

Mira Vogel
Vicki Dale
Paul Walker
UCL

Mahara UK 2014

Planning, supporting
and assessing
students' group
projects in Mahara

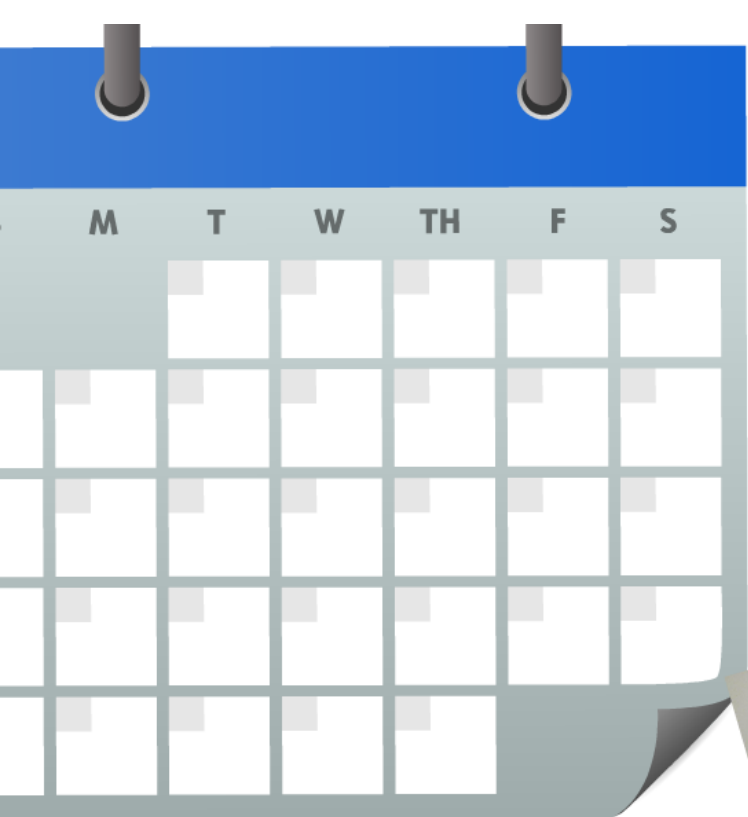
First term, first
year BA History
"different from

- 'Making History'
- Compulsory Year 1 entry curriculum
- c. 150 new students.
- Group project over 10 weeks.
- History-specific learning.

UCL ^N projects in

First term, first
year BA History
"different from
school"

- 'Making History'.
- Compulsory Year 1 entry curriculum
- c. 150 new students.
- Group project over 10 weeks.
- History-specific learning.
- Range of transferable skills including web-based communication.



Week -()



Department
teaching
committee



| For group work, what can we do ... | ... with Wordpress (external)? | ... with Wordpress (internal)? | ... with MyFuture? | ... with UCL Web (current settings) |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |

<http://goo.gl/HfEcCuz>

Academics negotiate curriculum changes. Discuss assessment strategy & group work environment.



1

Assessment criteria not specific to Web



<http://wilpf.org/wilpf-speaks-true>

| | A | B | C | D | E |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | For group work, what can we do ... | .. with Wordpress (external)? | ... with Wordpress (internal)? | ... with MyPortfolio? | ...with UCL Wiki (current settings) |
| 2 | ... as students / editors? | | | | |
| 3 | UCL service owner | N/A | WAMS | ELE | WAMS |
| 4 | Examples to compare | http://trabimechanic.wordpress.com/ | Generic examples at http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/ or search the web for blogs.ucl.ac.uk/* (where the asterisk is the wild card) | https://myportfolio.ucl.ac.uk/group/view.php?id=733 | https://wiki.ucl.ac.uk/display/DemoWikis/Home |
| 5 | Coordination and social presence | Draft posts and unapproved comments visible to group members. | Draft posts and unapproved comments visible to group members. | Groups automatically have a Forum; each member has own Wall. Email alerts for page changes. Private messaging. Also possible to leave comments on each page. | Activity stream macro. Comments on pages. |
| 6 | Embed from other sources eg timelines, concept maps, video | Using the free wordpress.com service, a few sources e.g. YouTube. | Many sources | Many sources | Possible but not very straightforward. |
| 7 | Comments with moderation | Yes | Yes | Yes; also feedback on postings. | Yes |
| 8 | Directly edit others' work? (Can be sensitive.) | Only in some roles | Only in some roles | Possible to create group-editable pages, or share a page which can't be edited, or share an editable page | Admins can remove editing privileges for selected pages within a space (but we m... |

<http://goo.gl/HEcCu2>

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Academics negotiate curriculum changes. Discuss assessment strategy & group work environment.

