Evaluation of students' employability skills development and the use of radar diagrams in Personal Development Planning

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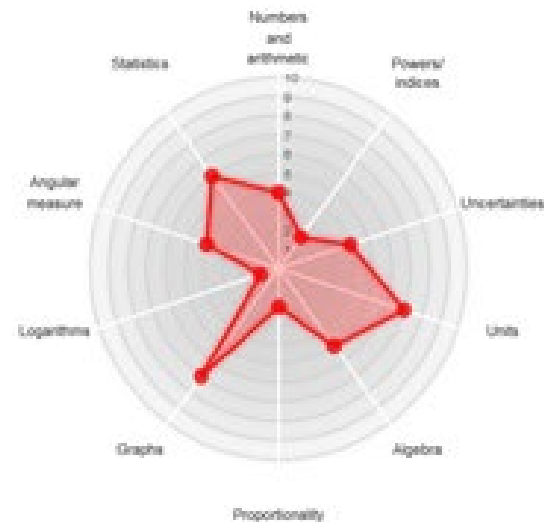
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Outline

1. Background

2. Context

3. Research questions and approach

4. Results and Discussion

5. Conclusions

Background

The national picture

- Employability skills have to be embedded in all HE courses

- Key review – Wakenham, 2016

- Skills development is strongly liked to Personal Development Planning (PDP)

- Students are encouraged to self-assess skills, and then reflect to plan improvements.
    - E.g. Kolb's Learning Cycle

Context
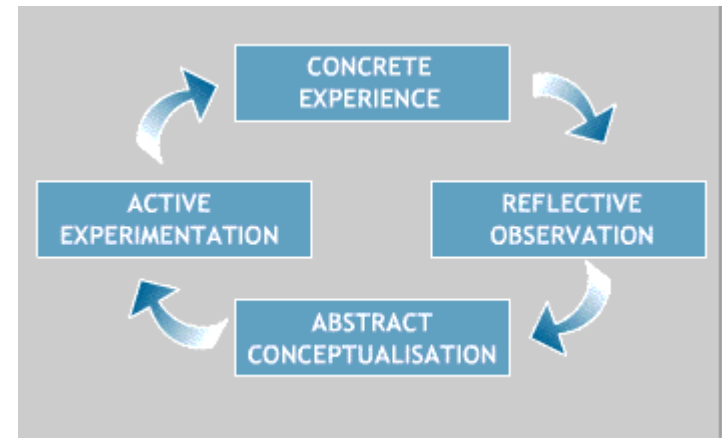
Skills development on S112

- **Science: concepts and practice**
  - New, multidisciplinary module from Oct 2017
  - 60 credits
  - FHEQ Level 4
  - Focussed on **skills**

