

Exploring the utility of using a VLE for weekly student evaluations of teaching

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ABSTRACT

Evaluation of teaching quality has been around for decades and summative teaching evaluations are the most frequent form of assessment of faculty performance in the classroom. The aim of this project is to explore whether the introduction of weekly evaluations of lectures are viable both from a student and faculty point of view. The process involved setting up an on-line questionnaire through a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) to allow students to give feedback on the lecturer's performance on a weekly basis. The evaluation of the project involved conducting in-depth interviews with a sample of faculty and students to find out whether weekly evaluations were too onerous, whether there was evidence the feedback was utilised by the faculty member and whether faculty would continue using the tool after the end of the pilot project. While faculty were initially keen to use the feedback received from the students, reviewing the feedback each week soon became too onerous a task, and tended to be superficially reviewed once every few weeks. Variations were found in faculty use of evaluation feedback, as a result of difference in background and experience. Those faculty members that were more involved in this student evaluation used the feedback to improve their teaching, in many cases as part of their reflective practice. The student interviews indicated that the lack of overall participation in completing the evaluation forms, which gave rise to questions of representativeness of the answers. On the contrary some student respondents suggested the response would have been higher had they had concerns with the way modules were being run. Though the students thought it was a good tool and useful for providing feedback, their motivation to fill in the evaluations every week varied throughout the period of study, and some believed the weekly feedback soon became routine and too onerous a task, and thus had a tendency towards being superficially conducted. Students tended to be more positive towards conducting the evaluation if the lecturer discussed them and/or made changes to their future lectures. While superficially, the results indicate a failure to engage faculty and students in the use of the weekly evaluation tool; further investigation suggested both groups were positive in regards to future use of the tool if it were at less frequent intervals and with a wider range of modules.

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2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Student Evaluations of Teaching

It is widely believed that university teaching not only can be improved, but should be improved (Ramsden, 1992). Years ago, the quality of a university was solely judged by its research output (Massy, 1994), however in the 1980s and into the 1990s there was a push to recognise the value the quality of the teaching students received (Hittman, 1993). It is possible that some of this trend had been driven by total quality management and constant quality improvement models that had become popular in industry being applied in universities by senior management (Fay, Ferrara, & Stryker, 1993; Hittman, 1993).

Student evaluations of teaching (SETs) have been around for decades and are the most frequent form of assessment of faculty performance in the classroom (Becker & Watts, 1999; Davis, 2009; Kozub, 2010; Lill, 1979; Onwuegbuzie, Witcher, Collins, & Filler, 2007; Parayitam, Desai, & Phelps, 2007; Read, Rama, & Raghunandan, 2001; Yao & Grady, 2005). The original objective of SETs is fairly straight forward, in that they aim to provide feedback to lecturers in order to improve their teaching (Chen & Hoshower, 1998). They have become compulsory in Japan (Burden, 2008) and in most universities in North America, where they have been used for promotion decisions for some time (Cashin, 1999; Chen & Hoshower, 1998; Dunegan & Hrivnak, 2003; Kozub, 2010; Wetzstein, Broder, & Wilson, 1984). Most student evaluations are conducted by the students in the class-room setting (Becker & Watts, 1999), and recommendations are that the teacher not be present in the room in order to reduce biases (Lill, 1979). SETs offer both the institutions and the academic being evaluated a quick and easy way of gleaning feedback from students. Read, Rama and Raghunandan (2001) note that other more intensive forms of evaluation, such as “peer visits, external and internal reviews of teaching portfolios, and qualitative feedback from students is more time consuming and places a greater demand on evaluators and institutions” (p190). As a result, SETs are the most common form of teacher evaluation used.

Aside from module specific SETs, there has been the development of the Course Experience Questionnaire in Australia by Paul Ramsden in the early 1990s, which inspired the development of the UK National Student Survey (Norton, 2009). Both of these SETs are

distributed after the completion of an entire university degree, giving stakeholders an overall evaluation of their degree programme. However, such global evaluations offer academics little feedback on module specific issues, and therefore very little opportunity to actually improve teaching.

Criticisms of Student Evaluations of Teaching

One of the issues with the current summative style of SETs, is they are most commonly administered at the end of the module or degree programme. While “such evaluations are ... the most important, and sometimes the sole, measure of an instructor’s teaching ability” (p A12, Wilson, 1998, cited in Becker & Watts, 1999) and therefore useful for administrators, they can be of limited value to the faculty member (Becker & Watts, 1999; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007; Yao & Grady, 2005). They are also of very limited benefit to the students completing them, as any improvement to the module by the lecturer based on the feedback from these evaluations cannot be experienced by students who have already completed the module (Becker & Watts, 1999; Davis, 2009). Regardless of the original objective of SETs, the summative types of SETs described above are now largely in place to meet the needs of the organisation, rather than the lecturer (Hounsell, 2009; Tennant, McMullen, & Kaczynski, 2010).

There are other criticisms of using summative SETs, such as grading leniency bias (Boysen, 2008; Marks, 2000; McPherson, 2006; Weinberg, Hashimoto, & M., 2009), which is said to have been responsible for the widely acknowledged problem of grade inflation in North American universities (Blackhart, Peruche, DeWall, & Joiner, 2006; Eiszler, 2002; Martinson, 2004), This is most likely driven by the fact that SETs are a major consideration taken into account during performance reviews and promotion decisions as highlighted earlier. Further criticisms include the influence of SETs on module difficulty (by dumbing down the module, reducing the amount of homework to keep students happy or as a punishment for a high workload) (Bryce-Wilhelm, 2004; Felton, Mitchell, & Stinson, 2004), influences of instructor attractiveness or cosmetic factors (Clayson & Sheffet, 2006; Felton et al., 2004), or whether the module is a required course or an elective, student effort and student interest in the module (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007; Parayitam et al., 2007; Scriven, 1995; Wetzstein et al., 1984). There is also the concern that students don’t take SETs seriously, seeing them as a chore (Dunegan & Hrivnak, 2003). Another criticism is that

SETS are “a threat to academic freedom in the sense teachers may feel inhibited from discussing controversial ideas and presenting challenging questions to students because they fear that students may express disagreement through the SET” (Braskamp & Ory, 1994, cited page 92, Parayitam et al., 2007). The most concerning research is that which suggests that using SETs systematically has no positive effect on teaching quality (Kember, Leung, & Kwan, 2002).

In spite of these criticisms, empirical research has shown some SET tools directly measure quality of instruction (Barth, 2008; Remidios & Lieberman, 2008). Other empirical research does not support the above allegations that grading bias affects evaluations given (Boysen, 2008; Lawson, 2005).

Studies have shown that “students generally considered the improvement of teaching to be the most attractive outcome of a teaching evaluation system” (p 531, Chen & Hoshower, 1998), and support for student evaluations shows that faculty recognise the importance of the students’ involvement in shaping the module (Lill, 1979). However, the current system of only using SETs summatively at the end of module or degree programme risks a decrease student motivation to correctly fill in evaluation forms, therefore possibly reducing their meaningful input (Chen & Hoshower, 1998).

It is important for students to see that the information is taken seriously, as students tend to doubt this when completing end of semester evaluations (Brown, 2008). Mid Semester Evaluations (MSEs) on the other hand give students the impression their opinions matter, and give them a more positive view of their lecturer (Brown, 2008). Such within semester evaluations are best described as formative forms of evaluation of teaching (Aultman, 2006; Davis, 2009; Harrington & Reasons, 2005; Hounsell, 2009).

Unfortunately, given the organisational rather than teacher focus on SETs, it appears that Ramsden’s original hope for teaching evaluation in many cases has not been taken on board:

“Evaluation is not at heart about collecting evidence to justify oneself, nor about measuring the relative worth of courses or teachers. It is about coming to understand teaching in order to improve student learning” (p241, Ramsden, 1992).

This point of view from Ramsden is consistent with other views whereby the main purpose of teaching evaluation should be to allow the faculty member to use it as part of their reflective practice (Trigwell & Shale, 2004). This point of view tends to support a more formative than summative role for SETs. A formative evaluation would allow the academic to utilise the feedback to improve their lectures as they happen, rather than waiting until the end of a year or semester when what they actually did in a particular class may be difficult to recall.

While traditional SETs would be conducted as a form of summative evaluation, the purposes of this project is purely formative, as its goal is to allow participating faculty not to “assess the worth of success of the instruction [but to seek] information to improve it” (p 23, Tessmer, 1993). This allows faculty to return to the original objective of student evaluation: “the original purpose of student evaluations was to provide feedback to the instructor to improve his/her teaching” (p.243, Lill, 1979). Such formative objectives eliminate the need to consider the aforementioned criticisms of SETS outlined earlier.

An alternative approach: Formative SETs

Traditionally, evaluation in higher education has concentrated on the collection of data, rather than interpreting it (Ramsden, 1992). It is this lacking of interpretation that has limited the utility of evaluation as a contribution to reflective practice. The point of conducting formative SETs would not be to replace the summative evaluations conducted, but complement them: “Evaluation is a continuous and continuing process. It should occur before a course, during it and after it” (p242, Ramsden, 1992).

Formative SETs offer the benefit of being solely focussed on the needs of the lecturer. For example formative SETs offer a new lecturer the reassurance that they are doing the right things or an experienced lecturer an insight to how a new module is going (Hounsell, 2009). This is consistent with other views on the matter: “Evaluation at the end of a course, cannot replace evaluation during it” (p242, Ramsden, 1992). Feedback that occurs during a module is much more effective at providing information that can directly improve student learning (Davis, 2009; Ovando, 1994).

On-going, formative SETS could have a number of positive outcomes for the lecturer, from increasing “feelings of empowerment to those dedicated to the teaching profession” (Stronge, 1997, quoted in p 290, Bouchamma, 2005), facilitating faculty personal development

(Johnson, 2000), consequently improving student learning (Aultman, 2006; McKone, 1999; Peat & Franklin, 2002), increasing student achievement (Ebmeier, 2003) and possibly leading to changes in the course delivery and improved future student evaluations (Keutzer, 1993; Parayitam et al., 2007). Most of all however, such formative SETs provide a straight forward process to support faculty in their efforts to be reflective practitioners. Being a reflective practitioner is considered a pinnacle of teaching practice: “The desirability of reflective practice in teaching is assumed in the literature” (p68, Moon, 1999). Simply put, reflective practice involves a teacher realising that learning to teach is something that happens throughout their career, not just when they are taking their teaching qualification (McFarlane & Ottewill, 2001; Zeichner & Liston, 1996).

