



A new framework for enhancing academic team buy-in to student voice mechanisms

'The mood music is very important'

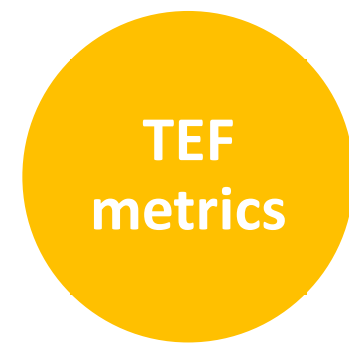
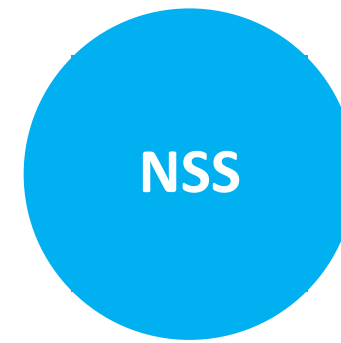
The driver for change

NSS Q25: It is clear how students' feedback on the course has been acted on

Sector: 57%

Department: 42%

Why close the loop (students)?

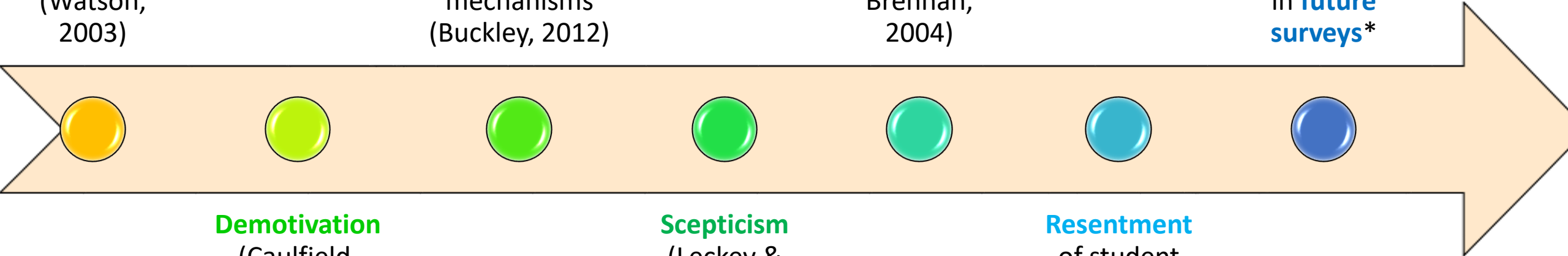


Value and importance of student participation (Watson, 2003)

Engagement with further feedback mechanisms (Buckley, 2012)

Student **satisfaction** (Williams & Brennan, 2004)

Likelihood of students participating in **future surveys***



Demotivation (Caulfield, 2007)

Scepticism (Leckey & Neill, 2001)

Resentment of student voice mechanisms (Buckley, 2012)

* Watson, 2003; Williams & Brennan, 2004; Nair et al, 2008; Young et al., 2011

Why close the loop (academics)?

NSS

TEF
metrics



University of
Chester

Open
discussion

(Cook-Sather,
2009)

Staff development
opportunities

(Blair & Valdez-Noel,
2014)

