

# THE FUTURE OF LEARNING: HOW THEY WANT IT, WHEN THEY WANT IT, WHERE THEY WANT IT?

*Exploring the student perspective and journey  
through the tertiary education system.*

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1<sup>st</sup> May, 2013

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# WHAT DO STUDENTS WANT?

- Quality
- Access
- Employability
- Engagement
- Flexibility
- Support
- Value



## HOW, WHEN & WHERE? A SUMMARY

- Learning how to learn and developing skills: support for transition, retention and completion - **graduate employability**
- Examining the **impact of deregulation on quality** from a student perspective and the need for investment
- **Diversity** of students, diversity of learning needs
- Student life: the need for **engagement and flexibility**
- **Learning support** and resources – the 21<sup>st</sup> century campus
- **The digital frontier: learning online and/or in the classroom**



# HOW: SUPPORT FOR TRANSITION, RETENTION AND COMPLETION - GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY

- The first year experience
  - Orientation
  - Positive transition
  - Mentoring (must be run by students, for students)
  - Support and resources (must be effective) – UES 2012: Around half of Australian students reported being offered very little or no support to settle into study.
- The ‘fourth year itch’
- Linking current learning to future career or employability – are graduate attributes enough? Whose attributes? Relevance to field of employment.
- English language support
- Supplementary help – U:Pass, student-based assistance, contact with and feedback from tutors



## HOW: QUALITY OF AND IMPACT OF DEREGULATION – A STUDENT VIEW

- **Concern student:staff ratios will blow out further – ideal is 12-20.** *Reasonable student:staff ratios are important in engaging students in their studies and contact with staff is a key way of improving retention.*
- **Classes are bursting at the seams – does this have an impact on learning?** *Whilst there is research that indicates high student:staff ratios do not necessarily equate to a lower quality experience, this is on the basis that large-class appropriate pedagogical strategies are being employed.*
- **Large class teaching** – are the proper teaching and learning strategies being employed across and within disciplines? Students feel part of the crowd.



# QUALITY – A STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

## NUS QUALITY SURVEY 2012

*Q: How do you feel your class sizes have affected your learning experience?* 4,138 comments received

A common theme was the **alienation and disengagement** associated with the over-crowding in the lecture theatres in popular first year courses:

*In previous years when my lectures have been overcrowded I've opted to watch online because it can be such a disruptive environment to learn in. When huge lecture theatres are used to accommodate a large amount of students it's often hard to not only hear the lecturer and see the slides, but also to feel engaged. If you want to ask something of your lecturer afterwards the line is often too long to be bothered with even if you don't have a class afterwards and you leave feeling frustrated and like you didn't get as much out of the lecturer because of it.”*  
(Humanities, University of Adelaide)



## A NOTE ON SURVEYS

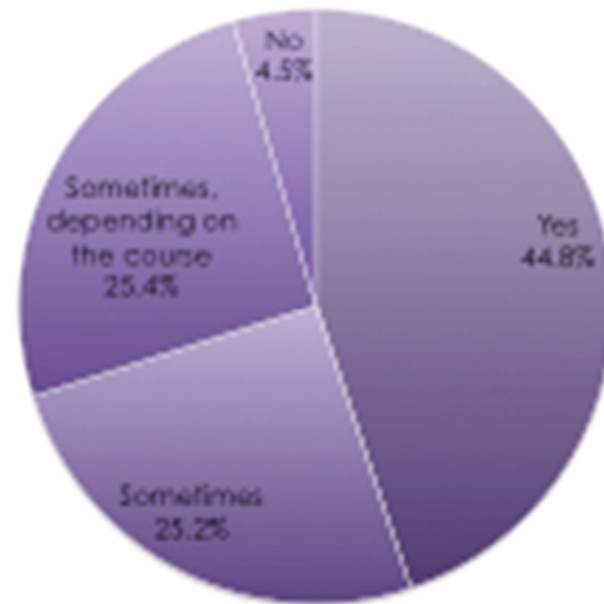
- Survey fatigue generally
- The skew towards arts/humanities students
- There must be a visible benefit (personal incentives work best) and change affected
- Must contain guarantees answers will be considered





# FEEDBACK

Are the teaching staff regularly available outside of class time for one on one additional consultation or advice (either on campus or via e-mail discussion)?





