
Welcome to the

**LEARNING & TEACHING
CONFERENCE**

Innovation in Assessment:

Meeting students where they are through greater diversity in assessment methods

Dr Cameron Graham, Associate Professor – Curriculum Design, ENU

Alison Bell, Faculty Dean, Creative Industries, COGC

Session Overview

- Introduction to STEP and the TAPPS Project
- Discussion – Experiences of Assessment Transformation
- Case Study Presentations
 - CoGC: Douglas Liddle
 - CoGC: Ross Semple
 - ENU: Azwa Shamsuddin
 - UoG: Dickon Copsey
- Plenary – Questions & Discussion

What is STEP?



STEP

Scotland's Tertiary
Enhancement Programme

step.ac.uk

- STEP (Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme) is the **new collaborative programme** that will support Scotland's tertiary sector to innovate in quality enhancement.
- It is designed to enable **Scotland's colleges and universities to work together** to improve and enhance learning, teaching, the student experience and staff development across tertiary provision.
- It is one of the delivery mechanisms of Scotland's [Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework \(TQEF\)](#) and is underpinned by the TQEF principles.
- STEP Topic (2024-2028): '**Supporting diverse learner journeys**'.

What is STEP?

Discovery – Year 1

During the Discovery phase, staff and students will come together for a series of Discovery Days to establish collaborative partnerships and design projects that will form the core of the programme.

Implementation – Years 2 & 3

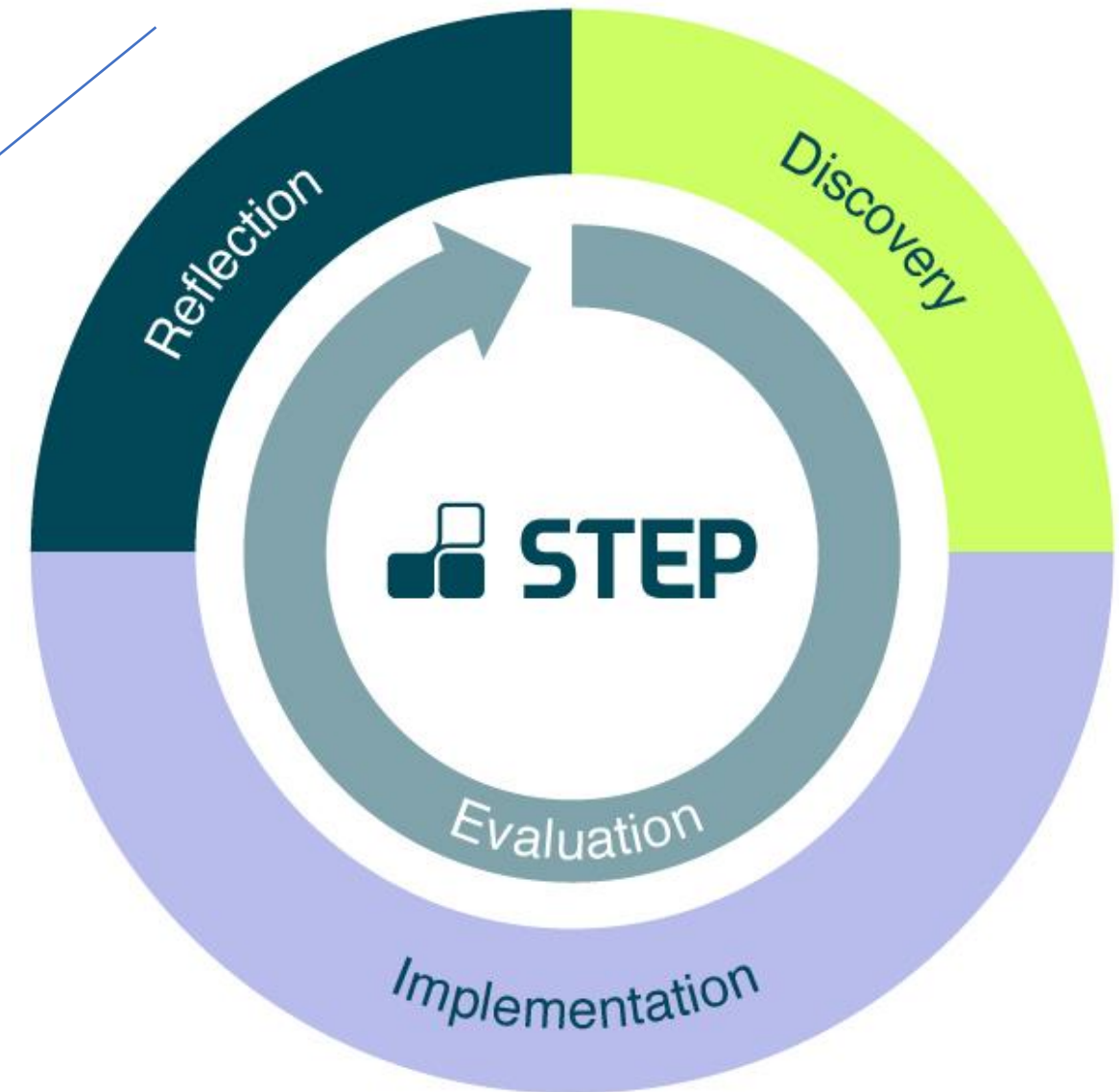
The focus of the Implementation phase is to launch and carry out the projects planned during the Discovery phase. Project leads and teams will be responsible for taking forward the programme of work identified in their proposals.

Reflection – Year 3

The Reflection phase allows for the summative evaluation of the cycle, as well as its constituent projects and additional activities, considering not only the impact of the work, but the effectiveness of its delivery.

As projects conclude, the Reflection phase allows for the dissemination of project outputs throughout and beyond the sector. The aim is to ensure that outputs and outcomes are embedded within the mainstream activities of colleges and universities to become 'business as usual'.

Where we are now!



