



## HEA Patchwork Assessment Practice Guide

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# 1. Introduction

This Guide is designed to help practitioners to develop patchwork assessment processes across a range of domains and levels and to aid subsequent implementation. It starts by providing practitioners with a working definition; it articulates a set of overarching principles for patchwork processes; covers the parameters of patchwork assessment, outlining also what falls outside of scope; it considers the implications for staff when operationalising patchwork assessment processes and the possible impact on students; finally it provides brief synopses of others' work in this domain alongside further resources. The intention is to build confidence in those seeking to use more inclusive forms of assessment - of which it is advocated that patchwork assessment processes can make a substantial contribution - and a longer-term ambition is to develop an emerging network of practitioners who can use this Guide as a conduit for sharing further ideas and to use as a springboard for taking patchwork processes to a new level. The Guide should be read in conjunction with the illustrative case studies and with the [HEA Framework for transforming assessment in higher education](#) (2016) against which many of its key principles are aligned.

## 2. Patchwork assessment

### 2.1 Definition

One of the key architects of patchwork assessment processes, Richard Winter, offers the following explanation:

"The essence of a patchwork is that it consists of a variety of small sections, each of which is complete in itself, and that the overall unity of these component sections, although planned in advance, is finalized retrospectively, when they are 'stitched together'."

*Winter (2003: 112)*

Often the word 'text' is used as an adjunct to patchwork, so the term patchwork text is most commonplace. In recognition of the progress made over the last decade of this form of assessment, this Guide refers deliberately to patchwork assessment processes instead as it is recognised that some forms of the patchwork process may be used without text, i.e. in the visual or performing arts, or may be used in cognate areas but where students use other forms of communication in consort with written text as part of an integrative patchwork process. Scale is also worthy of note. When Scoggins and Winter first posited their notions of patchwork assessment in 1999, the assumption was that this form of assessment would relate to modules and sessions in which individual pivotal learning moments and tasks would be documented and stitched together over a period of weeks. Whilst this approach still prevails, there are many other examples - see the range of approaches in the illustrative case studies - in which patchwork assessment processes have been scaled-up across programmes, devised across

many subject and disciplinary areas and academic levels, and delivered over substantial periods of academic study to become meta-patchwork assessment processes.

## 2.2 Key principles of patchwork assessment

The following points are provided to help practitioners determine the key constituents of patchwork processes. These principles are not exhaustive and they merely contribute to an evolving body of practice.

- Within higher and further education, the emphasis is upon learning that is **student-centred, inclusive, personalised, and contextualised within the real world**. This is an area of focus in the *HEA Framework for transforming assessment in higher education* (2016); hence patchwork assessment meets the Framework criteria of being 'challenging, realistic and meaningful' (p.3).
- All patchwork assessment processes require **continuous justification throughout**, therefore developing skills of synthesis and reflection as part of an integrative learning process.
- **Continuous formative feedback** is supported by **peer engagement**, another area of focus in the *HEA Framework for transforming assessment in higher education* (2016). Students engage in deep and meaningful feedback with each other and students should have the opportunity to support their peers whilst working in reflective groups.
- **Bespoke learning underpins the process** as it is the student who chooses the pivotal learning moments for each of the patches that are significant to them, within their own setting.
- **Articulation of experience is at the centre of the learning process** in which the episodes of learning are placed within a wider context by the student 'stitching' together a justified meaning of their theory and practice.
- The patchwork assessment process is designed so that **the student can experience continuous assessment which encourages deep and transformative learning** and helps to develop an understanding of complex inter-relationships.
- The **process supports an array of flexible pedagogies such as constructivist theories, flipped classroom** and other **student-focused pedagogies**. Due to its malleability and application, it is appropriate for students undertaking a variety of disciplinary studies or professional practice development at a variety of levels of study.

## 2.3 Relationship to the HEA Framework for transforming assessment in Higher Education

Patchwork assessment processes are closely aligned with the *HEA Framework for transforming assessment in Higher Education* (2016). This framework is both evidence-based and experience-informed and is aligned to the UK Professional Standards Framework. It can be adapted and applied to different disciplines, modes of study and institutional contexts by a wide range of users. The Framework recognises that full engagement in assessment can make a very positive impact upon student learning and satisfaction.

