

# Student Experience in European Partnerships at Staffordshire University

## 1. Introduction

Many UK universities are paying more attention to new European, Asian partnerships because of the current economic climate and tuition fees rise from 2012. This poster explores the student experience of the newly developed partnership between French Institution EMA Ales and Staffordshire University.

The skills of the teacher e.g. approachability, teaching techniques, social skills etc. can produce higher student engagement (Zepke & Leach 2010). Again, according to the Tinto's model, various factors e.g. teaching staff, external commitments, the integration of academic and social communities etc. affect the retention rate (Meeuwisse et al 2010). The innovative practice embedded in this investigation includes a smart integration of different techniques to maximise the mutual benefit of the partnership using effective skills of the teacher.

## 2. EMA Ales partnership

The brand new partnership with "Ecole des Mines d'Ales" or EMA Ales (EMA Alex 2011) allows French students to come to Staffordshire University for one or two months. It offers various opportunities e.g. double degree, studying at a UK university, getting familiar with English culture etc. The research involves the "Compiling Techniques" module and the very first cohort that has been completed in Jul 2011.

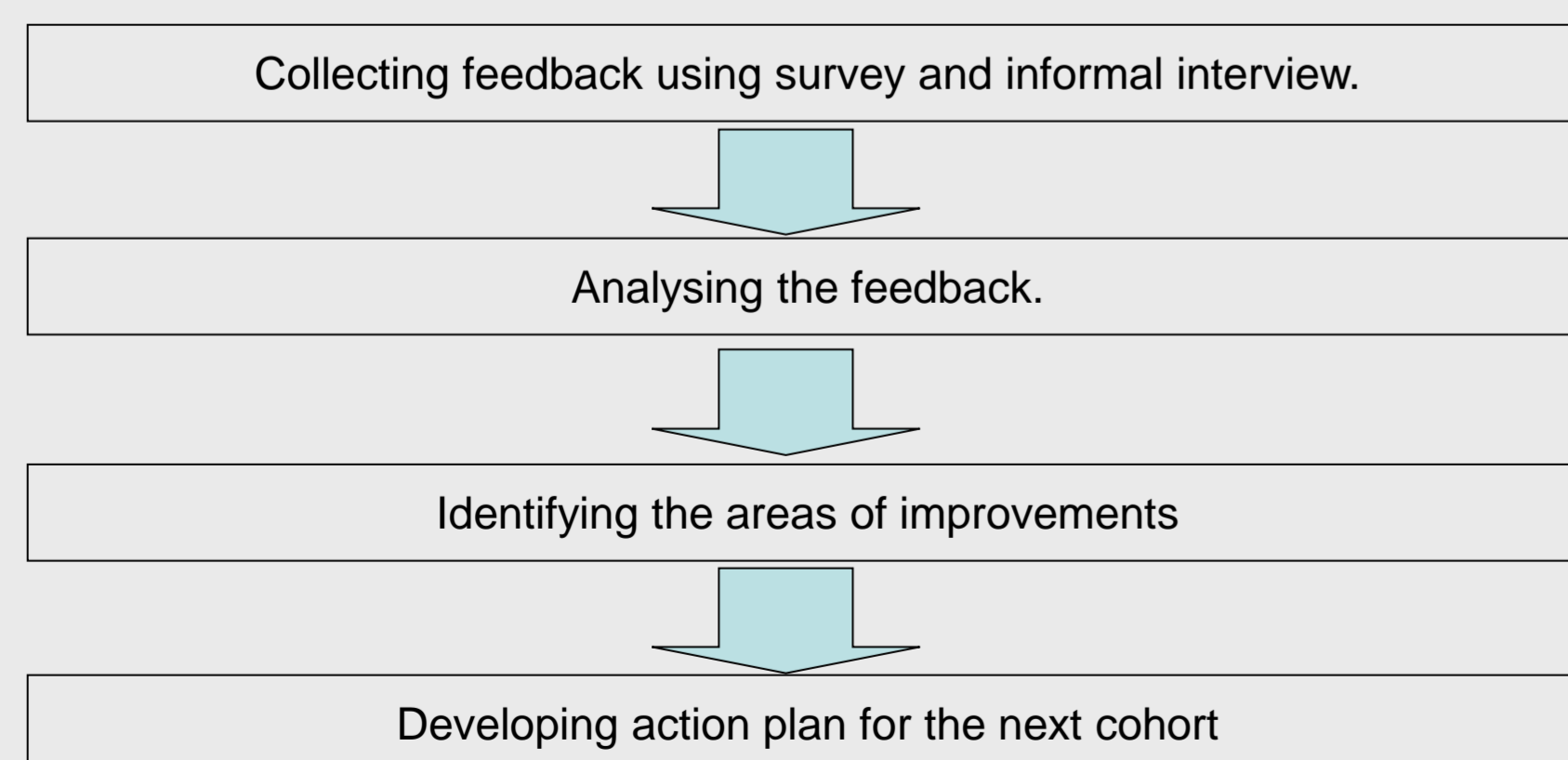
## 3. Aim and motivation

The aim is to understand the requirements of the current students and to develop action plan to deliver better student experience to the next cohort. The concept can also be generalised for international, home and other EU students.

