

Assessment and Feedback Symposium 2025

4 November 2025, Virtual delivery

Session abstracts

Keynote

Title TBC

Dr Miriam Firth, The University of Manchester

Abstract TBC

Parallel Session 1, 09:55 - 10:55, Zoom Room 1

Session 1.1a

Advanced large language model GPT for student feedback

Professor Samar Ahmed, Rabdan Academ

The provision of timely, personalized, and actionable feedback is a cornerstone of effective learning and student development. Yet, as class sizes increase and instructional demands intensify, educators often struggle to deliver high-quality feedback at scale. This paper explores the potential of advanced Generative Pre-trained Transformer (GPT) language models—representing a new class of Large Language Models (LLMs)—to augment or partially automate the feedback process in higher education. We investigate the application of GPT models, particularly GPT-4 and its successors, as tools to generate constructive, context-sensitive, and discipline-specific feedback on student submissions across various formats, including essays, reports, reflections, and discussion posts.

The study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining empirical performance testing with pedagogical evaluation. We begin by fine-tuning GPT-based systems using anonymized student writing samples and instructor feedback drawn from diverse academic disciplines. The fine-tuning process incorporates task-specific prompts and instructional rubrics to align model outputs with institutional assessment standards and learning outcomes. The quality of GPT-generated feedback is then compared with that of human instructors across dimensions such as clarity, relevance, depth, and tone. This evaluation is supplemented by student surveys and focus groups to assess the perceived usefulness, fairness, and motivational value of AI-generated feedback.

Preliminary findings indicate that GPT-based models can reliably produce feedback that is linguistically coherent, formative in nature, and broadly aligned with learning outcomes, especially when prompted with well-structured input and guided by explicit rubrics. Students reported high levels of satisfaction with the immediacy and specificity of the feedback, although concerns were raised regarding the depth of critical engagement and occasional genericity in model responses. Importantly, the study identifies several ethical and pedagogical implications. These include the risks of over-reliance on AI, the importance of transparency in AI use, and the potential for feedback to become detached from instructor judgment and emotional intelligence.

We argue that LLMs such as GPT should not be viewed as replacements for human educators, but rather as scalable tools that can support formative assessment strategies, promote self-regulated learning, and free up instructor time for higher-order pedagogical tasks. To this end, the paper offers a framework for the responsible integration of GPT-based feedback tools into existing learning management systems (LMS) and assessment workflows. The framework emphasizes transparency, oversight, and student agency, and

includes guidelines for prompt design, data governance, and hybrid feedback models that combine AI-generated suggestions with human annotation.

In conclusion, the paper advances the proposition that GPT-driven feedback systems, when thoughtfully deployed, can serve as powerful allies in enhancing student engagement, equity, and learning efficiency. However, their adoption must be governed by clear institutional policies, ongoing evaluation, and a firm commitment to pedagogical integrity. Future research is recommended to examine long-term learning gains, discipline-specific calibration, and the interplay between AI feedback and student motivation in diverse cultural and linguistic contexts.

Session 1.1b

When social constructivism meets transformational learning theory: Strengthening the learning community, student self-reflection and agency

Dr Laura Burritt, Dr Sally Fields, Beth Mozolic Staunton, Kellie Tune and Claire Kenny, Bond University

The application of occupational therapy theory to practice is a core competency that students must demonstrate prior to engaging in clinical placements. The subject, Foundations of Occupational Therapy, connected to an external placement, underwent review due to two identified risks:

- 1) a weak connection between the subject assessments and placement requirements.
- 2) industry partners reported that students were not prepared for placement.

Guided by social constructivism, transformational learning theory, and dialogic pedagogy and with the aim of establishing a culture of active learning, this presentation outlines an assessment design to support engagement with feedback, self-reflection and student agency.

The application of occupational therapy theory to practice is a core competency that students must demonstrate prior to engaging in clinical placements. The subject, Foundations of Occupational Therapy, connected to an external placement, underwent review due to two identified risks:

- 1) a weak connection between the subject assessments and placement requirements.
- 2) industry partners reported that students were not prepared for placement.

Guided by social constructivism, transformational learning theory, and dialogic pedagogy and with the aim of establishing a culture of active learning, this presentation outlines an assessment design to support engagement with feedback, self-reflection and student agency.

Session 1.1c

Engaging students with feedback provided by third space practitioners

Dr Steve Briggs, University of Bedfordshire

Third space practitioners (those working in roles that transcend traditional academic and professional services job classifications) have the capacity to play a transformative role in engaging students with assessment feedback. However, this potential is not always fully realised within higher education institutions. This session will outline approaches that have been adopted at the University of Bedfordshire to amplify the reach, value and impact of third space professionals in terms of engaging students with feedback. This will include discussion of an assessment transformation programme, curriculum framework, team structures and student support referral mechanisms.

