



EAT ERASMUS Case Study Template

Case Study title: Development of an online interactive assessment and feedback portfolio

Abstract (200 words)

The focus of our project was to improve assessment and feedback literacy for staff and students in the School of Biological Sciences at the University of Bristol. We aimed to improve understanding of assessment and feedback for both staff and students, and to support students in using feedback to identify their strengths and weaknesses and to successfully feed-forward. To do this, we created an online interactive 'Assessment and Feedback Portfolio' (AFP). The AFP is a collection of tools, co-created with student partners, containing information regarding assessment and feedback processes, resources to support students in improving their academic and transferable skills, and interactive elements for students to collate and engage with their feedback and track their skills development. To support the use of the AFP we introduced the 'Feedback Café'. The Feedback Café provided students with a regular opportunity to ask questions about assessment and feedback, gain advice on interpreting feedback and understanding how to improve their academic performance using the AFP. We evaluated the impact of the AFP and Feedback Café through a series of surveys and focus groups.

We are conducting research to evaluate the implementation of the Feedback Toolkit comprising of the Online Assessment and Feedback portfolio, Feedback Cafe Sessions and Taught Feedback Workshops. This toolkit was introduced in the Autumn of 2021 and was designed to help undergraduate Biological Sciences students understand and engage with their assessment feedback.

This is part of a project funded by Bristol Institute for Learning and Teaching (BILT) and led by a team from the Biological Sciences School in the Faculty of Life Sciences: Dr Rose Murray, Dr Bex Pike, Stella Welfare, Kathryn Wood, Carol Huang and Amy Jealous.

Reporting on your case study

The aim of ERASMUS EAT is to look at how an integrated assessment framework (EAT) can support enhancements in assessment and feedback by trying to develop staff and student self-regulatory practices. Your case study will benefit from being very clearly focused from the outset and in considering how all the dimensions and sub-dimensions of the EAT Framework need to be attended to in order to address your core issue. Keeping it as simple as possible is a good thing. Engaging with student as much as possible and thinking clearly about the evidence that you would like to collect will help in the design and implementation of your idea.

Designing an Assessment Intervention: What is your assessment focus?

Prompts	Key questions
<p>Focus</p>	<p>What is the key assessment issue you considered?</p> <p>To improve student assessment literacy and engagement with feedback. We did this by introducing a novel 'Assessment and Feedback Portfolio' (AFP) and supporting 'Feedback Café'.</p> <p>The Assessment and Feedback Portfolio provides resources for students to understand their assignment by providing explanations and justifications to students regarding their assessment and feedback, supports students to understand the skills required in their assessments, and an interactive element for feedback reflection and engagement and to track their skills development.</p> <p>The Feedback Café is a regular opportunity for students to meet with members of staff and study skills advisors for guidance on upcoming assignments and interpreting feedback.</p>
<p>Why did you choose this focus?</p>	<p>Why did you focus on this? On the basis of what evidence? Why did it need looking at?</p> <p>Using the National Student Survey, it was identified that although the University of Bristol scores well overall, the assessment and feedback section was among the lowest scores.</p>
<p>What was the context? <i>Module / programme Discipline Country Who was involved – staff and students</i></p>	<p>What is the disciplinary/module/course context in which your assessment work is situated?</p> <p>Biological Sciences, University of Bristol, UK. Staff: Rebecca Pike, Rose Murray, Dave Watson, Sheila Amici-Dargan, Ben Chant. Students: Carol Huang, Amy Jealous, Stella Welfare, Katherine Wood, Octavia Brayley.</p>
<p>Why is this important? <i>What is your contribution – is it original? Is it confirmatory of previous work? Is it actively taking the field forward by adding new understandings?</i></p>	<p>Why is what you did important?</p> <p>Assessment is one of the key drivers of student learning. With improved assessment literacy, improved engagement and application of feedback, and improved understanding of skill development, student learning would benefit as well as student satisfaction with their course.</p>
<p>How does this work contribute to current understandings we have of assessment and feedback <i>To what extent are you aware of current national and international assessment and feedback higher education debates</i></p>	<p>How does what you focused on link to current understandings of and priorities in assessment and feedback within your institution and more widely in higher education?</p> <p>Assessment and feedback continue to burden the higher education sector with low opinion from the student body e.g. NSS scores. The AFP and Feedback Cafe initiatives have been built with published research in mind, from work on assessment and feedback literacy, Boud's double duty of assessment, to Naomi Winstone's DEFT tool kit and FEATS project.</p> <p>We introduced and evaluated the AFP and Feedback Café within the School of Biological Sciences and the initiatives have been taken up by other School's within the University. If the project is successful in its aims, then we will be attempting to tackle one of the most critical areas of higher education practice in the sector.</p>

April – June 2021. Discussion with student partners about the challenges surrounding assessment and feedback, ideas for tools and initiatives to help. A short survey was distributed to all UG students to guide the design of a draft portfolio. N=19 responses. Focus groups were held with UG student volunteers on a draft of the landscape, and on feedback. A short survey to staff were distributed to collect data on assessments within the programme. This led to

the creation of the 'Assessment and Feedback Portfolio'.

