

University College Dublin

Academic Council Committee on Quality

(March 2015)

Strategies for 'closing the feedback loop' with students

1. Introduction

When students participate in an evaluation process their main concerns are whether their opinions matter, what happens to their responses, and whether the outcomes are communicated to the following cohort of students. If we expect students to take the evaluation process seriously then we must take their concerns seriously and close the feedback loop with them by indicating:

- Which comments/suggestions will be acted upon and how.
- Which comments/suggestions we would like to act on but are unable to and the reasons why.
- Which comments/suggestions we will not be acting on and why.

2. Examples of how to close the loop with students are set out below:

- Share formative feedback gathered during the semester on e.g. Blackboard / Moodle or similar platform.
- Set aside some face to face time with your students as soon as practicable after you gathered the feedback to discuss the feedback with them.
- Ask your students to select a student representative(s), discuss your evaluation outcomes with the representative(s) and then give the student(s) an opportunity during teaching time to report back to the students they represent.
- Place summaries on notice boards or online e.g. Question/Answer or 'You said / We did' (See UCD Library example in Section 3 below).
- Construct posters and display these where students will see them.
- Include articles in a College/School newsletter or social media.
- Send an email about your outcomes to students.

- Establish a staff-student liaison committee and report your evaluation outcomes to that committee – ask student representative to feedback to students.
- Discussion at the first class of the semester followed by on-going conversations over the semester.
- Four models of ‘Closing the Feedback Loop’ with students has been developed by UCD Teaching and Learning – see Section 4 below.

3. An example of a ‘You Said/We Did’ approach

A UCD Library example of ‘Closing the Feedback Loop’ with students using a ‘You said...We Did’ online approach is set out below:

- **You said: "More library services and transactions should be accessible online."**

Following the success of online booking of group study rooms, in early 2015 we have introduced online bookings for both individual study rooms and the Postgraduate Research Centre at James Joyce Library.

- **You said: "A simple addition that would help a lot for group work would be to add white boards to the group study rooms. Often I have wished for a large board to write on while planning out a group project."**

We added whiteboards to the group study rooms in James Joyce Library and these are receiving plenty of use, so thanks for that input to our last general survey.

- **You said: "more seats and larger tables in the James Joyce Library Hub" to facilitate the way you work.**

We listened and now there are sixteen additional study spaces, with new larger tables, and we've also adjusted the size of some of the existing tables.

- **You said: there are too many places we have to go online to search and find information.**

We have now introduced OneSearch, which pulls in information from many of our collections and offers quick access to a selection of articles and full texts on your topic online.

- **You said: "(we need) more access to plugs at more study desks" for those with laptops.**

In keeping with the many requests we have received from our users for increased access to power sockets on the study desks in our Libraries, we are pleased to let you know that access to power is being added to yet again, with 182 further desks in the James Joyce Library having power fitted for start of the new academic year in September 2014.

These desks are located on level 1 (in short loan area), on Level 2 beside the Confucius collection, and on level 3 near the Research Services offices

- **You said: "Please open earlier - and later".**

In the run-up to exam periods we now open from 7am in the morning. Check the opening hours pages for full details.

4. UCD Teaching and Learning

The four models of 'Closing the Feedback Loop' (UCD Teaching and Learning) refers to the process of letting students know how their comments from the Student Feedback on Modules survey have been used. The following models of closing the feedback loop were developed and tested by four different schools and may provide some inspiration for your own module or school. The models are set out in Appendix 2.

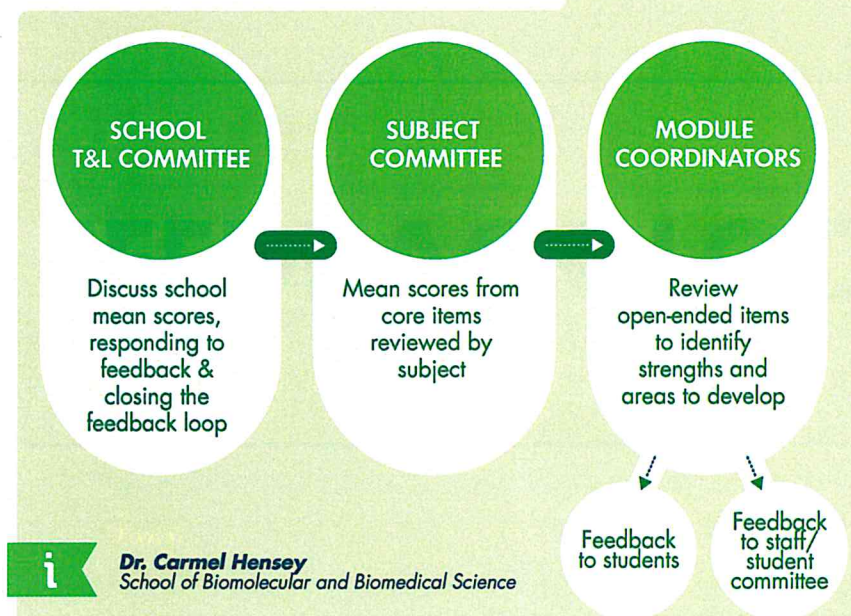
4. Four models of 'Closing the Feedback Loop' (UCD Teaching and Learning) are set out for information.

CLOSING THE FEEDBACK LOOP



Closing the feedback loop refers to the process of letting students know how their comments from the Student Feedback on Modules survey have been used. The following models of closing the feedback loop were developed and tested by four different schools and may provide some inspiration for your own module or school.

MODEL 1



Process

Feedback was discussed at a school-level, at a subject level and also reviewed by individual lecturers before related back to students.

