…and some staff

Audio-feedback: Student Experiences Across Courses and Contexts

Susan M Rhind, Graham Pettigrew, Jo Spiller

IAD INSTITUTE FOR ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT   **Principal's Teaching Award Scheme**

Overview

- Brief overview of school/ programme context
- Project background and implementation
- Quantitative and qualitative analysis
- Conclusions and next steps

School Context

- Professional programme leading to BVM&S degree
- ~750 students on programme
  - 5 year undergraduate programme (70 school leaver/ 30 graduates)
  - 4 year graduate entry (n = 50-60)

Project Background

- Earlier qualitative study → conflict between the personalised, individual feedback that students desire against the time and resource available from staff to meet this demand[1].

- Aimed to address 'ease of use' from the academic staff point of view as well as 'personalisation' from the students point of view.

- Trial using standalone mp3 recordings as feedback on in-course assessment was encouraging …..

[1] Smith K, MCune V, Rhind S: Academic Feedback in Veterinary Medicine: A comparison of school leaver and graduate entry cohorts . Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education 2011:1-16.

The Project: Part 1 - Making it as easy as possible for staff

Embedding within VLE: the Edinburgh Electronic Veterinary Curriculum/ EEVeC

The Project: Part 2 - Evaluation

1st Year

Course A → Assessment A, Assessment B

Audio Feedback → Assessment A

Text Feedback → Assessment B

3rd Year

Course B → Assessment C

Audio Feedback → Assessment C

Whole Class Feedback → Assessment C
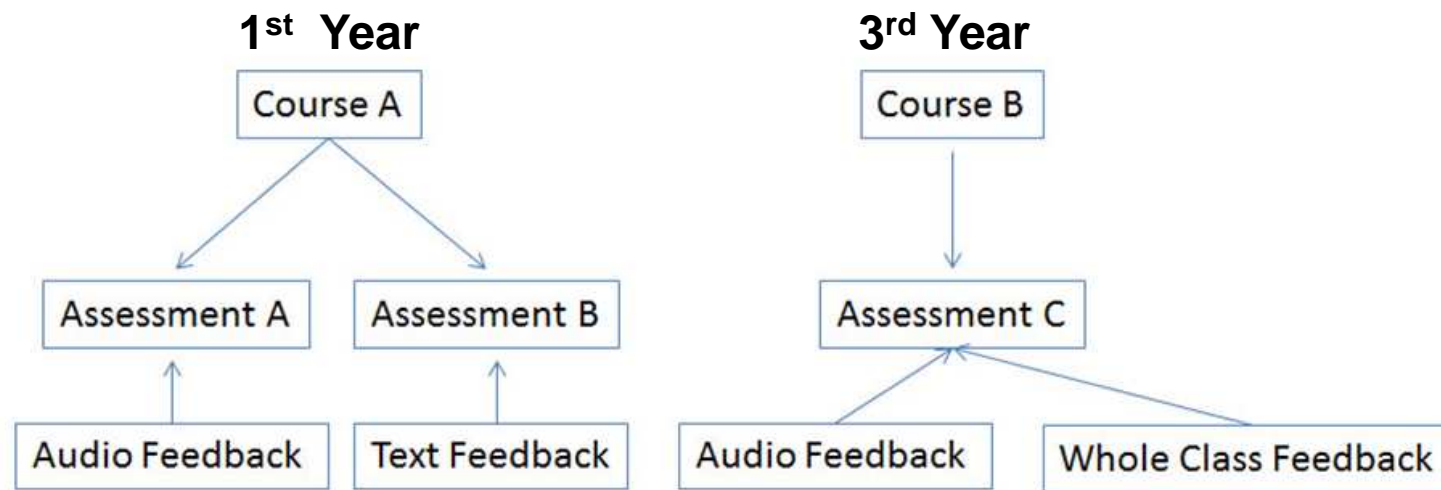
Survey response rates - 52% (Course A), 66% Course (B)

# Summary: Comparison of how helpful students found each type of feedback used in Course A or Course B

- 1st year students: Significantly more students selected the category 'strongly agree' for the audio feedback (chisq=7.46,df=1,P =0.006)

- 3rd year students: Significantly more students selected the category 'strongly agree' for the audio feedback (chisq = 4.5418, df = 1, p =0.019)

- No significant difference in either cohort when categories strongly agree and agree grouped together

