

Piloting collaborative evaluation approaches in creative education: Making space for staff & student voice in evaluation processes for curriculum development

introduction

University of the Arts London (UAL) is a specialist university that focuses on providing higher education in creative disciplines. **Fashion Practices for Social Change (FPSC)** is a new elective unit that combines teaching on complex issues aligned with climate, social and racial justice, with cross-disciplinary group project work in response to live creative briefs set with external value-aligned partners. We piloted an embedded qualitative approach to **evaluating** this unit through working in partnership with academic staff and recent UAL graduates.

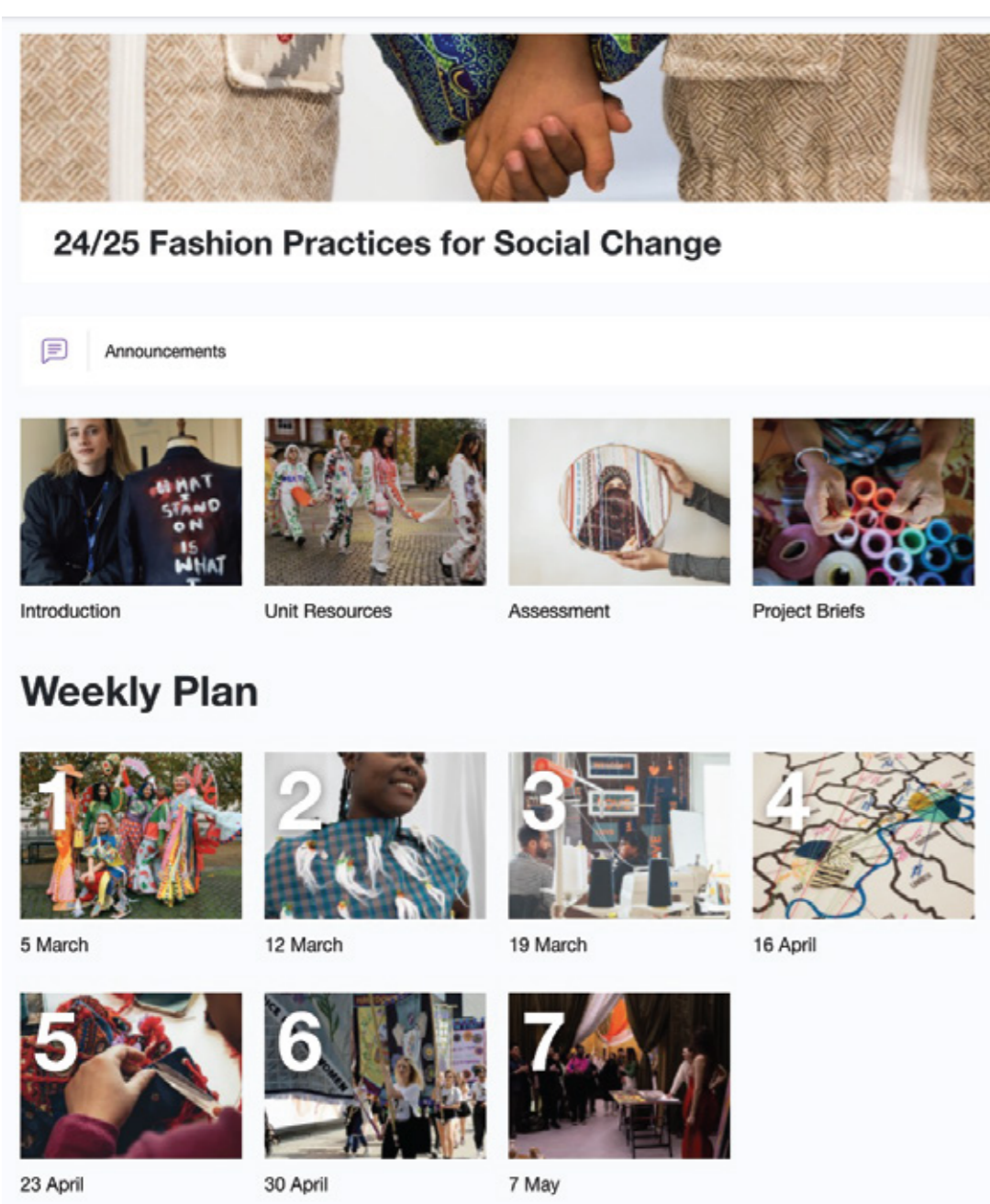


Fig. 1: FPSC Moodle page and Scheme of Work.

