Enhancing Student Engagement in the Curriculum

Gemma Allen, Emma Claffey, Philip Smither, Matthew Almond, Joy Collier

Departments of Classics and Chemistry, CDoTL

Project Outline

- Review of Current Practice at Reading and other HEIs
  - Chemistry, Classics, Pharmacy, Food Sciences, Biological Sciences, Politics, English, Archaeology
  - Bath, Southampton (Chemistry), Royal Holloway, un-named HEI (Classics)
 - Interview SDTLs, DDTLs etc

Project Outline

- The "Student View"
  - Student interviews and surveys (Classics and Chemistry)
- Special Projects
  - Use of Facebook (Philip)
  - Student-Led Module (Gemma)
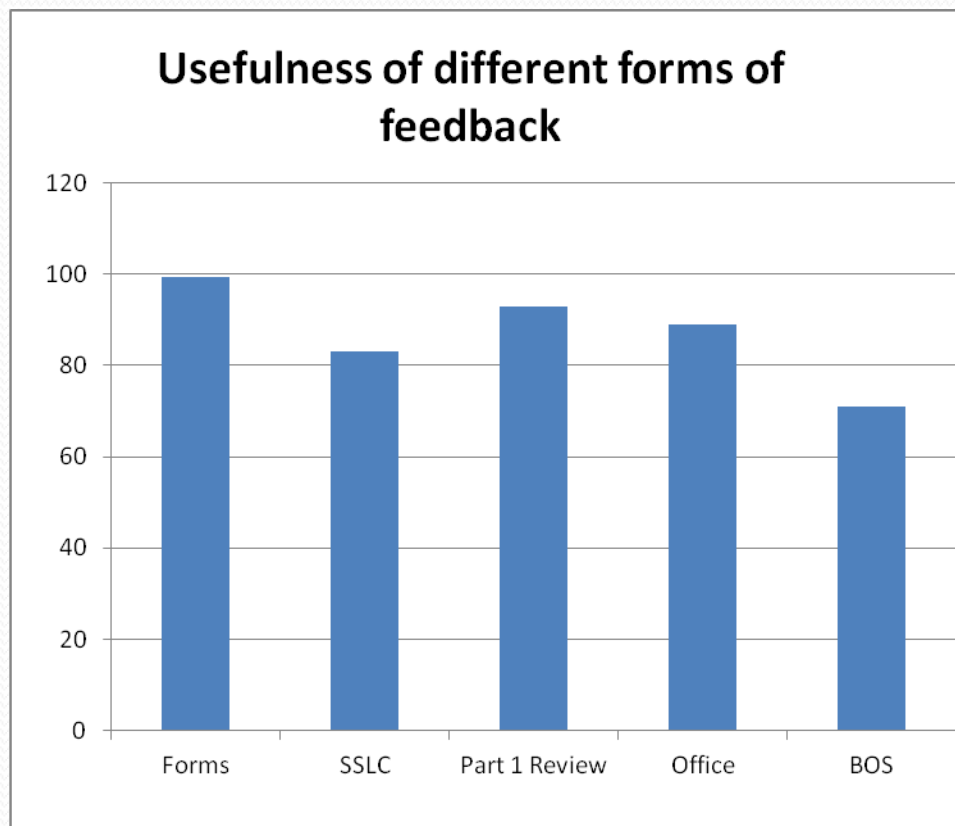
- Conclusions; Good Practice

Current Practice

- General Consensus of "what works"
  - Done Everywhere
    - SSLCs
    - Student Feedback on Modules