Parallel Session 1, 09:55 - 10:55, Zoom Room 2

Session 1.2a

Sonic scholarship: Rethinking assessment through AI and audio essays

Stuart Jones, University of South Wales

This session presents an innovative pedagogical model that replaces traditional written essays with AI-enhanced audio essays. Drawing on case studies from the MSc Music Engineering and Production course at the University of South Wales, we showcase how students combined voice synthesis, sound design, and audio production to craft podcast-style research submissions. The project demonstrates how AI tools can enhance creativity, accessibility, and technical skill development. This presentation highlights a broader pedagogical shift towards multimodal, industry-relevant assessment—and explores the evolving role of AI in empowering student expression and shaping the future of creative higher education.

Session 1.2b

Who's doing the thinking? Cognitive offloading, epistemic agency, AI, and assessment design

Dr Chahna Gonsalves, King's College London

How is generative AI reshaping how students think, write, and learn?

This session shares findings from interviews with final-year students who use GenAI to support reasoning, decision-making, and academic work. We explore how learners interpret authorship, responsibility, and legitimacy in AI-supported assessment. Using the Makers—Managers—Inforgs framework, we offer practical insights for designing authentic assessments that strengthen students' critical, ethical, and metacognitive capacities in an AI-enabled world.

Session 1.2c

Transforming assessment in the digital age: AI-driven simulations for real-world skills

Adam Nicholls, University of Exeter

This session showcases how AI-driven simulations can transform assessment by combining authenticity, engagement, and sustainability. Based on a project using ChatGPT and custom GPTs to create dynamic, discipline-adaptable scenarios, students engage in tasks such as client interviews, negotiation exercises, and advocacy practice. Each interaction demands real-time problem-solving and concludes with personalised feedback, fostering reflection and skill development. While developed for legal education, the approach applies across fields requiring professional judgement, communication, and digital literacy. Attendees will gain insights into design, implementation, and evaluation, leaving with practical strategies to integrate AI simulations into authentic, feedback-rich assessments at scale.

Parallel Session 1, 09:55 - 10:55, Zoom Room 3

Session 1.3a

The feedback quest: A gamified model for inclusive and scalable growth

Rihan Mustapha, ELI-PNU

What if feedback didn't just measure — but moved people?

What if feedback didn't just measure — but moved people?

This session introduces a reflective, inclusive feedback model designed to support meaningful growth across roles in higher education. Adaptable for learners, educators, and leaders, the approach emphasizes co-created reflection, emotional safety, and agency. Participants will explore how intentional feedback design can foster engagement, insight,

and scalable impact — beyond the limits of traditional methods. You'll leave with a practical tool to transform feedback from a transactional task into a developmental experience.

Session 1.3b

Lights, camera, education: Enhancing focus with a video-based question in timed macroeconomics exams

Dr Noushin Pouraghaei, King's College London

This session examines an innovative, inclusive assessment approach in intermediate macroeconomics where a student-generated video question is embedded within the timed final exam alongside traditional written questions. This integration offers students flexible, multimodal ways to express complex economic understanding within a high-stakes assessment. Drawing on metacognitive and reflective learning theories, the video task encourages cognitive refocusing and active reflection, supporting diverse learner strengths. Attendees will explore practical implementation, evidence of improved engagement, and strategies for scaffolding multimodal feedback. Join us to discover how embedding video assessment can transform inclusive, authentic evaluation in economics education.

Session 1.3c

Why don't they just do it? Reimagining formative assessment through student co-creation

Dr Emily Finch, University of Surrey and Filipa Tavares Moreira, Royal Holloway University

Formative assessment offers a low-stakes chance to gain feedback and build confidence so why do so many students opt out altogether or submit watered-down versions of the task that dilutes the learning opportunity? This paper answers that question from the student perspective, drawing on insights from World Café events that explored barriers to engagement and co-created practical solutions to overcome those barriers. The seven simple but powerful changes identified were implemented in a large undergraduate module. This presentation shares what we learned, what we changed and how this made a measurable difference to student participation and perceptions of formative assessment.

Parallel Session 1, 09:55 - 10:55, Zoom Room 4

Session 1.4a

Human-centred design approach for authentic assessment in an AI-driven learning environment

Dr Nina Hansopaheluwakan Edward, Wa Hoe Yan and Yizhi Wu, University of Sydney

We must rethink assessment design as AI transforms education and professional practice. This presentation explores the impact of integrating a Human-Centred Design (HCD) approach into authentic, work-integrated assessment to foster both digital and human capabilities. Drawing on students' end-of-semester evaluations (qualitative and quantitative) and client feedback, the study highlights increased classroom engagement, improved critical and analytical thinking, stronger application of learning, and greater confidence in independent decision-making. As AI reshapes education, how can assessment be reimagined to integrate technological possibilities and uphold essential human skills like creativity, empathy, and human-centred problem-solving?

