

Assessment and Feedback Symposium 2023

Shaping the Learning Experience: Innovations in Assessment & Feedback

7 November 2023, Penta Hotel Reading

Session abstracts

Keynote session, 09:35 – 10:15, Room: Penta 10&11

The long and winding road: from systematic review of assessment and feedback literature to influencing practice

Dr Edd Pitt and Professor Kathleen M Quinlan, Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of Kent

In 2022, we finished the review, [Impacts of higher education assessment and feedback policy and practice on students: A review of the literature 2016-2021](#), that synthesised 481 empirical studies from 71 different countries. Our aim was to highlight evidence-based assessment and feedback policies or practices that have had a demonstrable impact on key student outcomes. Ultimately, we sought to impact positively on educational practice. Although we concluded the review with 21 practical recommendations divided by audience, we wanted to do more to influence practice. To fill the research to practice gap, we designed the Assessment and Feedback Superchargers resource. In this keynote, we will discuss our journey, introduce the key principles that can supercharge assessment and feedback design, and offer delegates a taster of this game-like workshop resource.

Session 1.1, 10:20 – 11:20, Room: Penta 10&11

1.1a Innovating classroom assessment and feedback in mathematics education through advanced response systems

Dr Eleonora Pinto de Moura, King's College London

This session will present an innovative approach to classroom assessment and feedback in mathematics education through the use of advanced response systems. As the digital era reshapes educational paradigms, the integration of technology becomes paramount for enhancing student learning experiences. We will explore the application of advanced response systems for formative assessment and real-time feedback, focusing on how they revolutionize traditional practices and foster student growth and engagement. We will show diverse strategies that align with emerging trends in assessment, presenting advanced response systems as tools that challenge conventions and propel innovation in higher education.

1.1b Developing feedback literacy for first year students using a peer review exercise

Dr Alexandra Moores and Dr Richard Williamson, University of Kent

To support student understanding in assessment feedback literacy, an issue documented at both the University and nation level, we developed a formative Stage 1 peer review exercise using the digital resource Turnitin® PeerMark. We have been able to improve student feedback literacy by embedding this simple exercise into our academic advising framework. Students gained insight into marking and feedback processes that supported their understanding of how to use feedback to improve future assessments. This session will

outline how this initiative positively supported the success of our student cohort to improve their assessment marks overall.

1.1c Self-orchestrated learning in an 'open' feedback environment: Providing comparators and calibration, modelling feedback recipience and supporting feedback uptake

Dr James Wood, Bangor University

Peer feedback and comparison processes with exemplar essays can help learners generate inner feedback. This study examines how learners use a technology-mediated 'open' feedback environment to freely access various comparators, such as peers' drafts, feedback comments and dialogue, and teacher feedback. The findings show that learners benefit from the massively expanded opportunities for comparison, and use it to understand quality, improve their work, and develop feedback uptake skills. The presentation will discuss the theoretical and practical implications and contributions to the field.

Session 1.2, 10:20 – 11:20, Room: Penta 5&6

1.2a Assessment evolution through collaboration: Practical approaches to dealing with feedback

Olga Rutkovska-Lis, University of York

Building a solid foundation for feedback practices in a postgraduate module can be challenging. Considerable time and space constraints pose a threat to a compassionate approach to assessment with EDI at its core. However, Schools' collaboration with Academic Advisors allows for a smooth approach that boosts students' understanding of feedback and related practices leading to better outcomes.

This session is designed to share examples of practice from one of York University's School for Business and Society modules which supported the development of a more rounded understanding of assessment and feedback practices.

1.2b Student voice: What assessments do higher education students find most engaging?

Dr Kathleen M Quinlan, University of Kent

In this student-led project, we investigated what assessments students find most engaging and the relationships between features of those assessments, the degree of positive emotional engagement, and their self-perceived learning outcomes. We surveyed students in an English university (N=668) across the arts/humanities (n=112), social sciences (n=443), and sciences (n=113). They described their most engaging and interesting assessments and rated them on 21 Likert-scale items, including three features (authentic assessment, support, collaboration) and two perceived learning outcomes (academic achievement, self-confidence). Is authentic assessment associated with enjoyment? Does support lower stress? How else do students explain why these assessments were particularly engaging?

1.2c Authentic assessment for lab classes of 400 students

Dr Daniel Franklin, University of Warwick

Having students write something to mark at a later, more convenient time, is pretty easy. Assessing them 'live' is easy if there are not many students. Assessing a lot of students, live, is difficult. I will outline now we created authentic assessments for cohorts of up to 400 students, including live assessment in the lab and formative 'upskilling' time, designed to meet employers' expectations of scholarly graduates with technical, practical skills. I will also discuss how we addressed the practical challenge of balancing the marking demand on assessors with the requirements of PSRB accreditation.

