the institution. The research finds

² See appendices 4a and 4b.

³ For an example: The University of Massey, The University of Canterbury and the University of Otago have turnaround times for assignments in their statutes and policies of 'fifteen working days', '4 weeks' and 'three teaching weeks' respectively.

that Unitec’s SEQUAL evaluation process is not working; the feedback loop to students is not being closed, and neither staff nor students have a very clear idea of how SEQUALs are being used. Unitec is aware of the need for a review of SEQUAL. Therefore, an urgent and substantial overhaul of SEQUAL is recommended in collaboration with USU. Students have strong ideas about how they want to give feedback about their teachers; students prefer to speak face to face with someone about issues that are important to them.

USU believes that Unitec has some obvious strengths, which include the engagement and expertise of many of its staff, the willingness of management to take on difficult issues, its student support and learning support centres and its focus on ‘real world learning,’ which students appreciate when it is done well. Many students and staff also enjoy a strong sense of culture and community at Unitec. This report is not a comparative study and therefore does not suggest that Unitec’s record of teaching quality or evaluation is any better or worse than any other NZ TEO. One key finding is the willingness of Unitec to take on difficult issues, to be self-aware, and to collaborate with its Students’ Association. USU is confident about the results of such collaboration.

Throughout this report the need for valid and ethical evaluation schedules is highlighted. A good evaluation schedule might look something like this:

- 1** Existing situation/reason for evaluating
- 2** Scoping
- 3** Evaluation (using a range of methods)
- 4** Findings and analysis
- 5** Report and recommendations
- 6** Action plan
- 7** Implementation
- 8** Review and measurement
- 9** Judgements
- 10** Close feedback loop

Summary of Recommendations

The following seventeen recommendations were submitted to Unitec's Academic Board on 25th November 2008.

1. That USU submit the list of Recommendations 1.1-1.17 to Academic Board

Assessment and Assignment Issues

1.1: That Unitec design (with USU involvement) and implement a standardised, yet adaptable, Unitec wide 'assessment hand back sheet' for all assessments on all programmes (including essays, practical work such as films and exhibitions, IBL modules, PBL modules, reports, projects, crits and skits). This sheet shall provide space where lecturers and tutors are expected to give written feedback on student work, along with a grade.

1.2: That Unitec implement a standardised Unitec-wide schedule for the return of student work of 3 weeks maximum, with no exceptions.

1.3: That assessment feed-back sheets, including written feed-back and a grade, shall be sent out to all students in electronic form within this 3 week period.

1.4: That the handing back of student work is monitored by the Head of Department.

1.5: That students shall be provided with the following, available to students electronically, according to the timeline stipulated:

- finalised assignment due dates and dates of examinations (at the commencement of a course).
- moderated assignment questions for all summative assessments which are not to be conducted under examination conditions (four weeks before the assessment due date).
- moderated marking criteria sheets for each summative assessment (four weeks before the assessment due date).

1.6: That all summative assessment questions for a course shall

be moderated by a senior academic in the discipline, and that this process be monitored the Head of Department.

1.7: That Unitec prepare and circulate written guidelines on assessment best practice, to cover all forms of assessment, for the start of Semester 1, 2009.

Motion (1) That Academic Board adopts, in principle, recommendations 1.1 to 1.7, on Student Assessment and Assignment Issues, and that these recommendations are appropriately incorporated into the new Assessment Policy and/or accompanying regulation in collaboration with the USU, and that the implementation is to be the responsibility of the Dean, Teaching and Learning.

Motion Carried

The term 'in principle' here means that, whilst Unitec is not bound to abide by the specific details of these recommendations, they are bound to putting in place measures which match up to the meaning and intent of them and may be held accountable if they fail to uphold such meaning and intent. After a working group, of which USU will be part, has met to discuss the details of these points, they will be brought back to Academic Board in the new year, and we are confident that after consultation these initiatives will be in place for semester 2, 2009.

Student Engagement

1.8: That student representatives shall be elected for all programmes and their names and email addresses forwarded to USU by the last day of the second week of a programme commencing, or the last day of the fourth week for programme representatives in their first year of study, with exceptions to be negotiated with USU, and communication to be the responsibility of the programme director.

1.9: Normally that no nominated student representative, in any class or programme, shall be in an employment relationship with Unitec, with exceptions to be approved by USU.

1.10: That programme directors, in consultation with USU, shall be responsible for ensuring that due process is followed in the selection of student representatives.

1.11: That, in the absence of a student representative from the programme, USU shall be permitted access to all programme committee meetings and programme committee minutes. In such a case a representative of USU would take the position of a student representative from the programme and abide by any rules of confidentiality set up by the committee.

1.12: That, in consultation with a programme director, Head of Department or Faculty Dean, USU shall be permitted access to lectures, classrooms and workshops.

Motion (2) That the Academic Board adopt recommendations 1.8 to 1.12, on Student Engagement, and that their 2009 implementation be the responsibility of each Head of Department.

Motion Carried

This means that all the initiatives listed above must be adhered to for 2009.

Evaluation of teaching

1.13: That academic board recognise and encourage USU's future involvement in NZQA and ITPQ processes, and in particular that:

- USU SHALL BE INVOLVED IN THE SELECTION OF ALL STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN EXTERNAL EVALUATIONS.

- USU SHALL PARTICIPATE IN FORMAL MEETINGS WITH NZQA/ITPNZ-Q EVALUATORS.

1.14: That a redesign of Unitec's teaching evaluation processes be carried out, in consultation with USU, that is consistent with what students want in the light of research conducted in the QEP.

1.15: That feedback to students in response to course evaluation processes provided by departments shall be made available to USU.

1.16: That the Student Satisfaction Survey, all SEQUAL forms, all SGIDs and any other teaching evaluation mechanism employed by Unitec must measure the specific experience of Māori students.

1.17: That the Student Satisfaction Survey, all SEQUAL evaluations, all SGIDs and any other evaluation mechanism employed by Unitec must measure the Māori student experience of the Māori dimension included in programmes.

Motion (3)

That the Academic Board adopt recommendations 1.13 to 1.17, on the Evaluation of Teaching and that their 2009 implementation be the responsibility of the Dean, Teaching and Learning.

Motion Carried

This means that all the initiatives listed above must be adhered to for 2009.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO USU

2: That USU nominate one or more programmes (randomly or according to need) during each semester on which to conduct a triangulated USU quality assurance evaluation, which is to include no less than three of the following, as is consistent with good evaluation practice:

- FOCUS GROUPS WITH STUDENTS OR FOCUS GROUPS WITH STUDENTS AND LECTURERS FROM OTHER PARTS OF THE INSTITUTION.
- QUESTIONNAIRES.
- SELECTED ONE-TO-ONE INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENTS (NO LESS THAN THREE, NO MORE THAN TEN).
- OBSERVATION (WHILE A COURSE IS STILL RUNNING).

3: That all USU evaluations document the learning experience of Māori students.

4: That USU shall provide a dedicated site on usu.co.nz for students to give qualitative feedback on their lecturers and courses, anonymously. This information (amongst other information) may be used to nominate programmes to evaluate. This page shall also contain updated information on improvements made already, and how they

were achieved, including reports from past programme evaluations conducted by USU.

5: That USU shall send out an 'all student' email each semester for the sole purpose of reminding students to voice their concerns anonymously on the dedicated web page, and to update them on the USU programme evaluations, when the appropriate systems for this have been put in place.

6: That the USU website shall provide for a 'Question and Answer' space between students and the USU Advocate.

7: That USU shall devote, each semester, a marketing budget to inform students of the mechanism/s USU has set up to evaluate the quality of their education.

8: That USU shall hold, each semester, a focus group with student representatives focussing on how to improve and develop USU quality assurance evaluations, and to work out ways to engage student representatives more fully in the evaluation process.

9: That USU take note of the wishes, needs and views of students along with established criteria on good teaching practice, and use benchmarking with other students' associations, in order to make informed judgements about the quality of Unitec courses and programmes.

10: That USU initiate discussions with TTA, CTLI and the Academic Quality Office (or whatever their new titles shall be) and the Academic Standards Committee regarding making a formal link between those departments and USU, around issues of standards, evaluation and quality assurance.

11: That USU quality assurance evaluations shall be carried out by an education coordinator suitably knowledgeable about tertiary education and, where this is not the case, or where USU does not have an education coordinator, funding shall be set aside for an independent evaluator to evaluate programmes nominated by USU.

12: That a review of changes implemented, and their effects, including a re-evaluation of the quality of teaching at Unitec, shall be carried out in Semester 1, 2010. Format and method shall be at the discretion of the evaluator/reviewer.

PART I:

Method, Literature Review and State of Play

Chapter Two | **Giving Students a Voice (method)** 17

Summary..... 22

Chapter Three | **Theoretical Issues in Evaluation (literature review)** 23

Summary..... 32

Chapter Four | **Quality Assurance at Unitec (snapshot)** 33

Summary..... 50

2: Giving Students a Voice (method)

The objectives of USU's Quality Education Project were to make a series of recommendations around improving teaching quality, the evaluation of teaching at Unitec and student representation. The project needed to respond to student concerns about teaching quality raised in USU surveys in 2007. It also had to increase USU's relevance to the core business of education, to challenge Unitec's in-house course and lecturer evaluation process, SEQUAL (in particular the lack of a feedback loop to students), to outline USU's future role in quality assurance processes at Unitec and, finally, to use a valid and rigorous research process with sound ethical principles to legitimate the student voice within Unitec. The methodology therefore had to respond to this array of concerns and, moreover, needed to be able to sustain rigorous peer criticism.

A qualitative methodology was chosen. It was considered unfair to submit the quality of teaching at Unitec to a quantitative analysis because a quality should not be unnecessarily mediated through numbers and percentages. Furthermore, teaching performance does not sit at a constant level across time; it fluctuates depending on the individual professional and personal lives of the lecturer and of the students, the specifics of the student cohort, the material covered, the teaching and learning environment, the timeline of the course or programme, and the facilities and resources. Indeed, a certain fluctuation in the quality of the teaching and learning experience is to be expected in an environment where human beings are working together towards achieving specific goals. In other words, there are too many variables to make it fair, or ethical, to situate standards of teaching and learning within a quantitative research model (and this argument does indeed place SEQUAL in a difficult position).

The findings in this report cannot be taken as generalisations about the quality of teaching at Unitec, rather they are indications of specific areas identified through the narratives of students and lecturers which are in need of improvement. The narratives provided by people around their experiences of interacting in a social situation are an extremely valuable resource. The findings should be used in a way which reflects the spirit in which students and lecturers came to be interviewed: one of a shared responsibility for making improvements to the experiences of both students and lecturers for the good of both parties, and enhancing the teaching and learning process for better experiences and outcomes.

A multi-faceted approach was favoured which combined questionnaires and semi-structured narrative interviews alongside a policy and document analysis (both institutional and national) relating to quality assurance. A literature review was also undertaken to provide a theoretical context for the research.

Sampling

A total of 61 interviews were conducted and used. In a small population, a tertiary institution of approximately 11615 eligible students, 673 academic staff and 58 student support staff (a total of approximately 12338 eligible staff and students) 61 qualitative narrative interviews constitutes a study of considerable depth and breadth. Breadth was achieved if we consider that national studies in tertiary education often contain far fewer interviews. In *Quality and Power in Higher Education* (2003) Louise Morley interviews only thirty-six staff members across British higher education institutions. Of course Britain also has a vastly larger tertiary demography and national population than New Zealand. In terms of depth, a qualitative interview methodology classically provides a more detailed picture of a situation than does even a large scale questionnaire sample. Sitting in a room talking with a participant for up to an hour gives the researcher a much deeper understanding of how that participant feels about something than if they were to analyse rating scales or even quickly typed answers to questions in an online questionnaire. Furthermore, qualitative research methodologies are currently becoming more popular with the TEC, NZQA and ITPQ. Participants eligible for this study included all academic staff at Unitec, and student support and learning support staff at Maia, the Pacific Development and Support Centre, the Counselling Centre, the Careers and Employment Centre, the Disability Liaison Centre and Unitec's learning support centre Te Tari Āwhina. The total number of eligible student support and learning support staff was 58. All students enrolled at Unitec during semester 1, 2008, were eligible to take part with one proviso: students had to have been studying at Unitec for more than one full semester to be able to give informed responses. Only one student participant slipped through that particular net (41 student interviews were conducted). That interview was not even transcribed (40 student interviews were transcribed and used). All methods were piloted.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires were distributed online to students (see Appendix **1a**), with 274 respondents, online to academic staff (see Appendix **1b**), with 35 respondents, and to student support staff and learning support staff, on paper, with a total of 14 respondents (see Appendix **1c**). Although there were 274 responses to the electronic student questionnaire, most of these were incomplete. This should be considered a very low turnout. The interviews were sufficiently informative and high in number to be able to present a valid set of findings.

Significantly, the percentage of responses to the paper questionnaire was considerably higher than that of the student and lecturer electronic questionnaires:

	Population no.	Sample no.	%
Student electronic questionnaire	c11615	274	c2.4%
Lecturer electronic questionnaire	673	35	5.2%
Support staff paper questionnaire	58	14	24.1%

This response rate is significant if we consider that there is some anxiety across Unitec around the fact that electronic SEQUAL evaluations yield much lower samples than do paper ones. It is crucial to remember that quantitative evaluations such as SEQUAL must reap high sample sizes in order to effectively indicate areas in need of improvement in particular courses.

In this study filling out a questionnaire did not preclude any eligible participant to then come for an interview, and filling out a questionnaire was not a prerequisite for being interviewed. The results of the electronic questionnaires were not analysed except to identify themes which informed the interview formats. As there was a better response-rate from the paper student support staff questionnaire, these data have been used when appropriate.

Interviews

61 confidential interviews were conducted and transcribed, with 40 students and 22 staff (see Appendices 2a, 2b and 2c). One participant was counted twice as they were both a lecturer and student at the time. Participants attending interviews were compensated for their time with a \$50 shopping voucher. Between 650 and 700 pages of transcribed interview data and 14 three-page paper questionnaires were analysed during July 2008.

40 interviews were conducted with Unitec students who had been studying at Unitec for at least one full semester. They were from a range of discipline areas such as sport, social practice, business, communications, trades, education, construction, architecture, design, health, and from a range of cultural and national backgrounds. Five Māori students were interviewed, three Pasifika students, three International students and students from countries such as China, Singapore, Fiji, England, South Africa and Sri Lanka. Two students had declared disabilities. Students' ages ranged from teenagers to mature students in their forties or fifties. Student or staff ages were not requested because it was felt there was a danger that the mature student voice could be marginalised by readers. There was a good mix of male (18) and female (22) student participants.

22 interviews were conducted with Unitec staff, ranging from senior academics and managers, to part time lecturers from a range of cultural and national backgrounds, and included: managers; lecturers and senior lecturers; tutorial assistants; student support staff and learning support staff. Three Māori staff were interviewed, one Pasifika lecturer, and ten staff members who had originally come from overseas. Staff participants were from a range of disciplines such as education, trades, health, sport, communication, business, social practice and foundation studies. Eight staff participants were male and fourteen were female.

Fig. 1. Demographics of student and staff interviewees included in the study.

	International	Maori	Pasifika	Male	Female
Students (40)	3 (7.5%) (International)	5 (12.5%)	3 (7.5%)	18 (45%)	22 (55%)
Staff (22)	10 (45%) (From overseas)	3 (13%)	1 (4%)	8 (40%)	14 (63%)

The aim was to interview forty students and this proved no problem. An 'all-student' email was sent out (with a link to the questionnaire), the study was advertised in the student magazine *In Unison* and a poster and leaflet campaign was conducted about the project. Sufficient student participants were gained through this 'invitation' method, and also through the 'snowball' method (students and staff would tell their friends to come). In order that the study not suffer the accusation of the research not being 'fair' as 'probably only students with complaints would want to be interviewed' (even though the first student through the door was ecstatically happy with their programme of study) four students were 'cherry-picked' by the researcher (i.e. they had not requested an interview). Three out of these four students were extremely contented with their courses, although anything they did pick out as potentially challenging, or their feelings about what they wanted from their courses, their lecturers, or the SEQUAL evaluations, echoed the views of the other students.

