

Fostering assessment literacy via scaffolded peer review and formative feedback cycles

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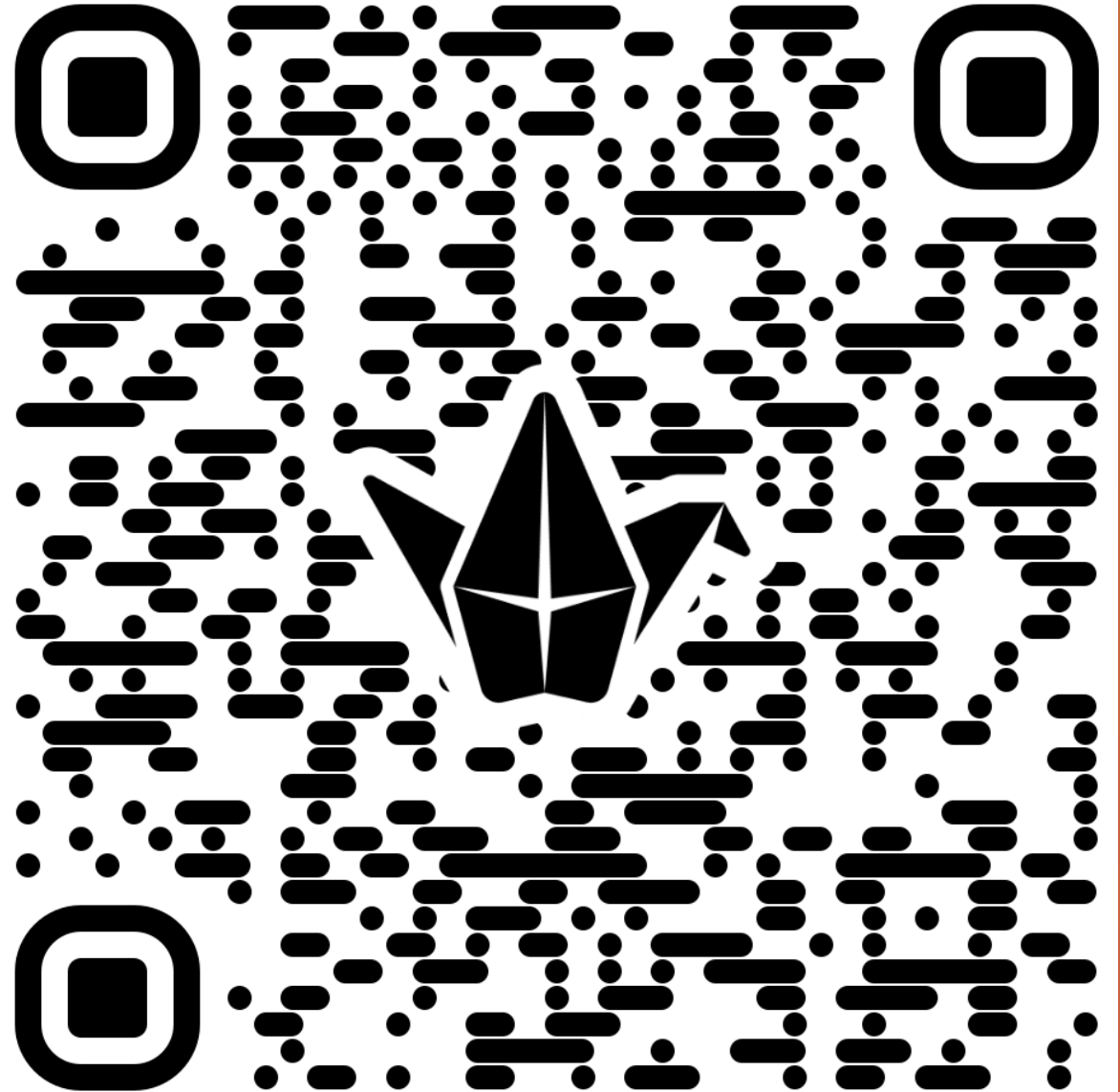
University of Southampton

Student-student peer review in
formative assessment:
What are the challenges and
opportunities?