Session 1.3, 10:20 – 11:20, Room: Penta 9

1.3a Peer evaluation in group projects: Insight into effective student critique and feedback

Alexander Mitchell, Brian McDonald, Michael James Scott and Joseph Walton-Rivers, Falmouth University

Collaborative projects are common in higher education; they yield authentic learning which nurtures employability. However, they can be difficult to assess and raise concerns around educators' ability to measure collaboration fairly and equally. This research explores peer evaluation as a mechanism to critically examine such collaboration and form constructive feedback. Thematic analysis of comments made by fifty student teams using Feedback Fruits provides insight into what students believe noteworthy and how they formulate feedback. Correlating student feedback with outcomes then illustrates the trends which lead to success, forming heuristics on good practice: key facets to consider and the means to convey them.

1.3b Developing transferable skills with final year biosciences students using design sprints and assessment co-creation

Dr Joanne Gough and Dr Alan Goddard, Aston University

With a high proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, Aston University Biosciences places a strong emphasis on transferable skills development to improve employability. To ensure personalised and authentic learning, the main assessments in the final year Professional Development modules involve students collaborating with academic staff to choose skills they want to develop. Initial ideas are generated during a structured, time-bound design sprint process that encourages innovation, creativity, and rapid student-focused outcomes. Students then learn about assessment and mark scheme design and co-create an assessment to develop and reflect on their selected skills. The results demonstrate increased enthusiasm for skills development.

1.3c Team based Learning in Psychology: From online to hybrid approaches

Dr James Findon and Dr Francesca Cotier, King's College London

Team Based Learning (TBL) is a highly structured, evidence-based, active learning approach where students study content outside of class and then apply it in-class – in teams – through a series of application exercises. TBL provides opportunities for both authentic formative and summative assessment. Instructor and peer feedback is 'built in' to TBL. This workshop is designed to introduce attendees to the basic principles and practices of TBL and is suitable for a wide variety of disciplines and teaching modes (online, hybrid and in-person).

Session 2.1, 11:35 – 12:35, Room: Penta 10&11

2.1 Taking a compassionate approach: Reducing assessment offences by fostering belonging

Dr Emma Winter and Claire Burrell, University of Portsmouth

International students play a vital role in the UK HE sector but often face unique challenges in adjusting to a new academic and cultural environment. This puts them at risk of assessment offences. Guided by the insight that academic misconduct can stem from a lack of belonging, Study Community offers a compassionate approach to addressing assessment offences by helping students building a sense of belonging.

Join this interactive workshop to delve into the Study Community experience, its design framework, and how fostering belonging can reduce assessment offences among your own students.

Session 2.2, 11:35 – 12:35, Room: Penta 5&6

2.2 A new tool to quantify authenticity of assessments

Dr David Tree, Stephanie Baines, Pauldy Otermans and Nicholas Worsfold, Brunel University London

Despite much work, the term 'authentic assessment' lacks an agreed definition, leading to ambiguity and controversy over the utility of the term. Our work aims to increase transparency and consistency in evaluating the authenticity of assessments using a standardised measure of authenticity based on previously published frameworks. We have developed a tool to measure authenticity in two dimensions, product and process, via a user-friendly survey whose results are displayed graphically. Participants will be invited to quantify the authenticity of assessments in their programmes of study and provide feedback on the tool they have developed and the underlying assumptions of the work.

Session 2.3, 11:35 – 12:35, Room: Penta 9

2.3 Practical approaches for effective assignment brief design

John Knight, Buckinghamshire New University and Dr Elaine Walsh, University of Limerick

Using approaches developed at Buckinghamshire New University (BNU) and University of Limerick (UL) drawing on Hughes' Assessment Task Design framework (Hughes, 2009) and Gilbert and Maguire's assignment brief design principles (Gilbert and Maguire, 2014), this practical, hands-on workshop will provide opportunities for participants to engage with and improve the communicative effectiveness of their assignment briefs.

Participants are encouraged to bring example briefs with them to work on. Resources and guidance developed at BNU and UL will be shared as takeaways from the session.