Session 1.4b

Flawed by design: Embedding AI to drive authentic assessment and integrity

Rania Shibl and Dr Judy Watson, University of the Sunshine Coast

This session presents an innovative use of Liam, an AI-powered simulated client, in a second-year ICT course to deliver unique, flawed SQL scripts and dynamic datasets as part of a summative database assessment. Each student (approx. 200) received different versions of the scripts and sample data, ensuring authenticity and academic integrity. By limiting Liam's responses to script and data generation, the task maintained control while

fostering engagement and digital skills. This session will offer insights into designing scalable, AI-assisted assessments that promote student agency, feedback dialogue, and real-world problem-solving aligned with evolving professional and technological contexts.

Session 1.4c

Beyond AI detection: Rethinking authentic assessments in higher education

Wendy Paola Yanez Pazmino, University of Birmingham

Generative AI (GenAI) is transforming higher education by challenging traditional assessments and complicating distinctions between student and machine-authored work. This study explores the use of AI audit trails alongside vivas to deal with the often hidden or undetectable use of GenAI and ensure authorship and accountability in collaborative work. The approach was implemented in a postgraduate software engineering module with over 250 students, who designed a system in groups and then took part of an individual viva. Students were required to explain their AI use, shifting the viva from a test of proof to a reflective exercise that fosters critical engagement with AI.

Parallel Session 2, 11:10 - 12:10, Zoom Room 1

Session 2.1a

Enhancing learning: The added value of dialogue alongside structured self-assessment

Helen Middleton, James Higginson, Sarah Willis and Matthew Shaw, University of Manchester

This session explores how a structured consultation skills assessment tool, combined with discussion, enhances feedback. Following a patient consultation, pharmacists complete a self-assessment using the Medicines Related - Consultation Assessment Tool (MR-CAT), write a reflective account, and have a follow-up discussion with an education supervisor (ES). Findings from an evaluation of MR-CAT show that ESs use Pendleton's feedback model and challenge self-assessment to develop feedback literacy (ability to use feedback to improve learning and performance). This promotes learner agency, as learners identify strengths, set goals, and create actionable plans. The tool and discussion together enhance reflection and engagement with feedback.

Session 2.1b

Beyond the red pen: An inclusive design for engaging students with feedback

Dr Shelan Jeawak, University of the West of England

This session unveils an innovative, practitioner and research led pedagogical design aimed at enhancing student engagement with feedback in group projects. Developed for computing students, it directly addresses common challenges like passive feedback use, team conflicts, and fostering inclusive learning environments. Discover how structured self and peer feedback, coupled with mentor-facilitated actionable dialogue, cultivates student feedback literacy, agency, and confidence from their foundational year. This highly generalisable approach empowers students to effectively engage with feedback, building crucial teamwork skills. Ideal for educators seeking practical, theory-informed strategies to transform collaborative learning.

Session 2.1c

Adapting shut up and write writing circles to improve students' confidence and anxiety around assessments by maximising feedback and support: A mixed methods study

Dr Ana Campos, Linzi Robertson, Megan Brenik and Lisa Adjei, University of Greater Manchester

Students in Social Sciences typically display high anxiety and low confidence in modules with a strong mathematical component. It has been suggested that a lack of interest and

insufficient contact with the content might be at the core of these issues. The present study followed a mixed methods approach where an adapted version of the Shut Up and Write was employed to support students with their assessment. A total of 20 Psychology students took part in the intervention. Quantitative results showed an improvement in their confidence. Findings from the thematic analysis highlighted themes around feedback, a collaborative environment and support.

Parallel Session 2, 11:10 - 12:10, Zoom Room 2

Session 2.2a

Dialogic assessment in the age of AI: Reclaiming authenticity through professional discussion

Blessing Maregere, Leeds Trinity University

This practitioner session introduces Professional Discussions (PDs) as a dialogic assessment method that encourages academic integrity, learner agency, and personalised feedback. Drawing on doctoral research within the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship, it presents a PD framework with key principles: Pedagogical Foundations of Learning, Reflective Dialogue and Learner Empowerment, Assessment for Learning and Development, and Implementation Enablers. Attendees will gain practical insights into designing and facilitating PDs across various contexts, while also addressing challenges such as tutor variability and digital barriers. Ideal for educators looking for human-centred alternatives to traditional assessment in the age of generative AI.

Session 2.2b

Learning beyond grades: A dialogic approach to ungraded assessment in higher education

Dr Claire Fitzpatrick, Dr Kelly Choong, James Hall and Matthew Stott, Edith Cowan University

In higher education, a persistent focus on final grades overshadows learning as a reflective, dialogic process. This outcome-centric culture is compounded by an AI-enabled world, which can encourage superficial engagement and limit authentic, critical thinking. Ungraded assessment offers an alternative, reframing learning as a dialogic, relational process. Grounded in subversive pedagogies and transformative feedback ecologies, our mixed-methods research explores student responses to this shift across two Bachelor of Communication units. Initial findings suggest ungrading fosters feedback literacy, relational learning, and a deeper commitment to learning as a process rather than an outcome, supporting a transformative educational experience rooted in empowerment and deliberation.

