



Re-visiting EAP Assessment Criteria: the Golden Gate Bridge Metaphor

The Golden Gate Bridge Metaphor and EAP – key ideas underpinning

- EAP Practitioners are the bridge – helping students to successfully cross over and make the transition to their academic subject degree.
- There are a number of varied types of assessments and criteria for UG and PG students.
- (EAP) assessments have to prepare students for the types of assessments students are going to encounter in their degrees
- Knowing how to interpret and use marking criteria can facilitate students in academic success.
- Assessments change and cohorts vary – EAP practitioners need to respond to this constantly.
- Knowledge of the theory of assessment and testing within EAP departments varies.

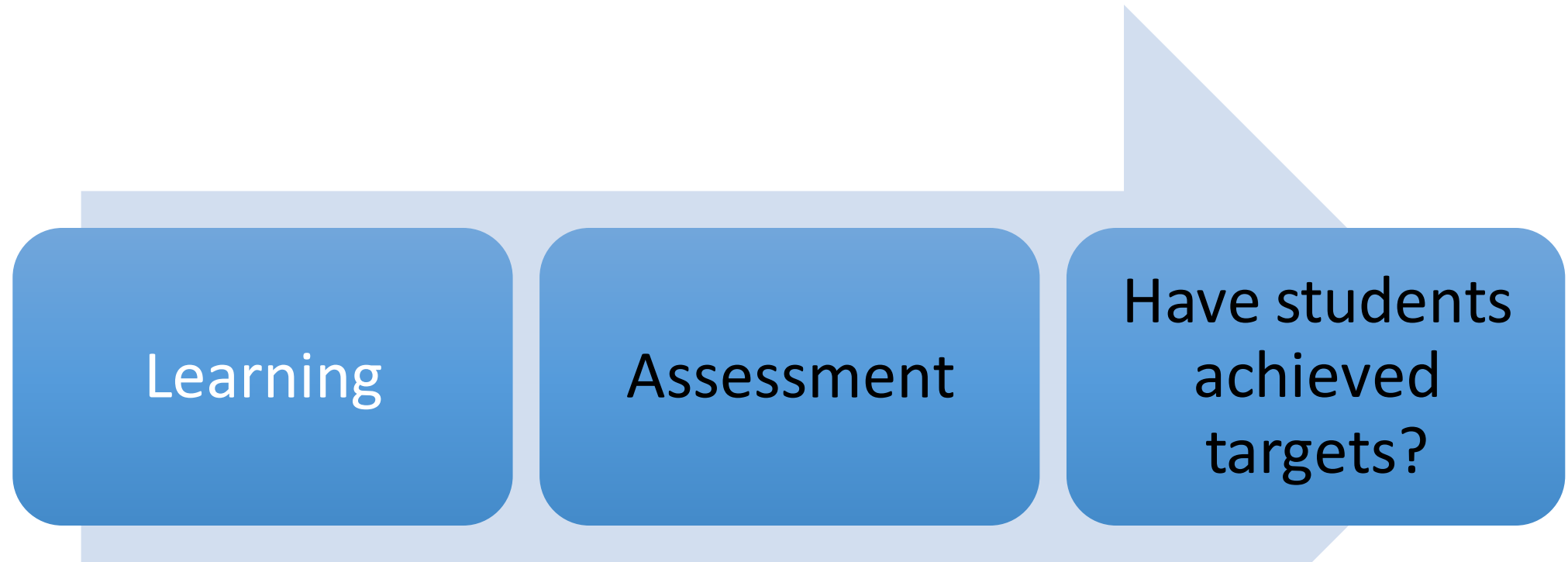
Background – How many assessment criteria?

- ELT
- 5 foundation programmes – average of 4 summative assessments (plus 4/5 formative) each with different criteria and Science School assessments (UG)
- 3 Pre-sessional programmes – 2 summative (2-week, 4-week and 10-week) (UG and PG)
- 1 Pre-Master's programme – School of Management (PG)
- In 2014 – development of 2 sets of criteria with a common core, task specific criteria and feedback box .