## 4. Objectives

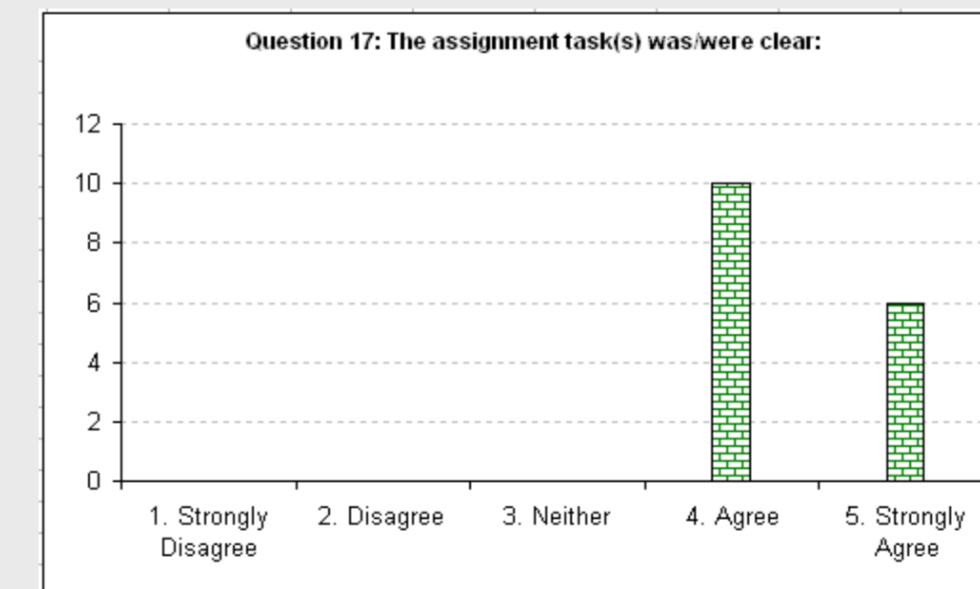
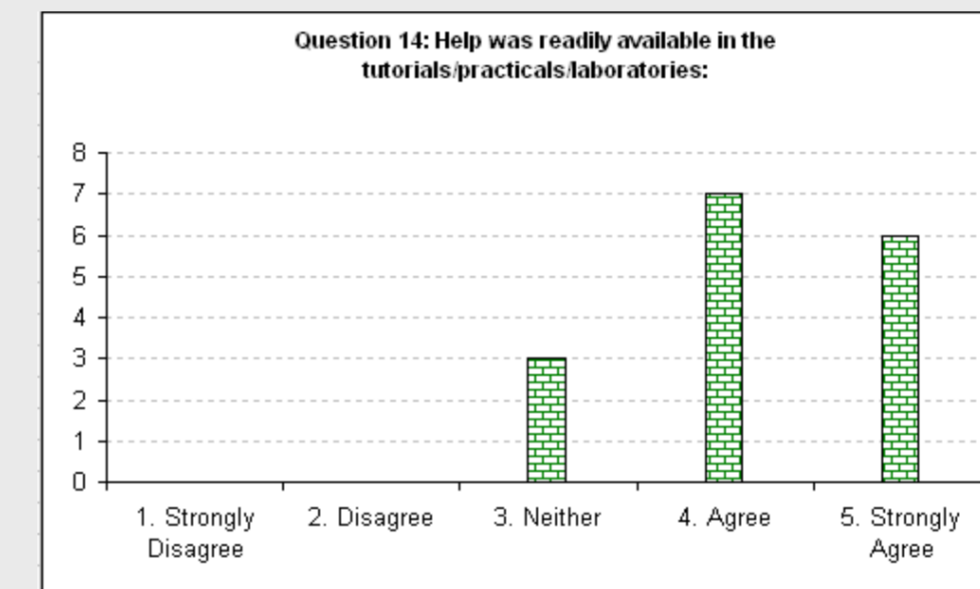
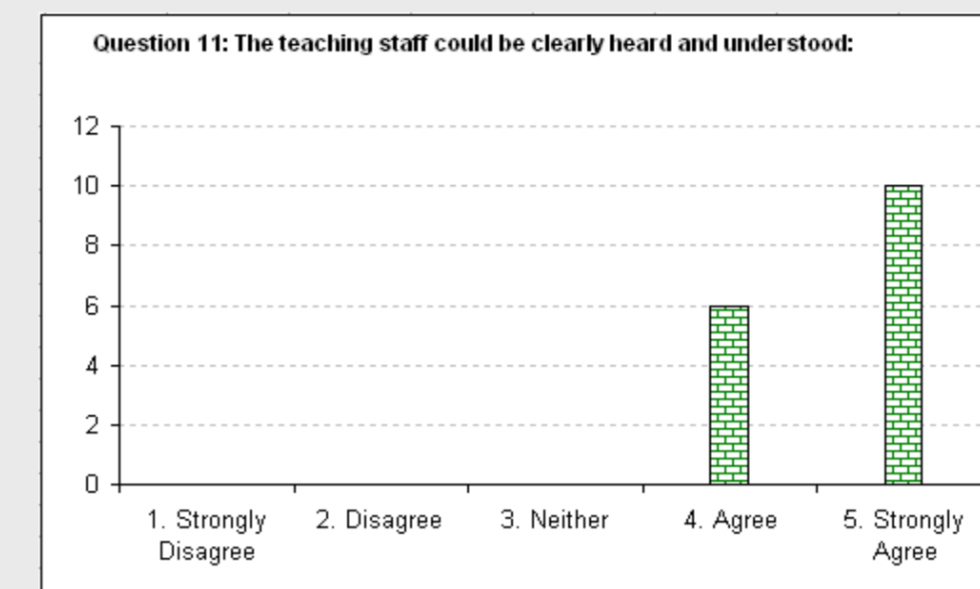
