

Strategies to Enhance Course Evaluation Ecosystem in NUS: Lessons Learned

Kiruthika Ragupathi, Beh Keng Khim, Yin Xiangwei

Centre for Development of Teaching and Learning
National University of Singapore





The NUS context

- 3 campuses; 16 faculties, schools and/or colleges
- 42,000+ students
- 2 semesters + 4 mini-semester + 2 special terms each academic year
- 2,500+ Courses each semester
- 8,000+ Classes each semester
- **3 staff for course evaluations**

} Feedback gathering exercise

History of course evaluations at NUS



Introduced paper and pen course evaluations (formative)



Used as a source of evidence for evaluation of teaching



Switched to online evaluations (in-house legacy system)



Transitioned to Blue (university-wide roll-out)

Course evaluations at NUS

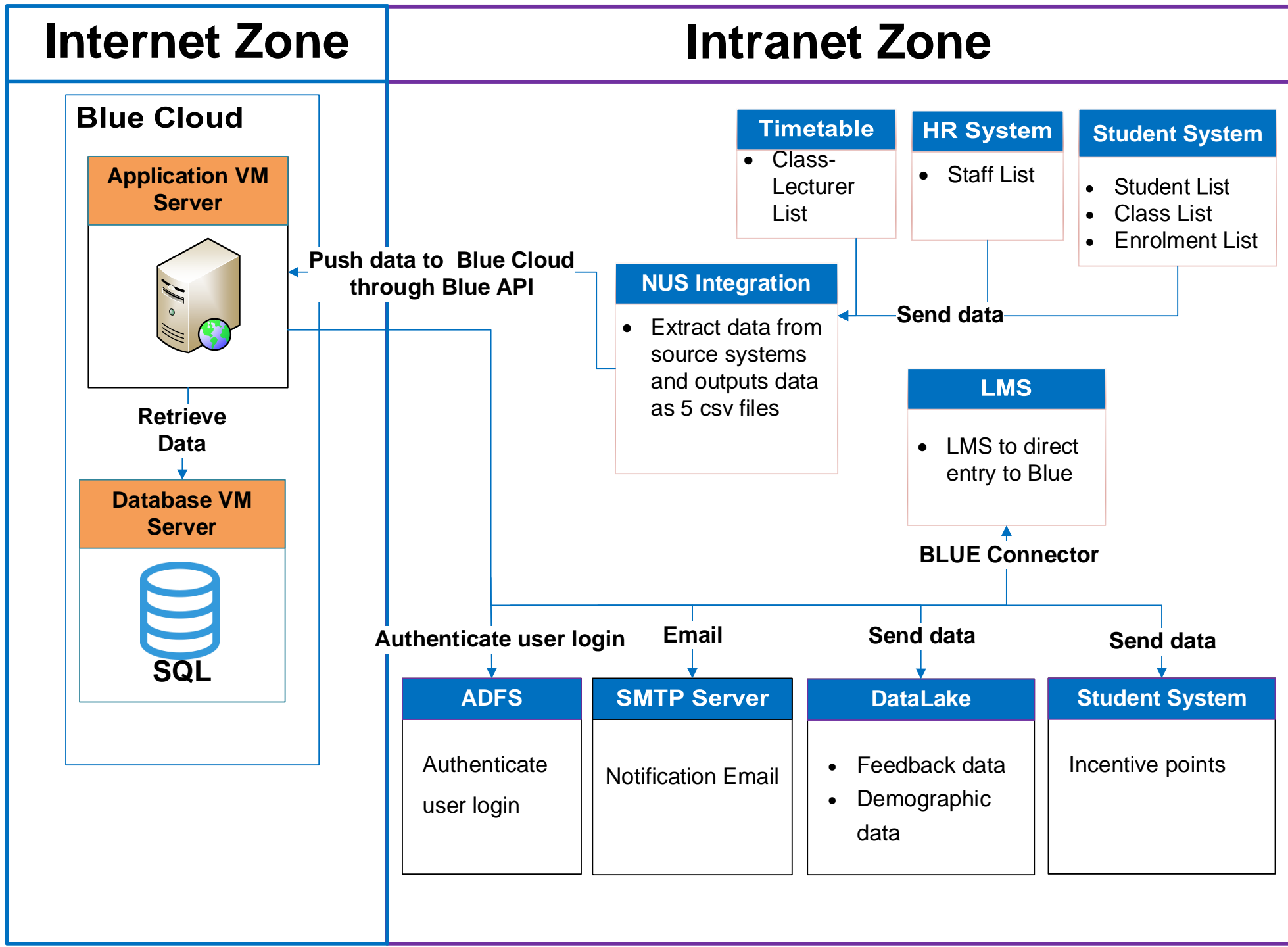
Feedback on the teacher

- 4 university-wide questions: Likert-scale
- 2 open-ended questions
- Up to 3 department specific questions: Likert-scale
- Nomination for teaching awards: Yes/No with comments

Feedback on the course

- 3 university-wide questions: Likert-scale
- 2 open-ended questions
- Up to 10 course-specific items: Likert-scale/open-ended (optional)

The data: in and out




A hallway with seven doors, one of which is yellow, set against a patterned wallpaper. The floor is made of light-colored wood planks. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

Strategies for enhancement

Lessons we have learned over the last 7 years



Ensuring data accuracy



SEE THE GOOD

Educating the community

What we do...

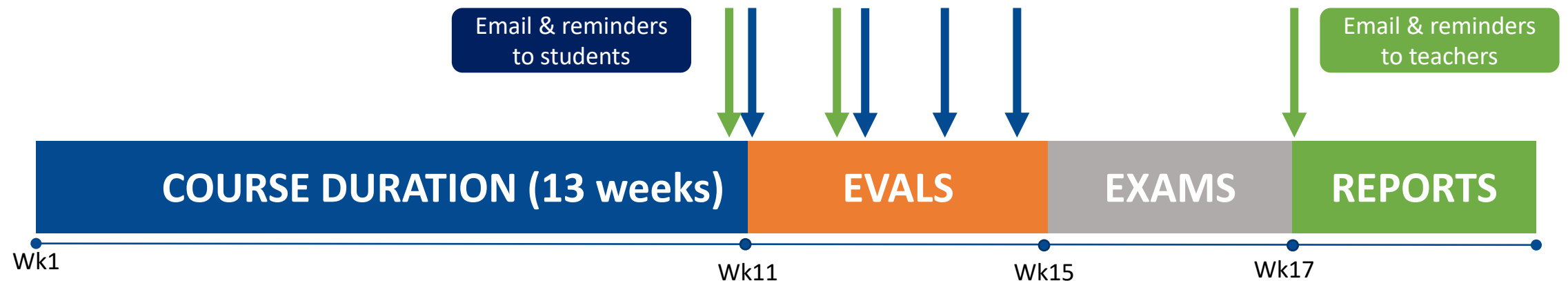
Students: Emails that emphasise the importance and purpose of feedback

Staff: Encourage teachers to monitor response and share informational materials on SFT in class (since 2020)