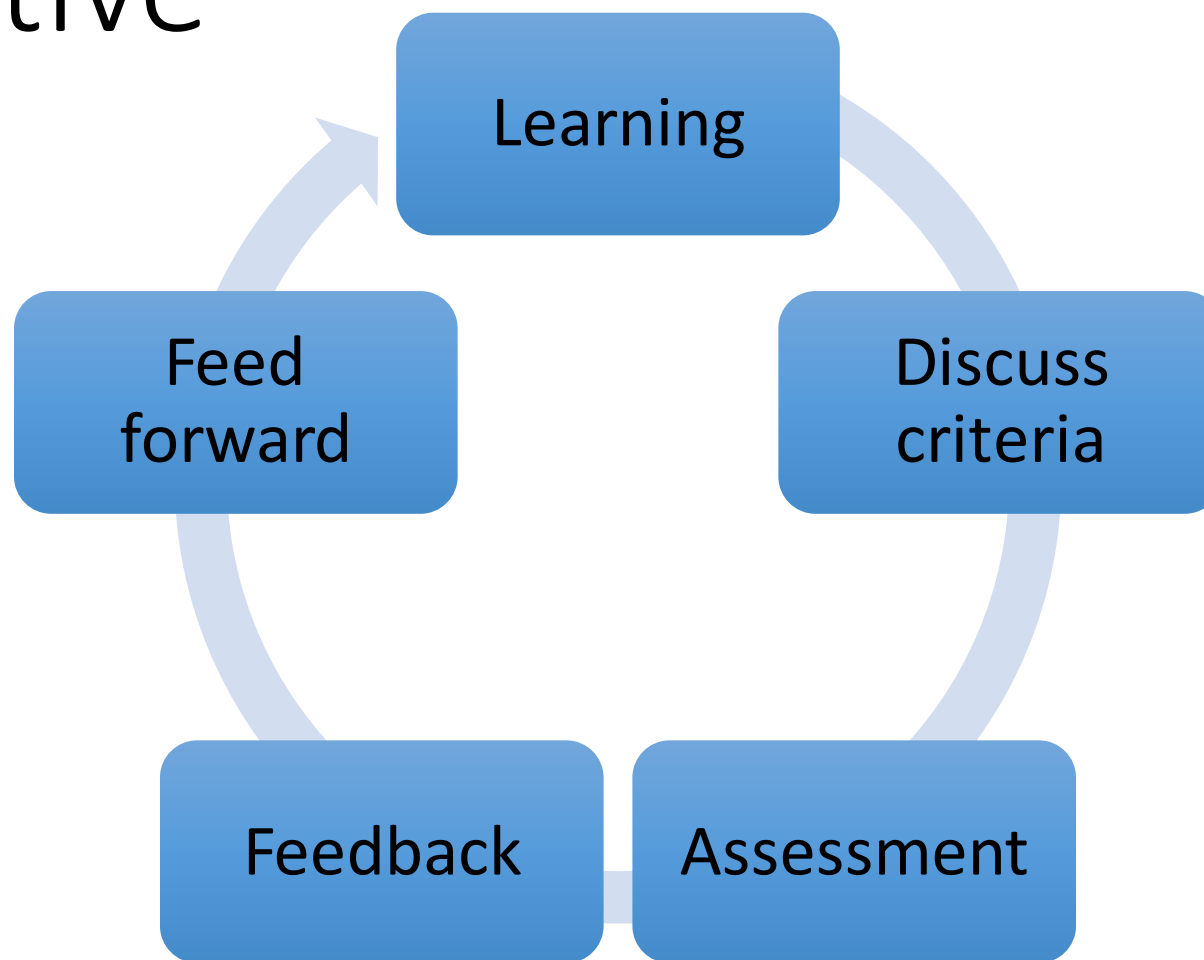
2 Case studies

- University Module - BL1101 Semester 1 summative essay
- Pre-Masters – preparation for School of Management – various criteria

Traditional - summative



Formative



(Boud & Falchicov 2006)

Formative

- When used by students as part of a formative assessment of works in progress, rubrics can teach as well as evaluate.