To obtain staff interview participants an 'all staff' email was sent out with a link to the questionnaire (which flagged the interview opportunity). A reminder email was sent out near the end of the interview process to get the final two participants. From this reminder email (and a gathering snowballing of staff participants) the project was overrun with requests to be interviewed and stopped at twenty-two staff participants (having aimed for a minimum of twenty).

Ethical research practice

The research abided by strong ethical principles and USU decided to submit the research proposal voluntarily to the Unitec Research Ethics Committee (UREC) for guidance and comments. UREC found no ethical shortfalls with the research proposal and the committee wished the research well.

The researcher for the Quality Education Project, in the role of Education Coordinator for USU, was able to build up a network of connections amongst academic and support staff and so USU was able to flag the study well in advance. All participants were assured that nothing identifying would be published in any documents and that their identities would be strictly protected along with the identities of anyone they talked about. This was also stated clearly on the consent

form (see Appendix 3). Highly sensitive and confidential data was being handled and the participants were reassured that there was only one researcher working on the project (interviewing and transcribing interviews). Two staff members said they appreciated this as it made them feel more comfortable about sharing information.

There was an array of leaflets for different support outlets at Unitec in the interview room so, if any students needed a referral, they were directed to the appropriate place. It was, however, shocking just how many referrals to support providers were given to staff that came to be interviewed. In fact, more referrals were given to staff than to students, which is significant considering almost twice as many students were interviewed.

Ongoing ethical practice with some of the student and staff participants would consist of the researcher emailing them and meeting them informally in the weeks that followed the interviews. This was partly to make sure they still felt happy about the researcher using the material they had shared and partly to ascertain if they needed any further referrals or support. A number of staff left the interview asking to be reminded of how confidential the interview would remain as they had shared quite sensitive information that could, they believed, get them into trouble. Confidentiality was always confirmed, and staff and students were consulted on borderline data to ascertain if they considered it revealing. Participants were aware that they could withdraw their data at any time. This is consistent with ethical practice and it was written into the consent form.

Interviews represent the primary methodology used in this project. These were supplemented, when appropriate, with data from student support staff questionnaires. However, the methodology extends further than this. A literature review was conducted, as was an analysis of the documentation relating to quality assurance processes, policies and mechanisms at Unitec and nationally.

Summary:

- 1.** The project used a rigorous qualitative research methodology which included a strong ethical framework.
- 2.** A low response-rate from the online questionnaires echoes a low response-rate from online SEQUALs.
- 3.** Paper questionnaires, by contrast, reaped a high response-rate.

3: Theoretical Issues in Evaluation (literature review)

The literature dealing with the issue of the student evaluation of teaching is far too large to document in detail (see: Leckey and Neill, 2001; Marsh and Dunkin, 1997). Hence, this section examines foundational articles and those texts pertinent to this report.

The course experience questionnaire (CEQ)

Although lecturers have been evaluated by students for many decades, the development of the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) is perhaps the beginning of the modern era of student evaluation. The CEQ, partly developed by Paul Ramsden, was a development of work originally carried out at Lancaster University in the UK in the 1980s (Ramsden, 1997). It was the first substantive and standardised version of the student evaluation of teaching by questionnaire. The CEQ instrument, or survey tool, was first tested across Australia in 1989 (Ramsden, 1991). It has since been re-developed in various formats around the world and given a variety of acronyms. Unitec calls its course and lecturer evaluations SEQUAL (Student Evaluation of QUALity).

Ramsden asserts why the student perspective on teaching quality should be paid due consideration:

Because students see a great deal of teaching, they are in an unrivalled position to comment on its quality. Moreover, nonexperts in a subject are uniquely qualified to judge whether the instruction they receive is helping them to learn. The existence of a positive relation between student evaluation and student achievement supports the validity of student ratings.

(Ramsden, 1991:306)

Ramsden brings together findings from his own research and key studies such as: Fraser's (1986), and Biggs' overview of several studies (1990), to suggest that certain specific characteristics of good teaching can be successfully pin-pointed. Further, Ramsden reiterates Marsh's claim that: *'there is an agreement between lecturers and students on the characteristics of good teaching in higher education'* (Ramsden, 1991:305, referencing Marsh, 1987). Ramsden clarifies thus:

Bringing together the findings from these very various studies, we may conclude that there are real differences in teaching quality and that these variations can be measured. Concern for and availability to students; enthusiasm and interest of teachers; clear organisation and goals; feedback on learning; the encouragement of student independence and active learning; an appropriate workload and relevant assessment methods; the provision of a suitably challenging academic environment: these are among the key factors defining 'good teaching' in higher education on which students are able to validly comment.

(Ramsden 1991:307)

Significantly, these characteristics were highlighted by both by student and staff participants in this study as key components of quality teaching:

Ramsden's 7 criteria for effective lecturing	Concern for and availability to students
	Enthusiasm and interest of teachers
	Clear organisation and goals
	Feedback on learning
	Encouragement of student independence and active learning
	An appropriate workload and relevant assessment methods
	Provision of a suitably challenging academic environment

The original 1989 CEQ instrument was extensive, consisting of 30 questions split into sub-categories, and based on the famous 'Likert' scale. The Likert scale is a psychometric scale commonly used in questionnaires, and is the most widely used scale in survey research (Likert, 1932). When responding to a Likert questionnaire item respondents specify their level of agreement to a statement. The first CEQ was, therefore, a quantitative instrument (tick-box). Other more recent incarnations are often a mix of quantitative (tick-box) and qualitative (comment box) methods, and usually smaller, although they can often be inadequately designed. Unitec's SEQUAL,

for example, employs a distortion of Likert's 5 point scale as it does not allow for a mid-response of 'neutral' with three options to 'agree' and two to 'disagree' (see Appendix 4a and 4b). What is important, regardless of methodology, is that the qualitative research into the student evaluation of teaching at Unitec in this USU study generated similar findings to Ramsden's in terms of what students (and lecturers) believe is important to teaching and learning.

Further, the above criteria for the measurement of teaching quality, and that specified in this study (set by students themselves and echoed by lecturers), have been consistently re-endorsed across methodologies (Ramsden's and this project's) across continents (Richardson, 1994; Cohen, 2005) and across decades (Leckey and Neill, 2001; Forrester-Jones, 2003; Harvey and Newton, 2004; Cohen, 2005; Richardson, 2005; Douglas and Douglas, 2006). Hence, change and development in these specific areas of teaching performance should be recommended, and expected, with a high level of confidence.

Quantitative or Qualitative Evaluation?

Some of the more recent literature on evaluation suggests that there are pitfalls when using a quantitative questionnaire methodology as a stand-alone mechanism for improving the student experience. Maureen Tam argues:

Research on quality student experience requires an array of methods, which should include both quantitative and qualitative measures to shed light on the experience per se and the factors that are associated with particular aspects of it.

She later clarifies:

Any measurement of quality and performance evaluation in higher education that falls short of the centrality of students' experience is bound to be peripheral and fail to provide information about how students find the experience and how much they are learning and progressing both intellectually and emotionally throughout their years in university.

(Tam, 2001:53)

Patrick Griffin, et al. (2003) also suggest that evaluation should encompass more of the student experience:

The original CEQ was based on a theory of learning that emphasises the primary forces in the undergraduate experience as located within the classroom setting. However, concentrating analysis on what happens in the classroom fails to account for a significant part of the undergraduate experience. As delivery modes expand and universities increasingly search for improved ways of providing a quality higher education experience, an instrument limited to classroom interactions is increasingly inadequate. If the standard instrument for course assessment is not able to truly measure the student experience across diverse settings, it may be a potential impediment to innovation and distinctiveness.

(Griffin, et. al., 2003:260)

It is clear, then, that more disparately adaptable qualitative methodologies must be utilised in more diverse experiential settings in order to gain a more representative picture of the overall student experience. It should be understood and officially acknowledged that the entire gamut of student experiences in tertiary education (including, in New Zealand, the Māori student experience) come under the umbrella of 'quality' and that they should be periodically assessed.

In a discussion of teaching and learning practice (and in another a Lancaster University project) Rachel Johnson documents the pitfalls of the evaluation questionnaire format in terms of self-reflectivity and professional development:

The SEQ (Student Evaluation Questionnaire) method of evaluation does not allow students and lecturers to discuss, evidence, explain, justify, negotiate, or gain new insights into their own or the others' views, interests, values and assumptions during the process of the evaluative activity. It devalues the subjective quality of personal opinion and experience because it holds subjectivity to be a problem; both parties' implication in the results obtained, or both parties' interests and concerns about the substantive content of a question, about the results obtained or about the use made of them are reduced to a matter of 'potential bias'. The questionnaire format implies that evaluation process is not a reflective, mutual learning experience, nor one in which a student's or lecturer's individual views and reasoning have high value.

(Johnson, 2000:423)

We could take Johnson's argument one step further and suggest that without subjectivity there can be no accountability. Perhaps it is no surprise that it becomes virtually impossible for people with responsibility within educational institutions to in any way 'own' poor teaching practices if the quantitative tools used to record such practices are, by definition, anti-subjective, or against subjectivity. As we know, from simple rules of grammar, without a subject there can be no experience and, more importantly, no action. Light and Cox say this about qualitative methodology:

Although quantitative research is still highly valued, qualitative enquiry, which gives a deeper impression of the experience of an educational programme, has enabled us to appreciate the more complex context of education and understand more about the unintended outcomes as well as the achievement of specific objectives.

(Light and Cox, 2001:197)

They go on to virtually describe this USU study:

Much educational research now gives 'qualitative' accounts of the experience of learning and teaching, using the actual words of the staff and students involved. This has led to a deeper appreciation of the different ways in which students learn and value their different experiences. We are less inclined to talk about students in general and more aware that average ratings may conceal differences which are important in developing better courses and teaching methods.

(Light and Cox, 2001:198)

The case study approach

Light and Cox (2001) describe something called 'illuminative evaluation', which, they say was first piloted by Parlett and Hamilton in the 1970s. Light and Cox describe this method as description and interpretation rather than measurement and prediction, which sits within a qualitative anthropological paradigm:

A central preoccupation is the 'learning milieu'. This represents 'a network or nexus of cultural, social, institutional and psychological variables. These interact in complicated ways to produce within each class or course a unique pattern of circumstances, pressures, customs, opinions and work styles, which suffuse the teaching and learning that occurs there' (Parlett and Hamilton, 1977:14).

(Light and Cox, 2001:198)

This is similar what we now call a ‘case-study’ approach to evaluation. Alan Bryman clarifies the case study approach:

The basic case study entails the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case. As Stake (1995) observes, case study research is concerned with the complexity and particular nature of the case in question.

(Bryman 2004:48)

Cohen et al. also describe the case study approach: ‘A case study is a specific instance that is frequently designed to illustrate a more general principle’. They go on to say:

Case studies can establish cause and effect, indeed one of their strengths is that they observe effects in real contexts, recognising that context is a powerful determinant of both causes and effects (...) Further, contexts are unique and dynamic, hence case studies investigate and report the complex dynamic and unfolding interactions of events, human relationships and other factors in a unique instance.

(Cohen, et. al., 2004:253)

Referencing cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973), they also note that:

Case studies strive to portray ‘what it is like’ to be in a particular situation, to catch the close up reality and ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973) of participants’ lived experiences of, thoughts about and feelings for a situation.

(Cohen, et. al., 2004:254)

A case study approach might be an ideal way to conduct quality evaluations of particular programmes or courses within a tertiary institution. A case study approach may be qualitative or it may mix qualitative methods with quantitative methods of analysis.

The issue of accountability

If research (whether undertaken by institutions themselves, by external bodies, or by students’ associations) is able to pinpoint concerns in any of the ‘good teaching’ areas noted by Ramsden, above, then it should not be insurmountable to have those concerns acknowledged, examined and righted. What is more, students are entitled to expect that if an institution is in the habit of measuring the quality of teaching performance (and, currently, in New Zealand,

it must) then quantifiable and recordable actions should be taken to address concerns, and the effects of those actions reviewed and fed back to students and lecturers.

It seems, therefore, that the quantitative questionnaire approach might not be the best way to produce, within an educational institution, accountability, action, implementation and professional development. Unfortunately this results in a paradox because ‘accountability’ is a primary reason for conducting student evaluations of teaching, as Harvey and Newton note: *‘Accountability has been the dominant underlying rationale for introducing quality evaluation’* (Harvey and Newton, 2004:151). Leckey and Neill also maintain:

Since the mid-1980s the global emphasis on quality, in all aspects of higher education, has led to it becoming the vehicle through which accountability is addressed.

(Leckey and Neill, 2001:19)

The quantitative CEQ instrument championed by Ramsden must, therefore, be called into question in terms of accountability and the importance of subjective experience (for example, personal narratives). Ramsden’s over-arching criteria for the quality of teaching (listed above) have been highlighted over and over again by the majority of student participants in this study as issues of importance to them. Given that these overarching principles are picked up repeatedly by students when asked very general questions, we must ask if it is necessary to relentlessly ‘direct’ students to ‘important criteria’ in evaluation questionnaires. Perhaps leading students towards criteria precludes the opportunity for more imaginative, open-ended, innovative and ‘student-centred’, modes of evaluation to take place.

A student-centred approach

If we accept that the student experience of tertiary education is multi-faceted then we also need to accept that students must be able to give feedback on issues that are important to them. This is also noted by Leckey and Neill: *‘Harvey (1999) suggests that too often questionnaires are based on what managers or teachers think are important to students’* (Leckey and Neill, 2001). They note that Harvey also stresses:

Students must be able to raise issues that are important to them; there must be an assessment of what is important as well as satisfactory; there must be an explicit action cycle with clear structures for delegating responsibility for change and for providing feedback on action to students.

(Leckey and Neill, 2001:25)

Leckey and Neill then go on to clarify something which, at the time of writing, applies to Unitec:

In many instances, institutions collect student feedback but do not always deal with it appropriately. It may not be properly analysed, or it may be analysed but 'becomes lost' in reports with statistics and tables that give little guidance for action and have limited circulation. Furthermore the 'feedback loop' is not closed in that students may not be informed about any actions resulting from their input. Closing the loop is important in terms of total quality management. If students do not see any action resulting from their feedback, they may become sceptical and unwilling to participate.

(Leckey and Neill, 2001:25)

Feedback from students in this study documents their unwillingness to participate in a quality assurance process from which they consistently see no improvement.⁴ These three students had virtually given up hope of a proper evaluation process:

S20: They're a good idea but as soon as you've been here a year and you see that nothing happens, I mean students start thinking like: oh you know here we go again...

S13: It's all good and well me filling this out but it kind of disappears into a little black box and I actually don't ever hear anything else about that.

S21: ...like, now, if I know, as a third year student, I know that nothing much happens with those then why would I want to go and do it anyway? It's kind of a waste of my time.⁵

If accountability is the underlying rationale for conducting quality evaluations of teaching (as Harvey and Newton, 2004, and Leckey and Neill, 2001, argue) and if (as Johnson, 2000, notes) quantitative evaluation side-steps accountability and responsibility because it precludes subjectivity (and hence 'experience' and 'action') then it is

⁴ See Powney (1998) for a discussion of the feedback loop.

⁵ For more quotes about SEQUAL See Chapter 9

clear that the way forward for quality assurance in tertiary education must be through developing qualitative methodologies such as those used in this USU study. Furthermore, if students should be allowed to give feedback on issues that are important to them, and not just issues that institutions think are important, (as Leckey and Neill, 2001, also argue) then they should also be allowed to give feedback through a methodology they prefer. Students prefer giving feedback on teaching through qualitative methodologies. These students cited face to face communication as ideal:

S12: (...) I just want to say that I think this type of thing is good (...) (participant indicates us talking). THIS type of thing. I think that, umm... people and institutions should always be trying to better themselves, you know, asking the students is a good way of doing it.

L: Do you have any ideas about any other ways to evaluate the teaching here?

S21: I think things like actually... like we're doing now, like actually speaking to someone about it.

S35: These interviews (participant indicates us talking), actually face to face, yeah. I think that's more, it's a better way of doing things (...)

L: Why do you think that's better?

S35: You just get to say things that you can't really answer on these (the SEQUALs).

S41: I think it would be really good to have a selection of students in a particular year or cohort on the degree and do like a focus group, because you get more in depth data, you know?

