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Listening to student voice: understanding the needs and priorities of different student groups in online and hybrid environments

Natalie Holland, Teaching & Learning Academy

Elena Zaitseva, Teaching & Learning Academy

Graham Sherwood, Academic Registry

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Outline

- Why did we undertake this research?
- What did we do?
- Module evaluation data 2021 and 2022: satisfaction by ethnicity.
- Asian students experience of online learning.
- Black students experience of online leaning.
- What are these findings telling us? Points for action.

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- North-West England – lack of diversity in local region.
- 27,199 students (21,628 undergraduates).
- 47% from local region.
- 48% from most deprived areas.
- Only 5.2% identify as Asian British and 2.3% identify as Black British.
- Using Blue for 7 years.

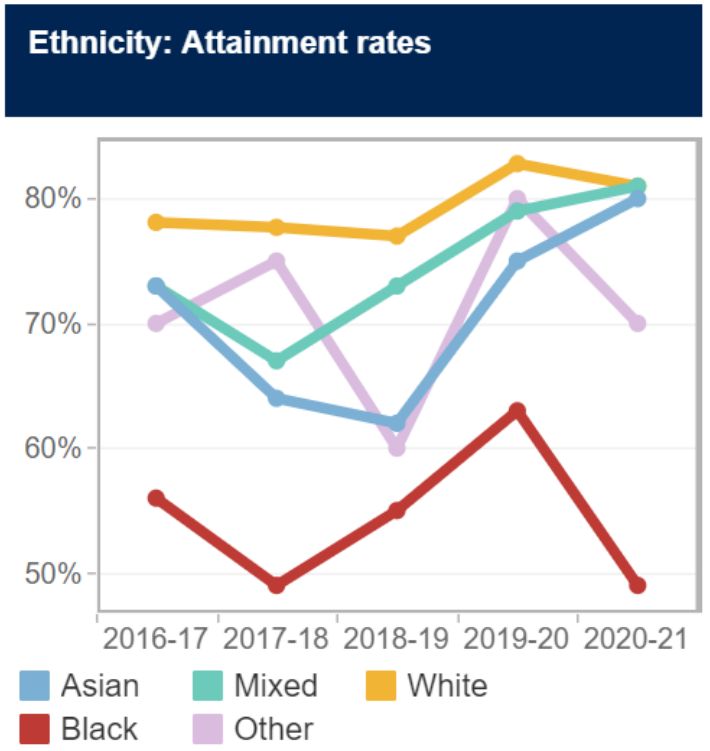
explorance.

Why the focus on ethnicity?

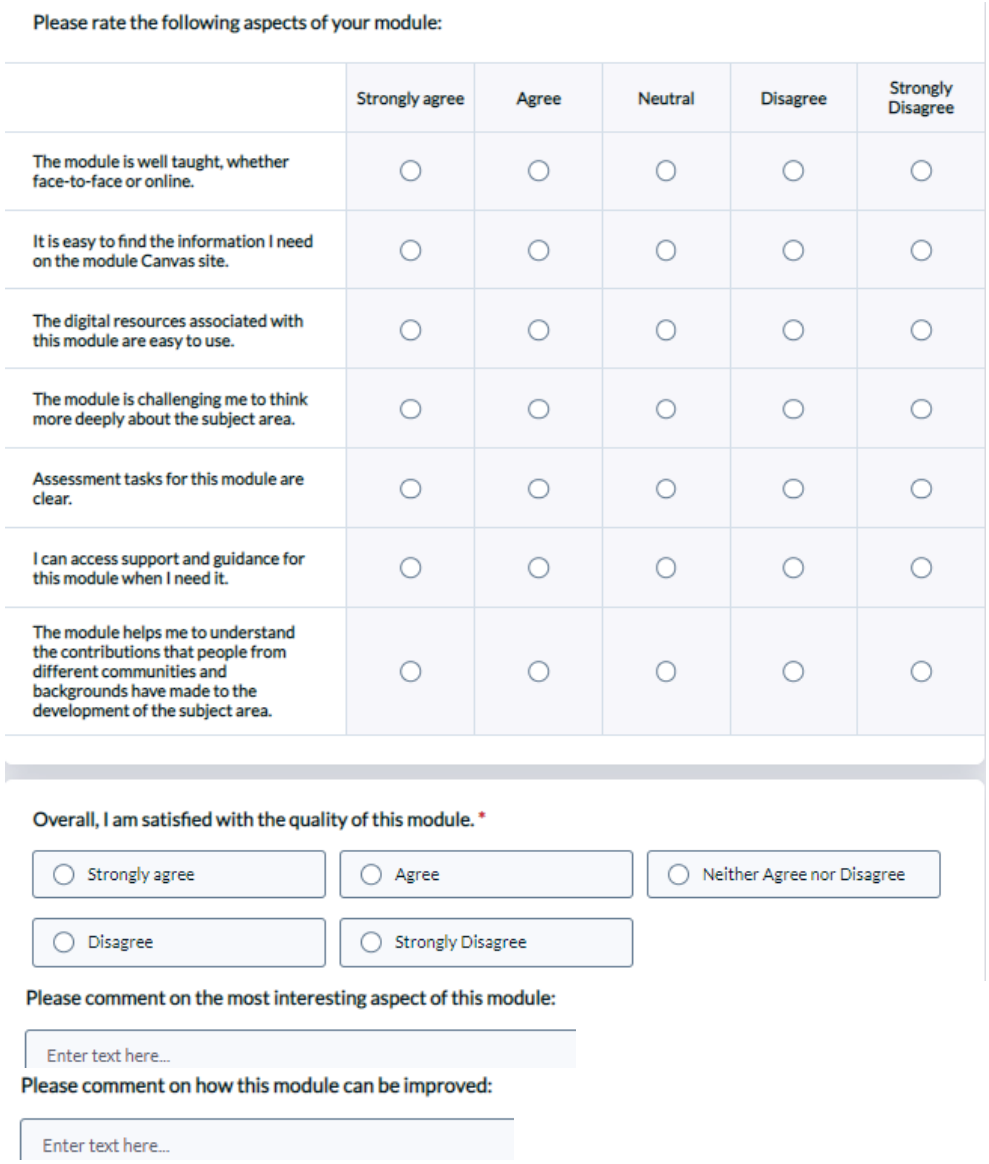
- **OfS national target** - Eliminate the unexplained gap in degree outcomes between white and Black students by 2024-25, and eliminate the absolute gap (both structural and unexplained differences) entirely by 2030-31.

