

The Irish Survey of Student Engagement as a Tool for Institutional Knowledge and Enhancement

A Tri-institutional Case-Study

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**Maynooth
University**
National University
of Ireland Maynooth



**STUDENT
SURVEY.IE**
WE'RE
LISTENING,
WE'RE
LEARNING

Presentation Outline

- ISSE as a tool to support enhancement
- 3 Areas of Good Practice
 - Encouraging Participation
 - Analysis for Insight
 - Using ISSE to Support Quality Enhancement
- Challenges and Opportunities for ISSE

ISSE- One survey, three institutions

- Institutions all within the Midlands, Eastern and North Dublin Cluster
- Common approaches across all three institutions, but....
- Differences in approach based on institutional context

	Athlone IT	Dublin City University	Maynooth University
2014	1,440 (41%)	1,006 (15%)	932 (15%)
2015	1,683 (51%)	1,670 (26%)	1,012 (15%)
2016	1,646 (54%)	2,346 (32%)	1,503 (22%)

Encouraging Participation

Encouraging Participation

	Maynooth University	Athlone Institute of Technology	Dublin City University
Timing of Fieldwork	Mid- semester, avoiding significant calendar clashes	Outside assessment deadlines	Later in semester; avoiding other surveys
Encouraging Participation	Academic 'buy-in', project manager, student support	Project Manager; Incentives	Key committee oversight; Accessible on VLE
Student Ownership	Strong Students' Union Support	Strong Students' Union Support	Strong Students' Union support

Partnership Approach



Partnership Approach to Data Collection- Athlone IT

- Project Plan in advance
- Partnership with Students Union
- Meetings with Class Reps
- Regular emails to students (Pre, during & Post)
- Feedback to student on results & action taken
- Promotion various Fora, Prizes, €1 hardship fund
- Photographs of winners each week with iPad mini to reinforce awareness

Partnership Approach to Data Collection- Athlone IT

- Monitoring response rates and then targeting specific groups
- Academic staff play a key role
- In Class completion in lab class
- Use of Open Access (large no. of PCs)
- Engagement with students on placement

Analysis and Insight

ISSE Analysis and Insight

ISSE Indicators	Individual Q's (Likert Responses)	Text based Q's
Institutional v International	Institutional v National/ Sector	Cohort Analysis (UG1, UGF, PGT)
Institutional v National/ Sector	Cohort Analysis (UG1, UGF, PGT)	Mode Analysis (FT, PT, Distance)
Cohort Analysis (UG1, UGF, PGT)	Mode Analysis (FT, PT, Distance)	Subject Area Analysis
Mode Analysis (FT, PT, Distance)	Subject Area Analysis	Demographic Analysis
Subject Area Analysis	Demographic Analysis	
Demographic Analysis		

Analysis and Insight- Comparative Approaches

	Maynooth University	Athlone Institute of Technology	Dublin City University
Analysis Owner	VP Strategy and Quality, Institutional Researcher	Led voluntarily by Faculty Dean	Institutional Researcher led
Analysis Focus	Cohort, Age, Gender, Mode of Study, ISCED field, Work status	Benchmarking nationally and internationally, cohort, Subject area	Faculty, School, Programme. Mode of study

Analysis and Insight- Maynooth University

Analysis of outputs: evolving agenda of priorities

- 2013 and 2014 review of responses to individual questions by year of study;
- Benchmarking MU against all universities; identification of comparative strengths and weaknesses between MU and sector, and also focus on movements on S&W within Maynooth
- Identification of key audiences for specific items of evidence
- Promotion of understanding of composite statistical indices of engagement and outcomes

Analysis and Insight- Maynooth University

Analysis of outputs 2015 & 2016

- Composite sample of data for three years 2013-2015
- Larger sub-samples
- Analysis of index scores by
 - year of study,
 - gender,
 - Mode of study (full-time vs part-time)
 - Field of study (ISCED fields mapped to MU Faculties)
 - Employment status (paid off-campus employment vs none)

Analysis and Insight- Maynooth University

Caveats:

- The survey records the views of the participating students
- Responses are essentially their opinions and/or perceptions
- Risk of bias in data - but the instrument has been thoroughly tested elsewhere
- Discernible statistical associations may not represent evidence of causality, eg. between some forms of engagement and student outcomes

Analysis and Insight- Maynooth University

Survey data confirms that:

- Significantly high proportions of students state that their formal education experience is academically challenging and they engage in active individual and collaborative learning in environments that they regard as supportive
- Engagement with a broader educational experience is not as enriching as it might be for many
- Resource constraints are impacting on class sizes (opportunities for student presentations) and timeliness & quality of feedback to students

Analysis and Insight- Maynooth University

Survey data confirms that:

- a significant majority of students provide strong positive responses to questions on higher order thinking.
- In most cases the scores for outcome indices improve significantly as students progress through their studies, but note first year students have limited experience of the university at the time of the survey
- The scores for career readiness indicate some scope for improvement

