Transcript for Exploring FELT: A Framework for Ethical Learning Technology
ETUG Fall 2024 Workshop: Navigating Ethics and EdTech – November 1, 2024
Presenters: Briana Fraser and Keith Webster

JACQUIE HARRISON:
So next up, we have Briana Fraser and Keith Webster. And their presentation is called Exploring FELT: A Framework for Ethical Learning Technology. Briana and Keith, we've both heard from, but I'll introduce them again. Brianna Fraser is a learning technologist at Langara College. And Keith Webster is the CTET associate director at Royal Roads University.

BRIANA FRASER:
Thank you, Jacquie. I'm just going to share the slides, Keith. Do you want to say anything more about yourself?

KEITH WEBSTER:
I'm the associate director for the techy side. Not for the pedagogy side. I have familiarity, but this is Briana's. Briana is the one charging forth with this. I was the one who said, Hey, I've heard of FELT as well.

BRIANA:
Thanks, Keith. Yeah, so I pitched this session idea to ETUG, and when I did, I asked if someone from ETUG would be willing to help me facilitate because when I looked at the session, like the overarching topic for the sessions today, and I was thinking about ethics and EdTech. I was like, hmm. I wonder if we all have a common understanding of what we mean when we say ethics and EdTech. In addition, myself, and I was just wondering if my feelings resonated with other people in ETUG, I feel kind of increasingly I don't know, disappointed or I'm not exactly sure the right word about a lack of progress maybe in developing a common sense of ethics and EdTech in our sector. So I thought maybe we could, together, explore an existing framework and see if it would help us come up with common language, common understanding, maybe something to take with us when we're working with stakeholders. So here we are. Our session is on the Framework for Ethical Learning Technology, also known as FELT. As we navigate the complex landscape of educational technology, I think it's becoming increasingly clear that we may not have a common understanding of ethics in our field. This can lead to challenges when making decisions about EdTech implementation and use. Especially as I said, we're communicating with people outside of our immediate community. It may be administrators, it may be decision makers, it may be people who hold the money in our institutions.

The purpose of today's session is really twofold. First, an opportunity to explore the framework that can help us develop a shared language around ethics and educational technology. Second, to equip ourselves with a tool that can facilitate discussions with instructors, administrators, and other institutional stakeholders who may not be as immersed in EdTech and ethics in EdTech as we are. By examining the FELT framework, Keith and I were hoping that maybe we could bridge these gaps in understanding and improve our ability to make and explain ethical

1

decisions in our work. I'm just going to move ahead to the next slide. This is an opportunity if you haven't already to access the framework. You can either go to the bit.ly URL that's on the screen or scan the code, and I'll also put in the chat the link. Let me make sure I have it here.

PARTICIPANT: We don't see the slides.

BRIANA:
You don't see my slides. Wow. Thank you. You know what? I haven't shared my screen. Of course, you wouldn't be seeing my slides. You know, it's been a really long time since I've done a Zoom presentation. So my apologies. I knew something would go wrong. Can you see my slides now? Thank you. Thank you for letting me know.

 Okay. So either in the chat, I put the link to the framework, or as I said, you can scan the QR code or use the bit.ly to get there. So, I'm not going to talk very much today. It's really going to be an opportunity for us to have a conversation, have some discussions around the framework. And I hope to jump into the conversations, and Keith and I had a conversation about, you know, we want to be part of these conversations, too. This is something that we are also trying to figure out ourselves. And so we want to be part of those conversations. But I just wanted to do a brief overview of FELT, kind of how it was, where it comes from. Who was involved in the creation and the main pillar. I'm just going to talk for a little bit longer before we get into those discussions. So FELT was developed by the Association for Learning Technology, otherwise known as ALT. Some of you may be familiar with ALT. It's a leading professional body in the field of learning technology. ALT created FELT in response to the growing need for ethical guidance in the rapidly evolving educational technology landscape. The framework was developed collaboratively. Drawing on the expertise of both ALT members as well as the wider learning technology community.

KEITH:
Did you tell this push forward on the slide? I'm going to wait 1 second, yeah, I just have the pillars, but I can move forward if you want.

FELT is designed to guide decision-making and reflection in the use of educational technology. It's not in any way a set of rules, but rather just a framework to help us think critically about the ethical implications of our choices. This makes it particularly valuable when we need to explain our reasoning to colleagues who may not share our background in education technology, may not have the same frame of reference, may not have the same kind of language. The FELT framework is built on four key pillars, awareness, professionalism, values, and community and care. I'm just going to quickly look at those pillars. The first one, awareness encourages us to be mindful of the diverse stakeholders affected by our EdTech decisions. This pillar asks us to think critically about our practice and consider the wider environments we influence. Have a look at the framework while I'm talking, I'm not going to read each one, but just looking at the overarching picture of each of the pillars.