Transforming Assessment Policy & Practice in Scotland (TAPPS)

A **collaborative, national project** focusing on driving innovation and diversification of assessment practices to support increasingly diverse learner cohorts in FE and HE.

- Project Leads: Edinburgh Napier University & City of Glasgow College
- Partners: Queen Margaret University, University of St Andrews, Stirling University, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Ayrshire College.

Driver for change....

“Assessment practice needs to transform to allow for further and more diverse methods of assessment (Advance HE, 2019) to be used across the sector **to better accommodate the needs of an increasingly diverse student cohort, as well as the evolving skills development requirements of students** to successfully navigate post-educational opportunities via work or further study”.

Context & Project Rationale

- Current policy and practice predominantly uses **traditional modes of assessment** which favour students with specific characteristics and demographics (QAA, 2005).
- With **increasing diversity of students** in tertiary education (e.g. background, experience and demographics, there is a need to ensure assessment practices support student learning, development and success – rather than hinder.
- We need to drive further **diversity in use of assessment formats and methods to better reflect the diversity of students help ensure fairness, inclusion and skills development** (Firth et al. 2023)

TAPPS - our aims...

Collaborating with student and staff project members from 7 institutions across Scotland (3 FE, 4 HE), the TAPPS project aims to **capture existing effective assessment practice** to:

- **develop an evidence base** and a portfolio of resources to **enable policy change**,
- **increase awareness and sharing of best practice** from across the Scottish tertiary sector where innovative, inclusive and diverse methods of assessment that are student-centred and recognise growing learner diversity are effectively adopted,
- **influence widespread and sustained changes in assessment practice** to benefit student experiences of assessment across the Scottish tertiary sector.

Your views and experiences of assessment transformation...

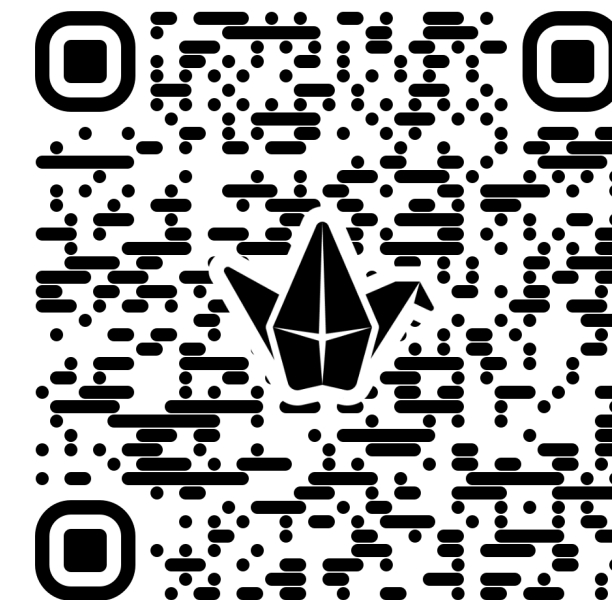
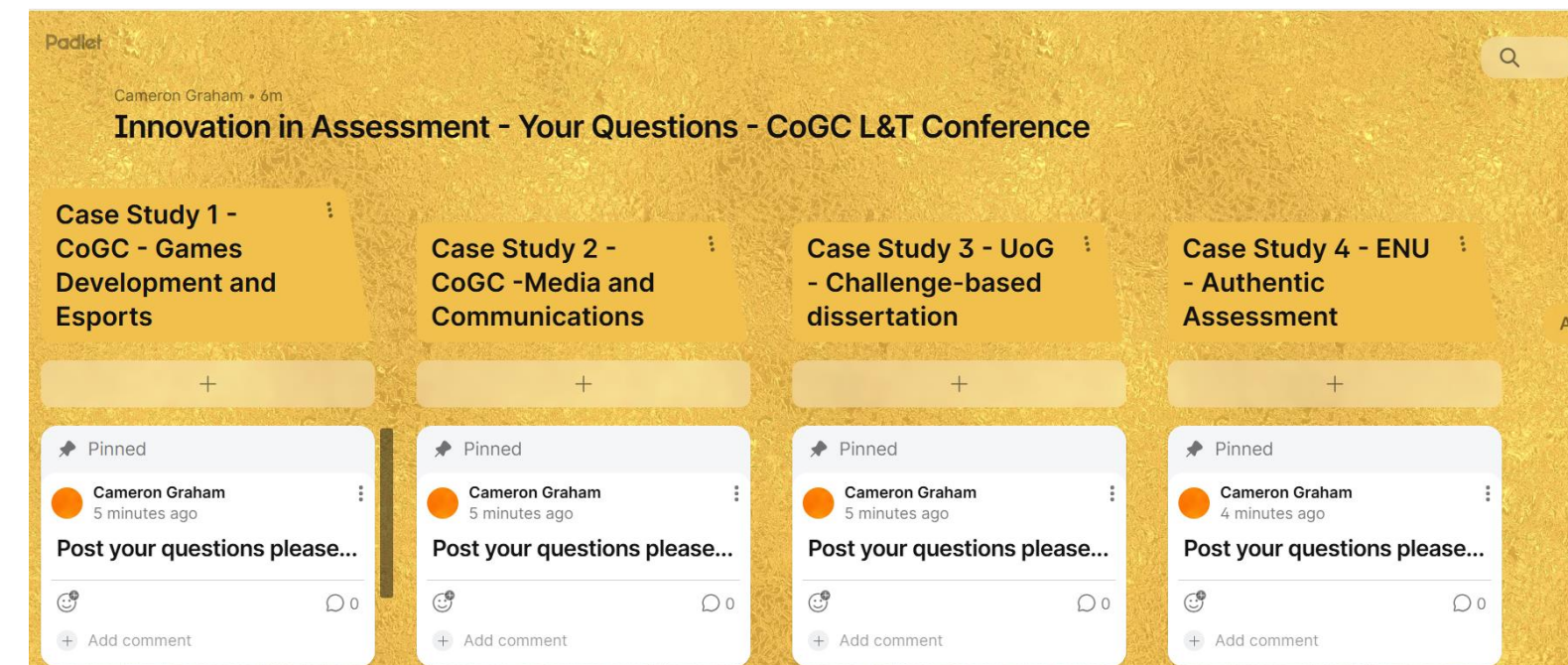
5-minute discussion using poster paper to capture notes:

1. Elect who in your group will report back
2. Discuss and record your answers
 - Why change assessment?
 - Where do you see barriers for your learners in assessment?
 - What is your biggest challenge in making your assessments more inclusive, innovative or diverse?