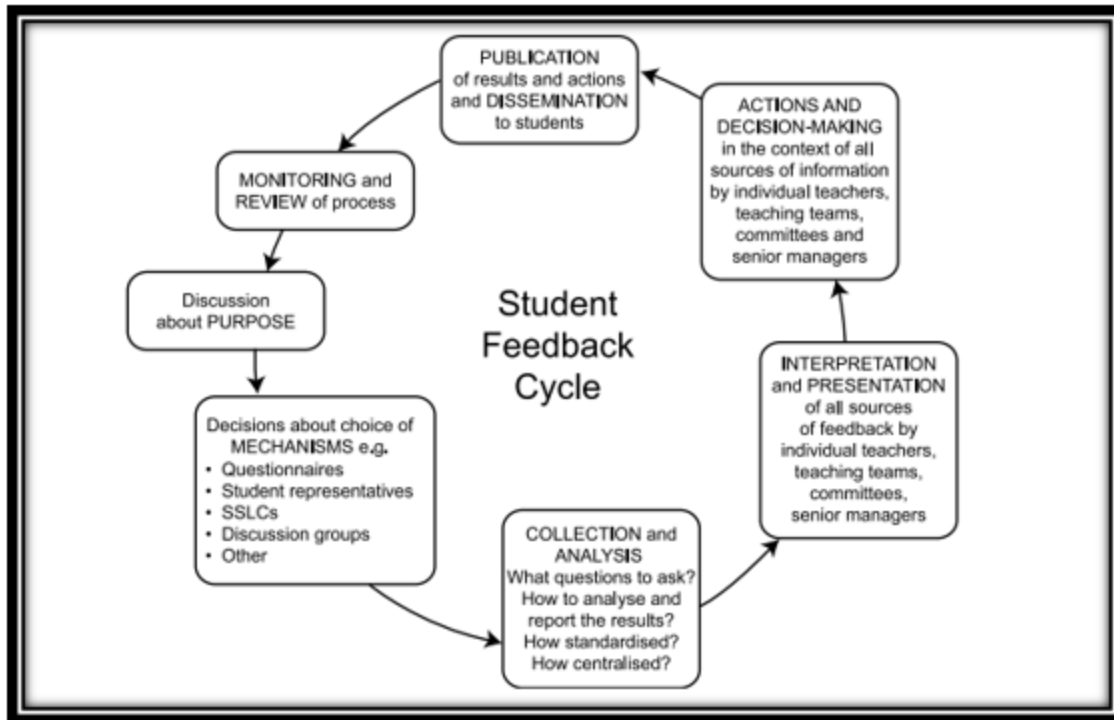
Increased
reliability of data
collected (Buckley,
2013)



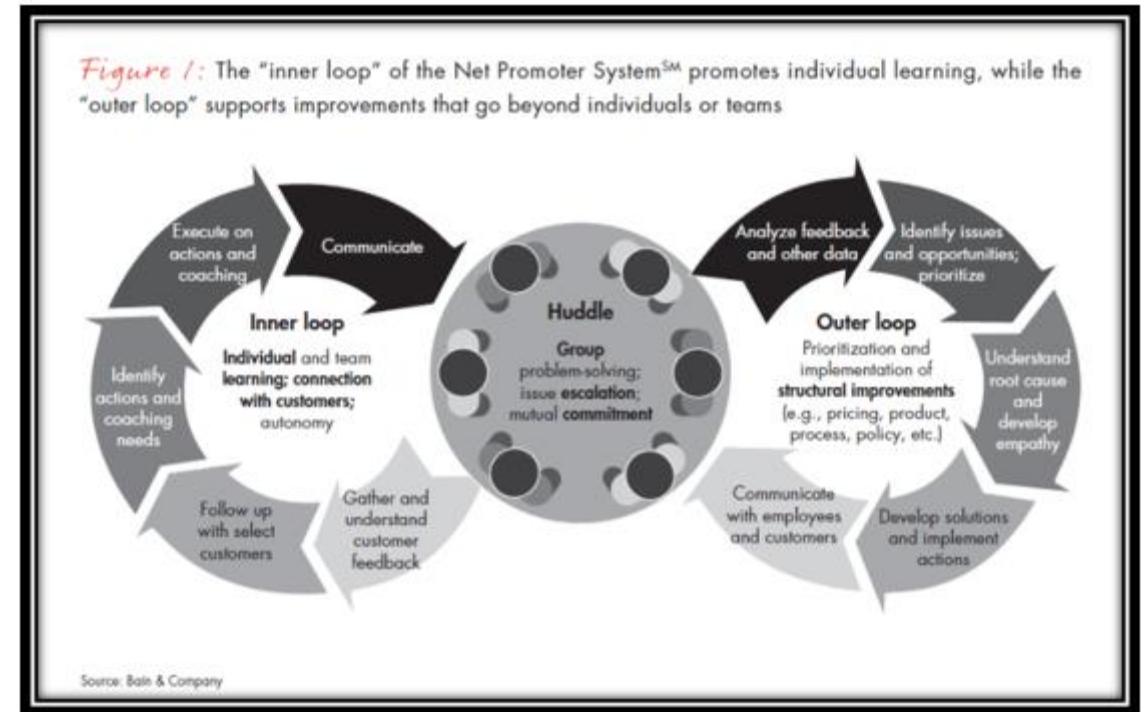
Ensure true
engagement of
academic staff with
data for
improvement
(Newbiggin et al.,
2013)

