



Overcoming the pseudo-individualised approach to student interactions

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‘Pseudo-individualised’!?



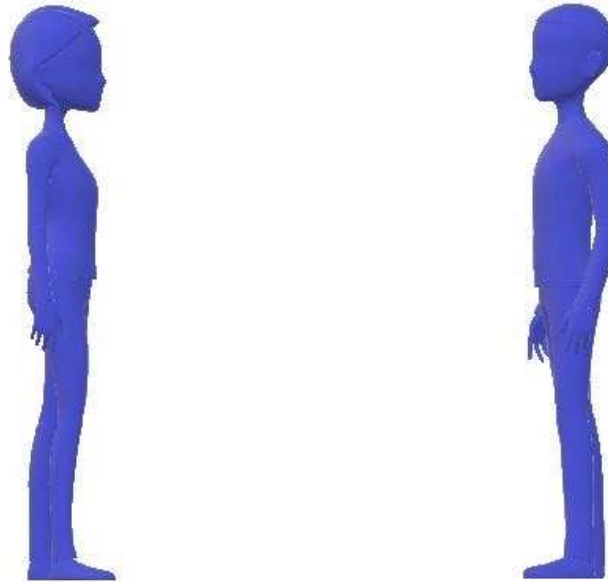
“Don’t know what that is-but it can’t be good!”

(Image from CNN 2014 attributed to West China Insect Museum)



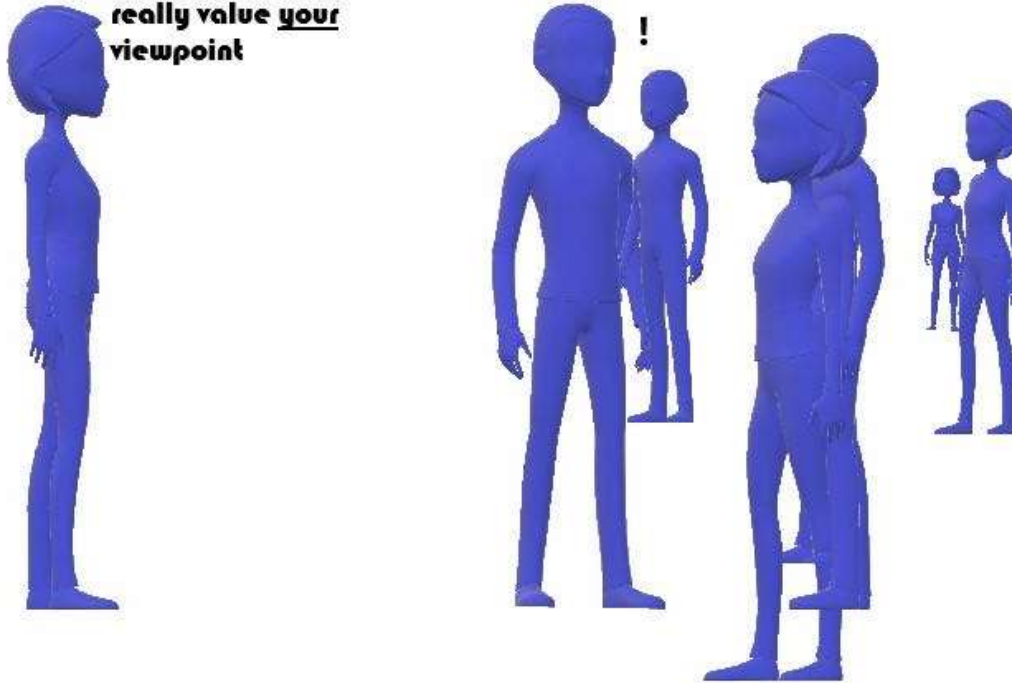
Pseudo-individualised approach

Hi Tim!



The generic email with a first name hook

**This message is only
for you because I
really value your
viewpoint**



Look Familiar?