Your thoughts please!

Please scan the QR code to access the
Padlet.

Feel free to add to the Padlet during the
talk - we'll return to it at the end to discuss
your reflections.



Overview

Our context

- Challenges with prior assessment methods

What we did

- Task design; formative assessment cycle; success criteria
- Scaffolded peer review: what it looks like

Outcomes and reflections

Our context

MA ELT/TESOL Studies
n = 180 students in '22/'23

Fully international cohort, predominantly from China



Core pedagogy module
"Principles of Communicative Language Teaching"

Compulsory;
must pass

Previously assessed
via 2 x summative
assessments (equal
weighting)

Summative
assignment: rationale
for a lesson plan

- Subject-specific and
general academic writing
skills

Our context: Challenges

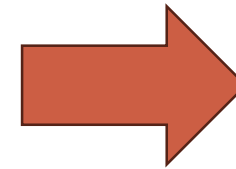
- High levels of assessment anxiety, particularly given high-stakes assessment context
- Lack of opportunities for development of student self-regulation and learner autonomy
 - Linked to traditional paradigm of “tutor provides feedback – student acts on feedback” (e.g. Nicol 2009; Sadler 2009)
- Difficulties engaging with formative assignment feedback has potential to generate further disempowerment (e.g. Green 2019)

Challenges with the 'linear' approach

Complete
summative
assignment

Tutors provide
feedback

Complete
summative
assignment



Tutors provide
feedback

What happens here?

- Few/no opportunities for Ss to engage with feedback in a guided manner
- Reduced effectiveness and uptake of feedback; limited opportunities for self-regulation
- Continued high anxiety / low self-efficacy for Assignment 2?