Case Study Presentations

Your questions for presentations

- Please post your questions on the Padlet, just scan the QR Code



CoGC Case Studies

Case Study 1: Douglas Liddle – Curriculum Head Games Development and Esports, CoGC

Diversity of Students

- 38% declared disability
- 39% Development Disorder, 29% Specific learning difficulty and 18.5% Mental health condition

Traditional Assessment Method

- Research – Report, Power Point Presentation

Innovative Change to Assessment

- Purpose of the assessment – Learning what it takes to work in the Creative Industries sector and developing and incorporating soft skills/meta/attributes.
- Learning Design - Guest Speakers , Live examples
- Optionality to work - groups, individual, pairs.
- **Optionality of assessment methods**, video, audio track, animation.

Impact

- Higher levels of student engagement and motivation.
- Increase in student **pass rates**
- **Application of skills and knowledge** developed in a wider context related to their area of study.
- Linking experience into a variety of industries and sectors in a future jobs context.
- **Building communicative skills** and affiliation with peers and wider sectors.



Case Study 2: Ross Semple, Lecturer Media and Communications, CoGC

Diversity of Students

25% declared disability

15% Development Disorder, 31.5% Specific learning difficulty and 25% Mental health condition

Additional Assessment Method

Reports and extended written response

Purpose of the assessment –Applying knowledge and skills in a multimedia environment.

Innovative Change to Assessment

- Apply principles of **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**
- Optionality in the learning design and teaching and learning materials.
- **Optionality of assessment methods**, written, verbal presentation, video, audio track.

Impact

- Higher levels of **student engagement** and motivation.
- **Higher quality of work** produced and submitted.
- Application of skills and knowledge developed that directly relates the multimedia sector
- **Increase in student confidence** in assessment production
- **Assessing the right skills** and knowledge through removal of barriers.

Case Study 3



University
of Glasgow



Challenge-based dissertation:

Embedding professional skills within the
curriculum

Dr Dickon Copsey
Skills and Development Lead

College Student Experience Team
College Of Social Sciences
University Of Glasgow



Challenge-based dissertation: what is it?

- Optional, scalable alternative to the traditional dissertation where preference for more applied, organisationally-focused or issues-based projects
- Can involve collaboration with external organisation where student/staff have existing contacts, or students can imagine an audience/recipient of their research
- Current context: CBD embedded within 6 x MSc programmes and 1 x MA undergraduate programme
- Assessment (60 credits):

Assessment	Weighting	Word length/duration
Project report	50%	7-8,000 words
Policy Brief	40%	2-3000 words
Individual Presentation	10%	10 minutes plus Q&A

ie. Shifts focus from research only to the communication of recommendations of the research to an organisation or non-academic audience



Challenge-based dissertation: how does it work?

Rationale

- Diversification of the traditional dissertation towards a focus on a more practical, skills-based and applied dissertation project
- Greater relevant to post-graduate career destinations (>10% of PGTs progress to further study)
- Builds on previous collaborative dissertation model which not scalable and produces dissertation which unsuitable for external organisations

Format

1. 'Project Report' = mini-dissertation (requiring only minor amendments to existing dissertation training and guidance)
2. 'Policy Brief' = communicates research findings with recommendations to an external organisation or non-practitioner audience
3. 'Presentation' = summarises key recommendations from Policy brief to a non-academic audience



CHALLENGE-BASED DISSERTATION: HOW IS IT DELIVERED?

Assessment:

- All assessment carried out by academic staff

College Student Experience Team support:

- Live workshops x 2
 - Intro to CBD, opportunities for external collaboration, and brainstorming topics
 - Intro to Policy brief assessment
- Online skills modules x 3
 - Making your dissertation work for you [developing an applied project; collaboration]
 - Writing a policy brief [communication of research findings through policy brief format ; policy brief template]
 - Practical presentation skills [development and practising of effective presentation]
- 1-1 support
 - Brainstorming topics; leveraging contacts; setting up collaborations; reviewing policy briefs and presentations