The potential contribution of weekly SETs in reflective practice

More broadly, the role the formative feedback process plays in being a reflective practitioner is not unlike the role that formative assessment plays in allowing students to learn. The difference for the faculty member in the comparison drawn above is that the feedback itself has to be elicited by the lecturer for their own purposes. For example, feedback for students can come from various sources including: people’s reactions, compliments or overall results (Race, 2005). Faculty can also use these sources for feedback as part of their learning, or reflective practice process. Such information could also be very valuable in a teaching portfolio, as student evaluations are highlighted as a key component of such portfolios (Fry & Ketteridge, 1999).

Race (2005) emphasises the importance of feedback occurring very soon after a particular activity in order to benefit learners the most. It is reasonable to expect that for the reflective practitioner, feedback be available as soon as possible after a particular event for the faculty member to gain the most benefit possible from the feedback; “It is recognised that there is a close relationship between reflection and evaluation” (p67, McFarlane & Ottewill, 2001).

Much of the literature on being a reflective practitioner focuses on how academics can foster reflective practices in their students (e.g., Bolton, 2005; Moon, 1999) or student teachers (e.g., Loughran, 1996). Literature that focuses on how academics may become reflective practitioners themselves is far less common and does tend to focus on early career academics (Brown, Fry, & Marshall, 1999). A book by Norton (2009) is a rare example. She questions

the lack of focus on academics being reflective practitioners: “We demand our students become lifelong learners, so why not ourselves?” (p22, Norton, 2009). Reflection is an important part of the learning process, and is an important stage outlined in Kolb’s Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). This reflection contributes to the learner then using this reflection to develop new ideas and put them into practice (Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

Reflective practice is something that can occur during a module, at the end of a module or over a complete programme of study (Brown et al., 1999). Table 1, below, highlights the forms of feedback identified in the literature that can be utilised in reflective practice.

Table 1: Types of feedback that can be used in reflective practice

Type of feedback	Sources
Index card for qualitative feedback	(Davis, 2009)
Evaluation questionnaire either distributed in class or on-line	(Davis, 2009; McFarlane & Ottewill, 2001)
Ask students to send a short message	(Davis, 2009)
Use a suggestion box	(Davis, 2009)
Focus groups or depth interviews	(Davis, 2009)
Establish student liaison committee	(Davis, 2009; McFarlane & Ottewill, 2001)

Although much of the literature alludes to the use of journals, notes or other qualitative forms of data (Bolton, 2005; Loughran, 1996; Moon, 1999), from a more broad perspective, formative evaluations can also contribute to a lecturer being a reflective practitioner (Bolton, 2005; Norton, 2009). Weekly SETs could be part of such formative evaluation while utilising a very efficient method of data collection. Moon (1999) refers to this as generating reflection by means of evaluative techniques. This is not to say that such reflective practice cannot be done with end of semester summative SETs or the other methods outlined above, it’s just that the sole purpose of formative, weekly SETs would be to provide an efficient, constant stream of information to allow regular reflective practice.

A formative SET as proposed in this project is quite complimentary to the idea of reflective practice during a module. For example, Brown et al (1999) suggest some areas that a lecturer could reflect on. These include the success of particular activities, the pace of the delivery and success of student engagement. Such information can be gleaned from a formative SET that could allow the lecturer to reflect on how to modify the class material for the following weeks.

This study addresses the time consumption demand by conducting the evaluations both electronically and weekly in order to gain on-going quantitative and qualitative feedback. As the use of a single source of feedback has been criticised (Timpson & Andrew, 1997), this study also aims to add another evaluation instrument to the single summative evaluation form currently administered by the university's quality assurance department.

Conducting SETs electronically was originally done on an experimental basis (Anderson, Cain, & Bird, 2005; Becker & Watts, 1999; Ha & Marsh, 1998; Harrington & Reasons, 2005; Ravelli, 2000), however, while not widely publicised in the literature it seems is becoming more commonplace (Sorenson & Reiner, 2003). With the increase in student numbers across many universities and constantly updated technologies, this practice has become less unheard of, especially in the sciences (Martín-Carrasco, Mediero, & Sánchez, 2010; Peat & Franklin, 2002) or in distance education (Harrington & Reasons, 2005; Ogunleye, 2010). Some benefits highlighted for conducting SETs electronically over paper SETs include efficiency savings (due to lower staffing costs, less photocopying and data entry) (Anderson et al., 2005) and improved quality and quantity of responses (Donovan, Mader, & Shinsky, 2006 ; Ravelli, 2000), however, both of these points have been debated (Sorenson & Reiner, 2003 ; Steinbart, 1989).

The most efficient means for conducting the SETs electronically was to utilise the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), Moodle. The next section considers VLEs and their utility for this purpose.

Virtual Learning Environments and E-Learning

Although the technology has been available for some time, e-learning has only really become a reality since personal computers have been powerful enough to handle the information that such programmes contain (Jelfs & Whitelock, 2000; Selverian & Hwang, 2003). While there are a range of technologies that can be used to enhance the learning environment (e.g. Bostock, 2007), for the purposes of this study a VLE is utilised. VLEs are now widely used to support distance learning courses (Littleton & Whitelock, 2004), such as those offered by Open University in the UK, but also as a secondary support for face to face teaching (Beatty & Ulazewicz, 2006), known as blended learning (Aspden & Helm, 2004).

VLEs have been used to support a wide range of educational activities, including: work based learning (Gray, 2001), to host quizzes and examinations (Bostock, 2007; Pavey & Garland, 2004), the creation of virtual laboratories, for example in chemistry (Dutton, Cheong, & Park, 2004), on-line student discussion and debate (Bostock, 2007; Gibbs, 1999; Thomas, 2002), sharing files (Beatty & Ulazewicz, 2006) and for providing materials to support traditional teaching methods (Bostock, 2007; Molesworth, 2004). Unlike most projects described in the literature, where web-based technology is utilised for the student's learning, in this project the academic is utilising the technology for reflective practice. In essence the teacher is using the technology to gain information to learn for themselves. While web-based or e-learning can support higher level learning (e.g., Laurillard, 2002), the majority of universities in the UK have utilised VLEs to enable students to access course materials (Browne, Jenkins, & Walker, 2006), which does not directly support higher level learning styles (e.g., Bostock, 1997). This project's use of the VLE will contribute to a faculty member's experiential learning process (Kolb & Kolb, 2005), supporting the idea that VLEs can be utilised to support a range of learning styles, including higher level learning.

VLEs have been reviewed very positively by some authors, almost being seen as the future of higher education (e.g. Bromham & Oprandi, 2006). The positive picture that has been painted is well debated however (e.g. Dutton et al., 2004). Some students were not fond of the VLE (Molesworth, 2004; Whitworth, 2005), and sometimes faculty have resisted as their workload for VLE upkeep has not been accounted for (Laurillard, 2007; Molesworth, 2004). These examples could be argued to be part of the politics of these organisations resisting

VLE use and implementation (Whitworth, 2005). Regardless of the resistance discussed, almost all universities in the UK had adopted a VLE by 2005 (Browne et al., 2006).

The most commonly adopted VLE platforms in the UK are Blackboard and WebCT (Browne et al., 2006). Moodle is much less common (Browne et al., 2006), but has been adopted at Harper Adams University College. Moodle was developed in Australia by Martin Dougiamas and has become popular because it is either free or low cost to universities (Schmalfeldt, 2006; Simba, 2003).

Of particular interest to this project, Moodle has a feedback tool, on which a questionnaire could be presented to students when accessing educational materials for their classes. This project explores the utilisation of this tool to conduct student evaluations. The benefit of using a feedback tool is the simplicity with which faculty can control the evaluation process themselves, and use the tool within the VLE to view results without having to share them with anyone else.

While there are a number of studies that explore conducting SETs electronically, they are usually summative in nature (e.g. Anderson et al., 2005; Donovan et al., 2006; Martín-Carrasco et al., 2010). The link between conducting SETs electronically and utilising them formatively has rarely been explored in the past (Ha & Marsh, 1998; Harrington & Reasons, 2005; Ravelli, 2000). In previous research, it has been common for a complex software tool to be designed to attach to a university's VLE, enabling web-based summative evaluation of teaching (Ha & Marsh, 1998; Martín-Carrasco et al., 2010). One considered formative evaluations using a web based questionnaire tool (Ravelli, 2000). Such tools would be far too complex for the average faculty member to install themselves. A benefit of what was proposed for this project is the simplicity of developing a questionnaire template as part of the existing VLE's feedback tool, meaning faculty had both the option of installing the evaluation tool into their VLE pages as is, or alternatively modifying it to suit their needs.

Aim and objective of this project

The aim of this study is to understand whether the use of a weekly formative SET is a viable contribution to module improvement from a faculty and student point of view and reflective practice from a faculty point of view. The objective of this research is to understand whether faculty members find immediate formative student evaluation useful in improving current

lecture materials whilst still fresh in their minds. Such feedback could provide lecturers with immediate feedback on:

- Whether their lectures are pitched at the right level of background knowledge for students
- Whether the students are finding the balance between actual formal lecturing and other discussion based activities appropriate for material being presented
- Whether the material was presented in an interesting and challenging manner
- Whether the particular class material is linked well to materials previously taught in earlier weeks (or previously taken modules)

This project aims to evaluate the use of an on-line, weekly student evaluation tool. In itself it is not an academic piece of research but research conducted to consider the success of a programme. In this regard, programme evaluation methods and approaches need to be considered.

Programme evaluation is the “systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programmes to make judgements about the programme, improve programme effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future programming” (p.10 Patton, 2002). This project aims to explore the success of the implementation of the SET but also consider how it may be improved for the future.

Categorising this evaluation is not as straightforward as one might expect. This project could be categorised as an Action Research project from one perspective as it is a “form of reflective inquiry that enables practitioners to better realise such qualities in their practice” (p.8, Mathison, 2005). It meets the criteria set for typical characteristics of action research in teaching and learning (Norton, 2009). On the other hand, Patton (2002) suggests that Action Research is one that aims to solve a specific problem, which is not the case in this project. From a programme evaluation perspective, this project best fits a Formative Evaluation, being one that aims to gain information to improve a programme (Patton, 2002; Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, 2004; Smith, 2001). In this case, the programme being evaluated is the programme for weekly, formative SETs placed in The University’s VLE.

In any evaluation, just like any piece of academic research there are research questions to be considered; in evaluation research, these are known as ‘evaluation questions’ (Rossi et al., 2004). Given the project aims listed above, the evaluation questions relate to two sets of stakeholders. Key research questions were devised based on the evaluation objectives, and not surprisingly were similar to research questions in evaluations of similar projects in the past (e.g., Ravelli, 2000). Table 2, below, highlights the major research question to both groups.