  - Done in Some Departments
    - Focus Groups
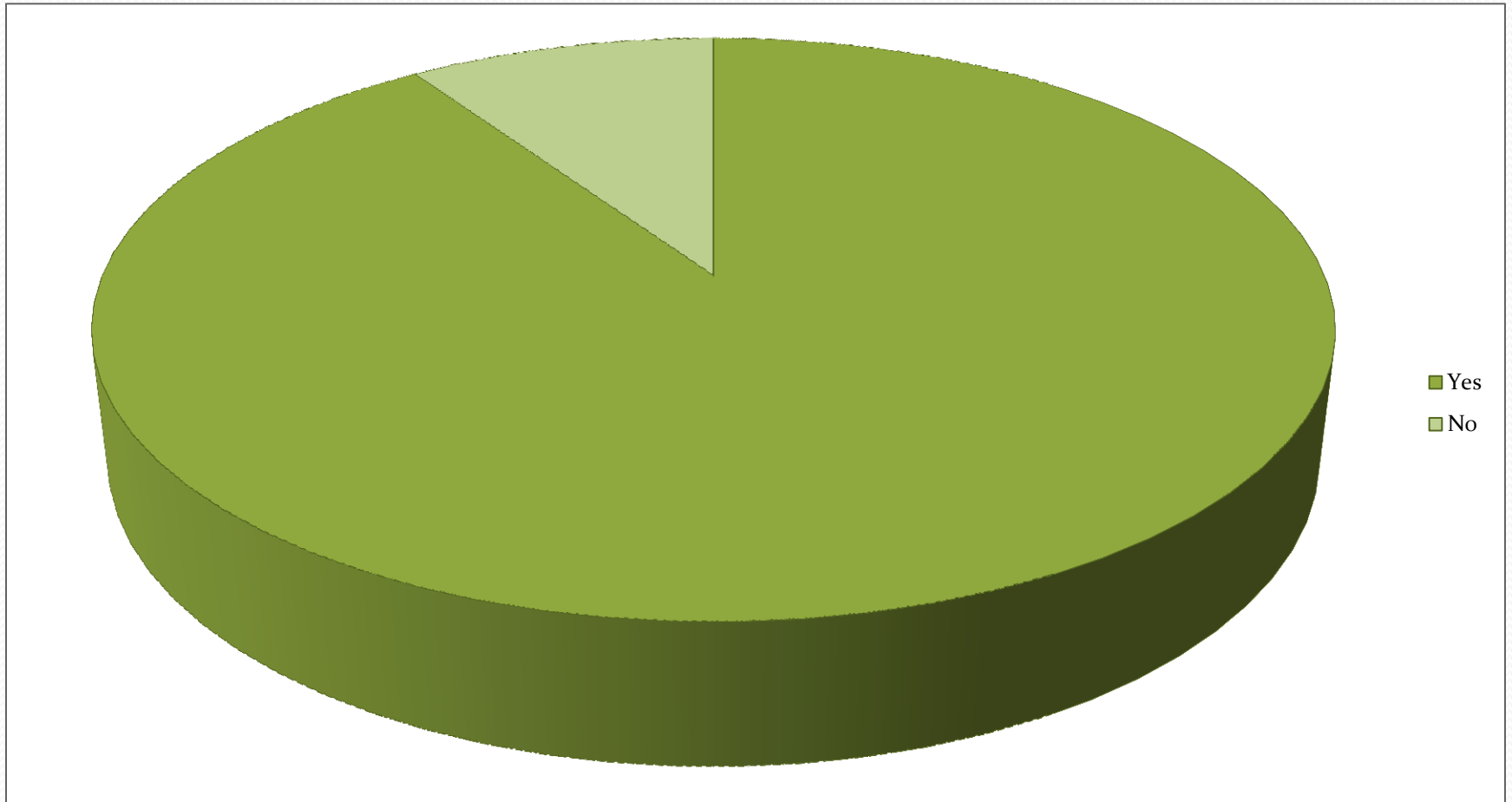   - Student Membership of BoS (at time of survey)
