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What do *I*, as a student, think of my own work? Using summative self-assessment in a large technical module

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Abstract

Self-assessment is a reflective practice enabling learners to evaluate their understanding (McMillan and Hearn, 2008). When fostering metacognitive processes, it can enhance learning by improving intrinsic motivation, understanding and learning strategies (Stanton, Sebesta and Dunlosky, 2021). The benefits for using self-assessment as a summative practice remains debated (for example, Andrade, 2019; Nieminen and Tuohilampi, 2020a; León, Panadero and García-Martínez, 2023). This paper presents the results of a summative self-assessment, on an undergraduate, larger (>100 students), technical module. The developed assessment on the module required submission of a critical self-assessment report around the technical work (i.e., portfolio) completed by students. Along with self-assessment, a combination of contract and negotiated marking was included into the assessment to encourage students' early engagement with learning. It required completing weekly tutorials, a mid-term formative assessment, and submission of portfolio for an exhibition. The summative self-assessment comprised of a reflective, critical report around student engagement with learning as well as the quality of their completed portfolio. This paper outlines the thematic analysis of the interviews and survey results of the learners. It highlights the perceived benefits and concerns voiced around a summative self-assessment. Some of the results highlight the reduction in stress levels and greater depth of critical assessment of students' own work. The paper offers practitioners an example on integrating summative self-assessment into teaching by [a] combining

elements of contract assessment and negotiated marking, and [b] providing space for students to explore individual learning paths scaffolded through feedback.

Keywords: self-assessment; contract assessment; un-grading; assessment and evaluation.

Background and aims

Reflective evaluation is an integral part of any meaningful learning experience. As learners, we are naturally inclined to ask ourselves ‘How am I doing?’ as we navigate through our learning journeys. This introspective question is not merely about tracking progress, but also about identifying gaps in understanding, planning the way forward, and critically evaluating the purpose behind our learning. This reflective practice helps us iteratively refine our learning approaches, deciding whether we need to go back or deepen or shift our focus along a different axis of the multidimensional space of learning.

More often than not, however, the traditional assessment practices emphasise grades and external validation, which can inadvertently curtail such learning journeys (McVarish and Milne, 2014). When students focus primarily on securing favourable judgments from educators, the intrinsic motivations for learning – such as curiosity, personal growth, and the application of knowledge – can be overpowered by the pursuit of grades. This preoccupation with external evaluation may shift the focus from the underlying reasons for learning to the pursuit of higher grades, leading to a more superficial engagement with the learning process.

As educators, we strive to foster authentic learning experiences (Herrington, Reeves and Oliver, 2014) that transcend the narrow focus on grades. We willingly subscribe to the concept of ‘assessment for learning’, a pedagogical approach that uses assessment as a means to actively support and enhance the learning process, as opposed to ‘assessment of learning’, which is often viewed as a tool for measuring or classifying outcomes (Sambell, McDowell and Montgomery, 2012).

The question is, therefore, how we can cultivate an environment where reflective evaluation is the fundamental component of the learning process itself. In this paper we

discuss an attempt to shift the focus from grades and introduce reflection practices into a summative self-assessment element with the hope of encouraging students to engage with their learning, driven by intrinsic motivation and a genuine desire to grow.

Literature review: (self-)assessment practices in HE

The concept of reflective evaluation and the use of self-assessment practices are well-established in educational research. Self-assessment gained traction in the 80s through the seminal works of Falchikov and Boud (for example, Falchikov and Boud, 1989). It is widely accepted that higher education should facilitate the goal of developing independent learners (Mckendry and Boyd, 2012); being able to judge and monitor learning performance is a fundamental principle for cultivating autonomous learning (Boud, 1995). Self-assessment, broadly defined as the process by which students evaluate the quality of their own work and learning (Andrade and Du, 2007), can therefore facilitate the development of meta-cognitive skills and self-regulation required for independent learning. Despite an extensive body of work on and around self-assessment that spans a number of disciplines such as computing (Barana, Boetti and Marchisio, 2022), medical education (Eva and Regehr, 2005) and languages (Jamrus and Razali, 2019), the practice of summative self-assessment remains limited.

Self-assessment is a broad concept that explains the number of definitions used in the literature. We take a narrower stance, and adopt Panadero's definition of self-assessment in this study that is '… a wide variety of mechanisms and techniques through which students describe (i.e., assess) and possibly assign merit or worth to (i.e., evaluate) the qualities of their own learning processes and products' (Panadero, Brown and Strijbos, 2016, p.804). We particularly focus on the use of summative self-assessment practices, that are often reported as fraught with challenges. The recent meta-analysis (León, Panadero and García-Martínez, 2023) of self-assessment highlights the benefits of formative practices, while advocating caution against adopting these as summative practices.

Can there, however, be trade-offs in adopting summative self-assessment if these improve student wellbeing, empower students to take an active role in their own learning, or develop critical reflection skills? Can summative self-assessment be designed to minimise

the challenges associated with summative self-assessment while improving student learning?