(Arter and McTighe 2001; Stiggins 2001)

- Used as part of a student-centered approach to assessment, rubrics have the potential to help students understand the targets for their learning and the standards of quality for a particular assignment, as well as make dependable judgments about their own work that can inform revision and improvement.

(Reddy & Andrade, 2010)

Foundation – a special case

- Foundation, first-year students and international PGs are ‘newcomers’ to university, or at least to a British institution, in the process of renegotiating their identities.

(Wenger, 1998: 154)

- Part of a student’s journey so dialogic feedback around the first summative assessment period becomes fundamental to supporting that journey at a moment when feedback can become a threat to self-esteem as much as it can be an opportunity to learn.

(Mutch, 2003)

Decline in feedback

Semesterisation and modularisation have created end-loading of assessment



Lecturers offering fewer comments and fewer tutorials.



Pro-formas are used, saving time and giving greater transparency and consistency



The language of assessment criteria and written feedback has become increasingly intertwined.



Two sets of criteria - rationale

- Different programmes – different teachers
- Transparency of grades
- Organised feedback/feedforward
- Consistence
- Straightforward for student use
- External examiners

Student:

	<i>Distinction (17-20)</i>	<i>High Merit (14-16)</i>	<i>Low Merit (11-13)</i>	<i>Pass (7-10)</i>	<i>Fail (0-6)</i>
CONTENT	Effective, critical and analytical approach towards the question/task. Strong evidence of critical understanding of sources; Effective balance between sources and own ideas/examples.	Clear and critical focus on the question/task is evident throughout. Evidence of understanding of sources; A clear attempt to balance information from sources and own ideas/examples.	Clear attempt to focus on the question/task, occasional strays. Some indication of understanding of sources; Imbalance between information from sources and own ideas/examples.	Attempt to focus on the question/task, confused in places. Over-reliance on information from sources or significant lack of sources.	Limited evidence of understanding/misinterpretation of the question. Misunderstanding of source material; Over dependence on sources or no use of source material.
LANGUAGE	Consistently grammatically & syntactically accurate throughout, producing a very clear argument. Appropriate vocabulary and expression. Strong awareness and command of academic style/register.	Generally grammatically & syntactically accurate throughout, producing clear argument. Reasonable vocabulary and expression. Clear awareness and good overall command of academic style/register.	Weaknesses in grammar and syntax interfere with clarity in places. Fair vocabulary and expression. Lapses in consistency with academic style/register.	Significant weaknesses in grammar and syntax frequently impede clarity. Limited vocabulary and expression. Inappropriate, non-academic style/register.	Errors in grammar and syntax impede clarity throughout. Very limited vocabulary and expression. No evidence of an awareness of academic style/register
STRUCTURE	The overall structure is effective and appropriate to task. Paragraphs/sections are clear, logically constructed and appropriate in length. The work is cohesive throughout.	The overall structure is appropriate to task. Paragraphs/sections are fairly clear, and organized appropriately. The work is generally cohesive throughout.	The overall structure is confused in places. Some paragraphs/sections are poorly organized. There is a lack of cohesion in places.	There is a lack of logic to the overall structure. Paragraphs/sections are poorly organized. There is a lack of cohesion throughout.	No apparent logic to the overall structure. Paragraphs/sections are disorganized. The lack of cohesion makes the work impossible to follow.

FEEDBACK

The first column of this table lists the specific aspects of this task. The highlighted points are those which you have achieved at a satisfactory level. The second column provides more detailed feedback and suggestions for improvement in future work.