Ensure
'management'
actually make
changes
(Watson, 2003)

The models



Williams & Brennan's (2004) Student Satisfaction Cycle



Reichheld's (2003) Net Promoter System

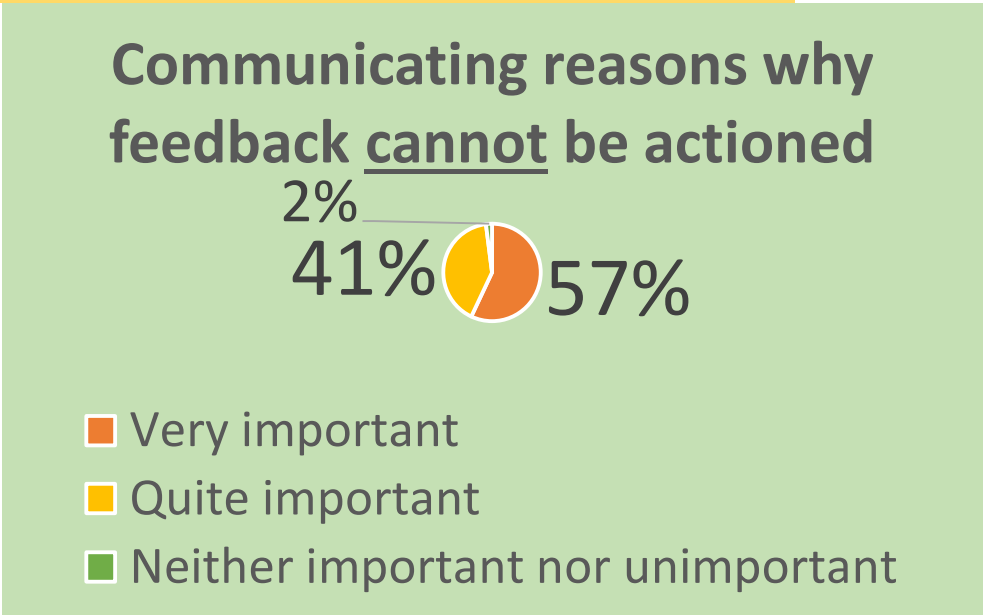
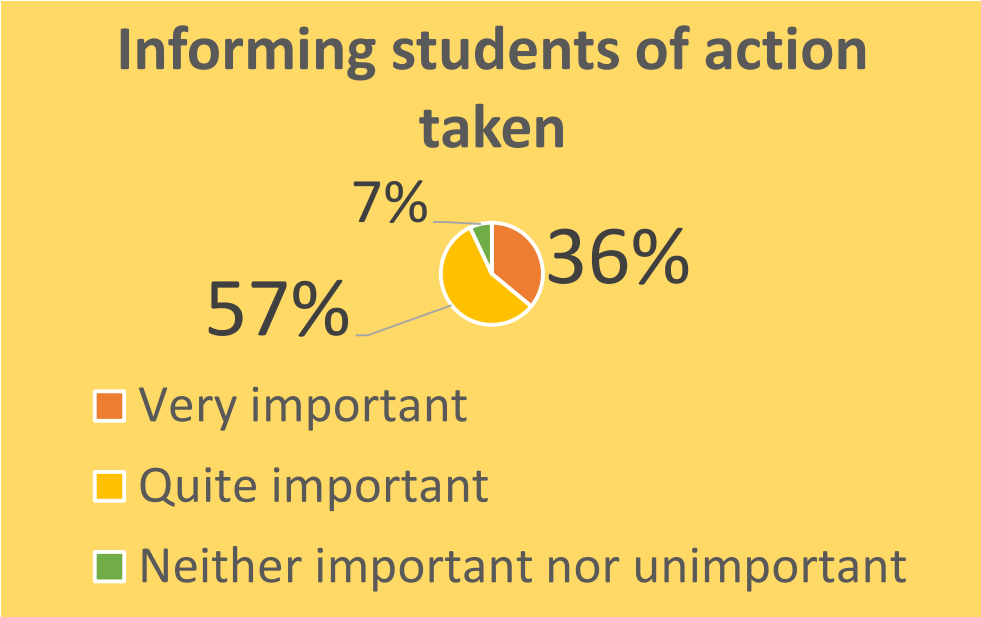
The research