Student wellbeing is gaining traction in academic literature, however, there appears to be a gap in the literature in exploring the effects self-assessment may have on student stress levels and wellbeing. Some studies suggest that the use of self-assessment can result in student wellbeing concerns or disengagement (Nieminen and Tuohilampi, 2020b). Yet, it is difficult to see how excessively rigid or narrow assessment and learning practices can contribute to improved student wellbeing.

We explored a range of approaches to self-assessment including negotiated marking (Alaoutinen and Smolander, 2010) and contract assessment elements (Stephenson and Laycock, 1993) to design and introduce a summative self-assessment that could minimise the concerns related to fairness of marks, while offering the benefits often associated with self-assessment practices.

In this paper we outline the self-assessment practice adopted on an undergraduate module and evaluate it using student feedback.

Case study: integrating contract with self-assessment

The summative self-assessment exercise was introduced as part of a Web Technologies, Level 5, technical module at a Russel Group university in London that aims to introduce students to fundamental topics such as HTML, CSS, JavaScript, as well as the principles of User Experience, Accessibility, Responsive Design, Search, and Search Engine Optimisation. Most students take this module as part of the core undergraduate programme that combines modules from Business and Information Science fields. This module enrols around 100 international and home students from a diverse demographic. The large number of applicants on the programme (approximately 1300) enables maintaining balance in gender and home country demographics in line with institutional recruitment policies. The educational background of students on the course varies widely, with some having formal technical or coding training, while others little if any experience with the technologies covered in the module. The diverse background of the students

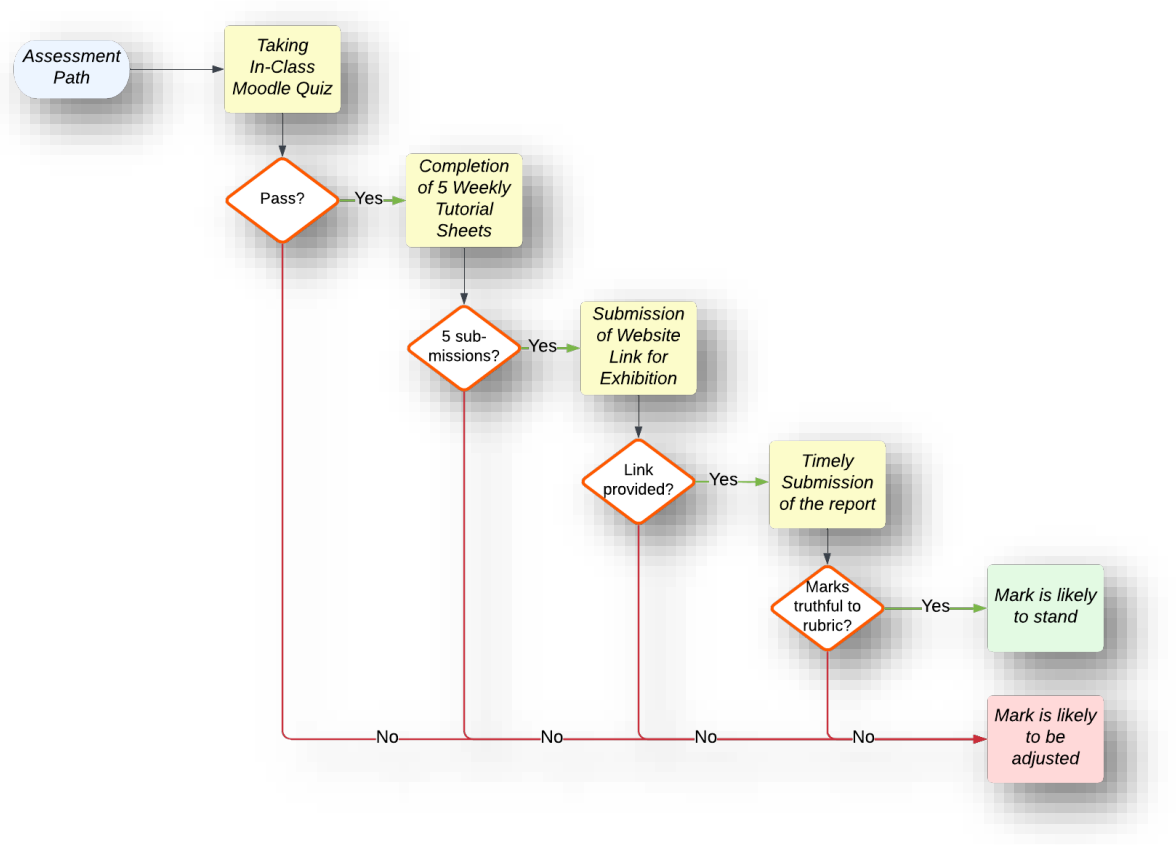
requires having optional exercises in Tutorial Sheets, extracurricular challenges or projects for those willing to build on their prior knowledge.