- Students regularly self-assess skills using a **radar diagram**
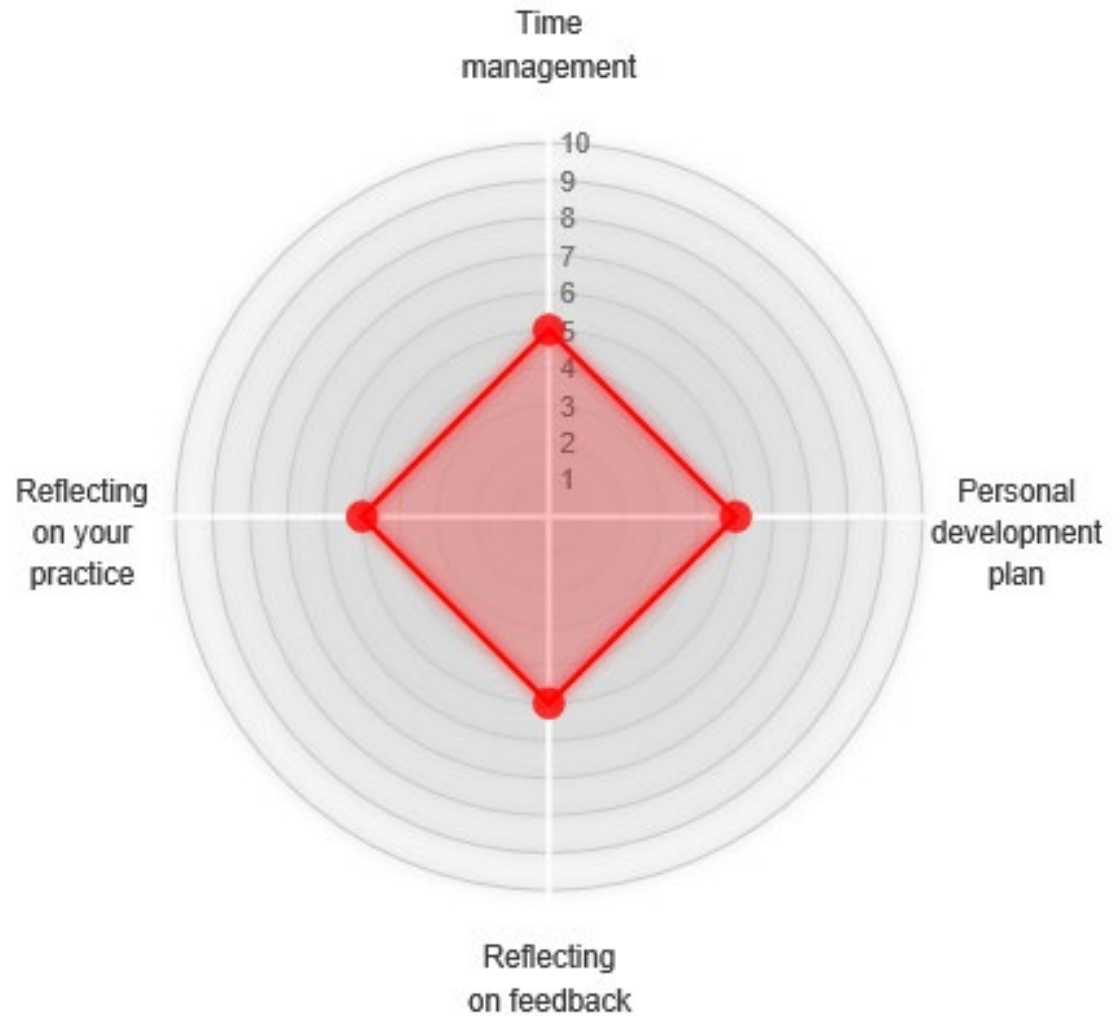 - Required in each of 6 assignments, with reflection

Context

We looked at two
groups of Learning
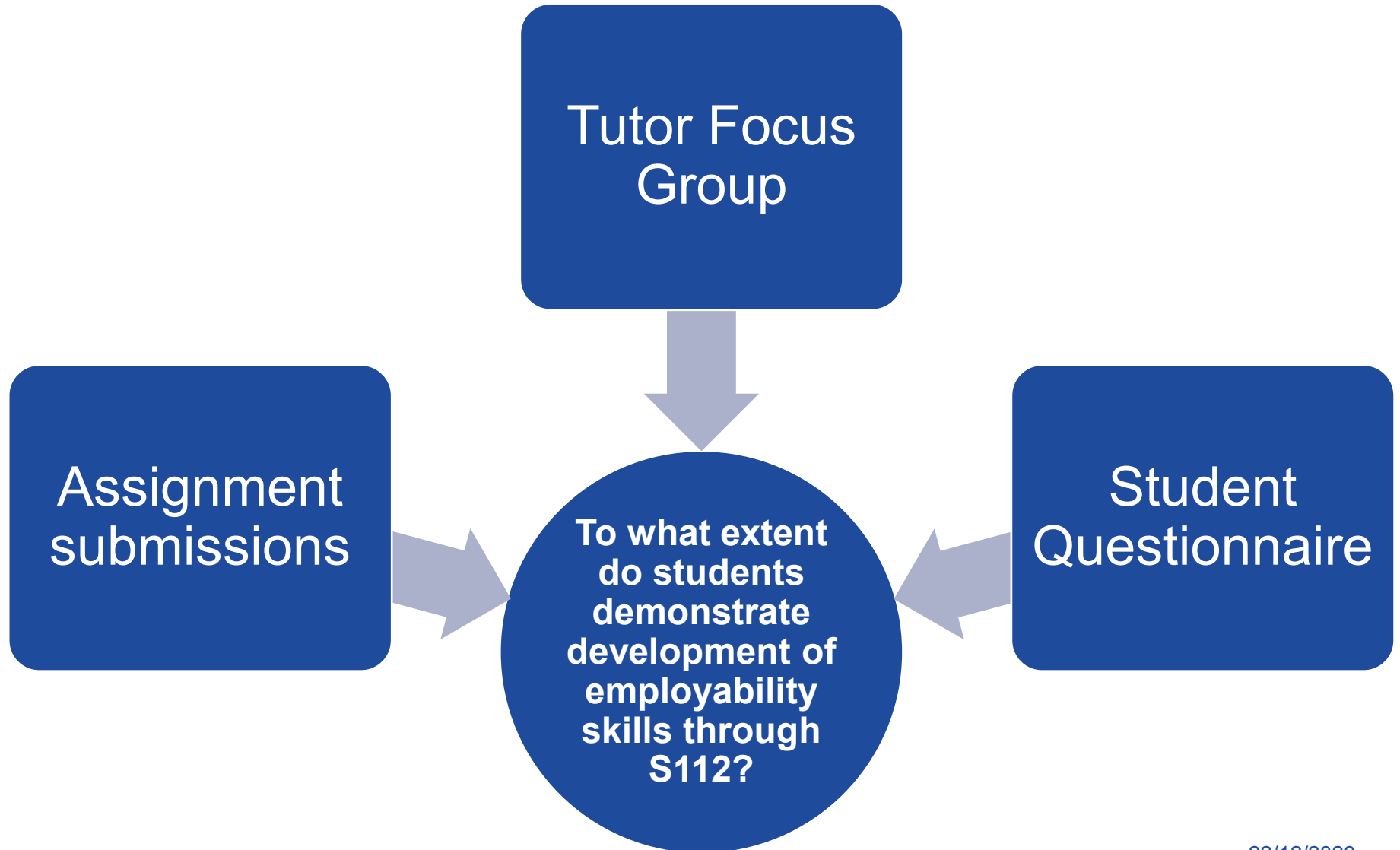Outcomes
    1. **Collaborating
    with others …**