Faculty/School Leadership: Targeted emails or conversations with some faculty/school leadership before the exercise

What we do ...

- **Extend duration** of SF exercise from 2 weeks to 4 weeks
- Encourage teachers to **share with students on how they use student feedback** to improve teaching practice
- Nudge teachers to **provide time in class**



Invitation email to students (Sample)

SUBJECT: xxxxx, your voice matters!

Hello xxxxxx,

Now is your opportunity to provide feedback to your professors on their teaching. Your feedback is important, and sharing your fair and honest views about your experience of teaching in the modules you took will enable professors to know how they are doing and where they can improve.

Provide your feedback now >>



Your feedback counts

Your constructive feedback supports professors to improve their modules and is one source of evidence used in the university's appraisal decisions.



Be Considerate

Improper language or personal comments are highly inappropriate and undermine your feedback. Abusive comments are unacceptable and will be discarded.



It's confidential

Your professors will never see your name; they will only receive an aggregate report, and only after the exam results have been released.



It's quick

You can complete your module feedback on campus, at home, or on the go! It is easy to use and compatible with mobile devices.

SUBJECT: Student Feedback Exercise on Teaching – AY 2016/2017, Semester 1



SUBJECT: It's time to evaluate your instructors (AY 2016/2017, Semester 2)



SUBJECT: Name, your voice matters!

Student Feedback Exercise: **Your Voice Matters!**



Be Constructive

Comments on your learning experience increases the value of your feedback.