Specifically:

- Patchwork assessment processes provide a cumulative set of formative assessment opportunities which can then be stitched together to produce a fully-justified summative account; with formative assessment thoroughly integrated within the learning and teaching process
- Due to the use of diverse assessment methods which underpin the patchwork process, validity, authenticity and inclusivity can be improved thus maximising the relevance to students within their own learning context
- Patchwork assessment processes prioritise opportunities for self and peer-assessment within the learning and teaching ethos, therefore enhancing students' understanding, trust and value in this as a meaningful assessment process
- The design of patchwork assessment approaches fosters student development in academic literacies by introducing students to writing and justification as a social and collaborative practice which is continuous and evolving
- Patchwork assessment promotes assessment for learning rather than assessment of learning, which is often designed to prove that learning outcomes have been achieved.

## 2.4 What patchwork assessment embodies

There are several aspects to note, relating to the pragmatic underpinning of patchwork assessment when introducing it within the curriculum, including:

- As Winter (2003) notes it always **requires a pattern that stitches together meaning**; hence, the whole entity has to be more than the sum of its 'patches'
- The patchwork process works best within a **teaching and learning philosophy of active and participatory engagement**. The design of a patchwork assessment assumes that students will engage willingly in sense-making activities, often facilitated by building-in co-design mechanisms from the outset
- It is **always owned by the student**. Scaffolded opportunities are essential to develop engagement but it is the student's selection, critique and justificatory narrative that really matter to make it a unique and authentic account
- It is a **rigorous and deliberative process developed over time** which synthesises a range of materials and insights whilst being held to continuous scrutiny by self and peer-review
- It is a **flexible and evolving process** in which learning accumulates over time, involving elements of retrospection, in-the-moment thinking and future-proofing that occurs synchronously
- It is a tool that enables students to develop and practice **graduate skills that are desirable to employers** such as problem solving, critical thinking, concise writing, and communication skills
- The patchwork process **seeks to extend personal, professional and theoretical boundaries** by developing and disrupting assumptions about knowledge and its application to context
- It is an opportunity for students to develop proficiency in a **wider range of writing skills than more traditional assessments**.

## 2.5 What patchwork assessment is not

Since the inception of patchwork assessment processes, there has been some ambiguity between this emerging form of assessment and various others, such as portfolios. The following section clarifies the differences for the practitioner.

- The patchwork assessment process is **not synonymous with a portfolio** approach (electronic or otherwise) as it is primarily concerned with cumulative gatherings of pivotal learning moments which are then justified. It does not act as a repository for professional development, per se.
- It is **not purely theoretical as its strength is in the application of cumulative learning within a specific context**. This allows the student to view the learning through a multiplicity of lenses and settings.
- A **patchwork assessment process is not a random set of items or ideas**. The 'stitching' together of links between the patches is crucial and these often become more complex, closely aligned and robust as the student becomes more confident in developing their skills of synthesis and reflection at the same time.
- **The process is not teacher-led**. Considerable direction may be needed at the outset in order to guide the student to confidently seek out pivotal learning episodes within the context of an unfamiliar approach. This input should reduce proportionately as the student's understanding, confidence and creativity grows during the process.

## 3. Considerations and implications

### 3.1 Considerations for staff

- Staff need to explain why the patchwork assessment process is an empowering yet challenging tool for student learning. It is **useful to articulate the skills students will develop if engaging fully with patchwork processes** such as: reflective writing; critical and creative thinking; synthesis and retrospection.
- **Introduce the concept to students in a deliberative and highly-prepared manner**. It is always useful to foreground the process with preparatory workshops on reflective writing, peer-review, use of formative and diagnostic feedback and some structured sessions on skills development to build confidence.
- Given that this might feel like an alien concept for some students, **scaffolding via use of worked exemplars, construction of a set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and early exposure to 'safe' peer critique** is essential.
- Be prepared for resistance! To develop effective patchwork assessment processes, **academic staff will have to unlearn some of their thinking and practices in order to become more effective facilitators of learning in partnership** with students and – if relevant – with employers as co-creators of knowledge and insight, rather than acting solely as gatekeepers of academic standards.
- **Patchwork assessment processes work best when constructively aligned** (Biggs 2003); hence, activities, evidence and assessment criteria should be based closely on the stated learning or programme outcomes and - due to the flexible nature of patchwork assessment - students should be involved in negotiating these parameters wherever

possible. (It is important to remember though that the learning is not solely about meeting the learning outcomes, but these do provide useful anchor points).