- Student paper questionnaires
- Staff semi-structured interviews
- Staff online questionnaires



The student view

Students <u>unaware</u> of action taken as a result of student feedback	<p style="text-align: center;">77%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(of these, 70% are 'concerned' by this)</p>
Students <u>choosing not to participate</u> in feedback mechanism	<p style="text-align: center;">75%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(of these, 40% 'felt nothing would be done')</p>

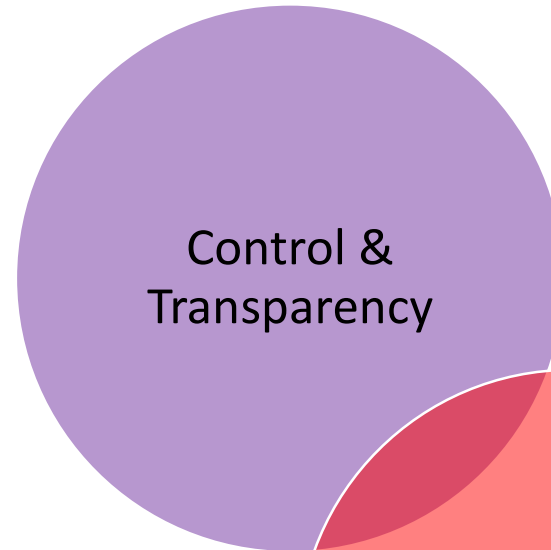


(questions posed in 2017-18, relating to students' experiences in 2016-17)

The academic view: past processes

'I wasn't given the opportunity to respond to comments made on my module'

'It was a closed process'



Consistency & Communication

'It was a triumph of form over substance.'

'there's a You Said We Did section [in the module handbook] but they weren't the ones who said'