- **LJMU data** – systemic problem worsened in 2020/21:
  - Move to online learning
  - NSS 2021: LJMU black students had the lowest Overall Satisfaction scores for any ethnic group. This represents a decrease of 14.89% when compared with NSS 2020 scores.

- **Questions:**
  - Why were certain students disproportionately effected in 2020/21?
  - What can Module Evaluation results tell us?



What did we do?



Please rate the following aspects of your module:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The module is well taught, whether face-to-face or online.	○	○	○	○	○
It is easy to find the information I need on the module Canvas site.	○	○	○	○	○
The digital resources associated with this module are easy to use.	○	○	○	○	○
The module is challenging me to think more deeply about the subject area.	○	○	○	○	○
Assessment tasks for this module are clear.	○	○	○	○	○
I can access support and guidance for this module when I need it.	○	○	○	○	○
The module helps me to understand the contributions that people from different communities and backgrounds have made to the development of the subject area.	○	○	○	○	○

Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of this module. *

○ Strongly agree ○ Agree ○ Neither Agree nor Disagree

○ Disagree ○ Strongly Disagree

Please comment on the most interesting aspect of this module:

Enter text here...

Please comment on how this module can be improved:

Enter text here...

The dataset

- Module evaluation of unit of teaching.
- Two years of data from LJMU students:
  - 2020-21 virtually all teaching online
  - 2021-22 active blended learning
- Response rates lower than pre-pandemic – constant across the two years.
- Analysis based on responses from UK (home) undergraduate students.

The study

- First looked at quantitative results.
- From here explored qualitative responses to open questions.

