



HOW I LEARN AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

ANNA PARPALA, PHD
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI, FINLAND



PROBLEMS WITH THE "OLD" QUALITY CULTURE

- The focus has been on students' satisfaction in teaching
 - Learning processes are related to the satisfaction level (Parpala et al. 2010)
- Students, academics and programme leaders did not get anything from the feedback
 - No "feedback cycle", the focus mainly on reporting mean levels (Harvey, 2013).
 - Mean level does not show the whole variance and enable the development of teaching (Biggs, 2001)
- The gathered data needed to be analysed in more detail
- The content of the feedback was not justified (research-based)
 - The instruments acted differently in different contexts ->unable to compare the results
 - The use of single items which varied yearly



THE BASIS OF THE HOWULEARN

- Strong research basis and validated in different contexts and cultures (Hailikari & Parpala, 2014; Herrmann et al. 2016; Parpala et al. 2013; Ruohoniemi et al. 2017)
 - Validated in Finland, Denmark, Italy, (Chile, Greece, Estonia, Hongkong, Netherlands)
- Emphasises the relationship between student learning and their experience of the academic quality in a study programme level (Parpala et al. 2010, 2013)
 - Emphasises the institutional responsibility of the quality enhancement (Biggs, 2001)
- Includes "easy to understand" concepts of teaching and learning (Coffield, et al. 2004)
- Highlights the dimensions which are related to student study success and employability (Haarala-Muhonen et al., 2016; Heikkilä et al. 2012; Parpala et al. 2015; Ruohoniemi et al., 2011; Tuononen et al. 2017)
- Enables supportive feedback for students (Parpala & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2012)



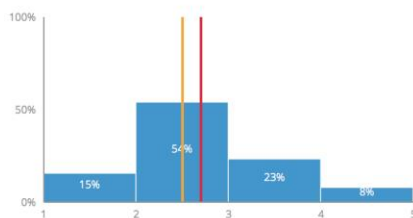
HOWULEARN – MULTIPLE WAYS TO USE FEEDBACK DATA

- Students will get individual level interpretation of their own answers compared to the whole student group
 - Ideas and information how to enhance learning
- Teachers will get group level information of the students participating in their courses
- Study programmes are able to get analysed data from the system, comprising information of study profiles, students' experiences of the teaching-learning environment and study success.
- Researchers are able to export group level data for in depth analyses on student learning and its relation to the academic quality



Example of student digital tutoring

Organised studying



2.5 | YOUR AVERAGE

2.7 | GROUP AVERAGE

Your score is very near the average of the whole group. If you wish to improve your organisational and planning skills, you can apply the methods introduced in the tips for supporting studying.

This dimension describes the systematic and organised approach to learning (focus on planning and time management). According to the research on student learning this learning approach, when combined with the deep approach (focus on reflection and intension to understand) produces the best learning results. In order to improve your learning skills and to perform better in your studies, it would be useful for you to review the scores you received in those two dimensions (Organised studying and Deep approach to learning). Consider how you study, and how you reflect and assess the material to be learnt, and how you integrate new knowledge into previous knowledge, and apply it in practice.

Improvement suggestions

Your score on items measuring organised studying is very close to the average of the students representing your discipline. If you have challenges in time and effort management, please read the tips below.

- At the beginning of each course, look at the course aims and core content, and make a realistic study plan and timetable for yourself.
- Set your own goals for each course, and decide on what you want to achieve.



STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES OF THE FEEDBACK

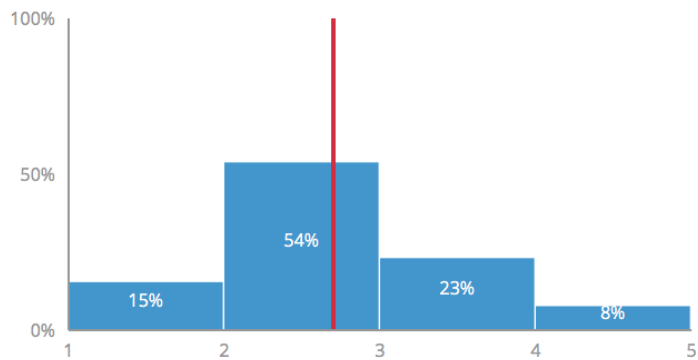
(PARPALA ET AL. 2018A)

- The HowULearn questionnaire is compulsory for the students studying at the University of Helsinki (4 times during 5 years)
- 67 student were asked to describe their experiences about the digital feedback (response rate 97%)
 - Majority of students regarded feedback as useful and in line with their own views
 - Students felt, for example, that the feedback opened their eyes
 - Only 3 students felt that their feedback was unnecessary