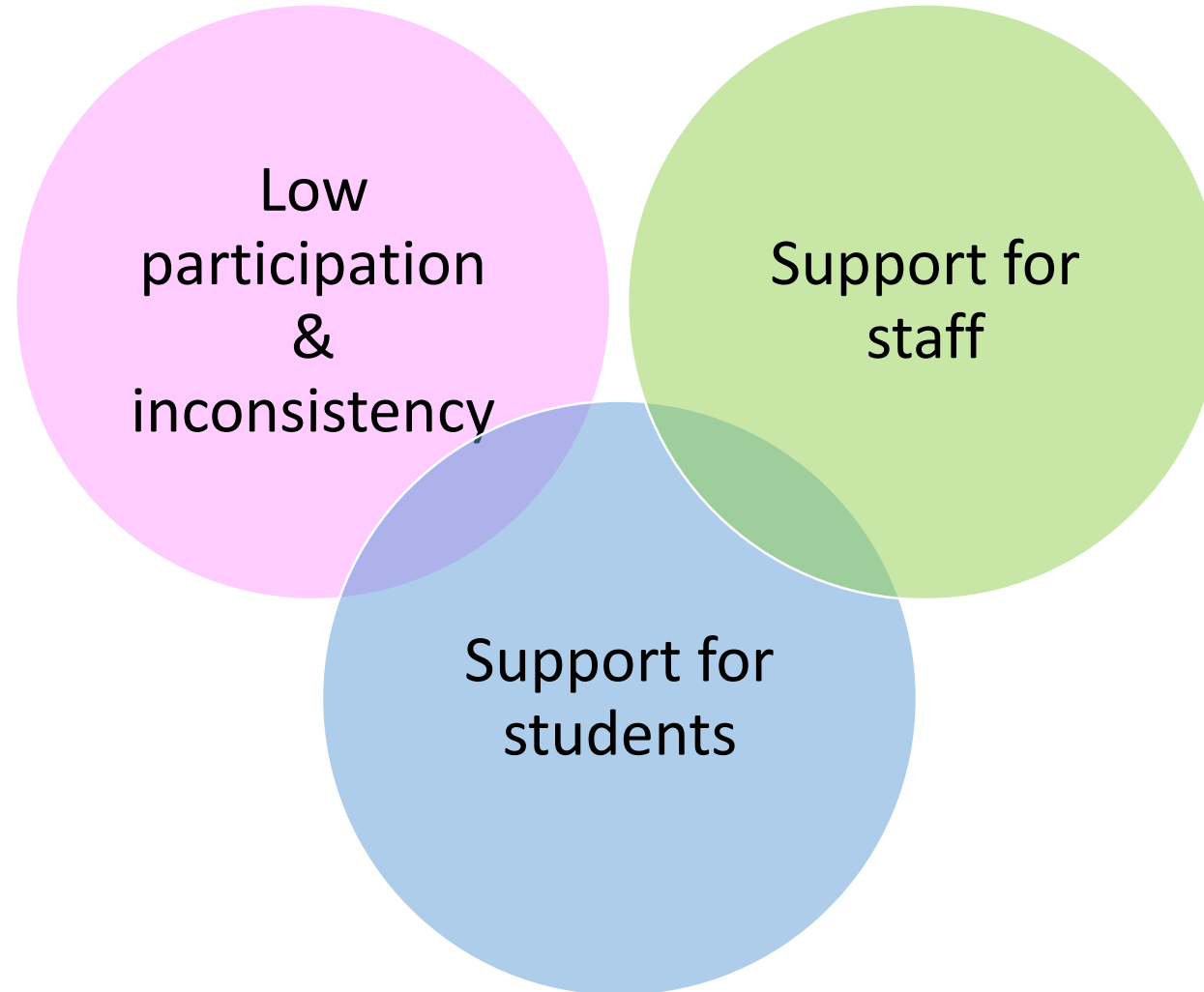
'Staff sometimes feel they have no right to respond to negative feedback and feel punished in some way by the outcomes of surveys'



'we need to create an environment where [...] you're not hammered by management for bad scores'

'[we need to s]top seeing this as being about blame and instead as an opportunity to develop'

The academic view: challenges and solutions

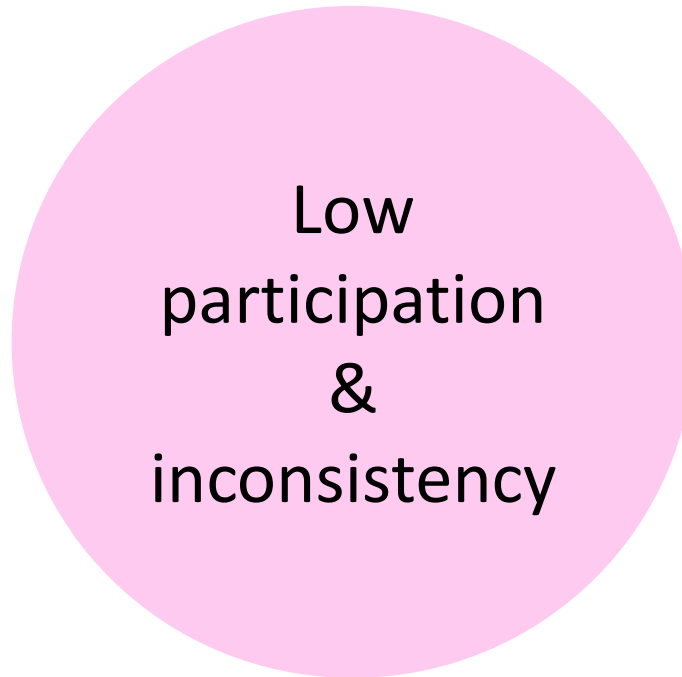




The academic view: challenges and solutions

'percentages are skewed when you have small numbers [It's] difficult to attribute weight [to the comments]'

'do you change something for the whole year based on maybe one or two students?'