Always focus on the learning and teaching issues and not on the teacher!



Be Specific

Provide examples of how you think your teacher or the way the module is organised has helped (or not helped!) your learning.



Be Considerate

Improper language or personal comments is highly inappropriate, and undermines your feedback.

Abusive comments are unacceptable.

**Student Feedback Exercise:
Your Voice Matters!**



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Faculty leadership initiatives



Deanery reaches out to students via email before every student feedback exercise

73%



Vice-Dean meets with the student committee and have townhall meetings before the exercise

71%



Residential colleges maintain close relationships with students

RC1: 72% | RC2: 83%

RC3: 87% | RC4: 81%

Student Feedback: Wiki Guide

A link to this guide is added to the email reminders

The screenshot shows a web interface for the Student Feedback system. On the left is a sidebar with a 'PAGE TREE' containing a list of items: 'About SFT system' (highlighted), 'Evaluation Period', 'SFT Questionnaire', 'SFT Reports', 'FAQs for Students', 'FAQs for Faculty Members', 'FAQs for Department Administrators', and 'Resources and Guides' (expanded to show 'Department Admins (Data Preparatic)', 'SFT: In-class instructions to students', 'SFT: Information to students (infogra)', and 'SFT: Interpreting your Reports'). The main content area is titled 'About SFT system' and includes a sub-header 'What is SFT?' followed by a paragraph: 'Student feedback on teaching at NUS constitutes one significant source of data on teaching quality as part of the University's processes for educational quality enhancement and assurance.' Below this is another paragraph: 'Accordingly, student feedback is intended to help faculty develop their practice, as well as improve their students' learning outcomes and learning experience. In ensuring high-quality teaching, academics need to work closely with SFT as a source of evidence to track and report student learning for performance review and promotion.' On the right side of the main content area, there is a section titled 'Access via Canvas' with the text: 'Login to Canvas, <https://canvas.nus.edu.sg/> to access Student Feedback from your Account:'. Below this text is a user profile card showing the NUS logo, a placeholder for a profile picture, and the word 'Account'. To the right of the profile card is a 'Log out' button. At the bottom of the interface is a navigation menu with icons and labels for 'Dashboard', 'Courses', 'Calendar', and 'Inbox'. To the right of this menu is a list of options: 'Notifications', 'Profile', 'Files', 'Settings', and 'Student Feedback' (which is highlighted in yellow).

Student Feedback

About SFT system

Created by Beh Keng Khim, last modified on 11 May 2023

What is SFT?

Student feedback on teaching at NUS constitutes one significant source of data on teaching quality as part of the University's processes for educational quality enhancement and assurance.

Accordingly, student feedback is intended to help faculty develop their practice, as well as improve their students' learning outcomes and learning experience. In ensuring high-quality teaching, academics need to work closely with SFT as a source of evidence to track and report student learning for performance review and promotion.

Access via Canvas

Login to Canvas, <https://canvas.nus.edu.sg/> to access Student Feedback from your Account:

Account

Log out

Dashboard

Courses

Calendar

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Profile

Files

Settings

Student Feedback



Maximising engagement

Overcoming non-response bias



personalised email invitations + Subsequent reminders



Extended duration



improved access

(web, LMS integration, mobile devices, university mobile app)



incentives

(points awarded upon completion, used for course registration)

