USE Interpretation Exercise

This activity has been designed for you to reflect on USE results and to begin planning your response.

**PART ONE: Introductory questions**

What were the unit’s main aims and outcomes?

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Having finished the teaching for the unit, explain how appropriate these aims/outcomes were for the students who undertook it.

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In what ways were the responses to the USE survey representative or not of the full range of students who completed the unit?

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During the semester did you wish you could have altered the unit in any way (timetabling, course materials, teaching resources, design of assessment, communications with teaching team or students)? If so, how and why?

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PART TWO: Interpreting your feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback –</th>
<th>Theme:</th>
<th>Theme:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify two key themes (as highlighted by results of specific USE questions) you want to focus on (e.g. providing feedback, motivation, communication, workload etc). Summarise the statistical data and written responses relevant to these themes.*</td>
<td>Rating (%agreement v %disagreement):</td>
<td>Rating (%agreement v %disagreement):</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Related comment/s:</td>
<td>Related comment/s:</td>
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| Interpretation – | | |
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| What are some of the reasons for these ratings/comments? Can the feedback be attributed to a particular aspect of the course design, teaching methods or course material? Why might various students respond differently to this aspect of the unit? | | |

| Implication – | | |
|----------------| | |
| Ideally, as a result of this feedback, how would you alter or strengthen particular aspects of the unit or teaching methods? Are there any changes related to this theme that you would like to make but can’t – why can’t you? | | |
Tips for interpreting numerical ratings and student comments from USE results

Alterations to teaching design and methods should not be the result of USE mean scores alone (especially when the response rate is lower than 60%). Instead, USE results should be used in conjunction with other reflection strategies and feedback results. Mike Prosser has suggested that “interpreting the results of student evaluation questionnaire as ratings of satisfaction [is] unlikely to result in major improvements [for] students”. That is, as also stated above, it is more useful to identify aspects of the course that caused confusion or frustration for students via the proportion of students agreeing in relation to those disagreeing. For example, percentage agreement (SA+A) of 70% usually indicates a strong positive learning experience, while percentage disagreement (SD+D) greater than 30% represents an area for further reflection. The next step is to investigate other sources of student feedback, such as student comments in the USE surveys. For Prosser, the goal is to align student experiences with course design and teaching methods: “We can focus on changing our teaching and our courses, we can focus on helping our students understand the way in which we teach and design our courses, or we can work on both”.

For assistance with the interpretation of numerical ratings and student comments, the ITL has developed the following resource: http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/awards/Making_use_of%20data_from_USE_evaluations.pdf
PART THREE: Planning and response

List two things that you will attempt to change or reinforce about the unit before it runs again. Changes need not be drastic.

1. __________________________________________________________________________

2. __________________________________________________________________________

Draft a plan for how you will go about making these changes before the unit runs again (you might consider institutional deadlines for redesigned assessment, for contacting colleagues or redrafting the course outline; it might involve identifying areas you would like to do more research in, people you need to contact):

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Now, draft one or two paragraphs that outline these changes/commitments and why you are making them. The paragraphs should be suitable to use in a bulk email to students via the Timetabling Unit, on a school webpage, on WebCT or in a lecture. You could consider sending versions of these paragraphs to students who provided you with feedback. For examples on ‘closing the feedback loop’, the ITL has provided examples at the following here: http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/use/feedback_response.htm

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