

Students' perceived motivation to learn: consistency across units

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Abstract

Curtin's online student evaluation system (eVALUate) comprises a unit survey with eleven quantitative items and 2 qualitative items. This validated survey asks students for their perceptions of what helps their achievement of unit learning outcomes (items 1 to 7), their engagement and motivation (items 8 to 10) and overall satisfaction (item 11). Item 8 ("I am motivated to achieve the learning outcomes in this unit") focuses on the student's perception of what they bring to the teaching-learning partnership.

Our previous research, presented at the 2007 Evaluation Forum, showed that various student subgroups report significantly higher motivation to learn. In this research, students also reported that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors (in particular the teaching staff) motivated their learning. Further investigation into student motivation has now been conducted to answer a number of questions raised at the 2007 Forum.

This current study investigated students' report of: different levels of motivation across units within a study period; the characteristics of the students who consistently report different levels of agreement with Item 8; and the factors that influence their motivation to learn. This presentation reports the findings from the Semester 1 2006 survey event and includes the responses where students were enrolled in four or more units of study (n = 15701 responses). The results include the percentage and characteristics of students who consistently report different levels of perceived motivation and the analysis of qualitative student comments.

Understanding the factors that motivate students to learn assists universities develop strategies for improving their experience.