The students on the module seek to develop technical skills through weekly practical tasks guided by tutorial sheets. Students are encouraged to complete these tasks on a weekly basis, and seek feedback from the module leader or the teaching assistants. The assessment requires students to develop a website, or a cohesive portfolio of web pages, which they subsequently assess against predefined criteria. This assessment report serves as a demonstration of their grasp of key concepts, such as validity of their code, accessibility metrics and website performance. Students are free to select the topic of their website, but many choose to build personal websites. This freedom enables students to explore their own learning paths and develop skills necessary for implementing their own designs. They are allowed to use templates as well as generative AI tools to develop their work, but should be prepared to critically assess the outcomes and demonstrate necessary understanding of the topics covered in the module in the self-assessment report. The submitted report stands for 100% of the grade and is limited to 3,000 words.

The report is expected to be written using a structured form that prompts students to address each of the assessment criteria. The form is designed to facilitate critical evaluation, where they are expected to provide evidence of their work, identify strengths and weaknesses of their website along with reflective commentary. Recognising the individualised nature of learning paths within this module, students are also permitted to introduce their own assessment criteria, provided these criteria are well-justified and reflect their unique learning experiences. The predefined assessment criteria are provided with a rubric, guiding students in completing their self-assessment. Students must also assign a mark for each section of their report based on the rubric or their modified criteria.

What distinguishes this assessment practice is the integration of a contract assessment element and negotiated marking. The contract element anticipates student engagement in a series of formative assessments throughout the term. The module leader retains the authority to adjust any marks, with the students' negotiating power diminishing if contract conditions are unmet. Figure 1 illustrates the formative assessment components and how they inform decisions regarding the adjustment of student-awarded marks.

Figure 1. Flow diagram for informing the decisions on adjusting student-awarded marks.



The primary objective of incorporating the contract element is to promote consistent student engagement with the module, ensuring that students in this large class receive feedback and interact with the material throughout the term, rather than solely before the submission deadline. The diverse range of projects developed during the module also provides an opportunity for students to participate in an exhibition, celebrating their achievements collectively.

Exhibitions are viewed as a form of authentic assessment (Darling-Hammond and Snyder, 2000; Davidson, 2009; Sokhanvar, Salehi and Sokhanvar, 2021). Given the high-stake, open-ended nature of assessment on the module, the exhibition in the end of the term was believed to offer students an opportunity to show the results of their work. The websites are unique, and often reflect their professional and personal interests. Organised in a large computer cluster, where students were able to browse the websites, explore interesting features and technologies used by fellow students, and find connections to peers based on published interests, this was an informal gathering to celebrate student achievements. The atmosphere was relaxed, with some mince pies and soft drinks to celebrate the festive season and the end of autumn term. While the exhibition was not a formal peer-

assessment activity, it offered an opportunity to learn from each other, compare interesting technologies used, and share their personal experiences and strategies of learning. The energy in the room was lively and jovial, although the public nature of the activity was anticipated somewhat anxiously by some. The summative assessment component was based on a critical self-evaluation report. The report was submitted within a month, and after the exhibition.

Around half of the cohort on the module, rather surprisingly, did not meet the requirement of the contract element of the assessment. Those who did, however, were found to have assessed their work fairly with only negligible differences in the marks awarded by the module leader. As a result, their self-awarded marks remained unchanged, with the exception of two students whose marks were increased. The average marks across the module increased slightly compared to the prior year by around five percentage points, however, this change can also be attributed to greater motivation of the students to perform well.

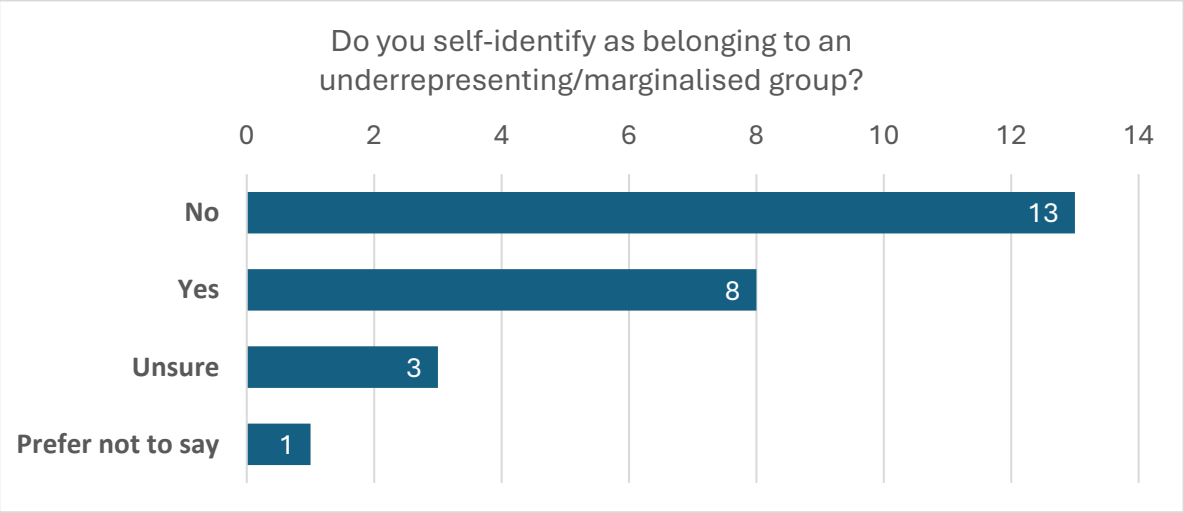
It is important to note that while this assessment strategy may seem straightforward, the concept of summative self-assessment is unfamiliar to many students, necessitating substantial support and reassurance planned into the contact hours throughout the term.

