

# SEDA Autumn Conference 2024



**Session Title:** Using genre analysis to design formative assessment

**Session Type:** Research Papers (20 minutes)

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**Co presenter(s):** Marion Heron

**Session Summary:** We present results of a SEDA funded project in which HE lecturers used genre analysis to design formative assessment tasks to provide scaffolding for student learning and achievement. HE lecturers analysed a module summative assessment, identifying the four facets of genre knowledge (Tardy, 2009) their students need to accomplish the task. Using this analysis, lecturers then designed a formative task. This original and novel approach facilitated effective formative assessment design and promoted lecturers' assessment literacy.

**Session Outline:** There is widespread agreement that formative assessment and feedback are important features of higher education (HE) course design and delivery (Morris et al., 2021), given their potential to guide and enhance students' learning and achievement (Bennett, 2011). However, evidence-based guidance on effective approaches to formative assessment in HE is lacking (Boud & Molloy, 2013, Evans, 2013). This lack of practical advice is one reason why formative assessment approaches are not regularly adopted in classroom practice (Boud et al., 2018). Against a backdrop of low teacher assessment literacy and student dissatisfaction with assessment and feedback, there is a clear need to provide HE lecturers with support in designing effective formative assessment.

We present results of a SEDA funded project in which HE lecturers used genre analysis to design formative assessment tasks to provide scaffolding for student learning and achievement. Project participants (HE lecturers) attended a workshop in which they analysed a summative assessment task from a module they taught on. Analysis guided them to identify the four facets of genre knowledge (Tardy, 2009) their students need to accomplish the task: subject matter knowledge; process knowledge (the stages the author needs to go through to complete the genre, e.g. composition/research processes); rhetorical knowledge (awareness of audience expectations, authorial purpose, argument and evidence) and formal knowledge (structure and linguistic forms e.g. disciplinary vocabulary). Lecturers then used this analysis to design a formative assessment task(s) that scaffolded facets of their summative assessment.

We draw on the following data to present our findings: (1) semi-structured interviews in which lecturers explored their developed understanding of task expectations and formative assessment design; (2) participants' genre analyses and formative assessment tasks. We show how this original and novel genre analysis approach facilitated effective formative assessment design, promoted lecturers' assessment literacy, and enhanced student achievement.

**References:** Bennett, R.E. (2011) Formative assessment: A critical review, *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*18(1), 5-25

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Evans, C. (2013) 'Making sense of assessment feedback in higher education', *Review of Educational Research*,83 (1), pp.70-120.

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