Session 2.2c

Prompting authenticity: Co-creating with AI to grow digital and critical thinking skills

Kev Bradshaw, and Dr Emma Winter, University of Portsmouth

This presentation showcases an innovative assessment strategy for a Level 4 marketing module, where GenAI is embraced as a co-creative partner. Students develop digital fluency and critical thinking skills through authentic tasks like podcast production and campaign design, using tools such as ChatGPT and Adobe Firefly. The approach fosters ethical reasoning, prompt literacy, and reflective practice, equipping learners with industry-relevant skills. This transferable, scalable approach will be of interest to others looking to adopt authentic assessment that actively encourages students to use GenAI.

Parallel Session 2, 11:10 - 12:10, Zoom Room 3

Session 2.3a

Using project-based learning to build autonomy and inclusivity

Dr Laura Todd, University of Nottingham

This paper will explore how Project-Based Learning (PBL) can be used to create inclusive assessments for a variety of learners. Following Wurdinger's (2016: 34) concept that for students 'to develop life skills, they must be given freedom and autonomy to tap into their passions and interests', I will discuss the practical implementation of my PBL-based module where final-year students are assessed by research-based podcast or vlog and written blog. This module has demonstrated that, when given opportunities for autonomy and creativity, PBL modules have widespread benefits for students with protected characteristics, boosting confidence and performance to build inclusivity by design.

Session 2.3b

SHARP in group assessments: Student-educator co-creation

Dr Zeenat Soobedar de Villeneuve, King's College London

SHARP transforms group assessment from anxiety-inducing experiences into collaborative partnerships benefiting both students and educators. Through structured pre-submission brainstorming sessions, the framework captures student concerns about collaboration challenges: unequal participation, unclear expectations, and coordination difficulties. Immediate actionable solutions are implemented before final submission. For educators, SHARP provides systematic protocols for early intervention with struggling groups, clear communication channels, and evidence-based insights for continuous assessment improvement. Results demonstrate that over 90% of students report improved performance, with collaboration ratings exceeding 4.2/5, while educators gain enhanced understanding of group dynamics and proactive assessment tools. SHARP benefits both assessment quality and student satisfaction.

Parallel Session 2, 11:10 - 12:10, Zoom Room 4

Session 2.4a

Is all feedback received in the same manner? Developing a new feedback format based on dyslexic students' recommendations

Dr Hossein Sadeghi-Movahed, Oxford Brookes University

Diversity in higher education demands diversity in assessment and feedback. This study investigates a new format of providing feedback for dyslexic students as suggested by participants in research using the Photovoice approach, which could also benefit non-dyslexic students.

Session 2.4b

Glass half full: Dyslexia and the function of assessment in Art and Higher Education

Skye William Eade, London Metropolitan University

This session explores inclusive approaches to assessment and feedback through the lens of dyslexia, drawing on the artwork Glass Half Full as metaphor and research artefact. Developed on lived experience, teaching practice, and critical pedagogy, the talk draws attention to how traditional assessment often disadvantages neurodivergent learners and privileges linear, text-based approaches. Rather, it argues for multimodal, dialogic, and co-created assessment practices that can reframe dyslexia as a strength, valuing creativity, resilience, and holistic thinking. The session shares practical strategies, including structured feedback models, to foster agency, agency, and diversity in higher education assessment cultures.

Session 2.4c

Making assessment work for everyone: Co-creating clarity in assessment criteria

Dr Lucy Noble, and Rhiannon Edwards, University of Bath

This session presents a faculty-led initiative at the University of Bath to improve clarity, consistency, and inclusivity in assessment criteria. In response to declining NSS scores, particularly around clarity of expectations, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences developed a shared assessment language and co-created generic criteria with students. These resources support staff in designing contextualised assessments and delivering more targeted, actionable feedback. The session will outline strategic goals, practical implementation, and next steps for evaluation. Delegates will gain insights into embedding inclusive assessment practices that enhance understanding and fairness across diverse learning contexts.

Parallel Session 3, 12:55 - 14:25, Zoom room 1

Session 3.1a

Repurposing telegram as a lightweight LMS for inclusive formative feedback in ESL

Kyan Mortazavi, Griffith University

This session presents a novel framework for inclusive assessment and feedback design, utilising Telegram to support diverse learners in resource-limited settings. It highlights how educators repurpose bots, channels, and polls for AI-assisted feedback, fostering flexibility, optionality, and student co-creation. Grounded in sociocultural theory, the framework ensures transferability across varied low-resource contexts, delivering scalable, equitable solutions. Join us to examine innovative approaches to enhancing feedback engagement and equity through repurposing and adaptable design.