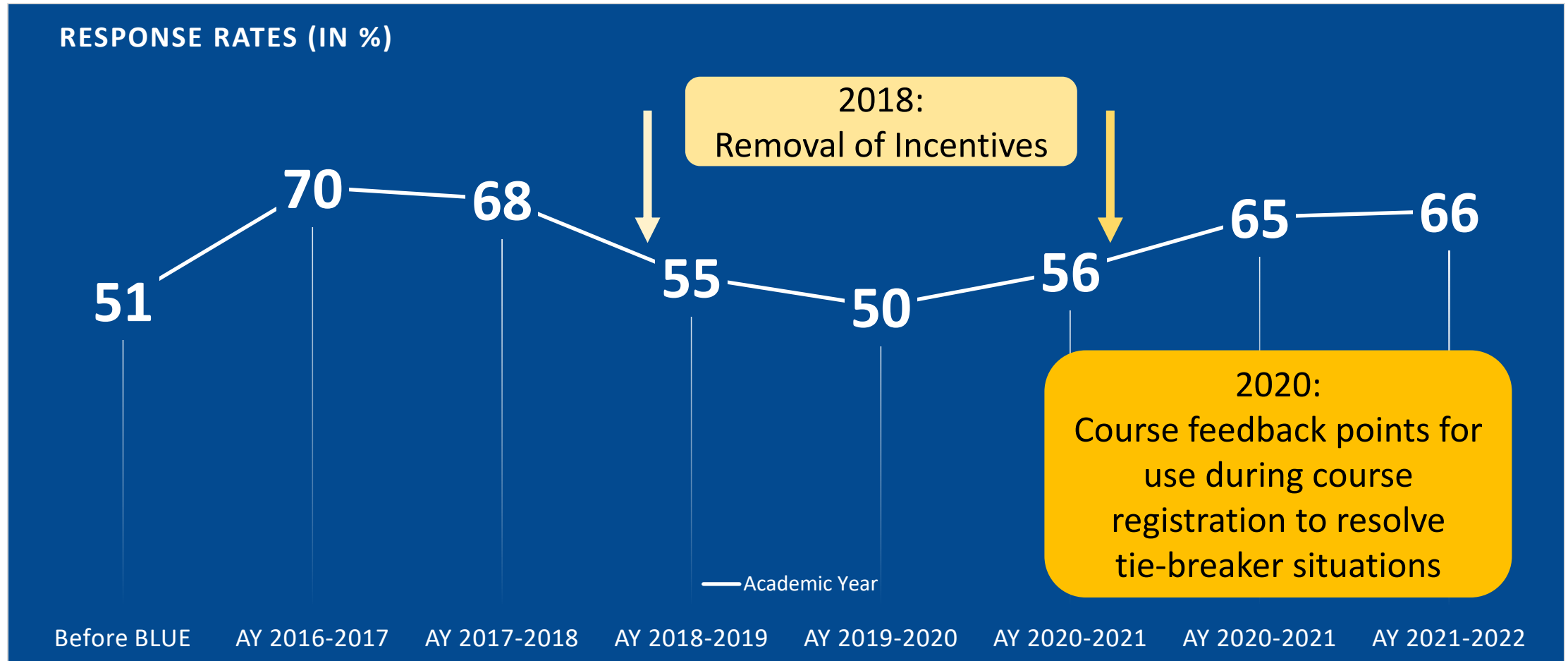


real-time response monitoring

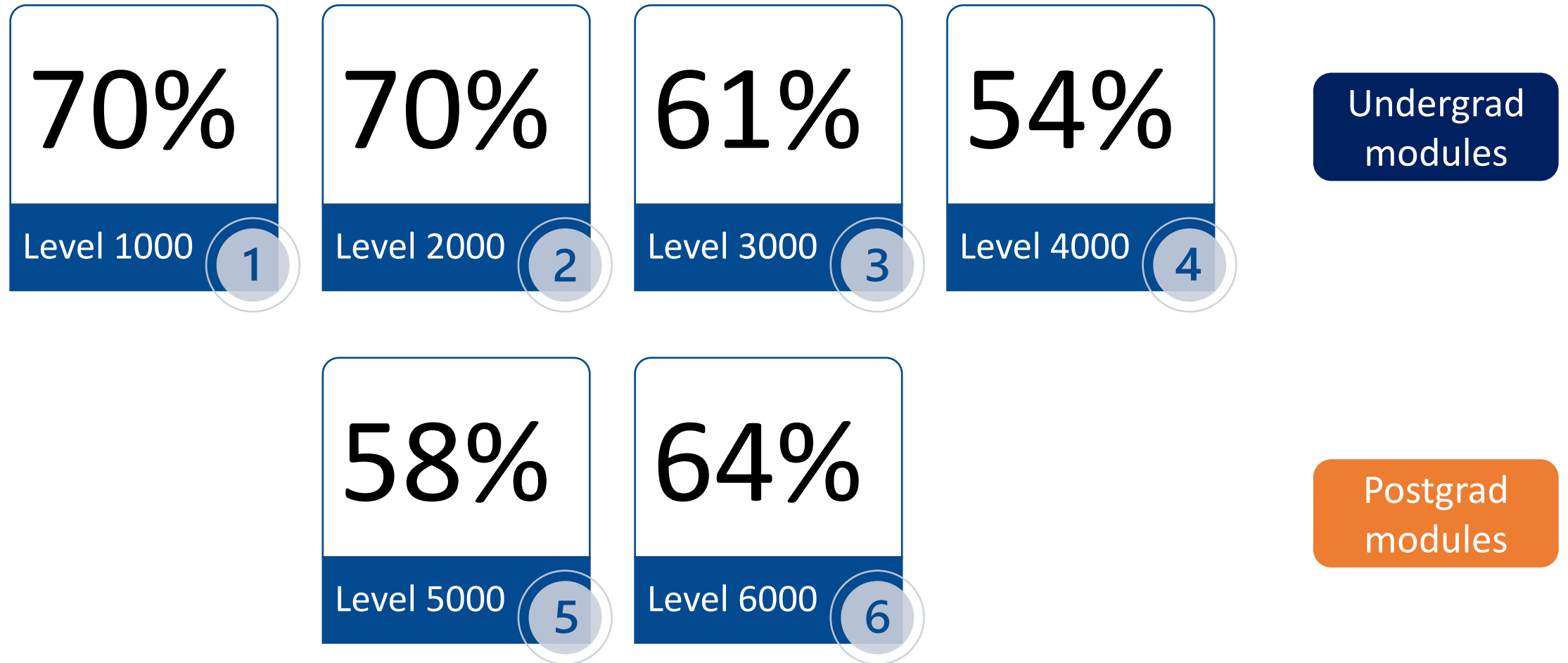
FOR STUDENTS

FOR TEACHERS &
ADMINISTRATORS

Response rates



Change in response rates by Level



Our future plan

Introduce closing of the feedback loop



Feedback exercise
(gathers data from students)



Report distribution
(to teachers & departments)



Teacher self-reflection
(gather summary & actionable insights from teachers)



Closing the loop
(share summary report with students that includes teacher actionable insights)



Providing feedback insights

What we do...

Improved reports for teachers

- aimed at developing reflective teaching and improvement over time
- aggregated text analytics report for each teacher

Better insights to Heads and Deans

- summary reports (for a quick overview)
- export reports (for further analysis)

Teacher Report (reflective teaching)

This semester is affected by a public health crisis. Colleagues are given the option not to submit this report for performance appraisal, MTAR, and P&T

A. GUIDELINES FOR INTERPRETING THE REPORT

The teacher evaluation report is for developmental purposes and is meant to help identify strengths and areas for improvement. Please consider the following recommendations that will aid in interpreting the results:

1. Examine the report by taking note of patterns in order to consider how best to act on the feedback your students have provided. The report is intended to be a tool for reflection and not a final judgment on your performance.

F. SELF-REFLECTION

2. The report is intended to be a tool for reflection and not a final judgment on your performance. Consider the following questions to guide your reflection:
 1. When comparing these results to the previous year's results, what areas have shown improvement?
 2. What areas remain to be improved and what are the necessary steps / actions to do so?
 3. Are there colleagues who could potentially guide me?
 4. Are there issues that require departmental or institutional support?

an area that requires immediate developmental focus based on student feedback.

Interpretation guide for faculty



INTERPRETING AND WORKING WITH YOUR STUDENT FEEDBACK ON TEACHING REPORTS

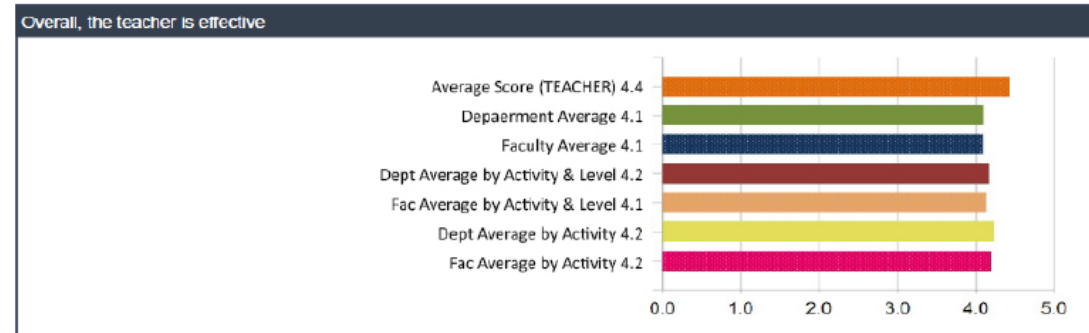
A RESOURCE GUIDE

Summary graphs: Snapshots of strengths and weakness

Summary graphs are graphical representation of students' ratings, presented as average scores that capture the quality of key elements. These set of tabulations and graphs allows you to compare your SFT scores to the department/faculty means as well as by department/faculty by activity type and level of module. A tabular comparison is provided for the university-wide questions: the overall effectiveness, enhances thinking ability, provides timely and useful feedback, and increases interest in the subject.

