MIND THE GAP:
USING MULTIPLE SOURCE SURVEY DATA TO CHALLENGE ASSUMPTIONS AND INFORM PRACTICE

Cathi Fredricks, Director of the General Modular Scheme
Dr. Jonathan Pratt, University Surveys Manager
Dr. Gemma van Vuuren Cassar, Faculty Director of Learning & Teaching
Dr Alison Eyden, Director of Learning and Teaching
Dr. Darren McGee, Senior Survey Researcher
In numbers:
300-500 (approx.) CH students recruited a year
900+ Possible combinations
249 combinations with enrolled students
149 combinations with 3 students or less.
A DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE? – WHAT THE SURVEYS SAY

5% Single Honours
Combined Honours

6% Single Honours
Combined Honours

USS

UKES
ASSUMPTIONS – FROM THE ANECDOTES

Greater dissatisfaction. . . .

Because of administrative hassle between different Schools/subjects
Because of differences in programme based virtual learning environments
For students who combine subjects across different Schools or Faculties
For students studying unrelated subjects
For those in small combinations or on certain subjects
## Undergraduate Student Survey 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Single Honours</th>
<th>Combined Honours</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N=3253</td>
<td>N=516</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teaching on my course</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment and feedback</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic support</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation and management</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning resources</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal development</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Satisfaction</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Personal development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Single Honours</th>
<th>Combined Honours</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The course has helped me to present myself with confidence.</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My communication skills have improved.</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel confident in tackling unfamiliar problems.</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>-10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysis of the USS also suggested that differences in overall satisfaction were:-

1. Independent of cohort/combination size

2. Just as likely to be *within* Schools/Faculties as across them

3. NOT due to a subject mix effect
UK Engagement Survey 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Single Honours</th>
<th>Combined Honours</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interacting with staff –</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asked questions in taught sessions or contributed to discussions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflecting &amp; Connecting –</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connected your learning to real world problems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning with others –</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked with other students on course projects and assignments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• 87% do not regret taking a CH degree.  
  79% would recommend it to a friend

• Majority of students found their studying experience interesting and challenging (hopefully in a positive way...)

BUT

• 32% reported that the experience had been very difficult  
  Only 51% reported that studying had been well structured
WHAT THE SURVEYS SAID: QUALITATIVE

1. Peer group cohesion

Harder to make friends, being in different classes and not often seeing the same person twice

Not having the same amount of contact time with people who do Single Honours, so not getting to know people as well

Some of the taught sessions are in large groups, and although I sometimes have something to speak out about, I can feel too anxious/nervous in a group

It’s not very inviting, seems like closed cliques

Sometimes it would be nice if there was more of an effort made by the Uni to get students to ‘gel’ together in our classes
2. Interactions with teaching staff

They know the names of SH students but not CH students...

Lecturers tend to forget that there are CH students in the classroom

Get less attention/help than students doing Single Honours, lecturers seem to care less

I felt I fell between the gaps. There was no effort to integrate CH students and I felt side-lined for not taking the full programme

Staff are unaware of the pressures from either course... there is a tendency to be forgotten and receive significantly less support
3. Perceived mastery of the subject

- Having less in-depth knowledge to those who do either course all the time
- Feeling like when it comes to assessments in certain modules, students who study the subject as Single Honours students have an advantage over me
- Sometimes lacking in knowledge about a subject
- Sometimes missing information covered in Single Honours modules and having to ask for clarification
- Tutors only interested in their subject area and see other subject as less important
WHAT THE SURVEYS SAID: PIECING IT TOGETHER

- Student self-confidence and perceptions of inadequacy
- Group cliques vs peer support
- Subject knowledge - Mastery / Valuing the Combination
- Inclusive teaching behaviours
Awareness Raising
Review Combined Honours Personal Academic Tutoring
Consistent VLE structure
Pilot Enhancement Activities
Staff and Student Focus Groups
Combined Honours Forum

Next Steps
FOCUS GROUPS - INITIAL FINDINGS

3 Staff groups and 1 Student Group
Questions – drawn from the survey research. Perception of difference between single & combined honours, experience in the classroom etc.

Students:
Mirrors the survey data

Staff:
• Didn’t recognise the confidence issues
• Institutional vs. programme
• Ownership
Role of detailed analysis of survey data in opening discussion

The importance & value of partnership working
CHALLENGES

• Colleagues as part of research project

• Avoiding a narrow focus on institutional issues and engaging individuals in the teaching & learning enhancement activities

• Ensuring supportive development
Cathi Fredricks
Cathi.Fredricks@Canterbury.ac.uk

Jonathan Pratt
Jonathan.Pratt@Canterbury.ac.uk