September 2021-2022 we launched the AFP for students to use voluntarily. Supported with the feedback café and feedback workshops to encourage the use of the AFP. We then evaluated the use of the tools within the AFP, the feedback café, feedback workshops and our dissemination strategies. Held a focus group with UG students (N=6) and distributed a survey to UG students (N=90, 41 year 1 students, 40 Year 2, 7 Year 3).

Implementation: What did you do?	
Prompts	Key questions
<p><i>The project promotes an action research type approach – working with students and staff to implement ideas and then evaluating them.</i></p> <p><i>It encourages the use of a mixed methodology and methods</i></p> <p><i>– the use of quantitative methods (e.g. survey data) and qualitative approaches (e.g., discussions with colleagues) to investigate practice.</i></p>	<p>How did you investigate your focus? We investigated student use and perceptions of the AFP and Feedback Café using quantitative methods (survey data) and qualitative approaches (focus groups and interviews).</p> <p>Did you do any pre and post testing of ideas/abilities/attitudes? We conducted focus groups and surveys with current undergraduate students on the initial design of the Assessment and Feedback Portfolio and to learn what students would want from such a tool. We made changes based on the results and feedback we received. Each year we have tested the use and perception of the AFP and Feedback Café by students and made changes accordingly.</p> <p>Were you able to draw on a variety of sources of information to support your findings? During preparation for this research, we found several sources which outlined the potential for working with students during curriculum development.</p>
<p><i>Describe what your approach involved.</i></p> <p><i>What did you do to enhance a self-regulatory approach to assessment and feedback practice</i></p> <p><i>What roles did students and educators play?</i></p> <p><i>See Moore et al (2015) Process diagram to help you describe the elements of what you did?</i></p>	<p>What were the key things you did and with whom? We distributed voluntary surveys to students. We ran focus groups with students who volunteered their time, and a set of open questions were asked in a recorded meeting. The recordings were transcribed and then coded for themes. The open-ended questions from the surveys were coded for themes. The closed questions were quantitatively analyzed. The work was with undergraduate students from all years of the programme.</p> <p>What student and staff groups did you engage with and how? Student groups were introduced to the project through a lectures, email and through their tutorials with their personal academic tutors. Staff groups were introduced to the project through regular staff meetings, emails and through the tutorial programme.</p> <p>Who approved ethical consent? (Institution?) The University of Bristol Faculty of Life Sciences and Science Research Ethics Committee and the Bristol Institute of Learning and Teaching.</p> <p>Over what time scale did you conduct this project? This project has run since 2020.</p> <p>Did it involve 1 or several iterations of change initiatives? This project has run for several years, and each year we have made changes to improve the AFP and Feedback Café based on feedback from staff and students. The focus and aims have not changed, but the interactive tool students use to engage with feedback and skill</p>

	<p>development has seen a different model used each year.</p> <p>What information did you collect? Student perception and use of the AFP and Feedback Café and the corresponding staff perceptions of the tools. More in depth perceptions using student focus groups and interviews.</p> <p>What tools/resources did you use? Voice recording, manual transcribing, manual coding and theme generation.</p>
<p>How was what you did aligned to the EAT concepts (FIDELITY) See check list below?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive – <i>do all students have equal access to learning and equal chances to do well?</i> • Shared beliefs and values – <i>have these been discussed and agreed between staff and students? Is there agreement on the key self-regulatory skills that need to be focused on?</i> • Student-staff partnership – <i>how genuine is this? To what extent are students encouraged to participate in all assessment decisions?</i> • Sensitive to context – how have you adapted assessment to suit your context? <i>nuances of your discipline and course, situated within your faculty and institution; and nature of student intake – what is specific about your course/subject demands and types of students you have?</i> • Holistic – <i>the whole experience of the student</i> • Integrative – <i>how all aspects of assessment are interrelated and impact one another</i> • Agentic – <i>allows students and lecturers to take control of their learning/teaching</i> • Engagement in meaningful learning experiences – relevant • Sustainable – <i>means manageable for all; also enabling students to manage their own learning. fthemselves – so extent to which they are able to accurately assess the quality of their own work.</i> 	<p>Staff were able to engage students in co-developing the assessment and feedback portfolio (AFP) through working with student research partners and acting on information provided by participants attending the focus groups and the weekly feedback café.</p> <p>Colleagues (staff and students) running feedback cafés were briefed on the purpose of this project and the core concepts of the EAT framework.</p> <p>Feedback cafés and the AFP are available to ALL students, to ensure these opportunities are inclusive. As a purposefully designed student-staff partnership project there was ongoing dialogue on shared beliefs and values. The feedback cafés and AFP were sensitive to context, in that the AFP outlined assessment maps and opportunities for feedback and the feedback cafés provided additional 1:1 opportunities for students to discuss the feedback on their Biological Sciences assessments.</p>
<p>See Assessment and Feedback Principles Appendix A and Student Engagement in Assessment templates</p>	<p>EAT concepts were incorporated as follows:</p> <p>Feedback cafés provided students with opportunities to get more focused feedback (AF1).</p> <p>Feedback cafés ran weekly providing early opportunities (AF2) for students to discuss their written feedback with staff (dialogic opportunities).</p> <p>The AFP was co-designed with students as an interactive tool to support self-evaluation (AF4).</p>