(I) Rating Score

Question	Average Score (TEACHER)	Dept Average by Activity & Level	Fac Average by Activity & Level	Dept Average by Activity	Fac Average by Activity
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
Overall, the teacher is effective.	4.4	4.2	4.1	4.2	4.2



Text analytics report for teachers

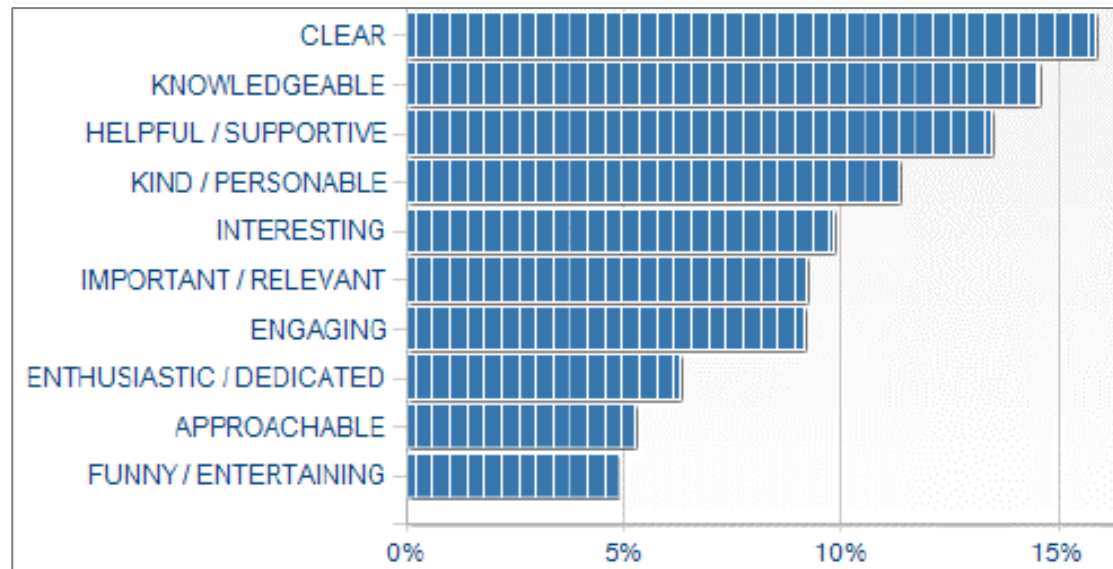
AGGREGATED TEXT ANALYTICS REPORT

This report provides an analysis of student comments received in response to two questions: "What are the teacher strengths?" and "What improvement would you suggest for the teacher?"

- The text analytics reports provide an overview of student comments for all of your teaching over the past semester.
- The reports are useful primarily for formative purposes. They can help with quickly identifying perceived strengths and opportunities for development in one's teaching based on the frequency of keywords and keyword combinations that appear in student comments. The corresponding attributes are derived from a dictionary that has been compiled on the basis of hundreds of thousands of student comments from multiple universities in North America, Australia, and elsewhere.
- The reports are especially useful for modules with large class sizes given the high volume of free-form comments, as they provide instructors with a quick summary of massive amount of data by categorisation. That said, it goes without saying that given enough time, humans tasked with reviewing free-form comments will always produce better results than even the most powerful computers. For example, if you have fewer than 50 comments then it might be a lot easier to read the actual comments than relying on categorisation. Thus, text analytics reports are not used for judging the quality of teaching, but are **meant only for the eyes of teachers themselves to reflect on** and, where necessary, improve their own teaching.