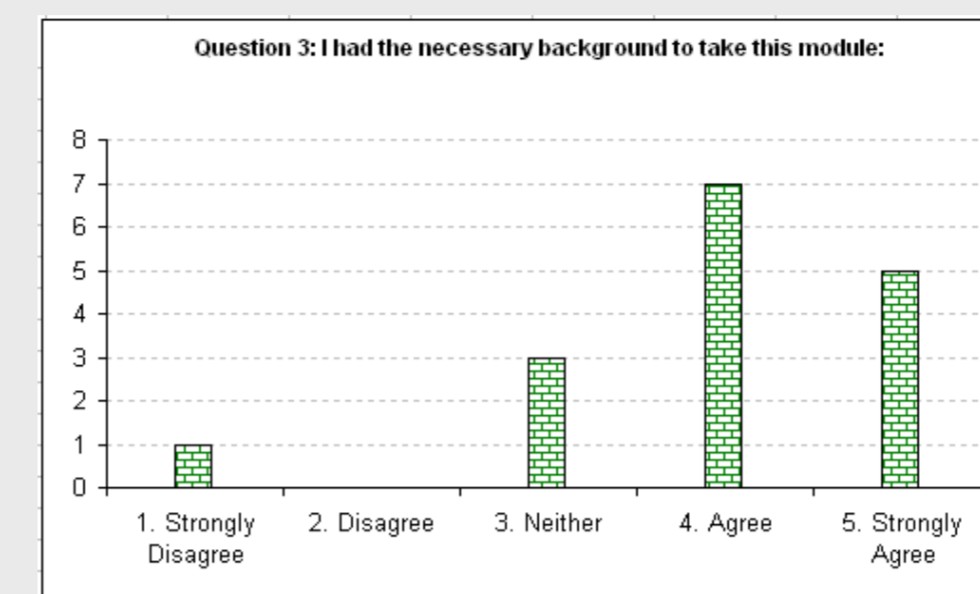
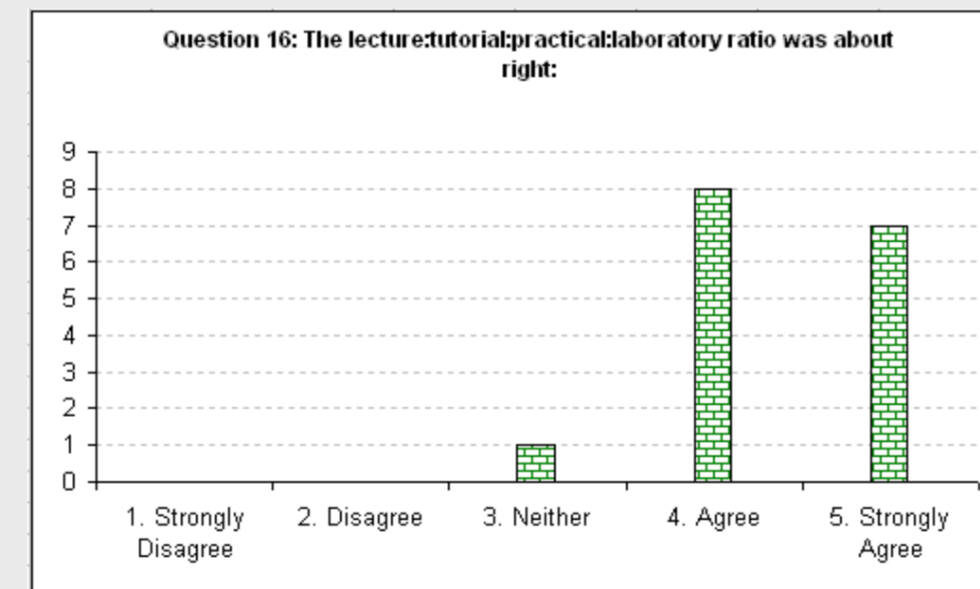
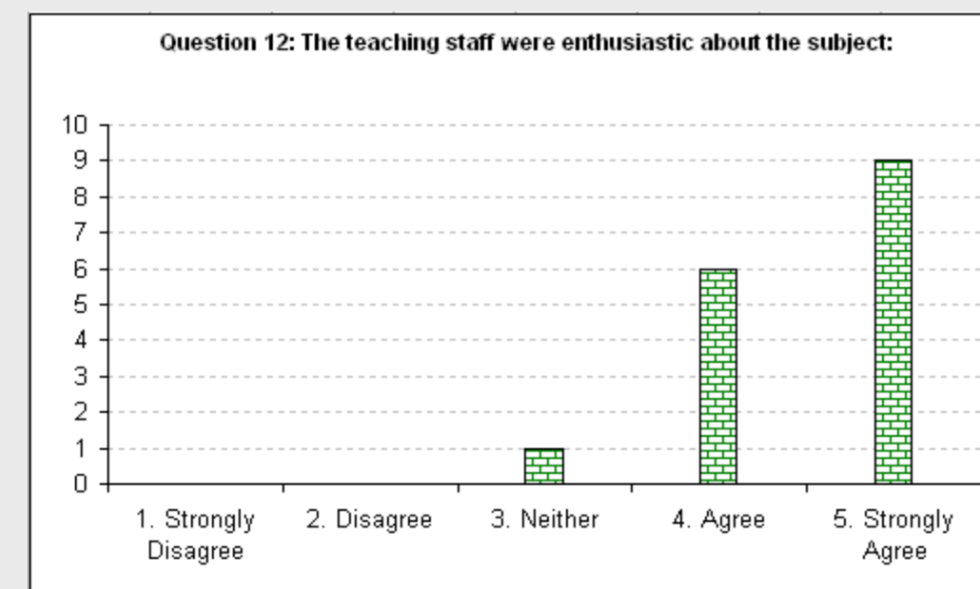
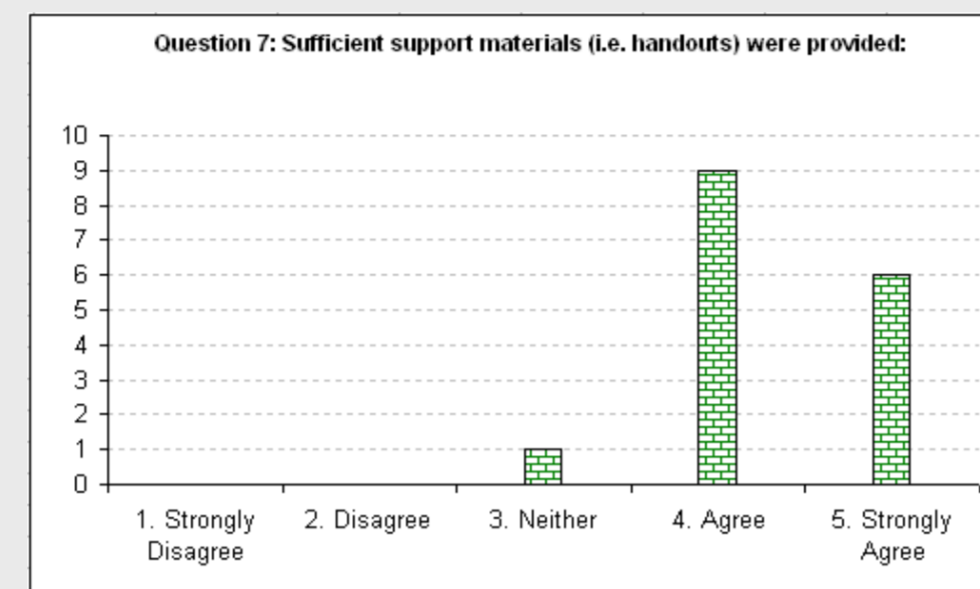