Research methods and data collection

To evaluate the effectiveness of the summative self-assessment in the module we adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data from a questionnaire with qualitative insights gathered through a series of semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was designed to capture a wider sample of students, while the semi-structured interviews were conducted with a smaller group to explore their experiences in greater depth. The data collection focused on questions around: [a] wellbeing and workload, [b] self-regulation, [c] self/tutor marking, [d] learning support and feedback, and [e] general learning environment the assessment cultivated.

The questionnaire was on Qualtrics[1] and distributed via email to all (n=113) students who completed the assessment. Taking part in the questionnaire was voluntary with an opportunity to enter a prize draw for a £25 Love2Shop voucher. A total of 25 complete responses were collected. Ten attempts remained incomplete and were discarded, leading to a response rate of 22.1%. We collected minimal demographic data, but we were able to record aggregated statistics on whether respondents would self-identify as belonging to an underrepresented/marginalised group (Figure 2). 23 respondents were year-1 students and two were year-2. No other demographic data was collected.

Figure 2. Distribution of respondents from underrepresented/marginalised groups.



In total five semi-structured interviews were conducted. The participants were recruited via the module discussion board and email. The interviews lasted around 40 minutes. The participants were compensated with £15 Love2Shop vouchers. The interviews were run solely by student researchers, having conducted the first interview jointly and the remaining four individually. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were pseudonymised and collated for a thematic analysis. Thematic analysis used transcripts, which were coded respectively using NVivo 14.[2] The coding was completed by a single researcher due to resource restriction, primarily using small Q approach which is a widely accepted approach in mixed method research and in applied research settings focuses on informing practice or policy. The codes were categorised into themes by looking at commonality between codes and their representativeness. After finalising small

[1] https://www.qualtrics.com/en-gb/
[2] https://lumivero.com/products/nvivo/?v=79cba1185463

themes, totalling to 29, which were reordered hierarchically, six final, main themes emerged.

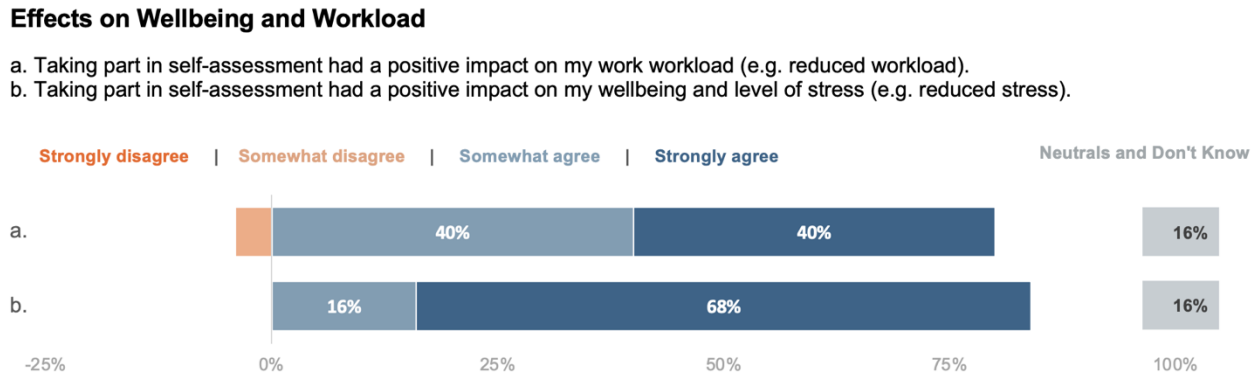
Results and analysis

Survey results

The questionnaire aimed to identify student views around the: [a] well-being and workload, [b] student empowerment through having greater control of their learning and having their voice heard, [c] support and feedback received, [d] effects on fostering a collaborative environment, and [e] self-regulation. The results suggest a largely positive attitude towards self-assessment, although most survey participants reported to have met the requirements of the contract. Therefore, the results may be biased towards those who were more engaged with the assessment.

The majority indicated that self-assessment positively impacted their workload and stress levels, with over 80% strongly or somewhat agreeing with the given statements (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Effects on wellbeing and workload.



Exploring the views on empowering students appears to have also been viewed positively (see Table 1), with 64% strongly agreeing that self-assessment made them feel empowered to voice their views on their work. The optional student-proposed criteria, utilised by only two of the 113 students in the cohort, did not appear to have as strong of an impact as initially anticipated. There were few strongly negative views on displaying work through an exhibition, although 56% viewed it positively. This suggests allowances should be made for those who may find exhibiting their work challenging.