	<p>What barriers and facilitators were there to implementation?</p> <p>Feedback cafés although deemed useful by students who attended them, often had low attendance.</p> <p>Up until now use of the assessment feedback portfolio tool has been optional so student engagement levels are rather low. We plan to create a summative assessment for this coming academic year that requires students to use the AFP.</p>
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Assessing the Impact of your Intervention: Key findings	
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Prompts	Key questions
<p><i>Did it engage the students and staff you wanted it to?</i></p>	<p>To what extent did your intervention reach your intended audience of staff and students? Was it manageable? Are there plans to test it more widely?</p> <p>See comment above. Currently student engagement is low with the AFP because it is an optional tool, but we are building it into a compulsory summative assessment for year 3 students to encourage them to reflect on past assignments and feedforward into future work at university and beyond.</p>
<p><i>Note any reported impacts on students:</i> <i>Did those who did engage do better than those who did not?</i> <i>Did it narrow gaps in attainment between more and less advantaged students?</i> <i>Student beliefs about their role in assessment</i> <i>Student confidence</i> <i>Student learning outcomes</i> <i>Student engagement in assessment</i> <i>Student satisfaction</i> <i>Assessment Literacy</i> <i>Ability to use, seek and give feedback</i> <i>Contribution to assessment resources and valuable outputs</i></p>	<p>What were the impacts on students? Did all students benefit equally? What specific changes resulted if any? Any unexpected outcomes?</p> <p>We have not formally evaluated the impact on students in terms of attainment but those who used the tool have demonstrated the ability to use and seek feedback. The AFP was co-designed with students and its ongoing development involves staff-student partnership. The resources associated with the portfolio are created by students for students and available to everyone.</p>
<p><i>Impact on staff engagement in training</i> <i>Did it impact staff conceptions of assessment and the role of students in the process?</i> <i>Did it make assessment more efficient?</i> <i>Staff competency</i> <i>Staff confidence</i> <i>Staff collaboration</i> <i>Staff assessment literacy</i> <i>Better assessment design?</i> <i>Did it lead to better curriculum design</i></p>	<p>What were the impacts on staff? Do staff have a better understanding of assessment? Was assessment design improved as a consequence of what you did?</p> <p>One of the key elements of the AFP is an assessment landscape (map) for each year of our undergraduate programmes. This tool is very useful for staff and students to see how assessments feed into one another and have been useful for curriculum review and development.</p>

<p><i>Are changes embedded within curriculum?</i> <i>Any longer term gains?</i> <i>Development of effective assessment networks</i> <i>Changes in attitudes?</i> <i>Upskilling of staff</i> <i>More efficient use of resource</i> <i>Impacts on policy?</i></p>	<p>Sustainability: any longer term gains from the project? Has what you implemented become part of business as usual – will it be maintained?</p> <p>Longer term gains for the project would be to continue to distribute the model across the University of Bristol and look to distributing the model further afield. The Feedback Café has become embedded within the undergraduate and postgraduate programme’s support offering, and the AFP has been embedded as a summative assessment in the year 3 curriculum.</p>
<p><i>What personal learning do you take away from the project?</i> <i>(Use reflective templates to support evaluative activities)</i></p>	<p>What was the impact on those colleagues and students leading the case studies? What were the key learning points for you? What would you have done differently in retrospect? How could you improve your design?</p>
<p><i>What are the key messages that would be useful for others trying to do this?</i></p>	<p>Transferability Were there any subject specific findings that have relevance to the sector? How can learning be adapted and utilized elsewhere? What are the key messages/learning from this work</p> <p>One of the key take aways from conducting this project was the importance of including students as partners in the development of the AFP and Feedback Café. Their ideas and initial feedback on the design were instrumental in the final product.</p>