1 Assessment criteria not specific to Web genre (though originality double-weighted), nor collaborative work.

Meant that show space rather than group work space was needed.

2 Groups receive a single shared mark.

Mahara fulfilled the requirement of a

single shared mark.

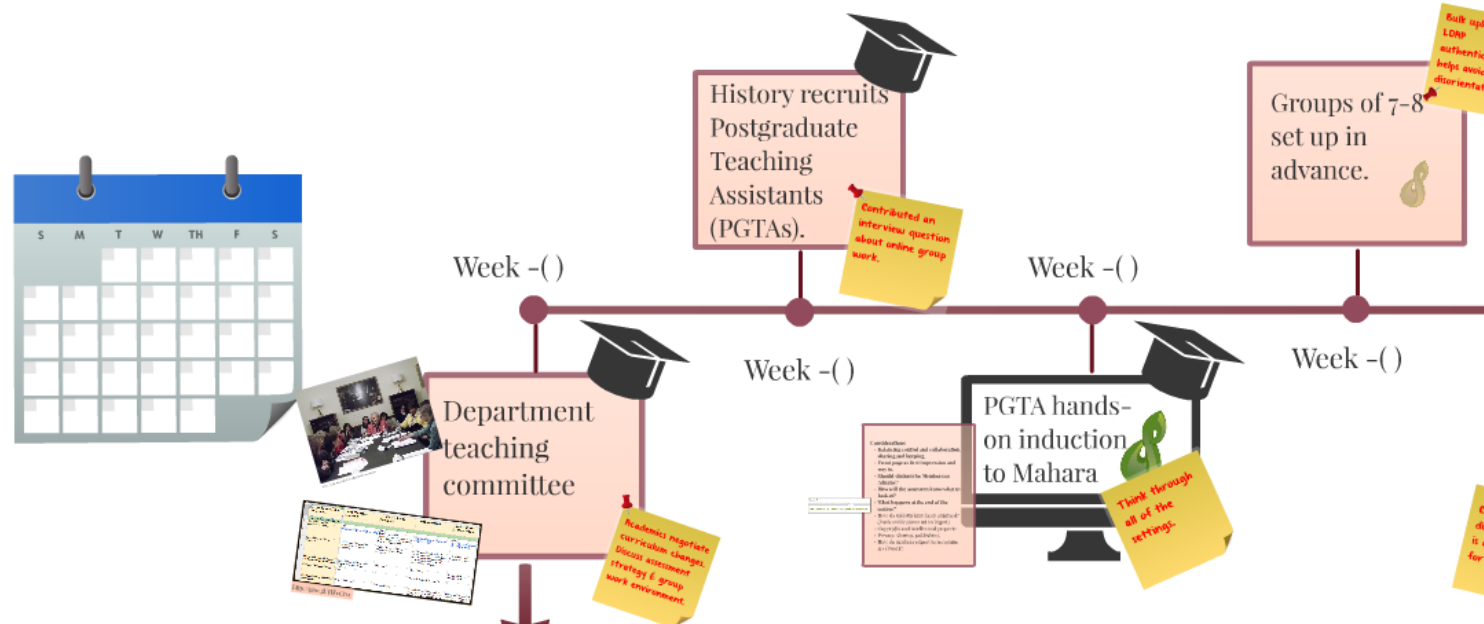


Mahara fulfilled the requirement of a show space.



Mahara is supported and primarily for students.





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Plannin

assistants
(PGTAs).

Contributed an
interview question
about online group
work.

Week -()

advances.

Week -()

Week -()

PGTA hands-
on induction
to Mahara

Considerations

- Balancing control and collaboration, sharing and keeping.
- Front page as first impression and way in.
- Should students be Members or Admins?
- How will the assessors know what to look at?
- What happens at the end of the course?
- How should students keep apprised? (Push notifications set to Digest)
- Copyright and intellectual property.
- Privacy, sharing, publishing.
- How do markers expect to recognise good work?