Table 1. Effects on student empowerment.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Some what agree	Strongly agree	Not Applicable/ Don't Know
Taking part in an exhibition allowed me to take pride in the work I completed.	4%	4%	20%	12%	56%	4%
Self-assessment empowered me to voice my view on my own work.	0%	4%	4%	24%	64%	4%
Optional student-proposed criteria for the assessment empowered me to pursue my own goal in learning.	0%	8%	20%	32%	24%	16%

In general, the marks students received were perceived as fair, but a small number of respondents appear to think that the tutor mark slightly overestimated their performance. Similarly, a comparable number of students felt they had marked themselves down (see Table 2).

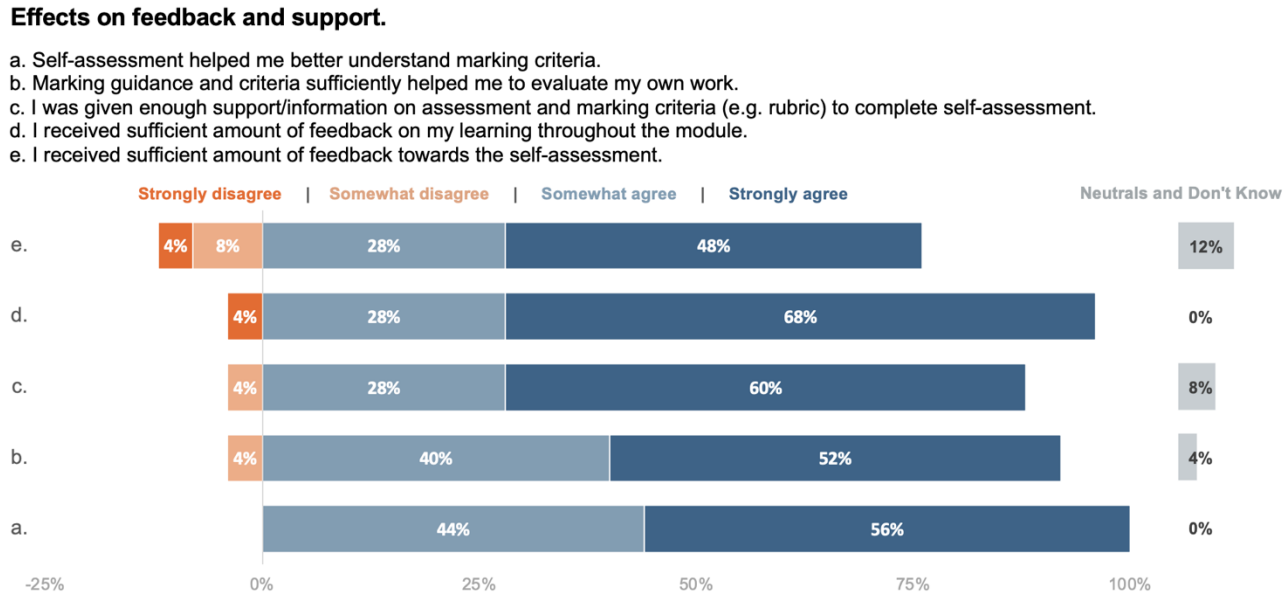
Table 2. Views on fairness of marking.

	Largely under estimated	Slightly under estimated	Fair	Slightly over estimated	Largely over estimated	Not Applicable/ Don't Know
The mark I assigned myself _____ my performance on this module.	0 %	8%	88 %	4%	0 %	0 %
The mark I received from tutor _____.	0%	4 %	79%	8 %	0 %	8 %

It appears that students generally felt they received sufficient support and feedback during self-assessment, with 68% strongly agreeing they received adequate support. This is particularly important, as lack of feedback can be viewed as a drawback of self-

assessment. Similarly, most students (56%) felt that engaging with self-assessment helped them better understand the marking criteria (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Effects on feedback and support.



A high number of respondents (71%) reported that participating in an exhibition helped them learn from other students. Similarly, a strong response in this section suggests that self-assessment may foster a more collaborative rather than competitive environment. Around 40% believe that self-assessment reduced competitiveness and promoted a more supportive learning environment (see Table 3).