This session presents a novel framework for inclusive assessment and feedback design, utilising Telegram to support diverse learners in resource-limited settings. It highlights how educators repurpose bots, channels, and polls for AI-assisted feedback, fostering flexibility, optionality, and student co-creation. Grounded in sociocultural theory, the framework ensures transferability across varied low-resource contexts, delivering scalable, equitable solutions. Join us to examine innovative approaches to enhancing feedback engagement and equity through repurposing and adaptable design.

Session 3.1b

Lessons from an AI in business module

Liam Newton, University of South Wales

This session reflects on a new level 6 AI in Business module added to the BA (Hons) Business and Management at the University of South Wales, particularly focussing on the assessment techniques used.

The assessment mix for this module was designed to allow students the freedom to experiment with and use a range of AI tools, building their digital fluency and thus employability, while also assessing their reflexivity and criticality in understanding the ethics and limitations of the tools.

This presentation includes reflections on this module and its assessments, including student voice on their experience of the assessments.

Session 3.1c

Making thinking visible: AI-generated process mapping to enhance feedback processes in simulation-based learning

Dr Suzanne Estaphan, The Australian National University, Marcos Rojas, Stanford University, Gerard Corrigan, Charles Stuart University and Amanda K Edgar, Deakin University

Process mapping—visually representing the steps and connections in decision-making—is an emerging tool in clinical reasoning assessment. This pilot study used synthetic transcripts from simulated clinical reasoning tasks to test an AI prototype for generating process maps, comparing these with expert-created versions. Our findings highlight both the promise and limits of AI in making complex thinking visible for feedback. We discuss how this approach can support the debriefing phase in simulation-based education, enabling timely, meaningful feedback while maintaining critical educator input. The session will share lessons from phase one of development and invite cross-disciplinary discussion.

Session 3.1d

Adding value to assessment and feedback

Dr Elly Vesty, Harper & Keele Veterinary School

This presentation outlines a poster-based assessment initiative designed to enhance scientific communication and feedback practices among UK undergraduate veterinary medicine students. By integrating industry engagement, public dissemination, and performance-based feedback, the approach fosters authentic learning experiences. Now in its fourth year, the initiative reflects evolving student needs and highlights the pedagogical value of multi-layered feedback. The session will explore its impact on student learning, stakeholder collaboration, and staff workload, offering insights into sustainable, discipline-relevant assessment design.

Session 3.1e

Enhancing academic writing support through AI-enabled tutoring: Reducing student anxiety and optimising faculty time allocation

Andrew Stephens and Mohammed Mustafa, Leana MSc

Academic writing anxiety and rubric alignment remain persistent challenges for students, while faculty spend disproportionate time on basic writing feedback rather than advancing subject knowledge. This issue is amplified online, where traditional support is limited. Our project developed an AI tutor to provide pre-submission guidance on writing quality and rubric compliance. Students gain confidence, reduce submission anxiety, and improve competency, while faculty reclaim time for deeper, discipline-specific engagement. Results highlight measurable improvements in student outcomes and faculty efficiency, offering institutions a scalable, cost-effective solution. Visit our poster to explore how AI can transform feedback in online higher education.

Parallel Session 3, 12:55 - 14:25, Zoom room 2

Session 3.2a

Integrating peer-led mock objective structured clinical examinations (OSCEs) into the medical curriculum: Enhancing preparedness in first-year students

Nelly Abdou and Arham Sharaz, University of Exeter

Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) are essential but often cause anxiety, especially for first-year medical students. This study evaluated a peer-led mock OSCE programme across three terms for first-year medical students (n=164), with senior students as examiners using university-aligned criteria. Pre/post questionnaires and qualitative feedback showed significant gains in preparedness (2–3 points increase, $p<.001$), reduced anxiety (72.6%→89.2%), and improved ability to think under pressure (77.4%→94.6%, $p<.01$). Students valued immediate, tailored peer feedback and reported high usefulness (>90% rating 8–10/10). Peer-led mock OSCEs enhance preparedness and confidence while offering a scalable, sustainable approach to formative assessment.

Session 3.2b

When the threat becomes a tool: Using AI to create authentic assessments for final year Life Sciences students.

Dr Emma Reid, University of Glasgow

To combat the increasing concern of unauthorised student use of generative AI in course assessments, I flipped in the narrative in my course option for final year Human Biology & Physiology undergraduates. As part of the Physiological Disorders end of course examination, students were asked to critique a previously unseen 1,000 word essay on one of the course themes, which had been generated using an AI tool. This authentic assessment enabled students as critical evaluators, and encouraged deeper engagement and understanding by shifting the focus from memorisation, to analysis and application.