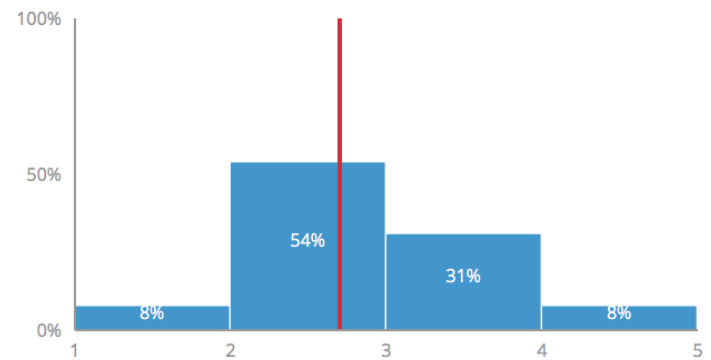


Example of group level reports

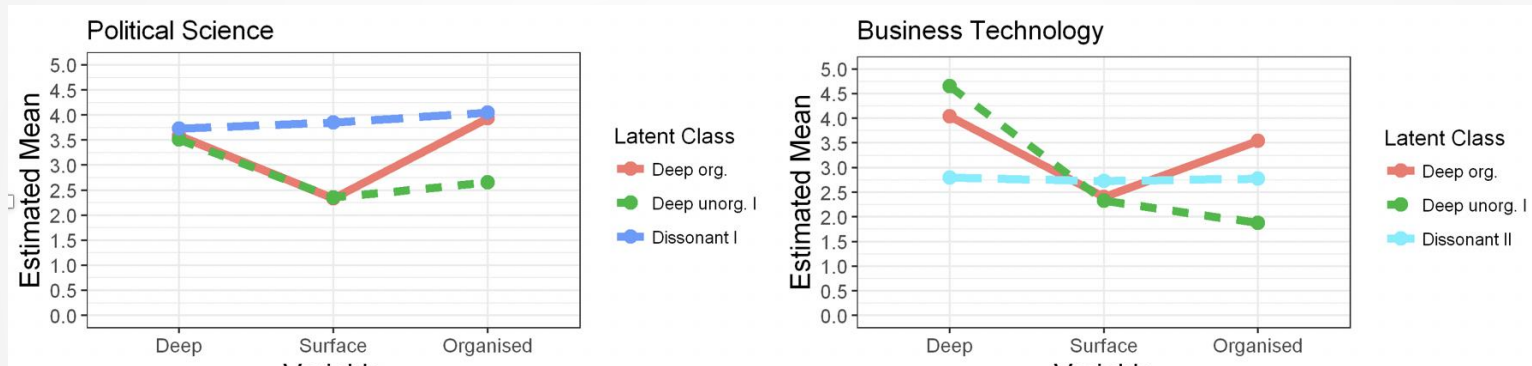
ORGANISED STUDYING



DEEP APPROACH TO LEARNING



EXAMPLE FROM THE INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL: RESULTS IN THE DANISH CONTEXT (PARPALA ET AL. 2018B)



- Political Science
 - 61% *Deep organised* -> higher grades
 - 33% *Deep unorganised I* -> lower self efficacy beliefs
- Business Technology
 - 82 % *Deep organised* -> higher grades
 - 13.5% *Dissonant II* -> lower self-efficacy beliefs

EXAMPLES OF DEVELOPING TEACHING ON THE BASIS OF HOW U LEARN – FROM DATA TO DECISIONS

Faculty of Biological and Environmental sciences

The data collection revealed that students experienced workload and difficulties because overlapping courses (Rytönen et al. 2012)

- Study paths were created in order to help the students to progress in their studies.

Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

Systematic data collection revealed students experiencing high stress and workload

Especially students aiming at constructing meaning but lacking the time and effort management skills were in trouble (Ruohoniemi et al. 2010)