Poster Session, 12:35 – 13:25

P2 Helping students to develop critical skills in safeguarding children and young people through authentic assessment

Sarah Donkin, University of Hull

Authentic assessment can help students to develop skills for future employment whilst also increasing their satisfaction and engagement in relation to their current studies. This poster depicts the benefits and some of the challenges of adopting a more authentic approach to assessment in relation to the topic of safeguarding children and young people. Students on two different undergraduate modules were assessed by means of professional discussions on a relevant case study, rather than a traditional essay. The new approach led to an increase in average marks, positive feedback from students, and, crucially, the opportunity for students to develop relevant practice skills in a safe environment.

P3 Feedback on the feedback!

Kirstine Collins, University of Stirling

In response to National Student Survey (NSS, 2023), Stirling Management School are committed to transform assessment and feedback experience for Business and Management students.

Research demonstrates that feedback is central to learning (Black and Williams, 1998; Hattie and Jaeger, 1998). Laurillard (1993) argued, action without feedback is unproductive for learners, taking this a step further Boyle et al (2020) suggest that an inability to action feedback is also unproductive not only for learners but also for the assessor providing it. We wonder then if we need to understand feedback better.

Session 3.1, 13:25 – 14:05, Room: Penta 10&11

3.1a Open book assessments: Why would we return to exclusive reliance on timed exams in the post-pandemic world?

Professor Philip Young, Warwick University

The pandemic, although problematic for providers and students, provided the ideal opportunity to experiment and alter how we assess students. In the School of Life Sciences, University of Warwick, we converted timed in-person Y3 exams to open book assessments. Although this caused concern among our longer serving academics, it offered the perfect opportunity to see how open book assessments perform. In this session, I will be using the subsequent four-year follow-up data to truly analyse how open book assessment perform compared with more traditional timed exams, and pose the simple question of why would we return to the pre-pandemic format.

3.1c Making tests more authentic in biosciences

Dr Prabha Parthasarathy, University of East London

This presentation centres around the redevelopment of an assessment to make it more authentic. The redesigned assessment reflects the real-world skill of performing and interpreting common laboratory tests to diagnose diseases. In addition to providing the rationale and details of the assessment, the presentation will focus on ways to support students, and will critically reflect on this new approach based on student feedback and the principles of authentic assessment.

3.1d Delivering 'better assessment': A whole institution strategic innovation

Professor Jackie Potter, Kirstie Simpson, Rebecca Falcon and Rebecca Collins, University of Chester

In 2022-23, the University of Chester developed and piloted a new approach to facilitating educational improvement called a strategic innovation forum (SIF). More than 120 staff, students and employers took part in a series of events and discussions to explore ideas and propose actions to improve assessment that would deliver student success and that would support student and staff well-being. The presentation reports on the intentions, actions and resulting outputs and outcomes from this work one year on.

Session 3.2, 13:25 – 14:05, Room: Penta 5&6

3.2a Video feedback as an inclusive innovation

Dr Rebekah Hill, University of East Anglia

Feedback has the potential to promote student achievement, boost self-esteem, promote learning, and enhance understanding, yet may not always fulfil this remit when students do not engage with it. Video feedback is known to promote more learning than written and enhance student achievement (Pitt and Quinlan 2022), nonetheless, written feedback prevails as the prevalent method of provision. This talk outlines the implementation of video feedback for the formative and summative assessment of an undergraduate module, and reports on the student and staff experience.

3.2b Case based discussion as an authentic assessment for healthcare

Dr Rebekah Hill, University of East Anglia

Case Based Discussion is a summative assessment method that represents an authentic, inclusive and efficient innovation for health science programmes. The method of Case Based Discussion consists of the submission of a 1000-word assignment of 'a case' relevant to the module focus, which is then critically discussed in the summative assessment, for 20 – 30 minutes (depending on the academic level). The critical discussion is assessed face to face online, using a rubric completed by both an academic and a clinical specialist. The assessment method will be evaluated from both staff and student perspectives and facilitates important rich clinical debate.

3.2c Self and peer assessment of professional attributes

Dr Rebekah Hill, University of East Anglia

For health care programmes, teaching, learning and assessment extends beyond university, since up to 50% of training can be based in clinical practice. This necessitates adapting to a variety of clinical settings and developing new professional skills, which adds to the challenges posed for students (Boyd and McKendry 2012). A feedback model is proposed that facilitates student self-assessment, enhances self-awareness, and provides formative feedback in a timely and proactive fashion. Such feedback will facilitate performance improvements for subsequent summative assessment and is consistent with the new emphasis of how feedback is delivered, actioned and impacted on future learning (Pitt and Quinlan 2022).