Table 2: Evaluation Questions by Stakeholder Group

Student Stakeholder Group	Lecturer Stakeholder Group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do students find filling out SETs each week onerous? • Do students believe the lecturer was utilising the results of the evaluations to make improvements to the way in which classes were run? • Were there any technical problems that made completing the SET difficult? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did faculty find the feedback useful to them? • How did faculty utilise the information gleaned from the evaluations? • Was the administration of setting up and maintaining the evaluation tool onerous? • Were there any reasons why faculty would or wouldn't continue to utilise such SETs?

Given the exploratory nature of the above evaluation questions, a qualitative research method was proposed. The description of this method is discussed after the next section which deals with the development of the SET questionnaire.

SET Questionnaire Development

The inspiration for this project came from a lecturer conducting mid-module feedback forms with open ended questions. The responses of the students were positive and detailed; it is believed they felt they could have an impact on how the module was run. This experience suggested it might be worth doing formative evaluation throughout the module.

Ramsden (1992) highlights six key principles of effective teaching in higher education. Those that pertain to the effectiveness of teaching should be considered in any attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching in any particular session. These include:

1. Making the session interesting
2. Making information understandable or clear
3. Concern for student learning

4. Intellectual challenge
5. Clear goals
6. Active engagement of learner

Given the aim of the project is to consider regular formative feedback, point 5 in the above list is not something that would be measured, as it would be more appropriate for a global evaluation of a module. The others however are areas that could be assessed regularly using a formative feedback form.

A review of literature was conducted to consider what a student evaluation of teaching questionnaire should consist of. There has been research conducted on what evaluation items students can provide useful feedback to (Green, Calderon, & Reider, 1998). However, often students are asked to evaluate their teachers on constructs they do not understand clearly (Scriven, 1995). Therefore, it was important to research what types of questions were both measurable by the students, and also useful for feedback to the lecturer. Calderon et al (1996, cited in Green et al., 1998) noted students were unable to effectively assess items beyond their scope of knowledge, including:

1. Sufficiency of course content
2. Whether course materials are current
3. Instructors knowledge of the subject matter
4. Appropriateness of course objectives and content
5. Appropriateness of technology used in the course

On the other hand students are in a position to reliably evaluate some aspects of a teacher's performance such as timeliness, whether they ask relevant questions (Scriven, 1995).

A list of possible questions and themes was compiled using a variety of sources (Barlow Hills, Naegle, & Bartkus, 2009; Becker & Watts, 1999; H. J. Brightman, 2006; H. J. Brightman, Elliott, & Bhada, 1993; Lill, 1979; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007; Parayitam et al., 2007; Paswan & Young, 2002; Race, 2005; Wollongong, 2008), previous SETs, and faculty feedback, before the final questionnaire was assembled.

After review of the literature, it was noted that most of the questions asked on SETs were related to the instructors' ability to communicate, teach, or present the material to the student

(Becker & Watts, 1999; H. J. Brightman, 2006; Lill, 1979; Parayitam et al., 2007; Race, 2005). One open-ended question was added at the end of the questionnaire to allow for any other feedback the student wished to make.

Table 3 below highlights the project objectives and the questionnaire themes that developed from both these objectives and the secondary research conducted in the area.

Table 3: Project objectives and questionnaire themes

Objectives	Themes:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore which particular teaching and learning activities utilised during the module students believe helped them understand and critically evaluate the material being presented • Whether their lectures are pitched at the right level of background knowledge for students • Whether the students are finding the balance between actual formal lecturing and other discussion based activities appropriate for material being presented • Whether the material was presented in an interesting and challenging manner • Whether the particular class material is linked well to materials previously taught in earlier weeks (or previously taken modules) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectures were interesting and/or uninspiring and provided a range of views on a subject area • Lectures pitched at the right level • Balance between actual formal lecturing and other discussion based activities • Material presented in an interesting and challenging matter • Lecturer encouraged student to think and learn independently • Particular class materials linked well to materials previously taught in earlier weeks (or other modules) (or real world) • Additional Theme – Communication ability

Another issue for questionnaire design was the subject of open or closed ended questions. While closed-ended questions make the questionnaire quicker to fill out from the student perspective, open-ended questions provide the opportunity for students to provide explanatory feedback. Mostly close-ended questions were used, as this practice is most common (Becker & Watts, 1999; Lill, 1979; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007), usually with an arbitrary rating from 1-5 Likert scale, anchored by Strongly Agree and Strongly Disagree on either end (e.g., Paswan & Young, 2002). This questionnaire was pilot tested during the first few weeks of study by the students before being finalised for use throughout the year. The final questionnaire used can be found in Appendix 2.

This common questionnaire was administered to each lecturer to use as a guide, though they were encouraged to add questions that were more specific to their module (for example, adding questions about practical or laboratory work if relevant).

Ethical Considerations for SET

Any evaluation can be subject to a number of ethical dilemmas. Researching learning and teaching can prove even more of a challenge because of the power roles in the student-teacher relationship (Norton, 2009). In this research project, the following actions were taken to ensure that the three basic principles that cover most codes of ethical practice were considered (Norton, 2009); informed consent, privacy and confidentiality and protection from harm. Table 4, below demonstrates how these three basic ethical principles were addressed.

Table 4: Addressing of Ethical Principles

Informed consent	Initially, it was proposed that students would have to fill in the questionnaire as a condition of downloading their class notes off the VLE Moodle. However, the British Educational Research Association deemed this unacceptable practise: “researchers must not use coercion or duress of any form to persuade participants” to provide feedback (p7, BERA, 2004).
Privacy and confidentiality	Moodle offers an anonymous feedback tool
Protection from harm	As the feedback was gained with complete anonymity, the likelihood of any individual student being identified and harmed was very limited.

The VLE enabled respondents to the SET to remain anonymous. As the faculty members registered as administrators for the module on the VLE were the only ones who could see the results, the results were also confidential and not available to other faculty or line managers. Faculty were, however, encouraged to share the summarised results with students as this would encourage them to complete the evaluation (Davis, 2009).

Student Motivation

The issue of motivating students to fill out the SET had to be considered. “Since students’ input is the root and source of student evaluation data, meaningful and active participation of students is essential” (p.532, Chen & Hoshower, 1998). This suggests that students who are not motivated may not provide meaningful information (Small & Mahon, 2005). In order to

encourage students to complete the evaluation, it was recommended faculty place the evaluation in the VLE so that it would appear just prior to students downloading key materials each week. However, in line with the ethical principles discussed earlier, it was pointed out to students that filling out the survey was not mandatory during the first few weeks of class.

Another consideration, particularly with this study, where students are filling out the same evaluation every week, “there is the potential for students to become uninterested in the evaluation process simply because of over familiarity with the instrument and the way they fill it out” (p.318, Divoky, 1995).

The theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) could imply that the students’ attitude towards the project (their motivation to participate) would influence their behaviour (filling in the questionnaires) (Small & Mahon, 2005). However, the assumption that attitudes and beliefs precede behaviour has had little empirical support (Barwise & Ehrenberg, 1985; Foxall & Bhate, 1993) and has been questioned for some time (Bird & Ehrenberg, 1966; Foxall, 2002). Although from a consumer behaviour perspective, another school of thought finds behaviour has a larger impact on beliefs than beliefs on behaviour (Winchester, Romaniuk, & Bogomolova, 2008); therefore, the students will gain additional motivation to complete the questionnaires once they see their comments are taken seriously and incorporated into the lecturers’ future material. Expectancy theory also reasons that students will “continuously evaluate the outcomes of [their] behaviour and subjectively assesses the likelihood that each of his or her possible actions will lead to various outcomes” (p.534, Chen & Hoshower, 1998) again suggesting that students will be continuously motivated by reaching positive outcomes through their actions (their suggestions incorporated into the material).

Unlike an end of semester SET, conducting formative SETs during the semester offers the students the chance to see not only overall results of the SET presented back to them, but also the subsequent changes to the way classes are run in the future. Prior research on formative teaching evaluations suggests this would provide further motivation to complete the SETs when compared to the regular end of semester SETs (Keutzer, 1993). It should be noted however, that the one similar exploratory study previously conducted had very low response rates because the students believed if the lecturer was doing fine, there was no need to

provide the feedback; “The facilitator’s final report suggests that students expressed the belief that if they were content with their teachers’ performance, there was no reason to complete the survey” (p7, Ravelli, 2000).

The questionnaire was administered to the students via VLE Moodle. The students were told about the study during the first few weeks of classes, then continuously encouraged to complete the questionnaire each week while downloading their lecture notes. Filling in the questionnaire was voluntary, so it was expected that not all students would participate and different students would fill in the questionnaire each week, depending on their motivation and interest. The lecturer was responsible for inputting the questionnaire into their Moodle page, and the results were only fed back to that particular instructor, not shared throughout the department or with their supervisors.

A training session was run for faculty who were interested in participating in the programme, so that they were familiar with how to implement the evaluation tool within the VLE. An easy to follow instructions sheet was also given for future reference (See Appendix 4).

3. EVALUTION METHOD

There are a large variety of research methods available to the evaluation researcher. The major method choice presented to the researcher is that of research paradigm, quantitative or qualitative (Clarke, 2003).

While quantitative methods may help determine the success of a particular programme, they don't offer an insight into the social processes involved (Clarke, 2003), nor unlikely to offer serendipitous insight into how it may be improved. In the context of this particular evaluation, there were two clear reasons why the method should tend towards qualitative methods, rather than quantitative methods.

The first is that major objective of the evaluation is exploratory. Qualitative methods are commonly utilised in evaluations because they capture the story of the programmes development (Patton, 2002). Such a method allows for depth of understanding and is more likely to allow serendipitous or unexpected findings (Patton, 2002).

The second is that the programme only involved a small number of participant faculty members, so drawing a large representative sample to conduct statistical analysis on would not be possible.

In depth interviews

Qualitative in depth interviews are a one of the most common methods of data collection in programme evaluation (Clarke, 2003). They enable an in depth understanding of the perspectives of programme participants to be considered (Clarke, 2003; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). They are particularly useful in studies where the discovery of new information is sought (Norton, 2009).

Specifically, Standardised Open Ended Interviews were conducted (Patton, 2002), also known as Structured Interviews (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Such interviews offer the benefit of focussing respondents on the same issues and therefore providing comparable results across interviews (Clarke, 2003).