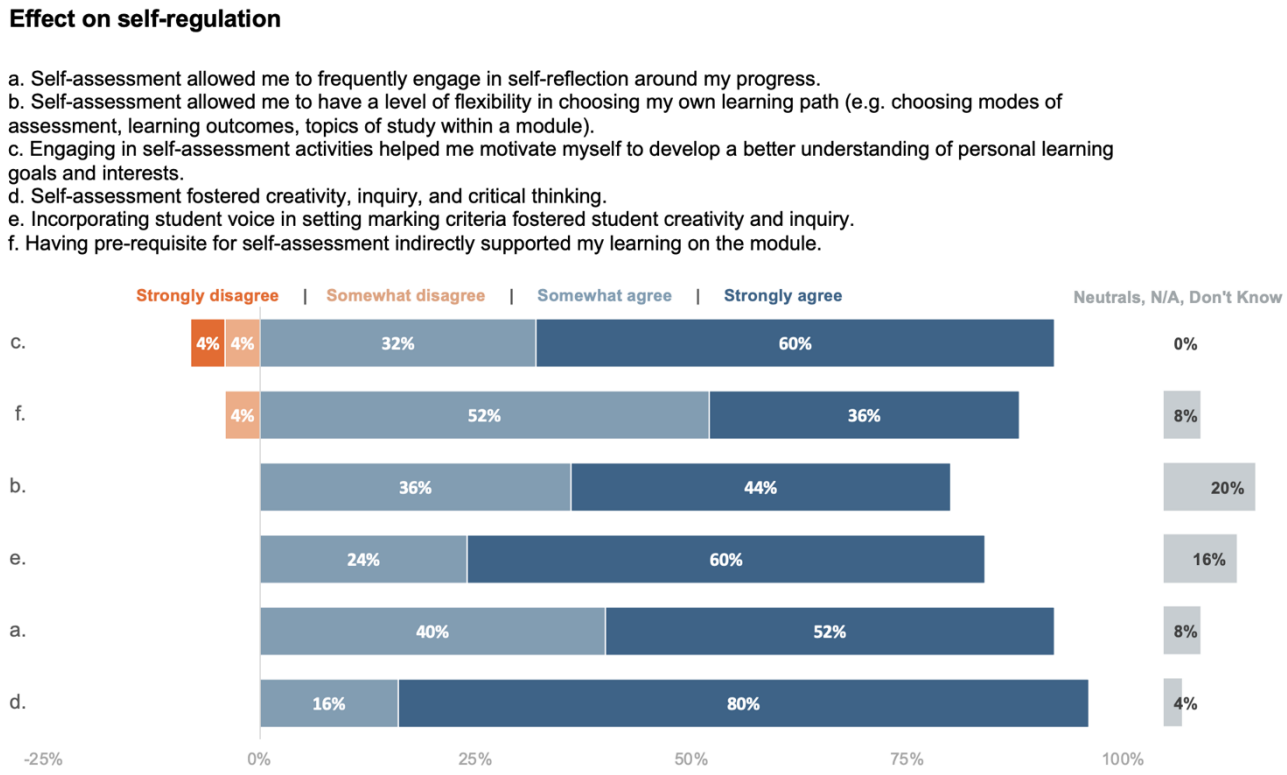
Table 3. Fostering a more collaborative learning environment.

	Strongly disagree	Some what disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Some what agree	Strongly agree	Not Applicable/Don't Know
Self-assessment fostered a more supportive environment where students would be more inclined to help each other in their own learning.	0%	0%	24%	40%	36%	0%

Self-assessment reduced competition amongst students.	0%	8%	12%	41%	33%	4%
Taking part in exhibition had helped me learn from other students.	4%	0%	4%	8%	71%	13%

The overwhelming majority of respondents (80%) strongly agree that self-assessment fostered their creativity. Allowing students to amend the marking criteria was seen by 60% as encouraging greater creativity and a drive for inquiry. Formative assessment exercises scored comparatively lower, suggesting a strong alignment of summative assessment with the contract elements (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Effect on self-regulation.



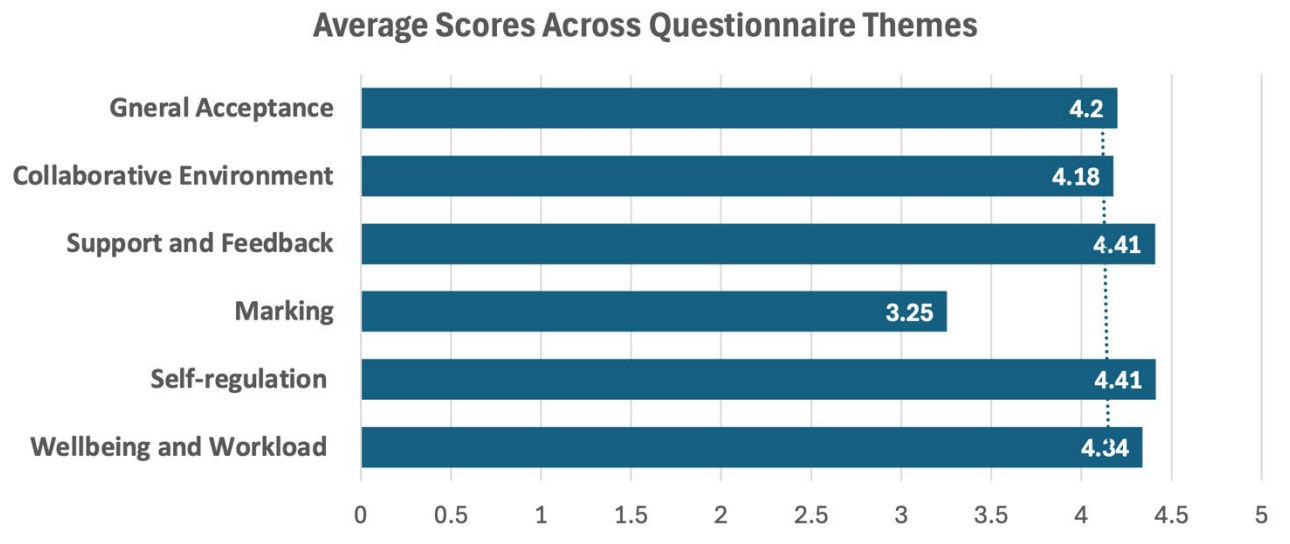
In general, most respondents (68%) indicated a willingness to engage with self-assessment in the future, while a smaller number expressed a preference for a combination of traditional and self-assessment methods (see Table 4).