Session 3.2c

Using live employer briefs as a form of authentic assessment to enhance problem solving skills: Evidence from an undergraduate psychology module

Dr Paraskevi Argyriou, Queen Mary University of London

This session examines the impact of authentic, work-integrated assessment on problem-solving skills in psychology students. Drawing on a Queen Mary Academy Fellowship project, we evaluated how a live employer brief, embedded as coursework in a final-year Psychology module, supported skills development. Students applied psychological theory to a real organisational challenge, producing evidence-based consultancy reports worth 25% of the module grade. Preliminary findings show improved problem-solving performance and positive perceptions of the assignment's role in developing critical thinking and applying expertise in real contexts. The session will share insights on co-designing assessment with employers and practical recommendations for embedding authentic assessment.

Session 3.2d

Insights from developing the university of chester's guide to authentic assessment

Dr Michelle Cordingley, University of Chester

The University of Chester's Guide to Authentic Assessment offers a framework to support the design of authentic assessments that (i) foster motivation to learn by building autonomy, competency and relatedness, (ii) support students' futures and (iii) promote positive wellbeing through inclusive and compassionate practices. The guide is accompanied by authentic assessment examples of practice from diverse subject areas. The poster outlines the guides' development, including the establishment of key themes, the collation of examples of practice and utilisation of artificial intelligence tools. Key insights, successes, and early indicators of the impact on assessment practices are shared.

Parallel Session 4, 14:30 - 15:30, Zoom Room 1

Session 4.1a

Rethinking software design assessment for the AI era

Dr Sara Hassan, Rehan Bhama and Ensi Smajli, Birmingham City University

The 2030 World Economic Forum skills framework highlights growing employer demand for critical thinking, problem-solving, and self-management skills, yet Artificial intelligence threatens developing them. This session showcases the undergraduate Software Design module at Birmingham City University, an innovative, authentic assessment co-created with industrial partners for a diverse STEM cohort. Embedding real-world enterprise case studies, inclusive assessment modes, and reflective practice, it enables learners to demonstrate skills and confidence demanded by employers in an AI-enabled world. This TEF Gold standard assessment raised student satisfaction (+10%), first-attempt pass rates (+10%), average marks (+8%), and reduced white-ethnic minority attainment gaps by 17%.

Session 4.1b

Can artificial intelligence humanise assessment?

Dr Jeffrey Vernon, Imperial College London

Increasingly we hear and read that generative AI can and should be incorporated into assessment. This session proposes an alternative viewpoint, which starts from the *differences* between human and machine intelligence. Clear thinking about the uniqueness of human intelligence can inform the design of assessments in which AI is superfluous.

We need to do this for two reasons. First: no discipline, even the study of AI itself, is truly a sub-department of AI. Second: disciplinary ways of thinking and working have their own intellectual consolations and material rewards. Let's meet and talk about the grammar of human-centered assessment.

Session 4.1c

Preparing Students for Honours Research: Process-Focused Redesign of the Literature Review Assessment in a GenAI-Enabled World

Dr Denise Hough, Barbara Mable and Victoria Paterson, University of Glasgow

We share the redesign of a literature review essay, a flagship assessment in the compulsory final year course Core Skills in Animal Biology, which prepares students for Honours research through training in statistics and literature consultation. The 2024–25 redesign emphasised process as well as product: students now submit a reflective table and annotated bibliography alongside their essay, with guidance on responsible GenAI use. This promotes transparency, academic integrity, and makes hidden skills visible. Evaluation shows increased student confidence and richer staff feedback. The approach has since been adopted by colleagues, evidencing its value as authentic preparation for future careers.

Parallel Session 4, 14:30 - 15:30, Zoom Room 2

Session 4.2a

Alternative summative assessment pilot to enhance inclusivity and student agency

Dr Jovana Radulovic and Ale Armellini, University of Portsmouth

This presentation reports on an Alternative Summative Assessment Pilot at the University of Portsmouth, involving 16 modules and over 500 students. The project investigated flexible assessment design, offering students choice of assessment instrument while maintaining academic standards. It responded to diverse learner needs and addressed aspects of the awarding gap, reflecting principles of inclusive assessment and widening participation. Drawing on learning analytics, student feedback, and module coordinator reflections, the pilot evaluated factors influencing assessment design, student choice, engagement, and grades. The session will share design approaches, key findings and practical strategies for implementing flexible and inclusive assessment in higher education.

Session 4.2b

Practicalities of optionality in chemical engineering assessment

Dr Emily Cooksey, University of Manchester

Optionality in assessments allows students to choose how they present their work, enhancing inclusivity and improving the student experience. In a third-year chemical engineering unit, students could choose between written or pre-recorded presentations. This approach has been implemented for two years, with improvements based on student feedback. The main concern for students was confidence in using different formats, while technical barriers were minimal. This talk will explore the practical implications of optionality, including the development of marking rubrics and feedback opportunities.

Session 4.2c

Student voice toolkit: A co-created resource containing tips and techniques for engaging and incorporating diverse student voices in feedback for large teaching classes

Dr Heather Yorston, Daisy Bao and professor Fiona McNeill, University of Edinburgh

Providing feedback has become a normal part of university life for students worldwide. Yet students often seem hesitant to engage with feedback processes posing challenges for improving the student experience.