The next pillar is professionalism, and this one emphasizes the importance of evidence-led practice and ongoing professional development, and we've heard about evidence-led practice a few times today. It also calls for integrity, honesty, and compliance with relevant laws and policies.

The next pillar is values, which focuses on supporting learner agency and promoting equitable access to learning. It also encourages the development of inclusive, supportive learning environments.

And finally, care and community. This pillar emphasizes the practice of care both for oneself and for others in the educational community. It also promotes sharing of best practices and recognition of responsibilities beyond our immediate institutions. So as we move forward into discussing FELT, we're going to explore how these pillars can guide us in addressing real world ethical dilemmas in educational technology. And hopefully by the end of our discussions today, you should have a kind of clear understanding of how to apply the FELT framework to your own educational technology decision-making processes, as well as how to use it as a communication tool with various stakeholders in your institution. I also hope that at the end, we can have a larger discussion about some of the limitations of the framework.

So what I'd like to do now is put you into breakout groups, and maybe Keith, you could help with this. In our groups, we're going to have a discussion for about 15 minutes. I'm just going to put into the chat some of the things that you can think about. So I want you to look at the FELT framework together. Look at the details of it. It's not a lot there. But as you're doing it, think about how the framework might help in your role. The challenges you face where FELT might be useful, and how FELT could help you communicate with different stakeholders. And then maybe if you can identify a notetaker in your group, not to take extensive notes or anything like that. But when we come back to the whole group, I'd like in the chat, your group to identify one key insight about how FELT could be valuable in your context. And we can have a little bit of a conversation as a whole group about that when we come back. So I'm just going to put those discussion prompts and the reminder into the chat. And then we can go into our breakout groups. Again, about 15 minutes for a discussion.

KEITH:
Okay. So I've got six groups. We should have a little less nine or so probably per group.

JACQUIE:
So Briana, we're still waiting for the chat. Okay. Great.

BRIANA: Coming now. There it is. Really rusty with Zoom. I'm sorry.

KEITH: Okay. Here we go.

BRIANA: Okay. Here we go.

Okay, looks like everyone is coming back. Thank you. Hope I didn't jolt you out of the breakout room. Hopefully it was a nice gentle ease back to the main room. So if you came away with one key insight, if you could put in the chat, I'm just adding one from our group discussion right now. Maybe we can just look at some of those key takeaways together, and then we're going to have a whole group discussion if everyone's okay with that. My group had a wide ranging discussion about all kinds of things EdTech. But one of the key takeaways that I heard and it resonated with me is that the framework could be applied to the way that we use technology, not only when we're adopting technology, and that there is a real opportunity to use the framework to potentially increase transparency when we are using tools in teaching and learning. Adam wrote, "We discussed the challenge to apply many of these as they FELT a little vague." Tracy writes, "We discussed that the framework covers everything we need to consider about a new technology. We will pick from the framework, depending on where the institution is at and the technology being requested." Trevor writes, "We looked at the Google Docs and had a hard time figuring out how to apply it to specific things like tools or processes." Luke writes, "Opening conversation with stakeholders with you must, you have to, don't forget about is not likely to get any traction. But using this framework for more human-centred focus to potentially difficult conversations could be useful." Thank you. I just wanted to go back to Adam's comment. Just say that one thing that I found really useful beyond the framework is when you go onto that page, they have examples of the way the framework has been applied. Actual institutions have shared output from when they've used the framework. And what I found was that it's very flexible so that when you look at those documents they are all quite different. People have really been able to take from them and apply them in their own context, which I actually found FELT might be more useful, quite a rigid framework. And then Keith wrote, "I would like to introduce a framework with faculty or with EdTech colleagues as a way to start a conversation that could expand the scope in which we consider each of the pillars.

Okay, what we wanted to do now, and I'm going to share my screen again. Hopefully, I will actually share my screen this time to have a whole group discussion about a challenge and see if we can apply together, use the framework and the pillars of the framework to this challenge and have a conversation about how that might work. Let me just. Don't do that. If I can get my slide show going here, and then I'm going to share my screen, and I will read out the challenge for everyone. Share screen. Okay. There we go. And here we go. And share.

Hopefully, you can see my slides, and I'm just going to read to you the challenge. An ethical, sorry. An instructor teaching a large online course is concerned about academic integrity in remote exams. They're considering using proctoring software that records students' screens, webcams, and microphones during tests. The software uses AI to flag suspicious behaviour for review. However, the instructor is aware of potential issues with student privacy, equity of access to required technology, and the stress this monitoring might cause for students. How can the instructor balance the need for academic integrity with these ethical concerns?