- **There are many operational considerations and logistics involved in designing successful patchwork assessments.** It is useful to consider: timing - especially if using the process at a meta-level as it is important that students gain a sense of the cumulative nature supporting this process; the pattern, pace and scale underpinning the process - for example, the extent to which the structure should be proscribed as part of the essential scaffolding process; the organisation and form of 'patches' - in determining how many episodes of learning the process should comprise and how these are introduced; whether there is an overarching theme to the 'stitching' and whether unravelling of connections are encouraged; whether students have free choice in selecting the type of patches and content, or whether there is a balance of compulsory and student selection.
- **Technology is now being used increasingly to enhance learning within patchwork assessment** from submission through to feedback. This can be used within the patchwork process to enhance student learning; however it is important that the technological infrastructure and systems are in place at the outset, e.g. to support students sharing their learning via any virtual learning platforms or social media.
- Due to the student-centred nature of patchwork assessment, staff may need to re-configure timetables and resources to support **small group seminars spread across the whole assessment process** as opposed to solely using lectures or tutorials.

### 3.2 Strategic implications for institutions

- The **scale and type of patchwork assessment processes used might test existing quality systems to destruction, if unprepared.** Therefore, it might be prudent to introduce patchwork assessment at a small-scale initially to test out the infrastructure with minimal disruption; especially if existing arrangements have been built around notions of linear not cumulative and flexible assessment.
- Patchwork assessment processes can **gain traction by being incorporated within approvals and validation procedures that recognise flexible pedagogies as desired practice** not as extreme outliers or as something 'special'.
- To engage fully with patchwork assessment processes **institutions need to consider widespread staff development opportunities** as a range of staff may be unfamiliar or uncomfortable with such a flexible process - and - one that challenges traditional academic identity to some extent. It should also be considered as part of a wider change-management process embracing flexible pedagogies.
- The emerging evidence-base concerning the **benefits realised by students and staff should be highlighted to drive forward evidence-informed practice.** Showcasing impact and recognising the positive effect on employability development should be considered as a conduit for change.

### 3.3 Implications of patchwork assessment and impact on students

- Students need to be **encouraged to develop trust in the process over time.** This can be achieved by using the experience of other students' positive stories - including their misgivings at the start - as a key starting point about the power of patchwork assessment.

Other strategies to build confidence can include: peer critique of existing exemplars; starting with a patchwork diagram in which formative rationales can be shared and revisited at a later date; developing robust FAQs about the process by getting completing students to write the questions and formulate solutions.

- > The **language of the patchwork assessment process can appear very alien at the outset to under-confident students**. Careful thought should be given to ways of framing the process linguistically so that it does not appear too novel or special; it might be useful to consider some synonyms for 'patchwork' such as on-going narrative, evidenced story or collage of incidents. These terms will be driven by the nature of the subject area and the language underpinning each relevant knowledge base.
- > **Ensure that patchwork processes are inclusive by encouraging students to use a range of resources to exemplify their learning episodes**. For example, an over-reliance on the visual portrayal of objects alone as signifiers can lead to students placing too much effort in finding a clever object rather than considering the meaning underpinning the selection. This can be avoided by having a wide range of patch exemplars in which words, objects, drawings and idioms are used to demonstrate the expansive repertoire from which students can choose, in accordance with their own learning styles.
- > **Be realistic with students from the outset that this is one of the most challenging yet productive assessment processes** they will undertake. Managing expectations regarding what the process is and what it isn't is certainly crucial for fostering engagement; hence, academic teams will need to provide continuous guidance and support to scaffold learning in creating more balanced interactions and relationship-building so that students take ownership of their own learning process.
- > **Draw on the evidence base to reassure students about the efficacy of the process** when compared with more traditional summative forms of assessment. The comparative analysis undertaken by Smith & Winter (2003) concluded that patchwork assessment is more successful than the traditional essay in encouraging students to present inherent complexities and dilemmas, whilst demonstrating independent critical thinking. The opportunities that a 'meta' patchwork process affords to digest and reflect and to give and receive feedback appears inherent to the development of autonomous learners as outlined in the illustrative case studies.