Unitec clearly wants to stand out as an institution which offers its students a high standard of student experience (both academic and cultural) and a high standard of education (through academic achievement and value-added). With the help of USU it is entirely possible for Unitec to excel in the area of quality assurance through a shared approach to evaluating the student experience which is responsive to new initiatives for quality assurance being initiated in 2009.

The next chapter outlines the quality assurance processes Unitec has in place at the time of writing, and the relevant national documentation on quality assurance requirements for TEOs. But the way forward for Unitec is simple. The institution must be prepared to

accept the established wisdom on the student evaluation of teaching recorded here in this chapter and, what is more, be prepared to work together with USU to put it into practice. Indeed, with the sea-change in more teaching-focussed quality assurance and increased accountability required from 2009 onwards by NZQA and ITPQ, at the behest of the TEC, coupled with Unitec's unsatisfactory record of accountability regarding SEQUALs, Unitec needs to make a concerted effort to find the most productive and responsive ways to conduct evaluations.

Summary:

- 1.** Qualitative evaluation methods provide greater flexibility and student-centredness than do quantitative methods.
- 2.** Students should be able to feedback on issues that are important to them using a methodology they prefer.
- 3.** Anonymous quantitative evaluations preclude subjectivity and, therefore, action and accountability.
- 4.** A case-study approach could be a way forward for student-centred evaluations.

4: Quality Assurance at Unitec (snapshot)

National quality assurance mechanisms

The evaluation of quality in New Zealand TEOs is changing dramatically in 2009. In terms of national quality assurance, Unitec is currently measured under QA Standard 1. This is a standard set by NZQA covering TEOs that are not universities.⁶

NZQA is in charge of the quality assessment of all TEOs which are not universities i.e.: Wānanga, Private Training Establishments (PTEs) Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs). Quality assurance in university programmes is the responsibility of the New Zealand Vice Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC), which is in turn monitored by NZUAAU.⁷

NZQA includes the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) against which it must approve all programmes offered by all TEOs, including Unitec. Unitec is currently assessed under 'QA Standard 1' in relation to the following criteria: governance and management; personnel; physical and learning resources; learner information, entry and support; development, delivery and review of programmes; assessment and moderation; notification and reporting on learner achievement; research. The standard also monitors if an institution is achieving its own goals.

The current focus of NZQA assessment is on inputs and compliance to processes and policies. However, the new approach is very much concerned with outputs. In other words, the new approach will ask about how an institution knows whether or not it is making a difference to the experience of students. This is a much more qualitatively-oriented and flexible process than the current more quantitative input-focussed approach. In the current approach there is an assumption that if policies and procedures are being followed then a difference is being made in terms of student outputs (success-as-results). However, NZQA now acknowledges that this might not be the case. NZQA recognises this potential problem and intends to make TEOs comply with a much more rigorous student-centred type of self-assessment.

It is part of NZQA's remit to '*Conduct approval and accreditation of courses leading to degrees and related qualifications*' and to '*Monitor NZQA Approved Degrees and Related Qualifications.*'⁸

⁶ See: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz>

⁷ See: http://www.nzuaau.ac.nz/nzuaau_site/audit/audit.htm

⁸ See: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz>

NZQA also examines and monitors Unitec's human resources policy, its finance policy and other aspects of the institutional framework. However, the bulk of the assessment is carried out on programmes. From 2009 this auditing process will cease and the focus will be on self assessment by a TEO and the external evaluation of their self-assessment.

ITPNZ⁹ is the representative body of the NZQA that deals only with Polytechnics and Institutes of Technology. ITPQ¹⁰ is the quality arm of ITPNZ. Unitec has rejoined ITPNZ and so will be reporting to them for under-graduate provision and to NZQA for post-graduate provision.

As previously mentioned there are new guidelines being introduced by the government in 2009 for both the external and self review of TEOs. These are included in the Government's Tertiary Reforms.¹¹ The new measures have already been trialled in some TEOs. Parliamentary decisions are about to be made on these changes and they will be introduced nationally in 2009 through the Education Amendment Bill.¹² Significantly, the Education Amendment Bill gives new powers to the NZQA regarding quality assurance procedures.

The TEC is the government advisory body which oversees the responsibilities of NZQA and ITPNZ. Without a doubt the emphasis of the tertiary reforms is on increased accountability. Furthermore, the TEC comments on quality assurance and monitoring in terms of a focus on making results of quality analysis public:

There will be greater transparency in the performance of the tertiary education system, and of tertiary education organisations within the system, as the quality of performance information improves and is made more available to students and the public.¹³

NZQA has recently circulated draft documents to enable discussion around the new quality assurance measures. In *'An Evaluative Approach*

⁹ See: <http://www.itpnz.ac.nz>

¹⁰ See: <http://www.itpq.ac.nz>

¹¹ See: <http://www.minedu.govt.nz>

¹² See: The Education [Tertiary Reforms] Amendment Bill <http://www.minedu.govt.nz>

¹³ See: <http://www.tec.govt.nz>

to *Quality Assurance*¹⁴ NZQA highlights a focus on ‘valued outcomes’, meaning an enhanced student experience along with better results achieved through ‘key contributing factors’ such as teaching and learning and more general support for students. Further to a TEO needing a strong Quality Management System (QMS) to provide a reference point for the institution’s standards, the new national quality assurance framework will strengthen the ability of a TEO to make judgements about whether or not their organisational activities are producing quality outcomes for students. According to NZQA a TEO should do this through using a broad range of evaluation methods.

In the pamphlet *‘Strengthening Self-Assessment in your Organisation’* NZQA stresses that TEOs must self-assess in order to enhance *‘organisational improvement and accountability to stakeholders.’*¹⁵ NZQA points out that any judgements to be made about the quality of an institution should be arrived at using a blend of authentic and valid evidential methodologies which, in turn, align with recent published research on evaluation research methodology. NZQA defines evaluation as:

The systematic determination of the merit (quality), worth (value) or significance (importance) of the quality of outcomes for learners and other stakeholders and processes that contribute to this (Scriven, 1991). The evaluative process includes a planned approach to gathering, analysing and synthesising evidence from multiple sources.¹⁶

For institutions such as Unitec the tertiary reforms mean that, in terms of the evaluation of quality, much more emphasis will be placed on the student experience not only through successful outcomes for students gaining qualifications but also around having ‘value-added’ to their lives. There will also have to be an increased focus on making sure teaching practice is of a high standard, for which Unitec’s staff will be made accountable through these new evaluation mechanisms. Such mechanisms will form part of a TEO’s self-assessment. This self-assessment will then be monitored and evaluated through NZQA’s and ITPQ’s external assessment procedures.

¹⁴ See: ‘An Evaluative Approach to Quality Assurance’ www.NZQA.govt.nz March 2008 (draft for trial purposes)

¹⁵ ‘Strengthening Self-Assessment in your Organisation’ www.nzqa.govt.nz March 2008 (draft for trial purposes)

¹⁶ Ibid.

Quality assurance at Unitec

The QMS

Unitec is obliged to have a Quality Management System (QMS).¹⁷ Unitec's QMS summarises the various processes in place which have potential regarding the quality assurance of educational provision at Unitec. The QMS sets out a list of guiding principles. Based on these principles quality assurance responsibilities are then assigned to committees and positions across the institution. The QMS could be seen as the back-bone of the institution's standards for quality performance. In the introduction to the QMS principles it states:

The most important attributes for achieving the institution's mission are reflection, critique and improvement. Thus the principles that drive quality assurance in the totality of a student's learning experience at Unitec are oriented to ensure quality is not reduced to compliance processes, but rather is perceived as a concept and practice of continual improvement.¹⁸

The QMS also lists Unitec's values as:

INTEGRITY, HONESTY, ACCOUNTABILITY, CREATIVITY, INNOVATION, COURAGE, RELEVANCE, CARE, RESPONSIVENESS, RESPECT, CONCERN, EXCELLENCE, FAIRNESS, JUSTICE AND PARTNERSHIP.¹⁹

Unitec's QMS principles cover the areas of: programme design, development and review; programme delivery and assessment; student guidance and support; reporting and recording of student achievement; student and staff research; employee services; resource provision and monitoring and audit.

Under the 'programme delivery and assessment' section Unitec commits to '*critical self-reflection, independent peer review, student evaluation and professional development*' in order to realise continual improvement of programme delivery and assessment. Under the 'student guidance and support' section Unitec promises that '*accessible, caring, ethical and empathetic support and guidance exists for the overall well-being of the student and to support success.*'²⁰

¹⁷ See: H:\Academic Quality Office_Useful Information for Unitec staff\Quality Management System

¹⁸ Ibid. p.4.

¹⁹ Ibid. p.5

²⁰ Ibid. p.4.

The Investment Plan

A consequence of the tertiary reforms is that, instead of having a Charter, Unitec now has to provide the TEC with an Investment Plan covering a period of three years. In 2007 Unitec submitted their investment plan to the TEC for the three year period 2008-2010, using the guidelines set out by the TEC. The Investment Plan contains a three year outlook for the development of Unitec's suite of programmes (academic directions), student recruitment, demographics, growth potential and engagement with the local community.

Unitec's six key principles outlined in The Investment Plan are:

- GROW WITH A PURPOSE
- DEVELOP AN INTEGRATED CAMPUS NETWORK
- DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE ACADEMIC PROFILE
- CONFIRM DIRECTIONS AS A UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
- BUILD A ROBUST PLATFORM FOR DEVELOPMENT
- NEGOTIATE COMPREHENSIVE CAPITAL RESTRUCTURING

In Unitec's 'Real Achievement' leaflet (a summary of Unitec's vision and mission) Unitec promises to:

- 'BE STUDENT CENTRED IN ALL OUR SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES'
- 'MAKE THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING OUR FUNDAMENTAL PRIORITY'

As an overarching and public statement about the standards and priorities of a tertiary institution the presentation of Unitec's vision and mission in outward publications looks promising. However, it is through the more internal and detailed documents of an institution that the real practices and cultures are established.

The Academic Strategy

Unitec's Academic Strategy has gone through some changes in 2008. The overarching outline of the strategy (the vision and mission, as detailed above) is set out within the first three pages and is

²¹ See: H:_Core Information\Investment Plan.

²² See: 'Investing in a Plan: a new system for investing in tertiary education,' TEC, March 2007, and the TEC booklet 'Investment Guidance' 2008-2010.

contained in Unitec's Investment Plan. The subsequent sections, including a 'statement of academic identity' and four 'academic strategy dimensions' have been developed over the past year in consultation with Unitec's Boards of Studies. This part of the Academic Strategy contains perhaps the most promising literature pertaining to standards within the institution. However, there is a troubling dislocation of priorities within the Academic Strategy. The first point in Unitec's 'Mission' states that 'Unitec will be teaching-led and research-informed'. Later, in the second Academic Strategy Dimension on 'Teaching and Research' this laudable and student-centred mission statement is not reiterated. Instead the 'integration' of teaching and research is prioritised as is tertiary provision which is 'distinctive, practice-focused, research informed and inquiry-led.' It is perhaps disappointing to see that where Unitec could make strong student-centred claims about the prioritisation of teaching the institution finds it difficult to commit fully to students' most central need.

The peer mentoring process

Unitec has a Peer Mentor programme, where mentor lecturers assist new 'mentee' lecturers in all aspects of professional development, along with the development of good teaching practice. This system relies on mentors volunteering to help new lecturers. Being mentored is also a voluntary undertaking. Unitec also runs a Peer Group Mentoring programme which is, again, voluntary. This system relies on the mentors and mentees getting together for group meetings to develop best practice and to network. Peer mentoring is an excellent scheme but it is not a 'catch-all' mechanism.

SGIDs (Small Group Instructional Diagnosis)

From time to time Unitec runs SGIDs. This is a voluntary and occasional system involving a focus group of students which is run by an SGID facilitator (a lecturer from another part of Unitec). The students voice their concerns about their course and the facilitator then feeds these concerns back to the lecturer. There are, however, considerable problems with SGIDs from a student perspective. First, the lecturer has to approach the facilitator to have one conducted on their students; the students cannot request one (although one has recently taken place after some students approached USU). Secondly,

there is no officially approved Unitec-wide set of standards set in policy to measure the outcomes of SGID evaluations against. Thirdly, feedback from the SGID goes to the lecturer and no report is officially sent to the students about any changes or action, neither is there a review system for SGIDs. It is not a stretch to assert that this system could be disempowering for students. Even though students may welcome the discussion, closing the feedback loop to students on actions taken is not currently part of the SGID process. The SGID process, whilst well-intentioned, and certainly not without great potential, is a disappointing case study in how vaguely Unitec has been known to approach the evaluation of quality.

Policies and procedures

Unitec's range of internal policies can also be considered as mechanisms with the potential for assuring quality within the institution. There are two kinds of policies at Unitec: academic policies and corporate policies. Corporate policies cover areas such as finance, the institutional infrastructure, codes of conduct and also human resources areas such as staff performance, development, review and management.²³

Academic policies cover areas such as programme regulations and review, the Academic Strategy, PBRF regulations and strategies, research, the Academic Statute, the policy for internal academic audit (piloted in 2008), practice-based learning, external monitoring, moderation, SEQUAL (Student Evaluation of teaching QUALity) and admission and graduation.²⁴

Some of Unitec's academic and corporate policies are noted below. All of these documents have a potential relationship to quality assurance in Unitec:²⁵

- INTERNAL ACADEMIC AUDIT POLICY
- PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES (HR8)
- ACADEMIC STAFF DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES (HR14)

²³ See: myUnitec Staff Portal.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

- ACADEMIC WORKLOAD POLICY (HR22)
- STAFF CONTRACTS AND POSITION DESCRIPTIONS
- STUDENT EVALUATION OF COURSES AND LECTURERS (SEQUAL)
- UNITEC SENIOR ACADEMIC STAFF APPOINTMENTS AND PROMOTION POLICY (HR2)
- PLANNING YOUR PERFORMANCE AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AT UNITEC (FOR STAFF)
- DEFINING AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE AT UNITEC (FOR MANAGERS)
- A MĀORI DIMENSION IN UNITEC PROGRAMMES

Policies which are written specifically for students, which also encompass quality assurance at Unitec are as follows: ²⁶

- STUDENT COMPLAINTS POLICY
- STUDENT SERVICES CHARTER
- GENERAL DISCIPLINARY STATUTE

At the time of writing there is no Assessment Policy at Unitec. USU believes that an Assessment Policy should be formulated by Unitec through consultation with USU.

The Student Satisfaction Survey

Another document which is important to a consideration of quality assurance at Unitec is the annual Student Satisfaction Survey.²⁷ It is sent out to all enrolled students at Unitec. As well as using quantitative rating scales this survey does provide an opportunity for students to write comments in boxes about, for example, issues they have with their programmes. Student satisfaction is measured, for most of the survey, on a 5 point psychometric scale ranging from 'very dissatisfied' (1), through a middle 'neutral' option (3), to 'very satisfied' (5). Aspects measured include student support (including The Students' Association), orientation, the international student experience, the student experience generally, and programme experience.

Whilst the moves being made by TEC and NZQA and ITPNZ are positive in terms of student experience, there are problems with Unitec's own quality management systems. The Student Satisfaction

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ : H:\Planning\Enterprise Reports\Student Satisfaction.

Survey is conducted with a response rate of less than one third of the eligible population. This is not an unreasonable response rate, but the information gathered is not used in a structured way by Unitec. Regrettably, therefore, the Student Satisfaction Survey sits around from year to year being compared quietly with different versions of itself. This is the case with many policies at Unitec, which have become little more than words on paper.

Quality assurance, evaluation and Māori students

Whilst Unitec has a policy whereby a Māori dimension must be included in all programmes ('A Māori Dimension in Unitec Programmes') and whilst it also has its own specific partnership document ('Te Noho Kōtahitanga') there is currently no way to evaluate to what extent a Māori dimension exists in programmes across Unitec, how students experience that Māori dimension, and what the Māori student experience at Unitec actually is. Wherever an intention to practice in specific ways is indicated through documentation, so there also needs to be in place a system for the evaluation of those practices. A nurturing of the Māori student experience needs to extend beyond the scope of Maia because the two documents mentioned above do not refer to practices only within Maia, they are applicable across the institution as a whole.

