



University of
Leicester

School of Biological Sciences

*Putting Focus into Student
Feedback*

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The Efficacy of Feedback in the 1st Year Programme: a Comparison of the Views of Students and Staff

- **Jointly funded by Teaching Enhancement Forum (internal) and GENIE (CETL).**
- **Assessment major driving force of student learning¹ and feedback is critical to the learning process².**
- **National Student Survey (2005) quality and timing of feedback were graded lowest of all aspects reviewed.**
- **Project aims to optimise feedback within School Biological Sciences by identifying any gaps between expectations of staff and students regarding the format of, and engagement with feedback.**

1. Synder, 1971

2. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2004



Project Outline

- 1-1 semi-structured interviews with staff.
- Questionnaire open to 1st and 2nd year students.
- Focus Groups with 1st Year students only.



FOCUS GROUPS

Carried out with 1st Year BS students to expand on data obtained from the on-line questionnaire:

- **Selection and recruitment of students.**
- **Composition of final cohort.**
- **Issues encountered when conducting Focus Group sessions.**
- **Lessons learnt –would we do it differently next time?**



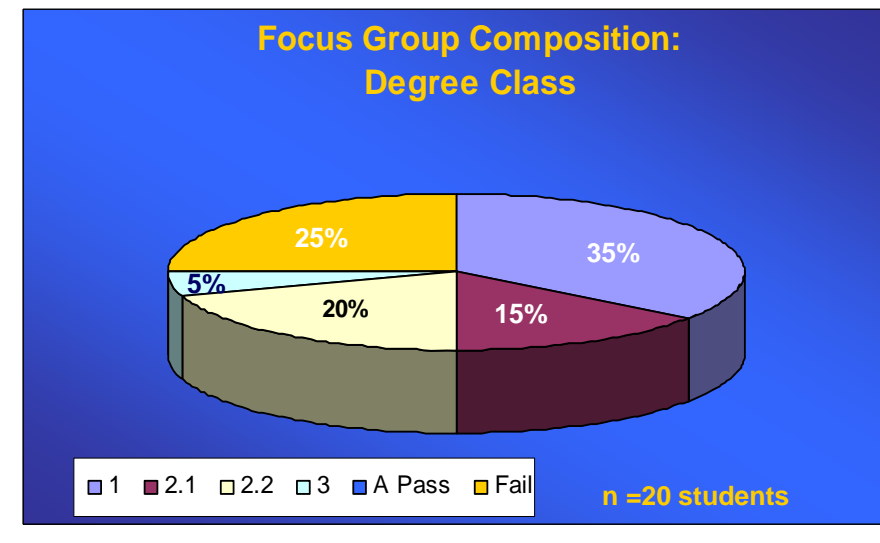
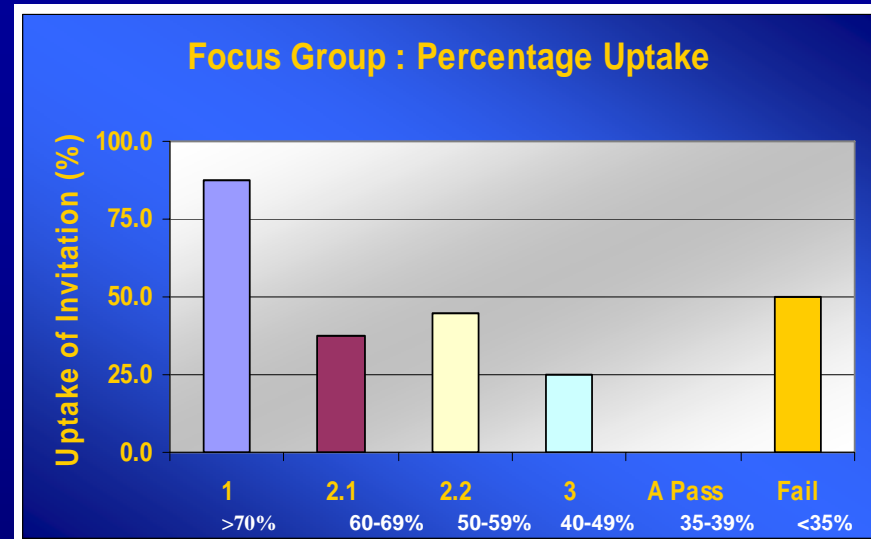
Selection and Recruitment of Students

- **10 students selected for each of 4 Focus Groups.**
- **Groups were matched for degree class (Jan 07 exams) and gender.**
- **Focus Groups run consecutively and selected students recruited as follows:**
 - **initial e-mail invite with explanation of project**
 - **reminder e-mail 1 week before FG**
 - **face to face confirmation in lecture 1 day before FG**
- **All FG participants placed into a ‘Prize-Draw’.**



Composition of Final Cohort

- 51.9% (n=41) of year group invited, with 25.3% (n=20) attending.
- Students in 1st Class band were most likely to attend.
- Final cohort has a good representation of all degree classes.
- Females (52.2%) were slightly more likely to attend than males (44.4%).
- Final cohort has M:F ratio of 1:1.5 which is representative of year group (1:1.39).



Conducting Focus Group Sessions

- **Timing of session chosen carefully.**
- **Used a semi-structured discussion plan with Questionnaire as a guide.**
- **Non-teaching staff used to conduct FG session.**
- **Discussion was recorded to maximise information obtained.**
- **Recording caused some issues:**
 - **Consent forms required to allow future use of material**
 - **assurance of anonymity**
 - **some comments may have been 'guarded'**
 - **transcription lengthy**



Lessons Learnt: would we do it differently next time?

What worked?

- Timing of session worked well.
- Use of non-teaching staff to conduct interviews allowed freedom of comments from students.
- Recording of sessions allowed maximum information to be gathered.
- Continuity of having one non-teaching person to select and liaise with students.



Lessons Learnt: would we do it differently next time?

What would we change?

- Invite more students to each session to counter 50% uptake.
- ‘Prize-Draw’ incentive may not have been sufficient to attract the less ‘engaged’ students
 - payment may be a better option if possible.
- Recruitment via other routes eg. CETL Student Network (in development).