Context
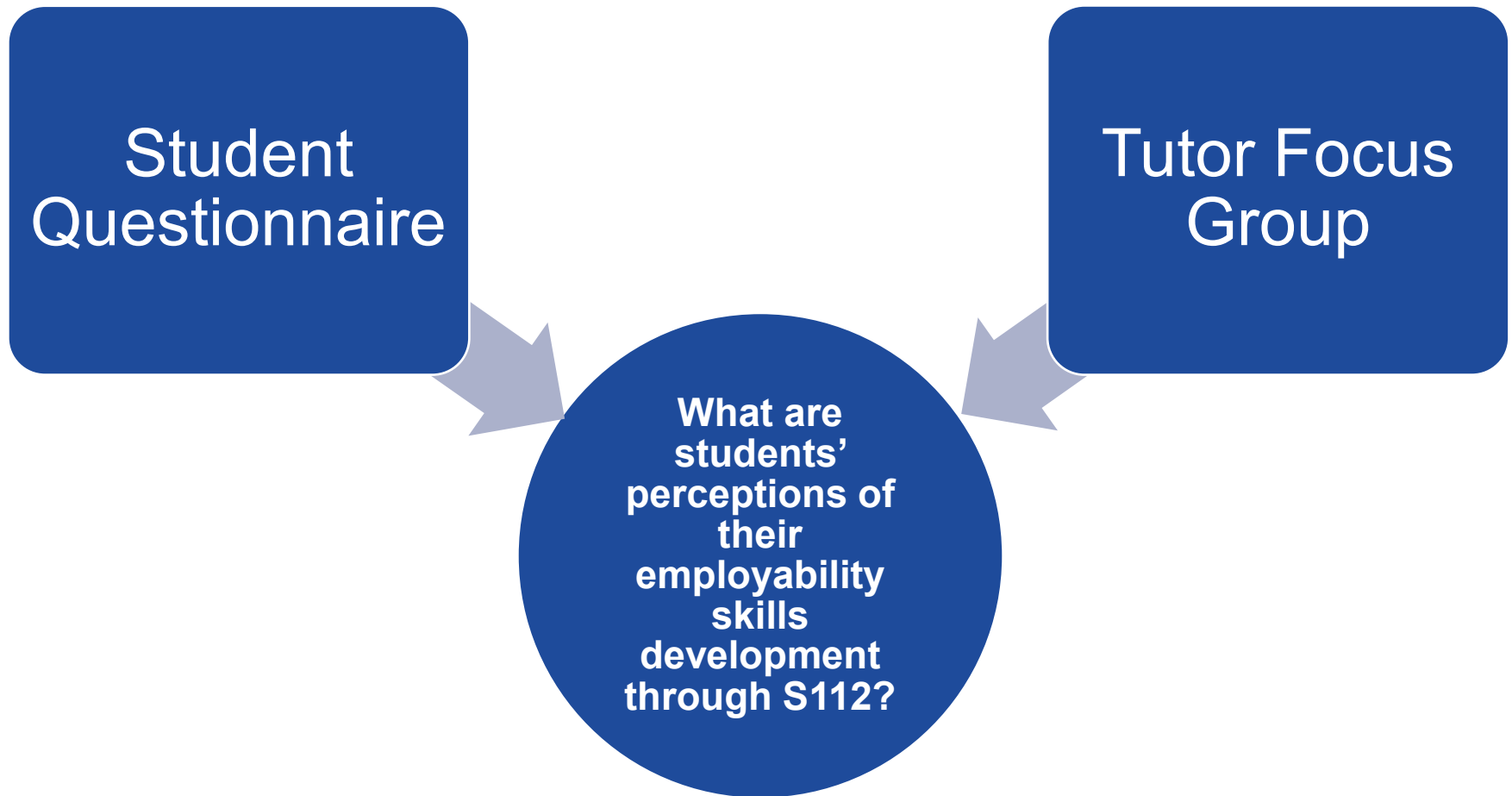
2. Self reflection and planning…