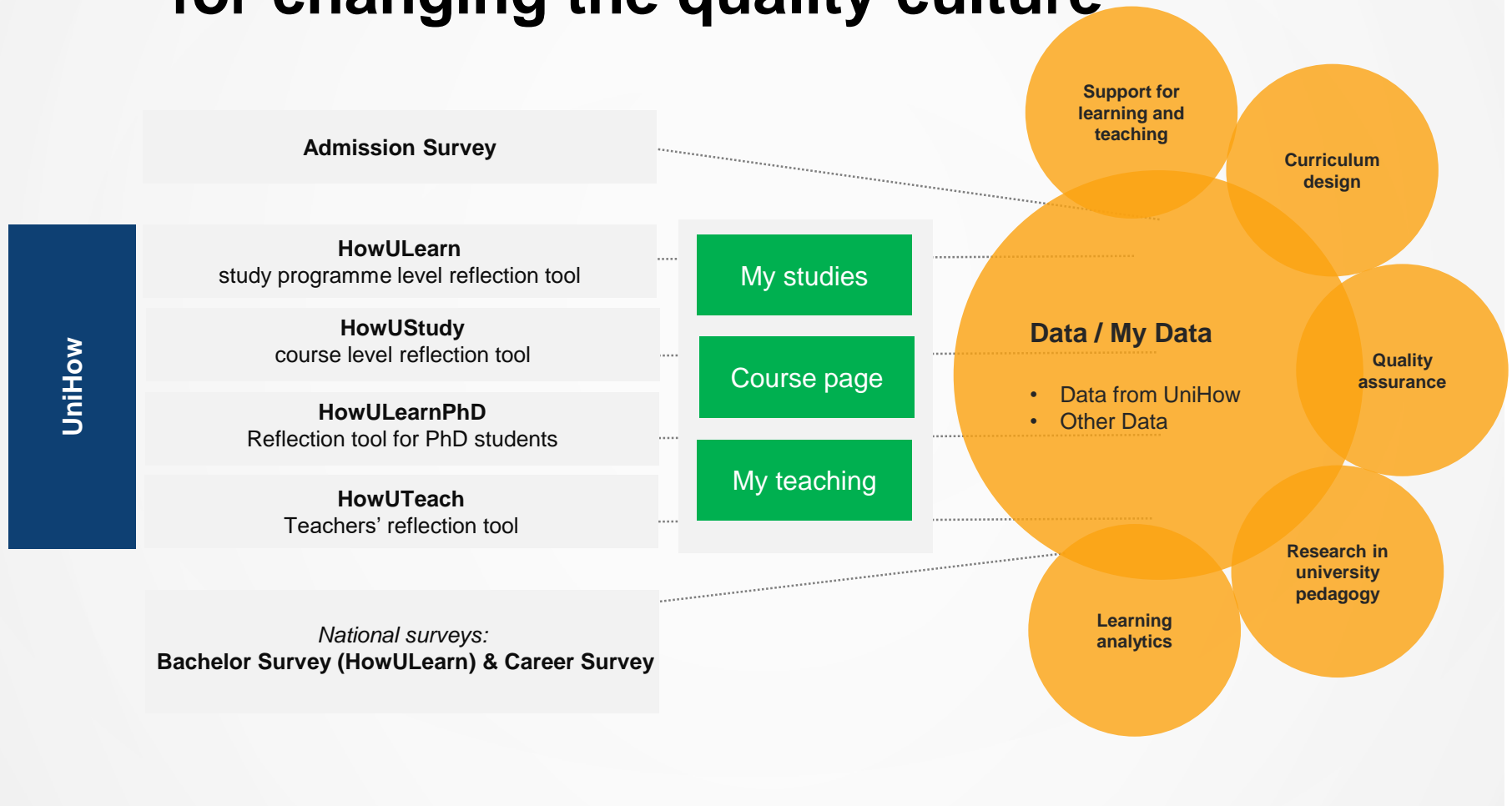
- The curriculum was developed further and students are given support e.g. on their time and effort management
- The stress and workload have decreased




EXAMPLE FROM COMPARING INSTITUTIONS: RESULTS FROM COMPARING ITALIAN AND FINNISH EDUCATION (RUOHONIEMI ET AL. 2017)

- Instrument works similarly in the two contexts
- In both institutions learning processes were related to students' experiences of the academic quality
- Students' perceived workload was higher in Bologna (3.76 ± 1.01) compared to Helsinki (3.00 ± 1.05) ($p < 0.001$)
 - Surface approach to learning was the strongest predictor of the workload in both contexts
- Differences in the experiences of the teaching-learning environment:
 - Students in Helsinki scored higher on 'Interest and relevance', whereas students in Bologna scored higher on 'Constructive feedback'

HowULearn becoming UniHow - feedback and reflection tool for changing the quality culture





CONCLUSIONS: HOW TO ENHANCE QUALITY

- Use research-based instruments to measure both students' experiences and learning processes to capture the variance
- Engage students, teachers, and especially programme leaders
 - Show how to use the information and how it is interpreted
- Make sure the concepts are understood in a similar way (shared language)
- Emphasise that gathering student feedback is important only if the feedback loop is working
 - Eg. the qualitative, informal feedback can be the most powerful tool in the course level
- Quality is hard to measure because it's contextual and subjective
 - The focus could be on the processes
 - How to support different study profiles: longitudinal data to show changes (Haarala-Muhonen et al. 2016)
 - How the instruments are used



THANK YOU!