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Explanatory statement for Students participating in the Friendship Method study.

Study Title: Rethinking assessment practices in higher education

Chief Investigator(s): Elena Riva, (University of Warwick) and Danijela Gasevic (Monash University)

Project ID: 37169

Introduction

You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Talk to others about the study if you wish.

Please ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Who is organising and funding the study?

The study is organised in partnership between the University of Warwick and Monash University and is funded by the Monash Warwick Alliance Education Fund.

What is the study about?

This project aims to measure assessment literacy related to contemporary assessment practices, identify potential barriers to implementation of effective assessment among educators; and develop materials for a professional education masterclass on implementing effective assessment in public health teaching.

The study will explore lived experiences related to assessment of public health educators and undergraduate and postgraduate students from Monash and Warwick universities using a novel Friendship Method. The discussions will focus on experiences around assessment and feedback in a more open, informal, and authentic manner as prompted by questions but without the presence of the researcher. The researcher will access the recording of the conversations only when concluded. Students will be paired with their peers from the other Institutions and will have the opportunity to have conversation about their perspectives and experiences.

What would taking part involve?

Taking part would involve participating in an online (Zoom or Teams) peer dialogue that researchers will facilitate using the so called 'Friendship method'. Approximately 60 to 90 minutes of time is required for the peer dialogue. In a pair with another Monash/Warwick student, you will be asked to reflect, share, probe and question topics and concepts related to assessment literacy, provision of effective assessment, potential barriers to their delivery, difference in assessment delivery pre-and post-pandemic, and future of assessment in higher education.

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The peer dialogue will be guided by structured questions which you will receive prior to the online conversation from the peer dialogue facilitator. The facilitator will also be there to open the call and provide you with further instructions, as well as to clarify any questions you may have. The facilitator will also coordinate the recording of the session. As the session will be in Zoom or Teams, the recording will be both a sound and visual (audio-visual) recording. Following this, the facilitator will not be part of the discussion between you and your peer. Nevertheless, you will be able to contact the facilitator at any point if you have questions and they will be able to assist throughout the discussion, if needed.

The questions will be based on the topic of assessment and your experiences of assessment in the Public Health sector in Higher Education. Prompts will be provided alongside each topic in case you need help with understanding a question. You are welcome to ask each other additional questions to further clarify or elaborate your answer. A facilitator will introduce the conversation and give assistance if you require any help. The audio from peer dialogue recordings will be transcribed and anonymised. This means that once your peer dialogue has been submitted to the research team, it will not be possible to withdraw this data as your individual responses cannot be identified.

Do I have to take part?

No. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and choosing not to take part will not affect you in any way. During the peer dialogue, you can also choose to withdraw your participation without giving a reason.

Can I withdraw my data after taking part?

After the peer dialogue is completed, and data transcribed, you will not be able to withdraw because the data will be anonymised and therefore it will not be possible to identify your data.

What are the possible benefits of taking part in this study?

Your contributions through participating in the peer dialogues will be invaluable to developing recommendations for future development of assessment. The results of this research can help inform future assessment education policies and help further tailor the programs offered to train new educators when coming to Monash and Warwick universities.

The peer dialogue will offer you a unique opportunity to engage with another student in Warwick/Monash through the 'Friendship Method' research technique. This method has been designed to overcome the power issue often associated to traditional peer dialogues. The research team see this opportunity as beneficial as it will allow you to discuss experiences around assessment in a more open, informal, and authentic manner as prompted by questions but without the presence of the researcher. You may find this to be a positive experience.

What are the possible disadvantages, side effects or risks, of taking part in this study?

We do not foresee any risks to taking part in the study. In the unlikely event that the peer dialogue leads to any distress, the facilitator will be able to provide information on where to seek help. The peer dialogue will last for approximately 60 minutes. During the peer dialogue, participants can choose not to answer the questions or discuss any topics of interest to researchers.

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Expenses and payments

You will not incur in any financial expense nor will you be paid for participating in this study.

Will my taking part be kept confidential?

No identifiable data i.e., names or other personal characteristics will be used in the transcriptions and writing of the research reports and papers. Your contribution will be anonymised as part of the transcription process.

What will happen to the data collected about me?

As a publicly funded organisation, the University of Warwick have to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally identifiable information from people who have agreed to take part in research. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, such as this, we will use your data in the ways needed to conduct and analyse the research study.

We will be using information from you in order to undertake this study and will act as the data controller for this study. We are committed to protecting the rights of individuals in line with data protection legislation.

No identifiable data will be collected from you as part of this study. At the beginning of the peer dialogue, you will be instructed by the facilitator not to utilise any names or places that would reveal their own or others' identities as part of the written accounts, such as referring to your friendship pair by name. The researchers would remove any identifying information at analysis stage if not addressed by you. Following the completion of the transcript from the peer dialogue, the video recordings will be deleted. Transcribed peer discussion data will be kept for 10 years (at least 5 years according to Monash University policy; 10 years according to the University of Warwick policy). All data that are no longer required will be permanently deleted from the server.

Data may also be used for future research, including impact activities following review and approval by an independent Research Ethics Committee and subject to your consent at the outset of this research project.

For further information, please refer to the University of Warwick Research Privacy Notice which is available here: <https://warwick.ac.uk/services/idc/dataprotection/privacynotices/researchprivacynotice> or by contacting the Legal and Compliance Team at GDPR@warwick.ac.uk.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on being part of the study?

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and a decision to withdraw participation from the study without giving a reason, will not affect you in any way. You can withdraw at any point while completing the peer dialogue without giving any explanation to the researchers. However, if

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you chose to complete the peer dialogue, once your peer dialogue has finished it will not be possible to withdraw this data as it will be anonymised. Therefore, your individual responses cannot be identified.

What will happen to the results of the study?

Upon completion of the peer dialogue, data analysis and interpretation, the results of the study will be translated in the form of a publications in the peer-reviewed journals. The results may also be utilised in other types of academic communications, such as social media platforms, websites, conferences, events, seminars, etc.,

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed and given favourable opinion by the University of Warwick's Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC).

Who should I contact if I want further information?

If you would like further information or if you have any questions, please email Dr Elena Riva (e.riva@warwick.ac.uk).

Who should I contact if I wish to make a complaint?

For Monash

Should you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact the Executive Officer, Monash University Human Research Ethics (MUHREC):

Executive Officer

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)

Office of Research Ethics and Integrity
Room 116, Administration Building B (3D)
26 Sports Walk, Clayton Campus
Monash University VIC 3800
Email: muhrec@monash.edu
Tel: +61 3 9905 2052

For Warwick

Any complaint about the way you have been dealt with during the study or any possible harm you might have suffered will be addressed. Please address your complaint to the person below, who is a senior University of Warwick official entirely independent of this study:

Head of Research Governance

Research & Impact Services
University House
University of Warwick
Coventry
CV4 8UW
Email: researchgovernance@warwick.ac.uk

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Tel: 02476 575733

If you wish to raise a complaint on how we have handled your personal data, you can contact our Data Protection Officer who will investigate the matter: DPO@warwick.ac.uk.

If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are processing your personal data in a way that is not lawful you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Thank you for taking the time to read this Explanatory Statement.