Students also asked to rate all the types of feedback received during their studies
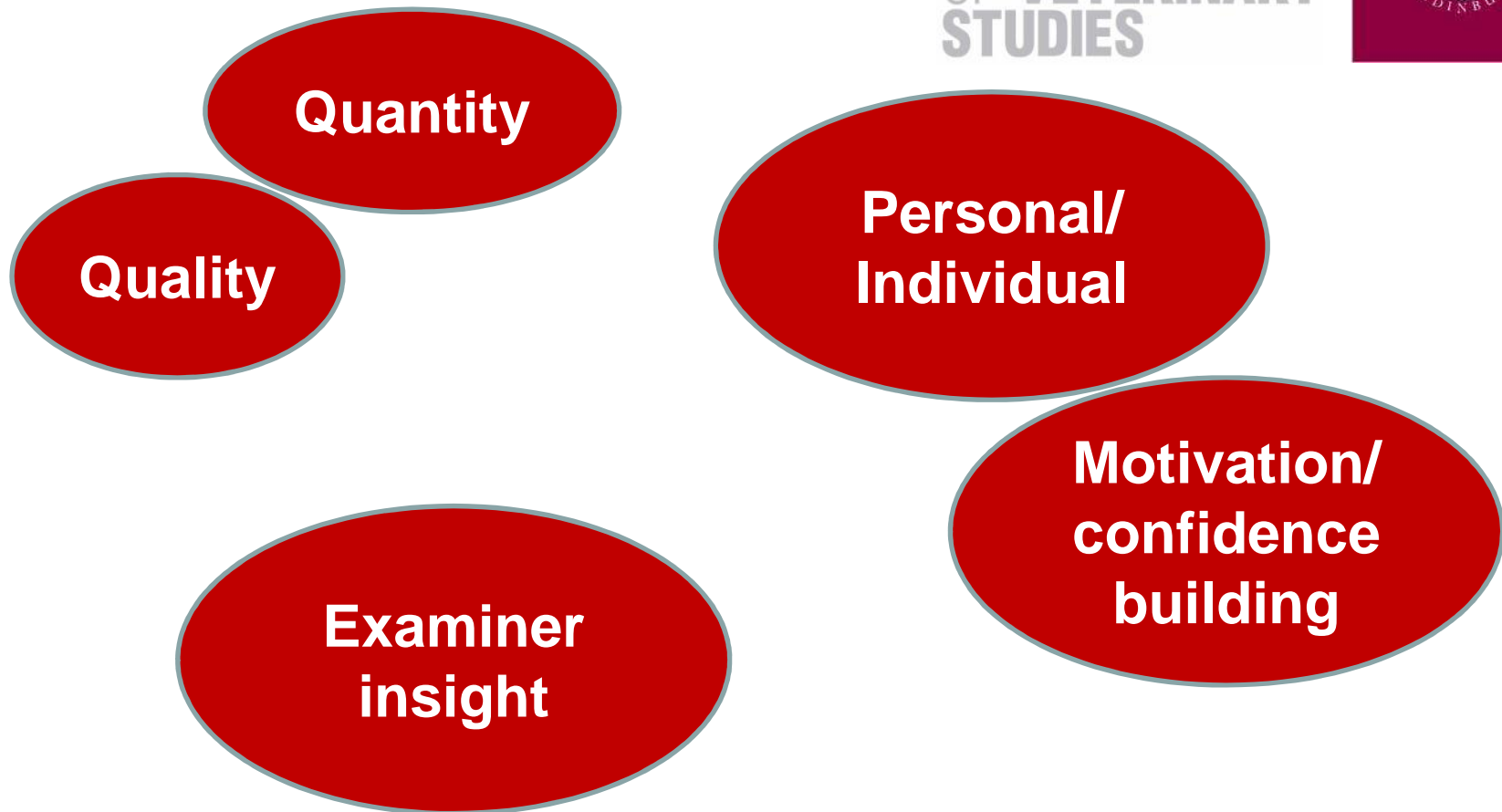
- "Given the types of feedback you have encountered so far in the BVM&S programme as a whole, can you please rate them in terms of how you have found them?"