Analysis and Insight- Maynooth University

Sources of Differentiation

- Average scores for first year female students are significantly higher than for males on *Academic challenge* and *Active learning* indices. Males have significantly higher scores for *Staff-student interaction*
- Females have significantly higher scores on each of the output indices: *Higher Order Thinking*, *General Learning Outcomes*, *General Development Outcomes* and *Career Readiness*
- Gender based differentials are not significant after first year on most indices

Analysis and Insight- Maynooth University

Sources of Differentiation

- Students aged <23 years have significantly lower scores on indices for *Academic Challenge*, *Active Learning*, *Staff-Student Interaction* and *Work Integrated Learning*
- Full-time students have significantly lower scores for the *Active Learning* and *Higher Order Thinking* indices, but they score significantly higher for *Enriching Educational Experience*, *General Learning Outcomes* and *General Development Outcomes*

Analysis and Insight- Maynooth University

Sources of Differentiation - engagement in off campus paid employment

- A high proportion (c. 50%) of full-time undergraduates undertake some off campus paid employment
- 40% of those in employment work at least 10 hours / week

Impact on index scores?

- Full-time students with some paid off campus employment have significantly higher scores for *Active learning, Enriching educational experience, Work integrated learning, Career readiness* and *General development outcomes*
- There are no significant differences between students who not undertake any paid employment and those that do so, in the scores for all other indices

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ISSE and the Quality Context

Embedding ISSE in Quality Context

	Maynooth University	Athlone Institute of Technology	Dublin City University
Communicating Results	Inst. Committees, staff and students, summary results circulated to all staff, SU distribution to students	Governing Authority, Inst. Committees, Programme Boards, staff and students	Inst. Committees, Faculties, Departments, Programme Reports
Embedding in Quality Processes	Informing curriculum design and experiential learning	QQI self-evaluation reviews, Informing policy at practice across Student Experience	Supporting evidence based approach to Programme Review

Embedding ISSE- Dublin City University

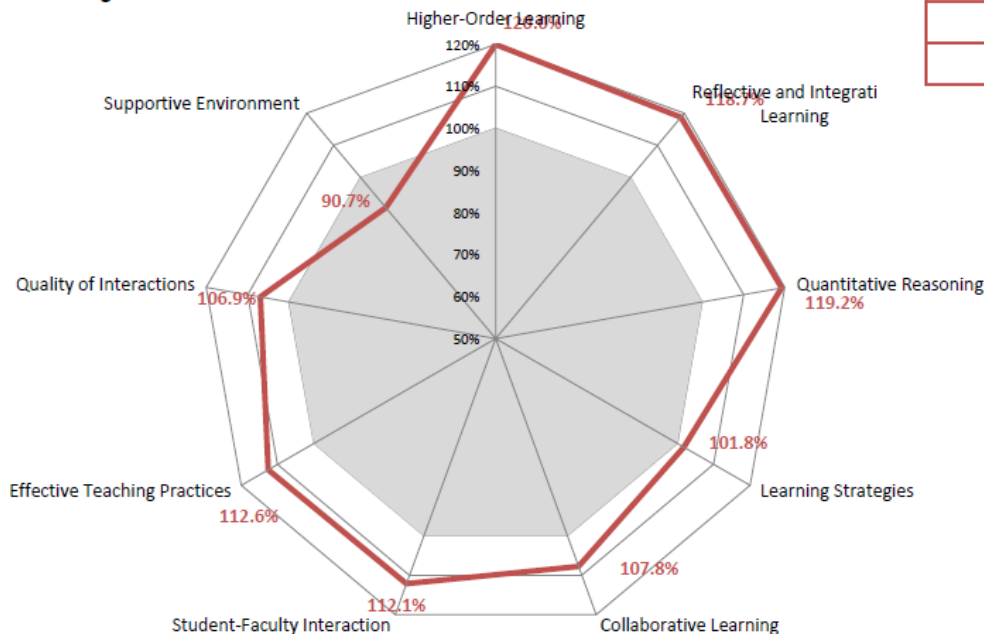
- **Wide Communication of Results**
 - Main Educational and Leadership Committees and Fora
 - Faculty Specific Presentations upon request
 - Student Support and Development
 - Students' Union results briefing
 - Text based responses distributed to Faculties
- **Indicators presented, but increasingly, individual questions**
- **Programme Level Reports**
 - 3 Years of consolidated data
 - Presented at Programme level, where possible
 - Reports generated to support student feedback element of Annual Programme Review

Embedding ISSE- Dublin City University

Programme Level Reports to support Annual Programme Review

ISSE Indicators 2016			
Revised Indices		DCUBS- PGT Management suite	ALL DCU
HO	Higher-Order Learning	45.1	37.6
RI	Reflective and Integrative Learning	38.0	32.0
QR	Quantitative Reasoning	26.3	22.1
LS	Learning Strategies	31.0	30.4
CL	Collaborative Learning	34.2	31.8
SF	Student-Faculty Interaction	17.8	15.8
ET	Effective Teaching Practices	37.2	33.1
QI	Quality of Interactions	39.0	36.4
SE	Supportive Environment	27.9	30.7

