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Enabling Compassionate Assessment – Do No Harm

Vikki Hill
Quality Insights Conference
24 Feb 2022



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Compassion

'...compassion means the noticing of social or physical distress to others and the commitment to reduce or prevent that distress'
(Theo Gilbert, 2017, p.189)

'..motivation to act/acting to alleviate suffering'
(Strauss et al, 2016, p15).



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No Detriment policies

UAL stated that the implementation of a pass/fail grade for all Level 4 units was “*in order to simplify the assessment process and ease the pressure during a very stressful time for staff and students and in an exceptional external context.*”

(Level 4 Regulation Amendment Guidance Note for staff - 1 April 2020)





Belonging through assessment: Pipelines of compassion

QAA Collaborative Enhancement Project 2021

 Search

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THE GLASGOW
SCHOOL OF ART



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Project Aims:

1. Identify areas of enhancement in assessment policies and practices to promote student sense of belonging and tackle issues of social justice.
2. Link this relational work with attainment gap/awarding differentials agendas in the creative arts.
3. Develop collaborative, dialogic, polyvocal and affective resources for staff development across the HE sector.



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Research Strands:

1. Pass/Fail grading
2. Feedback
3. Whole Self





Pass/fail grading

Belonging through Assessment: Discussion on Pass/Fail Assessment

1 month ago | More

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More from The Exchange UAL

Autoplay next video

Belonging through... The Exchange UAL

<https://vimeo.com/659023704>

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Pass/fail research findings so far...

Grades add to stress and anxiety

The harm done by grades to self-worth

Grades damage peer to peer and student to staff relationships

Grades encourage self-censorship

(Currant, Bunting, Hill & Salines, 2022, unpublished)

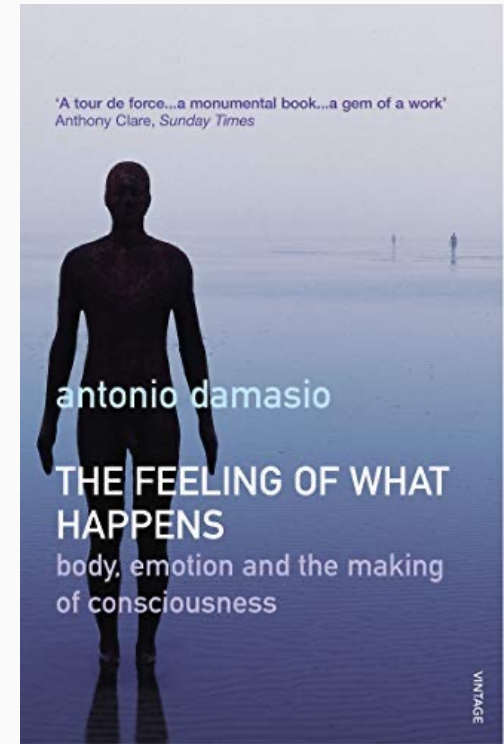


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Whole self

*We are not thinking machines that feel;
rather, we are feeling machines that think.*
Antonio Damasio

**In what ways do the
assessment policies
of higher education
institutions
acknowledge (or
ignore) the
relationship between
assessment and
students' whole self?**



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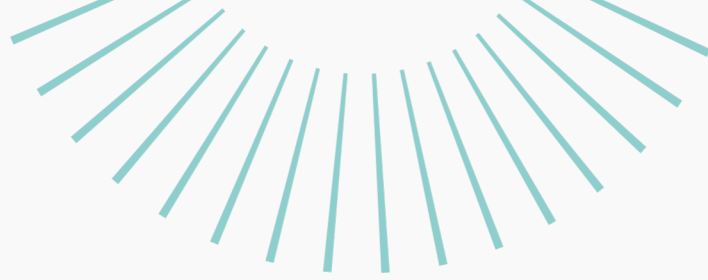
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Do No Harm

- Ethical assessment policy
- Trauma-informed pedagogy
- Decolonising assessment



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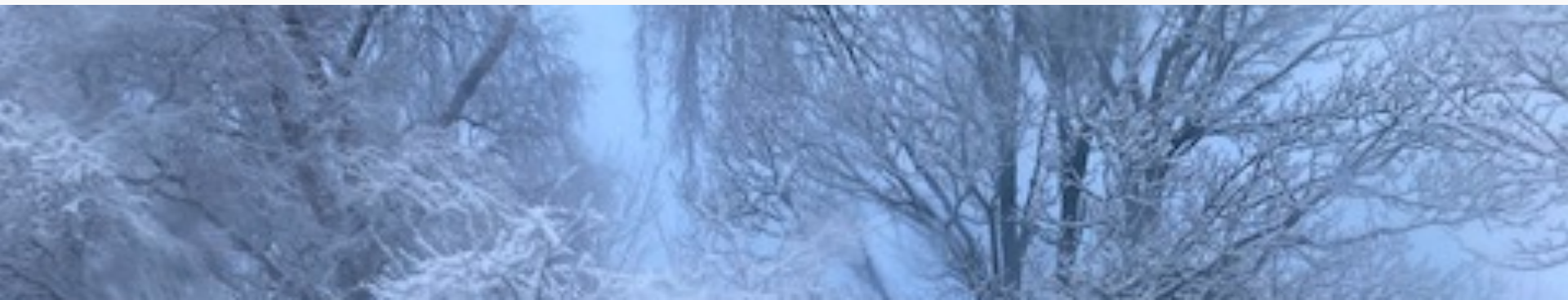


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What is trauma?

“an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.”

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2019



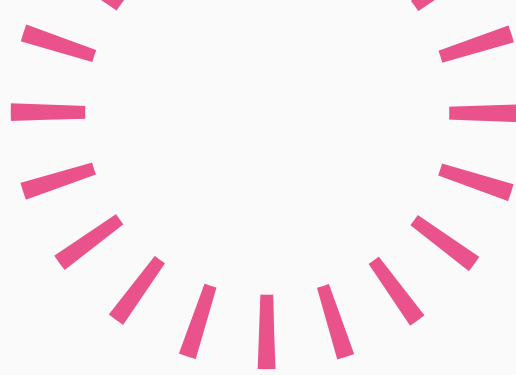
Trauma-informed strategies

- Inform (recognise and mitigate immediate stress/ threat)
- Connect (radical community, building safety)
- Protect (hope, empathy, flexibility, alternatives)
- Redirect (focus on building on what has already been learnt)

(Dr Mays Imad, 2020)

What happens when we read our assessment policies and regulations through a trauma informed lens?

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With thanks to the team...

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