In the 2006 Student Satisfaction Survey there is no evaluation of the Māori student experience. Maia (the Māori Development Centre at Unitec) is mentioned briefly in the report under the section on Student Services where it states: 'Maia and Te Tari Awhina received positive comments.'²⁸ [sic]²⁹ Although approximately 6% of respondents in the Student Satisfaction Survey were Māori no opportunity was taken to ask a separate question about their specific experience as Māori students.

Te Noho Kōtahitanga is a Unitec-specific document which endorses the spirit of partnership between Māori and Pākehā.³⁰ However this document has little status in Unitec apart from as a guiding principle. In this document it states: 'Unitec affirms that a spirit of generosity

²⁸ Unitec's 2006 Student Satisfaction Survey, p.66..

²⁹ 'Sic' is Latin for "thus", "so", "as such", or "just as that". In writing it is placed within square brackets and usually italicised—[sic]—to indicate that an incorrect or unusual spelling, phrase, punctuation, and/or other preceding quoted material has been reproduced verbatim from the quoted original and is not a transcription error.

³⁰ See myUnitec Staff Portal.

and co-operation will guide all its actions' and promotes 'Maori and Pakeha working together within Unitec.'[sic] Significantly macrons for 'Māori', 'Kōtahitanga' and 'Pākehā' are missing from this document. Te Noho Kōtahitanga is a document which relies on voluntary good practice. It is a document of intention. However, this means that the principles of partnership within it may sometimes be ignored. This document needs to become more fully experienced in all kinds of practices across Unitec, particularly in relation to quality assurance procedures.

Currently Unitec only has three references to Māori in its suite of policies. One of these policies is the 'Equal Employment Opportunities Policy and Plan',³¹ which is a corporate human resources policy. In this policy there is a section outlining the enhancement of the profile and status of Māori throughout Unitec, where it states: 'Unitec also recognises the need to increase the profile of Maori both in terms of the numbers of Maori staff and Maori representation on key decision making bodies'[sic]. This plan effectively ran out in 2001 and was never updated. Out of twenty-two staff members interviewed for this study, two were not on contracts, they were employed on a casual basis. Significantly, both of those lecturers were Māori women. Perhaps this shows just how seriously Unitec takes its Te Noho Kōtahitanga responsibilities.

Another academic policy that relates to Māori is entitled: 'A Maori Dimension in Unitec Programmes'³² [sic]. In this policy it states:

The Partnership between Unitec and tangata whenua is based on the Treaty of Waitangi and expresses Unitec's commitment to improve Maori participation and success and to incorporating a Maori dimension in all Unitec programmes.[sic]

Maia keeps records of the work Māori academic advisors have done with various programme committees regarding a Māori dimension. However Maia does not have figures relating to what proportion of programmes follow this directive, nor if the inclusion of a Māori dimension at programme development level is evaluated as part of the teaching content or style of that programme. It must be argued that, although Maia and Māori staff at Unitec are the guardians of Māori knowledge, the responsibility for evaluating participation in the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (1840) must be Unitec-wide

³¹ Ibid

³² Ibid

and, furthermore, built into all of Unitec's quality assurance and evaluation processes.

With regard to the Māori student experience, there is but one reference to Māori in Unitec's student policies. In the Student Complaints Policy³³ students are advised that they may seek the assistance of the Pae Arahi in order to make sure their complaint is dealt 'in accordance with tikanga Maori.'[sic] It seems a shame, however, that the only real reference to Māori student experience is contained within a document about making a complaint. This produces a negative relationship between Māori and the student experience.

The Ministry of Education's Annual Report on Māori Education, 2006/07, refers to the study: 'Te Whai i Ngā Taumata Atakura, 2007'. The Ministry states that the study found: 'a key aspect for Māori learners was likely to be the extent to which Māori students were able to maintain their cultural identity, across social and support networks outside of the institution and feel their experiences were valued within the learning context.'³⁴ Unitec's own partnership document Te Noho Kōtahitanga stresses that 'Unitec values each partner's heritage and customs, current needs and future aspirations. Māori and Pākehā working together within Unitec.'

New Zealand is legally bound to foster and develop a bi-cultural society through the principles set out in The Treaty of Waitangi (1840). New Zealand's status as a bi-cultural society is secured in legislation by the Treaty of Waitangi Act (1975) and in various other contexts where the principles of the original Treaty of Waitangi are legally upheld. Hence it is important for Unitec to consider carefully its approach to quality assurance in order to encompass the experience of Māori students. The importance of the Māori student experience should be a concern for every part of Unitec, consistent with the values of partnership, and not for Maia alone. Therefore, the evaluation of the Māori student experience should be included in all evaluation mechanisms across the institution.

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Ngā Haeata Mātauranga - Annual Report on Māori Education, 2006/07, The Ministry of Education, p.130.

The SEQUAL process

Unitec's SEQUAL process is highly problematic. No courses with fewer than ten students and no courses which are less than forty credits in value (short courses) are ever evaluated for quality. Once SEQUAL reports are made available to lecturers and managers it is often unclear how they are used, and the feedback loop is rarely closed for the students who fill them out.³⁵ In 2003 the NZQA audit of Unitec's SEQUAL evaluations was critical on the issue of feedback to students. They made a recommendation to Unitec to: 'review the processes for providing feedback to students and staff from SEQUAL and other forms of evaluation used.' This study clearly shows that feedback to students happens only very rarely, and not through any systematic means as Unitec promise on p.156 of their 2006 self-study document:³⁶ 'The four main aims of SEQUAL are: to systematically increase feedback to students; to concentrate on the improvement of student learning and the quality of teaching in balance with the accountability for evaluation; to encourage course teams to reflect on information gained and discuss results with colleagues, to improve course delivery; to provide an institution-wide evaluation system that is known for its validity and reliability.'

The SEQUAL course and lecturer evaluation surveys are not conducted consistently enough on courses, year after year, for any judgements to be made about whether or not a course, or lecturer, has improved. As they are currently only conducted every three years, no year-to-year comparisons can be made about courses or lecturers (unless specific SEQUALs are requested).

Furthermore, even though the SEQUAL teaching evaluation forms are headed 'Standard Teaching Evaluation'³⁷ there exists no over-arching standard, as a reference point containing a set of indicators relating to quality, against which SEQUALs can be measured. Therefore, if SEQUALs cannot be measured against a standard with key indicators, they should not be measured against themselves or each other.

This business studies lecturer succinctly points out the lack of standards at Unitec against which information gathered in SEQUALs may be measured:

³⁵ See Chapter 9 for student quotes about the lack of feedback from SEQUALs

³⁶ See: H:\Academic Quality Office\Audit_AQO only\2006\NZQA contact\2006_Audit_Self-Study_FINALfor NZQA.doc, p.18.

³⁷ See Appendix 4a.

6:...where you've got bad performance in any organisation, in any employee situation, that person should be told that they don't meet standards. Unfortunately in the academic world standards don't seem to be... I mean, I love this word here (at the top of the SEQUAL form) 'Standard Teaching Evaluation' you know... but yet there are no 'standards'.

Without a set of standards, or indicators pertaining to quality, measuring improvement becomes impossible.

It is reasonable to assert that Unitec's quality assurance mechanisms are, at the moment, relatively static. In the written documents analysed in this study there is little evidence of a 'loop' of accountability involving, for example: responsibility, action, implementation, measurement and review. Although, paradoxically, accountability processes are written into the 'code of conduct' which accompanies the SEQUAL policy. In the SEQUAL code of conduct it states: *'Staff should ensure that feedback on SEQUAL course evaluations, and details of course improvements are given to students.'* It is unclear, however, which 'students' are to be provided with the results. Even though any improvements made as a result of SEQUALs can be, and sometimes are, included in course information for the next student cohort of a particular course (the Unitec equivalent of a course outline is called 'myCoursedetails' and is accessed through Blackboard), no student in this study referred to such 'feedback'. This is because, of course, they had no access to the information after they had finished the course (or if they did, they didn't know it was there), and because, in effect, this is 'feed-forward', rather than 'feed-back'. The results of evaluation need to be fed back to the participants of an evaluation.

What is evaluation?

Evaluation (of quality, value-added or anything else) needs to be done for a reason and it needs to be done well. Doing evaluation well involves doing something with the results which is meaningful to the people involved and which improves a situation.³⁸ One of the key ethical principles of research is that it should be carried out in order to improve an existing situation. Because Unitec's SEQUAL evaluations involve a power relationship between students and staff and between staff and their managers, the ethics of how

³⁸ See 'Operational Standard for Ethics Committees' Ministry of Health 2006, where it states the research must have the potential to contribute to 'improved outcomes' (p.13.)

the evaluations are conducted must be considered, especially if we examine this quote from a student who admits to skewing the forms:

S39: Like, some teachers do not have these, do not meet these points. Like, some teachers do not encourage me to study. But for the sake of it I put: agree. You know?

L: Why do you do that, do you think?

S39: I just don't want to be an outcast. I just don't want to... if everyone agrees... I don't want to be the only one that disagrees.

The experience of some lecturers shows that there is a need for an ethical framework for evaluations:

4: I saw somebody who was completely destroyed by a SEQUAL.

L: In what way?

4: Ah, well, she sobbed and wanted to leave.

L: Leave the job?

4: Yes, and has now left the job.

Doing a sloppy job of evaluation has further ramifications than just ending up with inadequate or inconclusive data. People's feelings about evaluation processes must be paramount in the design of evaluation tools and in the procedures for collecting, utilising, and distributing results.

Completing the feedback loop of evaluation to participants and affected parties is one mechanism that needs to work properly and sensitively. It should involve feeding back a report on specific changes that have been introduced as a direct result of the evaluation process to all participants involved in the evaluation and implicated by it. Before the feedback loop can be closed a selection of procedures should occur. Within an institution this may mean making recommendations and having them approved by a senior management team. After any recommendations for change are approved there needs to be a successful implementation of these recommendations through a strong action plan.

An action plan should work through the principle of accountability. It should identify clear goals and roles and responsibilities for key personnel with consequences, timelines and milestones. Following

this there should be a measurement of the action that has been taken against the pre-existing situation in order to judge what changes have occurred. This should take the form of a review of the process of evaluation and its effects involving a direct comparison between the pre-existing situation and the new situation against pre-established criteria or indicators; in other words: a set of standards. These pre-existing indicators for judging improvement must be written up and agreed upon before the evaluation begins. Although general feedback on the process can occur at any stage, the 'feedback loop' can only be closed properly after improvement is made or changes occur. Therefore, neither is the feedback loop in itself a goal, it is, rather, a milestone (or incentive) which marks the measurable improvement of a situation. The steps in an evaluation should look something like this:

- 1** Existing situation/reason for evaluating
- 2** Scoping
- 3** Evaluation (using a range of methods)
- 4** Findings and analysis
- 5** Report and recommendations
- 6** Action plan
- 7** Implementation
- 8** Review and measurement
- 9** Judgements
- 10** Close feedback loop

It is important to understand that evaluation (of quality or value-added or anything else) is also, in itself, not a goal. Neither is evaluation a person with the ability to act. Evaluation is a means to an end; a process conducted by people, with people in mind. Poor evaluation ends up being its own goal because it is not owned by anybody. If there is no framework for action and review involving responsible and accountable people within an institution the results of evaluation will rot inside a stagnant system.

USU and quality assurance

USU currently has a limited range of quality assurance mechanisms. The USU Advocate deals with student complaints, appeals and aspects of policy (including taking part in a working party conducting annual rewrites of Unitec's Academic Statute). The Education Coordinator also deals with student complaints. However, rather than dealing with individual student matters (which are usually handled by the USU Advocate) the Education Coordinator will more often deal with general complaints about courses and programmes. The Advocate and Education Coordinator will occasionally work together on complaints. The Education Coordinator also consults with student representatives about the quality of teaching, conducts research into teaching quality at Unitec and, as a member of most of Unitec's academic committees, actively addresses issues on quality as they arise in committee agendas and through working parties. USU also provides a range of services to students and, therefore, conducts an annual survey review using both quantitative psychometric scales and qualitative comment boxes.³⁹

The relationship between USU and Unitec has many levels. Unitec contracts USU to provide certain services to students. USU also receives a significant amount of its funding from its student fee. Because the two organisations are inextricably linked through students it seems expedient that they work together in productive ways towards promoting, enhancing, measuring and reviewing the quality of teaching and learning at Unitec.

The recommendations in this report are the first step towards generating a collaboration of forces with an incentive to improve the student experience of teaching and learning at Unitec. USU wishes to build a strong platform for assessing the quality of teaching and learning at Unitec. USU's quality assurance mechanisms will be put in place in the hope of securing a professional quality-based dialogue with Unitec which will undoubtedly benefit students.

³⁹ Also see USU's 'Education Policy' and USU's 'Ethics Policy for Educational Research'.

Summary:

1. ITPNZ-Q's guidelines for TEO self-assessments from 2009 onwards will require a blend of qualitative and quantitative evaluation methodologies.
2. Unitecs values and mission statements are strong and positive sentiments which need to be more firmly cemented in evaluation practices and policies.
3. The Māori student experience of the Māori dimension on programmes is not currently evaluated across Unitec.
4. USU desire to work together with Unitec regarding audits and evaluations.
5. SEQUAL is fed forward currently and not fed back to students.
6. An example of a good evaluation schedule is as follows:

- 1 Existing situation/reason for evaluating
- 2 Scoping
- 3 Evaluation (using a range of methods)
- 4 Findings and analysis
- 5 Report and recommendations
- 6 Action plan
- 7 Implementation
- 8 Review and measurement
- 9 Judgements
- 10 Close feedback loop

PART II:

The Student Experience of Teaching and Learning

Chapter Five		The Whole Learning Experience	53
		<i>Summary</i>	59
Chapter Six		Assessment Anxiety	60
		<i>Summary</i>	66
Chapter Seven		The Māori Student Experience	67
		<i>Summary</i>	69
Chapter Eight		Effective Lecturing	71
		<i>Summary</i>	73
Chapter Nine		The Evaluation of Teaching	75
		<i>Summary</i>	85
Chapter Ten		Future Directions	87

5. The Whole Learning Experience

‘Experience’

The previous chapter examined the ways in which the evaluation of tertiary education is changing to incorporate a greater focus on the general experience of students. This is important because the way students experience education can affect their whole lives. Significantly Ramsden’s initial evaluation tool pioneered in the 1980s was called the ‘Course Experience Questionnaire’. Experience must therefore be accepted as a primary site for the measurement of all aspects of education. Experience is not only the way we feel and know things, it is also how we learn - *through experience*.

Positive and negatives

At the beginning of the interviews students were asked to speak about their positive learning experiences since being at Unitec. Importantly, students were able to identify good teaching practices easily and articulately:

S22: I think some of the best learning for me has been when there’s been real engagement from the teachers, there’s been humour and umm... sort of that real interaction. Some lecturers I think have a real interest in what they’re actually giving out to their students, whereas others stand up there and drone and they’re not sort of engaging, I don’t think, on a personal level with their students, so... yeah, for me... those lecturers who use humour, who use real life examples instead of just like throwing all this academic stuff at you and putting it into a practical sense. That’s made it easier for me to feel engaged.

S12: Well... we had XXXX as a lecturer... in one paper, in one topic in particular. She was really good. She was great because she was really into what she was teaching. I mean she’s probably a crazy woman but she’s really, really like really passionate about what she was talking about so... it was good... she was never apathetic about anything so if you asked her a question she would always give you some kind of answer, or find some kind of answer. She never said: ‘oh don’t worry about that’ or ‘we won’t look into that’ and... (...) She was my favourite lecturer.

Students favoured Unitec’s approach to work experience as a positive element of their education, particularly in the School of Architecture:

S9: There’s one really good thing about the Architecture School at Unitec compared the other ones, the other two in New Zealand, is that Unitec does the whole compulsory work experience thing. (...) I think, personally, that the school of architecture is the best one in

New Zealand at the moment, but they've secretly kind of quietly been building up and Auckland - if you talk to a lot of architects they'd say they prefer Unitec grads over Auckland grads just because we have that more practical nature and the work experience component.

Unitec prides itself on 'real world learning'. Clearly students appreciate this when it works well. However, Unitec must be aware of the special kinds of evaluation that need to take place with regard to the practical components of programmes.