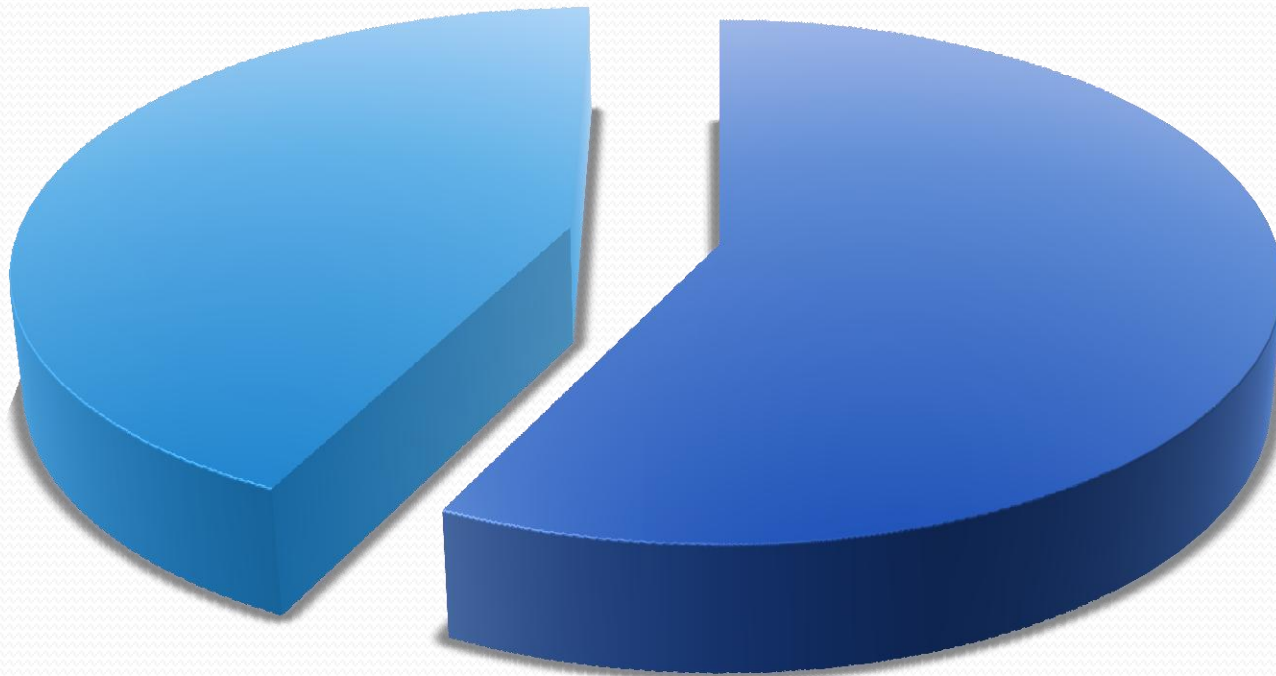
The Student View: Classics
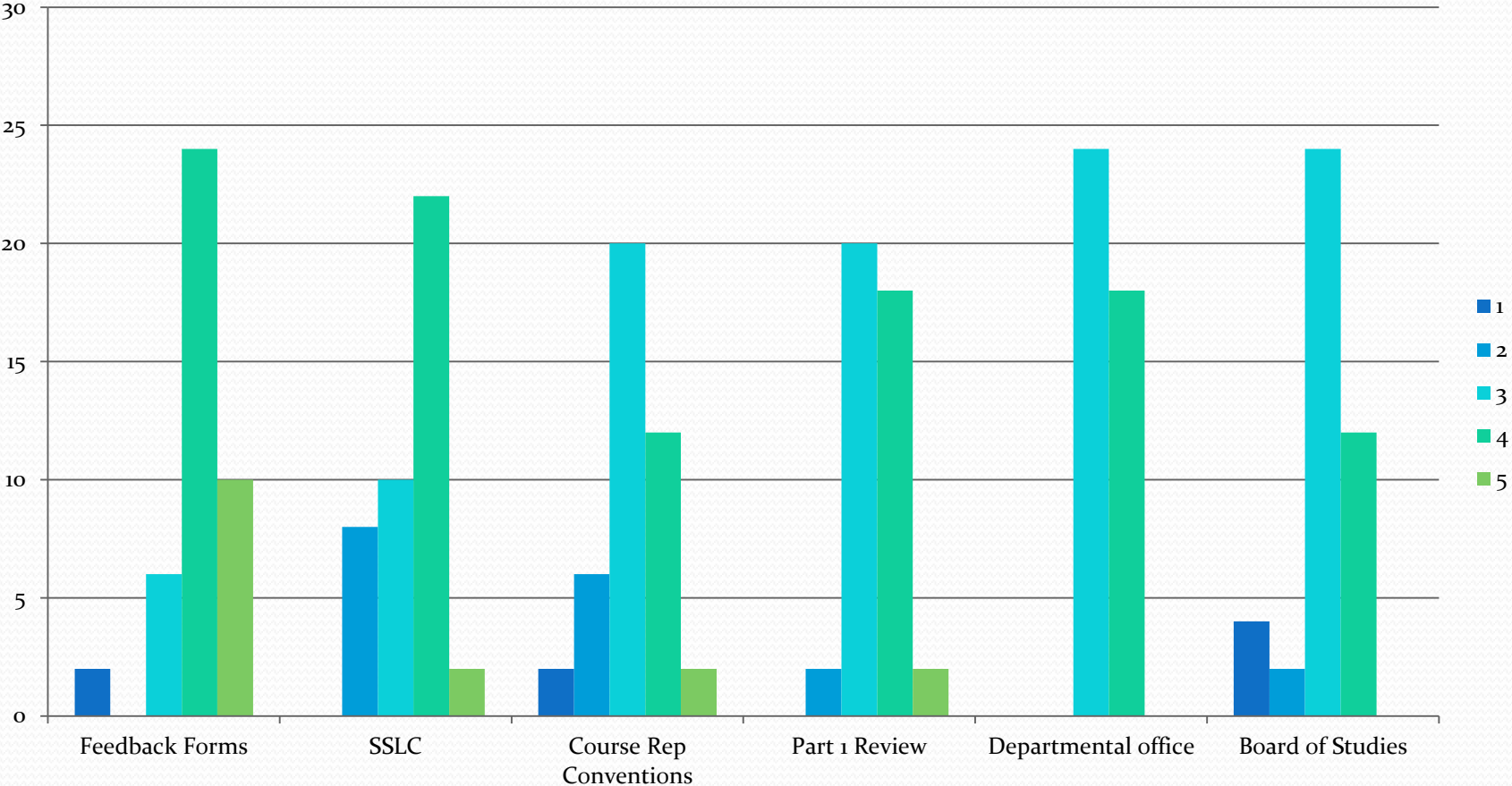
Student View: Chemistry