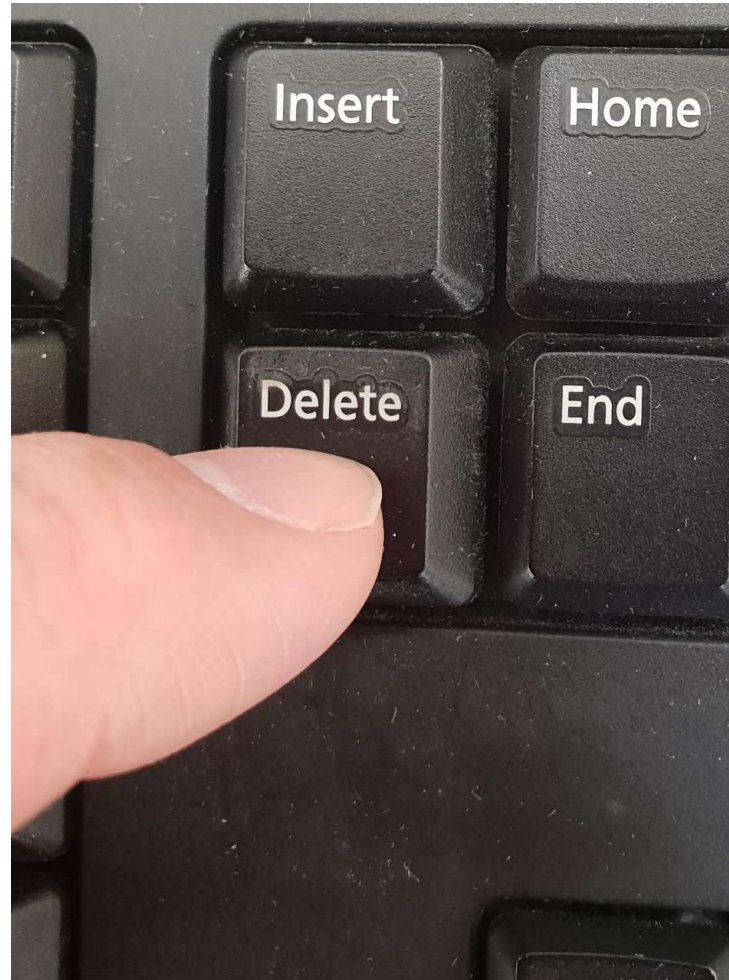
Dear Esteemed Dr Professor TIM,

I have a business proposal for you TIM

Please TIM just click on the link below and give us your bank details

- [WWW. VERYDodgylinks.com](http://WWW.VERYDodgylinks.com)

Outcome:

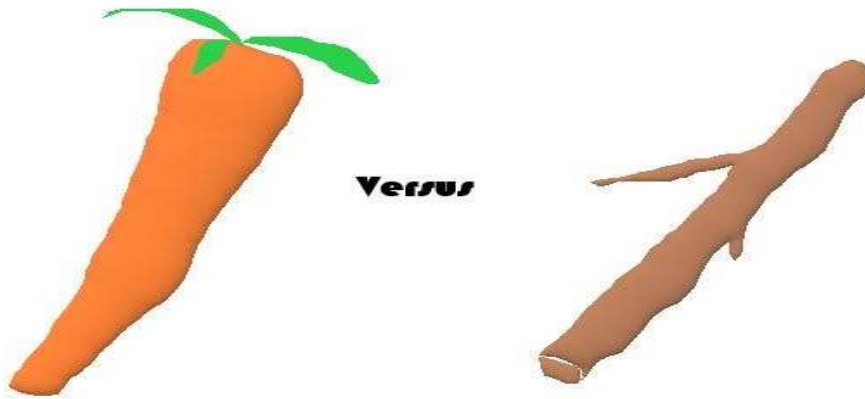


A journey to



improve student engagement

How to improve engagement - Carrot versus stick

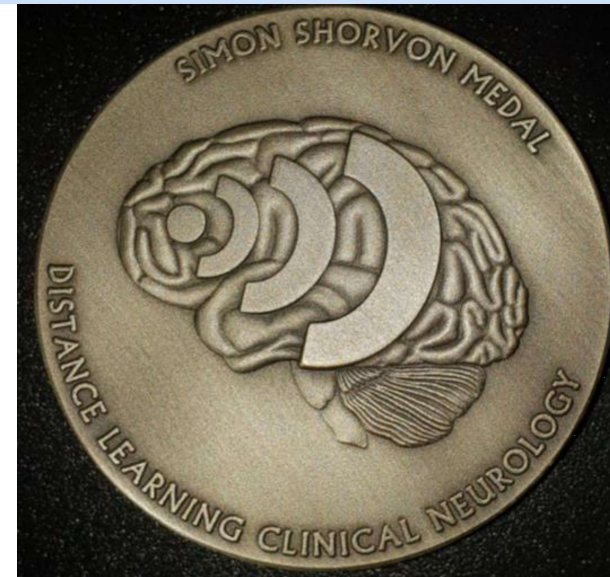


Incentivise

versus

Penalise

Incentive:	MONEY-£100 prize for the student with the best submissions over the year	MEDAL-the first medal for the course was designed with monthly submissions a significant factor
Outcome:	NO improvement in participation rates.	Significant improvement in participation rates.