So I'm going to attempt to leave this up and look at monitor hands up for discussion or the chat. So if you have some ideas about how we, as practitioners, could help an instructor use the framework and work through this ethical challenge, feel free to share your thoughts. Also, if you want to, I'm also really interested in gaps in the framework, and some people have already recognized some challenges that they felt with the framework. So that's also totally open for conversation. And thank you Keith for putting that in the chat as well. Luke. LUKE: You know, the first thing I think of when I'm reading through this is sort of asking myself, would I like to be remotely proctored by a robot? And I think that while maybe not an explicit point within the framework, I think a lot of it talks around that, where it's like, just try to consider what it is you're trying to do or what you feel is like the needed outcome, but maybe flip it and you just be like, do I want that applied to me? And personally no.

BRIANA: Fair enough. I'm glad that you're caring for yourself. Thank you. Jamie.

JAMIE:
Yeah. So looking at your ethical challenge here. When I have instructors come to me about exactly this problem or situation that they're in, I generally steer them away from proctoring software and let them know that there really isn't one at TRU. There is for open learning, but not accessible for face-to-face faculty who are on campus faculty, I should say, that are doing remote exams. I talked to them about things, the way they can mitigate cheating on their own. So timing. If they time the exam accordingly, then students simply won't have time to finish it if they're looking up every single question. Then also adding questions that are from in-class discussions and letting the students know that these in-class discussions are going to be on the exam. So they should maybe take some notes or maybe they can apply a notetaker for each class and that notetaker can be part of the participation grade. Just do simple conversations like that. So that they don't feel the need to use proctoring software and try to steer them away and just use good pedagogy to facilitate their exams.

IAN:
I think for me, if I can jump in, one of the things that I found to be effective when talking about proctoring software and its harms isn't just what I talked about earlier in terms of the bias and the discrimination, but the simple fact that it doesn't work. There's research out there that shows that it misses lots of cheating behaviour. There was a study, I think in the Netherlands called "On the Efficacy of Proctorio," where students cheated and students pretended to cheat, and it was just not catching really any of it at all. So I mean, false positives are a huge concern that I think needs to be emphasized to faculty, but also the false negatives, where it's just not catching stuff. And there's equity issues aligned with that, like students that have access to having somebody else sign in and take your exam for you or students that have the digital literacy to run a really long HDMI cable to the other room, and then someone else can take the test for them, like, it's not effective. And for the hundreds of thousands of dollars that institutions end up paying for these tools, I just think that that's the key message is that it's a waste of money, and it's not a nice thing to your students.

BRIANA:
Yeah I think that's kind of where I'm feeling, my frustration or just disappointment is that I don't feel like a lot of people are listening to that. Like, we can say it. We can show the evidence, right, of that, and it just doesn't seem to land. And that's, I don't know. I'm feeling really down about that. In the chat, "Authentic assessment is one direction instructors are looking to as an alternative to proctoring and cheating concerns. Doesn't work everywhere, but arguably is a great idea for some skills." Absolutely, Wendy. Thank you for sharing that. I think that is the way forward. Keith says, "There's certainly an issue that proctoring software favours students with technical skills." Yes, of course. All AI, I suppose. Tashia writes, "We had it, but recently dropped Turnitin." Yeah. That's the AI detection tool in Turnitin is also hugely problematic. John writes, "One related example that I've struggled with for one of our professional schools is that their professional body uses proctoring software. for professional exams, and faculty feel that they need to prepare students for that. We don't support proctoring software, but this example is challenging as we can't impact the professional body." Yeah, thanks for sharing that, John. I don't know if you want to say anything about else about that. But that's huge.

Emily writes, "I think the adding timing is a hard recommendation because then you run up against accessibility and high stress. It feels like with a remote online exam with any kind of multiple choice, short answer, we essentially have to say, you can't guarantee any validity." Yeah, I agree, Emily. I think that there's been some studies around with those tight timelines, it actually can increase students' anxiety to the point that they're going to turn to cheating because they don't feel like they can do well on the exam with those tight timelines. Don't really have time to think through, right? Another thing is to ask faculty if they are actually viewing all the recordings of proctoring software. There seems to be a sense that it can act as a deterrent, but this just feels like unnecessary stress. Yes, thanks. And yeah, John, you leave it there, fair enough. Any other thoughts about this? Yeah, Patricia.