TASK REQUIREMENTS (specific)	FEEDBACK
- Well focused answer to all aspects of the question - Clear thesis statement - Generally accurate and appropriate in-text and bibliographical referencing	

FINAL GRADE:

BL1101 Coursework essay Semester 1

10% of final grade (coursework 40% and final exam 60%).

Instructions to the students in the academic handbook:

‘Several people’s work led to the deduction that DNA was the substance of inheritance. Others contributed evidence used by Watson and Crick to solve the structure of DNA.

Write an essay **exploring** the contributions of at least three of these people’s research to determining the function and structure of DNA.

Be sure to **address the relevant findings** and how Watson and Crick learned of them.

Give your essay a **good title** in no more than 15 of your own words.’ 1500 word count.

Comparison of ELT criteria and School of Biology essay criteria 20-17 (distinction)

Mark	Criteria
17 - 20	Excellence: work characterised by Original thought and reflection. Critical awareness and analytical ability Use of wider reading or links with other modules/wider curriculum beyond that recommended Evidence of the criteria below along with anything above - 19-20. Excellent use of data and examples. Strong structural organisation. Flair in presentation. Well-balanced arguments. Thorough understanding of the topic/assessment task.

	Distinction (17-20)
CONTENT	Effective, critical and analytical approach towards the question/task. Strong evidence of critical understanding of sources; selection of credible and relevant sources. Effective balance between sources and own ideas/examples.
LANGUAGE	Consistently grammatically/syntactically accurate throughout. Extensive range of vocabulary and expression. Strong awareness and command of academic style/register.
STRUCTURE	The overall structure is effective and appropriate to task. Paragraphs/sections are clear, logically constructed and appropriate in length. The work is cohesive throughout.

Comparison of ELT criteria and School of Biology essay criteria 16-14

Biology

Mark	Criteria
14 – 16	Merit: work characterised by Solid knowledge and use of literature. Signs of analytical ability Clear evidence of reading within module material. Logical organisation and consistent relevance. Well-chosen use of examples and data. Fluent presentation. Well-structured arguments. Some excellent work, but not fully developed. Solid understanding of the topic/assessment task

ELT

High Merit (14-16)

Clear and critical focus on the question/task is evident throughout.

Evidence of understanding of sources; reasonably credible and mainly **relevant** sources.

A clear **attempt to balance information from sources and own ideas/examples.**

Generally grammatically/syntactically accurate throughout.

Wide range of vocabulary and expression.

Clear awareness and good overall command of academic style/register.

The overall structure is appropriate to task.

Paragraphs/sections are fairly clear, and organized appropriately.

The work is generally cohesive throughout.

Comparison of ELT criteria and School of Biology essay criteria 13-12/11

Biology

Mark	Criteria
12– 13	Satisfactory: work characterised by <i>Tendency to be descriptive.</i> <i>Some evidence of reading within module material. Some use of examples and data.</i> <i>Coherently structured and presented.</i> <i>Evidence of argument.</i> <i>Some good quality work.</i> <i>Reasonable understanding of the topic/assessment task.</i>

ELT

Low Merit (11-13)

Clear attempt to focus on the question/task, occasional strays.

Some indication of understanding of sources; not all sources are credible and/or relevant.

Imbalance between information from sources and own ideas/examples.

Weaknesses in grammar and syntax interfere with clarity in places.

Adequate range of vocabulary and expression.

Lapses in consistency with academic style/register.

The overall structure is confused in places.

Some paragraphs/sections are poorly organized.

There is a lack of cohesion in places.