Research Question 1 and Approach

Tutor Focus Group

Assignment submissions

To what extent do students demonstrate development of employability skills through S112?

Student Questionnaire

Research Question 2 and Approach

Student Questionnaire

Tutor Focus Group

What are students' perceptions of their employability skills development through S112?

Results and Discussion

Student assignments (n = 19) : Collaborating with others

Percentage frequencies of change in score
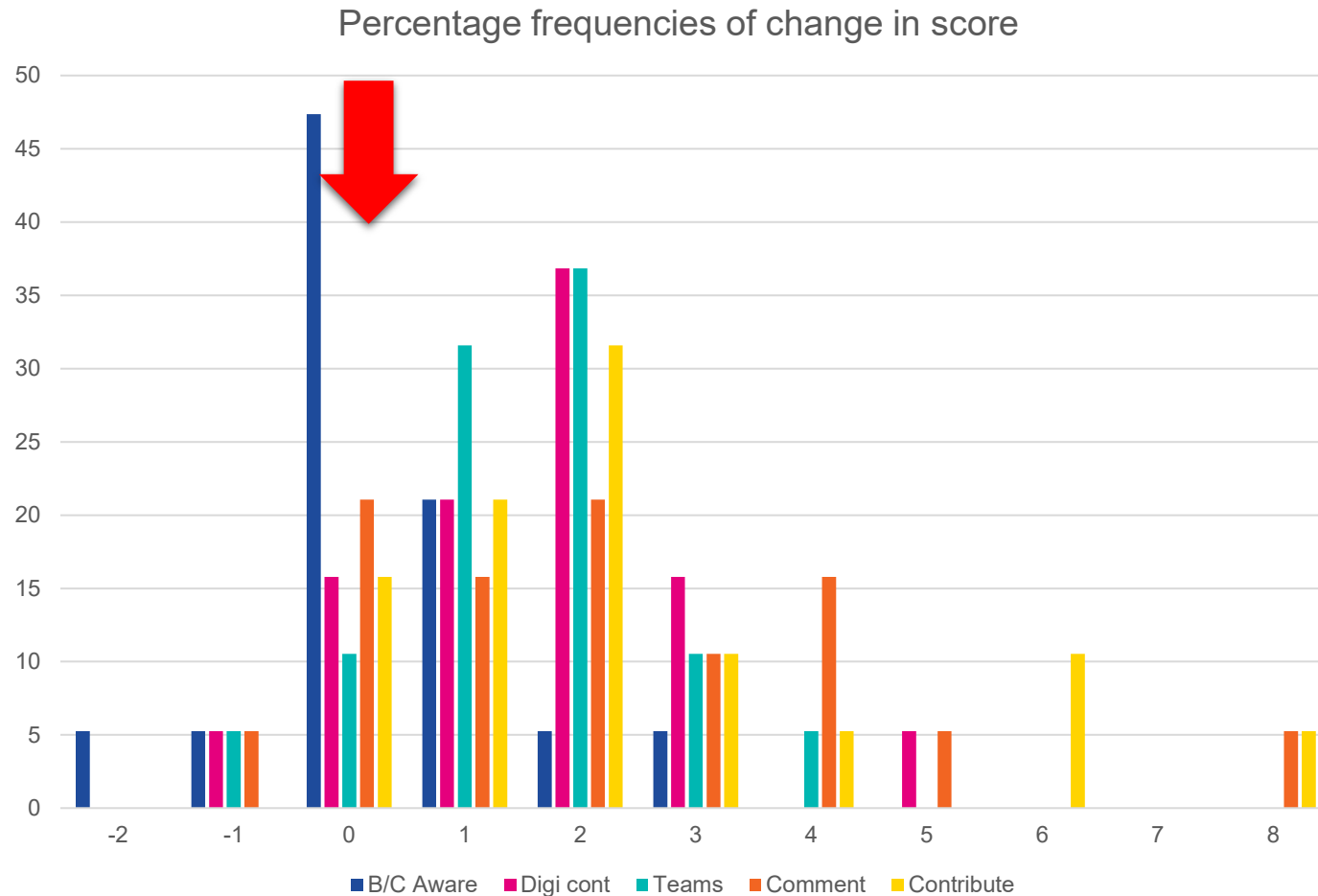
Results and Discussion

