



Student Partnership Through Agency  
and Collaboration in Self and Peer  
Assessment Activities

## Session Content



- 
- *Potted History: The Origins and Insights of an Assessment Practice Development*
    - *Current Climate in Scottish FE Sector*
    - *Exploring Pedagogical Approaches in HE*
      - *Case Study Approach*
      - *Case Study Outline*
    - *Insight to the Students' Experience*
      - *Study Conclusion*
      - *What Happens Next?*
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## A Potted History: The Origins and Insights of Assessment Practice Development



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- *Career background*
  - *Identifying the challenges of learning at college*
  - *Early interventions through assessment*
  - *Assessment practice development*
  - *Listening to the student voice*



- *Acknowledging a compassionate approach*
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City of Glasgow College(2022); Coffield (2008); Cunningham and Roberson (2023); Guay (2021),Hattie (n/d); King (1993); Niemiec and Ryan (2009); Pappas (2013); Skills Development Scotland (2018); SQA (n/d); The World Economic Forum (2016 & 2024),Worline and Dutton (2017)

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## Scottish College Sector: The Needs and the Challenges



- Single Tertiary Enhancement Framework
- Student Partnership Ambition
- Skills Development Needs
- Reduction in Global Delivery Hours
- Independent Study Skills
- Staff Up-skilling
- Real Term Funding Cuts
- 'Chronic Underfunding'
- Industrial Action
- Poor Staff Morale

*Scottish Funding Council (SFC)(2024); Sparqs(2024); World Economic Forum(2016); Skills Development Scotland(2018); Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)(2024a); City of Glasgow College (CoGC)(2022-24); CoGC(2022); Cunningham & Robertson(2023); SFC(2021); The Herald (2024); EIS (2023); BBC (2024); The Herald (2025)*

## Exploring Pedagogical Approaches in HE



- Self-determination Through Autonomy, Competence & Relatedness
- Critical Pedagogy for Student Empowerment
- Relatedness Through Whole Class Co-Creation
- Co-creation to Support the 3C's of Collaboration, Community & Cohesion
- Dialogic pedagogies to Foster Learning, Belonging & Achievement
- Dialogue for Critical Thinking & Self-reflection
- Dialogue to Support Agency
- Compassionate Pedagogies for Wellbeing & Belonging
- Self-awareness for Inclusion & Wellbeing as an Early Intervention
- Mindful Communication to Support Belonging
- Compassion for Wellbeing & Efficacy (FE & HE)
- Compassionate Assessment to Reduce Harm & Nurture Belonging & Connectedness

- Compassionate Feedback to Encourage Criticality & Critical Thinking
- Assessment 'as' Learning to Encourage Dialogue, Co-Creation & Peer Support
- Self & Peer Assessment to Promote Autonomy
- The Challenge of Time, Resources and Morale to Implement Change in FE

*Niemiec and Ryan (2009); Guay (2021); Kincheloe (2008); Bovill (2020); May and McIntosh (2025); Felten and Lambert (2020); Mui (2013); Orr & Shreeve (2017); Bunting & Hill (2025); Harvey (2024); Bunting, Hill & Riggs (2020); Harvey & Maratos (2024); Hill et al. (2023); Greated & Quaipe (2024); Mueller (2021); Brew (1999)*

## Case Study: Supporting Agency, Belonging and Competence Through Assessment



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- *Transparency - 'lifting the veil', engaging students in dialogue to understand complex assessment criteria*
    - *Support - providing structure, encouragement, addressing concerns*
    - *Collaboration in peer assessment - group-work, movement, dialogue*

- *Critical Reflection in self-assessment*
  - *Co-Creation through Feedback*
  - *Agency - having input to decisions and taking ownership of the assessment process*
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## **Case Study Outline**

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- *Meet & Greet*
  - *Start-point - Understanding Integrated Assessment Mapping*
  - *Mid-point - Formative Peer & Self Assessment Activities*
    - *End-point - Summative reflection*
    - *Observation of Non-Verbal Feedback*
  - *Opportunities to Offer Anonymous Feedback Throughout*
    - *Interviews*
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## The Students' Experience Through Emerging Themes



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### *Emerging Themes*

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- *Underlying Capacity to Comprehend Complex Criteria*
    - *New Perspectives Through a Peer Lens*
  - *Building Confidence and Competence Through Connectedness*
    - *Untapped Hunger for Critically Reflective Practice*
      - *The Pride in Being an Effective Partner*
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### **Underlying Capacity to Comprehend Complex Criteria**

'... the actual explanation ..., it's going to have connotations of XY and Z. So you're going to need to do XY and Z to be able to pull it off.'