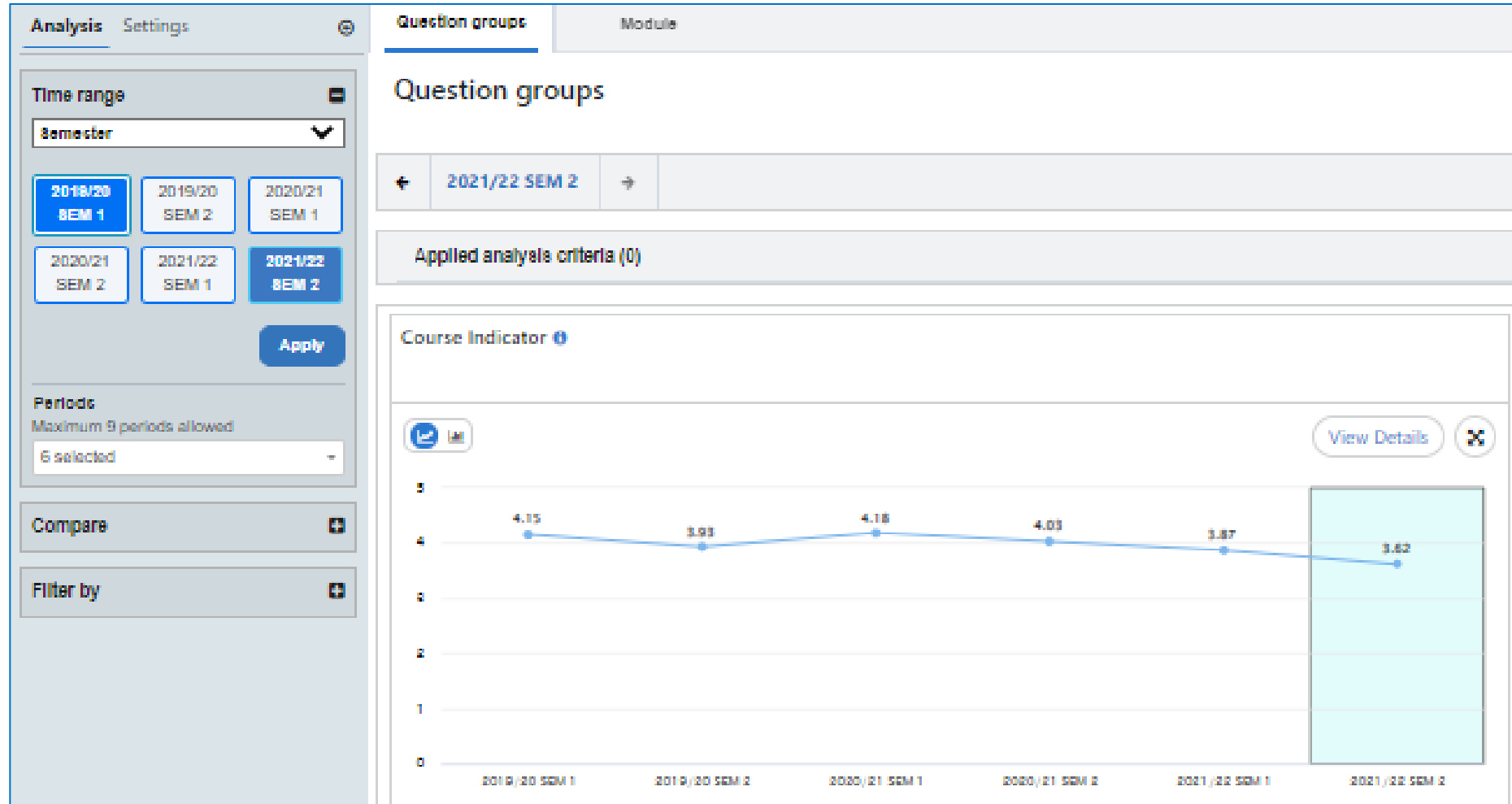
Better Insights to Heads/Deans

- real-time response monitoring during SF exercise
- summary report
 - an overall summary on modules and teachers
 - text analytics on open-ended comments



Our future plan

Launch the Instructor Feedback Dashboard for the next academic year



Kiruthika Ragupathi
kiruthika@nus.edu.sg

Beh Keng Khim
cdtbkk@nus.edu.sg

Yin Xiangwei
xiangwei@nus.edu.sg

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