

What learning experiences do master's students appreciate in co-badged courses at university?

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1. WHY DO WE CARE?

- Postgraduate students are vital source of **diversity** and **income** for universities
- They value learning experiences that are **different** from their undergraduate studies, however, this expectation is not always met (Humphrey & McCarthy, 1999).
- Currently, there is **no published research** on postgraduate experiences within these 'co-badged' courses.

2. WHAT'S THE POINT?

To understand what teaching and learning practices '**work well**' for master's students within co-badged courses through **appreciative inquiry** (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987).

3. WHO WAS INVOLVED?

Domestic and international students at The University of Queensland who were **enrolled in a Master's (coursework) program** within the Faculty of Science.

5. TOP 3 THEMES:

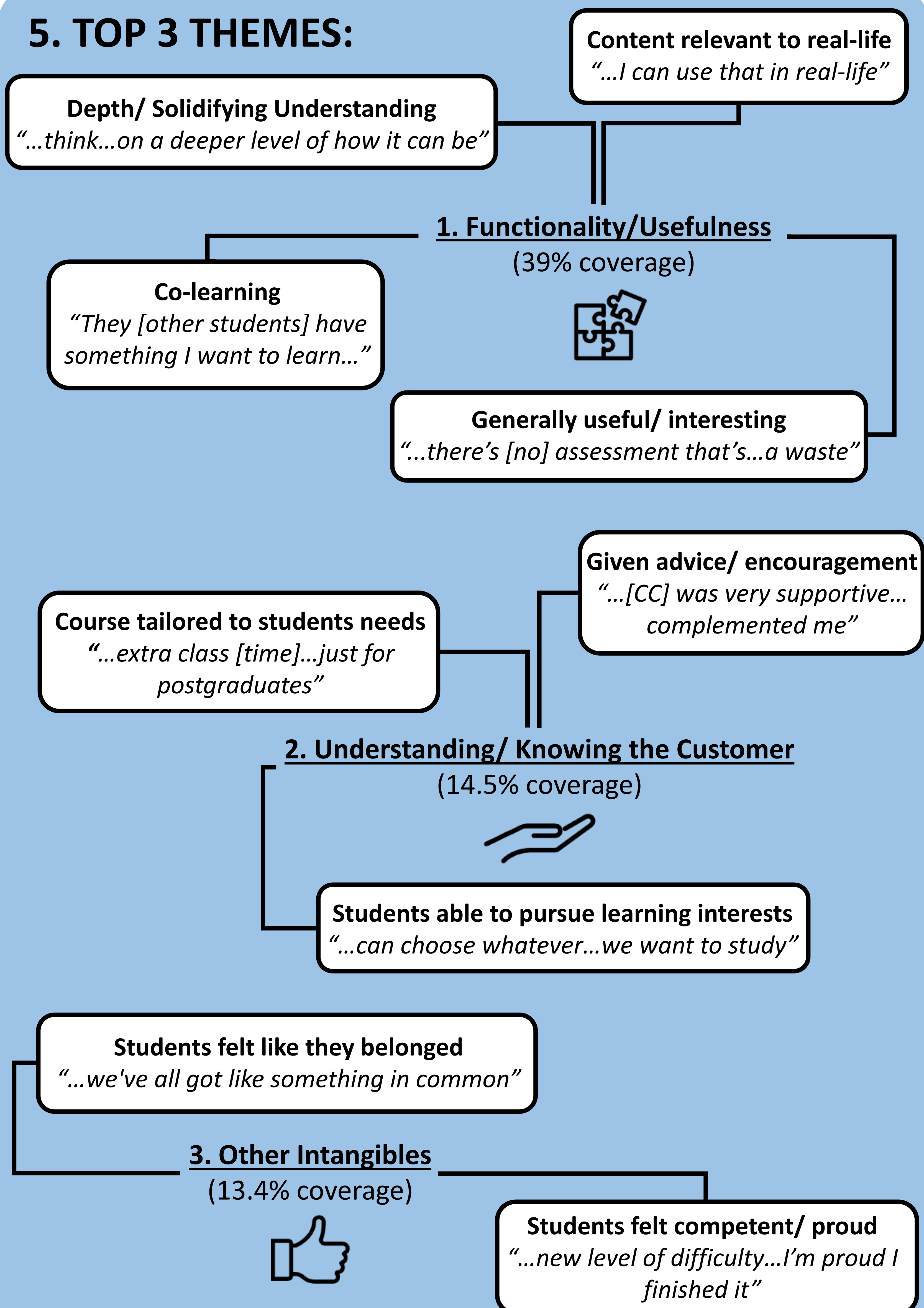


Figure 1. Schematic of the three most referenced themes in the framework. The parent themes – Functionality/ Usefulness, Understanding/ Knowing the Customer – are adapted from Douglas et. al. (2008). The third parent theme, 'Other Intangibles,' and all sub-themes (in rectangles, written in bold) were created by Valdellon (2022). CC= Course coordinator.

WHAT ARE CO-BADGED COURSES?

These are courses which are '**co-offered**' or '**co-taught**' to both undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Students may **share** learning environments, course material and assessments. The magnitude of overlap varies between courses.

4a. DATA COLLECTION:

Using semi-structured interviews, 13 master's students were asked to **reflect on positive experiences** in co-badged courses where they felt that:


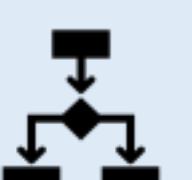



- ✓ the teaching and learning practices 'worked well' for them;
- ✓ the course was 'worth it';
- ✓ they were happy; and
- ✓ they belonged as a master's student.

4b. DATA ANALYSIS:

Student transcripts were **coded** into a **service quality framework** by Douglas et al. (2008) in *Nvivo* using a deductive and thematic approach.

New **sub-themes** were added under existing themes and the coding process was sense checked iteratively with a second researcher.

6. KEY INSIGHTS:

-  **Relevant, useful content** – co-badged courses should offer content and assessment suitable for postgraduate students' learning needs and future interests. Students see this as valuable.
-  **Student-led learning** – co-badged courses should give master's students room to be challenged, showcase their knowledge, think freely and lead their own learning. Students appreciate being able to make choices about their learning.
-  **Affect is important** – students often reflected on how they 'felt' in the course. Instructor's attitudes, behaviours and teaching approach contribute positively to students' overall experience.
-  **Consider diversity and acknowledge differences** – the master's cohort is highly diverse; as is the structure of and delivery of co-badged courses. Master's students are also different to undergraduates in many ways, and this needs to be clearly acknowledged.
-  **Co-learning and social interactions** – some students will find value in studying alongside undergraduates while others will not.

7. REFERENCES:

- Cooperrider, D. L., & Srivastva, S. (1987). Appreciative inquiry in organizational life. In R.W. Woodman & W. A. Passmore (Eds.), *Research in Organizational Change and Development* (pp. 129-169). Connecticut: JAI Press.
- Douglas, J., McClelland, R., and Davies, J. (2008) The development of a conceptual model of student satisfaction with their experience in higher education. *Quality assurance in education* 16: 19-35.
- Humphrey, R., & McCarthy, P. (1999). Recognising difference: Providing for postgraduate students. *Studies in Higher Education*, 24(3): 95-114.