## 4. Questions for practitioners

In this *Guide* we have advocated why patchwork assessment processes can be part of a positive shift towards more student-centred learning. In considering the value of patchwork assessment, practitioners might wish to reflect on the following questions to aid decision-making about adopting this innovative approach:

- > To what extent do your existing assessment processes prioritise cumulative learning that integrates both summative and formative assessment opportunities?
- > How relevant are your assessment methods for all students?
- > Do you prioritise opportunities for self and peer-assessment within learning and teaching in order to enhance students' understanding, trust and value?
- > Consider whether your existing assessment approaches foster student development in academic literacies as part of an evolving social and collaborative practice?

> How do you promote assessment *for* learning rather than assessment of learning?

## 5. In conclusion

This *Patchwork Assessment Practice Guide* has outlined some of the key requirements and considerations when introducing patchwork assessment processes as part of an inclusive curriculum. When read in conjunction with the illustrative case studies, further practitioner synopses at the end of this *Guide* and the *HEA Framework for transforming assessment* (2016) it should provide practitioners with the confidence to begin the process of designing their own effective patchwork assessment approaches. Although patchwork assessment is not a new phenomenon, it is not widely reported at present, although the authors of this *Guide* assume that it occurs at a much greater scale than is visible. It is clear that the well-designed patchwork assessment process develops student autonomy and provides a context for continuous reflection, synthesis and application, yet all of this is embedded in a bespoke method underpinned by principles of student-led learning. It is also characterised by a high degree of relevance that students really value.

The authors hope that this *Guide* - and its ancillary materials - has provided a compelling rationale for those previously-undecided staff and for practitioners coming to this concept afresh whom now might feel in a position to try it out. For further support, please consider the listed resources at the end of the *Guide* and consult the synopses detailing the work of other practitioners who have developed patchwork assessment in the H.E. domain.

The authors are very happy to receive further contact directly if practitioners would like more support, advice and guidance concerning this fantastic form of emancipatory assessment!

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### 6.1 Patchwork assessment references and other related resources

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assessment in higher education. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International* 40 (2): 112-122.

## 6.2 Practitioner exemplars

The following practitioners have provided synopses of their work using patchwork assessment processes and / or related philosophies. Please contact them directly for more details.

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**Contact:** Lydia Arnold, Educational Development and Quality Enhancement, Harper Adams University

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### **Description:**

The Harper Adams University Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Supporting Learning utilises a patchwork media approach (see Arnold, Williams & Thompson, 2009). Patches are created using individually negotiated tools, formats and genres; these are then shared for feedback and peer and tutor-led discussion. Students choose the media and genre of each patch according to a range of personal priorities, including i) the time available ii) personal development goals related to technology iii) potential usability of the artefact in 'real life' iv) as the programme content is about teaching and learning, the students sometimes wanted to try out formats that they would like to use with their students. Media types included narrated presentations, posters, videos, and reports that could actually be used (e.g. a committee paper recommending module design changes). A marking rubric, which transcended format and media issues, was created; this was very detailed in outlining academic demands and coverage. Finally, a stitching piece was required to locate personal learning gains. To overcome the challenge of weak reflection, a questioning framework was offered to support stitching: this was a list of reflective questions that students could select and choose to answer through their final piece.

### **Impact:**

- The treatment of learning in patches, with social interaction and self was personally transformational for some: "[The patches] ha[ve] enabled me to piece together various elements of what I do as a tutor...compare my experiences to that of my peers and modify my own teaching habits accordingly; indeed without the benefit [this], I feel any improvements in my teaching as a result of simply repeating classes and refining accordingly by myself, 'in isolation' as it were, would have been of limited value in the long term" (Student).
  - Students created artefacts that they could use in their everyday work role, or that they could share with real impact.
  - Media playfulness enabled new methods to be passed on in the teaching of course participants.
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**Contact:** Jill Barber, Manchester Pharmacy School, University of Manchester

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**Description:**

Critical Analysis and Communication is a 30-credit final year unit, set up as an alternative to the laboratory-based research project and designed to address the intended learning outcomes of the project that are of most use to practising pharmacists: that students should be able (1) confidently and impartially to analyse published medical literature from all sources, including newspapers and the primary scientific literature and (2) to communicate their findings clearly to healthcare professionals and the public. The first five mark-bearing assignments involve group work (typically 5 teams of 5) in which each group analyses an article for bias, error, selective reporting etc., and presents findings orally. Staff give feedback both orally and in writing. Each group leader also gives feedback to group members, which is marked. Then each student writes a short "True or False" analysing (usually) a recent health-related news story and role-plays a pharmacist counselling a patient on the same subject. Members of the public (usually from U3A groups) help mark these role-plays and give feedback. Most of semester 2 is spent either on a short non-laboratory-based project or on designing a project protocol. This is assessed by oral presentation and by written report.