PATRICIA:
Lots of things to say about all the things. But what I wanted to talk about a little bit is where using the framework to talk about this challenge, just looking at the different pieces that are inside of the framework. You know, in being aware, the interests of your stakeholders. So the interests of the students and if we use the governing body piece, the interest of that, and having to balance that. Using this framework to try and figure out if you can balance the need of the governing body in such a way that respects your students and maybe your own values as well. So just being aware of that. In professionalism, I'll just pick one, like act with integrity and honesty. I personally, and with most people in this room, I'm sure, these kinds of proctoring softwares just make me want to cry most days. So for me, I wouldn't be an honest person to even use one. I would try and find some other way. Sometimes, like, I would either if I would have them write it online with me on Zoom, and I would just be a proctor in the room, basically like if we were in a classroom, instead of using something like that that would record. Talking about care and community best practice. What is the best practice for these types of things and where can we minimize the risk and harms for everybody involved? Again, we talked a little bit about the values, values of me, my students, and everything that I'm trying to incorporate.

These are things that we run up against a lot, and I have also had these conversations with faculty, and I feel I try to give them some of the definite ideas. We do talk about timing as well. I talk about, let's, how about you just be just run it on Zoom or whatever you want to use. If you want them to write it in class, then they can still write it on the computer in class if you want to be there. But the video that Ian had showed, that's the kind stuff that is just, I just can't even imagine trying to take an exam and hitting some of those kinds of walls. And that's just it's just a hard stop. It's a hard no for me for those kinds of things. So that's where I'm coming from with this conversation. Thanks, Briana.

BRIANA:
Yeah, thanks. And in the chat, Alexander writes, "We have managed not to allow proctoring or plagiarism software. Really, for us, we are trying to change the conversation away from those that will go to any lengths to be dishonest and focus on making assessments reflective. And in an engaging learning environment, we want to capture those on the bubble by explaining that assessments are part of the learning process." Yeah, thanks for sharing that. And then, Keith, writes, "I wonder if online proctored exams are seen as the modern iteration of the university gym filled with single student tables for those huge end of semester exams. Stress old school becomes stress in the new school. Yeah.

 Okay. Any other final thoughts or other conversations, maybe around gaps with the framework? Digital panopticon.

JACQUIE:
Maybe there was a question a little earlier that I'm not sure was addressed. It's from Melanie, and she said, "We were wondering how elements from FELT can potentially align with the B.C. Digital Literacy Framework and what that might look like?"

BRIANA:
Yeah. I mean, I know in our group, we talked a little bit about, anticipating and looking forward to the sort of ethical framework that's coming out from the province. I don't have any insight about it. I don't know if those who are in that working group can talk about maybe how FELT aligns are similar or dissimilar from what we're going to be seeing? Christina?

CHRISTINA:
It took me forever to find the raised hands. I'm on the Working Group that's working on the Ethical Educational Technology toolkit, and I know that this framework was one that is part of the environmental scan that was done. And I think the decision was taken collectively to have something that maybe is a little bit more specific in some regards. Like this is really great from, as somebody who had mentioned it's kind of high level. So, you know, talking about autonomy and fairness and inclusivity and accessibility. And the toolkit is hopefully going to have questions that will lead to digging a little bit more deeply into some of these topics. Yeah, I think that's essentially what I have to say at the moment. It's not a set of rules like do X, Y, and

Z. It's really a set of questions for reflection and potentially for action. It's got a little ways to go in terms of refining.

BRIANA: Fair enough. Thank you for pointing out that question, Jacquie. I missed it.

JACQUIE:
Luke. I see you've got your hand up.

LUKE:
Yeah. I think one thing we talked quite a bit about in our breakout room was how yes, because it is kind of top it's high level, the framework that how could you apply it to other concepts? And I think a lot about how a framework like this where, as was just said, it's not rules, it's not policy 1.1. It's not checklist 2.4. But it's more of a reflective practice. It's a check-in with yourself. It's a check-in with the work you're doing. It's a check in with your audience with whoever. But, we know that at least in accessibility, like compliance doesn't work. I won't get into that, but it's verifiable that compliance has not worked. And so I'm having a very large thought that I will not be able to articulate for several weeks, but look forward to me ranting to you, Briana, about it.

BRIANA: I'm here. A like, well, yeah,

LUKE:
About like, well, yeah, is this not the framework itself, but the modelling of it? How do we apply it to these other things? So, in terms of digital literacy, in terms of accessibility, in terms of all of these things that might benefit a lot more from. Maybe an iterative sort of question. Question yourself, question your motives, question your actions as opposed to, yes, I, you know, check off this item, check off this item, check off this item. So I think it is very useful that way. But no gaps. Sorry, Briana.

BRIANA: Okay. Fair enough.

JACQUIE:
I'll invite another question, either raise your hand or put it in the chat.

BRIANA:
Maybe we can have a bit of a longer break.

JACQUIE:
Okay. Yeah. Thanks so much. Thank you, Briana, for that conversation. I think it was fun to work out just a bit different to go into breakout rooms and thanks for facilitating that conversation.