Student assignments (n = 18): Self-reflection and planning

Percentage frequencies of change in score

Legend: Ref Prac, Ref F/back, PDP, Time man
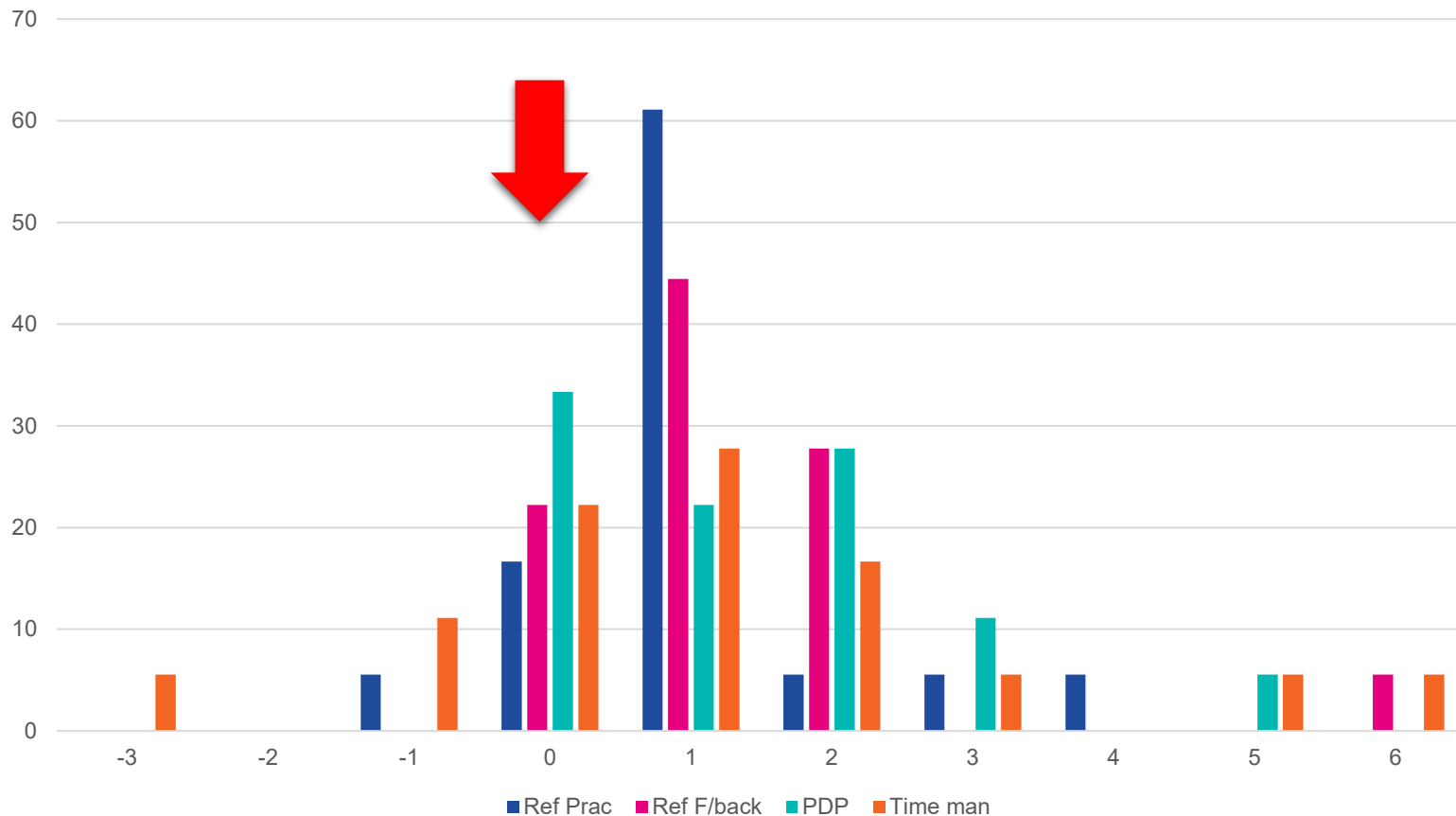
Results and Discussion