Table 4. General views on self-assessment.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Some what agree	Strongly agree	Not Applicable/ Don't Know
As a student I would be willing to actively participate in self-assessment in the future.	8%	0%	16%	8%	68%	0%
I would prefer self-assessment over traditional assessment.	4%	4%	16%	28%	48%	0%
I would prefer a combination of self-assessment and traditional assessment than doing only one type of assessment (self-assessment OR tutor-assessed).	8%	4%	16%	36%	36%	0%

Overall, the findings emphasise that students saw benefits in having summative self-assessment on their module. These results were consistent across different themes of the questionnaire. Figure 6 highlights that the average scores (1 for 'strongly disagree' to 5 'strongly agree') of Likert scale questions remained consistently above average.

Figure 6. Average scores of student responses. See Table 2 for context on marking.



Thematic analysis of student interviews

Overall, students conveyed a positive experience with self-assessment. Six main themes emerged from the thematic analysis of the interview transcripts, reflecting the diverse perspectives and experiences of the participants, despite the small cohort of interviewees.

Encouraging learning

Participants highlighted that self-assessment is particularly effective in fostering learning within the module and assessing the learning journey itself. As Interviewee 3 noted, self-assessment allowed students to 'focus on their own learning experience, rather than trying to meet that criteria'. This may suggest that – it encouraged a focus on acquiring new knowledge for long-term benefit – rather than focusing on grades. The reduced emphasis on grading also appeared to 'reduce the pressure' (Interviewee 4) on participants. They perceived the approach to make them feel less burdened by external expectations, stating, 'I'm not doing anything because of what was expected'. This sense of freedom allowed students to engage more deeply with their learning process.

Participants also emphasised the importance of reflective learning and believed it should be graded based on an 'honest reflection of your own work' (Interviewee 3). This perspective was tied to an enhanced motivation to take ownership of their learning journey. As Interviewee 4 noted, 'If you were being rated on a website, it's something you could do really well without having understood any of the lecture content just because … how the Internet works and ChatGPT and things like that'. The interviewee thought self-assessment showcased their learning journey.

Additionally, self-assessment provided a better showcase for their own work, enabling students to offer a more detailed description of their learning. Interviewee 4 remarked that it allowed them to explain 'how you've done it or what kind of what went into it'. Though interviewees felt the criteria were 'quite strict in terms of what you're writing about', optional criteria were welcomed and appeared to reduce stress levels.

Importance of continued engagement

Some of the participants emphasised the need to engage students throughout the course, particularly before the self-assessment period, as some of the students did not engage until the later part of the module. There were concerns that some students might focus exclusively on the self-assessment, neglecting the broader learning opportunities offered earlier in the module. Interviewee 3 stated that, ‘People understood from week one or week two that it was self-assessment. So they just didn’t go to any lectures, didn’t go to any, just focused on the report side of things and being able to like maximise their grade, putting in the minimum amount of effort’. This suggests that the self-assessment may need to integrate pedagogies that sustain engagement with learning tasks throughout the taught period. Interviewee 2 highlighted contract elements to ensure fairness and consistent participation. They thought that, ‘pre-prerequisites help to make the grades for everyone more, like fair’ adding that ‘you need to pass the threshold in order to give yourself a great rate’.

Importance of providing a marking scheme

Since self-assessment requires students to explain how their work meets the marking criteria, the availability and clarity of the marking scheme became a notable part of their experience. As Interviewee 5 explained, the process involved ‘tak[ing] a look at everything and see[ing] how well it falls with the criteria’ which led students to ‘look at the marking scheme a bit more’ (Interviewee 4). This emphasises the role a marking scheme plays in guiding students through the self-assessment process and aligns with the questionnaire results.

Students found the grading criteria to be ‘very clear’ (Interviewee 3). However, they also expressed specific concerns. Interviewee 4 noted a lack of emphasis on the quality of the website itself, stating, ‘I just need to write a really good self-report and have a mediocre website’. Additionally, there were concerns about the broad grading boundaries, with Interviewee 4 commenting, ‘It was very free... you can do whatever you want, but I think like it was a bit too much’.

Students also recognised moderation by the module leader as helpful. The potential for over- or under-scoring their own work lowered stress, as they were reassured that their scores would be reviewed. Interviewee 5 said, ‘I was kind of like, concerned about, you

know, over scoring or under scoring, so I was quite relieved that there was also the professor just reviewing it after we did it'. Similarly, Interviewee 2 noted, 'It was less stressful because I mean, I knew that the mark could be adjusted'.

However, the moderation process also introduced a degree of anxiety, as students were aware that their marks were not final until after review. Interviewee 3 noted, 'I was comparing myself to them, and ... I've now got a month-long wait where I'm not sure whether they're going to agree with me … think I've been too generous … think I've been too harsh'.