Think through
all of the
settings.

FC
on
to

Considerations

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Share Files Report

Members involved Non-members involved

ared with this group yet

PGT on in to M

Considerations

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tic

Members Forums Pages Collections Share Files Report

Shared with this group ^ Shared by Members Involved Non-members Involved

There are no pages shared with this group yet.

Hist-tastic

[About](#) [Members](#) [Forums](#) [Pages](#) [Collections](#) [Share](#) [Files](#) **Report**

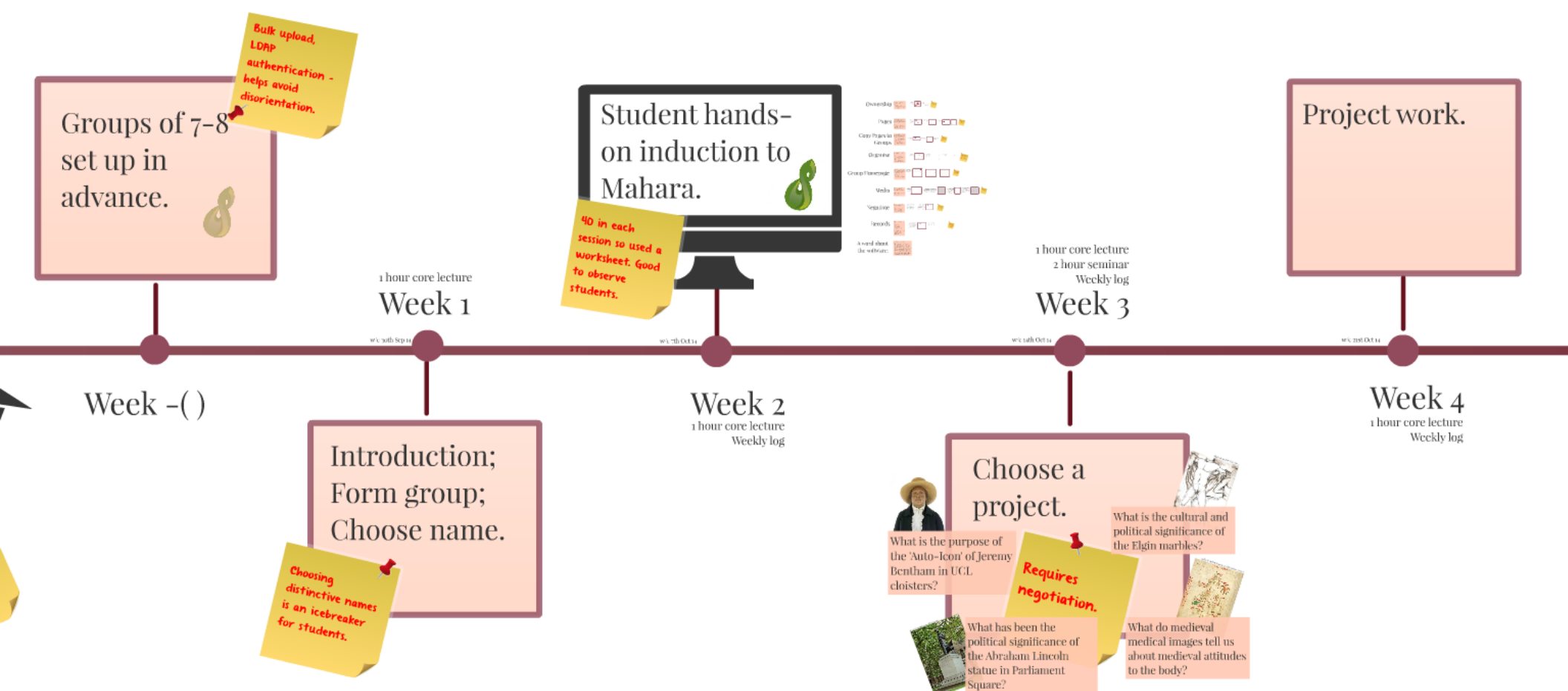
Pages shared with this group ▲ **Shared by** **Members involved** **Non-members involved**

There are no pages shared with this group yet.

