Queen Mary
University of London

Students' Lived Experiences with Inclusive Teaching

Isabelle Akoyon, Abdirashid Hassan, Elise Gasser Omfalos

This student co-led study explores and highlights inclusive teaching practices that support the academic success and well-being of all students at QMUL, regardless of race, background, or ability.

01. What is Inclusive Teaching?

Inclusive teaching is an intentional approach to designing and delivering learning, teaching, and assessment from the outset so that every student regardless of background, identity or ability is valued, supported and able to participate fully. Inclusive teaching removes barriers, respects diversity, and embraces varied learning needs and preferences by fostering equity, accessibility and engagement. Inclusive teaching gives all students an equal opportunity to achieve their full academic potential.

96% of online survey respondents indicated inclusive teaching practices have positively impacted their learning experience at QMUL.

02. Research Methodology

We adopted a mixed-methods approach combining an online survey (25 participants) and Listening Rooms (9 participants). Participants* included both undergraduate and postgraduate students from across all QMUL faculties and schools. The survey gathered broad insights into students' experiences, while the Listening Rooms—a peer-led digital space where students respond to questions without direct researcher involvement—allowed us to explore our key themes in greater depth.

Our participants demographics:

29 % have a long-term health conditions that could affect their studies
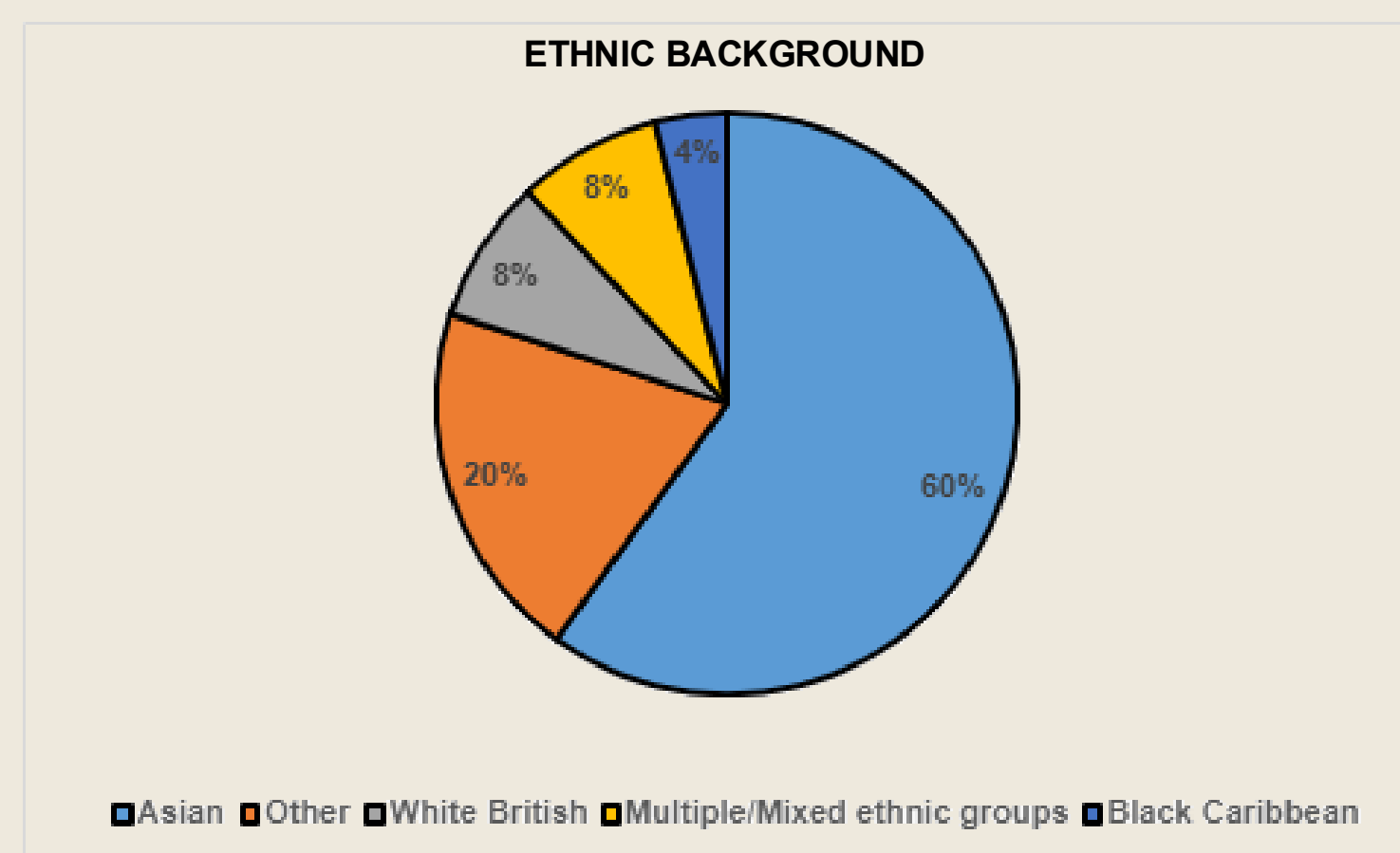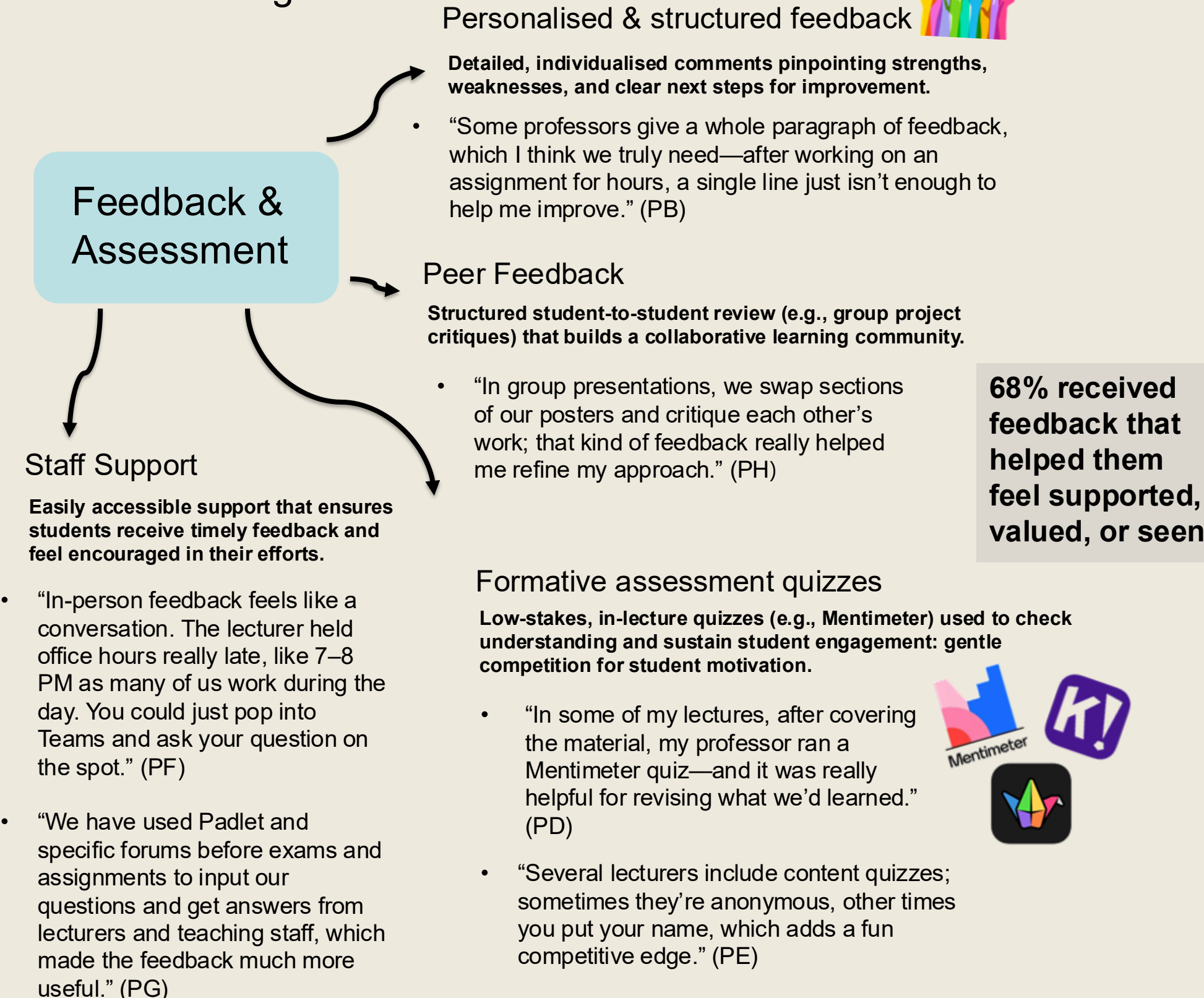
14% have a part-time work

12% are mature students (over 35 years old)

76% are UG , 24% are PG

44% are international students

* Participants are referred to as P throughout this poster. They were assigned anonymous identifiers such as PA, PB.