A recent study was conducted which engaged students in sharing their own perceptions of feedback and co-create mechanisms for amplifying their voice and closing the 'feedback loop'. Student interns sampled student perceptions through focus groups across three Colleges in the University. This resulted in the design of an interactive toolkit, available as an open research source, with a variety of possible, inclusive feedback mechanisms which we present in this symposium.

Parallel Session 4, 14:30 - 15:30, Zoom Room 3

Session 4.3a

Beyond the red pen: A research-informed, practitioner-led design for inclusive peer feedback

Dr Shelan Jeawak, University of the West of England

This session unveils a research-informed, practitioner-led pedagogical design to enhance student engagement with feedback in group projects. Developed for computing students, it directly addresses common challenges like passive feedback use, team conflicts, and fostering inclusive learning environments. Discover how structured self and peer feedback, coupled with mentor-facilitated actionable dialogue, cultivates student feedback literacy, agency, and confidence. This highly generalisable approach empowers students to effectively engage with feedback, building crucial teamwork skills. Ideal for educators seeking practical, theory-informed strategies to transform collaborative learning.

Session 4.3b

Experiential live project adjustment for different student cohort needs – a story of geographical and generational variations

Dr David Gordon, De Montfort University

This session will describe the consideration and transition process with experiential assessments (Kolb 1984) initially from a 100% global/international MSc student cohort to a UK focused undergraduate class, with quite specific experiential, themed, industry, and employability needs. This session will describe the research, the transition process, feedback mechanisms, and early employability successes. Although the assessment is commercially focused, the process and considerations are relevant for a spectrum of academic subject areas.

Session 4.3c

Co-creating change: Partnering with students to enhance programme assessments

Dr Grazyna Grace Lipowska-Bhalla, Yasmin Yamak, Kieron Allinson and Karina Lear, University of Manchester

As the higher education landscape continues to evolve, it is important to embed student voice in reshaping assessment and feedback practices to ensure they remain inclusive and responsive to learners' needs and experiences. We developed assessment enhancement framework for a postgraduate taught programme consisting of four steps: audit, student consultation, redesign and evaluation. Following last year's symposium presentation of the audit stage, this submission focuses on the student consultation phase. Through focus groups, interviews, and questionnaires, students co-designed assessment improvements and generated key recommendations. This partnership not only amplifies student voice but

also fosters ownership, strengthens inclusivity, and informs authentic, sustainable assessment practices.

Parallel Session 5, 15:45 - 16:45, Zoom Room 1

Session 5.1a

Scaffolding assignments using self- and peer feedback

Dr Rebecca Stratling, Durham University

This presentation provides practical examples of how to structure assignments and embed them in lectures and seminars throughout a module to facilitate consistent engagement of students with the module content, help students improve their ability to structure complex problems and analysis, and enhance students' metacognitive skills development using self- and peer feedback. This method of assessment also aims to reduce students' temptation – and their ability – to try to outsource structuring of problems, investigations or complex analysis to generative AI. It is also not overly demanding on academics' workload – especially after the first iteration.

Session 5.1b

Transforming feedback: A multi-faceted strategy for better outcomes

Dr Nicola Brooks and Karina Lear, De Montfort University

National Student Survey data indicated declining satisfaction with assessment and feedback within De Montfort University's Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, despite external examiner commendation of feedback quality. Analysis suggested a language gap between staff feedback and students' ability to interpret and apply it. This project aimed to develop a resource that standardises feedback terminology and translates comments into actionable improvement strategies. By embedding this resource within marking systems and providing staff training, the initiative seeks to enhance feedback literacy and promote student engagement, with implications for wider institutional and sectoral practice

Session 5.1c

Transforming the university learning experience and enhancing student success through authentic assessment and feedback

Frantzeska Kolyda, University of Westminster

As the world becomes increasingly complex, rapidly evolving and interconnected, we need to prepare our students to be 'fit for the future' and to be able to navigate through an AI-enabled world. Assessment and feedback play a vital role in shaping the learning experience. Students are motivated and often driven by assessment. It dominates their thinking. The session focuses on two approaches of assessment and feedback within the Computing curriculum, and discusses insights, challenges and reflections. It considers strategies to encourage student participation and agency and explores the conditions that motivate students to engage with feedback.

Parallel Session 5, 15:45 - 16:45, Zoom Room 2

Session 5.2a

Designing authentic and collaborative assessments: Insights and lessons learned

Dr Celeste McLaughlin, University of Edinburgh

This oral presentation will share insights from the course lead of an Advance HE accredited 20 credit curriculum design course. The course assessments have been designed to be authentic and include options to explore GenAI in accordance with university guidance on using GenAI for academic work. This session offers an opportunity to consider the authentic nature of the assessment including collaborative group work, interdisciplinary course design, engaging in university course design processes, and exploring the role of GenAI in

curriculum design. Insights will be shared about design decisions and how these will help with the develop of feedback literacy.

