



## **Practising what you preach: how an evidence-based strategy enables the achievement of transparency in assessment and feedback**

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### ***Presentation abstract***

In this presentation, we provided examples of evidence-based practice in a university-wide assessment and feedback redesign, driven by a new Learning and Teaching Strategy. To enable the implementation of this strategy and the university-wide shift in practice, the university looked to learning designers to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

We developed a comprehensive strategy with a focus on motivating buy-in of staff, which required us to ensure the relationship between practice and policy was transparent, meaningful, and evidence-based.

We focused on five pillars: 1) collecting data to identify developmental targets; 2) creating a central resource for maintaining evidence-based assessment practice; 3) educating new staff and early adopters to enable a supportive culture shift; 4) identifying academic departments that required extensive changes to achieve evidence-based assessment practice, with a focus on removing barriers to engagement; and 5) ensuring pedagogy/subject-level experts were crucial to both designing and implementing changes.

This presentation was of particular interest to learning developers who aim to better support and promote the skills that students need to excel on assessments. We did this by demonstrating how making the necessary skills and knowledge more explicit and real-world relevant will make it easier for learning developers to identify, communicate, and thus support students in what it takes to succeed in even the most unique assessment designs.

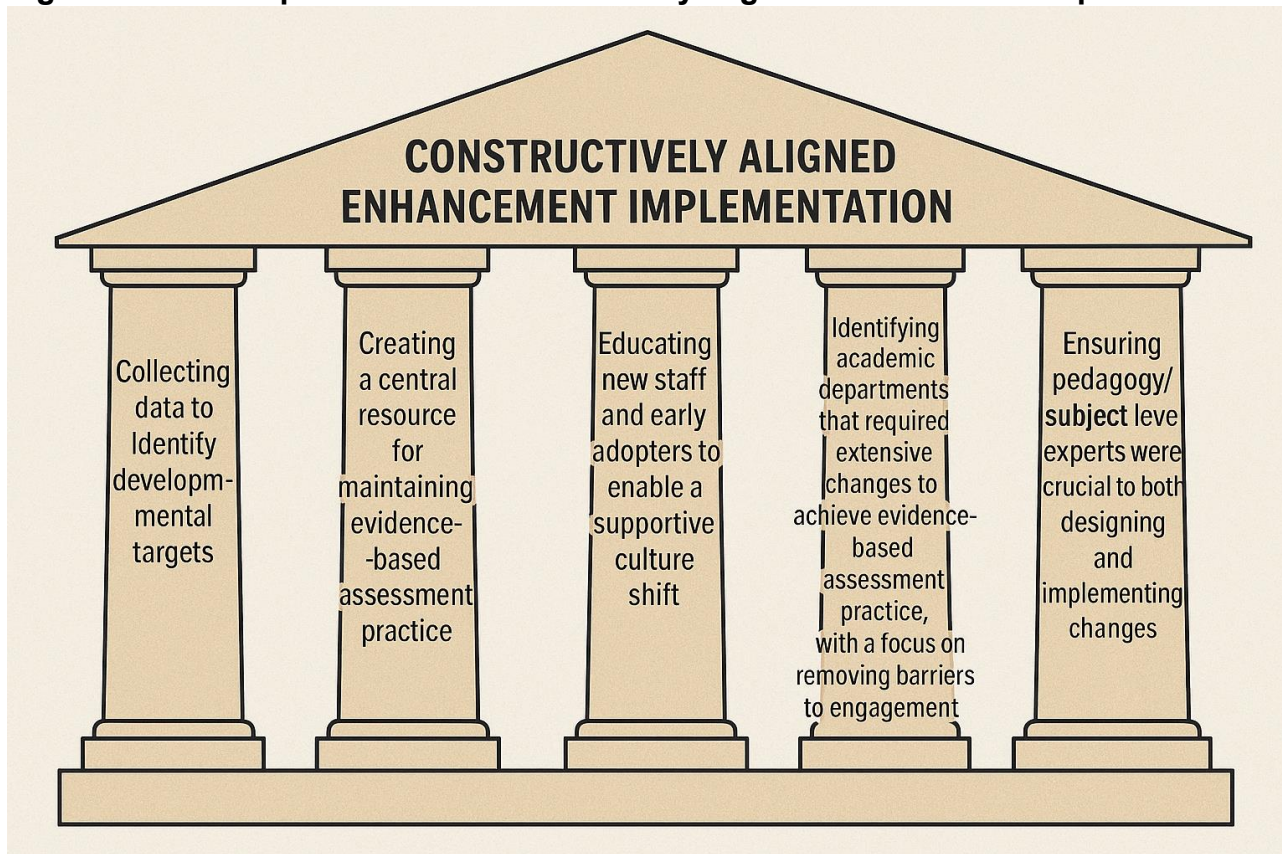
**Keywords:** learning and teaching; academic development; assessment design; staff development.