Sample

While a single case study would allow for more in depth questioning and analysis, the disadvantage is that a single case does not consider sub settings (Miles & Huberman, 1994). To allow for the possibility of such sub settings, purposive (also known as purposeful) sampling of a small number of respondents was conducted to ensure a breadth of experiences (Denzin, 1998 #220; Patton, 2002 #149). This method is also known as the multiple or collective case sampling method (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The benefit of such a multiple case approach is that it not only allows an in-depth understanding of the phenomena under investigation, but also a constant comparison across cases in different situations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This research utilised a form of stratified purposeful sampling, whereby participants are recruited from certain groups to ensure some variation of experience (Patton, 2002).

The criterion for the selection of faculty and modules was that the participants should come from diverse backgrounds so a broad range of data could be collected (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Yao & Grady, 2005). As the study was exploratory, representativeness was not a major criterion for the selection of participants. In the multiple case sampling approach, the aim is to add new participants because they will be able to bring a different perspective to the issue at hand (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Although faculty participants were recruited by putting an email call out to all faculty members within the institution, a sample of faculty from different departments, seniority, gender, and experience volunteered for the study. Student respondents were recruited to ensure a representation of both local and international students in different areas of study. The total number of participants was limited to six faculty and seven students so the amount of qualitative feedback from the interviews would not be overwhelming. This sample size is considered appropriate for a multiple case approach, as it is suggested that a sample size of any higher than fifteen can become unwieldy during the analysis stage (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Instrumentation

Once the method and sampling were determined, appropriate instrumentation had to be considered. Based on the fact that a multiple case study approach using in-depth interviews had been decided upon, the most appropriate level of instrumentation was to use a structured

aide memoire (Miles & Huberman, 1994). An aide memoire was developed for both faculty (see Appendix 2) and students (see Appendix 3). These aide memoires had a list of open-ended questions and probing points that were used to guide the conversations during interviews; such probing points can be important in allowing the interviewer to draw out further information on any particular topic (Clarke, 2003; Patton, 2002). The discussion questions on the aide memoire for faculty and students are highlighted in Table 5, below.

Table 5: Evaluation Questions by Stakeholder Group

Faculty Aide Memoire	Student Aide Memoire
1. What has been your teaching experience?	1. What has been your previous experience with evaluating lecturers?
2. What has been your experience with student evaluation of teaching?	2. How often did you fill in the evaluation tool? If not, why not?
3. What inspired you to get involved with this Aspire project and what were you hoping to achieve?	3. Did you see any results from your lecturer/classes from your evaluation? Or: What do you think they did with the evaluations?
4. What do you actually do with the online weekly student evaluation feedback?	4. Did this response (or lack of response) inspire you to continue/start the evaluations?
5. What barriers have you encountered in your use of student evaluation feedback to improve your teaching? What suggestions do you have that may enable you to make more effective use of student evaluation feedback?	5. Were there any barriers to you filling in the evaluation tool?
6. After this project is over, would you continue to use online weekly student evaluations?	6. What changes, if any, would you suggest to this tool?
	7. Would you like to continue using this tool?

The probing points which have been excluded from the above table have been included in the full aide memoire included in the Appendices. The interviews were audio recorded so that they could be reviewed and key themes transcribed at a later date with accuracy (Patton, 2002).

Analysis of Qualitative Data

While qualitative data enables the elicitation of rich descriptions and context surrounding responses given, it has a number of disadvantages or difficulties that need to be considered, particularly during the analysis stage (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The recordings of interviews were reviewed by the researchers. A thematic analysis was conducted to explore for common patterns arising from the interview transcripts (Norton, 2009), which allowed for data reduction (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This style of analysis strategy is known as inductive analysis or creative synthesis, whereby the researcher aims to immerse themselves in the data in order to discover patterns and themes (Patton, 2002).

The thematic analysis was conducted using two checklist matrices, one for faculty, and one for students, whereby quotes from respondents that related to similar themes were placed into tables (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The questions and probing points outlined on the aide memoire were used as a starting point for the checklist matrices. These allowed an efficient way of comparing results across cases and highlighting contrasts and comparisons (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

A key aspect of ensuring validity of results in qualitative analysis is to ensure that the interpretation made of data is not unique to the analyst. Qualitative researchers address this issue by ensuring Triangulation: “Triangulation is generally considered a process of multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation” (p.97, Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Analysis was triangulated by having two researchers conduct and analyse the interviews (Clarke, 2003), known as investigator triangulation (Patton, 2002). For example, three faculty and three student interviews were conducted by one interviewer, and three faculty and four student interviews were conducted by the other. These were then analysed in groups of faculty and students by each analyst, which were then reviewed by both analysts. This ensures a form of intersubjective certifiability (Sharp & Eddy, 2000), where two or more researchers reach the same conclusions after reviewing the same data.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Faculty Interviews

The lecturers represented a number of departments within the overall university college, representing Business, IT, Veterinary Nurses, and Environmental Studies. Most of the respondents had only been teaching for a year or two, and two of the respondents had over ten years experience. Two of the respondents were male, and four were female, and the ages varied from earlier teaching career 20s to later teaching career 50s. While there has been much research on the impact of lecturer specific variables on the outcome of evaluation, for example female or male, 'hot or not', years of teaching experience, relationship with the teacher and other variables such as class size (Barth, 2008; McPherson, 2006; Riniolo, Johnson, Sherman, & Misso, 2006; Timpson & Andrew, 1997), this particular evaluation tool was not interested in the differences between the evaluations of the participants. Instead, this study focused on the utility of these evaluations to the lecturer, rather than the evaluation scores, as the lecturer was in the best position to determine what scores were deemed acceptable or not acceptable.

Faculty Theme 1: Previous experience with evaluations

All of the respondents had experience with using student evaluation forms prior to beginning this study, and all had experience with the typical end of year evaluations conducted university wide by the university's quality assurance department. These evaluations tended to rate the overall module on a score of 1-5, and that information was fed back to the lecturer(s) of the module. One of the more experienced faculty observed that such evaluations were common: *"Everywhere I've taught has had them, and they run them at the end of the year"*. This is consistent with the literature that suggests SETs are widespread (Becker & Watts, 1999; Davis, 2009; Kozub, 2010; Lill, 1979; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007; Parayitam et al., 2007; Read et al., 2001; Yao & Grady, 2005). The overall impression was that while the end of year forms were a handy tool, they often did not provide enough information to be of greater value: *"I look at them, take in the information that's there... because the form in my opinion doesn't provide a lot of detail"*. This comment is consistent with some of the criticism of summative SETs, which are there to serve the organisation rather than the faculty member (Hounsell, 2009; Tennant et al., 2010).

One participant went straight to the quantitative information when reviewing the results of their evaluations: *“The quantitative information ...just know you got a score”*. At the university in question, students also can provide qualitative information to further expand on why they gave the score they did. This information tended to be more useful for reflection on teaching practice to all respondents, rather than the quantitative score. *“First year I got comments back that I wasn’t very approachable, and that was my nerves I think, I usually set them a task in the tutorial and sit back and let them do it. This year I’m going around and working with them... so I’m much more sort of involved with the class... that seems to be more appreciated than just sitting down at the desk”*. This is consistent with the arguments made in the literature that a range of information should be sort to encourage reflective practice (Brown et al., 1999).

Consistent with experts in the area (McFarlane & Ottewill, 2001; Race, 2005), who suggest there is a need for immediacy in feedback in the reflective practice cycle, the overall impression of the summative evaluations distributed at the end of the year was that they were conducted too late in the module to be of any use to those students who gave the scores: *“For one thing, the timing of them – at the end of the year! It’s too bloody late to do anything about it! It’s difficult to go back and say ‘how might I have needed to do that differently?’”*. They also tended to not be specific enough in reference to any particular changes that could be made to any lecture or how the faculty member could improve any particular sessions.

Faculty theme 2: Motivation to be part of the project

The respondents were inspired to begin this research project with a variety of different views. One of the less experienced faculty saw it as a way to ensure she was doing a good job: *“...it’s was more that I think personally I want to students to think I’m doing a good job, and I want that feedback from them to find out if I am or not, or find out some ways to improve my approach”*. Some were interested in getting feedback from the students in regards to changing the classes for the next years cohort, some liked the idea of getting regular feedback from students, and one of the more experienced faculty was interested in meeting like-minded people who are more reflective about what they do. Those respondents who had been teaching for a longer period of time seemed to be more concerned with making small adjustments to their teaching, and reflecting about what elements made the students more interested in their module. The more inexperienced respondents seemed to be more

concerned with making sure their lectures were okay, and making sure their teaching approach was appropriate for the students they were teaching: *“I’ve already done some of my own feedback tool... a project that would give me even more feedback would be theoretically even more useful... I think because I’m so new at this I find myself constantly second guessing ‘am I doing things right, are they getting anything out of it... do they understand what I’m saying”*”.

Faculty Theme 3: Use of on-line feedback

The respondents were also asked what they did with the on-line feedback. One interesting find was that each respondent used a different technique for eliciting feedback from the students using the on-line tool. Half of the lecturers did not provide printed out notes in class and the students were responsible for downloading them from Moodle, the university’s VLE. In these cases, the evaluation tool was linked to the notes, and the students were faced with a ‘barrier’ of the evaluation tool each week prior to getting their notes (though they could bypass the evaluation tool and not answer the questions): *“I get the impression that they will fill the evaluation form in just because it’s there and it’s a barrier. They’ll complete it ‘yes everything’s brilliant’, then click on the link to get access to their notes”*. Another respondent linked the evaluation tool to extended notes on Moodle, but provided a short form of notes during class: *“It’s generally been people who’ve missed a session... I came away with the impression they went through the evaluation form just to get to the lecture notes, so it’s all very positive stuff with no additional written comments”*. Yet another lecturer linked them to activities, which the students were to re-visit once the lectures were all completed: *“I’ll be taking them back to some of the supplementary materials. I’m going to revisit these evaluations. Because I think it puts them in a situation of being... they will now have the value of hindsight. They haven’t appreciated a reason to go and look at that material... I’m sure I’ll get a higher response rate... I’m very keen to re-evaluate how they found the sessions... their feeling about that”*. One respondent didn’t link the evaluation tool to any Moodle items, and simply reminded the students to fill it in each week.