'if a student is very happy or very unhappy, [they are] more likely to fill [the questionnaires] in. Those in the middle are less likely to'

'[do we] give kneejerk responses targeted to a small group[?] It leaves those students whose feelings are not followed feeling like we haven't responded to their feedback'.

The academic view: challenges and solutions

'feedback is hard to take – when you're doing your best and working hard and you get harsh or glib feedback from students.'

'there is a barrier in discussing it with other colleagues - we're all so busy it's the last thing we discuss'



Support for
staff

'some colleagues are quick to be dismissive as it can reveal shortcomings on their part. A past colleague said to me 'I see it as a pointless chore.'

'there are usually common themes [...] It would be a useful exercise to discuss how we approach the main themes as a department'

'[team work is essential to ensure everyone is] engaged with the modifications and invested in the reasons for the approach taken. This improves collegiality within the team and consistency for the students.'

The academic view: challenges and solutions

'There's an assumption we ask the questions and they know how to deal with answering them'

'What are they expected to say? "Nice, friendly, amusing" – that's not what we're trying to do here.'

Support for
students

'[it can be] seen as a popularity contest. I don't want to be popular. I want to be respected'

'Students should have support on how to write evaluations [...] that it's not personal or rude, and to consider people's feelings'.



The academic view: responding to students

*'if you are clear and open
with students, they will
respect that'*

Transparency

*'we shouldn't be afraid to
explain differences in the
cohort'*

*'a very personal
interaction, it shows you
care'*

The
personal
touch

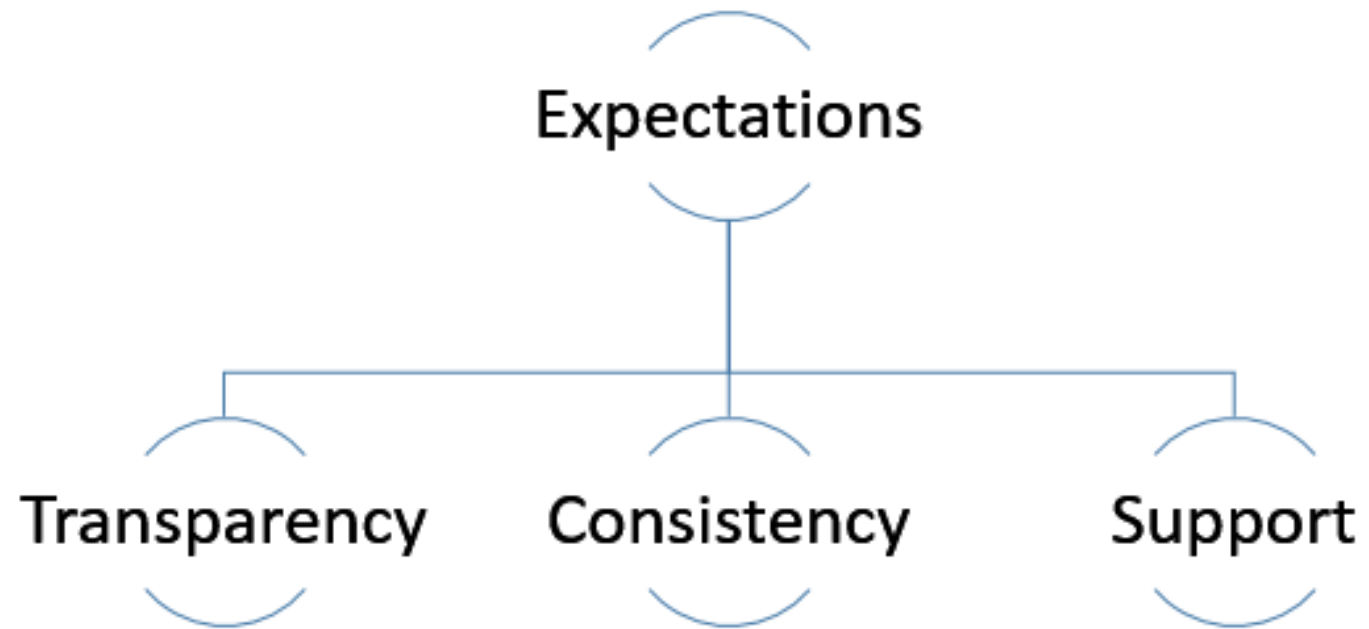
Sensitivity

*'we need to be very
specific [...]'*

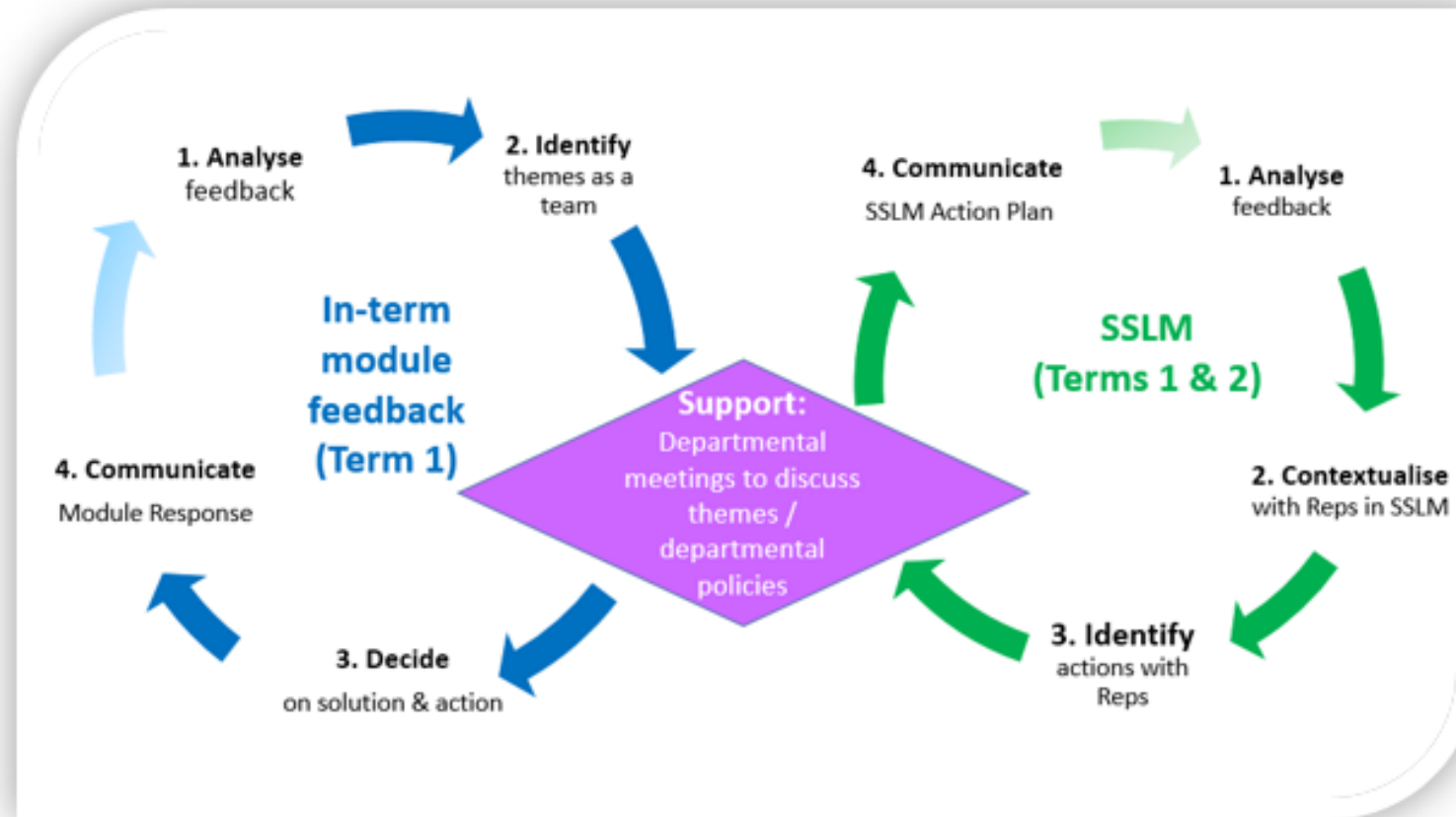
*'it needs to be explained
in full'*



The framework



The cycle