policy brief template and examples

POLICY BRIEF SHORTENED TITLE, DATE		POLICY BRIEF SHORTENED TITLE, DATE	
 Title: Short, snappy and informative. Use subtitle if too long. Introduce core argument Executive Summary This short (1-2 paragraphs max) summary statement needs to grab readers' attention and provide an overview of the policy brief. Ask yourself, what are the main points you want your audience to take away – even if they read nothing else? It should include the key problem being addressed, the key argument being made, and the key recommendation. Make sure you have an effective opening sentence that		POLICY BRIEF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS - A list describing your key findings and/or recommendations can be an effective and often necessary addition to your executive summary. - Your recommendations are at the very heart of the policy brief, so don't be afraid of highlighting them from the very start. This keeps your recommendations firmly in the audience's mind right from the outset. - Eos dolores iure qui voluntate quod cum tenetur atque sed culpa numquam vel veniam facere At perferendis molestias. - Non laboriosam corrupti sed totam dolorum sit reiciendis voluntate eum fugiat officia aut iure deleniti. <i>molestias in alias dolorum. Vel voluntatem percipiat, sed nostrum sint a dicta minima sed sint alias aut voluntas voluntate qui omnis officia.</i> <i>Eos dolores iure qui voluntate quod cum tenetur atque sed culpa numquam vel veniam facere At perferendis molestias. Quo sint quaerat id amet odit eos suscipit dicta sit porro quia et quam nemo! Ad debitis voluntas ut vero, voluntatem ea quas rerum. Ut recusandae illo adipisci tempore ex cupiditate commodi non consequuntur nobis et sint facere et nihil fugiat vel odit sint.</i> <i>Aut consequatur eligendi et consectetur</i>	
		Introduction What's at stake? This is your chance to introduce your argument, why you are writing the brief, and why this topic matters. Briefly introduce the problem that your policy recommendations will attempt to solve. The role of the 'Introduction' is to introduce the context, focus and purpose of the brief. It does not discuss findings and recommendations as these will come later in the text. - Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet. 33 sint atque nam unde atque aut dolorem illo qui reprehenderit iure At quis commodi At quisquam corrupti, Non magni cupiditate eum blanditiis quibusdam et voluntas maxime! - Quo sapiente libero sit voluntatem vitae sed itaque eius et omnis voluntatem qui voluntatem odio, In nobis impedit et neque, neque est cupiditate eveniet est ratione praesentium aut dicta totam. - Et voluntatem voluntatem non vero dolorum sit deleniti sequi rem quas molestias ea deleniti sunt a nesciunt officia sed repellendus consequatur.  EDITING TIPS: Add in as many images as you feel are needed to make it more captivating for your readers. You can replace any of the images on this template! Click twice on the image you want to replace or	
		Overview of the problem/Methodology You have already introduced the problem that your policy brief intends to solve in the 'Introduction' section. You now need to provide the methods and approach you will use to tackle the problem. Before you move onto your research results and findings, you need to explain how your study was conducted and by whom, and how the data was collected. "Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit." EDITING TIPS: Remember if you use quotes, consider putting them in bold to make sure they stand out to the reader, especially if they are important to your argument. <i>Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet. Et facilis autem ut labore reiciendis ex pariatur tenetur et quibusdam quod. Eum earum ipsa vel consectetur eius At sint enim eum possimus dignissimos sed molestiae voluntatem qui facere ducimus sit consequuntur harum?</i>  <i>A veniam quam non aliquam ipsum sit architecto, sint. Non consectetur omnis, quo laudantium molestiae, ea fuga quis et eligendi sapiente a voluntas minima est nesciunt tempora.</i> <i>Ut dolor optio cum omnis animi aut quisquam atque 33 sunt cupiditate vel totam aliquid aut nesciunt recusandae ut alias libero. Ut saepe sint et culpa dolores, et dolores corporis sed culpa illum et assumenda molestiae. Rem porro atque qui voluptatibus minima est unde laborum et maiores quae non quisquam iusto ea error voluntas.</i>	

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, 2023

POLICY BRIEF

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide cultural competency and safety training for all members of staff to help shift the museum's internal culture.
- Implement a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to help museums determine what steps they need to take to equalize their institution for Indigenous peoples on a long-term basis.
- Create employment positions in the museum specifically for Indigenous peoples to ensure that Indigenous peoples have staff members who can relate to their experiences and concerns.
- Give control over Indigenous exhibition creation to Indigenous peoples allowing them to determine how their histories are told.

Tjampí Desert Weavers from the *Songlines: Seven Sisters* exhibit at the NMA (2015), photograph: Vicki Bosisto

Increasing Indigenous Community Engagement within Museums

Executive Summary

In the past, museums have been seen as “imperialistic institution[s] which misrepresent [Indigenous] culture” (Conaty, 2003: 231). In modern day more and more museums are attempting to change this historical perception and instead position themselves as partners in presenting Indigenous communities’ histories and cultures.

To fully shift into the role of being a partner to Indigenous communities, museums must have a comprehensive understanding of the historical and modern socio-political barriers that deter Indigenous communities from engaging with museums. These barriers will vary with different Indigenous communities and should be addressed in cooperation with said communities.

Achieving successful cooperation with Indigenous communities functions on a basis of mutual trust and dedication to long-term partnership. Museums are responsible for educating themselves and their staff regarding Indigenous rights, struggles, and history prior to reaching out to Indigenous communities in hopes of collaboration. Doing this helps to create a safe and respectful environment for Indigenous peoples to work in without putting the full burden of Indigenous education on them (Conaty, 2008; Janke, 2018).

This brief will provide recommendations of direct action that museums can implement. These recommendations can be utilized by institutions who are at the beginning of their journey into Indigenous community engagement as well as institutions who are well seasoned in Indigenous engagement.

Challenge based dissertation

student testimonials

“The challenge-based dissertation's supportive training resources and learning certainly pushed [me] to think outside the academic realm throughout the process. It bridged the opportunities for developing collective interest with the host institutions and further enabled the possibility and capacity to prepare for future employability”
Lin Yen-Ting, MSc Museum Ed.

“What I really want to say to future students is that you don’t need prior experience to choose the CBD. [...] The CBD gives you space to visualize your thinking, to make your ideas heard, and to communicate your research in a way that is accessible to wider audiences. It makes research in the humanities more grounded and relevant — and it opens up new possibilities for impact beyond academia.”
Ziyi Cao, MSc TESOL

“Writing a collaborative dissertation as part of the Museum Education masters programme allowed me to build connections with a local museum and gain practical experience within the museum field that has been helpful in starting my career”.
Clare Smith, MSc Museum Ed.