There were mixed responses to what each lecturer did with the feedback tool, but this didn’t seem to vary with what style they used to get the information via links on Moodle. Overall, the answers were not as specific as they would have liked: *“I thought they would give me specific feedback on specific lectures, and that would allow me to make them clearer.”*

However, some respondents did find value in the feedback tool. *“Having seen that comment that questions weren’t stretching, or they didn’t feel they had an opportunity to... whatever... I probably went completely overboard [laughs]. I’m conscious that I didn’t walk around a lot... I tried to do the eye contact thing... and I did find myself asking...you fall into that trap where you tend ask the people who you know will respond... it did encourage me briefly ...to be more inclusive.”*

Faculty Theme 4: Student motivation to complete evaluation

An interesting find was that regardless of the method used for eliciting feedback from the students, all faculty members struggled with a lack of response rate from students. All participants were disheartened by this factor. *“I would only have 10 students going on to Moodle to access the lecture notes... and then say half of those students would do it... that ends up being a 25% response rate for the overall class... makes you wonder if that was representativeness enough to be able to do anything with the feedback... those students that respond, is there a reason they’re responding?”*. This result is interesting, given the earlier conflicting views in the literature about student motivation. The discussion on expectancy theory leading students to be motivated by seeing their input into the lecture being taken seriously may have led some students to keep using the evaluation tool, but didn’t inspire new students to sign up. This supports the approach taken by (Chen & Hoshower, 1998). On the contrary, it is possible that students did not bother completing the evaluations because they were content with the way classes were being run, which has been found in previous research similar to this (Ravelli, 2000).

Some questioned the students’ ability to be critical when evaluating a lecture, as most of the feedback was very positive: *“I’ve gone into class and actually shown them the results from the previous week, and made the comment that everything seems to be fine again... try to encourage them that way...I’m not sure how you get students to make more comments.”* However, one new lecturer commented that even if there weren’t many comments made or many students participating, you still had an overall view of how the lectures were going.

There were also two comments made about the immediacy of students responding to the feedback, and the question of whether this introduced a bias into their feedback. One respondent thought that because the students tended to not fill in the evaluation forms

immediately following a class, this decreased the likelihood of good feedback: *“So I thought you feel you lost some value when it’s retrospective comments about something that’s happened earlier in the week.”* However, another respondent thought that the break between having the lecture and evaluating it gave the student time to reflect on the material, and therefore the feedback was more holistic: *“When they think about it in their own time you do get better feedback”*. The other respondents did not comment on the timing of the evaluation tool.

Faculty Theme 5: Barriers to using evaluation tool

When asked about the barriers to using the evaluation tool, the respondents tended to agree that one barrier was the lack of student response. While they were positive about the evaluation tool itself, they questioned its usefulness in light of a small number of students actually utilising the tool. Another comment made by a number of the respondents was the lack of critical evaluation of each lecture: *“I think the problem is the students are apathetic, I just don’t think they care enough to make comments that are useful... their view on the way teaching works is, maybe they don’t see it as a two way communication”*. This is consistent with the research by Chen (1998) on the essential components of “meaningful and active participation” (p.532) when looking at the link between motivation and outcome. In this case, that type of participation did not seem to be elicited by the overall student responses to the evaluation. One respondent agreed with this, and even taught some non-updated lecturers to see if the students would respond: *“almost like a test to see if they were doing it right, and found that the feedback didn’t actually change as much as I would have thought that it should”*. This is consistent with research by Divoky (1995) in that students generally became more uninterested with the evaluation tool because it was too familiar.

Another respondent admitted one barrier was their motivation to continually use the tool and input the feedback into Moodle, though their reasoning tended to be that it was more of a psychological barrier (just one more thing to do on top of the already hectic workload) rather than the tool was difficult to set up, though another respondent commented how quick and easy it was to set up and that not knowing how to do it couldn’t be used as an excuse: *“The fact that you’ve done the questionnaire makes it much easier... if you’d asked me to set up my own questions I’m absolutely certain I’d of never got round to doing it”*. These results

suggest that choosing to use a template questionnaire within The University's VLE made the process much easier for faculty.

Faculty Theme 6: Future of the evaluation tool

The interview was closed with one more question: *After this project is over, would you continue to use online weekly student evaluations?* Surprisingly, even though most comments on the outcomes of the feedback were not positive, most respondents would still continue using an on-line evaluation tool. There were a few comments about how frequently they would use the tool, and most agreed that weekly was possibly too often, and a more flexible approach would be worthwhile: *"I'm keen to actually evaluate...this focuses very much on what went on in the session... there are some other things I'm keen to experiment with... I thought our students would be more digitally natured than they are"*. A few mentioned that perhaps the inclusion of more qualitative comments around each question would allow for more detailed feedback, but they questioned the student's likelihood of responding to more detailed questionnaires.

There were some serendipitous findings to the study. One lecturer, when questioned on what they did with the feedback noted: *"To be fair I think it's not so much what have I been doing with the feedback tool, for me it was the fact that I knew that feedback was coming, I consciously changed my lecture before... I had been evaluated on it... knowing those were the questions they were going to be a answering I actually changed the lectures that I ran from last year so that they would be able to answer those questions positively"*. Thus the evaluation tool provided a sense of motivation, and the questions themselves provided scope for what elements should be changed. This was a point that a couple other of the lecturers noted on as well. Another lecturer noted that: *"one of the questions in particular asked if they were inspired to go and learn more, perhaps wasn't something that I'd identified as a key thing that I should be doing... which is of course in a final year group is something hopefully very important. I think I was quite interested to find out whether I had done enough of a push to get them to go out and look for themselves at the end of a lecture"*.

Student Interviews

The criterion for the selection of students was that the participants should come from diverse backgrounds so a broad range of data could be collected (Yao & Grady, 2005). As the study

was exploratory, representativeness was not a major criterion for the selection of participants. The total number of participants was limited to seven so the amount of qualitative feedback from the interviews would not be overwhelming. Students from both genders, different education levels and backgrounds volunteered for the study. Five of the students interviewed were local UK students while two were international students from China.

Student Theme 1: Previous experience with SETs

Initially, respondents were asked to discuss their experiences with student evaluations of teaching. Consistent with research suggesting SETs are widespread (Becker & Watts, 1999; Davis, 2009; Kozub, 2010; Lill, 1979; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007; Parayitam et al., 2007; Read et al., 2001; Yao & Grady, 2005), all respondents had experience filling out some form of evaluation for classes previously taken: *“Generally it’s an A4 sheet at the end of the module...did you enjoy this module, what did you enjoy about this module, how would you make this better”*. Such evaluations were not just common to British student experiences, as the Chinese student commented that she’d been subjected to evaluations in China as well: *“Paper questionnaire required about each lecturer and each course...questions refer to the content of lectures...how good the class, how good the assignment, the lecturers knowledge”*. The British students also believed that they had other forms of feedback available than filling out summative evaluations. At the university in question, students are allocated personal tutors that they can raise issues with: *“normally if there’s any problems, I will tell her”*.

Their feelings were mixed as to how they believed traditional evaluations were utilised by staff. Some students were confident that faculty took on board feedback they had received: *“Some seem to take them on board and try and change their teaching patterns”*. Others were less convinced: *“I don’t know. In China it’s used less maybe. Maybe we do the evaluation but they don’t do something with that”*.

Even when they believed that the lecturers would take on board comments given in summative evaluations, some students were concerned that being at the end of a teaching period, they would not benefit from any changes made. One female British student commented: *“I kind of think that...you are writing down what you feel is good, but it’s not going to help you. It might help the next year of people, but it’s not really going to make much of a difference to you”*. A male British student confirmed this concern but saw the

greater good of how a summative evaluation can help future students: *“I don’t really see the point, it’s not going to benefit us at all, it’s a bit selfish...I would do it because it would help next year”*. This finding is consistent with literature presented suggesting that students would not benefit from end of module or end of degree evaluations given that the lecturer cannot improve on a module already completed for the current cohort of students (Becker & Watts, 1999; Davis, 2009). No respondent indicated concerns raised in the literature such as students evaluations being used for punishment for a high workload (Bryce-Wilhelm, 2004) or that the students did not take them seriously (Dunegan & Hrivnak, 2003). There was, however, one Chinese student who suggested there was concern about how valid responses on summative evaluations are: *“because we always evaluate the lecture after the exams, maybe there’s more emotions”*. This is consistent with the suggestion that students who have had poor grades may utilise the SET to punish a lecturer (Boysen, 2008; Marks, 2000; McPherson, 2006).

Student Theme 2: Motivation to fill out weekly formative SET

In regards to the formative evaluation tool developed, there was a mixed response to how motivated students were to fill it out. Some were happy to fill out the evaluation tool all the time: *“Yes, if I went to print out the notes, I’d fill it out, definitely every other week or so”*. Other respondents found their motivation to fill out the questionnaire reduce as the year went on: *“I started filling them in at the beginning of the year and as the year has been going on I’ve been filling them in less eventually stopped”*. This is consistent with previous research that suggested that students don’t take them seriously, as they see them as a chore (Dunegan & Hrivnak, 2003). One student saw a real benefit of having a simple evaluation tool for solving problems quickly: *“I think it would be quite a good tool...we all do have problems in lectures and its normally quite a big consensus of the course or the group...normally people make it known don’t they...but maybe if it was publicised or if everyone knew that if you did have a problem this is a really quick way to do it...rather than people moaning about what is happening for weeks and then someone telling someone...if it was made quite clear to people that it was on line, all modules and if you have problems you can go here then the lecturer will know straight away and he can change it for the next week”*.

Further probing was conducted with respondents to find out why or why they hadn’t completed the evaluations each week. Although it was voluntary to fill out, and faculty had

mentioned this in class, a number of students thought they were being required to complete the evaluation tool in order to get their lecture note handouts: *“I thought we had to do it to get our notes...well that’s what we thought anyway, but we’ve just said that to someone and they’ve said no, you can just get the PDFs”*. Others were happy to complete the evaluation tool even knowing they had the option of not doing so. One Chinese student was filling out the tool: *“almost every week”*. When asked why she didn’t fill it out on occasion, it was due to a lack of time: *“I am busy”*. One student commented that she thought linking it to the lecture note download in the VLE had been a good idea: *“it just becomes part of the routine you get into and print out your notes...and I think it helps because you think back to your lecture then”*.

When asked why some respondents had reduced the frequency of completing the evaluation tool there was a range of reasons given. Some found they didn’t have time because the evaluation tool was linked to lecture notes which were often downloaded at printed off minutes before the lecture: *“we print our notes just before the lecture, so you’re always printing them off the morning”*. Others became tired of the monotony of filling out the same questions every week: *“to get our lecture notes we just clicked N/A, N/A, N/A...just to get the notes because it was a pain filling it in every week”*. An additional issue was that even when students were filling out the evaluation tool, the consistency of answering each week was a little monotonous: *“it’s all the same every time. There’s very little variation of my answers for individual lessons unless something specific stood out”*. One student thought the evaluation tool itself did not give him an opportunity to give precise feedback about the lectures.