Are You Adequately Represented?

Do you want more say in your curriculum?

Yes
No

Current Situation

- What Issues?
  - Students often do not know who their course rep is.
  - Students often do not know what happens to issues raised at SSLCs or module feedback.
  - Feedback returns on modules low, especially if electronic systems are used.

- Much of this is being addressed.

Good Practice

- Ensure students know who course reps are
  - Noticeboard, Blackboard, Facebook
- Ensure Students know what happens to module evaluations and SSLC reports
  - Student membership of BoS, Blackboard site with module reviews (WIS)
- Suggest Lecturer and Student Co-Chair SSLCs
- Give clear information on MDFs and BB courses
  - Try to standardise where possible

Good Practice

- Focus Groups can be very good or not so good
  - Ensure students actually have a "focus" and an input
  - Need careful planning and guidance (Chemistry Part 1)
- Electronic Feedback on Modules does not seem to work well
  - Psychology trialling PRS "Clickers"
- Don't overload students with email

But most of all…

- Make sure that students know their feedback is important and make sure that staff are approachable
- Simply listening to students and acting on what they say (where possible) is best form of feedback
- It's more about basic staff-student relations than formal mechanisms

Student Led Classics Module

- Researched by Clare Coombe and Dr Gill Knight

- Lecturer's role supervisory

- Students completely in charge of the module
  - Conception
  - Design
  - Assessment

- A step-by-step analysis of the module:

Introduction to the Module

- Included in lecture on Part 2 module selection

- Positives:
  - Time to consider

- Possible problems:
  - Module descriptions

Module Conception

- Students must elect to take the module
- Part 1 Summer Term meeting

- Positives:
  - Democracy and fairness

- Possible problems:
  - Group size
  - Bibliography

Workshops: Teach Yourself

- Lecturer to run workshops on independent and group study

- Positives:
  - Stepping stone to engagement

- Possible Problems:
  - Least engaging aspect

Contact Time

- A set time every week
- Students split into smaller workgroups
  - Student led seminars?

- Positives:
  - Attendance aided by constant hours
  - Seminars engage students with their learning

- Possible problems:
  - Once aspect of the module not designed by students
  - Participation

Assessment

- A choice of assessment?
- Students decide their own assessment?

- Positives:
  - Complete engagement in learning

- Possible problems:
  - Ability of staff members to assess unusual types of work – but this could be solved…

Conclusion

- A split in both staff and student opinions

- An excellent idea?
- A terrible idea?

CL2AXX - Alcohol Consumption, Abuse and Addiction in Antiquity

- 10 credit Part 2 module

- Convenor: Prof Peter Kruschwitz

- Coursework only

- Workgroups

CL2AXX Coursework

- 10% - Group proposal

- 10% - Blackboard discussion board contribution

- 30% - Group poster presentation

- 50% - Commentary

Student Engagement

- Facebook

- Tension from workload

- Staff-student engagement

- Students seem willing to work