

Review It: a learner-led course evaluation

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Review It is a learner-led course evaluation tool providing advice from students to students who are finalising paper/offering choices as they progress through their study. Review It encourages reflection of the student's learning experience, and asks what advice that student would give other students. Survey results are moderated and made public online. By directing students to consider how they engaged with the learning material and delivery of an offering, Review It provides prospective students insightful advice from a student perspective. Students may also choose commend a lecturer or offering. The Review It question line also captures student perceptions of weekly workload, how close the offering matched their expectations, and whether there were unforeseen additional costs in study materials and resources. The benefits of the survey extend both to students and the institution; students have access to first-hand course testimonials, while the institution benefits from the first hand reports of students' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their courses.

Keywords: course review, learner-led, Review It, course advice, student reflection.

The Review It Survey

Review It is a learner-led course evaluation developed by EXMSS with support from Ako Aotearoa. Review It provides advice from students to students who are finalising paper/offering choices as they progress through their study. Review It encourages reflection of the student's learning experience, and as a part of that process asks what advice that student would offer other students. Survey results are moderated and made public online.

Perceived Need

In 2010 EXMSS developed Review It in response to enquiries from distance students who did not have the benefit of advice from face to face discussions with classmates about what elective papers to take as they progressed through their degree. Distance students consistently place a high value, and comment positively, on the Review It service.

Review It Survey Goals

1. Provide students with trustworthy and relevant advice that assists students in making paper choices;
2. Provide an opportunity for students to reflect on their learning experience;
3. Make available to lecturers feedback that may help improve future delivery;
4. To ensure the needs of all stakeholders are balanced with the project outcomes; and
5. Offer an opportunity for students to recognise individuals that have contributed to an exceptional learning experience (and recognise a good learning experience itself).

The Review It Cycle of Contribution and Support

In order to deliver on the Review It survey goals a cycle of contribution and support, of giving and receiving, has been developed. This enabled the question line to be considered in terms of two-way engagement and necessitated consideration of both what the student is seeking as information and what the student would benefit from giving.

The Review It Cycle: a community approach

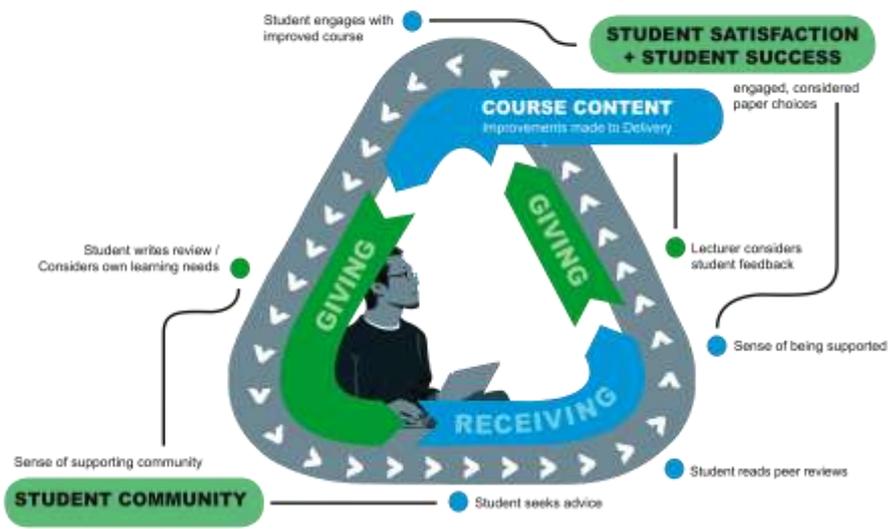


Figure 1: The Review It Cycle of Contribution, support and Improvement

Offering an Ongoing Cycle of Improvement

Part of this Review It cycle involves an opportunity for lecturing staff to review the course content and delivery in light of feedback received. Lecturers who make changes to course delivery have the opportunity to place feedback on Review It results pages. The public nature of the survey adds an element of scrutiny not present in most institution surveys.

The Survey Process

Students are invited via email to review the papers/offerings they are enrolled in. Surveys open for approximately six weeks and close following the release of examination results. Reminder emails are sent prior to the close of each survey. Student media announces when the survey results are available online.

The Survey Questions

Question Text	Answer style
On average how many hours of independent (not tutorials, lectures or labs) study per week was required?	
Other than the fees were there additional costs (such as textbooks, fieldtrips, contact courses or lab costs) for this paper?	
How would you describe the learning resources (printed and web material) of this paper?	Four point scale
How would you describe the process of assessment for this paper?	Four point scale
How would you describe the academic support for students in this paper?	Four point scale
Thinking about the previous questions, if you were to describe your academic experience in this paper what would you say?	Free text
The thing that helped my learning most was...	Free text
The thing I would like to see improved is...	Free Text
Would you recommend this lecturer for 'lecturer of the semester'?	Yes/no
Would you recommend this paper for 'paper of the semester'?	Yes/no

University Support

Massey University provides the database that Review It utilizes to complete each survey. Without institutional support the Review It would not be able to operate.

Best Paper, Best Lecturer

Awards are generated and presented annually for Best Lecturer and Best Paper as determined by student feedback. These awards are the students' opportunity to publically recognise good teaching.

Student Comment Moderation

Student responses remain anonymous. Prior to publication, survey comments are moderated
Moderation Guidelines. Comments should:

- Focus on the learning experience;
- Not speculate on or presume the reasons why an offering was delivered in the way it was;
- Offer constructive advice;
- Be free of expletives and terms that are generally considered offensive;
- Be free of libellous, personal or derogatory comments;
- Not disclose information that is private or personal;
- Be free of comments that contravene human rights; and
- Not name and shame.

Data Use and Ethics

Students agree to terms and conditions that allow the use of data for research. Ethics approval for the use of the Review It data has been granted.

Conditions of Publication

Moderated results will not be published if the number of respondents is less than 5% of the enrolled numbers or if there is only one response.

Conclusion

Review It, with its offering-specific feedback, takes student reviews a step further. Not only does it inform students' academic choices at offering level, it supplies a real connection between students' experiences, and the lecturers who are seeking to satisfy both the learning requirements and the students' desires for a positive learning experience.

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