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#LTSE2023

Nottingham Business School
Nottingham Trent University

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CHARTERED ASSOCIATION OF BUSINESS SCHOOLS

LTSE 2023
LEARNING, TEACHING & STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Delivering SCALE-UP workshops to overcome accounting students' resistance to active learning and group work at Nottingham Business School

Sunny Jones & Katharine Pearce

23 May 2023

EQUIS ACCREDITED

AACSB ACCREDITED

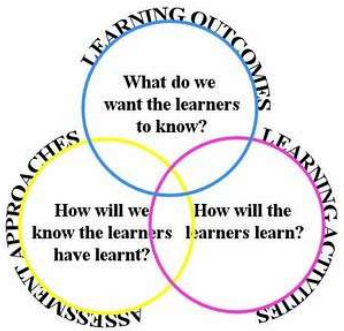
SMALL BUSINESS CHARTER

PRME CHAMPIONS
Principles for Responsible Management Education

Agenda

The expectation performance gap in group work and presentations

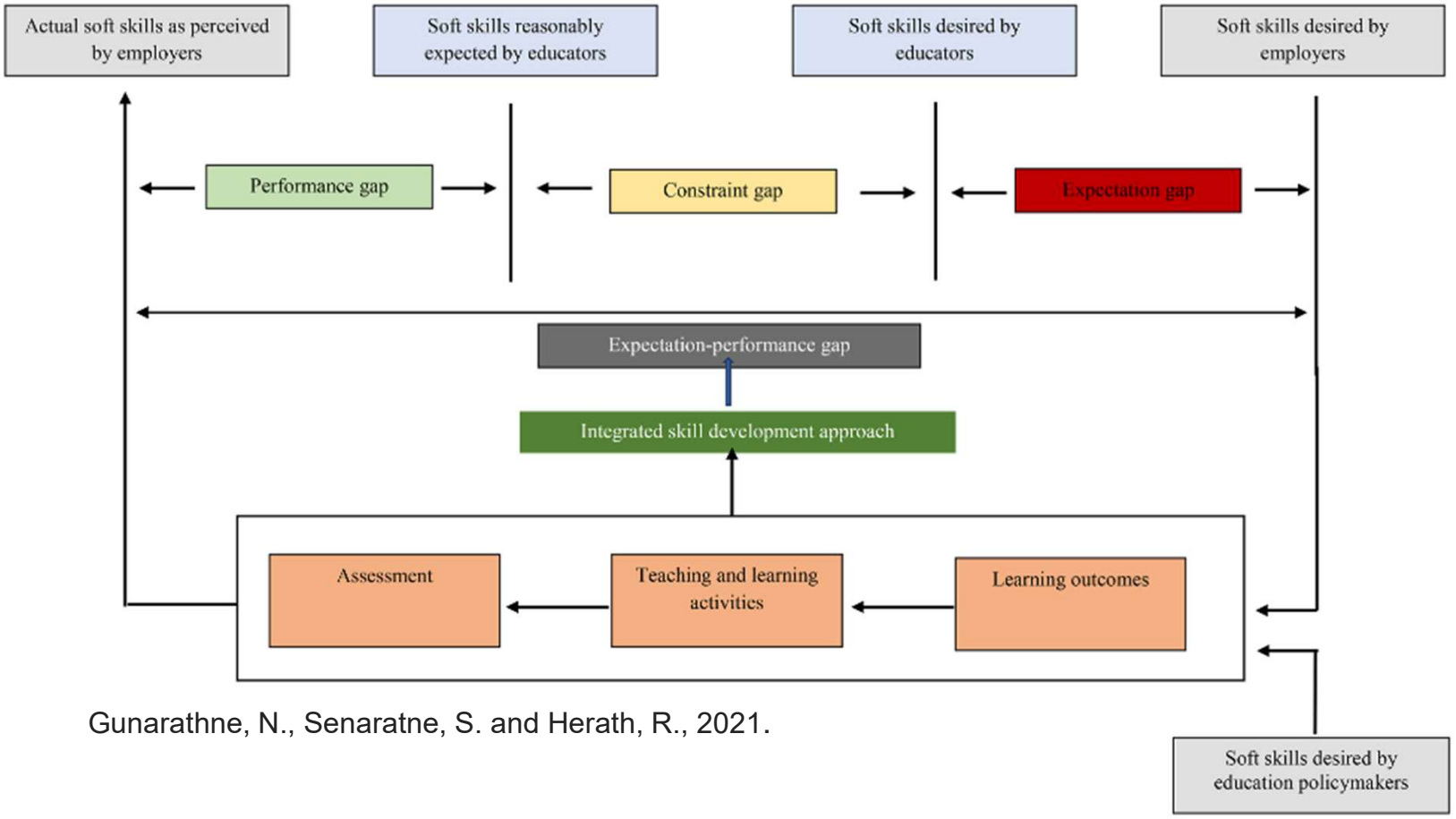
The Accounting Environment (TAE) module as a (partial) solution!



1. TAE - Issue and context
2. Module learning outcomes
3. Pedagogy & teaching and learning activities
4. Assessment - Group presentations
5. Module outcomes and impact
6. Next Steps

1. TAE - Issue and Context

The expectation–performance gap of soft skills in management education



Gunarathne, N., Senaratne, S. and Herath, R., 2021.

Soft skills desired by employers

Approach to soft skills for TAE:

1. Developing Growth Mindset behaviours encouraging curiosity, desire to learn and adopt a lifelong approach to continuous development (CIMA, 2018)

2. Providing opportunities for students to practice to learn how to learn (Osmani et.al. 2019) and how to use active collaborative learning environment to enhance learning and build self-efficacy (WEF, 2023)

3. Supporting students to understand how they will use and apply what they have learned in TAE in their academic and future professional careers (GOS survey) (HESA, 2021)

Table 1. Core graduate attributes.

Graduate Skills	Frequency
Communication	24
Teamwork	18
Problem solving	11
Technological skills	11
Creativity	10
Interpersonal	8
Leadership	7
Self-management	6
Flexibility/adaptability	6
Critical thinking	5
Time management	5
Willingness to learn	5
Planning and organizing	5
Initiative	4
Negotiation	3
Pregraduation work experience	2
Working under pressure	2
Self-confidence	2
Personality	2
Independent working	2
Motivation	2

Graduates employability skills: A review of literature against market demand (Osmani et. al. 2019)

Table 3. Categories and subcategories of skills identified as important for future accountants.