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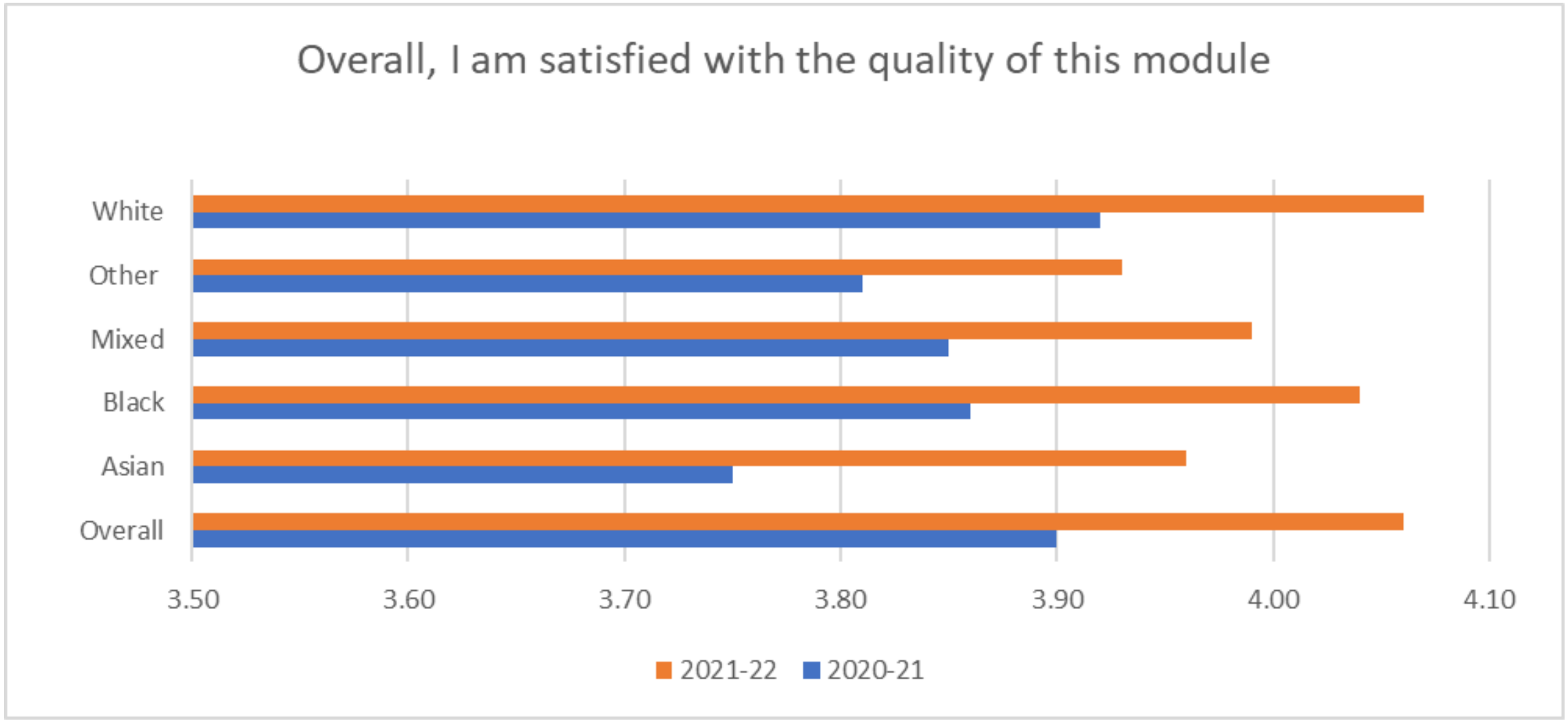
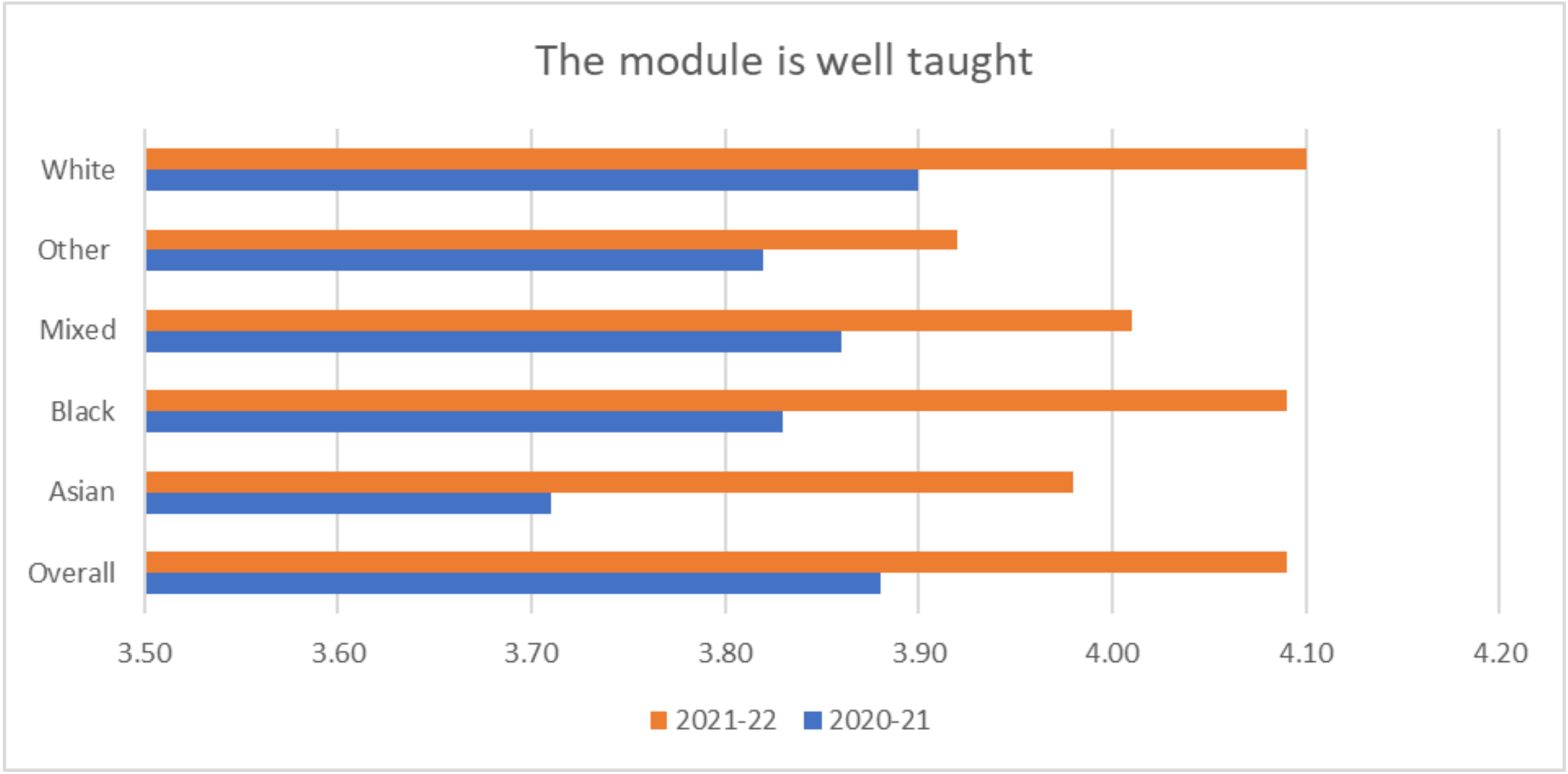
Online versus face-to-face



Teaching


The module is well taught
White
Other
Mixed
Black
Asian
Overall
3.50
3.60
3.70
3.80
3.90
4.00
4.10
4.20
2021-22
2020-21