**Impact:**

- > Students like the unit, and believe it will be useful, giving it very high marks in the unit evaluation questionnaires.
- > Attendance at taught sessions is excellent, usually with no unexplained absences, even among students with relatively poor attendance records.
- > Students become very confident in giving presentations.
- > Students tend to do well, but detailed analysis reveals that most students who achieve a degree class higher than expected actually perform well across the fourth year material, suggesting that this unit supports their other learning.

**Contact:** Michelle Cottle, School of Education, University of Roehampton

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**Description:**

The BA Early Childhood Studies at the University of Roehampton is designed to provide students with a deep understanding of young children and early childhood through research, theory, policy and practice. The HE3 Professionalism and Advocacy module equips students to become principled professionals and advocates in the field. Through the patchwork text, we encourage students to reflect on different facets of their professional principles and practice in context of policy development and academic research. They develop their critical thinking skills and knowledge, and develop as advocates for young children and their families. The patchwork text framework is distinctive in providing a supportive framework for both individual and collaborative reflection on challenging topics. Each week, a 500 word patch is set related to lecture content, and students engage in peer review of these the following week. In line with the principles of patchwork text assessment, the tutor's role is to encourage students to

collaboratively develop their own judgments about what comprises good writing. The patches involve different styles of writing including reflective writing, reviews of books and articles and a letter to their MP drawing on political issues of their own choosing, based on a round table, student-involved policy debate. Two formative patches and six summative patches are submitted.

### **Impact:**

- > Students' evaluations demonstrate that they value the feedback from their peers and the patchwork process.
  - > They value the range of topics, that allow them gradually to develop a confidence in understanding the importance of professionalism and advocacy in early years (evidenced in their final reflective patch on personal and academic development).
  - > Some students send their letters to their local MP and several have received responses.
  - > This year, students set up an Early Childhood Society (open to all interested parties). They met throughout the year to discuss issues of policy and practice.
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**Contact:** Julia Fotheringham, Department of Learning and Teaching Enhancement, Edinburgh Napier University

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### **Description:**

The PG Cert Learning Teaching and Assessment Practice is a programme for staff new to teaching in higher education. The assessment strategy is by way of a patchwork text developed in an e-portfolio together with three supporting learning contracts. The programme comprises a single 60 credit module containing nine learning outcomes organised into three thematic areas. At the start of each trimester, students agree with their personal development tutor (PDT) their choice of three learning outcomes to be worked on, drawing up their learning contract containing details of the three reflective patches which will be developed together with supporting evidence obtained from students' own practice. The completed patchwork text consists of nine critically-reflective patches (700 words maximum per patch) and a wrap-around reflection (2,500 words maximum). Assessment criteria for the patchwork text include:

- Provide evidence of critical reflection on own practice
- Provide evidence of critical engagement with literature and other relevant sources.

Students share their patchwork text with their PDT and their choice of other students on the programme. Formative feedback is provided at two points throughout the trimester, with a final summative assessment of the completed patchwork text at the end of the third trimester.

### **Impact:**

- > The flexibility inherent in the patchwork text strategy enables students to align their programme of study with priority areas of their practice.
- > Students are able to share their assessment products with their choice of participants which encourages collaboration and sharing of practice across the university.