03. Our Findings

Feedback & Assessment

Personalised & structured feedback

Detailed, individualised comments pinpointing strengths, weaknesses, and clear next steps for improvement.

- "Some professors give a whole paragraph of feedback, which I think we truly need—after working on an assignment for hours, a single line just isn't enough to help me improve." (PB)

Peer Feedback

Structured student-to-student review (e.g., group project critiques) that builds a collaborative learning community.

- "In group presentations, we swap sections of our posters and critique each other's work; that kind of feedback really helped me refine my approach." (PH)

Staff Support

Easily accessible support that ensures students receive timely feedback and feel encouraged in their efforts.

- "In-person feedback feels like a conversation. The lecturer held office hours really late, like 7–8 PM as many of us work during the day. You could just pop into Teams and ask your question on the spot." (PF)

- "We have used Padlet and specific forums before exams and assignments to input our questions and get answers from lecturers and teaching staff, which made the feedback much more useful." (PG)

Formative assessment quizzes

Low-stakes, in-lecture quizzes (e.g., Mentimeter) used to check understanding and sustain student engagement: gentle competition for student motivation.

- "In some of my lectures, after covering the material, my professor ran a Mentimeter quiz—and it was really helpful for revising what we'd learned." (PD)

- "Several lecturers include content quizzes; sometimes they're anonymous, other times you put your name, which adds a fun competitive edge." (PE)

68% received feedback that helped them feel supported, valued, or seen

Effective Structural Arrangements

Designing courses that directly respond to student preferences and needs — for example, by breaking sessions into smaller chunks — to improve learning flow.

- "Students asked to change from two hours of problem solving only to one hour lecture and one hour problem solving—and the professor made that change immediately." (PB)
- "After the module evaluation, they reworked the timetable so we had balanced sessions; it's so much easier to follow now." (PH)

Inclusive Approaches

Flexible, student-centred methods (e.g., fully transcribed lectures, live Q&A channels) that ensure every voice can be heard.

- "Even as a distance learner, I can interact live via Teams chat and ask questions in real time—so I never feel left out." (PE)

Inclusive Adjustments

Proactive modifications—such as captioned videos, accessible slide formats, and extra time—to remove learning barriers for all students.

- "Queen Mary really emphasises inclusive teaching—if there's a student who is blind or has any other disability, they make sure all accommodations are in place so they're comfortable." (PA)
- "They provide transcripts of lectures, adjustable slide text, and always ask if anyone needs extra time; that level of care makes a big difference." (PA)

Peer-Led Learning

Senior-to-junior peer programmes (e.g., Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL / PASS), where advanced students guide newcomers, fostering confidence and a sense of community.

- "In my PLTL sessions, senior students explained key concepts and shared the mistakes they once made—helping me avoid them and learn more effectively." (PC)
- "I attended Peer Assisted Learning regularly; it showed me what first-class work looks like and how to maintain that standard." (PH)

Inclusive & Effective Teaching Practices

ETHNIC BACKGROUND

60%
20%
8%
8%
4%

■Asian ■Other ■White British ■Multiple/Mixed ethnic groups ■Black Caribbean

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING LEARNING METHODS DO YOU FIND MOST EFFECTIVE?

36%
24%
24%
12%
4%

■Hands-On Projects ■Group Discussions ■Interactive Workshops
■Independent Reading ■Traditional Lectures

04. Conclusion

Students recognise and benefit from teaching staff's efforts toward inclusivity. Inclusive teaching enhances their sense of belonging and reinforces the feeling that their voices matter. This builds academic confidence and boosts achievement. Learners are eager for meaningful university experiences that help them develop skills to support their professionalism and citizenship.

Visit Queen Mary Academy Resources:

Inclusive curriculum

Developing Inclusive Education for neurodivergent learners

Active Learning

UDL Universal Design for Learning