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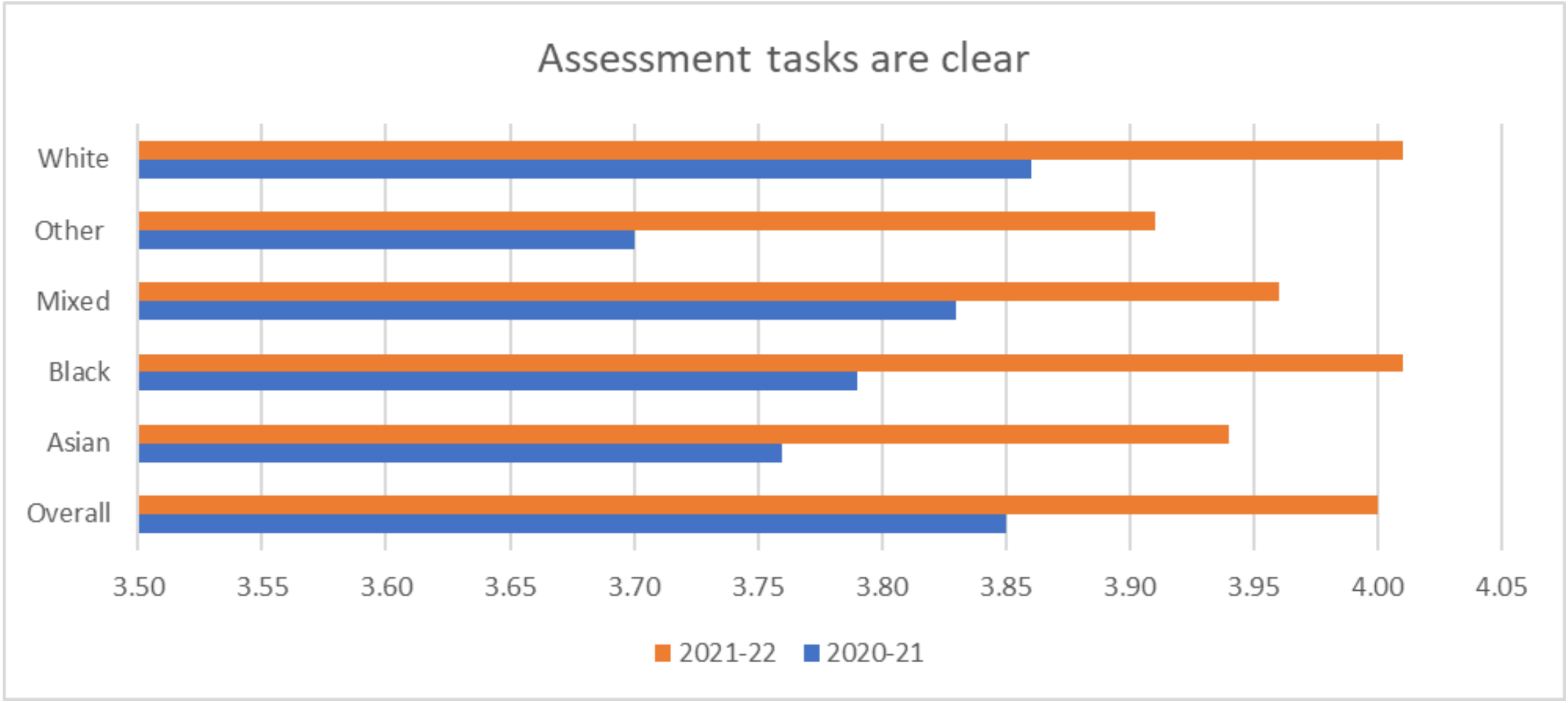
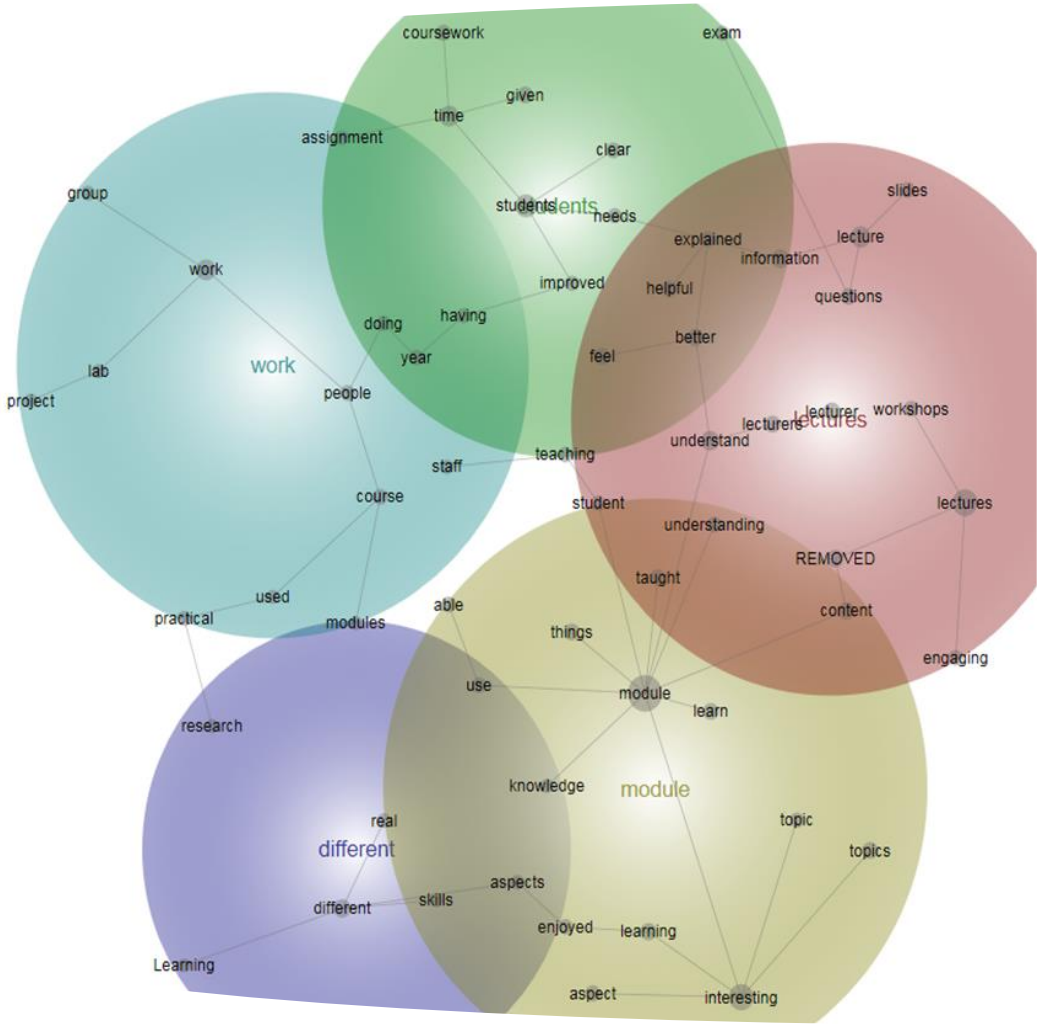
Clear assessment