- Wilcoxon signed rank test data compared each individuals responses in comparison to audio-feedback
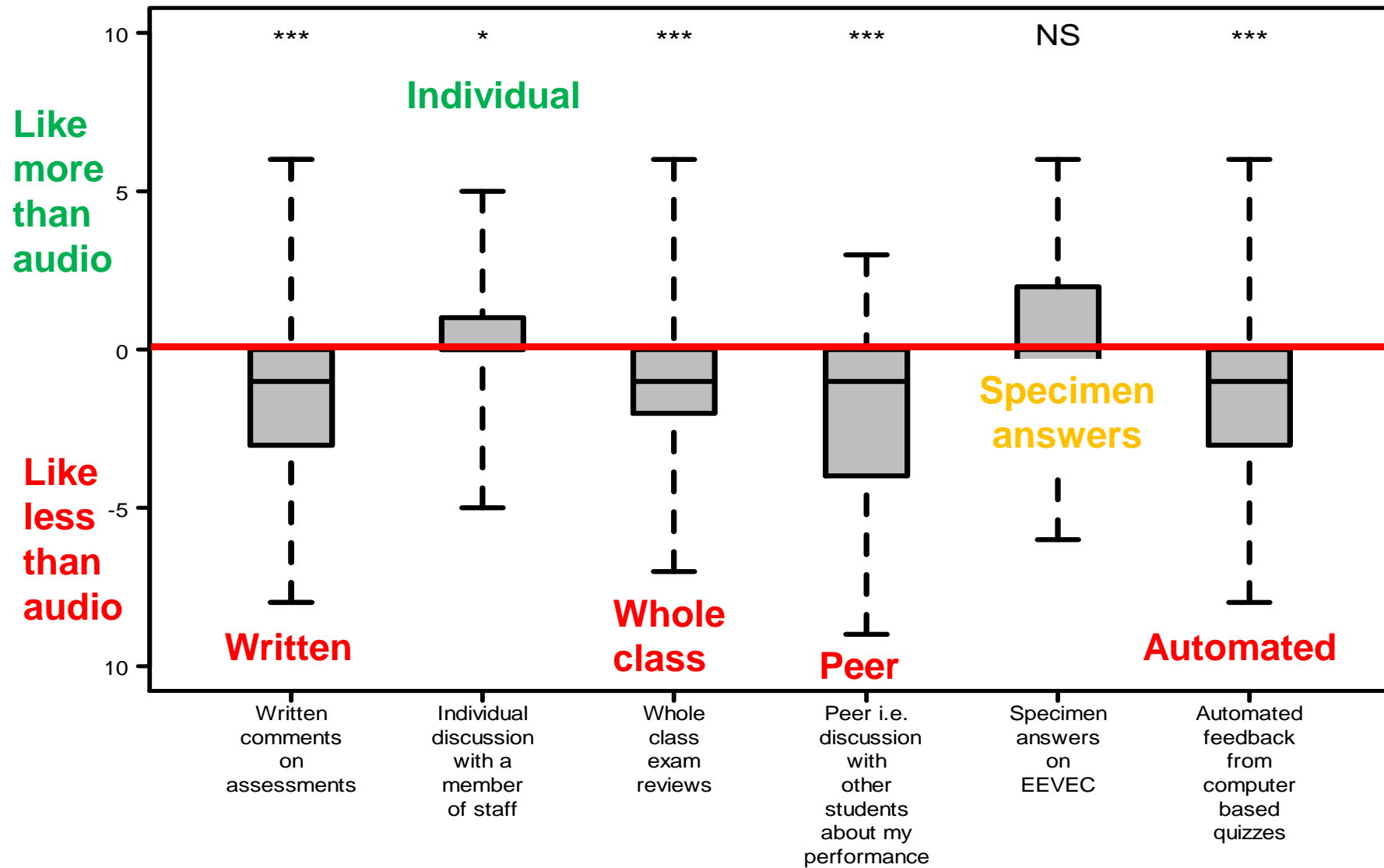
Thematic Analysis

Quantity

Quality

Personal/ Individual

Examiner insight

Motivation/ confidence building

Motivation/ confidence building

Personal/ Individual

- "I think this is an amazing tool! I feel really happy and encouraged to have heard my own personal piece of audio, and you can listen to it on your own where you feel comfortable and really make use of it'

- 'It is excellent to hear positive as well as constructive feedback. It is very motivating as it is on a personal level ……'

Quality

- 'Tone of voice is hard to convey in a short text feedback (which could lead to missunderstandings, the student may think the marker is angry or disappointed with them), however in the audio feedback we could easily gauge the way a comment is meant to be heard.'

Staff Reflections

- I was able to express myself more easily, which actually made it easier to give constructive criticism because I felt more confident that it would be interpreted in the way that I intended. S1

- ….had I been able to give the feedback to them earlier in their course I would have felt that I knew them as individuals better than what inevitably happens in a large class. S2

- I really like the personal aspect of feeling that you are talking to the student. I like the opportunity to give more nuanced and complete comments than you would as script. S3

But……

- 'as the term progressed I felt under much more time pressure to keep up with my responsibilities and felt more and more reluctant to use the audio tool. This was partly because I felt that my stress would be communicated through the recorded feedback; I had to be in the right frame of mind to do it well and that didn't happen very often.' S1

Conclusions

- Students value audio-feedback because of its personal and individual nature. There is potential for audio-feedback to enhance the student experience beyond the specific course context.

- Audio-feedback can be used as a valuable component of an overall 'feedback package' for students

- Future work will explore further the potential for audio to contribute to increasing the sense of community/ belonging/ caring as part of a new Personal Tutor System

Thank You!