The underpinning documentation

Student Guide to Feeding Back to Us

Staff Guide to Responding to Student Feedback

Student Voice Timeline

Accessible at Advance HE Connect. Student Voice Connect Group:

<https://connect.advance-he.ac.uk/topics/13607/forum>



Student guide: extract



School of Law: Student Guide to feeding back to us

We take your voice seriously. Our aim as a department is to listen to what you have to say about your learning experience on your modules in order to inform our practice, and to work with you to ensure the services (library, IT, Careers etc) that support your learning experience at Chester are cognisant of student needs.

Note that 'responding to student needs' does not always mean 'doing what students ask'. There are some practices we adopt as lecturers that are underpinned by sound educational reasoning (e.g. use of group work and presentations in class). However, we will always listen to what you have to say and respond to the views you express.

You will find as an appendix to this student guide a Student Voice timeline for the 2018-19 academic year. Detail on each of the processes is included below.



Student guide: extract

Things to think about when giving module feedback:

1. Module feedback should relate to **how well you feel you are being supported** on your module, whether that be by the teaching style, feedback given during or outside of class, the format of seminars etc.
2. **Do not confuse popularity with good teaching.** Lecturers have many different delivery styles, so when thinking about whether a lecturer or seminar tutor is 'good', do not think about how much you 'like' them - think instead about whether they convey the information you need clearly, and/or support you in seminars/workshops by providing useful feedback. They are there to help you develop your academic and independent learning skills – this is what we need feedback about.