# FEEDBACK

Do you receive helpful and timely feedback and comments from teaching staff about the work you have submitted for assessment?



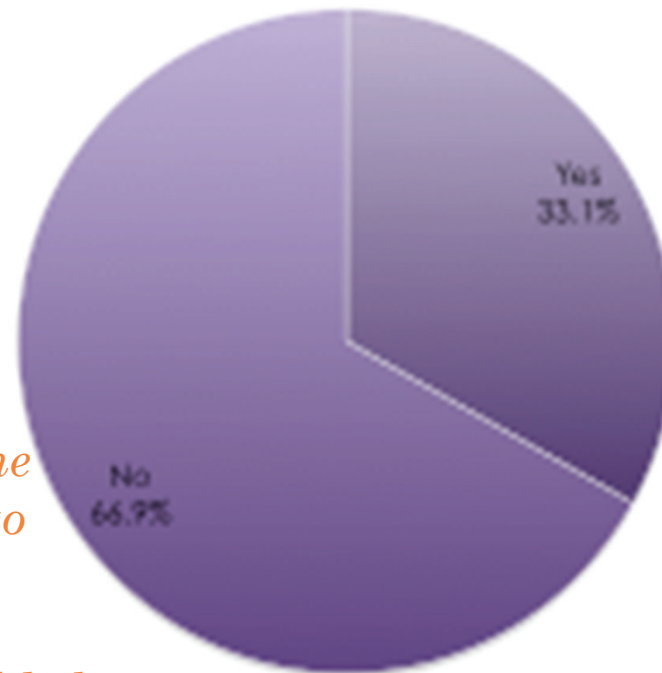
# HOW: QUALITY AND IMPACT OF DEREGULATION – A STUDENT VIEW

- Availability of resources in library and online – a prevalent student concern
- Casualisation of staff and inadequate ongoing training and support has meant that staff are not equipped with the strategies necessary to ensure a quality learning experience for students in a large class. Admin overload and lack of feedback is also a problem.
- Research –enriched teaching provides a greater student learning experience through tutor's depth and insight into field
- Retention as a key concern



# COURSE AND LEARNING SUPPORT

Are there enough copies of your textbooks available in the library so that students have a realistic option not to have to purchase them?



*Themes:*

*Self-directed learning and the transition from high school to university, and retention*

*Availability of resources and help when required*



# QUALITY – A STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

## NUS QUALITY SURVEY 2012

- Students attending lectures at smaller, rural campuses reported positively of a more personalised and supportive learning experience.
- The size of tutorial groups was a topic that was raised even more frequently than the size of lectures. 53.7% of students reported that their typical tutorial had more than 20 students in it.
- The most common recurring theme was once tutorials got above around 15 students that there was a deterioration in opportunities for interactive discussion and questioning



## HOW: DIVERSITY OF STUDENTS, DIVERSITY OF LEARNING AND OVERALL NEEDS

- THE MORE TAILORED, THE BETTER

- International students
- Postgraduate
- Mature age
- Ethno-cultural diversity
- Low-SES
- Queer
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- Women
- Students with a disability
- Distance students

In common: *Representation, support – learning and overall, specific services and equity.*



# FACILITIES

*Q: Could you describe any issues with your facilities? 1,741 comments*

- In 2012 survey just over 30% of students had issues with the quality of some of their lecture theatres or tutorial rooms.
- Overall, most students found their practical labs and studios to be sufficient and did not have any issues.
- 19.8% of students raised issues including potentially hazardous circumstances and poor ventilation, obsolete or poorly maintained equipment for undergraduate teaching in laboratories, overcrowding in laboratories in the first and second years of undergraduate courses.
- Other issues included an inadequate number of teaching staff to provide effective demonstration and supervision of techniques, long waits to use shared equipment and a general lack of space



# HOW: STUDENT LIFE

## *HOW DO WE DEFINE SUCCESSFUL ENGAGEMENT?*

**A proposed definition:** *Successful student engagement in tertiary education must involve the following on a regular basis. It is important any student:*

- Has the ability/tools to advance their knowledge;
- Has the ability/tools to advance their career prospects or academic standing
- Has the ability/tools to enjoy a social life and activities outside the classroom
- Engages on campus or in a university space





## FLEXIBILITY

- 2012 University Experience survey found that Just over half (51%) of students across Australia reported that financial circumstances affected their study.
- Students with a disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students experience greater financial constraint.
- Just over half (52%) of students nationally reported that paid work had at least some affect on their study.



