

Improving Assessment Clarity and Student Revision Behaviour through the Exam Scope Transparency Framework

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Abstract

Students in higher education often struggle to determine the scope and depth of knowledge required for assessments. This uncertainty can lead to inefficient revision strategies, excessive memorisation, and increased cognitive load. This study evaluates the Exam Scope Transparency Framework (ESTF), a structured teaching intervention designed to improve assessment clarity and support more effective student learning.

The ESTF translates lecture content into structured Exam Scope Summaries that explicitly define core concepts, essential terminology, and the expected depth of understanding required for assessment. By making assessment expectations more transparent, the framework aims to guide students in prioritising key material and organising their revision more efficiently.

A cross-sectional evaluation following implementation indicates strong student engagement, with over 80% of students reporting regular use of the summaries. Approximately 91% reported improved understanding of key concepts, while around 83% indicated clearer expectations regarding the level of knowledge required for assessment. In addition, 87% agreed that the summaries supported more focused revision, and 83% reported improved management of the information volume required for the study.

Importantly, over 78% indicated that the summaries influenced how they organised their revision.

These findings suggest that structured clarification of assessment expectations may support more efficient revision strategies and reduce perceived cognitive load. The ESTF represents a practical, scalable approach to enhancing student learning and assessment design in higher education.

Keywords: Assessment transparency, Student learning, Revision behaviour, Cognitive load, Teaching innovation