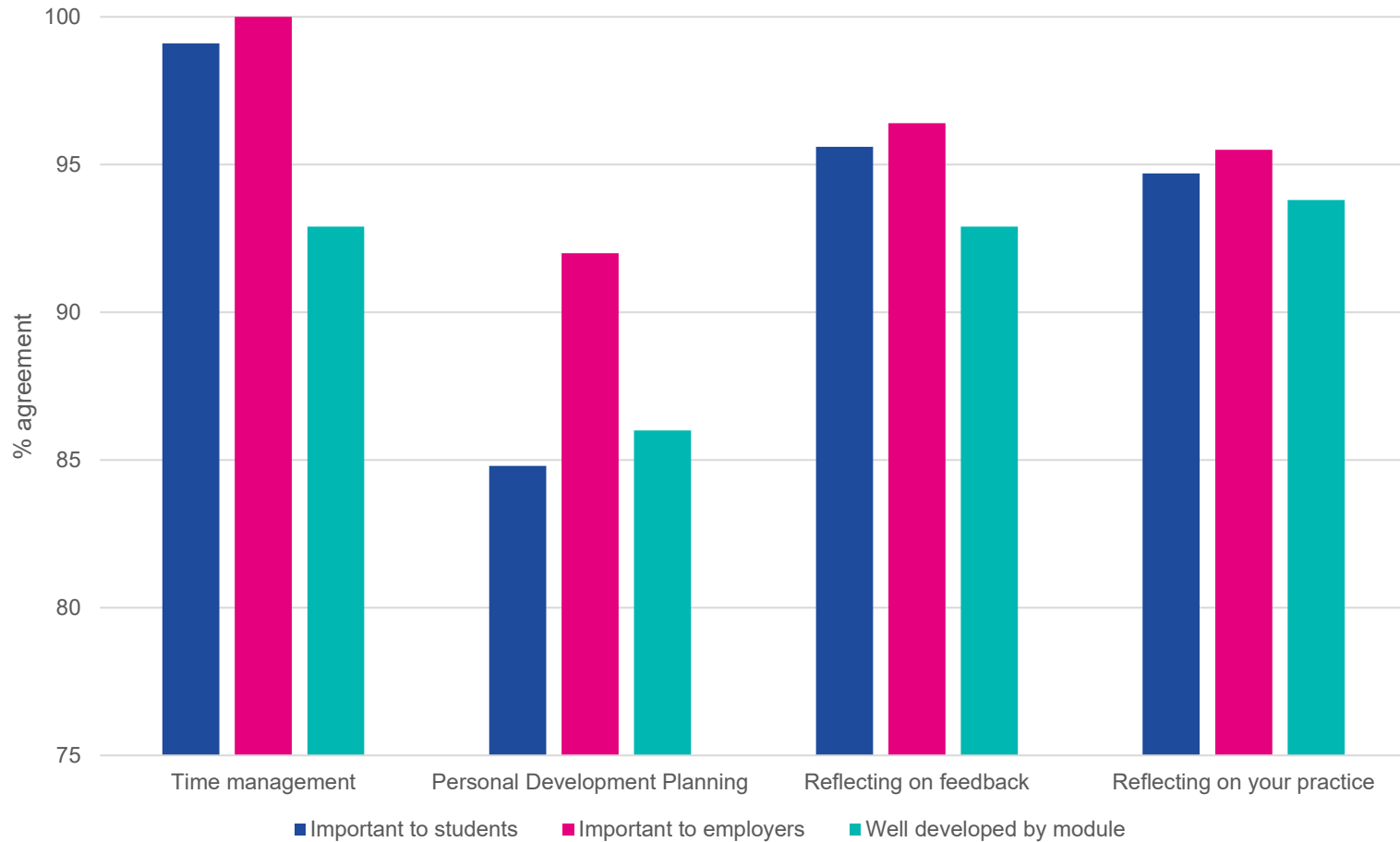Student questionnaire (n=115, 18%): Collaborating with others
