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# **INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE**

**22-24 June 2022  
Manchester, UK**



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present their object at the end of the course online, as a video presentation to their peers and receive feedback in supportive, small groups. Crucially, the assessment is not graded but awarded pass/fail only. As part of demonstrating engagement with the course, students are asked to; contribute to online fora discussions, clay make, grow cress, and visit green spaces in London. They are asked to make connection in their presentation between their chosen object and the wider themes of the module. By reflecting on their learning explicitly as part of the task, this is Assessment as Learning (Earle, 2013, Yan and Boud, 2021) in that, students are actively and demonstrably engaging with evidence of their achievements, understanding and feedback through the presentation task.

We present the rationale for this type of assessment within a module of this nature. We then highlight three main benefits:

- Students are developing emerging reflexivity in the way they are connecting their own sense of self and learning to an emerging understanding of issues of social justice through their engagement with the wider themes of the module. This has the potential for transformative practice in clinical education by introducing the students to different perspectives and ways of knowing (F Smyth Zahra 2018), whilst acknowledging the deep emotional component involved in learning.
- Through the assessment, the students are focusing on engagement with their own learning and seeking feedback from tutors and peers rather than being concerned with grades (Blum 2020) as is the case in all other elements of a competitive dental school programme.
- Finally, although the pre-Covid design of the module had pre-supposed an online component alongside the museum and green space outings, the launch in 2020 was in the midst of the Covid pandemic. Using data from the forums and the presentations, we tentatively propose that this explicit connection between the digital pedagogical component and the outings, through the assessment task may have helped belongingness in an otherwise isolated cohort and this may have increased the value of the module and its themes to many students.

#### Key References

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#### **Parallel Session 4 (Room 11) 17:30 - 18:00 Wednesday, 22nd June, 2022**

Presentation type Research or Evaluation Presentation Chair(s): Pete Boyd

#### **59 Reviewing pedagogic feedback practice from the Integrated Foundation Year student perspective**

Tina Harvey, Joanne Scott University of Cumbria, Carlisle, United Kingdom

#### Abstract

The transition into higher education (HE) can be challenging for many students, but in particular for those from non-traditional backgrounds. Understanding 'how to play the academic game' and adapting to the academic language and expectations can be difficult, in turn, this becoming exclusionary (Northedge, 2003). The problem occurs when educators '...take for granted that students know what to do with feedback' (Nash and Winstone, 2017:4) however the obvious fact remains that 'students cannot act on which they do not understand' (Mulliner and Tucker, 2017:268). Therefore, if students are to be academically successful, these skills are essential (Winstone, Mathlin and Nash, 2019) and pivotal when developing successful assessment practice for the long term.

Students on the Integrated Foundation Year (IFY) programme are typically from non-traditional backgrounds, which is why the aim of this project is to support their long-term academic development. Previous research has noted the importance of assessment feedback with aiding in retention and achievement for foundation students (Beaney

2006) which is a key focus of the IFY programme. Beaney (2006) continues and asserts that foundation students will be willing to work through many outside issues they may face if they feel they are gaining from their learning experiences. This was a main driver during the revalidation of the IFY programme, to create modules that were authentic to the workplace, along with embedding authentic assessment that would lead to developing employability skills and promoting life-long learning.

Research demonstrates that student insight is needed in order to be able to develop and adapt future assessment in response to feedback practice (Boyd, Hymer and Lockney, 2015; McDowell and Sambell, 1999). Hence the aim of this project was to gain students' perspective on various approaches to feedback practice, in order to identify best practice that enables students to understand, develop and progress their assessment literacy skills in preparation for progression to level 4. Applying a mixed method approach, an online anonymous questionnaire survey was deployed to 35 IFY students. Semi-structured interviews were then conducted to gain a richer depth of data. This presentation will discuss the discoveries of findings and reflect on the diverse perspectives of students' feedback preferences along with analysing the practicalities of embedding these findings into pedagogical practice within the teaching team. Finally, this presentation will highlight the next steps to this ongoing project and how improvements can be made.

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- Boyd, P., Hymer, B. and Lockney, K. (2015) *Learning teaching: becoming an inspirational teacher*. Critical Publishing: St Albans, UK.
- McDowell, L. & Sambell, K. (1999) 'Fitness for purpose in the assessment of learning: Students as stakeholders.' *Quality in Higher Education*, 5(2), pp. 107-123.
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#### **Parallel Session 5 (Piccadilly Suite) 09:30 - 10:00 Thursday, 23rd June, 2022**

Presentation type Research or Evaluation Presentation Chair(s): Stephen Rutherford

#### **100 Contextual assessment : a nuanced approach to mitigation**

Rachel Forsyth, Stephen Powell, Orlagh McCabe, Helen Laville Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, United Kingdom

#### Abstract

The coronavirus pandemic struck just before the main assessment period in UK Higher Education. Many UK universities implemented a 'no detriment policy' to guarantee that student grades in affected assessments would not have a negative impact on their final grades (QAA, 2020).

It was clearly essential to provide mitigation for campus closures, but there are potential difficulties with 'no detriment' policies. Firstly, students may progress, or graduate with, significant lacunae in core topics. This could be resolved by applying programme-level restrictions, or, for progression, by the provision of additional support, if possible, in subsequent years. Secondly, the 2020 cohort might be seen as having had an easier path to progression or graduation, whatever the quality of their actual submissions. This may have an impact on their own opportunities and self-image.

This presentation describes an approach which was designed to provide a more nuanced way of providing mitigation: contextualised assessment. We defined this as 'an approach to planning and marking assignment tasks according to criteria which are adjusted to reflect unforeseen, but that maintain robust standards'. Contextualised assessment applies to the task, not to a student's individual submission.