- Should
- Admin
- How v
- look a
- What
- course
- How s
- (Push
- Copyr
- Privac

Planning

Support



Weekly log

The screenshot shows a Moodle group page for a group named "By In the Making". The page includes a navigation menu with "About", "Members", "Forum", "Pages", "Collections", "Files", and "Report". The group information section shows it was created on 1 October 2013 and has 17 members, 7 pages, 6 files, and 2 forums. The "Latest forum posts" section lists several posts, including "Weekly Log - Week 9" and "Weekly Log - Week 8". The "Group pages" section lists pages such as "Timeline", "Infographic", "Interview Highlights", "Historiographical Analysis", "Assessment of teamwork and Methodology", and "Our Findings Analysis". The "Members" section displays profile pictures of the group members.

By In the Making

ect work.



Assess presentation:
2 staff markers;
2 other groups as
peer markers.

Assessment of
presentation
(50%) same mark for
all group members

- 10% peer assessment by two other groups
- 40% staff assessment by two academics

Assessment
criteria

- Effectiveness and format;
- Strength and range
- Methodological aw
- Historiographical e
- Clarity and strengt evidence;
- **Originality;**
- Effective use of sch and bibliography sh
- Adherence to word
- Evidence of effectiv

Week 11

Assess Mahara



Week 10
Weekly log



Finishing touches and deadline.

Responding to student queries. Imposing deadlines in Mahara.

Assess presentation

Mahara work marked by staff contact for the project, second marking by PGTA.

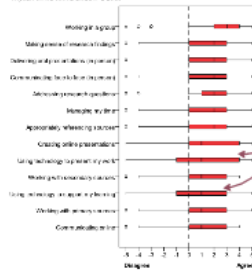
Connect markers with work - creating accounts and specific guidance.

Assessment of Mahara work (50%) same mark for all group members

Students broadly positive about the project design, unimpressed by Mahara

On transferable skills

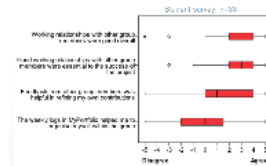
As a result of the Making History group project specifically, transferable skills to be more effective at...



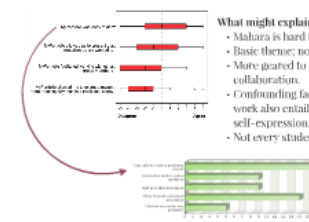
More spread
Less positive

What might explain this?

- Students played safe with tech, by own standards?
- Some didn't directly use tech?
- They didn't yet appreciate how tech use made them 'more effective'?



On Mahara specifically



What might explain this?

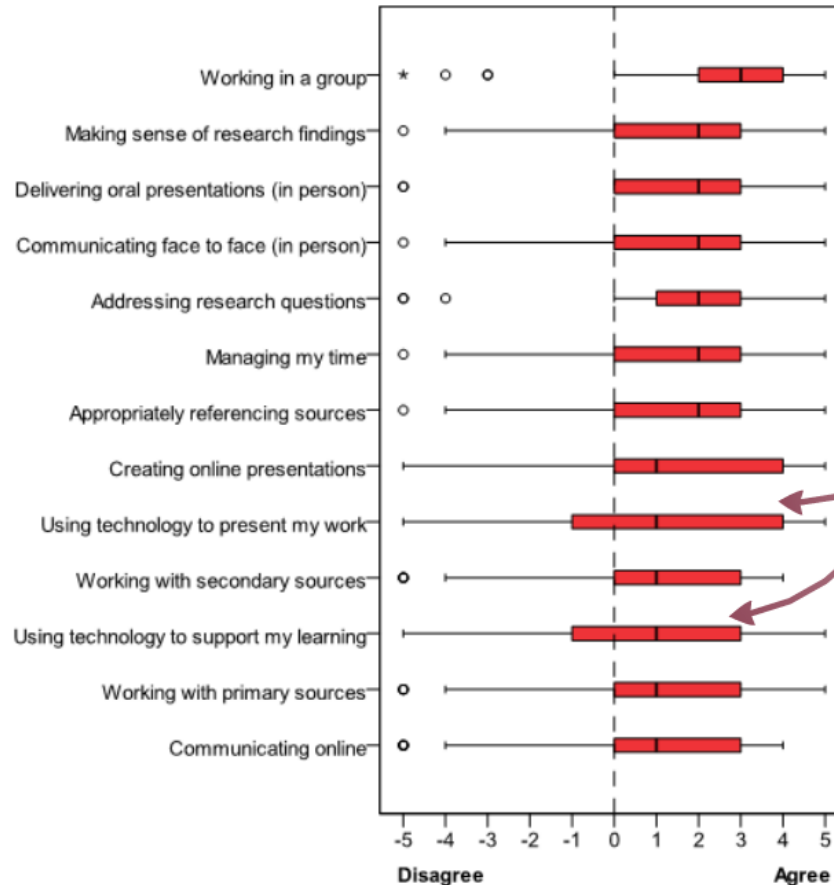
- Mahara is hard to conceptualise.
- Basic theme: no rows at the time.
- More geared to showing than collaboration.
- Confounding factors – group work also entails compromise on self-expression.
- Not every student used Mahara.