Category of skills	Subcategories of skills
Ethical skills	• Technical ethical skills • Interpersonal ethical skills
Digital skills	• Basic digital skills • Advanced digital skills • Data skills
Business skills	• Consulting and business advisory skills • Strategic thinking
Soft skills	• Adaptability • Communication • Lifelong approach to Continuous Personal and Professional Development (CPD) • Critical thinking • Dynamic problem-solving • Emotional intelligence

Exploring the impact of 4IR on skills and personal qualities for future accountants: a proposed conceptual framework for university accounting education (Tsiligiris, V., & Bowyer, D. 2021)

Benefits to group work

Social benefits

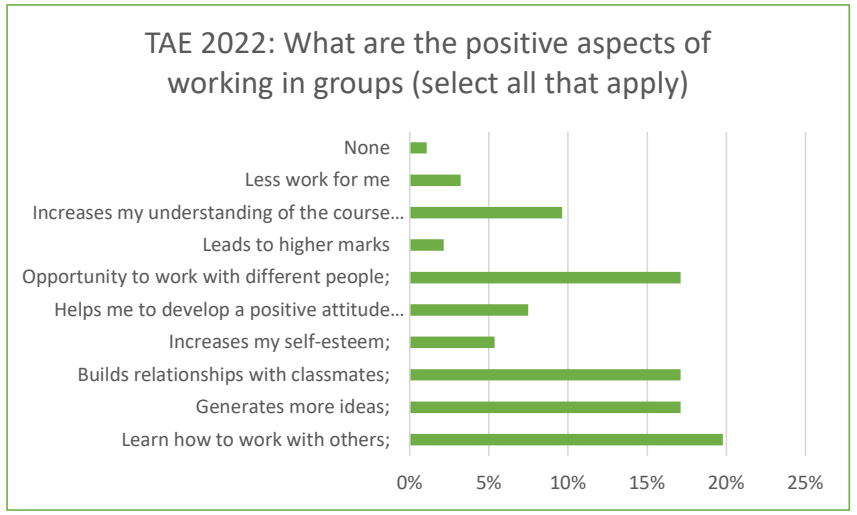
- Creates social support network for learners
- Builds positive heterogeneous relationships and promotes diverse understanding amongst students and staff
- Establishes a positive environment for modelling and practising cooperation
- Develops learning communities

Psychological benefits

- Builds students' self-esteem through student-centred instruction
- Reduces classroom anxiety through cooperation
- Develops positive attitude amongst learners towards teachers

Academic benefits

- Promotes higher level thinking skills
- Involves students actively in the learning process
- Classroom results are improved
- Models appropriate student problem-solving techniques
- Can be used to personalise large lecture classes



Source: NBS level 4 student feedback 2022-23 N=145

Adapted from Laal and Ghodsi (2012)

Resistance to group work

- Pre-module evaluation shows that our students have similar views about group work learning experiences as demonstrated in literature (Tucker & Abbassi, 2016)
- Arranging meetings, disagreements and unequal workloads are the most common cited issues for our level 4 students at NBS
- The responses are similar to previous level 4 cohorts completing the TAE module

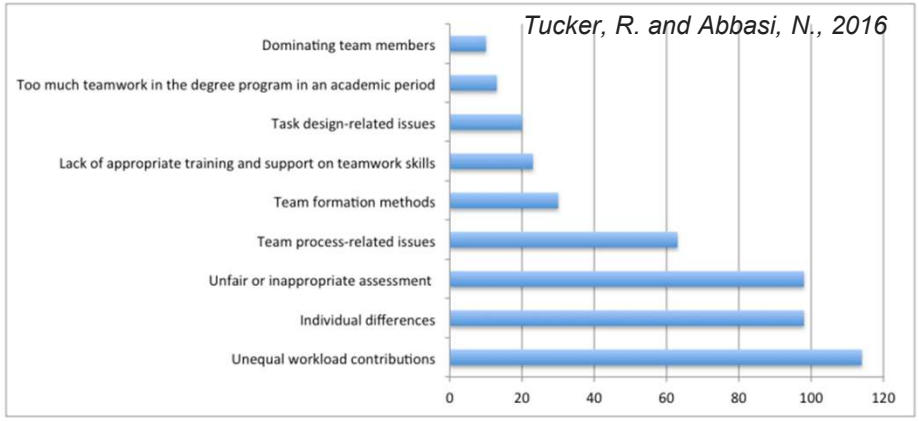


Figure 1. Comparison of factors accounting for negative teamwork learning experiences (in descending order)

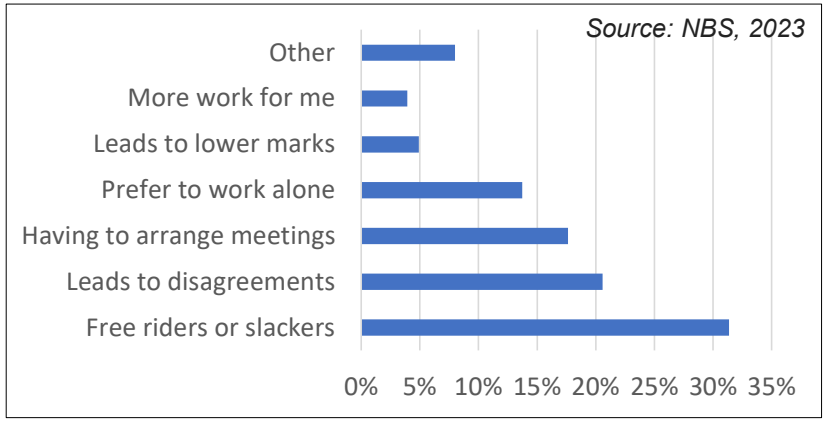


Figure 2. What are the negative aspects of working in groups

Source: NBS level 4 student feedback 2022-23 N=145

2. Module Learning Outcomes

The Accounting Environment (TAE)

Aims

01

Introduce students to the *wider business context* and the role of accountancy and finance within this, covering topics such as careers, ethics, technology and sustainability.

02

Allow students to experience interactive team-based working in a technology-rich environment

03

Develop their teamworking and presentation skills

04

Improve employability

- Explore ACF careers
- Professional bodies
- Interview questions
- Team work experience
- Reflection