Student Theme 3: Faith in faculty use of SET information

Respondents were asked whether they believed the lecturers were utilising the information. Some respondents were positive they could see changes: *“Second week, she did a lot more interactive stuff in the lecture”*. When referring to the same lecturer, another student noted changes later in the semester as well: *“I think so... [She] radically changed in the last couple of weeks the way she has been doing stuff, more discussion groups”*. This aspect was seen as a key expectation if students were to fill out the evaluation tool. One Chinese student noted that she thought the point of the evaluations were to: *“get significant information and improve their lectures...if she doesn’t do that the evaluation is useless”*. One of the British

students aired a similar thought: *“I wouldn’t have put the same effort into doing the questionnaire if I wasn’t sure there would be a payoff”*. These comments led the interviewers to understand the importance of ensuring that students were aware that faculty were taking on board the feedback coming from the evaluation tool. Respondents who raised this were asked whether the results of the evaluation had been discussed openly in class. Most respondents seemed to remember some discussion of results, even if it was only once. Others distinctly remembered occasions when the lecturer had openly discussed comments received: *“[he] used to go at the start of every lecture and he used to bring it up on the board and he would ask people why they didn’t fill in the comments...if they said it was bad, but didn’t tell him why, he was trying to get out of them what it was... he used to start every lecture and spend the first ten minutes of every lecture to find out what was wrong with last week”*. Other respondents confirmed this memory with this particular lecturer: *“[He] brings them up on the screen in the lecture sometimes...he did it at the beginning of class. He brought it up once that if anyone had anything useful to say it would be useful if they wrote it down. He noticed a couple were on disagree, but no one had written down what the problem was so he said it would be helpful if they did and that it was anonymous”*. Having faculty present the results back to students may have contributed to a small number of them continuing to complete them, as previous research suggests that one benefit of formative SETs is that it gives students the impression their opinions matter (Brown, 2008).

Student Theme 4: Evidence of faculty reflective practice

Some respondents believed they could see changes being made to the teaching style directly as a result of them filling out the evaluation tool: *“Every single week she’d come to us and go on about what results she got from it and she picked up if you written anything in the box and adjust the lecture a little bit differently”*. This may be a key advantage in having formative evaluations being conducted while students are still undertaking the module, as previous research with summative, post-module evaluations suggest that there was little evidence that student evaluations had any positive effect on teaching quality (Kember et al., 2002). The immediacy of the availability of results enabled faculty to not only change the way they taught but also enabled them to communicate to students which changes they would make to improve the learning experience. Such quick turnaround has been identified as being important in the reflective process (McFarlane & Ottewill, 2001; Race, 2005).

Another respondent didn't believe she had seen any direct changes, but wasn't concerned that this meant there wouldn't be any if they had been necessary: "*I think I would be confident that if I had put that there was a problem that [he] would have changed it he would have incorporated it. Someone said in the lecture the other day 'are we meant to be saying what we think or what you think?'. He made it really clear that 'this is completely about what you think and how you think about these things'. He would quite quickly solve any questions people had or change things if we wanted things changing*". Another student in the same class confirmed this by suggested there hadn't been the need for a change so wasn't expecting them: "*I usually put agree or strongly agree, so I didn't expect any changes*".

This discussion drew out a new theme relating to the type of lecturer who would be willing to stand up to scrutiny and implement such a tool voluntarily. One student thought expanding the tool to other lecturers would be quite desirable: "*I'd like to have been able to compare it, yeah... If some of the other lecturer's had used it...there are a few of the other lecturers I would have liked to have seen if the comments had had an effect on*". This was confirmed by another student who saw the evaluation tool as an opportunity to give anonymous constructive feedback to other lecturers: "*it could be useful but it would have to be done in the right way...varies really from subject to subject...some of the subjects you go in to that you think 'yeah I've got a beef with this' and you want some way of expressing it rather than bringing it up with [course leader]*". Aside from the anonymity the evaluation tool offered, another benefit was that it would be feedback that would go directly to the lecturer in question rather than via someone else: "*we've got specifically one module and the lecturer is not good. We've been to see our course manager ... everyone has complained... all the students in this class have complained about this lecturer but nothing seems to have changed. Maybe because they haven't spoken to him ...but if it came from one of these feedback surveys then maybe it would change*". The feedback tool was also seen as an opportunity to vent: "*In some lectures when you finish...especially if it's a bad lecturer...you just want to get the evaluation tool and put your comment on the bottom...I think it should be for all lectures*". Another respondent was quite sceptical about how likely faculty would take on board such venting: "*you can comment and hopefully see a bit of change...so if you don't like how the style of one lecturer's teaching, you can comment and hopefully they will change a little bit...but I don't think many lecturers would care*". As was discussed earlier, during the literature review, one problem with the recruitment method for faculty signing up to this

project is that it was most likely to attract those faculty most interested in utilising such information for reflective practice. These results however, are consistent with previous research which considered electronic formative evaluations; whereby students tended not to bother responding if they were content with their lecturers' performance, but liked having the tool available for when this was not the case (Ravelli, 2000).

Student Theme 5: Utility of weekly formative SET for gleaning information

Another theme that arose from the interviews was whether the evaluation tool was the best method of gleaning feedback from students. Some respondents thought it was an appropriate approach: *"I think it is quite a good tool if you had a problem and if you wanted to be anonymous about it ...and didn't really feel like saying it openly"*. It was suggested that low response rates should not be of concern: *"I would only use it if there was a problem... no feedback at all... no news is good news"*. If there was a module with problems, the response rate would be expected to go up: *"if there was a problem, I would... I think it definitely would be a good thing to have"*.

Other respondents thought there were better ways of obtaining feedback. For example one Chinese student commented that a better option might be an interview: *"maybe a short time interview...maybe better than a questionnaire if the teacher ask students suggestion, student might provide them ideas maybe student not interested in it"*. This is an interesting comment given the cultural implications of a lecturer asking for students' feedback. Due to the nature of Chinese cultural norms, such as typical eastern norms like "higher power-distance scores, a higher degree of collectivism, and different norms concerning tutor-student roles and behaviour patterns in class" (p.62 Eaves, 2009), it would be unlikely that an interview situation would elicit more feedback. This was also highlighted by the British students, who thought there wasn't a need for such a questionnaire, because if they had any pressing issues, they'd simply say so: *"I just felt that filling in a survey ...I would simply walk up to you and say...didn't really enjoy that because of this...or I enjoyed that"*. One respondent challenged this point of view as one that was fine for students confident enough to approach a lecturer but not an option for those with less confidence: *"I don't think some people will go and see [lecturer] and say 'look your lecture, you did this in your lecture' ...I don't think some people do that"*. This point of view was confirmed by another respondent who also highlighted the benefit of having a written feedback tool: *"for some people who are perhaps a bit quiet and*

perhaps need to reflect and write down what they think about something...but I'm not sure because I'm not that sort of person". This is consistent with the literature, which suggests that no one form of feedback should be used in the reflective practice process (Bolton, 2005; Loughran, 1996; Moon, 1999). The tool does however provide another form of gleaning such information from students who may not be comfortable with alternative face-to-face methods.

Student Theme 6: Future construction of SET tool

A theme that arose around the construction of the evaluation tool was explored further with respondents. A number of respondents highlighted the idea of changing questions every week to tailor the evaluation to the material covered in the class: *"if you are going to do it after every class, perhaps focus the questions on that class, but I guess that would be a lot more work"*. The reality of work this would put on the lecturer or evaluation tool designer was acknowledged by others: *"it would be quite labour intensive for the person doing it to change the questions every week ...but obviously you'd have to read it though...or maybe reduce them to a few questions...one of the main questions being 'do you have any problems'"*. One solution put forward by a number of respondents was to reduce the questionnaire down to around five questions: *"you could have less questions...if the student knows there are those set 5 questions and if there is a problem they can go there and it doesn't take very long and it is anonymous then it's good isn't it?"* Another respondent suggested that this would be a necessity if the evaluation tool was to be utilised widely across the university: *"but if every lecture required us to do that, it's okay...if every evaluations questionnaire only have four or five questions then its okay"*.

Another aspect relating to the construction of the questionnaire related to the use of closed versus open ended questions. Open ended questions were seen to give the student more opportunity to be specific in their feedback: *"If you only had asking for a yes or no answer...then there's not that much between ticking yes or strongly agree and writing strongly agree or yes...and there's also the option for people to say 'yes and particularly today [he] waffled on about advertising for half an hour'...that may be useful for getting answers"*. On the other hand, open ended questions were also seen as less likely than the current tool to get responses: *"get your lecture notes and have a box for optional course feedback...I think you would use it if you had a problem...people are lazy and can't be*

bothered, they take the easy route, don't they?". One respondent acknowledged that they had not put any qualitative comments in but on reflection could have done so: "I've never typed a comment in...suppose I could have put a positive comment in...maybe if you had a problem you could write it down". The preferred option for open and closed ended questions was the inclusion of both: "Put a comment box next to a few questions instead of leaving it till the end".

The results suggest that none of the student participants had issues with utilising the tool from a technical perspective, suggesting that conducting SETs utilising a VLE was an appropriate approach.

Student Theme 7: Timing of evaluations

A theme that arose around the timing of the tool was probed further. There was a conflict in feelings on this issue. Respondents almost unanimously didn't want to fill out a survey every week: *"I think it would be redundant...I don't think it would work. Having to do it for every class people will get very fed up of it very quickly".* A common theme tended to be the preference for evaluations to be conducted every half term: *"People would be more motivated to do it then...if it wasn't every week if you did it twice a term then people would definitely do it".* On the other hand, one respondent highlighted that she'd like to see the results put up in class every week so students could see how their peers were rating it: *"but meanwhile we want to get the result of the evaluation every week".*

5. PROJECT CONCLUSION

Overall, faculty members found immediate formative student evaluation more useful for confirming their lecturers were hitting the right notes with the students, rather than improving current lecture materials whilst still fresh in their minds. Lack of critical evaluation and small response rate by the students tended to frustrate many faculty members involved in the survey, and as a result not many changes were implemented as a result of the evaluation tool. This raises the question as to whether the exploratory study was not as successful at reaching its aims as prior research may have suggested it would be. On the other hand, while faculty were concerned with the lack of response by students, the students themselves indicated that low response should have been seen positively, in that while classes were running satisfactorily there was no need to fill out the questionnaire, whereas if they had needed to make complaints about the way classes were being run, the tool would have allowed them to do so. In spite of low response rates from students, the results suggest utilising a VLE to administer regular formative SETs; can help academics in their reflective practice. In the past it has been assumed that reflective practice relies on journals and more qualitative data, but this is an efficient tool that encourages faculty to reflect on what they are doing regardless of results.