3.2d The five-day formative assessment

Dr Emily Finch, University of Surrey

Students do not always engage with formative assessment, often choosing not to complete formative tasks at all or doing so in a desultory manner that renders the activity rather

meaningless as a learning exercise. The five-day formative aimed to improve meaningful engagement with formative assessment in a final year module by diving the assessment into a series of tasks, each of which received feedback. The talk reports on the successes and challenges of the project and identifies ways in which the approach could be made more effective. The views of students from the module are included in the presentation.

Session 3.3, 13:25 – 14:05, Room: Penta 9

3.3b Advocating student confidence: A case study to demonstrate how feedback methods can be used to create an accessible and supportive learning environment

Becca Crump and Jonathan Marsh, Cardiff University

Students often fear oral skills assessments, especially advocacy. In 2020 we enhanced the feedback practice on our advocacy module by making changes to the culture of the teaching and creating a less rigid approach which allowed students to meet the learning objectives in a more supportive environment. The aim was to increase student confidence and self-belief allowing them the space to develop their expertise and feedback literacy. This resulted in improved peer feedback and self-reflection and an uptick in summative outcomes.

3.3c Authentic assessment for senior people: "I think that I am doing this already"

Elizabeth Aylott, University of East London

Research pulls academics towards live authentic assessment, particularly with the rapid changes with AI. But to make it successful we need it to be viewed as authentic by our students. This presentation discusses an authentic assessment and how we are evaluating its effectiveness for students who are already working in the broader field of HRM.

3.3d Institutional responses to the challenge of GAI in assessment

Rebecca Page-Tickell, University of East London

How does an institution respond to technological challenges such as GAI? The attitudes of institutional members towards technological advancements are revealed in their responses to an intervention in response to GAI challenges to assessment policy. The initiation, design and outcome of such an intervention are discussed as an exemplar of how to rapidly develop institutional customs and practices around assessment in the face of challenge.

Session 4.1, 14:10 – 15:10, Room: Penta 10&11

4.1a Improving agentic feedback engagement and uptake with dialogic video feedback

Dr James Wood, Bangor University

Screencast feedback can improve feedback quality, understanding and uptake, but is most often deployed as the 'transmission' of feedback comments. This positions learners as 'passive recipients' and downplays the importance of dialogue and learner proactivity in feedback uptake. Drawing on evidence from a published study and from the literature, this presentation will explore how technologies such as MS Word or Google Docs can enable learners to actively engage with screencast feedback through dialogues with providers. It will also discuss how screencast feedback can foster trust and motivation among learners that encourages uptake of feedback.

4.1b Partnership working to create digitally innovative student assessment support

Dr Angela Mazzetti and Liv Jonassen, Newcastle University

In this workshop we present our experience of establishing a partnership between the module teaching team and the library's academic skills team to develop an innovative technological approach to support student assessment. Working in partnership, we developed a series of resources to support students with a new approach to assessment, a business infographic. The partnership resulted in both a qualitative enhancement in terms of the quality of infographics submitted and also a quantitative enhancement raising the overall grade average from 2:2 to 2:1.

4.1c Democratizing assessment rubrics for international students

Dr Chahna Gonsalves, King's College London

This presentation delves into the contested realm of assessment rubrics in higher education, focusing on first-year international undergraduates in a UK business school. Despite rubrics being heralded as tools for standardizing grading and clarifying expectations, our study exposes a nuanced landscape. We address two pressing questions: the challenges international students face in engaging with rubrics and how they use these tools in their assessments. Conducted via focus groups, this research fills a critical gap by examining international students' authentic experiences and perceptions. Findings were used to co-create a guide for students and academics which will be shared with participants.

Session 4.2, 14:10 – 15:10, Room: Penta 5&6

4.2a Defending academic integrity: Real-world evaluations in the digital age

Xiang Li, Arden University and Dr Kun Wang, The University of Manchester

In an era dominated by AI models like ChatGPT, traditional assessment is at a crossroads. The University of Manchester's groundbreaking 'a project of a project' methodology offers a beacon. This approach marries genuine student collaboration with practitioner insights, leading to post-AI multimedia outputs. Beyond mere academic exercises, these assessments evolve into rich, real-world explorations. The result is a robust, future-ready evaluation strategy that not only defends academic integrity in today's tech-savvy world but also promises broader adaptability across higher educational landscapes.

4.2b Changing the paradigm: Rethinking assessment in the AI era

Dr Angela Gao, University of Sussex Business School

The emergence of AI tools capable of generating essays has raised concerns about academic integrity and the authenticity of student work. As students increasingly rely on AI for content creation, traditional assessment methods may become inadequate in gauging their true writing and critical thinking abilities. To address these challenges, we need to reimagine assessment strategies, which are crucial to assure evaluations remain fair, relevant, and aligned with the educational goals of fostering intellectual growth and independent thinking, while also preparing students for a future where AI is an integral part of their academic and professional lives.