*'Using the sheets and using the scoring criteria information ... it was a lot easier to like ... actually take it and read it and use it'*

*'... because of that clear cut definition and and remembering the performance as they've done it and then using that performance against the criteria.'*

*'So, I think getting those sheets where we actually had like a clear definition of what this means ... we could actually ... self-assess ourselves fairly because ... I'm like very self-critical so, so having that clear cut definition and then it actually reviewing it properly like as it is not as I think it is.'*

*'So, for terms of assessment from what I remember ... we were all in the one room and we all had to write or type something ... It felt weird in that regard ... just quiet writing things down,... and then suddenly we're doing this group work where you're moving around and working in groups ... It's felt more fun ... it's a completely different shift.'*

### **New Perspectives Through a Peer Lens**

*'You really got to find out about what your peers thought. It wouldn't always be what you would expect it to be ... It's giving you stuff that your lecturers maybe haven't pointed out.'*

*'When it came to the comments and stuff like you could see what other people have put and then when you were reading that you were starting to think I can see that as well for the feedback. And then once you're writing about your own self-assessment, you're starting to kind of see what they were meaning about it.'*

*'Although it does unfortunately give people like I kind of leeway to to poke fun at people and like intentionally make bad comments. OK, that could be damaging to the person.'*

*'Hearing a peer assessment afterwards again varies on the people; there's a lot of biases that will play into it depending on who you are working with; who got given the sheet in the first place as well and also the outcome itself, and those are very important on top of a general bias'*

## **Building Confidence and Competence Through Connectedness**

*'There's like a lot of people, they would feel like focus on themselves (sic) ... So, I think with this it actually gets you to go 'Hey, there are other people. There are other people. And how are they doing?''*

*'It was a bit more, a bit more like collaboration with the actual all of us and the class actually talking to one another about how we did and what we could work on an' stuff and how we can improve it.'*

*'It ... felt like it was good to hear their feedback and then also just ... what we thought ... I thought it worked quite well. So, you felt like within your groups you were able because it was different voices that you were able to feel like it was, it was more like easier to actually fill the sheets'*

*'So because you'd worked in the group ... you could see your own work more clearly and were ... more able to assess your own work and you're able to say 'All right, OK, I see what they're doing' and you call that like a blind spot. And it's always like, you know, you're you're looking in the mirror at a car rear view mirror, and there's always a spot. There's always something you can't see.'*

## **Untapped Hunger for Critically Reflective Practice**

*'And then also help to show us as individual people that what we could work on ourselves as well, because really sometimes you don't think about it, but when you're like; we were doing the actual, like self-assessments and stuff, you got to like, think about it a lot more.'*

*'I definitely did work on all the feedback and that that I got gave. So that made me better in the actual performance or if I still have to work on some of the stuff, I then try and work on one thing at a time and I feel like in the final performance and just in general, my work has slowly started to gradually get better.'*

*'I'm on a mission on how to build myself now. It's obviously important to me because it shows like. 'Can they take what other people are saying into consideration?' And that's what I would say'*

*'Going forward I ... just like being a bit more like critical of it, just like making sure I've actually got it and then listening to it back later; a recording or something, just to see if it's actually the way I want it. And then also just kind of put myself more out there'*

### **The Pride in Being an Effective Partner**

*'It was quite good (to have a voice) and it was a bit more different as well. Felt like it was positive.'*

*'I know people do say that (they hear my voice) a lot and that but then a lot of people like forget (to take it on board) and then they'll go oh they don't actually do it but you've prove proved that you actually did'*

*'Having that ability to be able to do that and then to sort of say 'I didn't like this, but I liked doing this and I think you could do more with this' was actually a really, really smart idea.'*

*'It felt good knowing that what I say had got took him board and changed... Yeah. Yeah, it made me feel good.'*

*'It felt as though that everything that was said had been taken on board ... So, ... it was a lot more polished, it felt as though that it ran a lot more smooth and it felt as though that everything that we had brought up as problems had been fully listened to and it just made everything just run like clockwork.'*

## Conclusion



- Students can apply cognitive and processing skills to comprehend complex integrated assessment criteria and apply this understanding to their work
- Structured group-work supported their capacity to develop critical analysis and self-awareness
- Dialogic interaction with peers encouraged critical-analysis, self-awareness and self-efficacy
- Collaboration with peers supported connection, cohesion and competence
- Competence supported their autonomy, self-direction and independent study skills
- Co-creation and efficacy of partnership supported feelings of agency and wellbeing
- Partnership supports belonging and can be enabled through opportunities for feedback, co-creation and collaboration
- Students showed an appetite for further support to develop autonomy and agency
- Students showed a desire for the further reduction of assessment induced harm
- Concerns around bias, bullying and trust that would need to be addressed in future interventions

## What happens next?

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- *Demonstrate the impact of new assessment approaches across the tertiary sector*



- *Inform new assessment and feedback guidance at City of Glasgow College*
    - *Bespoke assessment development support for curriculum teams*
      - *Inform SQA Assessment Guidance for NextGen:HN*
        - *Develop further models of student support*
  - *Develop methods to address concerns raised around bias, bullying and trust*
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*City of Glasgow College (CoGC)(2026); Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)(2024b)*

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