Unitec's Learning Support Centre, Te Tari Āwhina, also featured prominently in students' positive learning experiences:

S21: I have used Te Tari Āwhina, and I did for my (paper), I saw (TTA tutor) and I found that (their) tutorials were a major factor in me passing that paper.

In a climate where teaching practice will be monitored much more closely by external funding agencies Unitec needs to make sure that lecturer skills across the whole institution are up to the standard of the skills offered by specialist staff in Te Tari Āwhina, and other centres which focus on learning support, such as Maia.

Students also described more negative learning experiences. In their descriptions of bad learning experiences they often mentioned poor teaching practices showing, once again, that students are excellent at understanding and recognising teaching standards. These three students describe the experience of being made to feel stupid by their lecturers:

S22: (...) She was quite dismissive, if you didn't put it in her words, sometimes you'd feel like you were kind of shot down, like you're treated like you're dumb, but you'd just be using slightly different language. And I think a lot of students felt like that because (...) they didn't feel validated with their questioning or their language style and stuff like that.

S11: (...) ...they talk in ways you just don't understand, and they're not very open to what you're trying to... if you're asking them a question, for instance, they'll sort of make you know that you're not very smart and then they won't answer the question they tell you to go read a book or something.

L: How do they make you feel that you're not very smart, what do they say?

S11: Like they'll laugh at your question, as if, like, that's a bit of a dumb question.

L: How does that make you feel?

S11: Ah, you feel a bit stupid... you sort of don't really ask questions again I guess.

(Pasifika student)

S19: (...) I wanted to ask him questions, he was kind of a bit impatient with me, and that wasn't so good. (...) But I mean maybe that's due to me not being smart in that area.

L: Did you pass the course? (...)

S19: Yeah I scraped in and I tried my best. But, yeah, he was just a little bit impatient with me...but maybe I was particularly stupid, I don't know.

The self confidence of students was a factor highlighted by student support staff in questionnaires. In answer to the question: ***'In your view what are the main issues students face which adversely affect their learning?'*** this staff member wrote: *'Pressure/problems in their personal life, i.e. lack of support, relationship difficulties, anxiety, self-doubt, lack of confidence.'* Issues around self confidence, however, are amongst the easiest to rectify in a teaching and learning situation if a lecturer is aware of their students' needs and requirements. Other students made more general remarks regarding their negative experiences of the teaching at Unitec:

S3: (...) He's got no structure. When you get an assignment it's very vague. (...) He's got to be the worst lecturer I've ever had. And he also has no control over the class. (...) I know other students have complained about him too but he's still teaching.

S13: (...) What I've tended to find would happen there: we'd start our meeting at 11 o'clock, at eleven thirty five she'd sort of stroll in with a coffee in hand or something like that. To me that's just not tolerable in any way whatsoever. So I had a lot of issues around professionalism.

S25: Some of the lecturers need a bit of a kick up the butt in getting themselves prepared. There are certain lecturers who literally come to class with nothing prepared, nothing ready to go, and no notes, no... nothing to hand out to support their learning.

This next student provided the title for this USU report:

L: (...) Some teachers don't have teaching training...

S39: True?!

L: Yeah. Some of them used to be school teachers or they've got qualifications in teaching, but a lot of them don't have. Do you think some kind of teaching training qualification should be compulsory for lecturers?

S39: Yeah! Because if they can't teach, we don't learn. We don't learn, we fail. We fail, we've wasted our cash. International students pay 15 grand a year. 7.5 for one semester, to get their diploma. If you give us poor quality lecturers, we don't learn a single thing. For one - the lecturer I'm talking about - she can't do her thing, eh. But nevertheless we still pass, but... that class is more of like - self study. We go there, we waste our time in class, we go home, we study. Yeah. (...) So I reckon Unitec should have a certain benchmark for the quality of the lecturers, before they employ them or something. So that - we pay for what we should get, you know? More bang for buck, you know?

L: More bang?

S39: That's what we say. We pay one dollar, we get one dollar's worth, you know - more bang for your buck. B-U-C-K - Buck: cash.

(International student)

Staff participants were asked if they were aware of any poor teaching practices at Unitec. This could be seen as a staff question broadly equivalent to the one asked of students about their worst learning experiences. This was asked in order to ascertain if the same practices recurred in answers from both groups. If so, this would indicate that students were perfectly capable of recognising poor teaching practices, and that students and lecturers are in broad agreement about teaching standards. It seemed clear that they were:⁴⁰

15: (...) I've sat in on some teachers teaching and umm... been aghast at their teaching style.

L: What kinds of things?

15: For three hours, sat on a chair like this - all spread out, open, and just getting the students to talk and it not related at all to the teaching timetable or what it's supposed to be and then 15 minutes before the lesson's finishing, said: 'right then we ought to get on with such and such, and... oh we've run out of time so, right, you know what you've got to do, you've got to study about that and that's that.'

5: I've heard, even in other schools, of teachers basically saying: 'I don't want to be doing this. I want to be doing research... I see myself as a researcher, not as a teacher.' I mean the students don't want to hear that. That's not what they're paying for.

⁴⁰ See Volume 2 for more student and staff views on poor teaching practices at Unitec.

21: (...) I am aware of teachers who are not well prepared and spend a lot of time talking about themselves.

There is much that Unitec can do to mitigate such negative student learning experiences. The recommendations in this report are aimed at addressing some of these problems and at making the teaching at Unitec more rigorous in terms of, for example, being organised, engaged and well prepared.

Issues around group work

Group work dynamics proved to be an issue for students. This Chinese International student had a host of negative experiences in terms of interaction with lecturers. The student also struggled with the classroom dynamics.

S17: It's a cultural problem, well when you want to make a friend I think some of the foreigners – it's not easy to make friends because of spoken English, with our problems and the culture difference, so... I met some very kindly friends but actually when we group and need to do assignment it's hard to find people... like a foreigner... like English is their own language, to be grouped with us. It's difficult.

L: So how could the lecturer make that better?

S17: Well, umm... at the moment no... they couldn't do anything, they couldn't force them to group with us...

L: Why do you think that is, that that happens?

S17: Umm... cultural problems. (...)

L: How does that make you feel?

S17: Well, umm... sad sometimes, yeah because sometimes it's just only me that needs to find a group but every group don't accept me. (...) It's not always happens but, sometimes, yeah.

L: That must be upsetting.

S17: Yeah, that's right, and I have to ask the lecturer to arrange me to a group.

(International student)

Problems with group work in classes, particularly in relation to classes containing international students with English as a second language, was a recurring theme for students. It is clear from the story told above that some lecturers may benefit from training in group work facilitation skills so that international students do not have to feel sad and lonely at being left out of groups.

Students learn better in tutorials

Students generally felt that they were better able to learn in tutorials rather than in lectures:

S19: (...) I also think it's quite important that they don't just stand there and talk talk talk – they ask students questions. I know normally nobody ever hardly answers but if they make people talk that's good. And, yeah, encouraging people to do group work in the class.

S4: We had tutorials last semester before our last exams that were really good because they went over what we'd done at the start of half-way through the year, and just totally refreshed lots of things where you'd be reading it but you'd be kind of like: 'oh, I'm just reading it' but then... kind of like a repeat or a refresher on older subjects...

In times to come the staff:student ratio at Unitec will increase to fall in to line with other TEOs. It will be important for Unitec to tailor students preferred methods of teaching to these changes. It became clear through this research that students were sitting in lectures of two and three hours long for much of the time, and that they began to 'switch off' very early on. The students interviewed for this study overwhelmingly preferred being taught in tutorials and more interactively rather than through a lecture where they were often just 'talked at'. Perhaps a more appropriate model might be one where students attend, at most, a one hour lecture with lecturers taking rolling tutorials from that lecture.

Summary:

- 1.** The student experience as a whole must be evaluated.
- 2.** Students appreciate 'real world learning' when it is done well.
- 3.** Some students experienced being made to feel stupid by lecturers.
- 4.** Staff echoed the students' concerns around teaching and learning practices.
- 5.** Group work activities are stressful for students, especially EAL students.
- 6.** Students believe they learn better in a tutorial situation, where there is real interaction.

6. Assessment Anxiety

Probably the most important and most often occurring issue in terms of negative learning experiences was the level of anxiety students had over assessments, including the issue of getting feedback on their assignments:

S21: When they say they're going to follow the marking schedule they should follow the marking schedule, they don't have hidden agendas, that they're like: oh we also thought that you should do this, because sometimes if you get a marking schedule you're trying to follow it, you don't want to go off on a totally different tangent, because you're like: well I'm not going to get marks for this anyway, then it turns out that, hang on, that tangent was what they wanted and you had no idea so you're trying to do the work and you're playing a guessing game with yourself.

S22: I think all lecturers should use a marking criteria form, but they don't. (...) I think a lot of the lecturers are really slack in the marking process, just kind of like: oh shit, don't want to do it but it's part of their job. They'll turn up to class but they don't want to do the after stuff, and it's the after stuff that we learn from, so I think we've been kind of ripped off.

Later the same student says:

S22: I often wonder if the marking should be blind marking, just with the student number... But we put our name, email address, phone numbers and one lecturer, we asked him about this and he said: 'absolutely I have a preconceived idea on what a student's abilities are and I mark them on that basis.'

Assessment anxiety was particularly high amongst international students. They sometimes found assessments particularly stressful because of negative classroom dynamics. This domestic Chinese student points out the problem quite expertly:

S34: I can speak English, that's fine, I can relate easily with other kiwi students but I know of other students who just keep to themselves because they don't understand much of English, they feel comfortable with their own kind, so whereas the signal that they give to the kiwi students was completely opposite – the kiwi students were thinking they were being arrogant, not wanting to mingle, but it's the complete opposite.(...) Maybe partly they feel they don't understand the Chinese that much they just feel uncomfortable for them to be in their group, it delays them in their assignment if it's teamwork and they're quite frustrated.

L: But they don't see the positives or the benefits.

S34: That's the thing, you see...

(Chinese domestic student)

The experience of this Chinese international student resonates powerfully with the message from the domestic Chinese student above:

S17: Lots of students are Chinese and one of the students... this is a real situation... did his assignment very hard but he got very low marks, and he came to complain with the lecturer and he need the lecturer to re-mark his assignment and he told the lecturer: 'I did very hard work and hard job and I don't think this mark is reasonable and if you insist on giving me this mark and you can ask the other lecturer to mark my assignment; if the other lecturer just give me the same scores and I will accept the scores' but the (...) lecturer complained to the student and said: 'oh this part is not very good, and this part is not very good' and so we have got our thoughts, opinions, about this lecturer: you do your assignment and whatever you get is the mark and you do not complain with the lecturer and the lecturer will let you pass, if you bother the lecturer the lecturer will not let you pass and will get trouble with you – the lecturer. (...) That's the problems here of teaching, sometimes, sort of like responsibility of teaching.

L: What would be the responsibility there – in this situation?

S17: The lecturer is quite... from our view the lecturer does not have responsibility for the teaching because the lecturer let it pass and even some students did the work, the hard job, so they give all the class the same marks. It's real.

L: So you think they're not taking their responsibility seriously enough?

S17: Yeah, that's right, yeah. I tell you (...) – the lecturer, I'm not going to mention the name, but, in my course, whenever you do a hard job or not, you will get the same marks, the whole class the same marks: 75. The same marks about your assignment, every assignment, we have got at the moment, just the last semester, we have got two assignments and one mid-semester test, well... the two assignments - everyone got the same.

L: Every single person got the same grade?

S17: Yes, that's right, very ridiculous.

Again the experience of staff echoed that of the students. This academic staff member had a major issue with the fact that assessment requirements put too much pressure on undergraduate students by loading them up with giant research projects:

19: All this practice based learning and research based learning, all this kind of thing, you know, where undergraduate students are basically required to write a thesis, you know... first year students are required to do interviews in a research project and this kind of thing, and I just think: what's wrong with writing an essay? (...)

L: What do they think is wrong with writing an essay? (...)

19: People think it's disconnected from real world learning and um... that it's not, you know, that it's better to write like a business report or something like that rather than to do the kinds of activities that an essay involves.

L: And what do you think is lost in all these new methods of learning?

19: Well I think people are being asked to be critical before they've actually gotten any training or basis in a subject, and they're being asked to be independent scholars before they've got... before they've been fully inducted into the discipline and the rules of thinking in the discipline, and that critical thinking involves application of judgement and prior knowledge but if nobody spends time with you to build up your prior knowledge in order for you to be an evaluative critical thinker, capable of making judgements, then it's just, you know, kind of making people jump through all kinds of hoops that make no... that aren't necessarily going to make sense to them and don't necessarily build a strong foundation for critical thinking in the future.(...) ...for example, you know, undergraduate students writing theses, writing...

L: A dissertation of how long?

19: Oh like a substantial dissertation with chapters.

L: 10,000 words?

19: 20,000 words. (...) With chapters, interviews, a literature review a methodology, chapters. (...) I just think it's madness, you know? It's hard enough having to do it as a masters and PhD student (...) but it seems to be the thing that's required now.

A lecturer working in a student support centre also echoed the students' assessment anxiety:

2: The absolute number 1 thing that students struggle with is: understanding the assignment question. That is the number 1 thing that students come to see me for. (...) And it usually involves either the question... I have to confess, some of the assignment questions I've seen are absolutely shocking. Whoever's writing them doesn't know how to write assignment questions. They're very vague... they... you kind of get two sorts. There's either the very vague, like, one sentence thing: 'discuss the blah blah...' you know, and it's so open that it's too open, you know. There's so many possible ways you could take that. It's just too broad. And then there's the ones like... that have... and here's an example... *24 key instructions in them!*

It seems that where assessment issues are a major area of stress and anxiety for all students, for international students this stress and anxiety is considerably heightened. It is no surprise that common student problems are exacerbated for students who have English as a second language. Perhaps it is assumed that lecturers who are employed to teach in tertiary institutions know how to set reasonable assessments, and how to grade and moderate professionally. As this study clearly shows, there are some excellent lecturers at Unitec who act professionally around assessments. Clearly, though, this is not always the case. Perhaps Unitec needs to consider setting up a formal schedule of assessment training for lecturers.

It is not easy sometimes for lecturers to keep up with good practice. In-house training opportunities are often not taken up. However, there is certainly a balance which needs to be ascertained when setting assignments, to make sure enough information is given, but not so much as to be overwhelming for students. Perhaps the best way forward might be for Unitec to issue guidelines as standard to all lecturing staff about best practice when setting different kinds of assessments.

Students want feedback on assignments (on time)

As well as experiencing anxiety over assessments, this study shows that students often got little or no feedback on their assignments and some had to wait months, if not years, to receive their assignments back, if they got them back at all:

L: What about assignments – are you getting those back in a timely fashion?

S22: No.

L: Tell me about how long it takes.

S22: Now what paper was it last year, I think we waited 12 weeks for an assignment to come back.

L: Have you ever had a report back from one of your assignments?

S10: I must have.... yeah, maybe back in the early days... like my first ones... I did, I got them back in my first year... umm... but I'd say probably only about two... and, umm... I'm not silly I get... if I put the work in I get a decent mark but I don't know where... I mean, I know what I think I'm good at and bad at but I don't know if that's what they think I'm good at and bad at.

SX: (...) There's a lot of disorganisation and the whole school structure is not managed that well, which I think affects stuff, just things like - we hand in assignments and when you get your results back and... things like that, like, I waited a year and a half to get one paper's results back... at one point they had to chase it up (...) and it's kind of frustrating. (...) I think it's stated in the (school) handbook that we sometimes get each year that the tutors are meant to give you feedback on assignments and stuff but we never get feedback. (...) ...we just get a mark, so... and I think it's meant to be that each tutor gives us a sheet with feedback but it's completely dependent on the tutor if you do or not. Most of the time you don't, you just get a mark and that's it and I almost feel like we should be kind of... you know, if you got a bad mark you kind of want to know why you get a bad mark.

The dominant theme of questionnaires received from staff in student support and learning centres concerned problems around assessments and assignments. In answer to the question ***'In your view what are the main issues students face with adversely affect their learning?'*** this staff member notes:

Poorly designed assessments, poorly designed courses; courses being organised on the run. Inadequate staffing in schools, excessive course content and assessment - unfair requirements that penalise particular groups of students in ways that are unrelated to learning outcomes.

