



Using the EAT (equity, agency, transparency) framework to promote inclusive assessment practices

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Presentation abstract

This presentation demonstrated how learning developers can use Evans's EAT framework (2022) to increase the accessibility, equity, and inclusivity of assessment practices by designing innovative activities that promote student assessment and feedback literacy. The activities showcased in this presentation were used in Academic Language and Literacy workshops at the University of Bristol, which played a central role in demystifying assessment and feedback processes for students at all levels of their academic journeys. Underpinning theories and practical applications from these workshops were explored for each of the three dimensions of the framework to demonstrate how this tool could be used to increase the transparency of assessment practices and empower students to take a more active role in the assessment and feedback process.

In terms of assessment literacy, the presentation proposed ways to improve students' ability to generate internal feedback and self-regulate their learning (Nicol, 2021) through the discussion and evaluation of exemplars (Smyth, 2023) and the decoding of assessment briefs and marking criteria. Activities to increase students' agentic engagement with feedback practices (Winstone et al., 2017) were also discussed, such as analysing tutor feedback to explore disciplinary practices and highlight the integral role of feedback in academic knowledge construction. The final part of the presentation focused on how to help students navigate the ever-increasing modular system of HE assessment design (Jessop and Tomas, 2017), so that they can make connections between assessments on different units and exploit central university resources to support their development.

Keywords: inclusive assessment; equity; agency; transparency; feedback literacy.

Community response

The session provided an engaging platform for participants to reflect on their experiences with the EAT framework. It fostered meaningful discussions on embedding inclusivity in assessment practices, particularly in postgraduate programmes with diverse educational contexts. Participants expressed interest in the practical strategies shared and appreciated the structured delivery of content.

The session concluded with participants expressing their appreciation for the engaging and thought-provoking content. Comments from the Zoom chat included:

- ‘Thanks so much, really interesting!’
- ‘Very interesting examples of practice, many thanks for sharing!’
- ‘That was great, lots to think about. Thanks very much.’

The positive engagement and meaningful discussion reflected in the chat underscored the session’s impact and its ability to inspire reflection among attendees.

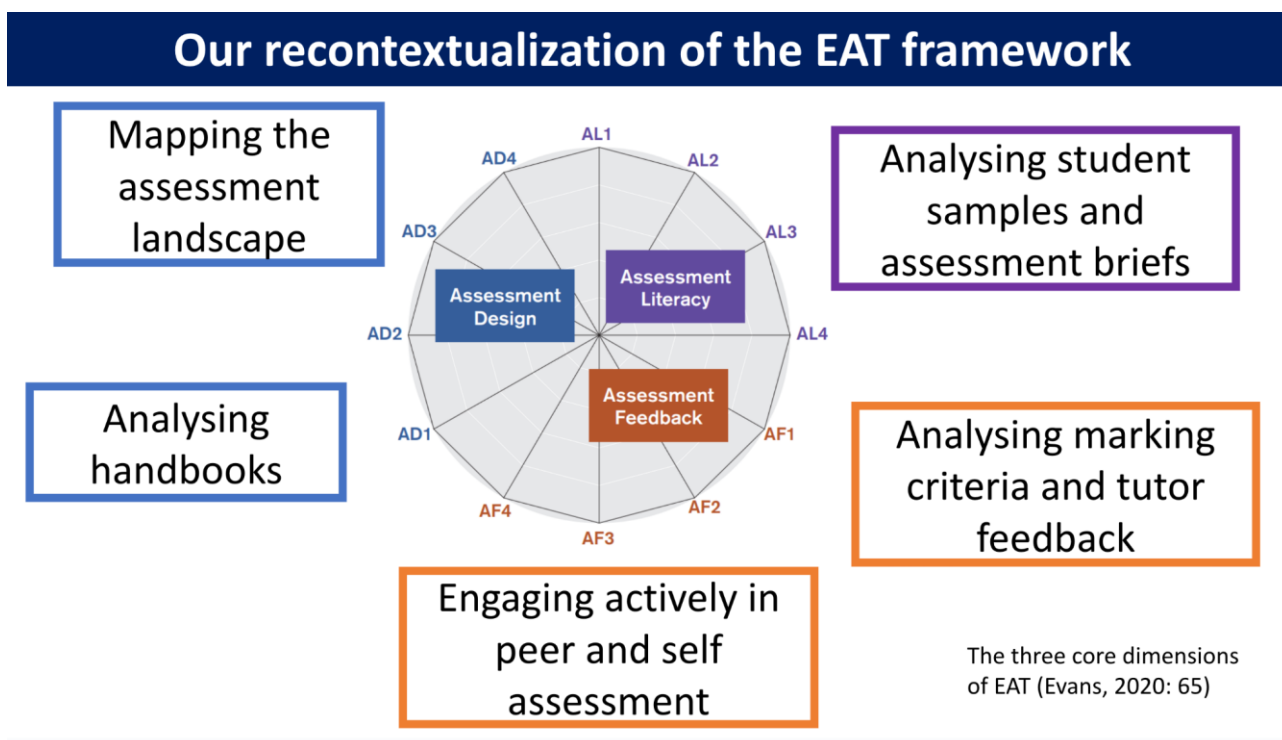
One attendee noted the inherent challenge of working with a range of disciplines and therefore cohorts of students with very different needs. This was acknowledged by the presenters who mentioned that adopting an ethnographic lens to the teaching of academic skills does require considerable analytical work (for example, analysis of departmental documentation). However, this is a challenge that needs to be met when adopting a disciplinary perspective in developing students’ academic communication skills.