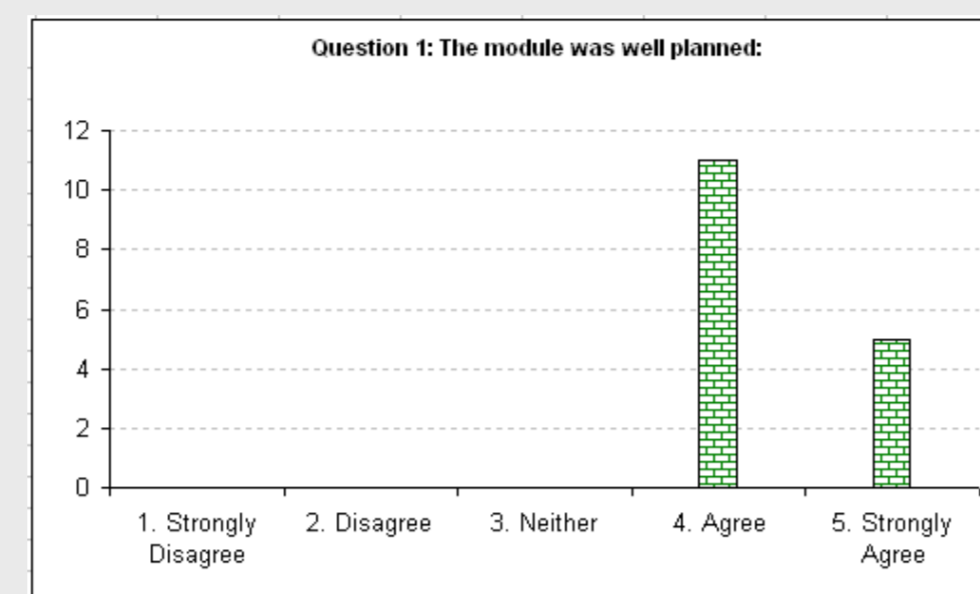
- Understanding the needs and backgrounds of the French students.
- Collecting feedbacks from the students for analysis.
- Maintaining satisfactory level of completion or retention rate.
- Bridging the gaps between French and UK institution.