summary

We piloted a **collaborative qualitative approach** to explore student experience of a new master's unit's first year of delivery to identify strengths and areas for improvement. We supported **students** to contribute to data analysis, which surfaced unexpected insights for the **next unit iteration**. Student researchers identified several themes as being important to **learners' experience** that did not come to the immediate attention of the Evaluation Lead, enriching the analysis and feedback. The timing of feedback allowed the Unit Leader to have access to, and reflect on the key messages in time to **embed relevant changes** into the curriculum for the planned unit delivery in the next academic year. This collaborative approach, that centred **staff and student voice**, was felt to be supportive and constructive.

methodology

We used a **qualitative** approach, including **semi-structured interviews** with members of the teaching team, external partners, and current students in the 2024-2025 academic year. We then employed recent UAL graduates as part of the team, who conducted **thematic analysis**, creating space for them to support data interpretation and meaning-making through their own experiences of being students through the analysis and write up.

student co-analysis process

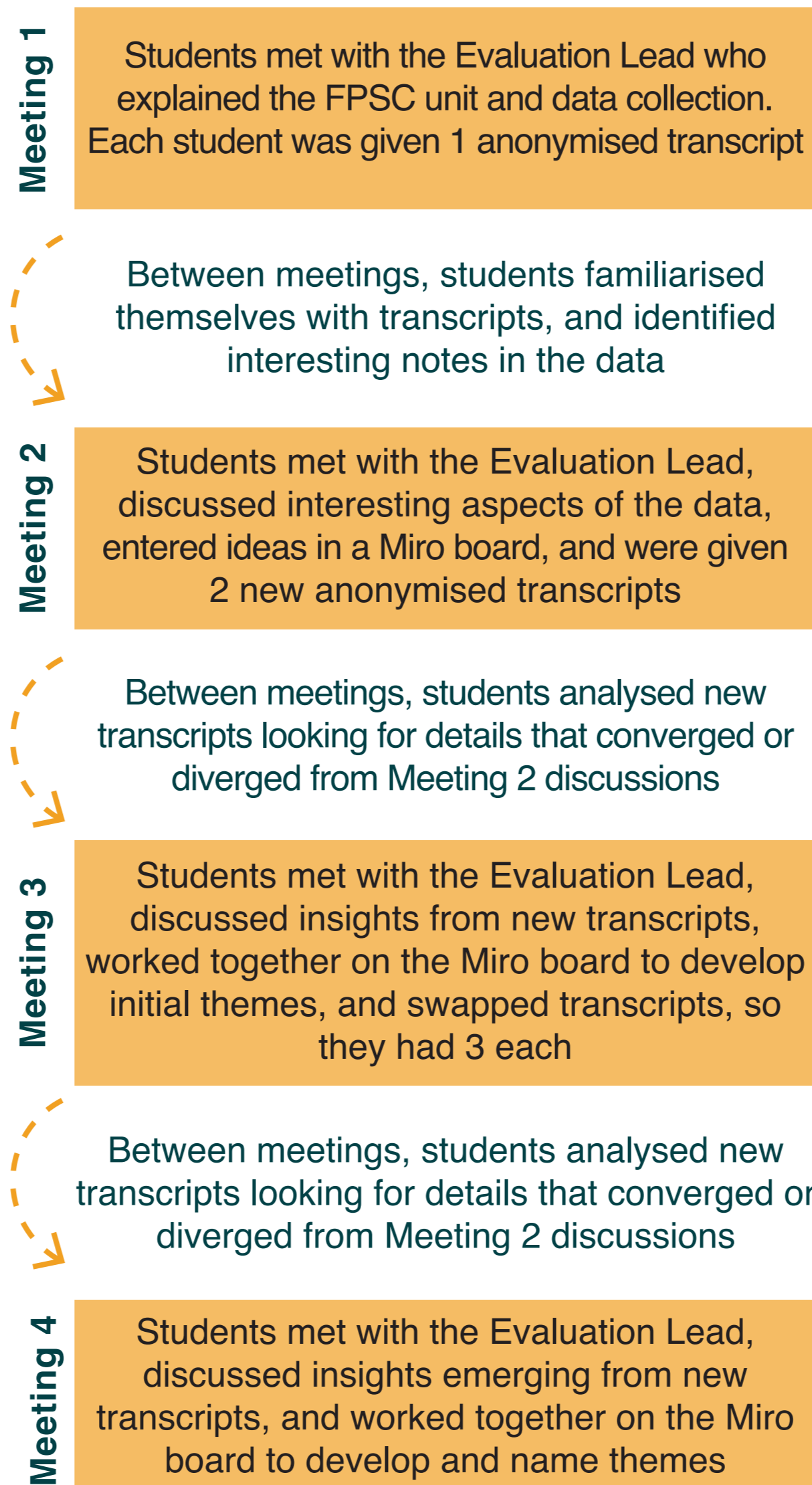


Fig. 2: Miro board used for thematic co-analysis.

