



HOW CAN WE MAKE OUR ASSESSMENTS EFFECTIVE AT DEVELOPING STUDENT SELF-REGULATORY SKILLS?

Developing student-centred assessments

How to develop our assessments, so that they are effective for students, and improve their engagement and learning.

What needs to change about our assessments?

In order to develop and improve, students need to be able to judge their progress accurately, and to identify where they need to improve. Assessment should play an integral role in this developmental process, so that assessment is an ongoing part of the learning experience, not just a test of knowledge and understanding. In other words, assessment AS learning, rather than assessment OF learning.

So what are we doing wrong?

In their 2016 paper, Waring and Evans suggested that we need to consider “How students come to co-own their programmes with lecturers and see themselves as active contributors to the assessment feedback process *rather than seeing assessment as something that is done to them*”. So involving students in *understanding* the aims of their assessments, and the feedback on their work, is best achieved by involving students actively in the design and development of assessments, and the feedback processes. Involving students in evaluating whether assessments are explained clearly, in determining if the aims of the assessment are clear, or identifying their feedback needs, are examples of simple, but powerful, ways in which students can be engaged.

Why should we involve students in the design of assessments?

By involving students in the design of an assessment, it is possible to help them to better understand the aims and purposes of the assessment. Co-design of assessments also empowers students to make the assessment relevant to their needs, and to clarify the instructions they are being asked to follow. By working with students, we are able to come to a *shared understanding* of the language being used in an assessment and its guidelines and criteria. A useful tool to help us with this process is the ‘**EAT Framework**’ developed by Professor Carol Evans.

What is the EAT Framework and how can it help?

EAT (“Equity, Agency and Transparency”) is an integrated assessment feedback framework which summarises all the key decisions we need to be making in developing our assessment practice (for more information, go to: <https://www.eatframework.com>). EAT is based on a systematic review of over 50,000 research papers on assessment to clarify features of effective assessment practice. The framework helps you to think about the interrelated nature of assessment, and the most important factors that need to be taken into account in planning and implementing assessments.

The EAT Framework is comprised of three key dimensions (each of which has 4 sub-dimensions):



IDEAdigital #39: Enhancing equity and student participation in assessments- the EAT framework



- 1) Assessment Literacy** helps us design assessments to ensure that both students and teachers understand the aims and purpose of assessments, and what each assessment is requiring students to do.
- 2) Assessment Feedback** helps to highlight key features that make feedback on assessments effective for supporting student learning.
- 3) Assessment Design** helps us think about how to integrate assessment properly in the students' learning, and our curricula, so that it becomes part of a student's 'learning journey'..

Why is the potential benefit of EAT?

EAT provides a tool by which we can collaborate as students and staff, to identify how assessments are perceived by both parties. EAT helps start conversations about what needs to change to improve the assessments for both students and staff. EAT is a *research-informed* approach to developing staff and student competence in assessment, as part of developing lifelong learning skills. The framework aims to support students in developing their 'self-regulated learning'. Students with self-regulation skills can better control (a) How they think and process information ('cognitive' factors), how they evaluate and monitor their learning ('metacognitive' factors), and the motivations and feelings that influence their approach to learning ('affective' factors). Being able to regulate these areas makes students more effective learners, and builds skills for lifelong learning after University.

What opportunities are there to help me with this?

Several colleagues within Minho University are involved in an Erasmus+ funded project to use the EAT framework to improve assessment practices across European Universities. There are 5 other partners, based in Spain, Belgium, Kosovo, and the United Kingdom. This project aims to provide training for academic staff and students at the partner institutions. The Minho University team are currently training other colleagues to use the EAT framework, and spread these ideas to their own subject disciplines. We will be looking for people to use the EAT framework within their own academic Schools, and to tell us what happens and how it impacts both students and staff. Do please get involved by contacting UMinho's EAT team at : sec-mjc@reitoria.uminho.pt