05

Achieve diploma level exemptions wih both CIMA and ACCA

BA (HONS) ACCOUNTING & FINANCE (BAAF)
280 STUDENTS AT LEVEL 4 (2022/23), 20 CREDIT POINTS, HALF YEAR 2

3. Teaching and learning activities

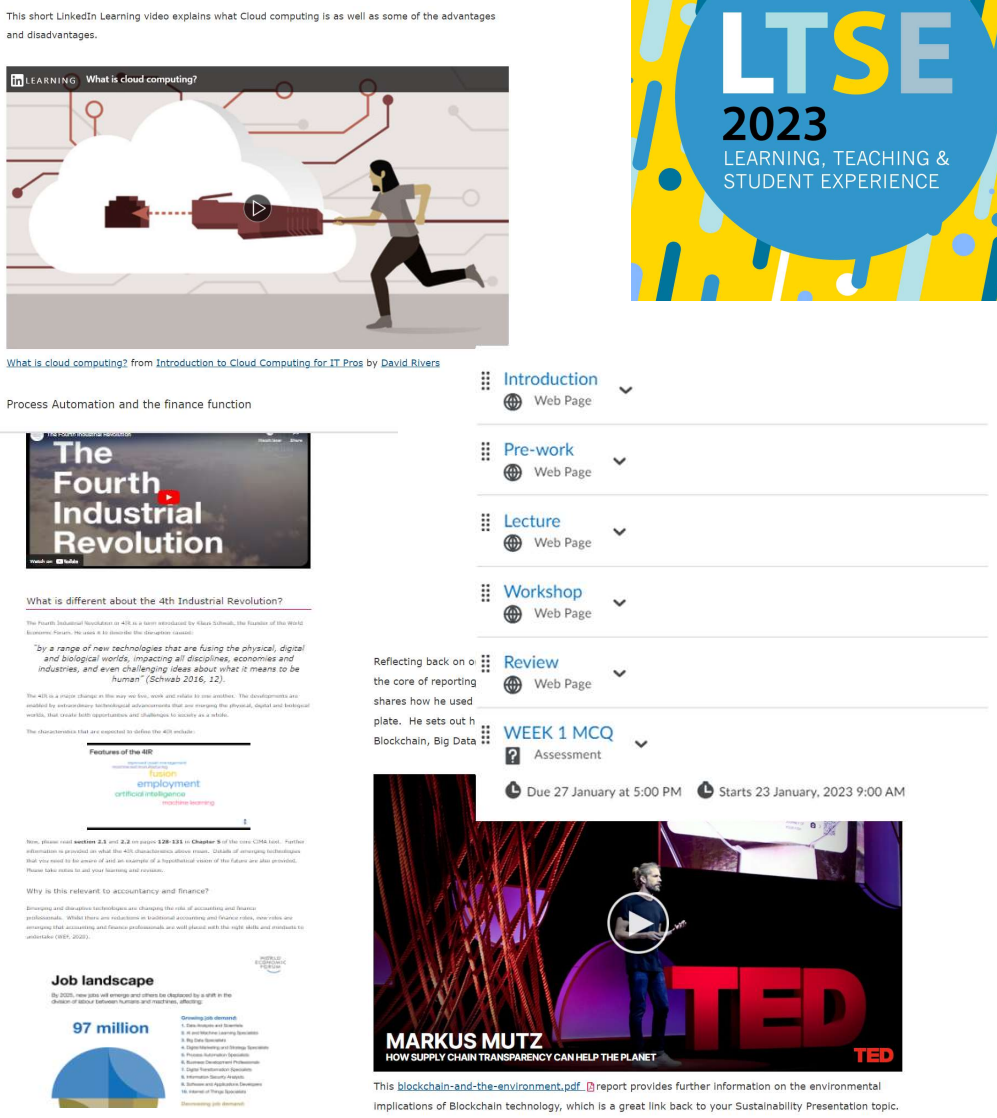
SCALE-UP

- Student-Centred Active Learning Environment with Upside-down Pedagogies (NTU, 2017, Beichner et al 2007)
- Pre-work for content (theory)
  - Curated resources – html page, links, videos, quizzes
- Workshops for application (practice)
  - 2 hours, 2 seminar groups (40), 2 tutors – leader and facilitator
  - Round tables of 9 - increased interaction between tutor, peers and groups
  - Teams of 3
    - ✓ Changed each week 1-7 then set teams 8-12
    - ✓ Manager, scribe, sceptic roles
    - ✓ Shared laptop
  - Series of interactive activities
    - ✓ Work within teams
    - ✓ Feedback to whole class

NTU Approach: SCALE-UP handbook (ntu.ac.uk)

Pre-work

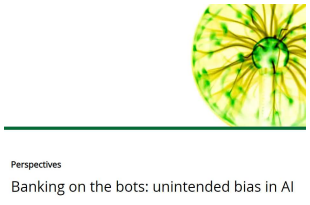
- VLE (NOW) - HTML based pre-work
- One core (professional body) text for the module
- Carefully curated content all contained in NOW with links to additional resources and mini-assessments
- Prior-week lecture recordings and slides available for revision
- Usage stats to monitor engagement
- Weekly MCQ quiz



SCALE-UP case resources

- Designing activities to engage student and using resources that are:
  - Contemporary
  - Deliberately controversial
  - Relevant to future accounting & finance careers and professional bodies
- Variety of ways to feedback and present research findings e.g. PowerPoint, Data Visualisations

- Higher levels of engagement
- Students generally keen to voice their opinion verbally
- Students feed in recent news articles
- Provides critical events for reflection
- Better understanding of the diversity of work and roles in the Accounting and Finance profession



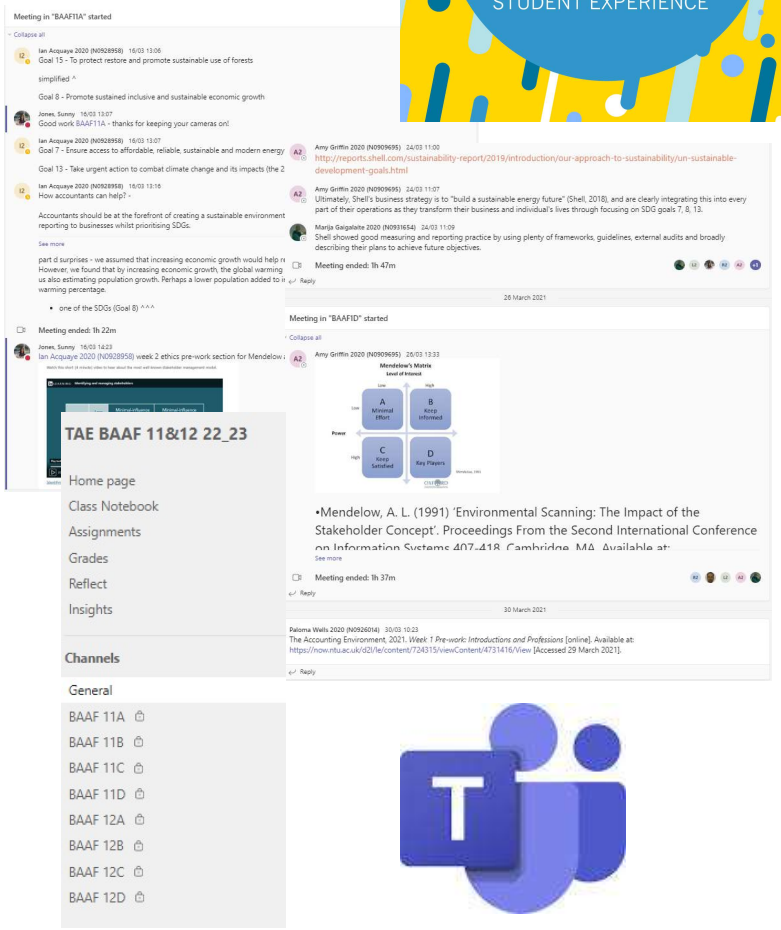
SCALE-UP case resources - Innovations for 22-23

- Authentic work-like activities:
  - ✓ Industry Support - working with the NTU Finance team to support lectures on the Accounting and Finance profession, developments in the sector and emerging issues and roles
  - ✓ NTU Finance Assistant Director of Finance providing a real-life Big Data exercise in workshops - HESA
  - ✓ Working with external professionals (University of Missouri) on practical Blockchain game/activity in workshops
  - ✓ Using Chat GPT in AI workshops for students to assess its use and limitations
  - ✓ Dedicated and experienced academic team – diverse experience and industry/practice backgrounds