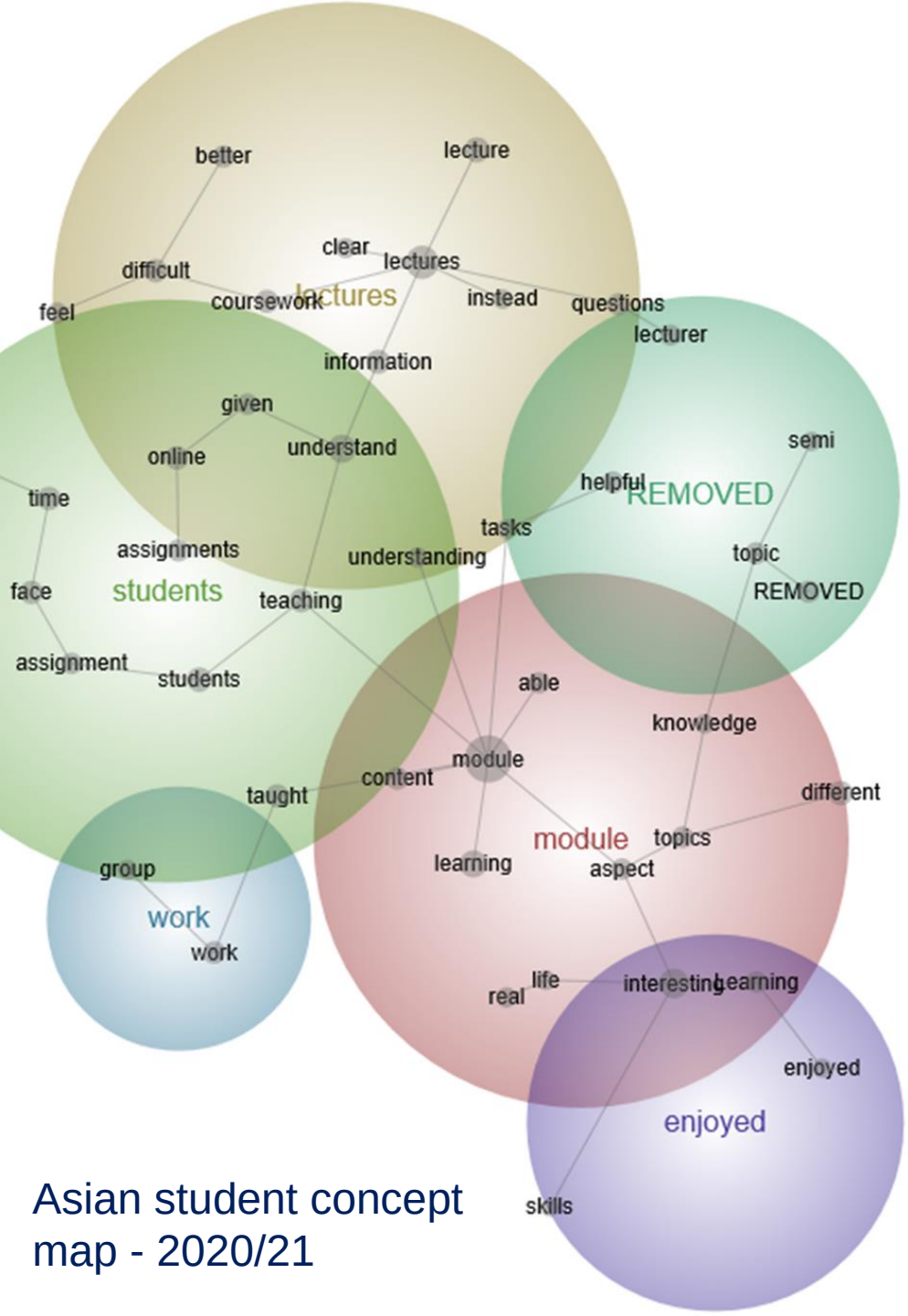


Getting help when I need it

Comments analysis - Methodology

- Merged all comments into one dataset.
- An automated semantic analysis tool, Leximancer, was used in the analysis.
  - Allows instant interaction with large qualitative datasets to reveal semantic characteristics of the text and patterns in the data.
  - Identifies concepts, themes (concept clusters), and connections between them, including their proximity.
  - Sentiment analysis
- Focus on exploration of Black and Asian student's comments.