Student survey, 40 respondents or fewer for some questions.



On transferable skills

"As a result of the Making History group project specifically, I consider myself to be more effective at ..."



More spread
Less positive

What might explain this?

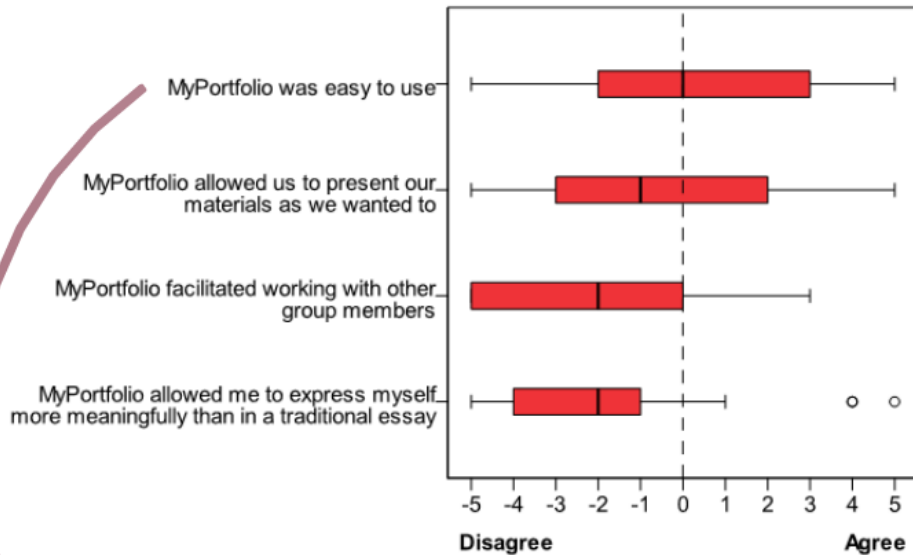
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Student survey, n=33