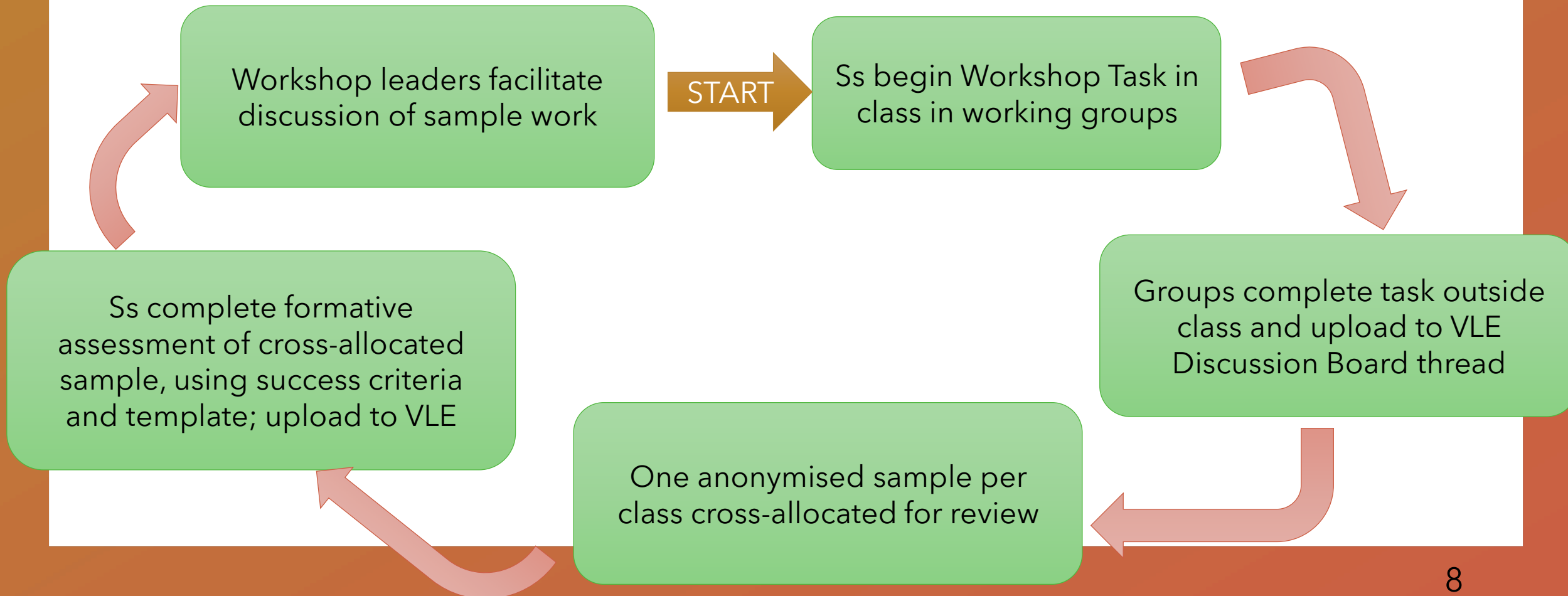
Our aim

Develop assessment literacy

- How?
 - Students produce small-scale tasks modelled after summative assignment; iterative module-length process
 - Allocated to “working groups” of 5-6 peers, in which they reviewed (anonymised) peer examples
 - Use of success criteria; “noticing” (Schmidt 1990)
 - Fortnightly workshop sessions with tutor input: additional feedback ‘strand’

What it looks like: formative assessment cycle

- Predominantly facilitated through workshops
- Students pre-allocated into "working groups" of 5-6 (approx. 5 working groups per class)



What it looks like: feedback

1. Student uploads their group's task to VLE

Student
4C-RE: Workshop Task 1
4C
4C-Workshop 1 Formative Assessment Template(1).docx (22.169 KB)

2. Non peer-reviewed groups receive written tutor feedback:

Mark Rose
RE: 4C-RE: Workshop Task 1

| |
|---|
| Does the plan align with outcomes? The plan seems to align with the first two learning outcomes. However the third - By the end of the lesson, most learners will be able to discuss their favorite mode of transportation with peers. - will be more problematic given the learner's limited command of the language (see below). |
| Are activities appropriate for age and level? The activities in the preparation and presentation stages seem well suited to the age and abilities of the learner. The production stage may be too much of a cognitive challenge - to what extent will A1 beginners be able to 'discuss' this topic? To what extent will the suggested guidance from the teacher result in a practical 'discussion'? |
| Does the rationale show knowledge of the literature, and use this effectively to justify the pedagogical choices made? You show solid awareness of LING 6041 related literature such as Ur and Nation. Your observation that effective vocabulary learning requires the use of 'high frequency and simple' words (for beginners) was a solid one. |
| Does the rationale discuss principles outlined in LING6041 content, as well as elements of a wider communicative approach. Are less communicative elements fully justified? There is awareness of principles outlined in LING6041 content. You could perhaps have explored precisely how and why multi modalities benefit student learning for example answering this question is key to showing a rationale for your lesson planning choices. |

Targeted feedback links explicitly to success criteria

How does this help to develop assessment literacy?
Tutor feedback on four categories parallel with 'success criteria' modelled on summative requirements

What it looks like: “Success Criteria”

An **excellent** response (Distinction) ...

A good response [60-69] ... (Merit)

Devises a lesson plan/stage that **mostly aligns** with the chosen learning outcome, although there may be some minor misalignment
 Includes activities that are **mostly appropriate** for both the age (adult OR young learner) **and** level (beginner) of the learners, although one aspect (age/level) may be less strong than the other
 Shows a **solid** knowledge of the literature on teaching vocabulary and uses this **mostly effectively** to justify the pedagogical choices made
 Demonstrates that principles outlined in LING6041 content (e.g. incidental vs. intentional learning), as well as elements of a wider communicative approach (e.g. student-centred learning) have been **considered in the majority of** the lesson plan/stage, with, at least **some nuance**. Any less communicative elements should be **mostly justified** e.g. with respect to learners' needs

A fair response [50-59] ... (Pass)

Devises a lesson plan/stage that **partly aligns** with the chosen learning outcome; some parts may not be well-aligned
 Includes activities that are **partly appropriate** for the age (adult OR young learner) **and/or** level (beginner) of the learners; some aspects of learner characteristics may not have been considered
 Shows **some** knowledge of the literature on teaching vocabulary and **begin to** use this to justify the pedagogical choices made
 Begins to demonstrate that principles outlined in LING6041 content (e.g. incidental vs. intentional learning), as well as elements of a wider communicative approach (e.g. student-centred learning) have been **considered in some parts of** the lesson plan/stage. Less communicative elements should be, at least partly, **justified**

A **weaker** response (Fail) ...