Another support staff member stated that where quality control measures such as pre- and post- moderation were not in place then assessment was poorly worded and inconsistently marked. Another noted a lack of appropriate feedback to students on their assignments, and yet another reported that they wanted to see students kept more up to date with their progress. A further support staff member reported that lecturers should be evaluated on the kind of feedback they give to students.

Recommendations:

ASSESSMENT AND ASSIGNMENT ISSUES

1.1: That Unitec design (with USU involvement) and implement a standardised, yet adaptable, Unitec wide 'assessment hand back sheet' for all assessments on all programmes (including essays, practical work such as films and exhibitions, IBL modules, PBL modules, reports, projects, crits and skits). This sheet shall provide space where lecturers and tutors are expected to give written feedback on student work, along with a grade.

1.2: That Unitec implement a standardised Unitec-wide schedule for the return of student work of 3 weeks maximum, with no exceptions.

1.3: That assessment feed-back sheets, including written feed-back and a grade, shall be sent out to all students in electronic form within this 3 week period.

1.4: That the handing back of student work is monitored by the Head of Department.

1.5: That students shall be provided with the following, available to students electronically, according to the timeline stipulated:

- FINALISED ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES AND DATES OF EXAMINATIONS (AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF A COURSE).
- MODERATED ASSIGNMENT QUESTIONS FOR ALL SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS WHICH ARE NOT TO BE CONDUCTED UNDER EXAMINATION CONDITIONS (FOUR WEEKS BEFORE THE ASSESSMENT DUE DATE).
- MODERATED MARKING CRITERIA SHEETS FOR EACH SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT (FOUR WEEKS BEFORE THE ASSESSMENT DUE DATE).

1.6: That all summative assessment questions for a course shall be moderated by a senior academic in the discipline, and that this process be monitored by the Head of Department.

1.7: That Unitec prepare and circulate written guidelines on assessment best practice, to cover all forms of assessment, for the start of Semester 1, 2009.

Summary

- 1.** Assessment anxiety is high amongst students, especially international or EAL students.
- 2.** Academic and support staff also have concerns around the kinds of assessments students are being asked to do.
- 3.** Students are not getting enough feedback on assignments within a reasonable time period.
- 4.** Quality assurance processes around assessments need strengthening.

7. The Māori student experience

There are many things to consider when thinking about the experience of Māori students. A central consideration regarding cultural identity is the importance of positive role models. The need for positive Māori role models cannot be over-stressed, especially when we consider that there is often an issue around Māori students feeling overwhelmed in a culturally unwelcoming environment which they may find inhibiting.⁴¹ There was an issue of displacement for this Māori student in her school career which her whānau helped her overcome:

S33: A good teacher to me is...(…) a good listener, you've got to have a good listener and someone who knows what they're talking about... clear instructions, adaptable, to adapt to each individual in the classroom, not overly, but... a people person I guess, a good communicator, good listener, someone with a caring attitude, and from personal experience I think teachers outside of high school are probably better, than the one's you actually get in school when you're a school age kid.

L: Why do you think that?

S33: It's probably my own experience. It wasn't easy at high school for me, you know, but outside of high school I've achieved, inside high school it wasn't very good. (...)

L: So you found it hard to trust educators?

S33: Yes, in my particular school, there wasn't very much encouragement at all. My encouragement came from my whānau.

(Māori student)

This Māori student describes the general atmosphere in her classroom, where she sometimes feels uncomfortable:

S4: But, mostly, just funny jokes and, like, people just sitting on chairs (she means tables) and going 'ah, but it's alright because the tāngata whenua aren't here' and you're kind of going: 'well – how do you know who's not offended by that?' ...and, like, sitting on a table is culturally insensitive, but... just little jokes and if you're kind of thinking about it, like, maybe lots of people would say: 'oh yeah...' and wouldn't care, but then the people who do care – it's important for them.

(Māori student)

The more visible Māori culture is the more comfortable Māori students will feel in an institution such as Unitec. When a person is happy in their environment they will learn and study more effectively, and their experience will be all the more fulfilling. Cultural visibility obviously comes in many forms, and can be enhanced in a variety

⁴¹ I am grateful for discussions with Māori advisors on this issue.

of ways; however, whenever cultural identity is at stake, strong and positive role models are essential. It cannot be disputed that Māori are under-represented in the hallowed halls of post-compulsory education and that a commitment to Māori professional development should not be side-stepped by individual institutions.

Because of the Treaty of Waitangi, and Unitec's commitment to it within its own self-styled partnership document Te Noho Kōtahitanga, the experience of Māori students at Unitec cannot be by-passed, or left to Maia to organise and take sole responsibility for. A partnership implies two equal partners and so the needs, experiences and development of one side of that partnership must not be ignored, nor must they be subsumed into the needs, experiences and development of the other side. New Zealand's cultural history as a bi-cultural nation founded on clear and dynamic partnership principles must be acted on through more than just lip-service by educational institutions. The recommendations made in this report relating to the evaluation of the Māori student experience should be viewed as just one move to establish a richer experience for Māori students at Unitec. Unitec needs to cement its commitment to the Māori student experience through evaluation procedures.

The development of a vibrant Māori culture within the space of Unitec, in various ways, does not just benefit Māori students and staff it benefits everyone, as this Chinese student attests:

L: If you'd like to tell me about your best learning experiences?

S31: I think so far it has to be all the lectures I've been to... (...) Another point I remember was, umm... the time we went to the marae. That was quite interesting and seeing a different culture, even though, like, I've been here for so long being able to go to a marae and stay was pretty cool and then knowing the history of that – that was pretty sweet as well, yeah.

(Chinese student)

Unitec is both a bi-cultural and a multi-cultural organisation; it is neither one nor the other. Unitec is bi-cultural in the sense that New Zealand is a bi-cultural society. New Zealand is a bi-cultural society with a multi-cultural population. Unitec is a bi-cultural institution with a multi-cultural population. The institution needs to find a way to incorporate this understanding into teaching practices and into its cultural life. Only when Unitec has forged an over-arching ideological

commitment to this particular cultural paradigm can the experience of all students be enhanced.

Recommendations

1.16: That the Student Satisfaction Survey, all SEQUAL forms, all SGIDs and any other evaluation mechanism employed by Unitec must measure the specific experience of Māori students.

1.17: That the Student Satisfaction Survey, all SEQUAL evaluations, all SGIDs and any other evaluation mechanism employed by Unitec must measure the Māori student experience of the Māori dimension included in programmes.

Summary:

1. Māori students need positive Māori role models.
2. The Māori student experience is not currently evaluated formally across Unitec.
3. Māori culture has value and benefit for all students.

8. Effective Lecturing

When student and staff interview participants were asked what characteristics they thought an effective lecturer should have, the similarities in responses were quite astounding. This shows that students are experts at judging the quality of teaching, as Ramsden (1991) suggests. It also indicates that the shared experience of teaching and learning is marked by very similar expectations from both sides about what should happen in the classroom. Student responses to this question highlighted characteristics such as approachability, good communication, empathy, responsiveness, engagement, passion for the subject, respect and the strength of a lecturer's knowledge base:

S13: They should be passionate about what they're doing. They... it should be a fundamental field of interest, and they should have a strong sense of empathy, and they should be flexible, and they should be supportive and encouraging.

S18: I think communication. Communication, knowledge of subject.

S12: Passion. They should definitely be passionate about what they're teaching, they should be open and responsive and approachable yeah I think nice is always a good one – yes nice, it's not necessary but it's good (...). And obviously they should know what they're talking about because that always helps.

S41: An ability to communicate and address different learning styles.

S35: They've got to be real welcoming and down to earth. Not so, you know: 'I'm at the front of the class, you listen to me' and all that – not so authoritative.

S25: Ah, they should be enthusiastic, supportive, prepared, organised and understand what it is they are lecturing.

S14: I think communication is a really big one – how well they've communicated the course material.

The responses of lecturers to a question regarding the characteristics of an effective lecturer also picked up attributes such as good communication, a lecturer's knowledge base, approachability, respect and engagement.

20: My personal view, and what I've studied about teaching and learning, is that they should be approachable, friendly, engaging (...)

My personal approach is to try and remove as much of the hierarchical structure as possible, so to try and be on the level of the students, try and relate to the students.

16: Oh: communicative, charismatic, flamboyant, knowledgeable of their discipline, love for their students, keen interest in the subject, keen interest in the process of teaching and learning, um... links with practice in my area but probably in every area, you know... of getting knowledge – a life long learner, um... what else? Respect, definitely respect for students.

3: Well, I think I've said it before, but staff should be approachable. They should be seen to be, umm... I mean, if you're teaching in a student centred way, you're interacting with your students, you're engaging with them, you're teaching in ways that connect students with you.

The evaluation of lecturers

As long as lecturers and students agree on what characteristics or attributes an effective lecturer should have, then a successful evaluation to find out if a lecturer displays such characteristics in their interaction with students should not be difficult to devise and conduct. There was another way in which the question of what an effective lecturer should be like was approached. Student and staff participants were asked what they thought should be evaluated in lecturers. Significantly both students and lecturers used their answers to this question to think about the finer points of what makes teaching effective. Significantly, students used their answers to this question to think about how lecturers should be made accountable in various ways. These students said:

S39: Whether the stuff they teach and the way they speak and all that can be understood by students. That's the main thing, because I've seen heaps of students going home after class, not knowing a single thing.

L: And what should lecturers be evaluated on?

S17: Umm...

L: For example you said about something there for Asian students – if there's a lot of Asian students in the class – what kinds of things were you thinking of? If you had to design one and write one, and you had to have a questionnaire for students, or even just the Chinese students, what would you put, what would you ask them about?

S17: I would ask – would you like to have the feedback from the lecturer frequently, or a few or something... how many feedbacks do you think...

and how do you feel of the teaching skills of the lecturers, because their language is not your own language, English is not your basic language – so how do you feel the lecturer copes with those kind of problems... when you don't understand, how (do) they make you understand? This is communication problems.

L: So: how does the lecturer overcome the language difference to make good communication?

S17: Yes, that's right.

(International student)

S34: I think their style of teaching is important (...) If their style of teaching is just talking talking talking talking... I don't actually digest much. I actually like variety in teaching.

S18: Probably the knowledge of subject, but maybe we're not in the best position to do that. But we're definitely in the best position to effectively evaluate their communication skills.

These next academic staff members also implied that lecturers should be evaluated on the effectiveness of their interaction with students:

21: I have a strong position which says that they should be evaluated on their teaching, they should be evaluated in the sorts of assignments that they set, they should be evaluated on the... on how quickly they return those assignments (...) and they should be evaluated on how helpful the comments that they make have been to the students' learning.

19: A kind of responsiveness, like a good fit with who's in front of them, a good fit with what they're delivering and who's in front of them. That they, in some way (...) there's a recognition that the content that they're delivering is, and the skills that they're imparting are, actually useful and useable for the people that are in front of them.

Summary

Students and lecturers summarised the key qualities of effective lecturers thus:

- GOOD COMMUNICATION SKILLS
- APPROACHABILITY
- PASSION FOR THE SUBJECT AND SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE
- SUPPORTIVENESS OR EMPATHY
- BEING PREPARED AND ORGANISED

9. The Evaluation of Teaching

SEQUAL

Unitec's SEQUAL evaluations proved to be an emotive subject all round. This student's response indicates how using SEQUAL as a tool to evaluate the quality of teaching is in a sense a pointless project as it cannot be established confidently as a true indicator of how a student really feels about the teaching on a course, only of how they say they feel about it:

S39: I reckon these points here: 1-6, some of them doesn't match. Like, some teachers do not have these, do not meet these points. Like, some teachers do not encourage me to study. But for the sake of it I put: agree. You know?

L: Why do you do that, do you think?

S39: I just don't want to be an outcast. I just don't want to... if everyone agrees... I don't want to be the only one that disagrees. So, you know... but all the other lecturers have been good, it's just this one.

(International student)

It is apparent from this students' response that SEQUALs cannot be relied upon to tell the truth of a situation. If one student admits to misrepresenting the real picture (for whatever reason) we cannot be certain how many other students do the same. Other students made some interesting points about the SEQUAL process in general:

S2: Well, this (points at tick-box scale on the SEQUAL) isn't a good way of getting an overall picture but, I mean, it's quite... umm, it's quite emotionless, whereas if you had proper feedback either via interviews or, you know, students writing about their experience, type of thing, you get a better sort of... a more intimate kind of picture.

S13: (...) I think it's a good system and it is... kind of lacks a feedback loop, to the students. It's all good and well me filling this out but it kind of disappears into a little black box and I actually don't ever hear anything else about that. (...) It's like: give me feedback.

It was clear that students believed that SEQUAL did not enable them to give the kind of feedback they would like to give. There was often

an issue around students not getting feedback from SEQUALs that they had filled in.

What lecturers think of SEQUAL

For lecturers the SEQUAL evaluations sometimes proved to be an emotionally charged experience, showing that the SEQUAL process has ethical implications:

4: I saw somebody who was completely destroyed by a SEQUAL.

L: In what way?

4: Ah, well, she sobbed and wanted to leave.

L: Leave the job?

4: Yes, and has now left the job.

Other lecturers, who had conducted their own research into evaluation methodologies, commented on the lack of validity of SEQUALs:

L: The SEQUAL evaluation forms – how do you feel about those?

X: I think they're very subjective, I think they're ... I don't think they're a very reliable instrument. I don't think they're very valid. (...) I think for a lot of second language students they don't understand the language, and sometimes they don't understand if it's zero that's good or 5 that's good... or excellent, sort of thing. Umm... I don't think that they really pick up... necessarily pick up when the students are not happy with the course. I think SGIDs do that so much better. But I think... I know that I've got courses where (...) ...students have told me they're not happy but they will not write it on a piece of paper (...) I don't know that necessarily it shows that you're a good teacher, I think what it might show is you're a nice person and, you know, you're kind to the students. But does that necessarily mean you're a good teacher? What is it measuring? That's why I think it's such a blunt instrument. It's very difficult to tell what it measures.

From a staff perspective, as well being an emotionally charged experience, SEQUAL was seen by some to be an ineffective tool for evaluating teaching and learning.

Feedback of SEQUAL results to students

All the student participants were asked if they had ever received any feedback from filling out SEQUAL evaluations. A few said that their lecturers had read out the SEQUAL summary reports in class and said they were going to change certain things. The students appreciated the feedback loop being closed informally on these occasions; however, no students reported receiving any formal feedback from filling out SEQUALs. Some students couldn't remember whether they'd had feedback or not, a few had received the informal kind mentioned above, some students had never filled out a SEQUAL form, but most answers as to whether they'd received feedback were as follows:

S28: No, I haven't

S30: No.

S9: No. I know the tutors get feedback. They've told us that they get feedback.

S41: Not that I know of. I seem to remember doing one on line, but...

S21: Never. It's more like I fill those out, they take it away and that's it. That's the last I hear of it.

S23: No, I've never had feedback, because usually I'll just write 'agree, agree, agree', everything (he points to the comment boxes) – no. And that's my standard response, because I don't want to cause any trouble and I can't be bothered actually speaking my mind.

S26: No. I suppose they're supposed to be confidential. No one's approached me.

S39: Nah.

S35: No.

S25: No! Straight out – no!

S24: Not SEQUALs.

S29: No.

S36: No.

S16: No.

S19: No I've never seen any...

S20: No. I've not met one person that has.

S18: Never.

S22: No.

S14: No.

S38: Umm... (pause) no, I don't think so.

S1: No. No. I think that's something I would like as well.

S5: No, I've never had feedback.

L: Have you ever had any feedback from filling out one of those?

S15: I don't think so. No.

S17: Sometimes we write something, yeah but never improve. If they are – never improve. Sometimes see they are rubbish to be honest. (...) I think we need feedback.

L: So you've never had feedback?

S17: Never!

(International student)

Although many of these responses were identical, it is interesting to see the scope of negative responses from students who never got any feedback from filling out SEQUAL evaluations. Changes made to courses as a result of SEQUALs are sometimes put into the course details for the next cohort. However it is crucial to remember that this is not 'feed back' but 'feed forward.' Good evaluation should always feed results back to participants and affected parties.

How students think SEQUALs are used

Students and staff were asked if they knew how the SEQUAL evaluations were used. Students mostly answered in the following vein:

L: Are you aware what's done with the SEQUALs after they're completed and collected?

S29: No.