3. We want to hear success stories! When asked to provide feedback on one thing you like in the module, try to think about something the lecturer/tutor does which you feel supports your learning and/or would like to see done in other modules. In this way we can **support the dissemination of good practice** within the department.
4. Please bear in mind that your responses will be read by the module team in order to implement changes (where possible/necessary) and provide a response to your cohort. We would encourage you to be as honest and open as you can, but please ensure that your **responses are respectful**, even when they contain constructive criticism.
5. As mentioned above, 'responding to student needs' does not always mean 'doing what students ask'. There are some practices we adopt as lecturers which are underpinned by sound educational reasoning (e.g. use of group work and presentations in class). Where we **do not propose to make changes** due to the methods having a sound underpinning, we will inform you. This **does not mean we have not listened to your views.**

2. Aims

- **Aim 1:** Ensure **student expectations are realistically set**, both in terms of what they are feeding back on, and what 'responding to students' means;
- **Aim 2:** Ensure **staff feel supported** to close the loop on feedback provided by students;
- **Aim 3:** Ensure **all students** (so far as this is possible) **are made aware of the responses** to Termly Review, SSLM and MEQ processes in a **consistent** manner;
- **Aim 4:** **Encourage a higher response rate** to Termly Review, SSLM and MEQ, to ensure we are responding to views **representative of the cohort**.



Before and After

‘the feedback cycle only works if everyone is engaged and buys into it. [academic staff] need to effectively deliver it. This can only happen if they feel management have got their back [...]. The mood music is very important’

‘I have co-ordinated the teaching team’s consideration and response to the reviews. This collegiate approach within module teams is crucial in ensuring a united approach to constructive criticism’.

‘It was clear that the students felt as though their voices were being heard’

Did it work?