Solution! Simply offer awards to improve participation

BUT no!

Student feedback from this work revealed an even stronger motivator than medals or money...

...a truly individualised approach to the student.

Test this hypothesis:

The Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) runs each year

Unfortunately participation is low-only 14% for our online course of nearly 100 students in 2017.

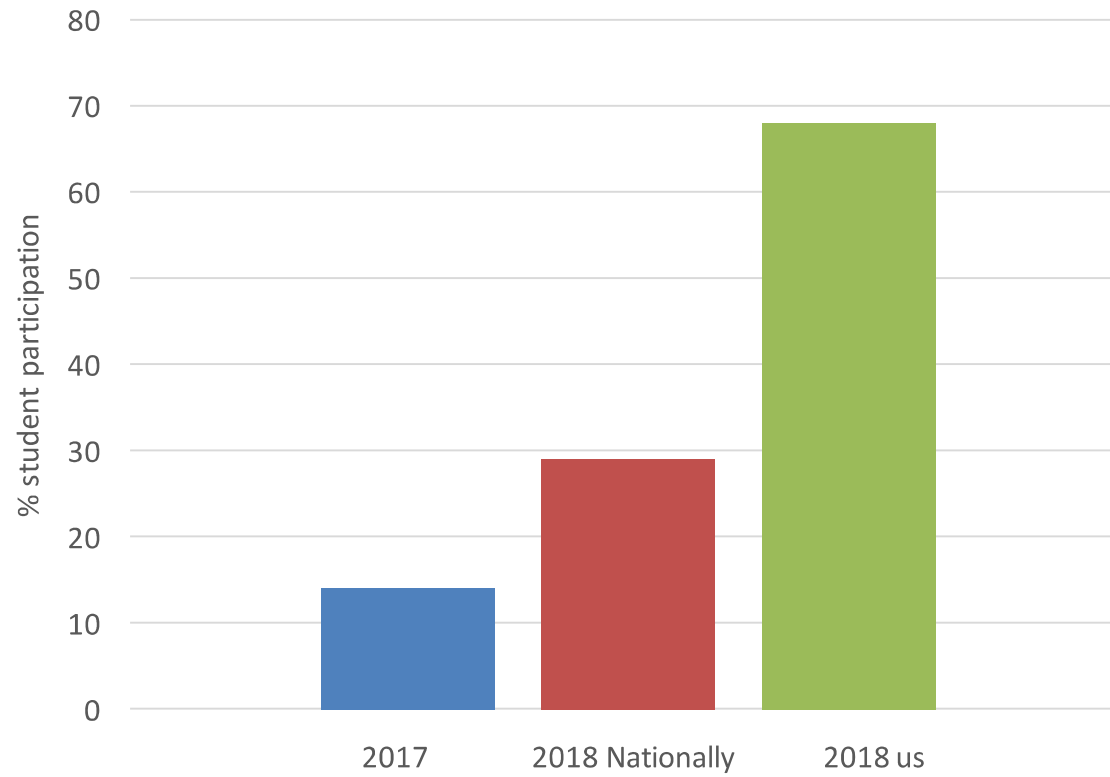
For the 2018 PTES I used an individualised approach to improve student engagement

How?

First prove to the student that your email is *truly* an individualised one for that student:

- 1) Their first name
- 3) THEN update on their individual course progress
- 4) THEN in NEXT paragraph ask them to participate in PTES survey

PTES PARTICIPATION OUTCOME



The Good:

Strong affirmation of the value of our individualised approach

Over 90% of students satisfied with course

Almost 90% of MSc route doctors felt better prepared for their future career as a result of our course.

The Bad

We thought we had explained our course marking structure well

.....The 2018 PTES results showed the students did *not*.

So we promptly clarified this

AND fed back to the students that they HAD been listened to.

...and the ugly

**You need over 50% student participation
to get representative results**

**Many surveys do not achieve this-and
therefore are not representative.**

Wait a minute...

Giving something (even feedback) might influence the response itself.

However, the linked feedback I offered was actually only developing the same lines of guidance I had already offered at other time points in the year.

What about all the extra work?

My approach took more time BUT:

-I needed to give feedback to each student anyway

-Previous work on student participation had been inefficient as they did not produce representative results.

Conclusions

Truly individualised interaction with students can make them feel valued and far more likely to respond than by trying to save time with quick generic postings.

This is especially important when a response is required from the student, such as work submissions or survey participation.

**The more we respect and value students,
the more likely they will feel empowered to share their views.**

**Respect is a two-way street,
if you want to get it, you've got to give it.**

R.G. Risch

