

Faculty of Humanities

School of Environment, Education and Development

Please use this form to respond to the course unit evaluation data for your course unit.

The responses to the evaluation data will be made available to students through Programme Committee meetings and on the student intranet, and will also be used in responding to the Faculty, should this be required.

Academic Year:	2013-14
Semester:	1
Course Unit Code:	EDUC70100
Course Unit Title:	Developing Researcher Competence
Lecturer(s):	Juup Stelma (Convener); Zeynep Onat-Stelma; Eljee Javier

% of evaluations completed:	9/22 (41%)
Positive points from the evaluations:	<p>The quantitative measures (Likert scale items) show that a majority of participants are satisfied with the course unit. 6 of 9 responses to most of the individual questionnaire items are positive (Strongly Agree or Agree), with higher rates than this for the organisation of the course and clarity of the assessment methods, and everyone agreed that the course offers opportunities for participation.</p> <p>Positive qualitative responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It provides the space and time for preparing for the dissertation. The journals are very very good for getting you to think about what you are doing. • I found the materials to be very organized. This helped with the learning process. • Structure and organisation, pace of learning, piloting, discussions in forums, useful support materials (handouts/reading lists/Blackboard pages) • I valued the opportunity to develop while receiving support along the way. This unit is a unique experience and its value will be appreciated even more next semester. • The research journal 'handouts' are an excellent tool. I would like to introduce something like this in my own teaching. Interestingly, I found that the more one uses the research journal the more one appreciates it. So it is vital to get started using it. <p>Positive comments about specific tutors:</p> <p>Juup Stelma:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging and supporting distance students to engage in forum discussions in replacement for face-to-face sessions. • The feedback from posts in BB were clear and helpful for specific areas of the steps. His responses were timely and I felt comfortable asking questions. A good sense of humour is needed for distance learning so thankfully Juup revealed this. • Quick response and positive, encouraging feedback. <p>Zeynep Onat-Stelma:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zeynep's comments to others were helpful. I liked her • She responded to requests for feedback in a timely manner and nicely. <p>Eljee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I liked Eljee's comments in BB. She was quick to respond and gave thoughtful advice • Quick response and positive, encouraging feedback. • Some comments on a forum do not amount to much.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She responded to requests for feedback in a timely manner and nicely.
Criticisms raised:	<p>Some of the quantitative Likert scale items included up to two negative (Disagree or Strongly Disagree) responses, sometimes accompanied by an indifferent response (Neither Agree or Disagree), to some items (including 'overall assessment of the unit', 'usefulness of the feedback', and 'enthusiasm of the course delivery').</p> <p>Negative qualitative responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's difficult to see the value at this point. Assumedly it will be useful when redoing these steps for the dissertation. • Like almost every course I have taken so far, there is virtually NO interaction on forums. No class, no learning culture etc. You post, you wait, you wait some more, you get a response from a tutor a week later with a few comments and you go back to your reading again. • I get the feeling that the tutors have very little time to deal with the online distance students. If there are 30 students on the course, I'm amazed as only about 8 seem to be doing any work. • I'm paying a lot of money for this "teaching" and am really disappointed. • I think that the feedback given to us by tutors on discussion board in blackboard was scarce and sometimes very belated (up to 5 days later). In my case in the last 4 steps of the DRC I received little support: very short messages no really engaging in depth with my posts. Considering that this module is supposed to prepare us for the dissertation I was very disappointed with tutors' activity on black board. • I would like to finish the assignment for this unit before Christmas, as I am travelling, but I am still waiting for any comment on the last step of this module posted 3 days ago. I feel that this delay might jeopardize my chances of finishing on time. • I also understand the idea of the DRC being a type of 'practice' run for the process of the dissertation, but I also dread having to do this work over again for the dissertation when this unit could have been replaced with the time being spent on the dissertation itself. I realise that in some cases some of the research content may be applicable, but I'm unclear how directly or if all things I've done in the DRC must be replicated again for my dissertation. <p>Negative comments about specific tutors:</p> <p>Juup:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't know what his (Juup) approach is. A few comments on forums do not amount to much. I don't even know what he looks like! <p>Eljee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some comments on a forum do not amount to much.
How you will address the evaluations:	<p>The tutor team is pleased to have received generally positive evaluations. However, we note the negative responses focused on 'usefulness of the feedback' and 'enthusiasm of the course delivery'. The negative qualitative comments add more detail, with a clear concern about the quality and speed of tutor responses in the discussion forum. We recognise that the quality and speed of tutor responses may not be consistent with expectations, and we will pay particular attention to this in next year's distance version of this course unit.</p> <p>We have also noted the comments about what is 'the point' of the course methodology, and the lack of clarity in the relationship between this course unit and the dissertation. We believe some good work has been done on this issue over the past years, but will continue to improve this aspect of the course unit.</p> <p>We also received the following constructive comments from MA participants which we value and will consider for next year:</p> <p>Comments focused on this course unit specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A guideline of deadlines for the steps would actually be helpful. I would find it helpful to know that I should be on step X by week X. This helps me to set my goals and stick to them. As it is, I never felt I was achieving anything substantial, and always felt miles behind everyone else. Personally, I do better, knowing when to aim for. Not that it has to be adhered to...nothing