It is possible that the low level of responses that were achieved later in the year were a result of students finding the task boring and tedious. It is recommended that such a tool be implemented at less regular intervals, perhaps once or twice during a semester.

However, a serendipitous finding was that knowing an evaluation was to be done of their materials motivated a number of faculty members to make changes to their modules even before the tool was implemented, and some of the questions on the evaluation tool motivated some to reflect on their own teaching practices. This suggests that implementing such a tool may encourage faculty to reflect on their practice, regardless of whether students are filling out the evaluation tool or not.

One observation for faculty who were enrolled in a Graduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education was that utilising this tool enabled them to collect formative evaluations that could then be included within their portfolios to demonstrate reflective practice. Evaluations have been highlighted as an important part of a teaching portfolio (Fry

& Ketteridge, 1999); however using formative evaluations allows the faculty member to better demonstrate how it contributed to reflective practice.

In conclusion, the weekly on-line use of student evaluations is one more form of evaluation which can be used to provide a more comprehensive view of another dimension of teaching, and should be treated as such.

6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

A limitation of the study was that it only used faculty and student interviews conducted by faculty members; therefore, some of the participants may be hesitant to express all their opinions because of the potential for sensitivity to the subject matter. The results were based on an exploratory study of education faculty at an agricultural based university-college, and although the participants were selected from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds, most faculty participants had limited experience with teaching, so their experiences or perceptions may not be generalised to faculty from other disciplines or institutions.

Other possible research could compare the summative assessments done by the universities quality assurance department with the weekly evaluation scores to see if continuous student feedback has an effect on those scores (for example, do those lecturers who conduct weekly feedback and therefore change their lectures get higher scores from the students on the module?). Further research could also be conducted on how to improve the student response rate, and therefore receive a more representative amount of feedback from each class.

7. SUMMARY AND FUTURE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

What the project meant to me

Although the idea of the project was instigated by my colleague conducting mid-semester qualitative evaluations, my motivation for conducting this project was that I wanted to know which particular classes needed improvement. Although I was getting good student feedback (I am usually one of the highest rated lecturers in the Business faculty at Harper Adams University College), I wanted some more specific feedback from students in relation to which materials were well presented and understood and which required improvement. In particular, with the marketing communications module I teach, I didn't feel like it was flowing well enough. While I believed most of the lectures on their own were good enough, I felt that the link between topics was not clear. With my consumer behaviour module, while I could see the 'roadmap' was clear, I wasn't sure which specific topics were clear to students and which weren't. It seemed weekly feedback was the ideal way to get the information I needed to work out where the modules could be improved even further.

What changes in the curriculum came out of the project

On reflection, I'm not sure I got the information I was looking for. As much as I would encourage students in class to give me specific feedback and qualitative comments, the response rates were lower than I'd hoped and students rarely filled out the qualitative comment at the end of the feedback tool. There were some classes where it was pointed out that I did too much talking and not enough discussion, which I was then able to make changes from. However, the biggest changes made, did not so much come from feedback in the questionnaire, but knowing that each particular class could be evaluated, and therefore, the feeling that I needed to put more into them to get the best score possible (even if it didn't change!). For consumer behaviour, one particular lecture stands out as very complex. I spent quite a lot of time revisiting this and chasing up more data to present to students, to show them that the consumer behaviour patterns applied across different countries, markets and product categories. In marketing communications, I redesigned the back end of the module so that the flow between lectures was much more obvious. While this did not appear

to make much difference to the weekly scores, today I received a pleasant surprise when I saw that the students who took this module had rated me equal highest in the faculty for all second year modules (with a score of 4.4 out of 5). For Consumer behaviour, I was rated the highest rated faculty member for any final year module (with a score of 4.2 out of 5). This suggests to me that it wasn't the evaluation scores so much that encouraged me to make the changes, but just the fact that I knew I *would* be evaluated.

Future professional development as a result of the project

The person I have received funding for the project with has been working with me on writing up this research into academic papers. We have already presented some of the early research (in particular, the faculty interviews) at the *International Conference for Communication Technologies in Education*. We have since submitted another article to *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education* that discusses the student results to the project. Although the funding for the project is over and this dissertation is to be handed in, we have decided to conduct a further round of interviews with faculty. In particular, our own experiences with this project have inspired us to do a new section of research exploring reflective practice as a result of this project for all faculty involved.

Aside from academic research, from a teaching point of view, both of us are considering conducting another project based on the outcomes of this one, even on an informal basis. From this project we have learned that weekly evaluations are too frequent, and feedback from students suggested they wished to have a shorter questionnaire with more options for qualitative comments. If conducted every half-semester, we are interested to see in particular if we can improve response rates. If this does occur, we would then encourage faculty who are savvy with The University's VLE to adopt the feedback tool on within their lecture notes downloads.

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9. APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: THEMES FOR CONSTRUCTION OF SET QUESTIONNAIRE

Lectures pitched at the right level	
The instructor often simplified difficult material	(Lill, 1979)
The instructor encouraged students to broaden their knowledge of the subject material through outside study	(Lill, 1979)
The difficulty level of the course activities and materials is very easy/very difficult	(Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007)
General theme of level	(Race, 2005)
Balance between actual formal lecturing and other discussion based activities	
This teacher encouraged me to interact with other students	http://www.uow.edu.au/cedir/asd/tsse/UOW040461.html
This teacher encouraged participation in discussion and collaborative activities	http://www.uow.edu.au/cedir/asd/tsse/UOW040461.html
Rapport with groups of students	(Becker & Watts, 1999)
The instructor allowed/encouraged relevant questions or comments	(Parayitam et al., 2007)
Encouragement of discussion and ability to initiate and direct it	(Lill, 1979)
Encouragement and reinforcement of independent thought	(Lill, 1979)
Develops students' thinking skills	(Lill, 1979)
Independent thought on the part of students was encouraged by the instructor	(Lill, 1979)
Class discussions were not encouraged by the instructor	(Lill, 1979)

Challenging questions were never raised by the instructor	(Lill, 1979)
The instructor manages classroom discussions so that they are useful	(Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007)
Material presented in an interesting and challenging matter	
Interesting presentation of subject material	(Lill, 1979)
Conveyance of new and broad viewpoints	(Lill, 1979)
The instructor does not present a variety of new and different viewpoints	(Lill, 1979)
The instructor inspired me to become interested in the course	(Lill, 1979)
I have learned a great deal in this class/I have learned very little in this class	(Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007)
The instructor asks questions that challenge me to think	(Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007)
Discusses points of view other than his/her own	(H. J. Brightman, 2006)
Contrasts implications of various theories	(H. J. Brightman, 2006)
Discusses recent developments in the field	(H. J. Brightman, 2006)
Presents origins of ideas and concepts	(H. J. Brightman, 2006)
Has an interesting style of presentation	(H. J. Brightman, 2006)
Seems to enjoy teaching	(H. J. Brightman, 2006)
Is enthusiastic about his/her subject	(H. J. Brightman, 2006)
General theme of Lecturer being 'interesting' or 'enthusiastic'	(Race, 2005)
Particular class materials linked well to materials previously taught in earlier weeks (or other modules) (or real world)	
Use of applications and examples	(Becker & Watts, 1999)
The instructor did a good job of relating the subject matter to other academic disciplines and to real world situations	(Lill, 1979)

The instructor shows meaningful relationships among the topics in this course	(Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007)
The instructor relates course material to life situations when possible	(Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007)
General theme around Lecturer being able to relate material to the real world or linking to previously learned material	(Race, 2005)
ADDITIONAL THEME: Lecturers communication ability	
This teacher communicates the subject matter clearly.	http://www.uow.edu.au/cedir/asd/tsse/UOW040461.html
This teacher organises the subject matter well.	http://www.uow.edu.au/cedir/asd/tsse/UOW040461.html
This teacher stimulates me to think about the subject	http://www.uow.edu.au/cedir/asd/tsse/UOW040461.html
Because of this teacher I have felt enthusiastic about studying this subject	http://www.uow.edu.au/cedir/asd/tsse/UOW040461.html
This teacher presents an appropriate amount of material for the time available	http://www.uow.edu.au/cedir/asd/tsse/UOW040461.html
Teacher's overall effectiveness	(Becker & Watts, 1999)
Communication skills	(Becker & Watts, 1999)
Organisation and planning	(Becker & Watts, 1999)
The instructor communicated clearly and effectively	(Parayitam et al., 2007)
The instructor presented content in an organized, logical fashion	(Parayitam et al., 2007)
The instructor provided course materials in a timely manner	(Parayitam et al., 2007)
The course covered material consistent with the stated objectives	(Parayitam et al., 2007)
The instructor was well prepared	(Parayitam et al., 2007)
The instructor stayed on the subject	(Parayitam et al., 2007)
Instructor's interest in subject material – enthusiasm	(Lill, 1979)

Clarity of exposition or interpretation	(Lill, 1979)
Organisation of material – logical ordering	(Lill, 1979)
Instructor’s interest in her or her students	(Lill, 1979)
Ability and willingness to motivate students	(Lill, 1979)
The instructor’s explanation of the subject matter was clear and concise	(Lill, 1979)
The instructor organised the subject matter of this course in a logical, easy to follow manner	(Lill, 1979)
The instructor presented the subject material in an interesting, stimulating fashion	(Lill, 1979)
The instructor communicates the purpose of the class sessions and instructional activities	(Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007)
The instructor uses examples and illustrations which help clarify the topic being discussed	(Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007)
Keep students interested during class; good speaking skills	(Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007)
Speaks in a manner that is easy to understand	(H. J. Brightman, 2006)
Explains clearly	(H. J. Brightman, 2006)
Lectures easy to outline or case discussion well organised	(H. J. Brightman, 2006)
General theme of Lecturer being able to communicate or explain well	(Race, 2005)