The session chair, Sandie Donnelly, commended the clarity and depth of the presentation, particularly the use of the ‘student samples not models’ strategy. She reflected on its potential to shift student perceptions of exemplars and enhance their learning experience. Additionally, the reader/writer grid was praised for making abstract concepts more concrete and connecting assessment criteria to writing practices.

Next steps and additional questions

The presenters' recontextualisation of the EAT framework places emphasis on the interconnectedness of students' assessments, using student exemplars, and the active participation of students in the analysis of documentary data such as assessment briefs and marker feedback to clarify assessment expectations. By contextualising the framework (Figure 1), the presenters successfully bridged theoretical concepts with practical application, fostering critical thinking and active engagement among students. This approach highlights the critical role of embedding reflective practices into the learning process to enhance assessment literacy.

Figure 1. The presenters' contextualised adaptation of the EAT Framework.



Central to this adaptation is the focus on three key dimensions of the EAT framework: assessment design, assessment literacy, and assessment feedback. The framework incorporates actionable strategies such as analysing handbooks, marking criteria, tutor feedback, and assessment briefs, while also encouraging students to engage actively in peer and self-assessment activities. These elements collectively empower students with the skills and confidence needed to navigate and succeed in diverse assessment contexts. The presenters further recommended fostering collaboration by encouraging students to connect with institutional support services and take an active role in co-designing assessments. This inclusive and iterative approach not only promotes a sense of

ownership among students but also strengthens the partnership between educators and learners, driving the ongoing refinement of the framework.

The presentation outlined several priorities for the future:

1. Framework impact assessment: evaluating the effectiveness of the EAT framework in improving student outcomes, particularly in feedback literacy.
2. Enhanced collaboration: strengthening partnerships with institutional support services to ensure contextual relevance.
3. Resource development: creating accessible guides and toolkits for educators and students.
4. Expanding applicability: adapting the framework to formative and oral assessments.

Key questions for future exploration include:

- How can the framework ensure inclusivity across disciplines and assessment formats?
- What metrics can effectively evaluate its impact on student learning?
- How can the co-creation process between educators and students be further strengthened?

Authors' reflection

Debora Catavello

It was really important to position our work with students not only as support with academic writing but as a concerted effort to make 'the basis of achievement' (Monbec and Ding, 2024, p.79) visible to students. Using the EAT framework to reflect on our practice made this possible as it has allowed us to identify students' needs that we are addressing (for example, feedback literacy) as well as areas where we could expand our provision (for example, assessment design). For example, in relation to the case study of 'nested assessments' discussed in our presentation, we have recently strengthened our collaboration with the academics and have jointly designed an assessment that better meets students' needs. We hope for similar opportunities to arise in the future.

I was pleased to read the session chair's positive comment on the reader/writer grid, which I have successfully used with different cohorts. I often tell my students that good writers must fulfil their readers' expectations since our understanding of what we read is partly based on our ability to predict what comes next (Brown and Yule, 1983). This is the premise behind the grid activity. I still remember when I was first prompted to reflect on the dialogic nature of writing in the work of Winter (1977) and Hoey (2001) when I was researching cohesion in academic writing as part of my MA dissertation. Apart from teaching the 'mechanics' of writing, the grid can also help students develop assessment and feedback literacy by framing the 'reader/writer' relationship as 'marker/student' or 'peer reviewer/writer'.

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It was encouraging to read that our approach to using 'samples not models' resonated with the session chair as we feel that this discourages performativity and helps students to work out what 'good' looks like when they compare and evaluate a range of samples (Nicol, 2021). As we mentioned in our presentation, the challenge now is to adapt this approach to oral assessments so that students can demonstrate their critical thinking in speaking without aiming for a perfect performance. Iterative practice and peer review using the marking criteria will be even more crucial for these assessments to help students understand the forms of language and communication expected in their discipline in these new assessment forms (Duff, 2010). Since the conference, I have started working closely with the Innovation department to design materials to help students understand the expectations of their group oral assessments on a new MA programme. Opportunities for self-assessment, such as recording themselves and analysing transcripts of their interactions, should strengthen students' abilities to regulate their own learning as they pursue their assessment goals (Evans, 2020).

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AI was used by the guest editor to enhance the readability and clarity of the community responses and to format the references. The presenters did not use AI to write their reflections. The content has been improved for formatting while ensuring the original content remains intact. All final edits were reviewed and approved by the author.

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