Increased comparison with peers

Participants observed that self-assessment exacerbated benchmarking student grades with their peers. This often resulted in students reflecting on the marks of others to calibrate their own. Self-assessment may encourage collaboration, as Interviewee 2 highlighted the benefits of this peer comparison, stating, 'Like by the end of the first semester, we didn't really know each other yet … [it] was a very helpful to get familiar with your classmates'. However, setting structures to avoid competitive mark comparison may be needed.

Similarly, Interviewee 4 noted a positive aspect of collaboration that emerged from this comparison: 'in terms of collaboration, I think that was good in terms of seeing the standards and kind of not just giving yourself a mark out of nowhere, having kind of a baseline to compare to'. This indicates that self-assessment not only encouraged students to set realistic benchmarks for their own work but also facilitated a shared understanding of standards among peers.

However, students expressed a need for additional resources, particularly 'examples of previous students' self-assessments' (Interviewee 1), which they believed would help. Despite these benefits, some participants noted that this increased comparison fostered a more competitive environment, as they felt they were contending with others' evaluations rather than simply focusing on their own learning. This finding highlights potential barriers to creating a collaborative learning environment.

Interviewee 3 expressed this sentiment, noting, ‘More competitive because I think at least my experience, like when you’re being graded by TA …, this weird team spirit of you’re trying to beat the TAs in a way, like you’re trying to fight against them to get all of you to a first. Whereas when it was self-assessed it was like you’re fighting against other people’s judgement in a way, sort of made it more secluded, and then also either compassion of other people’s coursework and their grades and stuff’. This quote reflects the shift from a collective effort to a more isolated struggle against peers’ judgments, altering collaboration and competition dynamics.

Overestimation of performance

A common theme among the interviewees was the perception that students ‘overestimate’ (Interviewee 1) the quality of their work. Several reasons were identified for this behaviour. One reason is that students believed they could potentially secure a higher grade by awarding themselves a higher mark, even if they were unsure they deserved it. As Interviewee 3 observed, ‘Some of my mates [tried] to maximise as many marks ... without ... reviewing anything’. While moderation was put in place to avoid this, a mindful approach towards reassuring students, having a closer oversight of the self-assessment to avoid increasing levels of stress in students would be useful.

Interviewee 1 articulated this sentiment: ‘I feel it’s natural to feel confident ... be proud of your design ... know how many hours you’ve worked on it’. As a result, students generally perceived receiving ‘better grades through self-assessment’ (Interviewee 3). The same interviewee highlighted this issue, noting that ‘people’s perspectives of self-evaluation are very different’ which could lead to significant disparities in grading among students. This highlights the need for trust building among students, especially for year-1 and in larger classes.

Suitability/unsuitability for wider adoption

Overall, interviewees believed that self-assessment is suitable for adoption in other modules. Some suggested it being particularly appropriate for ‘more practical modules’ (Interviewee 3) or ‘technical modules where progress can be objectively measured’ (Interviewee 2). These types of modules typically involve clear benchmarks, making it easier for students to track and articulate progress in a self-assessment context

(Interviewee 2). Interviewees thought that ‘essay-based’ (Interviewee 4) or ‘theory’ (Interviewee 2) modules may not be suitable for such assessments. However, one of the interviewees mentioned the opposite, where they think self-assessment is ‘not for more quantitative ones’ and is more suitable for ‘qualitative subjects’ (Interviewee 1).

Conclusion

This study evaluated the implementation of a summative self-assessment exercise within a large technical module, integrating elements of contract assessment and negotiated marking. By combining survey results with a thematic analysis of student interviews, the study offers insights into both the impact and potential challenges of integrating self-assessment as a summative tool. The findings suggest that, despite some of the challenges, summative self-assessment is not only a viable alternative to traditional assessment methods but also delivers significant benefits. These benefits include reducing stress and improving wellbeing, fostering deeper engagement with learning, empowering students to take ownership of their educational journeys, and enabling them to take greater pride in their achievements.

The most compelling conclusions drawn from both the survey and interview data show that self-assessment effectively reduces student stress, encourages deeper engagement with course material, and enhances understanding of the marking processes in higher education. The contract element, in particular, stood out as a motivator, prompting students to engage with their learning early in the term, track their progress consistently, and gain confidence in their learning trajectory. This also contributed to some meaningful collaboration within the cohort. While the survey data indicates that self-assessment reduces competitiveness and fosters mutual support, it is essential to acknowledge potential challenges in the light of deeply embedded focus on grades that may lead to comparing their work with others and subsequently diminishing the collaborative nature of the learning environment.

More generally, the adopted self-assessment helped students better understand the marking criteria, while the contract element offered some reassurance of fairness in marking. However, interview results also revealed some concerns about the perceived fairness of self-assigned grades, particularly the fear that some students might receive

higher marks than they deserve. Therefore, fostering trust within the cohort is crucial, as perceptions of disparity in effort or fairness could undermine the overall effectiveness of self-assessment.

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