Asian student concept map - 2020/21

Asian Students Comments

- In 2020-21, Asian students were the least satisfied based on quantitative data.
  - Teaching on the module
  - Help and guidance is accessible
- Whilst figures improved for 2021-22, Asian students were still one of the least satisfied groups.

- Strongest concepts are consistent with those identified during analysis of comments prior to pandemic (Holland and Zaitseva, 2021):
  - associating module level experience primarily with **lectures** and **interesting** content or delivery.
  - **Coursework** is also a consistent concept in Asian students' comments, often referred to in relation to questions, difficult, information, understanding.

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Asian Students Comments

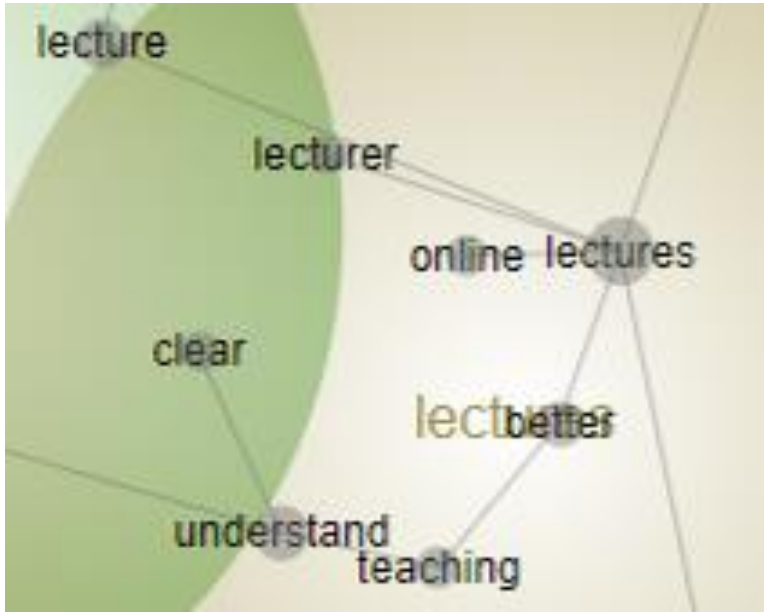
Concept	2020-21 Sentiment	2021-22 Sentiment
Lectures	Fav (30%)	Fav (27%)
Interesting	Fav (23%)	Fav (42%)
Understand	Fav (33%)	Fav (22%)
learning	Fav (23%)	Fav (14%)
Information	Unfav (14%) / Fav (14%)	Fav (13%)
Face	Unfav (9%) / Fav (9%)	
Coursework	Unfav (16%)	
Taught	Fav (6%)	Fav (23%)
Online	Unfav (16%)	Unfav (6%) / Fav (5%)
Difficult	Unfav (67%)	
Content	Unfav (9%)	
assignment	Unfav (12%)	Fav (7%)

'Online', 'Understanding' and 'assignments'

- **2020/21**

- Impact on assessment or assignment
- Impact on understanding content in lectures

- **2021/22**



- Online recordings of lectures help improve understanding.
- Understanding ➡ teaching techniques that lead to better understanding – no longer related to being/ or not being online.
- No connection between online and assessments

'Online', 'Understanding' and 'assignments'

- **2020/21**

"The online lectures have made it slightly more difficult to understand information. The concentration levels drop drastically due to being sat at a screen for a long period of time"

"Quality of teaching online could have been improved as I found it hard to understand the information given from the lecturer and what we had to for the assessed presentation"

- **2021/22**

Online

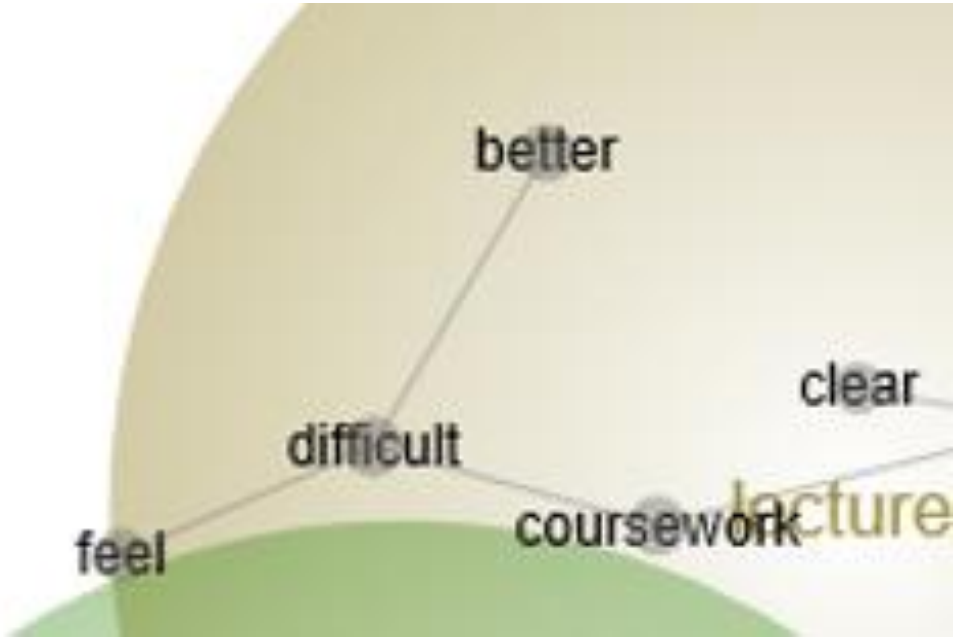
"It was such heavy content with new terminology, that it was hard to keep up. I watched the online recordings and they were a lot better as I could learn at my own pace"

Understanding

"I like that we learn an interact well with cinema by having a set film each week to focus on, it allows a better understanding to take place when in the seminar and analysing it as a class".