key findings

- Positioning a **professional evaluator** to work in partnership with academic staff was effective in gathering nuanced feedback from students which could be used to develop the unit for the next academic year.
- Using **complementary pedagogical and evaluative skillsets** together was effective for the unit development.
- Students who had undergone a short **practically-focused course** in evaluation methods could effectively contribute to the thematic analysis.
- The involvement of students in the analysis process added another layer of interpretation of the data from a **student perspective**.
- **Students involved in the analysis** process identified different themes within the data as being important to the Evaluation Lead.
- This **collaborative approach**, that centred staff and student voice, was felt to be supportive and constructive.

conclusion

Partnerships between colleagues with pedagogical and evaluative expertise can be an effective approach to drive complex **curriculum development**. The involvement of student researchers in the analysis process was possible and **enriched the analysis**.

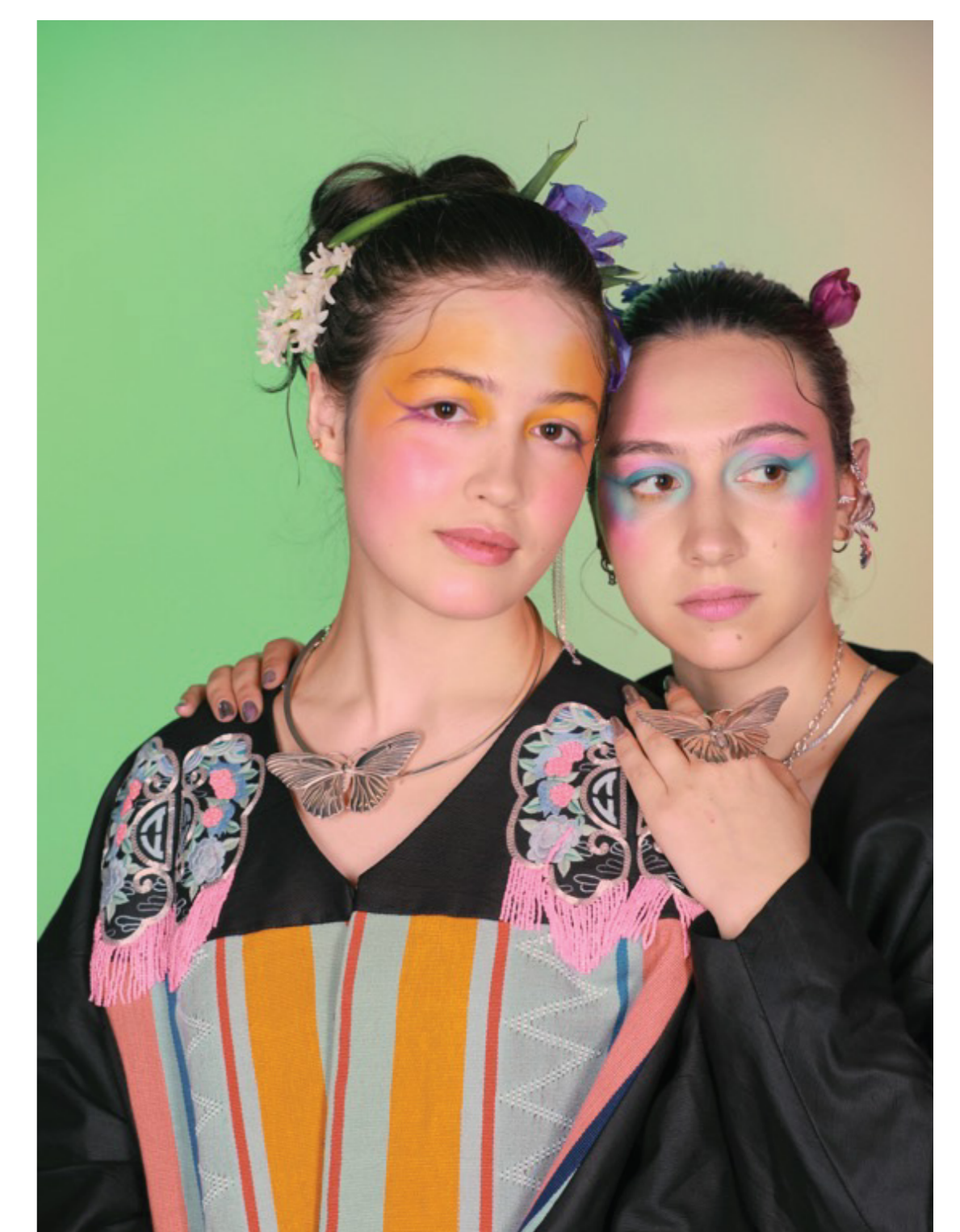


Fig. 3: Photoshoot produced by one student team in response to the brief set up by Fashion4Freedom.