Professional literacy development:
A pilot project with undergraduate speech & language therapy students

Alex Mallinson & Lynsey Parrott

Institutional context

- Marjon built on a proud commitment to widening participation

- Small university with attendant benefits and challenges

- 25 years of training pre-registration SLTs

Programme level context

- Removal of funding for AHP and nursing students from September 2017

- Compression of BSc programme from 3.5 to 3 years

- Accelerate students' progression through the curriculum

- Evidence based practice & behaviour change theory

- Time for change….

Pilot project context

- Following AHE 2017, key messages were;
  - Supporting students to get over the bar
  - Unschooling (Kearney, 2017)
  - Increasing formative opportunities
  - Changing the first year experience

- Opportunity to acknowledge differently the multiple demands of a dual qualification, vocational programme

An approach to the development of literacies

Professional

Academic

Assessment & feedback
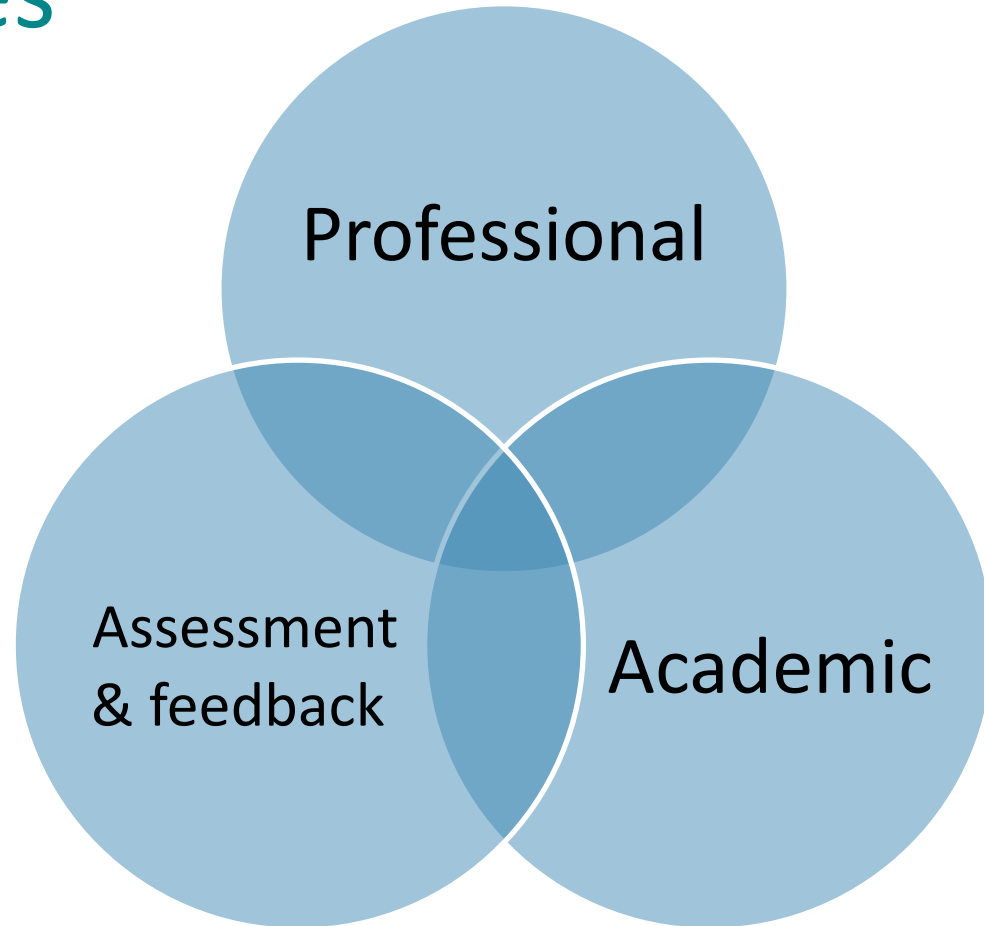
Another literacy?