Difficult

- **2020/21**



- Concept in 2020/21 only
- Difficult mainly mentioned in relation to struggling with coursework.
- Connection between **difficult** and **feel**.
- Feel is a common concept prior to covid in White and Black student comments.
- Asian students normally focus on the module/ content/ their learning rather than how they feel about their learning.

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Difficult quotes

- **Difficult** and **coursework**

"The coursework title could have been made clearer many students found it difficult to understand what was being asked of them"

"CAD coursework extremely difficult for what was shown in lesson. Bigger focus on coursework if the tasks have little to do with in lesson".

- **Difficult** and **feel**

"I feel that due to not having gone through the slides face to face, it is very difficult to understands a certain topic from just notes and no verbal explanations".

"I feel like being asked in the coursework to design a parallel algorithm without much prior practice, made it very difficult, or course there were some examples of parallel algorithms in the lecture, but I feel like more practice would have been beneficial"

Black students' feedback

- Black students: largest attainment and continuation gap, not always linked to low satisfaction

- Assessment tasks for this module are clear.

Black – 68% Agree (22% neutral); White -71% Agree (16% - neutral).

- I can access support and guidance for this module when I need it.

Black -73% Agree (neutral – 21%); White - 76% Agree (neutral – 16%)

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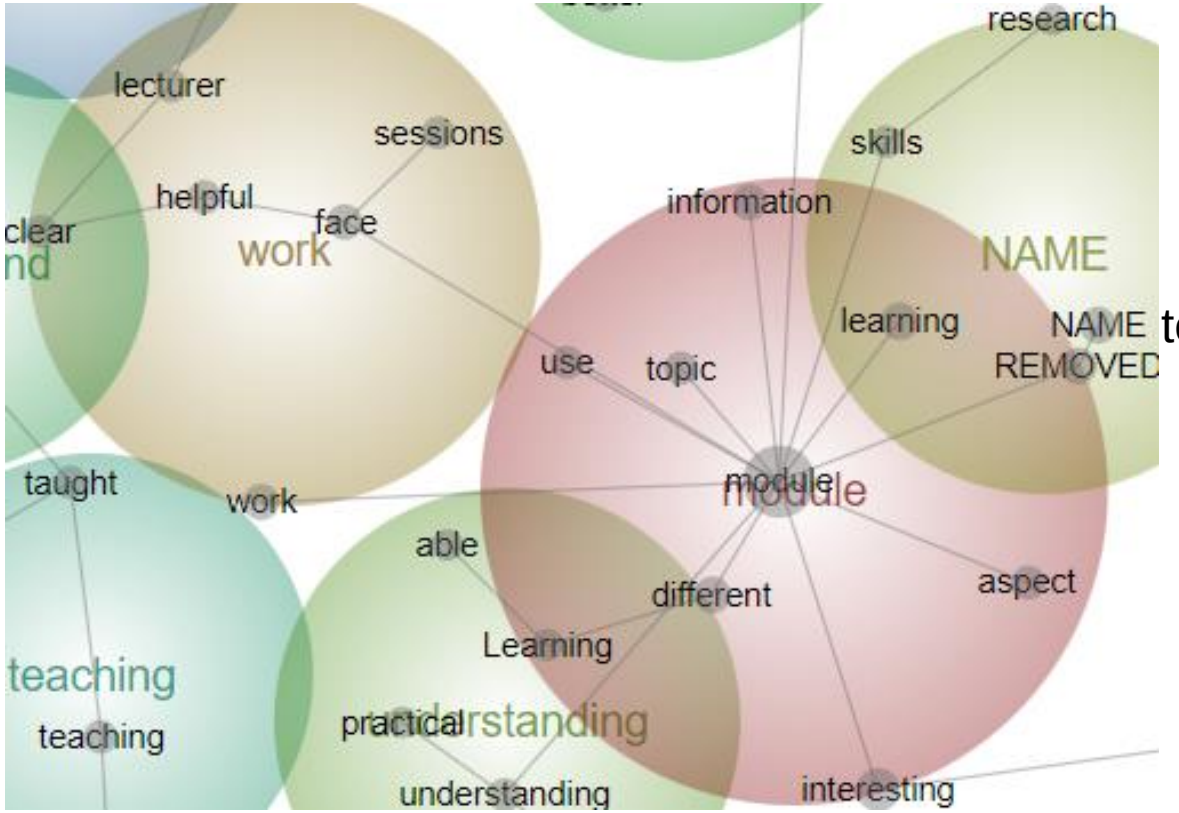
Black students

Concept	2020-21 Sentiment	2021-22 Sentiment
Lectures	Fav (20%)	Fav (23%)
Understand	Unfav (22%)	Fav (17%)
Learning	Unfav (17%)	Fav (07%)
Zoom	Fav 07%	n/a
Face	Unfav 09	Fav 03%
Information	Unfav 13%	Fav 20%
Support	Fav 05%	Fav 07%
Teaching	Unfav 13%	Fav 20%
Assignment	n/a	Fav 07%
Practical	Fav 02%	Fav 10%
Assessment	Unfav 04%	Fav 07%