S31: I suppose they're meant to be all confidential, since there's no names and all that, then also I think they just put it through a computer and see what's happening. I don't know. I'm not sure. Do you know?

S3: (Laughs) Well, I haven't really seen much in the way of results. I mean as... what Unitec's learnt from them.

S24: No. Thrown in the bin! (Laughs)

S28: No, I'm not, no.

S41: No, not at all.

S18: It's like you fill it out and it goes into a black hole and you never see it again.

S35: No idea.

S9: No.

S30: Filed away? (Laughs)

S39: No idea. I think they use it to evaluate their lecturers or something? The quality.

S23: I assume they just go straight to the teacher, and they go: 'oh I recognise this handwriting – it's XXXX (participant) and he gave me a bad one, oh I'll mark him harshly in the exam.'

S22: I guess they go through it at some committee and I'm not really sure, I think they go back to our department and our head of department (...) would kind of look at it and do some sort of evaluation of his team, I don't know.

S17: Umm... I think they will look at these ones and just discuss it, and the people discuss it and think – it's okay, so you might improve this side... but for us, we have just got no information about these ones.

S32: All my friends, we would ask: 'So what? What's the point? Where does this go? What happens next? What's the point of us wasting our time when we don't get any feedback from it?' You know? We don't know what management does or admin does with it.

S14: No, it's really very vague.

S4: I'm not sure. I kind of thought maybe they weren't really used.

S19: As far as I'm concerned I fill that out and it goes into... wherever. I don't even know what they do with it really.

S20: The course director once said that the comments actually do come up in a meeting, umm... but I don't know what happens to them.

S21: (Laughs) No. I guess the information's kind of compiled together and the repeated comments get taken to them but that's probably wishful thinking, I'm not really sure, to be honest (laughs).

S38: No. I've never been told what happens with them.

S16: No. What do they do? What happens?

L: Are you aware of what's done with the SEQUALs after...

S36: (Interrupting) No.

L: ... they're completed and collected?

L: Are you aware what's done with them when they're...

S26: (Interrupting) No. Like to know.

L: Are you aware of what's done with the SEQUALS after they're completed and collected?

S15: Besides looked at? No. I'm not really aware.

L: 'Looked at' by...?

S15: Whoever it is that's supposed to be looking at them (laughs). Yeah, I don't know who looks at them. (...) I'd like to know who does look at them and who... and what happens with the results.

S27: I can surmise what happens to it. I'm assuming there's a central administration core that deals with collation and the summarising of the information, and then that's distributed accordingly to each programme leader and the programme leaders distribute it out. I imagine it comes through here as well.

L: No.

S27: Oh you don't get... you're not privy to the information? That's perhaps maybe one of the shortfalls of it - is that it's not independently evaluated, and one might say that it could be 'kept under wraps' as a consequence.

As we can observe there was another overwhelming response in the negative when students were asked if they knew how SEQUALs were used within the institution. It is important to remember that any evaluation needs to be done for a specific reason, and that all those participating in it know why an evaluation is being conducted and what the process entails.

How lecturers think SEQUALs are used

Significantly, many staff interviewed did not have a much clearer idea about how SEQUALs were used:

L: Are you aware of what's done with the SEQUALs after they've been completed and collected?

4: No. All I know is that they are collated and I get a sheet back.

12: Someone takes them away (laughs). And then, the following year, I get a colourful little bar graph chart which I've totally forgotten about because it was six months previous, or something like that, and I look at it and go: oh yeah, and I file it away.

16: No. Well I think the programme director gets a copy, and then at their generosity they share it with the staff (laughs).

22: Wouldn't have a clue!

Even more worrying was this response from a lecturer:

L: Are you aware if these are used for performance management, performance review or not?

8: I have no idea.

It is shocking that the above lecturer had no idea how she was being evaluated in her job. One lecturer did point out some good practice regarding the process that their school had for examining SEQUALs, however it seems that there are clearly ethical issues regarding information sharing:

X: (...) We table SEQUALs and pass them around. And then the course co-ordinator gives a kind of report to programme committee which is basically responding to the SEQUAL saying: these are the strengths of the things and I can get feedback hopefully saying what we're going to do in response to the feedback we've got. But we had discussions at the time because, although I empathised with this particular colleague, neither did I support us editing SEQUALs before they came to programme committee either. Like making sure that all the complicated stuff was deleted, which they were arguing for because they didn't want people's names, and then you can't do that much with feedback.

What is also interesting in most of these responses from lecturers is that they usually do not comment on how SEQUALs are used as such but, rather, on where they go and who reads them. Aside from the one example of group discussion, it should be noted that generally a use was not referred to by staff, rather a *destination*.

Alternative evaluation strategies

Students were asked if they had any ideas for other ways of evaluating teaching. Many students pointed to the face-to-face discussion represented by the interview format as an ideal way to evaluate the quality of teaching or the quality of a course:

S12: I just want to say that I think this type of thing is good. (...) (participant indicates us talking) THIS type of thing. I think that, umm... people and institutions should always be trying to better themselves, you know, asking the students is a good way of doing it, yeah.

L: Do you have any ideas about any other ways to evaluate the teaching here?

S21: I think things like actually... like we're doing now, like actually speaking to someone about it.

S35: These interviews (participant indicates us talking), actually face to face, yeah. I think that's more, it's a better way of doing things... (...)

L: Why do you think that's better?

S35: You just get to say things that you can't really answer on these (the SEQUALs).

S41: I think it would be really good to have a selection of students in a particular year or cohort on the degree and do like a focus group, because you get more in depth data, you know?

The issues students had with poor teaching practices principally focused on lack of communication or interaction of one sort or another. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that the model students preferred for evaluating teaching was a face to face communicative or interactive model (like the interview, or focus group). It was also clear that students felt a great sense of relief and even catharsis in some cases (as did staff, it has to be said) as a result of being able to speak to somebody in depth about issues they were facing at Unitec to do with teaching and learning.

Lecturers were also asked for their views on alternative methods to evaluate teaching:

4: It wasn't an original thought, I got it from Unitec. You just write start, stop and continue in three columns and put the pens on the table and then I say I know that I go too quickly for some of you and I mightn't do this... I want you to tell me to start – deliver stuff that you want, stop doing stuff that you hate and continue to do stuff that you

like. And then I walk. I go away for ten minutes and then when I come back the board's all written on by various people.

16: I've got mid course evaluations, so mid course I give them a simple questionnaire to fill in and then at the end I've got something which I call recap activity and it's basically about the course, what they've learned, what they've covered. (...) If they've learnt something they will put in learning outcomes that they've learnt something, and then also they write about the process.

Whilst some lecturers interviewed for this study used their own versions of evaluation methods it cannot be assumed that all, or indeed most, lecturers at Unitec follow such good practice.

It is clear that students prefer methods of evaluation which involve discussion or interview. In the new NZQA/ITPNZ regime of the evaluation of 'the student experience' such methods seem not only preferable, but necessary. It has been argued throughout this report that students should not only be allowed to feed back on issues that are important to them, they must also be allowed to feed back using methods they prefer.

Reasons to evaluate

The data contained in this report shows that preferred methods for the evaluation of teaching by students and staff were coming from two very different places, in so far as staff and student participants wanted to use the data in very different ways. Lecturers who were interviewed were probably already fairly effective at teaching and certainly self reflective, and many were conducting their own evaluations of their teaching practice. These lecturers wanted feedback on how they could improve their teaching even more. Student participants, however, in their assessment of different evaluation methodologies, were more often than not trying to think of ways to mitigate the poor practice of less effective lecturers. This produces a chasm in communication between lecturers who are not self reflective enough and the students who are struggling to learn. A suite of effective evaluation strategies is needed to address this problem.

This problem could be alleviated in part by a stronger role for an institution's students' association in the process of designing

evaluation methodologies which are in line with what is important to students. Importantly Unitec needs to understand that students' associations have a unique view of what issues students want to be able to feed back on, and what they want to get out of any evaluation. If things carry on the way they are, with students' associations always on the back foot in terms of reacting to academic problems after they have arisen for students, it is unlikely that students will ever get the kind of learning experience that they want, value or deserve. It seems reasonable to assume that the measurement of teaching performance should be a deciding factor in terms of whether a lecturer is performing adequately in their job or not. What is needed is a culture shift. Giving students more of a voice in terms of the evaluation of teaching would produce a more communicative, responsive and interactive institutional environment and make a culture shift regarding lecturers' attitudes to teaching practice far more achievable.

Recommendations

EVALUATION OF TEACHING

1.13: That academic board recognise and encourage USU's future involvement in NZQA and ITPQ processes, and in particular that:

- **USU shall be involved in the selection of all students for external evaluations.**
- **USU shall participate in formal meetings with NZQA/ITPQ evaluators.**

1.14: That a redesign of Unitec's teaching evaluation processes be carried out, in consultation with USU, that is consistent with what students want, in the light of research conducted in the QEP.

1.15: That feed back to students in response to course evaluation processes provided by departments shall be made available to USU.

Summary:

- 1.** Responses submitted by students on SEQUALs are sometimes misrepresentative of their real views or feelings.
- 2.** Students prefer and value the use of face-to-face methods in the evaluation of their experiences.
- 3.** SEQUAL results are not being formally fed back to student participants.
- 4:** SEQUAL results are often not being communicated to affected staff appropriately or ethically.
- 5.** There is little understanding amongst students or staff as to how SEQUALs are used.
- 6.** The design of SEQUAL and the procedure for its distribution and use should be over-hauled in 2009 in consultation with USU, in light of findings in this report.
- 7.** Ethical guidelines and processes should be established for evaluations and audits at Unitec.

10. Future Directions

This report contains within its recommendations to USU a requirement for a formal review in the first semester 2010, and ongoing evaluation and benchmarking of the evaluation practices of USU. The recommendations made here also provide scope for more streamlined auditing of Unitec's practices regarding the student experience. The Quality Education Project is the first step in USU working more closely and empathetically with Unitec regarding the experiences of all students. USU is confident that this relationship will grow and develop positively and, in the future, provide a best practice model for other TEOs and their Students' Associations. An off-shoot report from the QEP will present findings around staff issues at Unitec, and will be presented to Unitec management in the first semester of 2009. Some of the interviews with staff uncovered certain frustrations with the institution which might well be mitigated by the recent re-structure. However, certain management practices and experiences of bullying amongst lecturers are more sinister issues which should be reported to the institution.

USU research in 2009 will focus on the experiences of Māori and Pasifika students. There are issues around cultural safety and also around the retention and success for both Māori and Pasifika students at Unitec. Although this project was able to highlight some issues in relation to Māori students, the experiences of Pasifika students have gone undocumented. This is a significant finding in itself. USU and Unitec are aware of an issue regarding the success of Pasifika students and so there is clearly a need for further research. Research with Māori and Pasifika students will be conducted after full and open consultation with Maia and with the Director of the Centre for Pacific Development and Support. In short, this project will be a combined study, using culturally specific research methods. This study will be undertaken in 2009.

This report does indicate that students who have English as a second language face a gamut of difficulties, specifically around assessments and group work. Therefore, a study into the experiences of international students is also required. This study will be undertaken in the second semester 2009.

Index of acronyms

AQO	Academic Quality Office
CEQ	Course Experience Questionnaire
CTLI	Centre for Teaching and Learning Innovation
EAG	Expert Advisory Group
HR	Human Resources
IT	Institute of Technology/Information Technology
ITO	Industry Training Organisation
ITPNZ	Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics New Zealand
ITPQ	Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
NZUAAU	New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit
NZVCC	New Zealand Vice Chancellors' Committee
PI	Performance Indicator
PTE	Private Training Establishment
QA	Quality Assurance
QAB	Quality Assurance Body
QAM	Quality Assurance Model
QEP	Quality Education Project
QMS	Quality Management System
SEQUAL	Student Evaluation of QUALity
SGID	Small Group Instructional Diagnosis
TAMU	Tertiary Advisory and Monitoring Unit
TEC	Tertiary Education Commission
TEO	Tertiary Education Organisation
TNK	Te Noho Kōtahitanga
TTA	Te Tari Āwhina
UREC	Unitec Research Ethics Committee

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Unitec's internal documents

QMS - Quality Management System: H:\Academic Quality Office_Useful Information for Unitec staff\Quality Management System).

Investment Plan: H:_Core Information\Investment Plan.

myUnitec Staff Portal

Appendices

APP. 1 Questionnaire scripts (1a: Student, 1b Lecturer, 1c student support staff)

APP. 2 Interview scripts (2a Student, 2b Lecturer, 2c Student support staff)

APP. 3 Consent Form

App. 4 Example SEQUAL forms

Appendix 1a:

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE, QUALITY AND EVALUATION OF TEACHING, USU 2008 (SURVEY GISMO)

INFORMATION SHEET

This is a USU study to find the best way to evaluate teaching at Unitec. USU is independent of Unitec and works in the interests of students. Last year in several surveys USU was asked by students to investigate and evaluate the quality of teaching at Unitec. This project was developed in response to these requests. This is your chance to have your say about how you want the quality of your education evaluated. USU intends to propose a new model of evaluation based on the findings of this research. You can become part of this research by completing this short confidential questionnaire. Your name will not be used, the questionnaire is confidential and the research may be made public. By filling out this questionnaire you consent to the above. I also want to interview students. Interviews will be confidential and the results will be fed back to you this year through the USU website. If you are interviewed you will be paid \$50 for your time. So, if this questionnaire raises issues for you please come and see me for a more in-depth interview: Dr. Louise Allen (USU Education Coordinator): Ph: 8154321 ext: 7380; BLDG 180, room 1123; usueducation@unitec.ac.nz.

QUESTIONS

1. What is your programme of study? (comment box)
2. Which of these best describes the 'SEQUAL' or course and teacher evaluations?
 - USELESS
 - OF LITTLE USE
 - USEFUL
 - VERY USEFUL
 - DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY ARE
3. What is your general opinion about the SEQUAL questionnaires? (comment box)
4. Have you ever received feedback from filling in SEQUAL questionnaires? Yes/no
5. From these choices who should evaluate the quality of teaching at Unitec?:
 - UNITEC
 - THE USU STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
 - THEY SHOULD DO IT TOGETHER AS A TEAM
 - THEY SHOULD BOTH DO IT INDEPENDENTLY AND SEPARATELY
6. Please tell me the reason for your choice. (comment box)
7. What aspects of teaching do you think should be evaluated? (comment box)
8. Think of ONE particular lecturer who you think needs to improve their teaching.

Is it because they do any of these things? If so how often?

	never	occasionally	regularly	always
Culturally insensitive				
Late to class				
Not genuine or 'real'				
Has an accent I can't understand				
Doesn't understand me				
Teaches irrelevant subject matter				
Has no time for me				
Poor knowledge of the subject				
Badly organised				
Can't use technology well				
Takes too long to mark assignments				
Lacks interpersonal skills				
Puts me down or makes me feel stupid				
Can't control class discussion				
Gives little or no feedback on assignments				
Doesn't value me or what I think				

9. Think of ONE particular lecturer who you think is really effective.
Is it because they do any of these things? If so how often?

	never	occasionally	regularly	always
Marks assignments in good time				
Understands me				
Well organised				
Gives good feedback on assignments				
Can use technology well				
Speaks clearly				
Builds up my confidence				
Has a good knowledge of the subject				
Is genuine or 'real'				
Makes time for me				
Teaches relevant subject matter				
Can control class discussion				
Values me and my opinions				
Arrives on time to class				
Is culturally aware				
Has good interpersonal skills				

You can vote for this lecturer in the USU Lecturer of the Year competition in August.

11. Has anything really upset you, or held you back, in terms of your learning at Unitec? Please tell me what happened. (comment box)

12. Is there anything else you want to say? (comment box)

Thank you for your time. Please contact me for a **confidential interview**. Dr. Louise Allen (USU Education Coordinator): usueducation@unitec.ac.nz. Ph: 815 4321 ext: 7380. BLDG 180, room 1123.

