

# DO OUR STUDENTS REALLY KNOW WHAT WE *THINK* THEY KNOW....AND WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

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**KEYWORDS:** student perceptions, feedback, assessment criteria

## ABSTRACT

Despite the fact that academic staff spend many hours designing effective courses and information rich course manuals, it is often the case that some students will simply "miss the point", that is they miss, or misunderstand, a vital piece of information that would allow them to excel in, and importantly, value and enjoy the course. Complications arise in the fact that which point is missed depends on the student in question. Thus changes made with the intent to improve the course for subsequent cohorts may result in a similar outcome i.e. some students will still miss the point! Despite this potential drawback, changes were made to aspects of the practical classes and related assessments to address the above problem in a 3rd year undergraduate course. Student evaluations were targeted at two specific aims; 1) to verify anecdotal observations that students value and enjoy practical classes, and 2) to identify specific concerns with the assessments, address the identified concerns and evaluate the effectiveness of the changes that were made. Encouragingly, the majority of students did value and enjoy the practical experience. Students' concerns regarding the assessments were addressed and re-evaluated, revealing a mixed reaction, which will be discussed in further detail.

Proceedings of the 16th UniServe Science Annual Conference, University of Sydney, Sept 29<sup>th</sup> to Oct 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010, page 119, ISBN Number 978-0-9808597-1-3