Workshop activities

Using Microsoft Teams Channels

- Created a channel for each workshop in MS Teams
- Group learning challenge and SCALE-UP activities completed weekly in face-to-face workshops and uploaded to MS Teams in the live session
- Tutors select uploads from MS Teams and ask student groups to feed back to main group
- Resources available for all students to access after workshop
- Created “Locked Channels” for students once assigned to their summative assessment group in week 8
    - Work together on their group work assessment
    - Share resources outside of workshops
    - Hold online meetings



Student Feedback

Commonly cited benefits of SCALE-UP

- Teamworking skills developed
- Conceptual understanding increased
- Ability to solve problems improved
- Failure rates significantly reduced
- “at-risk” students do better and continue to do so

Beichner et al (2007)

“It helped me improve my team working skills and verbal skills for example giving an answer in front of the class and the presentation tasks …” [MySay 2023]

“I like how the module is interactive and relies on working in a team ” [MySay 2023]

“We were forced to work in teams with people we didn't know, and the teachers helped enabled interaction between groups and helped to break the ice which increased productivity of the workshops” [MySay 2023]

"I like the engagement in the workshops and the content involved. I value the way of teaching with the workshops, with how we are made to work through the tasks as groups and then listen at the end to everyone's slides. It is an effective way of learning in my opinion. Provided a great opportunity to get to know others …” [MySay 2022]

"I like the engagement in the workshops and the content involved. I value the way of teaching with the workshops, with how we are made to work through the tasks as groups and then listen at the end to everyone's slides. It is an effective way of learning in my opinion. Provided a great opportunity to get to know others …” [MySay 2022]

"the topics in this module are very helpful to us as students as they are essential knowledge for future accounting and finance professionals. It gives us real life knowledge and teaches us things that we will definitely use in our careers...” [MySay 2022]

"I like how the module is well laid out and very organised, also having most of the information on the now page has made it a lot easier to revise before seminars. Being able to work with different people every lesson has also helped to talk to other classmates in which other modules doesn't really give you the option” [MySay 2022]

"I love how relevant and modern it is – it tackles different areas of the business world and shows us, through different resources, very real developments...in the business world....It has really relevant...knowledge about what profession we are going into. I really value that, because courses can have the tendency to have a very "inside the box" method of learning...“ [MySay 2022]

“I enjoy the format of this particular subject in terms of the module leaders making it a workshop which makes it more a of a social environment and more enjoyable to learn this topic as I am able to make new friends whilst carrying out group work…” [MySay 2022]

Team Based Learning (TBL)

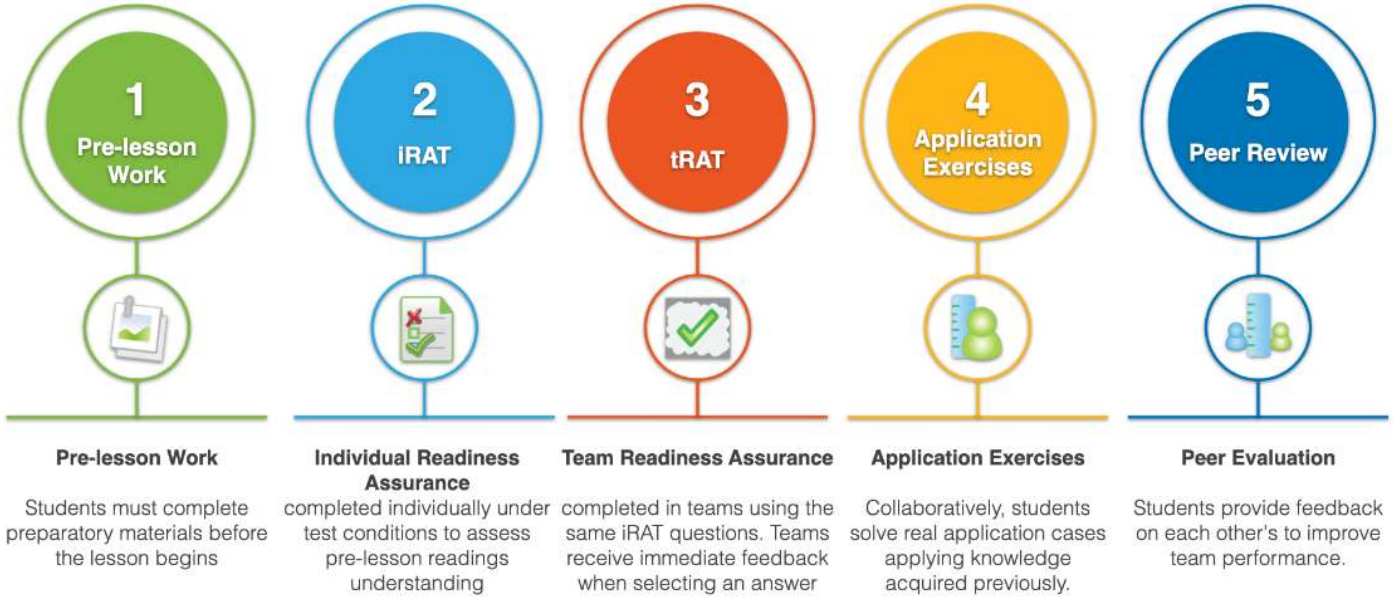
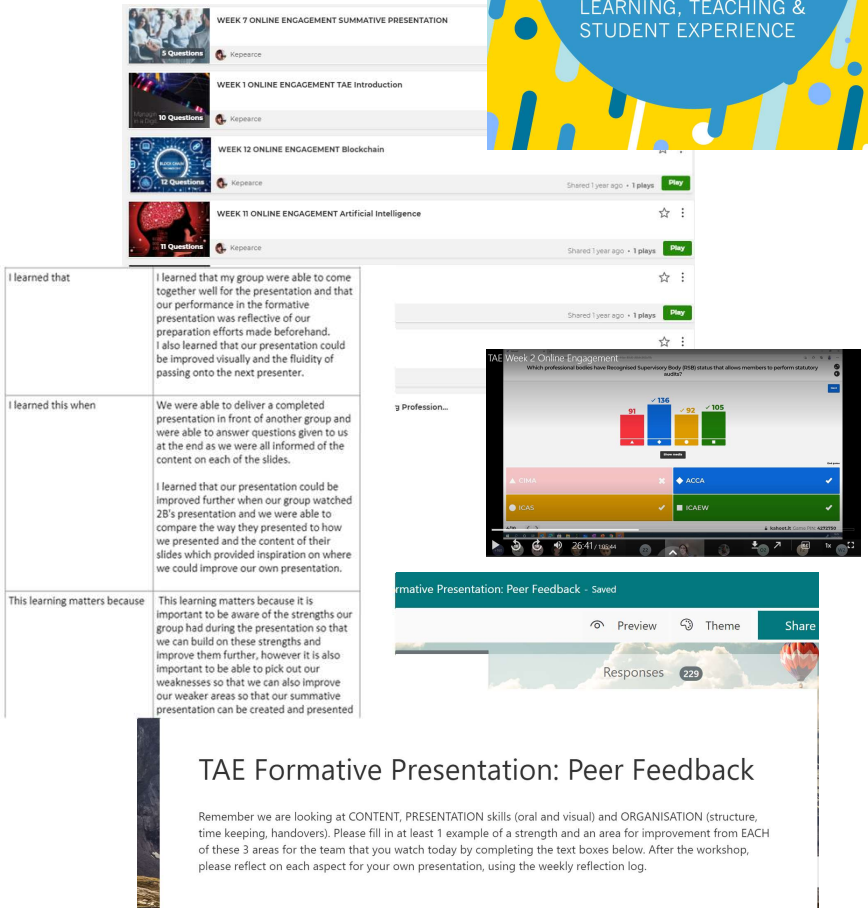