- Perceived gap between learning at university and on placement

- Establishing firmer links between academic and professional skill sets-transferable skills

- Key to this overlap is feedback as a mediator of behaviour change (Michie *et al.,* 2011)
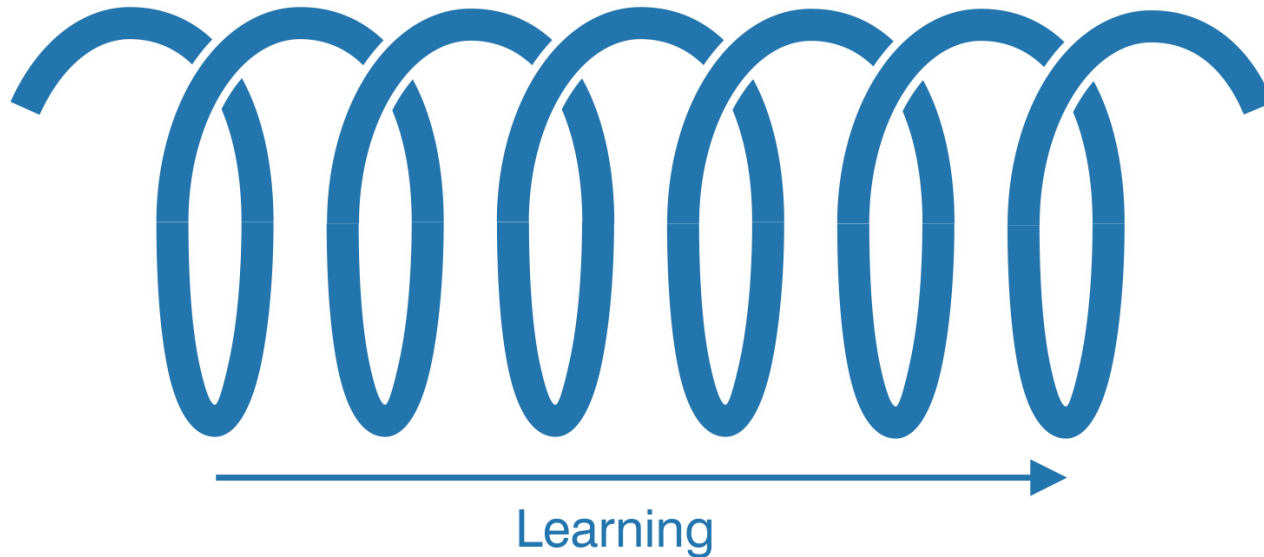 - Feedback receiving, giving and seeking