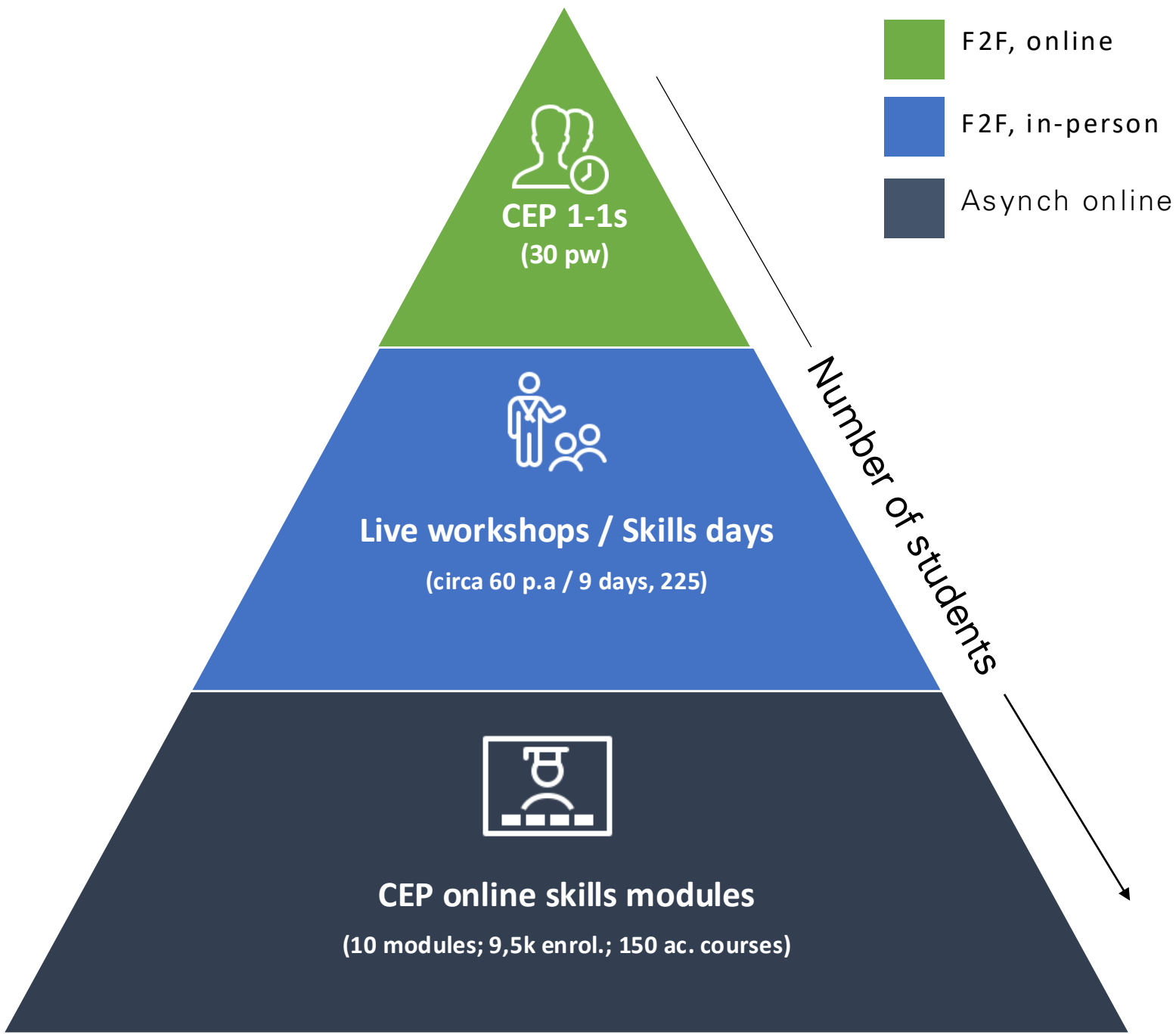


EMBEDDED SUPPORT FOR SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY: COLLEGE EMPLOYABILITY PROGRAMME

- 10 professional asynchronous skills modules
- Tutor-supported, online asynchronous, 2-6 hours
- Curricular and extra-curricular access
- Skills modules supported by in-person in-course intro workshops, online anytime 1-1s, and monthly skills days
- Supports credit-bearing assessments (2024/25 - Embedded in 151 academic courses)
- 11k enrolments; 1,2k completions (24/25)
- Digital certificates, badges and HEAR
- 91% agree/strongly agree that module provided opportunities to improve my employability and skills (641 responses)

Your College Employability Programme Journey

“The CEP provides a comprehensive programme of online courses, live workshops, interactive skills days, and 1-1 guidance to support you to develop and communicate key professional skills essential for your programme of academic study and the workplace.”



COLLEGE EMPLOYABILITY PROGRAMME



Planning your journey

- Your future: Careers and Employability
- Study abroad: Induction

Developing your skills and experiences

- Groupwork to teamwork
- Making your dissertation work you
- Writing a policy brief
- Practical presentation skills
- Leadership

Communicating your skills and experiences

- Understanding & articulating your strengths
- LinkedIn
- From study abroad to the workplace