Image source: https://docs.lamsfoundation.org/tbl/tbl-process

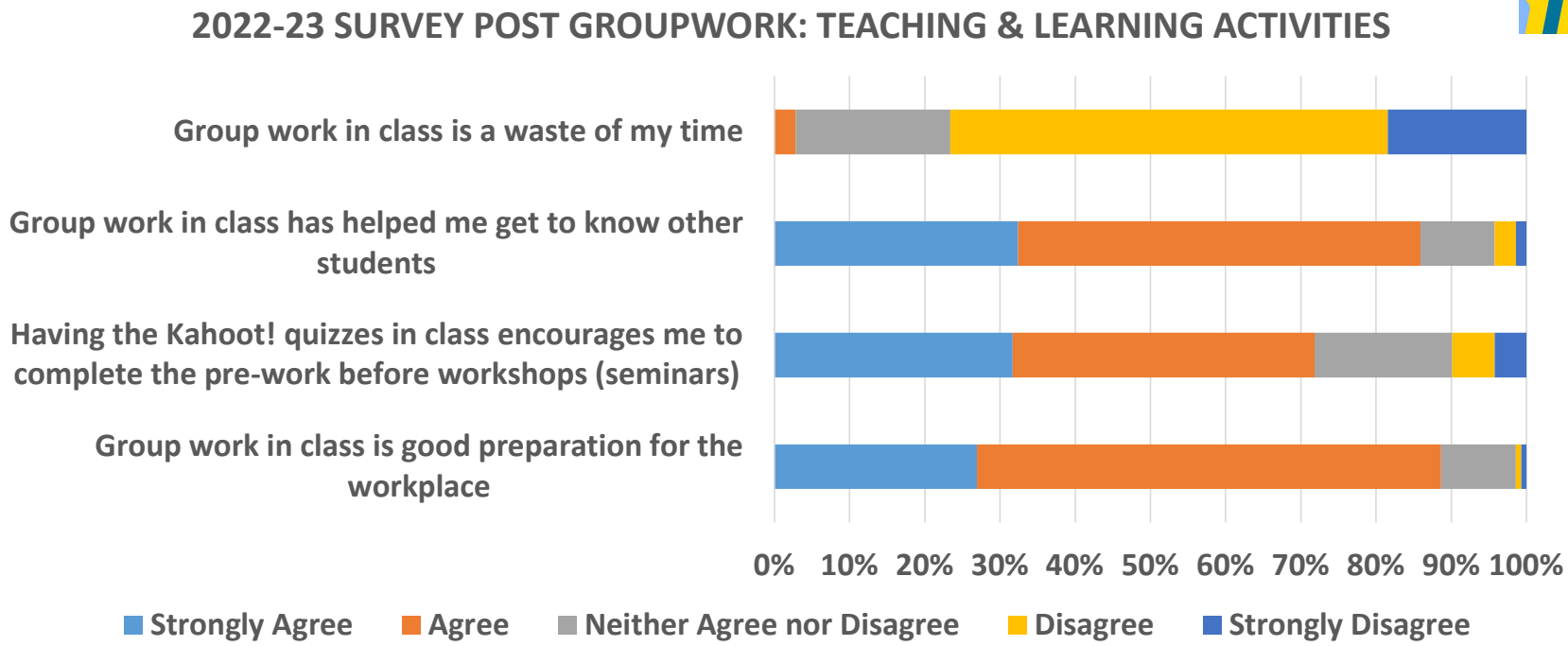
Michaelsen, L.K. and Sweet, M., 2008.

Integrating TBL

- Introduced elements of the TBL pedagogy
  - Pre-work
  - Individual Readiness Assurance Test (IRAT) – completed in the weekly lecture via Kahoot!
  - Team Readiness Assurance Test (TRAT) – completed in the weekly workshop via Kahoot!
  - In-class feedback/ explanations
  - MCQ via NOW to end week
- Formative assessment
  - All students provided peer feedback on formative group presentations
    - Students reflected on peer presentations as well as their own formative work



Student Feedback: Teaching & Learning



Source: NBS level 4 student feedback 2022-23 N=145

Student Feedback

Commonly cited benefits of TBL

- Improved communication, problem-solving and debate within teams
- Greater peer to peer learning
- Higher engagement in class and with pre-work – healthy competition!
- Better knowledge retention
- Greater self-efficacy
- Improved team performance in assessments
- Greatest benefit for lower attainers

Haidet et al, 2014

"I enjoyed doing the Kahoots weekly because it helped me to refresh my knowledge of the topics covered in the previous week. *" [MySay 2022]*

"I like the blend of online and inperson work. The pre–work that has to be done before the seminar gives a great insight into what will be covered in the workshop and the kahoot at the beginning helps to jog the memory of what was learnt" [MySay 2022]

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"I liked playing Kahoots because I like competitions" [MySay 2022]

"The weekly Kahoot are enjoyable working together with new people each week Teaching is very informative and gets everybody involved which helps the group get to know each other" [MySay 2023]

"I like how the pre work is organized week by week and how the teaching within the workshops are relevant to the pre work topics. I also like how we are given opportunities to test our knowledge week by week through the kahoots" [MySay 2023]

"I enjoy testing what I have learnt from lectures and pre work by playing kahoots in the seminar" [MySay 2023]

"I enjoy teamwork. It has showed me how to successfully interact with peers" [MySay 2023]

"I like that we get to work in a team and it helps build our skills when working in a team and the weekly mcqs are challenging". [MySay 2023]

"I really like the way everything is very well organised in the NOW learning room and also the videos during the pre work which makes the learning more kind of fun and easier to understand and gives you a motivation to do it" [MySay 2022]

"I like working in different groups each week as I have been able to talk to other students in my seminar that I don't normally talk to. Also I liked the weekly kahoot and MCQ because I can test my knowledge and see which answers are incorrect and learn from them" [MySay 2022]

"I like having a new group each week" [MySay 2023]

4. Assessment - Group presentations

Reducing the pain of group presentations – step 1

- Students work in different teams in weeks 1 - 7
  - Keep records
  - Maximise socialisation
  - Try out new roles
- Presentation teams set in week 8 onwards
  - Teams of 4-5 students
  - Work together weeks 8-12
  - Part A – Formative
  - Part B – Summative builds on Formative

- Grouped with similarly engaged students
  - Attendance at TAE workshops
  - TAE NOW usage
  - Weekly reflections
  - Made clear at start of module
  - Reiterated to non-attenders via email/ NOW
- Marking matrix 60% group score 40% individual
  - 25% weekly reflection, 15% individual contribution
  - Allows team leader to get credit
  - Allows free-riders to be downgraded

Reducing the pain of group presentations – step 2

Formative presentation week 10

- Brief – team of consultants, sustainability focus
- Part A so no effort wasted
- Peer and tutor feedback
- Non-attenders are re-assigned
- Communicated from outset = very high attendance!