Being and becoming

identity

academic

clinical

professional
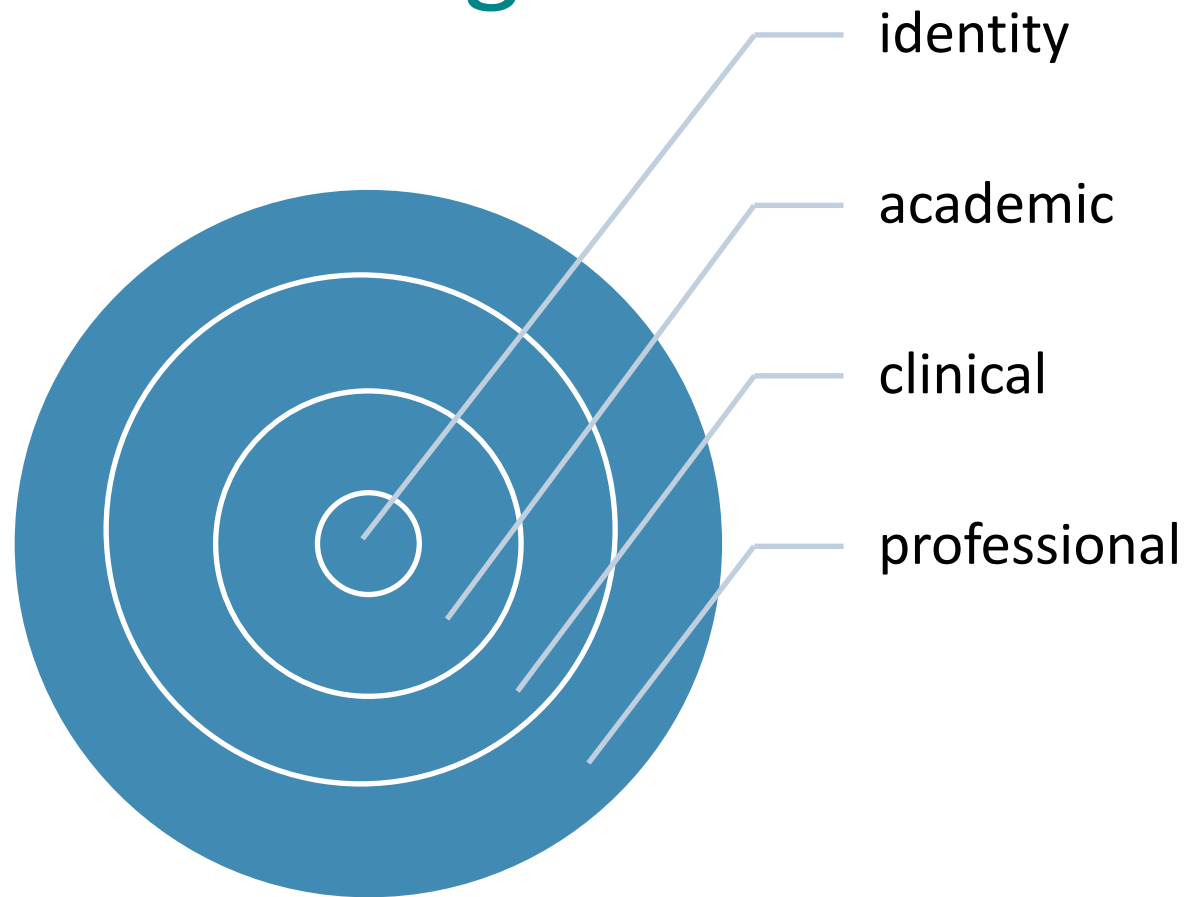
New module, new project

Learning

- Embedded writing support (Wingate, 2010)

- Series of feedback loops designed with nested tasks (Boud & Molloy, 2013) leading to summative assessment

https://edtechnow.net/2013/02/25/conversation/

PLYMOUTH
MARJON
UNIVERSITY

- Dialogic in intention with multiple feedback loops involving self, peers, tutors, seminars and module materials

- 1 x F2F meeting-self-generated feedback action plan

- 3 x formative short essays-developmental approach

- 1 x summative essay

- 2 questionnaires (module/placement)
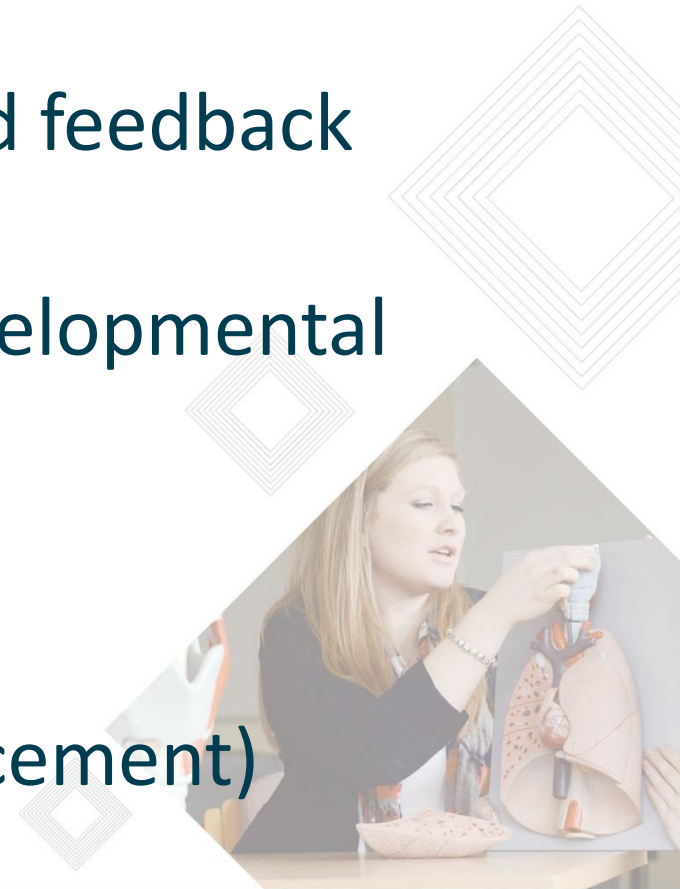
Emergent data