Lipnevich et al. (2014: 540):

Effective FA involves students understanding:

- their current performance;
- the desired state;
- how to “mind the gap” or reduce this difference

Assessed in the summative assignment:

- **Alignment of planned activities with learning outcome**
- **Consideration of learner characteristics e.g. age, proficiency**
- **Subject understanding; use of literature to justify pedagogical choices made**
- **Understanding of broader pedagogical principles reinforced throughout module**

Scaffolding feedback literacy

6. Evaluate this work by completing the sentence and listing the information required below:

Section A

Now look at the Success Criteria for Workshop Task 1. Each has 3 bullet points which are arranged thus:

- Criterion 1 – alignment with learning outcomes
- Criterion 2 – appropriateness of lesson activities
- Criterion 3 – knowledge of literature
- Criterion 4 – consideration of LING6041 principles

List two things this example has done well. For each one, list a point from your chosen mark band in box 1, cut and paste the point into box 2, commenting on in box 2, and then put your reasons as to why you think it requires improvement in box 3:

Example 1

| | |
|--|--|
| Box 1: Success criteria bullet point (Mark:): | Box 1: Su |
| Box 2: Rationale extract: | Box 2: Rd |
| Box 3: Why you think this is a good example? | Box 3: Why you think this is a good example: |

List one thing this example could do to improve. Cut and paste a point from your chosen mark band in box 1 that you think could be improved, extract from the rationale you are commenting on in box 2, and then put your reasons as to why you think it requires improvement in box 3:

Box 1: Success criteria bullet point:

Box 2: Rationale extract:

Box 3: Why you think this could be improved?

Section B

Complete this sentence below – do not forget to delete the words in the [brackets] that you do not need:

We think this example is a [mostly/somewhat] [excellent/good/fair/weaker] response because....

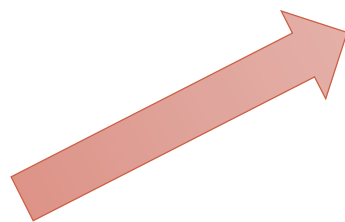
If we want students to engage in practices such as peer feedback that may fall outside of their culturally-embedded pedagogical expectations, we have to give them a clear « road map » and motivation for doing so.

Developing assessment and feedback literacies: Example

Success Criteria

A good response [60-69] ...

- Devises a lesson plan that **mostly aligns** with the chosen learning outcome, although there may be some minor misalignment
- Shows a **generally solid understanding** of Scrivener's (1994) model (authentic/restricted exposure, noticing, self/guided discovery, authentic/restricted output), although this may not be consistent across all stages. There is a **good attempt** to integrate the model into the lesson plan
- Makes **mostly relevant and accurate** reference to a range of literature to support the pedagogical choices made
- Demonstrates that principles outlined in LING6041 content (e.g. restricted v authentic output), as well as elements of a wider communicative approach (e.g. student-centred learning) have been **considered in the majority of** the lesson plan/stage, with, at least **some nuance**. Any less communicative elements should be **mostly justified** e.g. with respect to learners' needs



Example 1

Box 1: Success criteria bullet point (Mark:60-69):

Shows a **generally solid understanding** of Scrivener's (1994) model (authentic/restricted exposure, noticing, self/guided discovery, authentic/restricted output), although this may not be consistent across all stages. There is a **good attempt** to integrate the model into the lesson plan

Box 2: Extract from student work above:

In the lesson plan the 'fill in the blanks exercise' emphasizes the application of grammatical rules through an explicit learning activity and is a form of restricted input. Scrivener (1994) notes that the early stages of language learning often require more explicit teaching and practice of grammatical rules.