	<p>set in stone, but just a guideline, so you know how much time you have for certain things, and to know if you have fallen too far behind.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For distance students who do not have access to the library, it would be very helpful to have a complete book list even before the unit begins. It can be very stressful trying to get books from local library systems in one's country, and one can only buy so many books on short notice. • I can understand that for some students it may not be helpful to have all of the materials for the DRC steps available on Blackboard, but for others who progress more quickly or who need to develop their theoretical thinking before doing the actual research work, I believe that all of the DRC step material should be available from the outset of the course. Distance students have not only their studies but also demanding teaching duties and being able to organise their time and set their pace is crucial. • In other courses we had video conferences with the tutors in which we could discuss ideas presented in the literature or discuss our semester assignment. I missed that in this unit. <p>We expect to follow this constructive advice in revising next year's course unit.</p> <p>Comments focused on the MA by distance study more generally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not only for this course but for all courses in this MA Ed Tech and TESOL program. It would be very useful for the admin and the prof's to have a very noticeable announcement to advise when the course begins. From the onset of this program it never is clear to me when the start date is for the courses. I am sure it is in the handbook somewhere but could it be visible in blackboard in our TESOL common room? For example, when does the next course begin? I never knew if the start date was Sept 1 or 10th or 26th. Same for the second semester. Is it Feb 1 or 10th or 27th? • I have found this unit very difficult to do through the distance format. It's not the fault of the materials or staff, but a mixture of course design and my own timing. I've realised throughout much of this degree that from a distance student's point-of-view, it's very reading-heavy and we're largely left to our own devices, with the exception of a couple degree courses that required use of web tools because they were essential to the content. The predominant read-the-lecture, do-tasks-alone, report-on-forum process repetitive and demotivating, especially when you are, at points during the semester, behind the others. It would be nice if there were some lectures to watch or recorded sessions from the on-site classes to see how the content is utilised in that format. I'm not sure what else would help improve this design for distance students like myself. • I would like also to suggest that understanding of what the dissertation is and includes could be incorporated into the two previous years. The connections between course units and the dissertation was never clear to me. In fact, there was no mention of the dissertation throughout any course unit aside from it being suggested that we consider what topic we'd like to do for our dissertation once or twice. Maybe this would be accomplished by more direct discussion in course units about the dissertation (in all years) and support materials for students about it being more obviously available. Maybe I missed all this somewhere during the three years here. <p>We will bring these constructive comments up in a future MA TESOL curriculum development team meeting.</p> <p>Finally, one comment focused on the mismatch btw. the evaluation form and the distance study experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BTW. I can't comment on some of the question on this form as the course is not over yet or some just aren't relevant for distance learners. Classes have not been delivered at all so how can I comment on that? <p>Each year the MA TESOL tutor team represent this concern to the University; we expect this to continue to be a problem given that the vast majority of University courses are taught face-to-face.</p>
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PLEASE RETURN FORM BY EMAIL TO: daniel.chung@manchester.ac.uk