Working relationships with other group

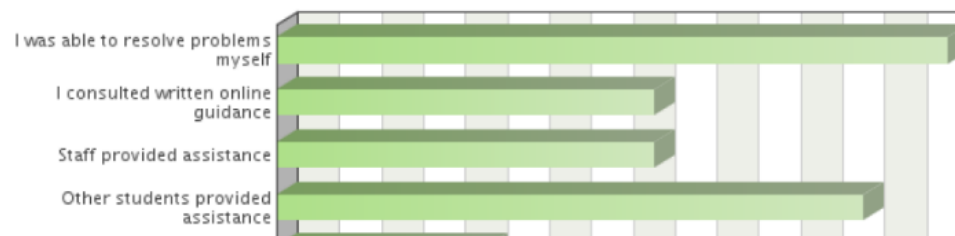


On Mahara specifically



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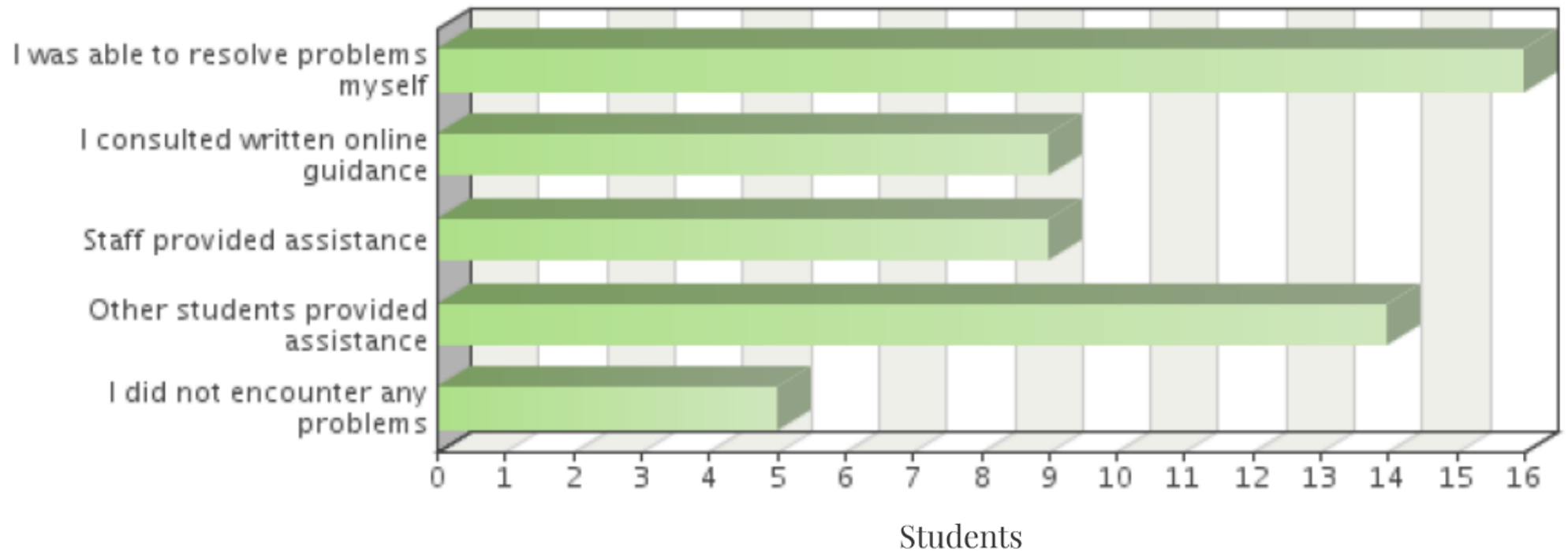


agree

Agree

self-expression.

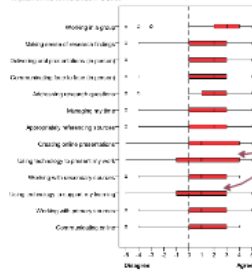
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On transferable skills

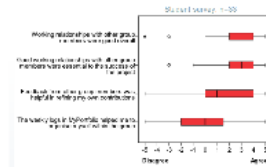
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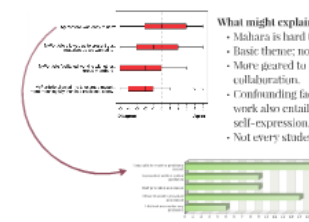
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Academics and PGTAs strongly positive

- Group marks higher than expected.
- Lively work - a pleasure to assess.
- Straightforward to assess.
- Commendation from external examiner.
- Tech and support surpassed expectations.
- Students gelled.
- Students adopted the intended research-based approaches.
- Weekly logs helped the PGTAs.
- Conscious of some social loafing, and some deceit about group work processes.
- Do not assume these new students will yet recognise benefits - taking the long view.



N.b. includes but not limited to the Mahara work.

What we learned about supporting Mahara

- Holistic approach to induction.
- Use csv files for all group updates.
- Deadlines bring embed requests.
- Need Institutions with own admins.
- Students need guidance about designing landing page.
- Assessors need guidance.
- Expectations - why Mahara?
- Opt out of consent to share, rather than opt-in.

For educational purposes only.



Why Mahara worked /

- The work was assessed - high expectations.
- Well-communicated course ethos.
- Conscientious PGTAs involved in decision-making from start - including Mahara.
- Students helped each other.
- Students coordinated with Facebook, SMS, phone, &c.
- Staff helped each other.
- ELE provided responsive and pre-emptive Mahara support - permissive approach.
- Mahara's bulk processes very helpful.

what Mahara needs

Mahara has huge promise for group project work at UCL - student-orientated, staff-friendly, multimedia-friendly, supported by ELE.



It would benefit from:

- more social presence for group members - help with coordination.
- more mobile-friendly (for fieldwork).
- more individual control over look+feel.
- more wiki-like accountability / recognition for individual work within groups eg revision history, logs.
- project management in groups eg Plans.
- exit strategy - export the group work.