4.2c Academic integrity with artificial intelligence: Avoiding multiple chat tests

Lee Price, Cardiff University

'The next academic session will be the first in which Generative Artificial Intelligence tools will be widely available to staff and students from the outset.' (QAA, 2023).

Multiple Choice Tests are commonly used in summative assessments. Online platforms (e.g. Blackboard) are often used to conduct MCTs, as universities utilise the administrative and cost saving benefits developed during the pandemic. The increasing prevalence and accuracy of AI challenges this practice. This paper will consider whether it is possible to maintain academic integrity in MCTs through question design (e.g. through Single Best Answer questions), or whether other solutions need to be pursued.

Session 4.3, 14:10 – 15:10, Room: Penta 9

4.3a How do you know? Who says so?

Emily Ellis and Dr Holly Saron, Edge Hill University

This presentation reports the initial work undertaken to enhance feedback practices with first year undergraduate nursing students to achieve the contemporary aims of feedback.

We will focus on how written feedback is provided and received by students, and how an initial dialogue with students resulted in spontaneous co-production of student-centred feedback language and practices, including the generation of co-produced student-centred comments (quick-marks).

While several recent conceptual frameworks promote the contemporary paradigm of feedback, this work generates authentic student-centred co-produced feedback, relevant to all disciplines.

4.3b What is inclusive assessment? Conversations with experts

Dr Sheena Hyland, Geraldine O'Neill and Leigh Graves Wolf, University College Dublin

Words often mean different things, to different people. Language is dependent on context and the language of assessment is no exception. In this session, we outline our approach to seeking clarity around the definition and practices of inclusive assessment. We provide some in-process findings from an ongoing action research project and offer some initial reflections on the complexities and challenges surrounding the concept and implementation of inclusive assessment in higher education.

Session 5.1, 15:25 – 16:05, Room: Penta 10&11

5.1a Authentic by design: Developing students for the talent economy

Dr Alison Megeney, Dr Deeba Parmar, Dr Olga Mourouti, Dr Phil Barter and Dr James Graham, Middlesex University

Middlesex University provides intellectually demanding degrees focusing on professional practice for which 'authenticity' is a key principle underpinning LTA strategy. Viewed positively by student as demonstrated in NSS 2023 (Assessment and Feedback +4.54 above sector) this strategy embraces a range of technologically enhanced methods to enable the development of highly sought after graduate competencies: creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, empathy and collaboration.

We will discuss:

- how programmes develop graduates that are future focussed and employment ready
- embedding industry awards in curricula
- collaborative practice- and project-based approaches
- inclusive authentic assessment through coursework to explore students' understanding of topics.

5.1b Setting the standard: Using multiple choice tests to enhance feedback and reliably evaluate student performance

Lee Price, Rebecca Crump and Maria Keyse, Cardiff University

Can MCTs assess higher order learning? Can they be used to reliably differentiate student performance across traditional award classifications? Are they an appropriate method of summative assessment? We will argue 'yes' and will demonstrate this by reflecting upon a case study. In 2023, we implemented a new assessment strategy for the LLB (Hons) degree, which included MCTs in 10 modules. By applying the methodology used in professional law examinations, we will demonstrate and workshop how it is possible to assess higher order learning in an authentic manner, to reliably differentiate student performance, and how online tests allow enhanced feedback opportunities.

Session 5.2, 15:25 – 16:05, Room: Penta 9

5.2a Engaging with feedback: The consequent effectiveness of formative feedback in Higher Education

Dr Bianca Fox and Adam Tate, Nottingham Trent University

This presentation discusses solutions to address student engagement with formative feedback. Using course data, the presentation explores a range of processes involved in feedback uptake and answers the following questions:

- How many students check and use their formative feedback to improve future coursework?
- How effective is the formative feedback provided and to what extent does it translate into better student outcomes?

The presentation intends to support practitioners in designing effective formative feedback practices that can be embedded in the HE curricula.

5.2b Reflecting Industry through the use of an Interview Assessment

Joanne Bambrick, Manchester Metropolitan University

This presentation will discuss how an authentic assessment was undertaken with students being the interviewer rather than the interviewee, to reflect the Financial Planning Industry. It will outline the process followed to make the assessment unique while also aligning it to the learning outcomes. The benefits to the students and unit teaching team will be discussed, focusing not only on the grades achieved but the additional skills that students were able to obtain through the assessment process. The challenges faced with this form of assessment will conclude the presentation along with next steps for the future.