- The e-portfolio is integrated with the virtual learning environment which creates opportunities for students to develop their digital literacy and to explore technologies which may be useful in their own teaching practice.
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**Contact:** Alfredo Gaitán, Department of Psychology, University of Bedfordshire

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**Description:**

Our experience of running a level 6 unit on 'Critical Social Psychology', until 2008 had been that the stronger students engaged with challenging readings and produced good essays, but the weaker students struggled with complex epistemological concepts and disengaged; many of them failed to submit or resorted to plagiarism. We wanted everybody to benefit and learn. Therefore, in 2009 the teaching team redesigned the two assessments, as well as the tutorials. Based on notions inspired by experiential learning, students chose a broad topic of interest and wrote the first assessment drawing on their prior knowledge and experiences. In the second assessment students continued to work on the same topic, in a structured sequence, searching for answers to questions they themselves generated and refined through group discussion; this assignment drew on inquiry-based learning. In 2010, the second assessment was turned into a patchwork text assessment to be written as a blog in Pebble Pad. It is 2,500 words long and is made up of four short pieces of text and a final commentary. This was managed as an action research project with a second cycle in 2012-13 which allowed continuous evaluation and refinement. It is still in place with very positive results.

**Impact:**

- Consistent impact on academic performance (over the last six years): very high submission rates, no plagiarism and high pass rates.
  - Students acknowledge that the patchwork text assessment supports their learning, in the in-depth interviews carried out as part of the projects, and in the unit evaluation survey: less stress, greater sense of control, more engagement with learning.
  - The analyses carried out as part of the research projects have allowed the process to describe the structures of the students' arguments as well as shifts in thinking which could not be captured by other types of assessments.
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**Contact:** Paul Hewson, School of Computing, Electronics and Mathematics, University of Plymouth

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**Description:**

Based on a long standing optional module which provided some Mathematics students with the opportunity to spend 20 days within a school environment, we introduced a final year optional module "Mathematics in Industry". The aim of this "Mathematics in Industry" module was not to introduce new mathematical material that might be relevant in industry; rather it was to provide students with the opportunity to develop skills in problem solving and communicating

concepts. A substantial element of the module was to complete a short but realistic work-based scenario either in industry or in the public sector. One of the learning outcomes required that students “understand the needs of clients and appreciate the difficulties that some clients encounter understanding mathematical and statistical concepts” and a further learning outcome asked students to “reflect critically”. Assessment of such learning is likely challenging in any environment but is particularly challenging for staff and students used to working within a traditional mathematics environment with conventional mathematics assessments. A formal patchwork of four elements (a presentation and three distinct written components) was required for assessment, with students strongly encouraged to use formative assessment as well as making use of peer assessment before final submission of a completed portfolio.

### **Impact:**

- An appreciation that reflection is a powerful learning event in its own right. This is particularly valuable where perceptions might be that “mastery of a new technique” is the most important aspect of learning.
  - The patchwork assessment helped develop self-awareness and critical reflection; whilst these are often key graduate employability attributes opportunities to develop them are not always easily found otherwise.
  - The patchwork assessment modelled the importance of communication and helped to reinforce the development of this skill.
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### **Description:**

In its new Certificate to support the professional development of veterinary general practitioners, the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons required universities to include a professional (non-technical) skills module, alongside clinical modules, for the first time. The curriculum developed by the Royal Veterinary College has organised the learning outcomes into broad themes, such as communication skills, leadership and team-working, ethics and professional development, with participants choosing five foci for self-directed study, supported by advice on reflective writing and a ‘starter’ reading list. Participants are directed to structure these individually-themed pieces around an experience or series of experiences which they review in a critically-reflective fashion, in the context of broader professional and business-related literature. Following this informed reflection, participants indicate ways they have changed or intend to change their working practice. Individual pieces are graded and receive feedback on content and the sophistication of the reflective writing. At the end of the module, participants complete a reflective summary piece building on the individual themes and the feedback received. Unlike traditional lecture-based professional development that has little long term effect on practice; participants report profound effects and often describe this module as the most important professional development experience of their careers.

**Impact:**

- Relevant and meaningful professional development that results not just in new knowledge but changed practice behaviours.
  - Professional development that affects not only the participants themselves but also their whole practice team.
  - Benefits for animal welfare and client relationships.
  - Better understanding of the professional role and the reasonable expectations of clients (and reasonable expectations of themselves as professionals).
  - Reduced stress as a result of better ability to balance priorities and positive reframing of emotions in relation to difficult decisions and case management.
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**Contact:** Georgia Prescott, Initial Teacher Training, University of Cumbria.