Box 3: Why you think this is a good example?

This is a good example of providing a reason for using a more controlled form of practice and it shows good awareness of Scrivener's use of restricted exposure (as his model calls it). As the class mainly contains early stage learners who would benefit from having more scaffolded guidance in this way this also shows that the plan is aware of the needs of the learner class group.

Student Response

Student perceptions: Mid-module feedback

What do you like about the module? What should we continue doing?

I have the opportunity to **share my opinions with my groupmate**. I like this very much.

The **group work was needed**, and I was sent to a group with strange [unfamiliar] classmates. It makes me communicate with new friends and ideas.

The workshop is a **good exercise for preparing the assignment** and engaging with classmates.

The process of **assessing other's work by a certain criterion**

Teachers... **[k]eep tracking students' feedback and learning process** to prevent students from not keeping up.

I also prefer workshop tasks and **we can also get feedback to review**.

Teamwork in workshop

It is interesting that **we can give marks and feedback** to peers' work

After the workshop, **I can get feedback so that I know what needs to be improved**.

Group discussion is great for **fostering our oral English ability**

[The module structure] can underpin what we have learned and **check whether we can put knowledge into practice**, which is useful.

Student perceptions: Mid-module feedback

Is there anything you think we should change about the module?

I hope everyone can write their own lesson plans every week, and then **the teacher will give detailed one-to-one comments and revision suggestions. Only in this way can I get promoted**

Too much group work, **individual work should be encouraged**

Honestly, **I will not read others' work after the class.**

Group members are **not active**

It rarely exercises my ability of writing lesson plans, because I can only write some parts in group cooperation each time, and **the feedback is from students, which is not professional**

Challenges:

1. Low levels of self-regulation - not a 'quick fix' scenario
2. Not all are immediately convinced of benefits of group work/feedback and prefer an individual approach
3. Perception that teacher feedback is superior to student feedback

Wider outcomes

Summative performance

Average score 1.5 marks higher than '22/'23

Reduction in failed scripts and in scripts achieving lowest passing category ("Pass"/ 50-59)

Increase in scripts in two highest categories:
Merit (60-69) **+13.8%**, now the most frequently-awarded category (was Pass);
Distinction (70+) **+2.1%**

Progressive perception shift

From '23/'24 Semester 2 mid-term feedback:

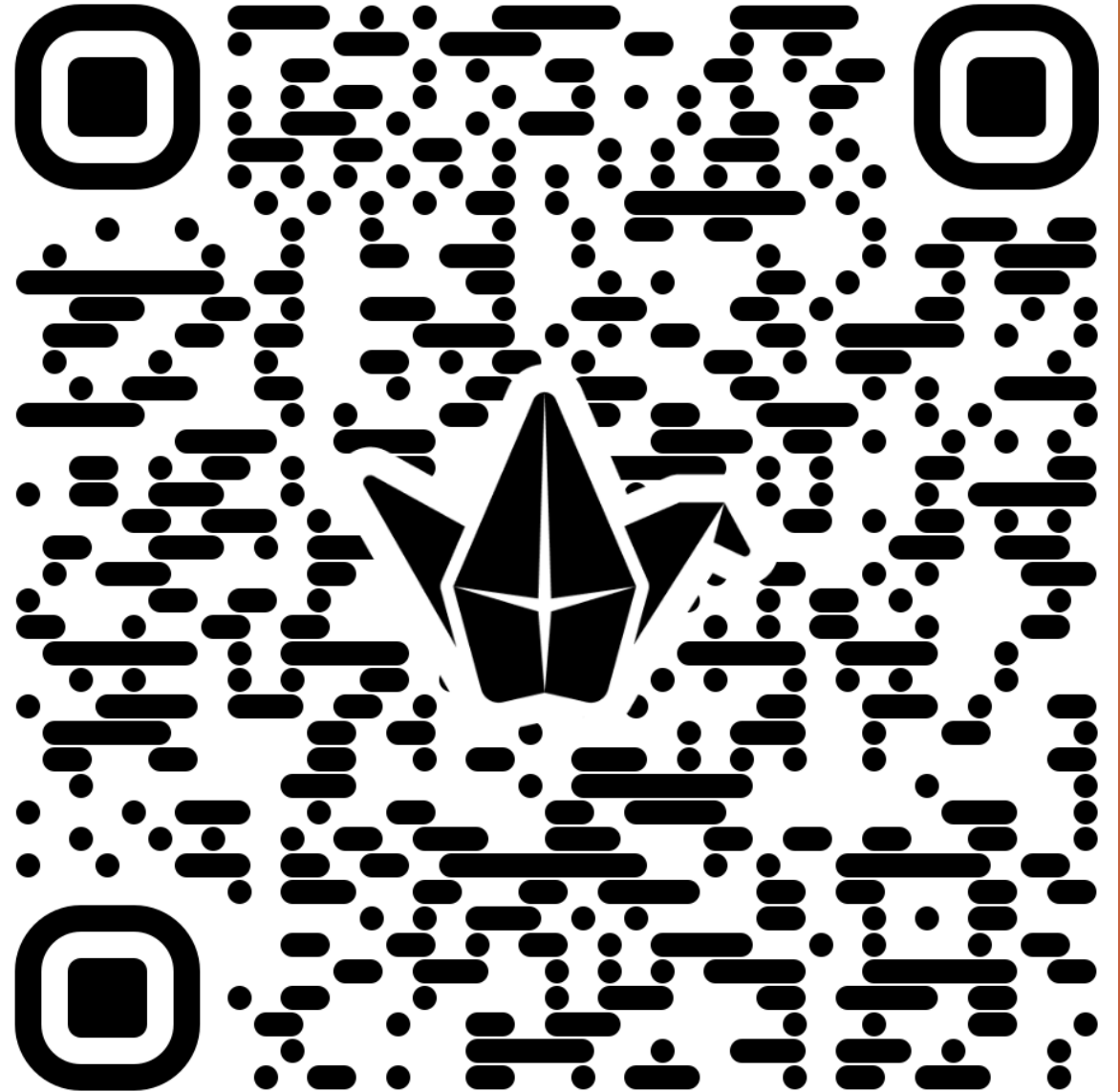
"I think I gradually learned how to justify my lesson plan... The formative assessment is also helpful because it's a kind of example of justification for us to reflect on our learning."

Final reflections:

- Keys to building assessment and feedback literacies in UKHE
 - **Scaffolding**: gradual introduction to disciplinary/institutional requirements
 - **Iterativity**: Regular opportunities to engage and experiment in a lower-stakes, structured context; creation of dialogue
 - **Peer review**: safe, relaxed environment to discuss and benchmark performance (see also [Student learning and peer support](#) (Advance HE), Lochtie & McConnell 2024)

Your reflections: Padlet

- Any similar experiences to the challenges discussed in the example?
- Did you resolve them in a similar way or differently?
- Any differing experiences with formative assessment and/or peer review?



Thanks for your
attention!
Any questions?

**Resource sharing (success criteria,
feedback templates):**

Requests welcomed via email

(A.J.F.Wallington@soton.ac.uk)



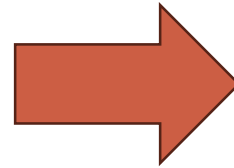
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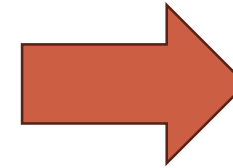
Workload implications

Complete
summative
assignment

Tutors provide
feedback



Complete
summative
assignment



Tutors provide
feedback

Evans 2013: uptake of feedback is critical, but equally key are the demands of feedback provision on instructors

- **Summative 2000-word assessment** – 180 scripts x 45 mins = **135 hours**
+ moderation
- **Revised formative assessment:**
 - 36 groups x 20-30 mins = 12-18 hours x 5 weeks = 60-90 hours
 - Average approx. **70-75 hours total**

Padlet link

- <https://padlet.com/ajfwallington/student-peer-review-for-formative-feedback-opportunities-and-ym7mryg7kefg5idg>