APPENDIX 2: FINAL SET QUESTIONNAIRE USED

1.) The material covered in the class was aimed at a level that I understand	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Not selected <input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree <input type="radio"/> Agree <input type="radio"/> Neither <input type="radio"/> Disagree <input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree	(Position:1)	↓ ↑ ↕ 🔊 🌐 ✖
2.) The lecturer presented the subject material in a way that was interesting	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Not selected <input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree <input type="radio"/> Agree <input type="radio"/> Neither <input type="radio"/> Disagree <input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree	(Position:2)	↑ ↓ ↕ 🔊 🌐 ✖
3.) The lecturer presented different viewpoints on the subject	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Not selected <input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree <input type="radio"/> Agree <input type="radio"/> Neither <input type="radio"/> Disagree <input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree	(Position:3)	↑ ↓ ↕ 🔊 🌐 ✖
4.) I have learned a great deal in this class	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Not selected <input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree <input type="radio"/> Agree <input type="radio"/> Neither <input type="radio"/> Disagree	(Position:4)	↑ ↓ ↕ 🔊 🌐 ✖

- Strongly Disagree

- 5.) The lecturer encouraged me to broaden my knowledge of the subject material through outside study
 - Not selected
 - Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
 (Position:5) ↑ ↓ ⇅ ⚙️ 🗑️ ✖️

- 6.) The lecturer encouraged relevant questions or comments
 - Not selected
 - Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
 (Position:6) ↑ ↓ ⇅ ⚙️ 🗑️ ✖️

- 7.) The lecturer raised challenging questions
 - Not selected
 - Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
 (Position:7) ↑ ↓ ⇅ ⚙️ 🗑️ ✖️

- 8.) The lecturer managed classroom discussions so that they were useful
 - Not selected
 - Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
 (Position:8) ↑ ↓ ⇅ ⚙️ 🗑️ ✖️

- 9.) The lecturer related the subject matter among the topics in this module
 - Not selected
 - Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
 (Position:9) ↑ ↓ ⇅ ⚙️ 🗑️ ✖️

- 10.) The lecturer related course material to real world situations when possible
 - Not selected
 - Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
 (Position:10) ↑ ↓ ⇅ ⚙️ 🗑️ ✖️

11.) The lecturer organised the subject matter in a logical manner

- Not selected
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

(Position:11) ↑ ↓ ↕ 🔊 📄 ✖

12.) The lecturer communicated clearly and effectively

- Not selected
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

(Position:12) ↑ ↓ ↕ 🔊 📄 ✖

13.) The lecturer inspired interest in this subject material

- Not selected
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

(Position:13) ↑ ↓ ↕ 🔊 📄 ✖

14.) Please add any other constructive comments that may be useful to your lecturer about last week's class

(Position:14) ↑ ↕ 🔊 📄 ✖

APPENDIX 3: AIDE MEMOIRE FOR FACULTY INTERVIEW 1

Intro: Just need to discuss what you are here for today (e.g. the mid-point evaluation to see how things are going). All answers confidential but quotes used in Aspire report and publications.

State name to ensure we have it recorded

1. What has been your teaching experience?

Probe: how many years, what department what levels taught

2. What has been your experience with student evaluation of teaching?

Probe: have you ever implemented any other form of evaluation outside of standard evaluations conducted by university. How have you used SET information in the past?

3. What inspired you to get involved with this Aspire project and what were you hoping to achieve? (e.g. Whether: lectures are pitched at the right level, students are finding the balance between actual formal lecturing and other discussion based activities appropriate, the material was presented in an interesting and challenging manner, the particular class material is linked well to materials previously taught in earlier weeks (or previously taken modules)

4. What do you actually do with the online weekly student evaluation feedback?

Probe: What areas are you trying to target right now as you use student evaluation feedback? Did you change your class materials/lectures because of the feedback?

5. What barriers have you encountered in your use of student evaluation feedback to improve your teaching? What suggestions do you have that may enable you to make more effective use of student evaluation feedback?

Probe: How did you find the administration of setting up and maintaining the evaluation tool? What was the level of student response?

6. After this project is over, would you continue to use online weekly student evaluations?

Probe: Why, why not? What changes could be made to improve the tool?

APPENDIX 4: AIDE MEMOIRE FOR STUDENT INTERVIEW 1

Intro: Just need to discuss what you are here for today (e.g. the student perspective of the evaluation to see how things went/are going). All answers confidential but quotes used in Aspire report and publications.

State name to ensure we have it recorded

Intro: Level of student, programme, gender, background

1. What has been your previous experience with evaluating lecturers?

Probe: How much detail do you put in them, do you think they're useful, etc.

2. How often did you fill in the evaluation tool? If not, why not?

Probe: Remind student that we want frank and honest opinions of the evaluation tool.

3. Did you see any results from your lecturer/classes from your evaluation? Or: What do you think they did with the evaluations?

Probe: Did the lectures change, did the class structure change (more/less discussions, activities, etc), did the lecturer discuss the comments

4. Did this response (or lack of response) inspire you to continue/start the evaluations?

Probe: Why/why not? What did keep you going, stop you from filling them in?

5. Were there any barriers to you filling in the evaluation tool?

Probe: Based on answer to question 2 – too often? Too onerous?

6. What changes, if any, would you suggest to this tool?

Probe: Timing, question length, changing the questions, qualitative feedback, etc

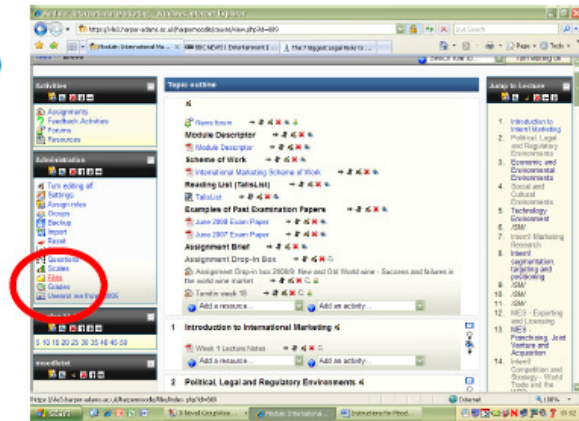
7. Would you like to continue using this tool?

Probe: Would you want to see this tool on other lectures? Why or why not?

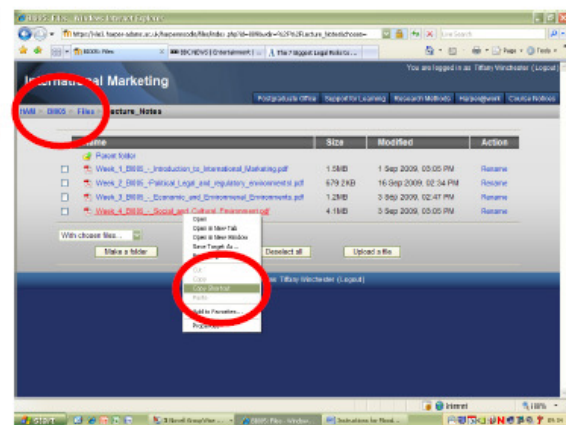
APPENDIX 5: FACULTY INSTRUCTION SHEET FOR INSERTION OF EVALUATION TOOL IN VLE

From Moodle page in EDIT mode:

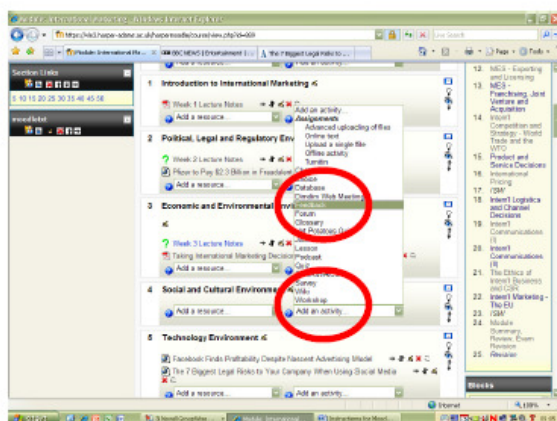
1. On the left of the screen click on "FILES" in the Administration box (see picture on right)
2. Upload your lecture notes file




3. Once uploaded, right click on chosen file and choose "copy short-cut" (see picture on right)
4. Exit screen by clicking module title in blue on the top left (see picture on right)

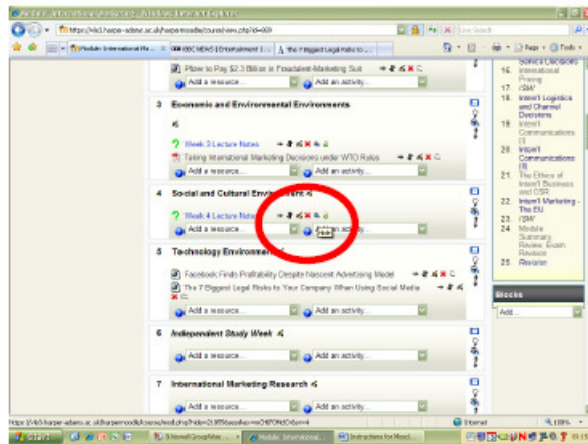


5. Go to the block under which you want to add your lecture notes (example – Week 4 in Block 4)
6. Click on "ADD AN ACTIVITY" (right hand scroll menu) and click FEEDBACK (see picture on right)



14. Scroll through your Moodle page to the block you entered the link on. You should then see a **?** next to your lecture notes.

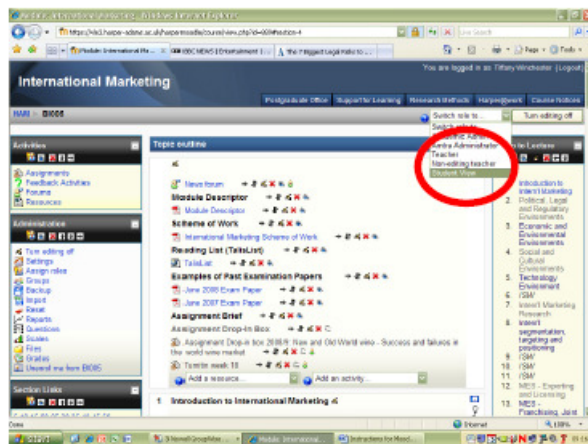
- a. If you want to do this ahead of the week, you can hide the notes by clicking the open eye next to the feedback  (see picture on right)



15. TO CHECK IF THEY ARE WORKING:

16. At the top of the Moodle page, click on SWITCH ROLE TO and select STUDENT from the pull-down menu (see picture on right)

- a. NOTE: Obviously if you have hidden your lecture notes nothing will appear, so do this test before you hide your notes



17. Click through your links to make sure they are working.

- a. NB: You don't have to fill in the survey, just leave the boxes ticked as NOT SELECTED
 - i. This is important for the student to understand as well, as ethical guidelines state that students should not feel coerced into providing feedback
- b. At the end:
 - i. If you click on CONTINUE you will be taken back to the main screen.
 - ii. For your notes, you must click on the link you set up!

18. At the top of the Moodle page, click on RETURN TO MY NORMAL ROLE