Session 5.2b

Authentic assessment through AI-enabled stakeholder simulations

Dr Kennedy Ofor, University of Sheffield

In this session I will explore how generative AI was used to design authentic formative assessments that mirror real-world challenges through simulated stakeholder engagement. By embedding diverse stakeholder perspectives into tasks, students were encouraged to apply critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills beyond traditional academic contexts. The approach provided flexibility to support diverse learners, while also fostering dialogue and co-creation in assessment. Drawing on examples from engineering and transferable across disciplines, the session demonstrates how AI-enabled stakeholder simulations can transform assessment into a more inclusive, meaningful, and future-ready experience for students.

Parallel Session 5, 15:45 - 16:45, Zoom Room 3

Session 5.3a

Tailoring assessment support through transparent communication, co-creation and self-directed learning

Dr Christina Magkoufopoulou, Coventry University and Dr Anna Law and Dr Laurie Walden, University of West of Scotland, and Dr Lucie Ingram, University of West London

The Time-on-Effort-and-Task (TET) toolkit has been designed by incorporating the views of staff and students across the UK through surveys and focus groups. The toolkit aims to prompt open, transparent discussions between staff and students around the challenges of assessment. For example, the knowledge and skills that students may already have or need to develop, as well as how to maximise success, considering both time and effort investment. The toolkit helps teachers to critically review their assessments. The talk will show how this versatile toolkit can be applied for transparent communication, co-creation, or self-directed learning.

Session 5.3b

Embedding a culture of compassionate practice: Action research through staff-led innovation in assessment

Jacqui Browne, Kaplan International Pathways and Victoria Wilson-Crane, Kaplan International Pathways

How can staff be supported to innovate without being overwhelmed by top-down change? This session shares how Kaplan International Pathways are embedding action research into everyday academic life as a sustainable model for professional growth. By giving educators freedom to explore assessment challenges through the lens of compassion, we created space for inclusive, innovative practices to emerge. Examples include using WAGOLLS (What A Good One Looks Like), reframing deadlines as submission windows, and dynamic scheduling for resits. The session highlights how action research is shaping compassionate assessment across the organisation.

Session 5.3c

Final year students as co-creators of inclusive practical assessments and feedback in the life sciences

Dr Peter Moulton and Hanne Krogsaeter, University of Glasgow

Discover how inclusive assessment co-created with student partners can transform lab-based learning. This session showcases an innovative Honours project model where final-year students design contemporary, inclusive practical classes and assessments for their peers. The approach enhances engagement, skills development, and curriculum

relevance—while offering a scalable solution to growing lab capacity challenges. Learn how student-led design can embed authentic assessment, improve feedback practices, and align with employer expectations, all while strengthening belonging and inclusion across the Life Sciences curriculum.

Parallel Session 5, 15:45 - 16:45, Zoom Room 4

Session 5.4a

Sustainable peer assessment in virtual classrooms: A community of inquiry approach

Barbara Nicolls, Buckinghamshire New University

Discover how peer assessment of oral presentations in a virtual classroom can transform assessment into a sustainable, scalable and student-centred practice. Grounded in the Community of Inquiry framework, this session showcases an innovative approach that reduces staff workload, enhances assessment and feedback literacies while fostering student partnership. Learn how co-created rubrics, recorded presentations and reflective feedback cycles support ethical, valid and reliable assessment. Ideal for educators seeking practical, research-informed strategies to balance rigour with wellbeing.

Session 5.4b

Challenging wicked problems: A case study in assessment stress, digital anxiety, and culture change

Professor Bonnie Latimer, Professor Kate Borthwick and Daniel Hobson, University of Southampton

This presentation showcases a culture change initiative at the University of Southampton, addressing two linked sector-wide challenges: the stress and overwork tied to assessment for both staff and students, and the uncertainty surrounding digital technologies in assessment, especially AI. Framing these as human-centred issues, we highlight their impact on wellbeing and morale. The session begins with a strategic overview of the cultural change we want to achieve, and then turns to an interactive segment featuring a novel tool designed to gamify the process of assessment innovation and rationalisation for colleagues.

Session 5.4c

Sustainable peer assessment in student-led virtual classrooms: A community of inquiry approach

Barbara Nicolls, Buckinghamshire New University

How can peer assessment and feedback be both rigorous and sustainable in virtual classrooms? This session explores an innovative, student-led model grounded in the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework, where learners manifest teaching, social and cognitive presences co-designing and implementing assessment and feedback practices. By integrating technology and collaborative strategies, this approach enhances engagement, reduces staff workload and promotes equity. Attendees will gain practical insights into scalable assessment design that supports institutional goals while fostering inclusive learning environments. Join us to discover how peer assessment can be transformed into a sustainable, empowering tool for student success.