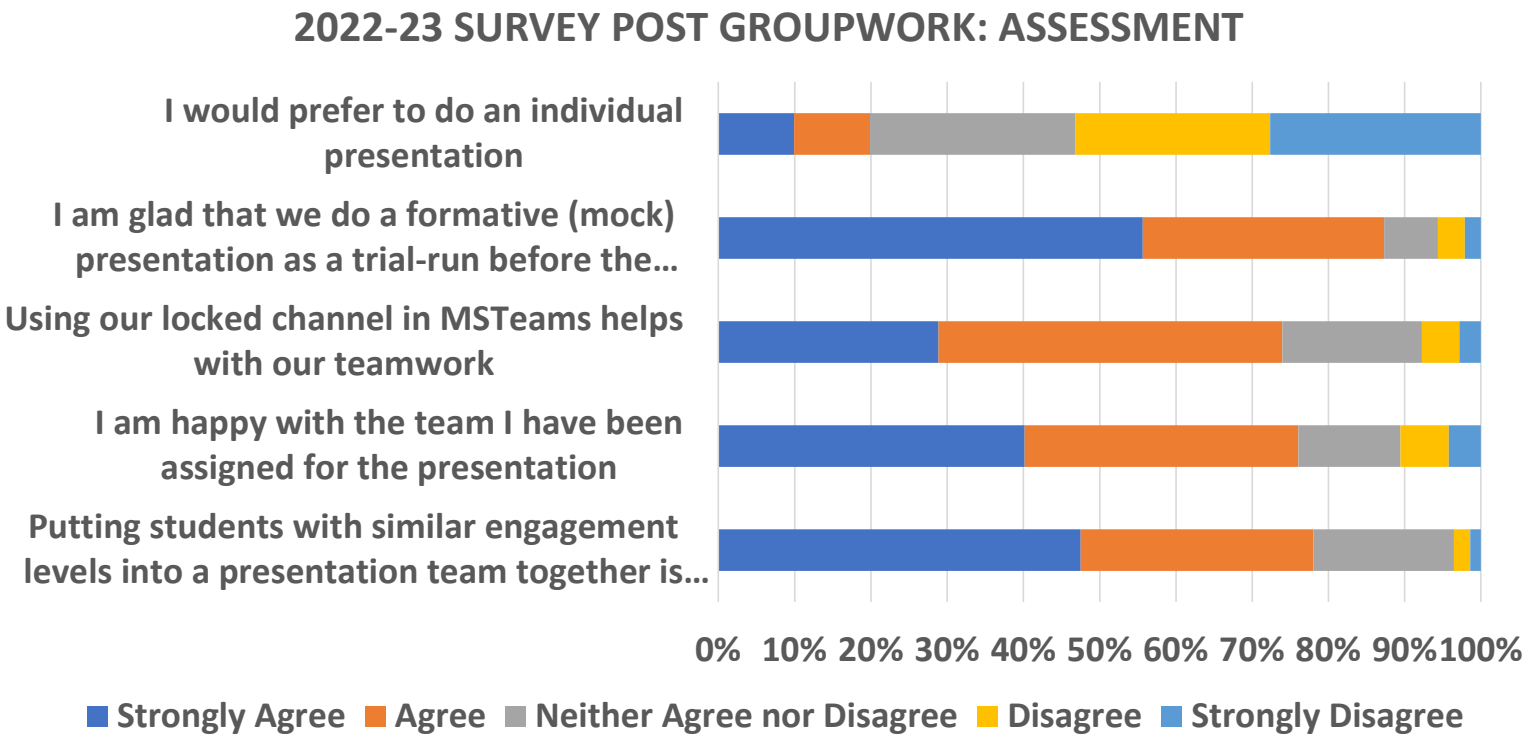
Summative presentation week 12

- Part B so familiar with background
- Plus, weekly reflection
- MUST include reflection on mock including peer feedback

Student Contribution

- Use of locked MS Teams channels
  - Audit trail for assessing relative contributions – back up peer assessment scores
- Use of online individual peer feedback forms
  - Much easier to grade individual contributions – all in one Excel file vs many Word documents!

Student Feedback: Assessment



Source: NBS level 4 student feedback 2022-23 N=145

Student Feedback

"I liked how the formative presentation was linked to the summative as it makes it easier to understand" [MySay 2023]

"I like having the attendance based groups as this means that there are similarly motivated people within a group. " [MySay 2023]

"I have greatly developed my public speaking skills from the formative and summative presentation, and I believe that this might have been something I didn't know I was good at" [MySay 2022]

"I like studying with other students being involved in group work" [MySay 2023]

"Even though I do not enjoy public speaking, I like that this module asks you to sit with different people in each class and do some work together to then talk about it later. I feel like this has helped me feel a bit more comfortable with public speaking. Additionally, I like that during the formative and summative presentations, we are only presenting in front of one other group rather than the whole seminar group." [MySay 2023]

"… the attendance being linked with the final presentation was an amazing idea because it helps to prevent people being stuck in teams with different work styles which I know in the past has made the experience extremely stressful" [MySay 2022]

"I feel as though this module links to the other modules of this course. I also like the fact that we do group work so a small amount of people can come together as a collective and collaborate to get different viewpoints" [MySay 2023]

"i like that we are put in teams and are allowed a trial run at the presentation which gives us useful feedback for the summative. i also liked MCQs exam plus the fact that we are put in teams depending on our interaction with the group and attendance, this put us with likeminded students who want the same outcomes. Overall the tutors Katherine and Sonny were amazing and made the learning more enjoyable and easy to understand. PS loved the kahoot too. …" [MySay 2022]

"I have actively enjoyed getting involved in the teamwork side of this module, especially due to recent preparation for our formative presentation has me more interested in this" [MySay 2022]

"I like that during the formative and summative presentations, we are only presenting in front of one other group rather than the whole seminar group" [MySay 2023]

"I like how groups are based on how well you interact with the course" [MySay 2023]

"I like that its a challenge since I'm not very used to doing presentations in front of everyone" [MySay 2023]