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Comparison of ELT and School of Management criteria

- Ill-defined terminology
- Coherent argument is the only real overlap
- Little opportunity to mix and match
- No direct reference to specific tasks
- Critical review appears to be as much about language as content
- Is this graded by counting the ticks?
- Resembles a template – damages creativity

Essays, Reports and other Qualitative Assessments

Mark	Result	Criteria
1 – 6	Fail	Disjointed and with limited evidence of understanding, tending towards an answer that is incoherent, irrelevant or non-existent.
7 - 11	Pass (Below Masters Level)	Performance substantially below expected Masters level. Some knowledge and understanding is evident, but answer is partial and inadequate; may be in summary or list form only.
12 - 13	Pass	Adequate performance. Answer covers all relevant material but descriptive rather than explanatory. Unreflective reproduction of lectures and basic readings. Little analysis. Relatively coherent at top end; less coherent at bottom end.
14 – 16	Pass	Performance is good to very good. A clear understanding of material. Augments indicative answer. Well-structured and coherent argument. References exceed basic readings. Upper end includes critical analysis. Lower end exhibits only minor flaws in structure, or unclear linkage of concepts.
17 – 20	Pass / Distinction	Excellent performance. Includes critical analysis of course material, evidence of wide reading, and thorough understanding of subject matter. Cogent, well-written and integrated answer, which illustrates main points with excellent examples. Original insights at the top end.

Assessment Guidelines/Marking Structure:

Technical Reports and Analysis and other Quantitative Assessments

Mark	%	Result	Criteria
1 – 6	1 - 37%	Fail	Technically unacceptable or with very poor technical work, very little effort and lacks understanding.
7 - 11	38 - 49%	Pass	Weak technical coverage, little explanation, some guesswork.
12 - 13	12 = 50 – 55% 13 = 56 – 59%	Pass	Partial answer, reasonable structure and explanation. Reasonable understanding of the technical issues with no serious errors in technical application.
14 – 16	14 = 60% - 63% 15 = 64% - 66% 16 = 67% - 69%	Pass	Good answer. A good understanding of the theoretical and technical issues with clear structure and presentation. Some omission and explanation at lower end.
17 - 19	17 = 70% - 79% 18 = 80% - 89% 19 = 90% - 95%	Pass / Distinction	Complete answer, clearly structured and explained with good presentation and references.

Assessed Coursework Feedback Form

MODULE CODE & TITLE:
STUDENT ID:

Assignment number:

% of overall mark for module:

Penalties for late submission:

Days late =

Penalty Points =

Final Mark

Performance against assessment criteria

	<i>Very Good</i>			<i>Very Poor</i>	
	A	B	C	D	E
Evidence of preparation	A	B	C	D	E
Ability to define and discuss key concepts, and apply theory & ideas	A	B	C	D	E
Structure and clarity	A	B	C	D	E
Student Value Added: <i>insights (analysis, arguments etc.) Provided by a student beyond describing the current literature</i>	A	B	C	D	E

Overall comments

Name of assessor:

Date:

Marking Scale

The following Marking Scale is adopted in all module assessments and examinations.

17 – 20 = Pass with Distinction

7 – 16 = Pass

1 – 6 = Fail

Please note that the mark awarded reflects overall performance on the assessment.
The assessment criteria and "A to E" scale provide additional feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the assessment.

Assignment: Critical Book Review

% of overall mark for module: 25%

Penalties for late submission:

Days late =

Penalty Points =

Final Mark

Performance against assessment criteria

	20-17	16-13	12-9	8-5	4-0
Is there a strong opening statement?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Is there a good and evidence-based summary of the book's key points?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are the book's main points/arguments understood?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Is the reviewed material addressed and positioned logically?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are linkages made between the book's material and broader issues and questions?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Has there been an attempt to evaluate the book's contribution to knowledge?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Is there a good level of critical engagement with, and evaluation of, the book's arguments?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Is there evidence of original and independent thinking?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Is the writing style of a good standard?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Is the presentation, spelling, grammar and punctuation of a good standard?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Is there a closing statement/conclusion that adds value?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Conclusion – we want to know...

- What are your experiences with working with other departments and training students to use criteria?
- Are you happy with the criteria you use for EAP assessments – how often do you re-visit?
- Who ‘knows’ about language assessment and testing in your department– is this enough?

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