## HOW: LEARNING AND SUPPORT RESOURCES – USE OF TECHNOLOGY

- Lecturer or tutors' limited ability to use technology (especially when video-link used)
- Audio support through recorded lectures important – for revision and to assist students with learning difficulties
- Availability of power points in lecture theatres or classrooms to re-charge computers in long sessions and the lack of reliable wireless internet connectivity for student and staff in some teaching facilities



# HOW: ONLINE LEARNING AND FLEXIBILITY

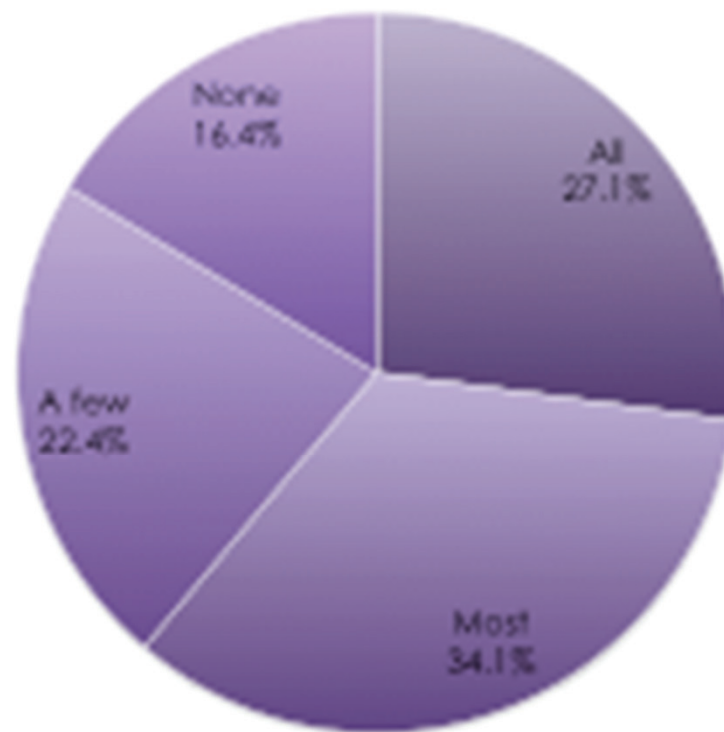
Overall students have been positive about the support offered online:

- *“The level of on-line support has dramatically increased in the last few years. I now have some of my readings as well as links to extra readings, youtube videos, online journals and websites for most of my subjects this year. This was very different to when I started and is extremely helpful for research essays. There are not enough hours in the day to get through all of the extra stuff posted for my Politics subjects (that is a good thing!)”* (Humanities and Social Sciences, La Trobe University)
- *I feel if all the classes provided the same materials online, i.e readings, lecture recordings, lecture notes, extra activities, assignment information, It would make it easier to study and to understand the course content. Classes that don't provide these resources I often feel I perform worse at, or am more stressed about”* (Arts, Education and Human Development, Victoria University)