Skills days

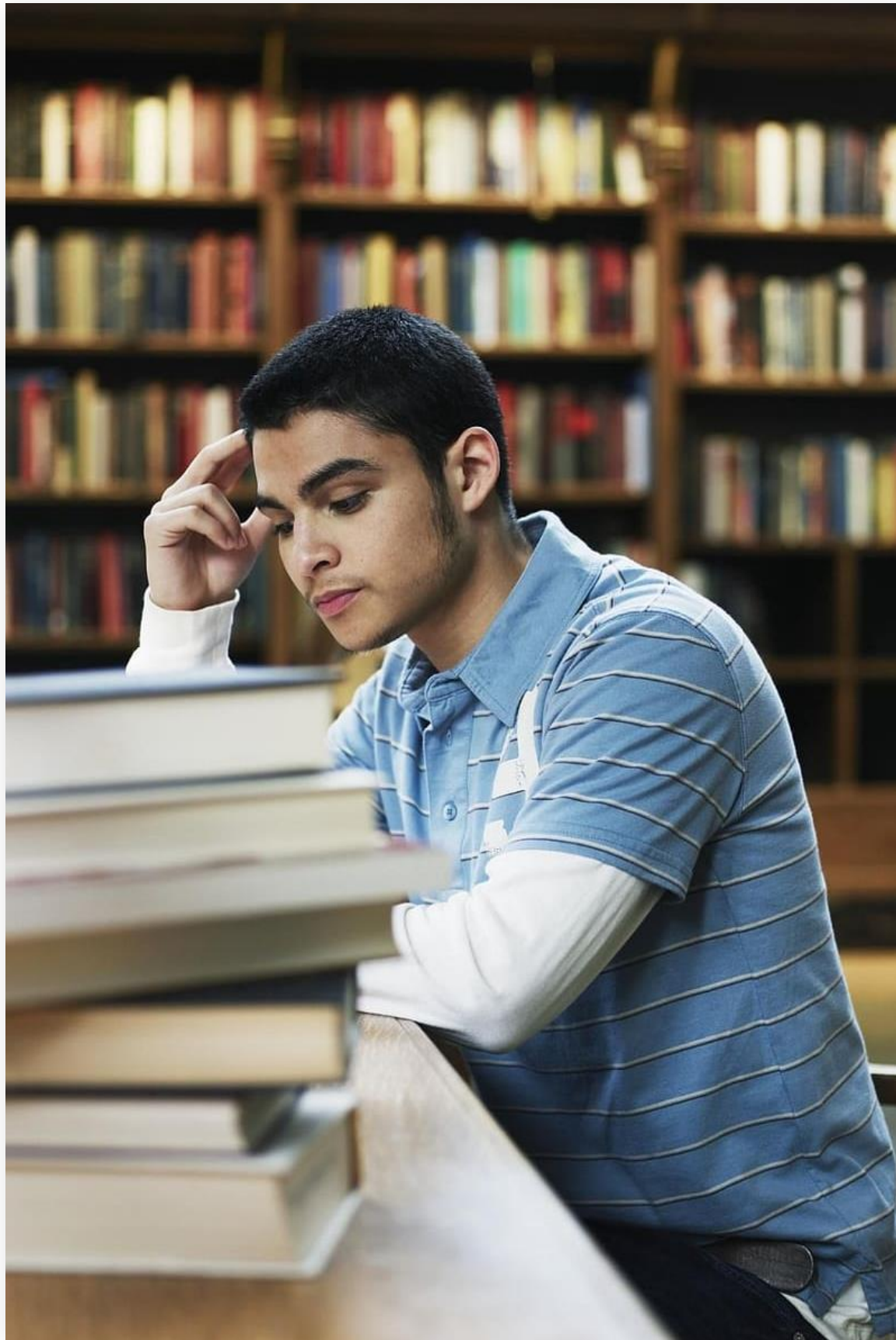
- Understanding & articulating your strengths
- Teams
- Assertiveness

Find out more:
<https://www.gla.ac.uk/cep>

CHALLENGE BASED DISSERTATION

FUTURE PLANS

-
- **Approved at Board of Studies + scalable delivery model => rollout across College as option alongside traditional dissertation**
-
- **Rollout to PGT programmes beyond School of Education**
-
- **Complete UG pilot (MA SocSci: Economics) and evaluate**
-
- **Further dissemination:**
 - **‘Alternatives to traditional dissertation’ report (ULTC, 2025)**
 - **Embedding Employability Framework best practice case studies**
 - **School L&T Committees**
-
- **Complete CBD evaluation**
-



Case Study 3

Innovating an authentic assessment for TNE students

Dr Azwa Shamsuddin

PhD, MSc, BSc (Hons), FHEA, RN

Lecturer in Nursing

Law and Ethics Module Lead (Singapore)

Who are the learners?



Singapore
RNs



Diploma
holders



Large
cohort

Module learning outcomes

- **LO1:** Critically examine the relationship between law, ethics and ethical reasoning in nursing practice in Singapore.
- **LO2:** Implement and appraise a decision making process using a legal and ethical framework or code of practice.
- **LO3:** Critically evaluate strategies for dealing with ethical and legal challenges in the provision of healthcare to inform future nursing practice.
- **LO4:** Critically reflect on the way in which healthcare legislation, culture and society influence ethical practice and health and well-being more broadly.

Original assessment - 2023

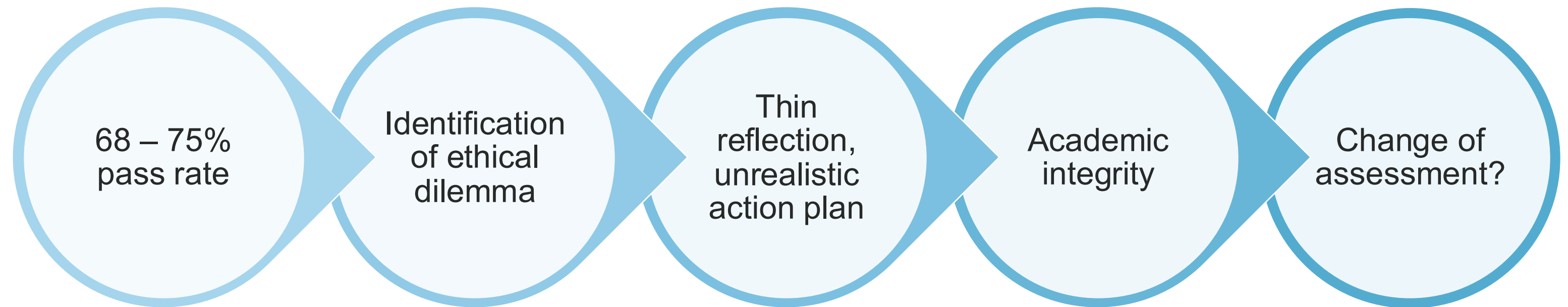
Formative

- 500-word ethical dilemma

Summative

- 3500-word portfolio
- Identify an ethical dilemma in practice and discuss dilemma in relation to ethical principles, legal and professional aspects.

Challenges



Module feedback and reflection

Interesting
scenarios

Enjoyed
discussion

Enable
practice
change

Authentic
assessment

Proposed assessment

Formative

- Ongoing – encouraged discussion of ethical dilemmas with online peer feedback (Padlet).