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**Description:**

Initially I used Patchwork assessment on a Level 4 specialist module in Primary Religious Education, assessed through a 4000 word 'portfolio'. Assessment was redesigned to increase the involvement of students throughout the module and spread their workload, whilst reducing the marking load for the tutor. Students completed a Professional Development Activity (PDA) after each taught session in preparation for the following week. These were tasks, which I felt would benefit the students either academically or practically as teachers. Each week, PDAs were followed up somehow: by peer reviewing, collating or applying research. They found this formative assessment useful both as a giver and recipient of feedback, because if they are to give feedback they have to be clear about the criteria themselves. Because these pieces were formative, the pressure of grading, and issues around the accuracy of peer marking were removed. The final summative assignment was reduced to 1500 words, with the PDAs submitted as appendices and referred to in the final piece. I included reference to the PDAs in the marking criteria to acknowledge the level of work involved, but they weren't graded. I have since rolled out a similar approach on a Level 6 core RE module with a whole cohort of 100 students, with great success.

**Impact:**

- Increased student involvement in sessions. Because there is a peer review follow-up activity to each PDA, there is an expectation they will be completed. The vast majority of students do complete PDAs to a good standard.
  - Greater student satisfaction. Students appreciate the spread of workload and reduced word count of the final summative piece. In evaluations they are overwhelmingly positive about this process.
  - Reduced marking load for tutors. If you reduce word count of the final piece, the tutor's marking load is reduced without affecting the quality of student experience.
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**Contact:** Suzanne Flannery Quinn, School of Education, University of Roehampton

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**Description:**

The first year of the BA Early Childhood Studies at the University of Roehampton is designed to be an introduction to the range of topics relevant to the field of early childhood studies, including the principles of child development theories, children's well-being, the social experiences of children and their families, the techniques of observation and research with young people, and children's rights. This broad range of topics is framed within a human ecological perspective that recognises young people and their families as dynamic participants in society and culture. The concept of culture is given special attention in the HE1 module Cultural Influences in Early Childhood Studies, a 20 credit module that has a patchwork text (with formative and summative components) as a component of the pedagogy as well as the assessment. The 500 word weekly patchwork texts require students to read and write in a range of genres, such as the analysis of photographs as text, conducting interviews, a position paper, an analysis of poetry, the construction of a fictional dialogue between early childhood theorists, and a reflective commentary intended to sew the patches together. This is a very challenging task for most students in their first year. If the pedagogy of the patchwork presents a struggle to students in year one, we consider that to be an important form of learning in of itself. Two formative patches and six summative patches are submitted.

**Impact:**

- > Patchwork text writing groups help students and tutors to get to know one another in their first year.
- > Patchwork assignments are mapped onto the broader curriculum and range of assignments in the programme. For example, there are patchwork assignments related to interviews, providing an introduction to research techniques that are strengthened in the research modules and that can be used in the final year dissertation.
- > Having a patchwork text assignment in the first year is a good foundation for the patchwork text that is used in the final year of the programme. When students have the assignment in the final year, they have familiarity with the approach and a confidence in their abilities.
- > Student feedback has indicated that patchwork text is uniquely suited to the diversity of topics in the module and multi-genre writing showcases the diversity in the subject matter as well as the diversity in the group of writers.

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**Description:**

Patchwork assessment has been used in the two modules that make up the Postgraduate Certificate in Veterinary Education (PGCertVetEd). In the first module, sometimes reluctant scientists and clinicians use four formative pieces to support the development of reflective writing. Themes including student learning, teaching methods and assessment are similar to those described by Dalrymple and Smith (2008) for their foundation degree programme in work-based education. The four "patches" are submitted on a monthly basis and receive

detailed written feedback, both in terms of content and the sophistication of the reflective writing, but are not graded. Educators, who often complain at the way their own students focus on grades rather than feedback, have themselves asked for grades, but this has been resisted in order to model good feed-forward practice. The patches and feedback are then reworked to produce a summary, summative piece that receives both a grade and feedback. This grade makes up part of the formal assessment of the PGCertVetEd. For grading the final summative piece, descriptive criteria for marking reflective essays have been developed for the college's marking scheme.

**Impact:**

- > Modelling of best practice in the combined use of formative and summative feedback to support learning.
  - > Development of science-based educators as reflective practitioners.
  - > Effective teacher development through critical reflection of own experiences and practice.
  - > Developing teachers who can teach their own students 'how to reflect' and the value of reflection.
  - > Changed class design and delivery.
  - > Creation of educational leaders of the future.
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