- Feedback input
  - Peer feedback not measured in this pilot

  - Content, style & links to professional practice = professional literacy
    - constructed to align with evidence for best practice (Nicol & McFarlane-Dick, 2006, Hyatt, 2005)
  - Having achieved *x*, it may be predicted that you will be able to do *y* in professional practice
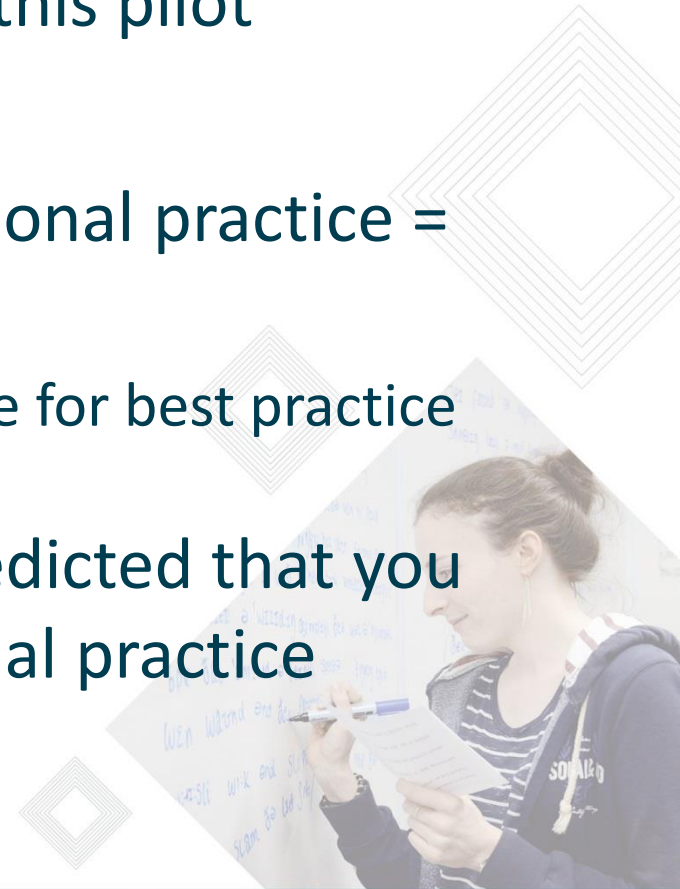
- Student perspectives;

  – "it felt as though we were *working together*"

  – "only did it because I thought it was *compulsory*"

  – "I think the process has encouraged me to reflect on my own work and *actively react* to feedback which would be more valuable in future"

  – "I knew what I did *wrong* and why"

Repeat or revise?

- Individual student responses indicate positive experiences (not all!)

- Rationale for taking a programme long approach to feedback changes

- Engagement/prioritisation; overlap with other summative assessments

- Developmental process for all

What next?

- Impact on staff;
  - at university
  - in clinical practice
  - profession-wide

- Impact on student/s;
  - at university
  - on placement
  - as a lifelong learner

- Not a linear progression from academic to professional literacy…

- Textual analysis of feedback practice-discourse &/or content

Thank you for listening

amallinson@marjon.ac.uk

lparrott@marjon.ac.uk

@sltmarjon