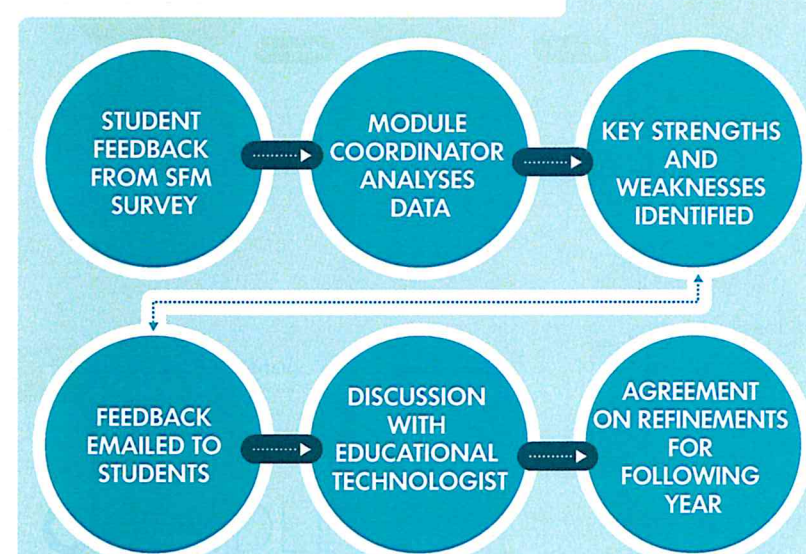
Benefits

- Provided a comprehensive overview of issues affecting module, school, and subject.
- Communication to students via a staff-student committee.

Considerations

- Students who provided the feedback were not likely to receive immediate feedback on their contribution or changes informed by this.

MODEL 2



Process

Five strengths & weaknesses were identified from the survey. This information was emailed to students. Potential changes were discussed with an educational technologist.

Benefits

- Enabled an insight into students' perceptions.
- Showed students their input is taken seriously.
- Discussions with colleagues provided ideas for changes.

Considerations

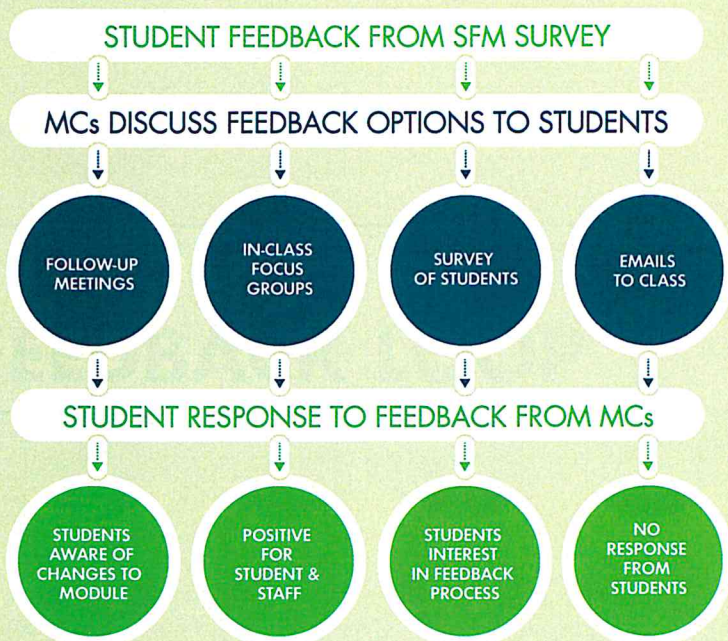
- Process was lengthy.
- Process requires several iterations before substantial changes can be made.



CLOSING THE FEEDBACK LOOP



MODEL 3



Process

Four module coordinators (MCs) met to discuss how to close the loop. Three MCs met students and one emailed them, responding to SFM feedback and exploring their views on closing the feedback loop.

Benefits

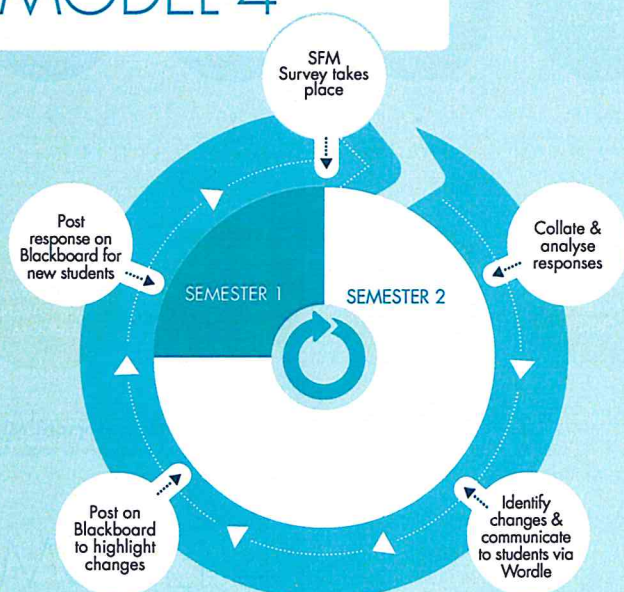
- Students appreciated being kept informed & knowing feedback was used.
- Discussions with students were informative & insightful.

Considerations

- Views only representative of those who completed the surveys or participated in class discussions.

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MODEL 4



Process

Word clouds (www.wordle.net) were made from responses to open-ended items to show most common suggestions & posted on Blackboard. A version will also be posted for incoming students.

Benefits

- Open-ended questions provided feedback on issues that may not have been considered problematic.
- Word clouds show the main issues at a glance.

Considerations

- In a service teaching module, students will not see the impact of their own feedback.
- Low response rates.

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More information can be found at www.ucd.ie/teaching
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