Summative

- Part1: Asynchronous online class test (20%)
- Part 2: One-hour online group discussion of an ethical scenario (80%)

Proposed assessment

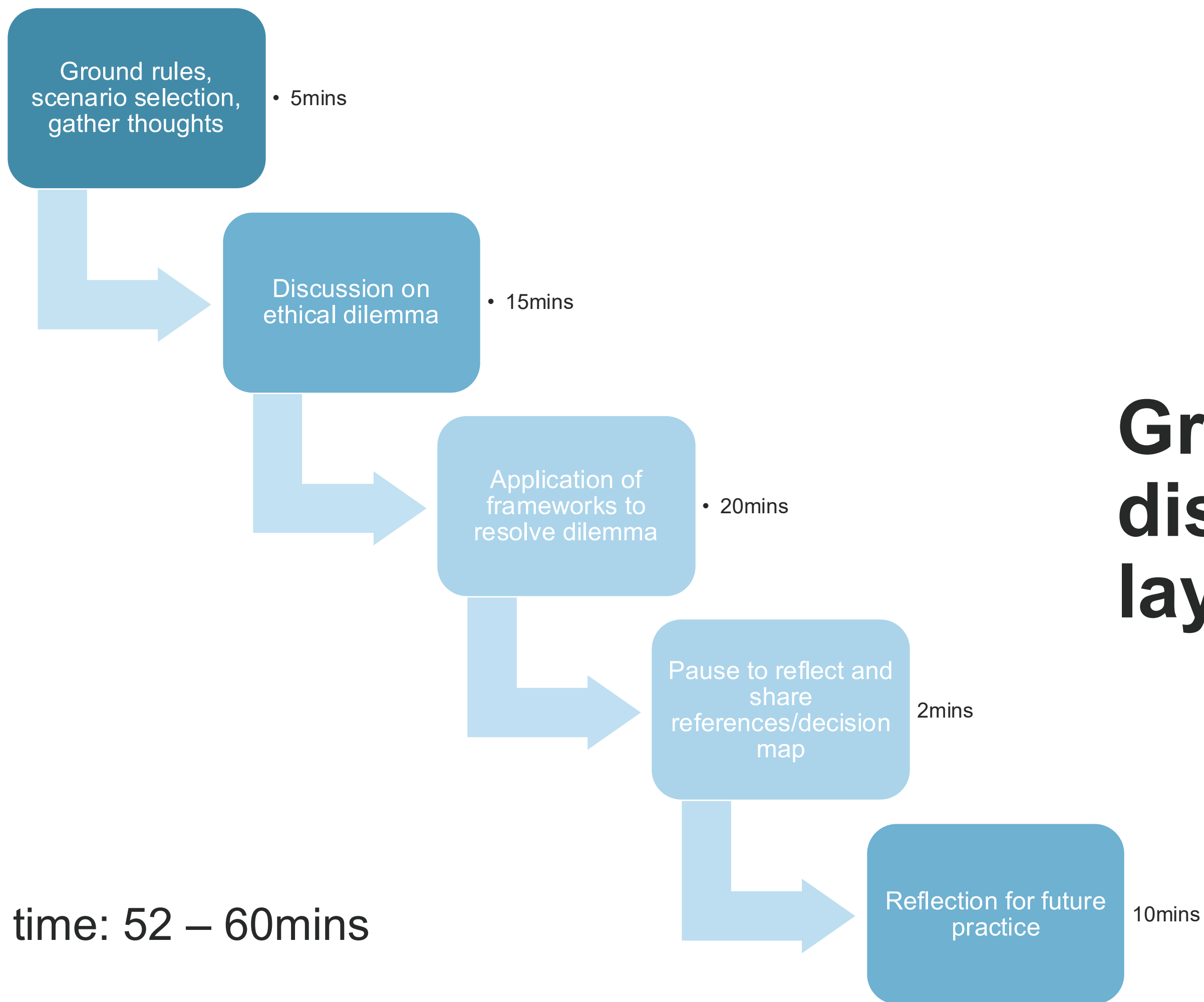
Part 1 summative (20%)

An online class test will be available to the students from week 5 of the module. Students will need to complete this before week 8 where answers to the test will be discussed in tutorial

Part 2 summative (80%)

- Students will be presented with a selection of ethical scenarios from week 3 – explore and draft decision map for each.
- Day and time of assessment 4 weeks in advance via Teams.
- Facilitator will use standardised prompt sheet, students marked individually based on criticality.

Group discussion layout



Marking rubrics

Criteria	Requirements	Marks awarded				
		1 – Fail (5 marks)	2 – Pass (10 marks)	3 – Good (15 marks)	4 – Excellent (20 marks)	5 – Outstanding (25 marks)
Critical understanding of the links between law, ethics, and ethical reasoning in nursing practice (LO1) – 25%	Demonstrates a critical understanding and effective communication of evidence underpinning how law, ethics, nursing values and societal norms intersect in nursing practice that may result in complex situations.					
Implementation and appraisal of a decision-making process using a relevant framework (LO2) – 25%	Thorough implementation of relevant ethical, legal, and professional frameworks in resolving an ethical dilemma with justification of selected frameworks.					
Critical evaluation of strategies for dealing with ethical and legal challenges (LO3) – 25%	Considers the views of team members and critically evaluates varying strategies using evidence to resolve the ethical dilemma at hand.					
Critical reflection on the influence of law, ethics and culture on health (LO4) – 25%	Demonstrates critical reflection on the influence of law, ethics and culture on health to inform future nursing practice.					