"I like the group work presentations as it boosts your confidence for future work " [MySay 2023]

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5. Module outcomes and impact

TAE Module Health

RATING	2:1 & ABOVE	FAILURE
Green	73% ▲▼ 0%	1% ▲▼ -2%

PERFORMANCE

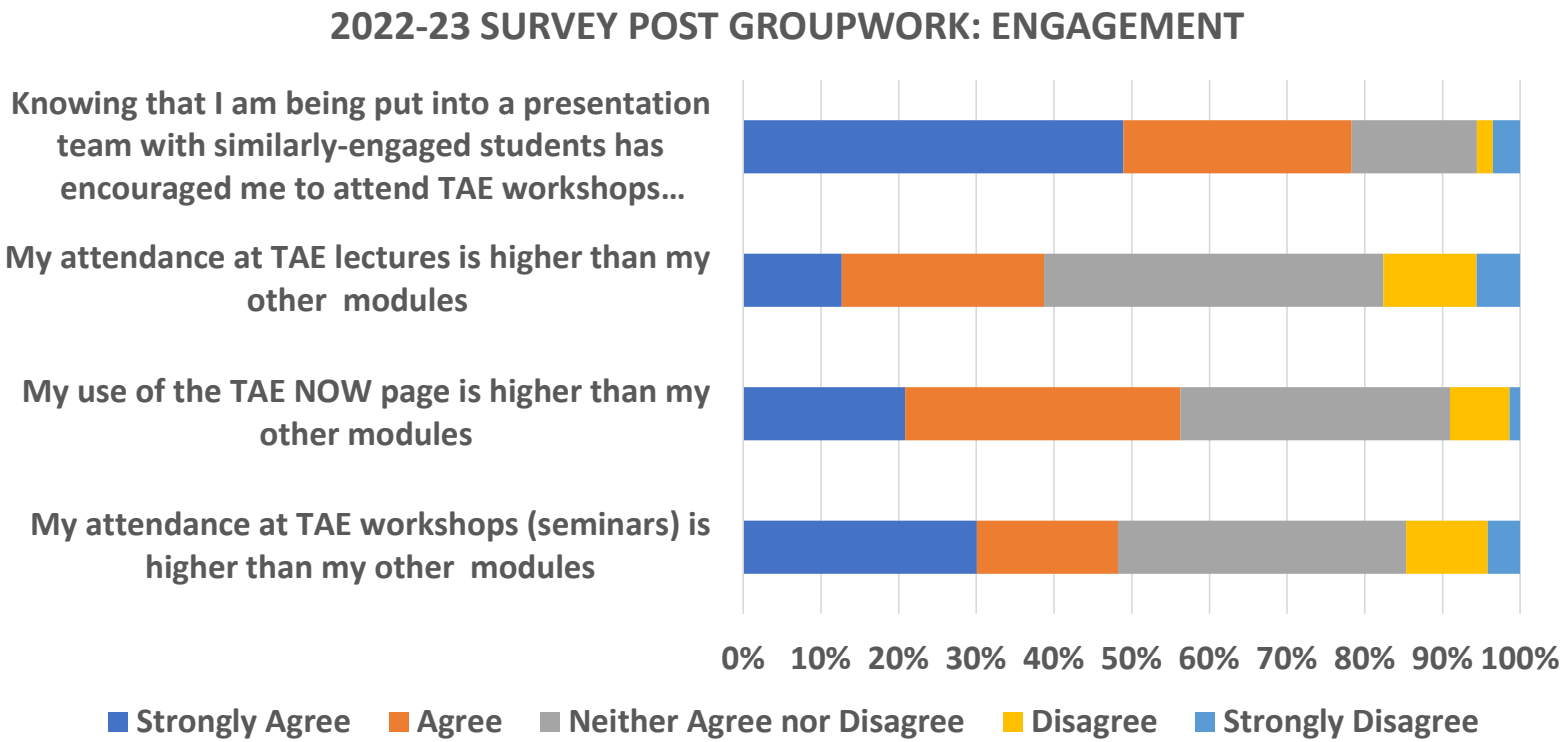
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
2:1 & Above %	68%	89%	73%	73%
First %	21%	39%	31%	16%
Upper Second %	46%	50%	42%	57%
Lower Second %	24%	10%	22%	21%
Third %	7%	2%	2%	5%
Fail %	2%	0%	3%	1%
Attendance	63%	74%	71%	70%

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Overall Satisfaction	3.8	3.9	4.2	3.9
Teaching Quality	3.8	4.2	4.2	4.2
Response Rate			20	49
Response Rate				

Source: Nottingham Business School Module Health Data – TAE 2022

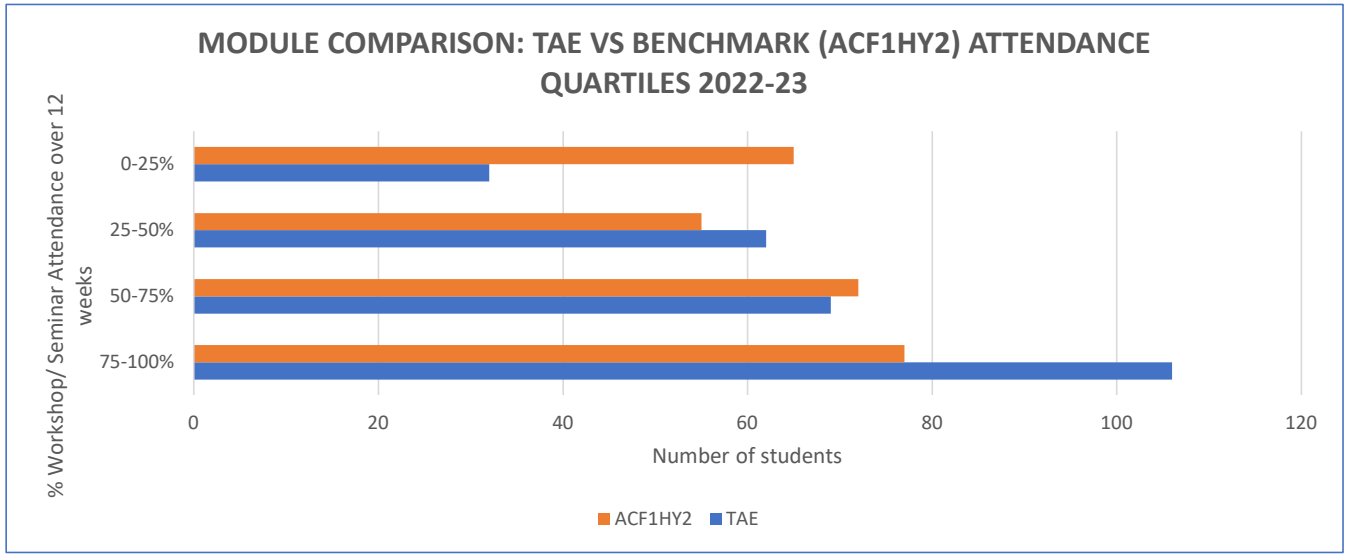
- NBS has a RAG rating system to evaluate module health
- Student Performance for TAE stable at 73% for "good degrees"
- Improvements in student module feedback in 2022/23 (41% response)
  - ✓ Overall Satisfaction 4.1 (3.9)
  - ✓ Teaching Quality 4.3 (4.2)
- Compared with NTU (2017) research

