

# ANALYZING STUDENT FEEDBACK FROM THE 2017 IAMU STUDENT FORUM: CHARTING PATHS TO THE FUTURE

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## 2017 IAMU STUDENT FORUM

The 2017 IAMU Student Forum, jointly organized by IAMU and IMO, was held at the IMO Headquarters in London, England from July 11-13. The student forum was a global event in every sense: 59 students from 52 IAMU member universities, hailing from 30 different countries participated in the event, making it a truly international and multicultural experience for everyone involved. During the student forum, participants had the opportunity to connect and collaborate with world-leading researchers, educators, and experts from the maritime industry while under the auspices of the IMO.

The IAMU Student Forum was held in conjunction with IMO's World Maritime Day 2017, which theme was "Connecting ships, ports, and people." This theme was chosen to highlight the vast and diverse components of the maritime industry, and the forum workshops were designed to mirror this concept using a student-centered methodology. The workshop part of the forum consisted of 5 different groups, each assigned with the difficult task of addressing complex issues currently facing the maritime industry. The 5 workshop topics were the "Attraction, retention, and attrition of seafarers," "Global maritime professionals," "Ports and shore-based business," "Quality training on board for the first license," and "Gender in the maritime industry." Over the course of the forum, students worked under the supervision of their facilitators and co-facilitators to identify the underlying issues at the heart of each topic, while also coming up with unique suggestions and solutions for dealing with them.

## Analyzing Student Feedback

One of the main goals of the 2017 IAMU Student Forum was to engage the student participants in a learner-centric approach that would encourage them to work interdependently on well-defined learning tasks. Each participant was responsible for their own performance, verbalizing their ideas, conducting their work, while the group facilitators guided the group-learning process, interacting with students in a personal, dialogic fashion rather than being overly directive or authoritative [1]. The group facilitators were not to focus on overt instruction, but rather on clarifying topic expectations, catalyzing dialogue, circulating actively among the groups, reinforcing positive instances of cooperative behavior, issuing timely questions designed to promote elaboration and encourage higher-order thinking [2].

Another goal of the 2017 IAMU Student Forum was to overcome the serious disadvantages of traditional teacher-centric education, by encouraging students to actively find links between theory and practice. Group work plays an important role in the development and maturity of personality while it is a momentous factor in the process of socialization [3]. This student-centric learning approach was built around the workshop topics and discussion results as the students tried to understand not only the topics themselves, but also their underlying concepts and mechanisms. Participants in the forum not only acquired the necessary understanding of the designated topics, but also developed generic competencies such as communication skills, problem solving, and team work spirit, which are the hallmarks of task-based learning methodology [4].

This paper summarizes the workshop outcomes of the 2017 IAMU Student Forum, and analyzes the post-workshop feedback that was collected from the student participants. While the student feedback was overwhelmingly positive for the event, indicating high levels of learning and knowledge gains, encouraging rates of participant satisfaction, and demonstrating signs of successful networking between the participants, there is still much to be learned from the general survey feedback and specific participant comments that will help guide future activities to be even more successful.

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