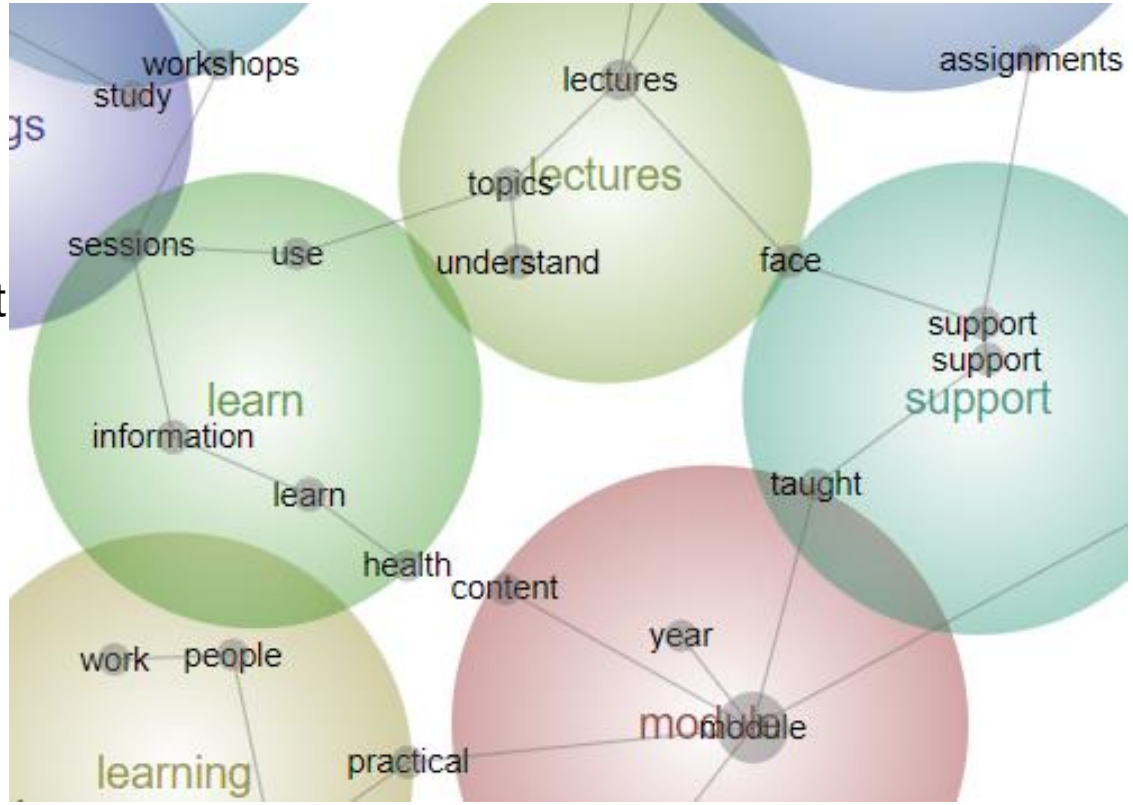
Black students' comments

2020-2021



text

2021-2022



2020-21 themes

- **Enjoyed interactive Zoom sessions and when F2F sessions took place; fully online was challenging**

The module leader incorporated face to face teaching, with virtual workshops, lives lectures and panoptos thoroughly.

Face to face honestly; online is challenging I learn much better face to face as I get distracted so easily with this online learning

- **Lack of practical sessions had negative impact**

I don't believe enough was done to allow students to have practical work, which gave us a very virtual project experience...

2020-21 themes

- **Support and opportunity to practice**

Knowing that all the difficulties of the pandemic, module leaders have to be more encouraging and inviting to students to participate in tasks given by the module leader before given any assignment

Perhaps more support sessions to allow more time for catching up with lectures during lockdown...

- **Assessment practice**

... module leaders have to be more encouraging and inviting to students to participate in tasks given by the module leader before given any assignment

2021-22 themes

- **Positive discourse is back**

...everything was just fantastic

- **Would like more support**

I would like to have someone who can see and guide me through my work and explain where I struggle.

Needs more support when it comes to prepare for exams. More material needed to support students on assessment tasks.

- **Additional challenges**

The distraction of juggling placement, assignment and family commitment means as a mature student In this world with life commitments my assignment will never be completed to my own personal satisfaction and my grades will reflect this disadvantaged .

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I like the face to face sessions...

... though sometimes it can be noisy by people chatting. I can engage more with the sessions and able to ask questions and interact with the tutor. I like everything about this module its very very interesting and the way the tutor explains things its very clear, I could sit and listen to the tutors talk all day as they have so much knowledge and experience and it shows that they are not just reading from a book. I love every session and the tutors made the lessons engaging there's no chance of you falling asleep because someone just reading to you. Pure fun, pure knowledge i can safely say every session I leave feeling I have learnt something. Thank you.

What are these findings telling us?

- Overall satisfaction has improved for all ethnic groups, but white students are still more satisfied than other groups.
- Black and Asian students are often reluctant to ask for help in relation to their studies. Provision of support needs to be proactive.
- Online delivery poses an additional barrier to accessing support and general understanding of the content/ assessments and coursework.
- Lack of F2F interaction impacted on opportunities for informal pastoral support. Particularly seems to affect black students.

Actions

- Review the role of personal tutors in proactively providing opportunities for support.
- Developing informal role models and mentoring specifically for black, Asian and minority ethnic students.
  - Upscale mentoring scheme piloted in 2021/22
- Review of types of assessment and feedback provided to all students, particularly those from diverse backgrounds.
- Advice and guidance for modules that intend to retain a large amount of online delivery.

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Thank you