Appendix 1b:

ACADEMIC STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE. QUALITY AND EVALUATION OF TEACHING, USU 2008 (SURVEY GISMO)

INFORMATION SHEET

This is a USU study to find the best way to evaluate teaching at Unitec. USU is independent of Unitec and works in the interests of students. Last year in several surveys USU was asked by students to investigate and evaluate the quality of teaching at Unitec. This project was developed in response to these requests. I am getting feedback from students and student support staff; however I would also like your opinions on these issues. USU intends to propose a new model of evaluation based on the findings of this research. You can become part of this research by completing this short confidential questionnaire. Your name will not be used, this questionnaire is confidential and the research may be made public. By filling out this questionnaire you consent to the above. You can send this questionnaire back to me through the email (your name will remain confidential), you can mail it back to me in the internal mail, or you can drop it in to me. I also want to interview some academic staff. Interviews will be confidential and the results will be fed back to you this year through the USU website. If you are interviewed you will be given \$50 in vouchers as compensate for your time. So, if this questionnaire raises issues for you please come and see me for a more in-depth interview: Dr. Louise Allen (USU Education Coordinator): Ph: 8154321 ext: 7380; BLDG 180, room 1123; usueducation@unitec.ac.nz.

1. How important is it to have your teaching evaluated by students?
2. From these choices, which best describes the 'SEQUAL' or course and teacher evaluations?
 - USELESS
 - OF LITTLE USE
 - USEFUL
 - VERY USEFUL
3. What is your general opinion about the SEQUAL questionnaires?
4. From these choices who should evaluate the quality of teaching at Unitec?:
 - UNITEC
 - THE USU STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
 - THEY SHOULD DO IT TOGETHER AS A TEAM
 - THEY SHOULD BOTH DO IT INDEPENDENTLY AND SEPARATELY
5. Please tell me the reason for your choice.
6. What aspects of teaching should lecturers be evaluated on?
7. What do you enjoy about teaching?
8. What don't you enjoy about teaching?
9. What do you think are the key characteristics of an effective lecturer?
10. Does being evaluated worry you or make you stressed? Yes/No
11. If 'yes', why?
12. Is there anything else you want to say?

Appendix 1c:

USU'S QUALITY EDUCATION PROJECT, 2008 STUDENT SUPPORT STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE (ON PAPER)

INFORMATION SHEET

This is a USU study to investigate the quality of education at Unitec and to find the best way to evaluate teaching at Unitec. USU is independent of Unitec and works in the interests of students. Last year in several surveys USU was asked by students to investigate and evaluate the quality of teaching at Unitec. This project was developed in response to these requests. I am getting feedback from students and academic staff; however I would also like your opinions on these issues. USU intends to propose a new model of evaluation based on the findings of this research. You can become part of this research by completing this short confidential questionnaire. Your name will not be used, this questionnaire is confidential and the research may be made public. By filling out this questionnaire you consent to the above. You can send this questionnaire back to me in the internal mail, or you can drop it in to me at the USU office in The HUB. If you have more to say, I will be conducting interviews. Interviews will be confidential and the results will be fed back to you this year through the USU website. If you are interviewed you will be given \$50 in vouchers as compensate for your time. Unfortunately I can only conduct a limited number of interviews. So, if this questionnaire raises issues for you please come and see me for a more in-depth interview: Louise Allen, USU Education Coordinator: ph: 8154321 ext: 7380; BLDG 180, room 1123; usueducation@unitec.ac.nz.

STUDENT LEARNING

1. In your view what are the main issues students face which adversely affect their learning?
2. Is there a solution to any of these issues?
3. Tell me about any areas of Unitec which you think have a particularly good approach to student learning.
4. Tell me about any areas of Unitec which you think have a particularly poor approach to student learning.
5. In your view are there any management issues or processes which create obstacles to student learning?

TEACHING EVALUATION

6. Are you aware of the SEQUAL course and teacher evaluations? Yes/No
7. If 'yes' – are you aware of any issues students have with these?
8. From these choices who should evaluate the quality of teaching at Unitec?
 - UNITEC
 - THE USU STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
 - THEY SHOULD DO IT TOGETHER AS A TEAM
 - IT SHOULD BE DONE BY AN EXTERNAL ORGANISATION
9. Please tell me the reason for your choice.
10. What aspects of teaching should lecturers be evaluated on?
11. Is there anything else you want to say?

Appendix 1c:

STUDENT INTERVIEW FORMAT

Section A: Learning Experiences:

- TELL ME ABOUT SOME OF YOUR BEST LEARNING EXPERIENCES SINCE YOU'VE BEEN AT UNITEC.
- TELL ME ABOUT SOME OF YOUR WORST LEARNING EXPERIENCES WHILE YOU'VE BEEN HERE.
- ARE THERE ANY LECTURERS WHO HAVE BEEN REALLY HELPFUL TO YOUR LEARNING? IF SO - HOW HAVE THEY HELPED YOU?
- ARE THERE ANY LECTURERS WHO HAVE HELD YOU BACK IN YOUR LEARNING, OR BEEN REALLY UNHELPFUL?
(IF SO - TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED, HOW DID IT MAKE YOU FEEL?)
- WHAT IS THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE TO LEARNING THAT YOU FACE?
- HAVE LECTURERS HELPED YOU WITH THIS? IF SO - HOW?
- HAVE LECTURERS MADE IT WORSE? IF SO - HOW?

Section B: Evaluation of Teaching and Learning:

- WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE WAY THE LECTURERS ARE CURRENTLY EVALUATED USING THE SEQUAL FORMS? (SHOW THEM EXAMPLES)
- DO YOU THINK THEY ARE USEFUL?
- HAVE YOU EVER HAD FEEDBACK FROM A SEQUAL?
- ARE YOU AWARE OF WHAT IS DONE WITH THE SEQUALS AFTER THEY ARE COMPLETED AND COLLECTED?
- DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEAS ABOUT OTHER WAYS TO EVALUATE TEACHING?
- SOME STAFF, WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE STUDENT EVALUATION OF TEACHING SAY: 'STUDENTS DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR THEM.' WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS APPROACH?
- WHAT ATTRIBUTES OR CHARACTERISTICS SHOULD AN EFFECTIVE LECTURER HAVE?
- WHAT SHOULD LECTURERS BE EVALUATED ON?
- WHO DO YOU THINK SHOULD ADMINISTER THE EVALUATION OF TEACHING AT UNITEC?
- WHY?
- DO YOU THINK THE GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN HIGHER EDUCATION SHOULD BE COMPULSORY FOR LECTURERS WITHOUT A TEACHING QUALIFICATION?
- ARE THERE ANY THINGS SPECIFIC TO YOUR SUBJECT YOU THINK THE LECTURERS IN YOUR SCHOOL SHOULD BE EVALUATED ON?
- IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT TO SAY BEFORE WE STOP?
- ARE THERE ANY THINGS YOU WANTED ME TO ASK YOU ABOUT THAT I DIDN'T ASK?

Appendix 2b:

ACADEMIC STAFF INTERVIEW FORMAT

EVALUATION

- ARE YOUR EXPERIENCES OF BEING SEQUALED?
- ARE YOU AWARE OF WHAT IS DONE WITH THE SEQUALS AFTER THEY ARE COMPLETED AND COLLECTED?
- DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEAS HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE SEQUAL EVALUATIONS?
- WHAT ABOUT OTHER WAYS TO EVALUATE TEACHING?
- DOES ANYTHING WORRY YOU ABOUT BEING EVALUATED?
- SOME STAFF, WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE STUDENT EVALUATION OF TEACHING, SAY: 'STUDENTS DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR THEM'. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS APPROACH?
- WHO DO YOU THINK SHOULD ADMINISTER THE EVALUATION OF TEACHING AT UNITEC?
- WHY?

LECTURERS

- WHAT SORT OF CHARACTERISTICS OR ATTRIBUTES SHOULD AN EFFECTIVE LECTURER HAVE?
- WHAT DO YOU THINK SHOULD BE EVALUATED IN LECTURERS?
- ARE YOU AWARE OF ANY POOR TEACHING PRACTICES AT UNITEC?
- SHOULD THE GRAD DIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION BE COMPULSORY FOR LECTURERS WITHOUT A TEACHING QUALIFICATION?

PASTORAL CARE

- HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR STUDENTS TO RECEIVE PASTORAL CARE FROM THEIR LECTURERS?
- DO YOU THINK LECTURERS AT UNITEC GIVE ENOUGH PASTORAL CARE TO STUDENTS?

WORKLOAD

- DO YOU THINK LECTURERS' WORKLOADS SHOULD BECOME TRANSPARENT?
- WHAT IS YOUR WORKLOAD?

STUDENTS

- WHAT DO YOU SEE STUDENTS STRUGGLING WITH THE MOST?
- DO YOU HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO GIVE TO YOUR STUDENTS?

MANAGEMENT

- TELL ME ABOUT THE SUPPORT YOU GET FROM YOUR MANAGERS.
- WHAT COULD YOUR MANAGERS DO TO MAKE THE TEACHING EXPERIENCE BETTER FOR YOU? (NOT FOR HOS)
- WHAT COULD YOUR MANAGERS, OR UNITEC, DO TO MAKE THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE BETTER FOR STUDENTS?
- ARE THERE ANY SYSTEMS OR POLICIES OR PROCEDURES AT UNITEC THAT FRUSTRATE YOU?
- ARE YOU A MANAGER? (COULD BE HOS, ASS. HOS OR PD)
- IF SO – DOES ANYTHING FRUSTRATE YOU AS A MANAGER?

PERSONAL

- ARE YOU HAPPY IN YOUR JOB?
- WHY, OR WHY NOT?
- HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT LEAVING?
- WHY?
- WHAT STOPPED YOU?

END

- IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT TO SAY BEFORE WE STOP?
- IS THERE ANYTHING YOU THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO ASK, OR YOU WANTED ME TO ASK, BUT I DIDN'T?

Appendix 2c

STUDENT SERVICES/STUDENT ADVISOR INTERVIEW FORMAT

EVALUATION

- DID THE QUESTIONNAIRE RAISE SOME ISSUES FOR YOU? TELL ME MORE ABOUT THOSE.
- DO YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT A PARTICULAR SCENARIO?

EVALUATION

- HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE SEQUAL EVALUATIONS?
- ARE YOU AWARE OF WHAT IS DONE WITH THE SEQUALS AFTER THEY ARE COMPLETED AND COLLECTED?
- DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEAS ABOUT OTHER WAYS TO EVALUATE TEACHING?
- SOME STAFF, WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE STUDENT EVALUATION OF TEACHING, SAY: 'STUDENTS DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR THEM'. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS APPROACH?
- WHO DO YOU THINK SHOULD ADMINISTER THE EVALUATION OF TEACHING AT UNITEC?
- WHY?

LECTURERS

- WHAT SORT OF CHARACTERISTICS OR ATTRIBUTES SHOULD AN EFFECTIVE LECTURER HAVE?
- WHAT DO YOU THINK SHOULD BE EVALUATED IN LECTURERS?
- ARE YOU AWARE OF ANY POOR TEACHING PRACTICES AT UNITEC?
- SHOULD THE GRAD DIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION BE COMPULSORY FOR LECTURERS WITHOUT A TEACHING QUALIFICATION?
- WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP LIKE BETWEEN LECTURERS AND STUDENT SUPPORT/STUDENT SERVICES STAFF?
- DO LECTURERS AT UNITEC INFORM THE STUDENTS CLEARLY ENOUGH ABOUT WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE TO THEM?
- ARE THERE ANY WAYS IN WHICH LECTURERS HINDER OR HOLD BACK STUDENTS?

PASTORAL CARE

- HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR STUDENTS TO RECEIVE PASTORAL CARE FROM THEIR LECTURERS?
- DO YOU THINK LECTURERS AT UNITEC GIVE ENOUGH PASTORAL CARE TO STUDENTS?

WORKLOAD

- DO YOU THINK LECTURERS' WORKLOADS SHOULD BECOME TRANSPARENT?
- WHAT IS YOUR WORKLOAD?

STUDENTS

- WHAT DO YOU SEE STUDENTS STRUGGLING WITH THE MOST?
- DO YOU HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO GIVE TO STUDENTS?

UNITEC

- WHAT COULD UNITEC, DO TO MAKE THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE BETTER FOR STUDENTS?
- ARE HERE ANY SYSTEMS OR POLICIES OR PROCEDURES AT UNITEC THAT FRUSTRATE YOU?
- IS THERE ANYTHING THAT MAKES YOU FRUSTRATED IN YOUR JOB?

PERSONAL

- ARE YOU HAPPY IN YOUR JOB?
- WHY, OR WHY NOT?
- HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT LEAVING?
- WHY?
- WHAT STOPPED YOU?

END

- IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT TO SAY BEFORE WE STOP?
- IS THERE ANYTHING YOU THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO ASK, OR YOU WANTED ME TO ASK, BUT I DIDN'T?

Appendix 3:

INTERVIEWEE CONSENT FORM 'The 2008 USU Teaching Quality and Evaluation Project'

This is a study into teaching quality and teaching evaluation at Unitec. Information about participants will be kept strictly confidential within the USU Education Office. The information gathered will eventually be made public by being:

- FED BACK TO PARTICIPANTS
- PRESENTED TO UNITEC MANAGEMENT IN WRITTEN REPORTS
- SUBMITTED FOR PUBLICATION

Neither you, nor any people you mention in the interview (or in questionnaires), will be named in the final research report or in any publications.

Participant's name:.....

I consent to be interviewed and I understand:

* I will not be identified in the research

* I can withdraw from the research at any time and have my contributions destroyed

Signature:..... Date:.....

Email:..... Phone:.....

Researcher's name:

Signature:..... Date:.....

Email: usueducation@unitec.ac.nz Phone: 09 815 4321 ext 7380

Appendix 4a:



STANDARD TEACHING EVALUATION SURVEY



SCHOOL:	S D E S N	TERM:	1 0 7 2
COURSE CODE:	DES N6340	COURSE ID:	5 6 7 1
LECTURER:			
COURSE:	Contemporary Theory		

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS

- This questionnaire will be used to review your lecturer's teaching performance.
- Your **CONFIDENTIAL** responses will be summarised and reported back to the lecturer and Head of School. The summary may be used in staff performance reviews and the monitoring of new staff.
- Please shade the option that most accurately reflects your experience with this lecturer on each of the six statements listed below.
- Please only use **BLUE** or **BLACK** pen when filling out the questionnaires.
- If you do select more than one circle in error please cross out the circle you do not want to answer.
- Please **DO NOT** staple or bind the SEQUAL forms together.
- Please **DO NOT** alter any of the course details in the section above. Your form will be **INVALID** if any of these are changed

Shade Circles Like This--> ●
 Not Like This--> ⊗ ⊙

THIS LECTURER:

	Absolutely Agree 5	Strongly Agree 4	Agree 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
1. Communicates ideas and information clearly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Is well organised and well prepared	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Is enthusiastic, with a responsive & interactive style of teaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Encourages me to learn and study	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Demonstrates a sound knowledge of the topic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Overall, this lecturer enhances my learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What do you like most about this lecturer?

What could this lecturer improve to enhance your learning?

Thank you for your time and co-operation

58352



Appendix 4b:



COURSE EVALUATION SURVEY



SCHOOL:	S C O M M	TERM:	1 0 7 2
COURSE CODE:	C O M M 5 4 3 9	COURSE ID:	2 2 2 6
COURSE:	Creative Writing		

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS

1. Please shade the option that most accurately reflects your experience on each of the nine statements listed below.
2. Please only use BLUE or BLACK pen when filling out the questionnaires.
3. If you do select more than one circle in error please cross out the circle you do not want to answer.
4. Please DO NOT staple or bind the SEQUAL forms together.
5. Please DO NOT alter any of the course details in the section above. Your form will be INVALID if any of these are changed

Shade Circles Like This--> ●
 Not Like This--> ⊗ ⊙

VALUE OF COURSE

Absolutely Agree 5 Strongly Agree 4 Agree 3 Disagree 2 Strongly Disagree 1

- | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. The course has extended my knowledge and skills | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. There was an appropriate balance between real world application and theory | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

ORGANISATION OF COURSE

- | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 3. All necessary course information was clearly communicated to me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. The course followed a logical progression of learning | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. The assessment measured my learning fairly | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. The course material was covered at a good pace | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

RESOURCES OF COURSE

- | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 7. The learning materials were helpful | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. The learning equipment and resources were adequate | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

OVERALL

- | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 9. I am satisfied with the quality of this course | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|

Outline what you like best about this course

Outline how this course could be improved

Thank you for your time and co-operation

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