Challenging approval

Oct 2024

Risk concerns –
online, ESL

Group
discussion
time/contribution

Demonstrating
evidence

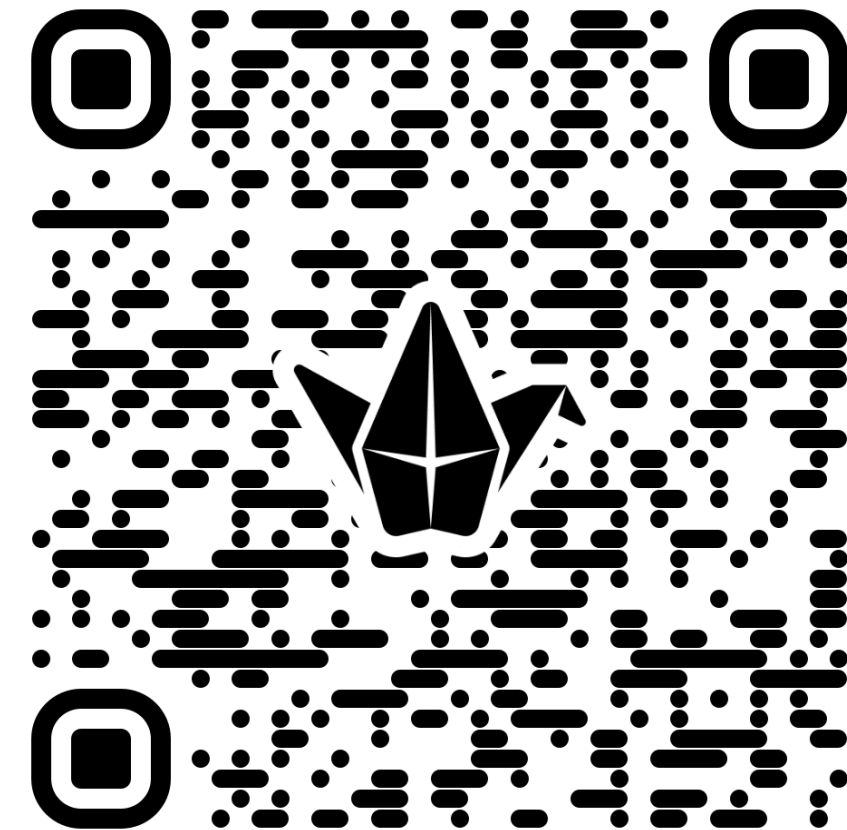
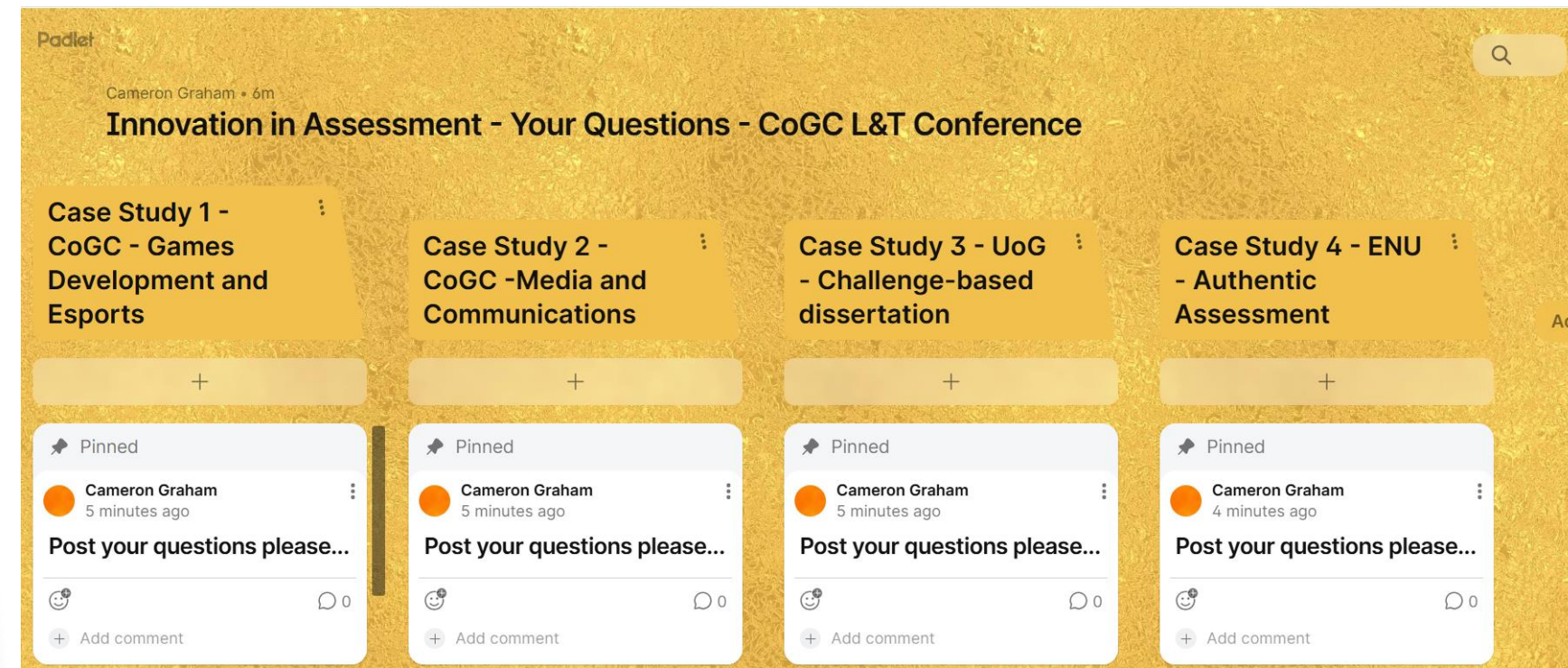
22/01/26

Thank you!

Dr Azwa Shamsuddin
a.shamsuddin@napier.ac.uk

Your questions and examples to share

Please post any examples of
transforming assessments...



Can you support TAPPS...

Do you want to contribute:

- If you would like to **help contribute to or promote our work** in your institution or if you would like to attend a future sharing events or share a testimonial, contact Cameron or Alison

c.graham@napier.ac.uk and Alison.bell@cityofglasgowcollege.ac.uk