## 5. Research Methodology



## 6. Survey Results

### 6.1 Feedback on close ended questions



### 6.2 Feedback on open ended questions

#### 6.2.1 Positives about the module – student's view

- Happy
- Interesting
- Clearly, happy
- Interesting, useful, happy
- Lecture, tutorial, teacher
- Interesting lecture. Dynamic and interested teacher
- Interesting. Good tutorials → very helpful to understand
- Good pronunciation for French students. Desire to learn. Attendance / help in tutorial
- Clear English, good course, good ratio between course / tutorial / practical

#### 6.2.2 Things needing improvements – student's view

- More technical things
- More coding
- Work group, subject share
- Should do as follows: 1) lecture, 2) practical exercising, 3) Tutorial & portfolio
- The Turnitin system sometime useless

## 7. Critical Analysis

### 7.1 Positive sides

The survey results and the marks obtained by the students indicate that the students were happy with the lectures, tutorial lessons and delivery.

Only one case of plagiarism was identified in the Turnitin system.

Many English technical terms were already known to the students.

32 out of 33 students completed the module successfully.

### 7.2 Limitations

It is a short-term i.e. 4-week intense course.

16 out of 33 students returned the completed the survey form. However, 1 student was NOT regular in the classes at all.

## 8. Conclusion and recommendation

The first batch of EMA Ales students was academically prepared for the "Compiling Techniques" module. Although they spent only 4 weeks in Stafford, they adapted to the UK education system rapidly.

Some students expressed their concern to less computer programming in section 6.2.2. As this was the very first batch, it was hard to predict or understand the level of the students. More programming exercises will be included from the next year.

There was a concern towards the accuracy of the Turnitin system in section 6.2.2. The Turnitin system was used as a tool for assessment submission and quick indication for plagiarism. Actual plagiarism cases are identified by the instructor.

Group project can be designed to increase the level of group work.

## 9. References

EMA Ales (2011), *Ecole des Mines d'Ales* [online], Available from: <http://translate.google.co.uk/translate?hl=en&sl=fr&u=http://www.mines-ales.fr/&ei=Eo01TuPQKo6whQeCwZXeDQ&sa=X&oi=translate&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CCwQ7gEwAA&prev=/search%3Fq%3Dema%2Bales%26hl%3Den%26prmd%3Ddivscom>. [Accessed: 03 Sep 2011]

Zepke, N. and Leach, L. (2010). Improving student engagement: Ten proposals for action. *Active Learning in Higher Education*. 11(3) p. 167-177.

Meeuwisse, M., Severiens, S. E. and Born, M. P. (2010). Reasons for withdrawal from higher vocational education. A comparison of ethnic minority and majority non-completers. *Studies in Higher Education*. 35(1), p. 93-111.