### ***Community response***

This presentation addressed a challenging aspect of institutional change: implementing comprehensive assessment and feedback reform at scale. The presenters shared their systematic approach to achieving transparency in assessment practices through a five-pillar strategy that positioned learning developers as important bridges between educational theory and institutional practice. It provided attendees with a rare glimpse into large-scale institutional transformation in action, while demonstrating how their inclusive approach may lead to meaningful, iterative, programmatic, and inclusive assessment.

The five pillars offered a replicable blueprint for change, addressing the challenge of moving from individual good practice to institutional transformation. Importantly, the strategy also considered common barriers such as staff resistance, resource constraints, and the difficulty of coordinating change across diverse academic departments and priorities. The presentation's emphasis on evidence-based practice was especially valuable to learning developers who often struggle to justify their interventions or demonstrate impact. The Practice Enhancement Tool, with its 737 respondents and 29.4% response rate, represents a substantial data collection effort that provides both baseline measurement and capacity for ongoing evaluation. The explicit connection between staff development, institutional systems, and student outcomes offered a compelling narrative for learning developers advocating for resources and support.

**Figure 1. The five pillars of the constructively aligned enhancement implementation.**



### Next steps and additional questions

The case study explored in the session presented a range of issues and questions relevant to learning developers across different institutions. For example:

- What would be your top three recommendations for someone wanting to propose a similar initiative at their institution?
- How did you build credibility and influence to lead such a comprehensive institutional initiative?
- While you mention 'students are experts', how much genuine decision-making power do students have in shaping assessment practices under this framework?
- Are there any unintended consequences or areas where the framework has created, or might create, new problems?

## ***Authors' reflection***

This presentation shared our experience of supporting a university-wide shift in assessment and feedback, driven by a new Learning and Teaching Strategy. As learning designers, we were tasked with helping to translate strategic intent into practical, evidence-based change – making policy feel real and relevant to staff.

Each pillar had its own challenges and wins. Collecting data helped us identify where support was most needed, while creating a central resource gave staff something tangible to lean on. Working with new staff and early adopters reminded us how powerful culture shifts can be when they're nurtured from the ground up. In departments where bigger changes were needed, we focused on removing barriers, not just highlighting them. Throughout, we made sure pedagogy and subject-level expertise were front and centre.

For learning developers, this work offers a lens into how assessment support can be more targeted and transparent. We know that students often struggle to understand what success looks like in unfamiliar or complex assessments. By making the required skills and knowledge more explicit – and tying them to real-world relevance – we create clearer pathways for support.

One of the most impactful outcomes was seeing staff begin to reframe feedback and assessment as shared, developmental practices rather than isolated tasks. This shift opens up new opportunities for learning developers to collaborate with academic teams, not just in delivery but in design.

Ultimately, this reflection is about how strategic alignment, thoughtful design, and cross-role collaboration can drive meaningful enhancement.

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reflections and enriched our insight into this conference presentation and its impact on the audience.

The authors used Copilot to create Figure 1 in the manuscript.

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If anyone would like more information on our implementation strategy, or a chat about how something like this can be implemented in your context, please feel free to reach out to Kimberly Davis at [kimberly.davis@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:kimberly.davis@glasgow.ac.uk).

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