Student Feedback: Engagement



Source: NBS level 4 student feedback 2022-23 N=145

Increased attendance

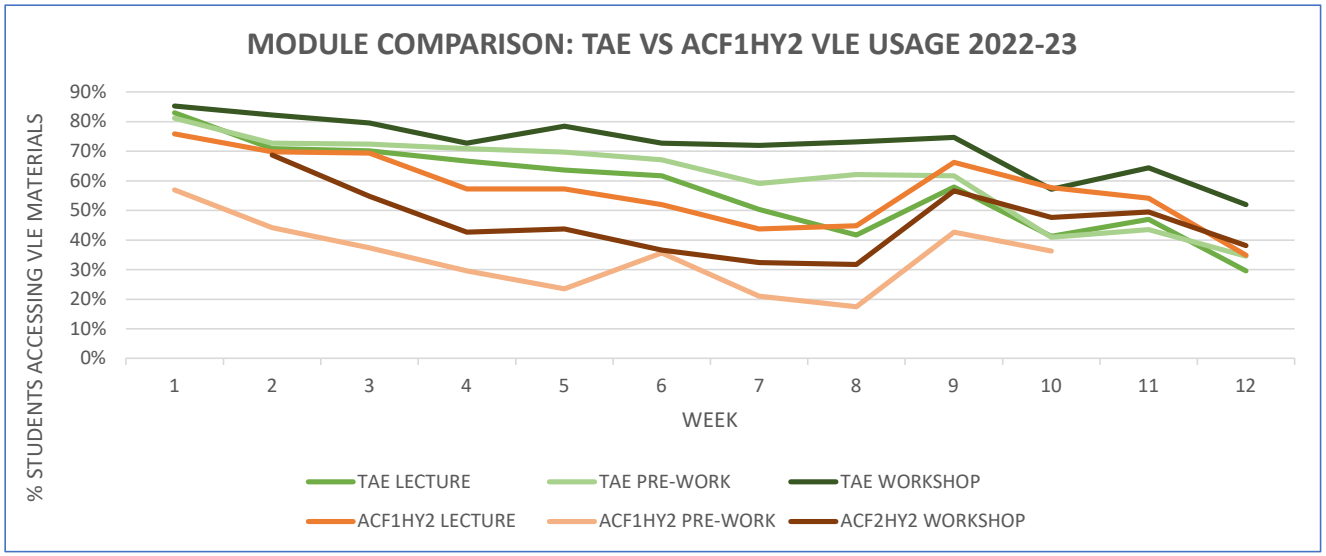


Particularly at lower end...

2022-23 Average Attendance	TAE	ACF1HY2	Difference
BAAF Level 4 Students	62%	52%	10%
BAAF Level 4 Flagged as “LOW ENGAGER”	35%	18%	17%

Source: NBS NOW Attendance Data & Student Engagement Intervention Data 2023

Increased VLE (NOW) usage

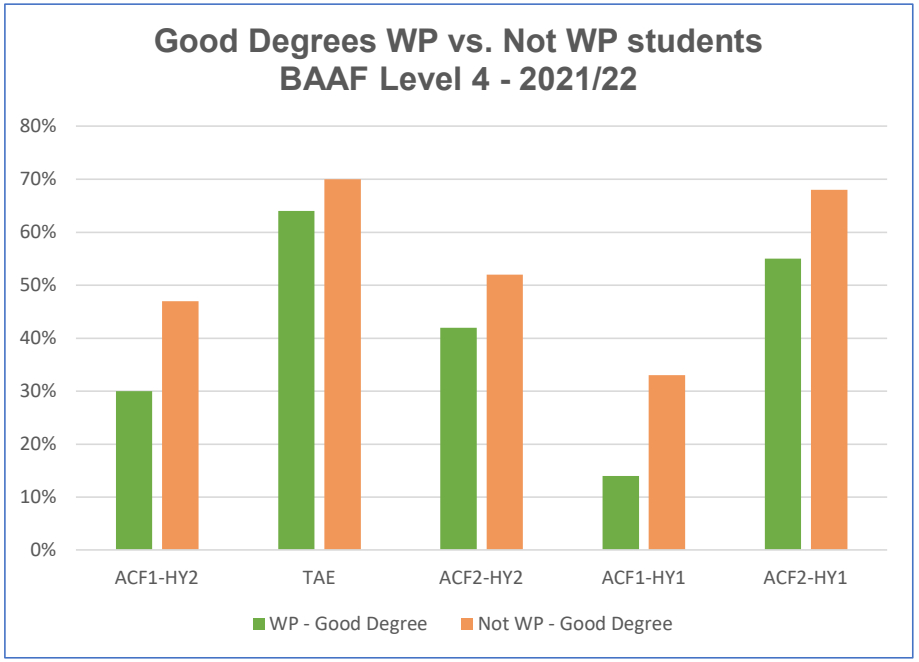


Particularly with pre-work...

Average %	Lecture	Pre-work	Workshop
TAE	57%	61%	72%
ACF1HY2	57%	34%	46%
Difference	0%	**27%**	**26%**

Source: NBS NOW usage data 2023

Widening Participation (WP)



Source: Nottingham Business School Module Health Data 2021/22

- NTU research shows that SCALE-UP modules had lower failure rates and higher grades for Success for All (SfA) target groups (NTU, 2017).
- The SfA target groups are now covered under the NTU WP / Access and Participation Plan (NTU, n.d).
- WP Data is in its infancy in the School and much work is being done to further understand the WP data and wider intersectional attainment and progression data.
- Initial analysis shows 64% of WP students and 70% of non-WP students achieved a 2:1 or above on the TAE module in 2021/22.
- The gap between WP and not-WP student achievement is smallest on the TAE module at 6%, however, TAE is the only level 4 module with group work as an assessment.
- TAE is also the only module in the BA Accounting and Finance course portfolio that uses the SCALE-UP Pedagogy for group work modules

6. Next steps

What's next?

- Analyse attainment data from BAAF Course and module health data collated at a school level for continuous improvement purposes.
  - Understand the attainment of students on this module vs other first year modules
  - Analyse data to understand attendance and engagement on all level 4 modules as compared with TAE
  - Further analysis specifically with regards to the WP and Black and White attainment gaps for our students
- Collate and analyse assessment data for BAAF modules at level 5 and 6 for group work only to ascertain the impact of SCALE-UP and TBL pedagogies on group work outcomes and attainment.
- Ascertain appetite for introduction of SCALE-UP at BAAF level 5 and 6 aligned to SCALE-UP research findings "the more SCALE-UP modules, the greater their impact on progression and attainment for disadvantaged students" (NTU, 2017 p.8)

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