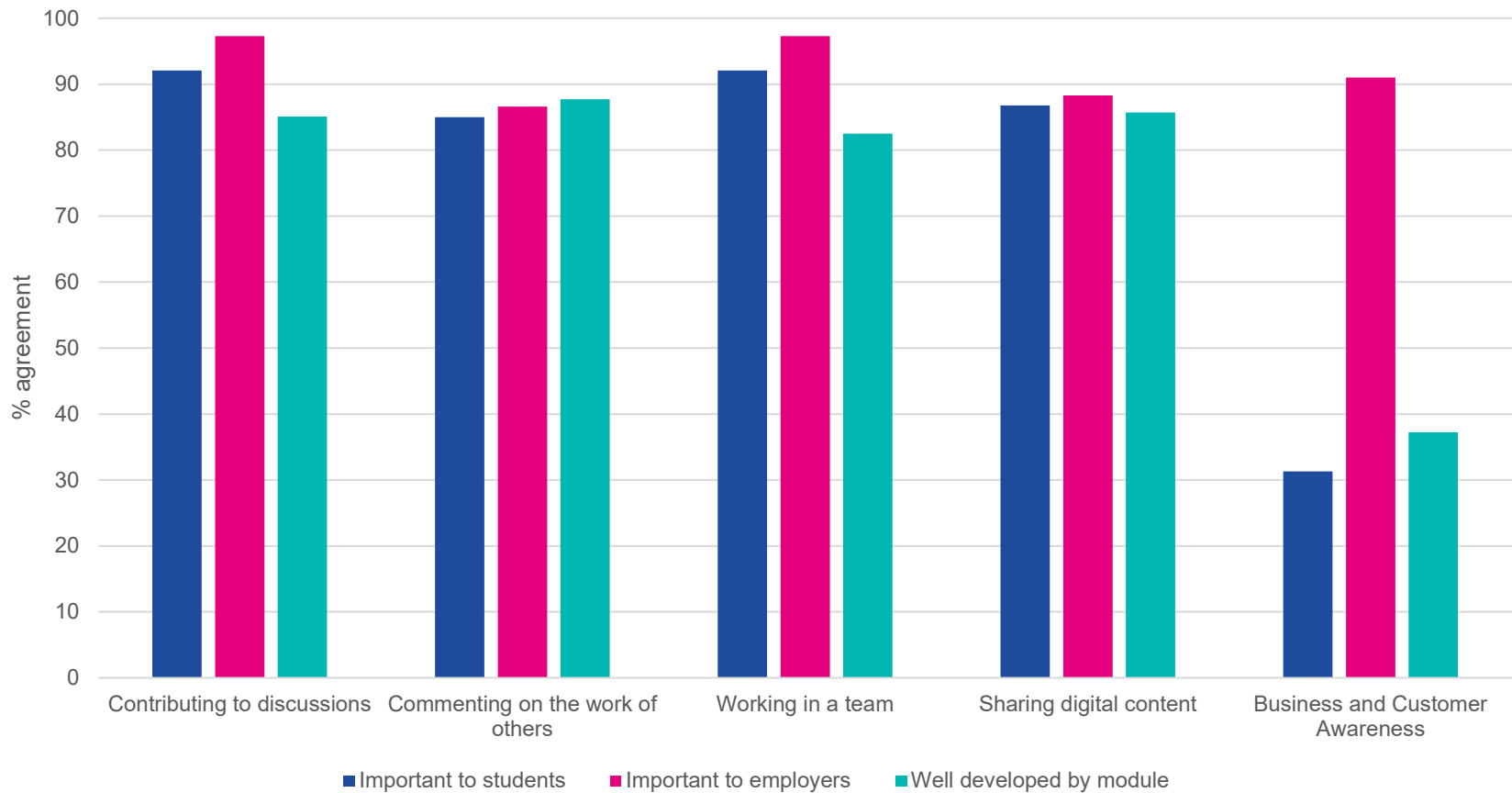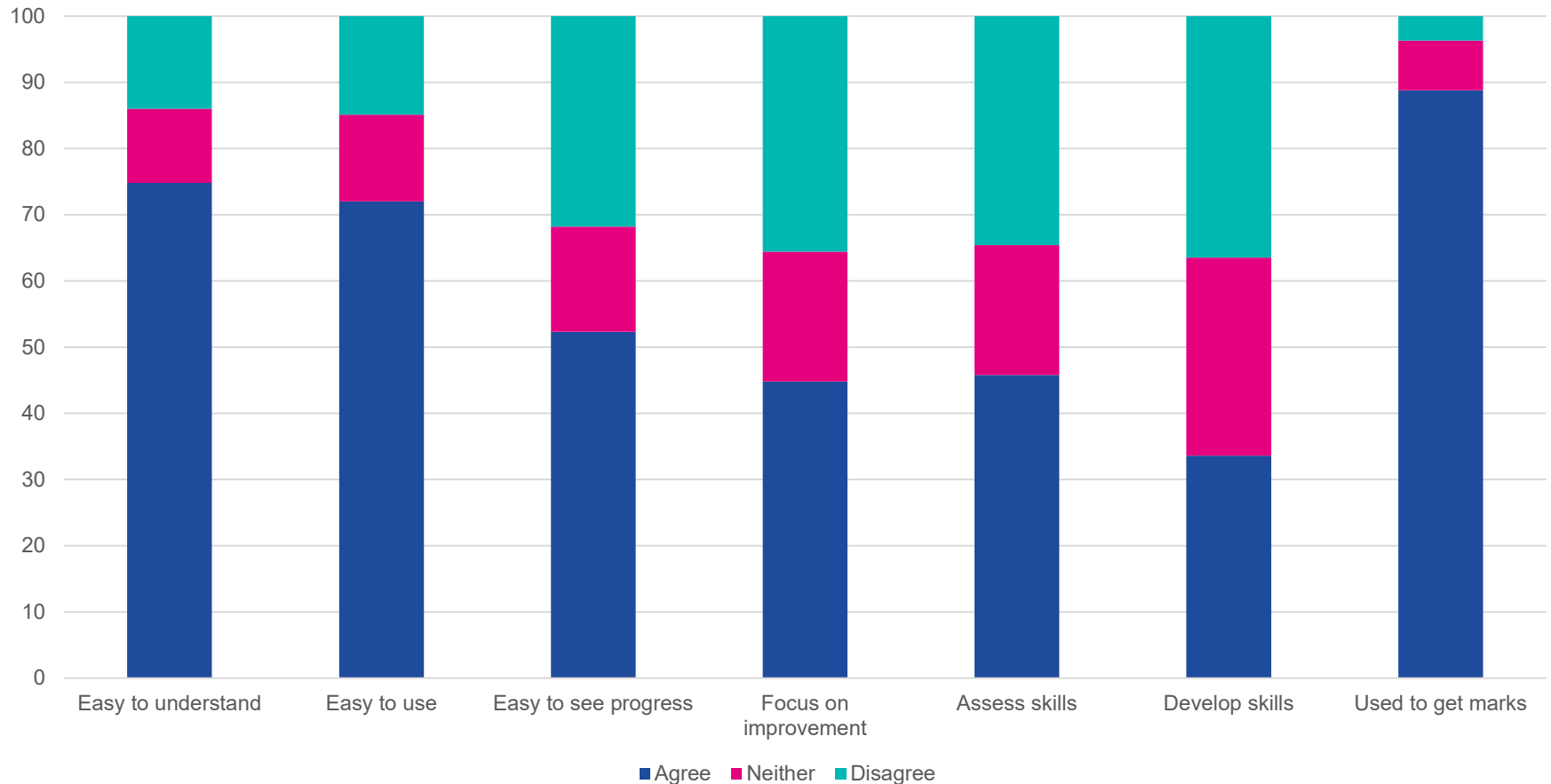
Results and Discussion