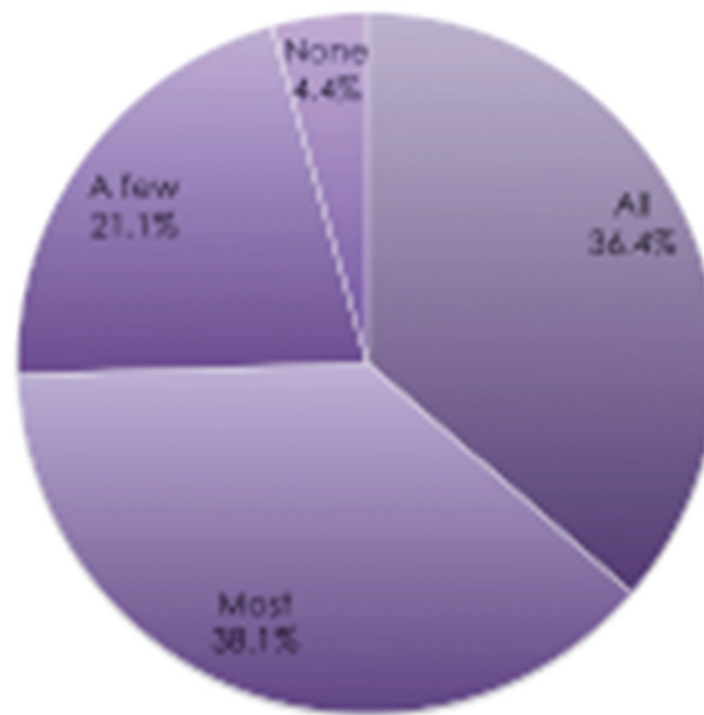
# ONLINE LEARNING AND FLEXIBILITY

Are your lectures recorded and available on-line?



# ONLINE LEARNING AND FLEXIBILITY

Are your course materials and readers available online?



## OVERALL SATISFACTION

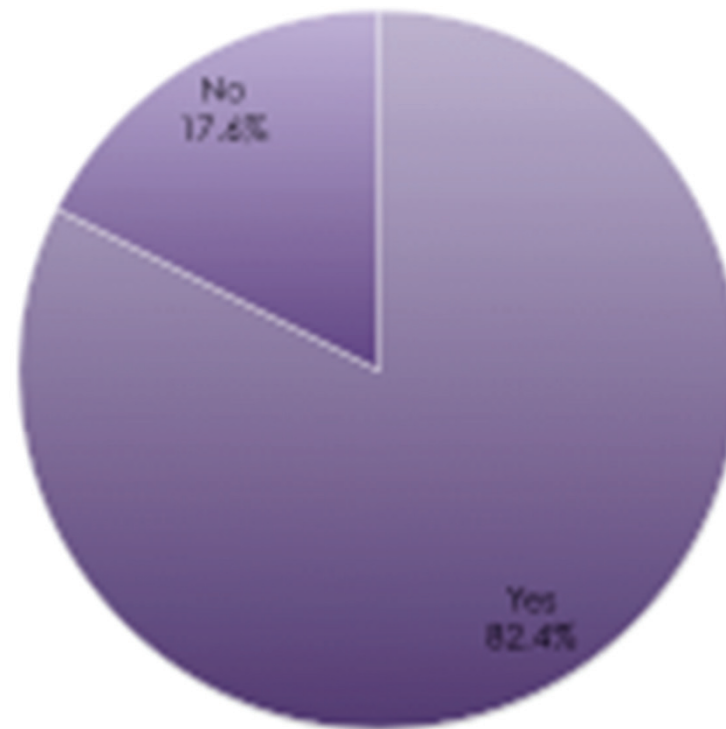
- Students were asked to rate their satisfaction with their degree so far taking into account the costs and time involved. 67.6% of students rated their experience as outstanding or good. If we include the students who rated the experience as average the figure rises to 88.7%.
- 83.5% of students also indicated that they would recommend their course and university to a friend.



# ACADEMIC CHALLENGE

Do you feel academically challenged by the material covered in your course?

1,169 comments





# WHERE: OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM: CAMPUS LIFE

- **Orientation** is crucial, and re-orientation is also important
- **Communication – regular, varied**
- **Facilitation of student life and ‘sticky campuses’**
- **Representation in and outside university**
  - Student organisations
  - University governance – incentives and/or recognition
  - An emphasis on leadership and skills
- **Support services**
  - Equity services – has there been a decline in use?
- **Transition to employment**
  - Careers advice service shows an increase from 21% in 2010 to 25.6%
  - Careers Fairs and engagement with employers
  - Graduate attributes
  - Recognition of extra-curricular activities



# STUDENTS ARE NOT CONSUMERS OR CUSTOMERS

- Students are the both the heart and the hands of the system
- Marketisation and privatisation of universities goes against students' interests – access and equity
- Students as learners and partners