DCUBS- PGT Management suite

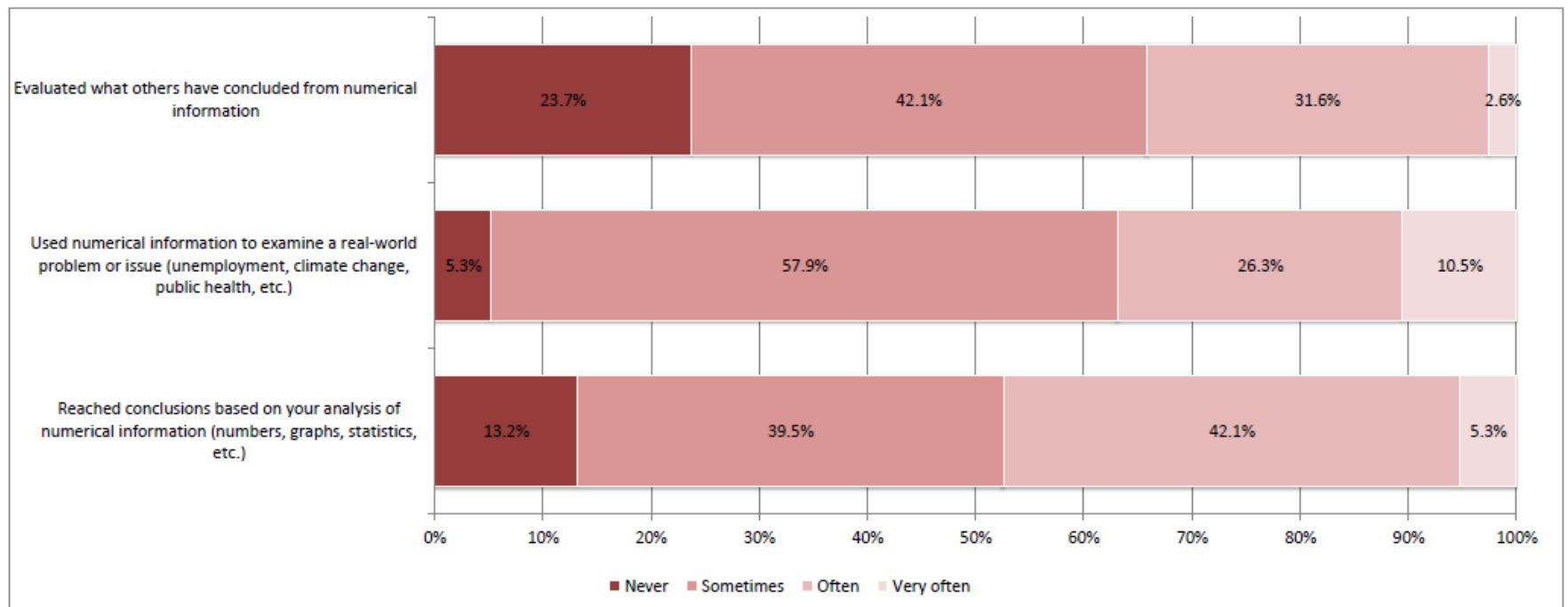


Programme Level Reports- Dublin City University

Quantitative Reasoning (New 2016)

During the current academic year, how often have you:

DCUBS- PGT Management suite	Years on Survey	Never	Sometimes	Often	Very often	Total Responses
Reached conclusions based on your analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.)	2016	13.2%	39.5%	42.1%	5.3%	38
Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue (unemployment, climate change, public health, etc.)	2016	5.3%	57.9%	26.3%	10.5%	38
Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information	2016	23.7%	42.1%	31.6%	2.6%	38



Future Challenges and Opportunities

ISSE- Future Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

- Maintain and develop a balanced participation & higher response rates
- Continue partnership approach with student representatives
- Achieve further added value – verification of consistency in results from year to year is not enough
- Consider if all indices are equally important and how much improvement might be achievable
- Improve effectiveness of feedback to students & staff
- Promote deeper analysis of the sources of systematic variation in index scores
- Strengthen capacity for analysis of the survey data

ISSE- Future Challenges and Opportunities

Opportunities

- Articulate more clearly the expected / hypothesised relationships between the survey questions / indices
- System level added-value via in-depth analysis of relationships between all indices, and questions contributing to variance in indices
- Continue to take action based on the results and feedback from students
- Consider enhancement via inclusion of additional data from student records in an anonymised file
- Review appropriateness of ISSE Qs for taught PGs, flexible learners, and research PGs
- Consider options for benchmarking of results - within institutions, nationally and internationally.

ISSE- Conclusions

- ISSE is a powerful tool for supporting enhancement of the experience of students and staff in higher education
- The transformation of data into useful information requires careful analysis and should be guided by a strong theoretical underpinning of the preferred learning processes of third level students
- There is scope for more analysis that could enhance pedagogy, learning and understanding of the attributes acquired by different groups of third level graduates
- The diversity of experiences of graduates should be cherished, but it may be helpful to agree a priority set of core attributes
- Finally, the binary categorisation of disciplines and students into AHSS/STEM is too restrictive.