Student questionnaire (n=115, 18%): Self-reflection and planning

Results and Discussion

Student Questionnaire (n=115, 18%): 93% used radar diagrams

Percentage agreement on radar diagram questions

■ Agree ■ Neither ■ Disagree

Results and Discussion

Student questionnaire: main emerging themes

Theme	Sub-themes (number comments)
Time management	Negative (6) Positive (10)
Communication	Negative (3) Positive (4)
Group work	Negative (11) Positive (10)
Reflecting on feedback	Negative (0) Positive (7)
Radar diagrams as a tool	Negative (53) Positive (17) Just for marks (20) Problems self-assessing (40) Technical problems (18) Bad idea for progression (40) Good idea for progression (8)

Results and Discussion

Associate Lecturer Focus Groups

- Compared 3 ALs who participated in project with 3 ALs who weren't involved

- Both groups of ALs agreed on:
  - The importance of their advice to students
  - That the module developed skills well

- The ALs involved in the project provided richer information

- There was a difference when comparing the number of positive and negative comments on radar diagrams:

	Involved	Not involved
Positive	8	4
Negative	2	6

… could this be evidence of unconscious bias in the ALs involved? May affect the presentation of radar diagrams and skills development to students.

Conclusions

- Students showed improvement in self-assessment scores, except Business and Customer Awareness
  - Questionnaire supports this - least valued skill
  - Embed at qualification level, not module
- Most engaged with radar diagrams to gain marks
- Majority found radar diagrams usable and understandable
- < 50 % students found value in radar diagrams for PDP
- Students struggle to self-assess at module start
- The role of AL advice is key – can also affect student perceptions

References

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Any questions?...

Thank-you for attending

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