Moving towards Equity in Assessment

Cultural Responsive and Student-centered Assessment

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Established in 2008, NILOA’s mission is to discover and disseminate ways that academic programs and institutions can productively use assessment data internally to inform and strengthen undergraduate education, and externally to communicate with policy makers, families and other stakeholders.

Go-to online resource for assessment learningoutcomeassessment.org
Let’s Get to Know Each Other

1. Who’s In the Audience?
2. What is equity?
3. Equity in assessment?
4. Student involvement in assessment?
NILOA Occasional Paper

*Equity and Assessment: Moving Towards Culturally Responsive Assessment* published in January 2017

- How consequential can assessment be to learning when assessment approaches may not be inclusive of diverse learners?
- Describes what culturally responsive assessment entails, and proposes a way to conceptualize the place of students and culture in assessment.
The Importance of Equity

Without examining issues of equity the students who may stand the most to gain from assessment efforts may have the least benefit since their learning is not accurately assessed and feedback may not be relevant to impact learning.
EQUALITY

EQUITY
Current Assessment Approaches

3 Musketeers Fallacy
- In order to make a measure of student learning equally valid for everyone, everyone completes the same measure—all for one and one for all—as a means to ensure fairness instead of using different measures for different groups. However, multiple paths.

Not a new idea to make assessment more equitable
- “if different groups have different experiences and different ways of presenting their attributes and abilities...it is unlikely that we could develop a single measure or test item that would be equally valid for all” (Sedlacek, 1994, p. 550)
- University of East London

Standards of review remain the same – demonstrations change!
FOR A FAIR SELECTION EVERYBODY HAS TO TAKE THE SAME EXAM: PLEASE CLIMB THAT TREE
Why Focus on Cultural Relevancy?

“Culture” has been historically difficult to define
- “Diversity” fails to address issues surrounding race/ethnicity and the different histories, needs, interests, and issues affecting distinct groups

But culture matters
- As Carney Strange and James Banning (2015) state, student cultures “can play an important role, for good or otherwise, in introducing students to and maintaining their engagement in the learning process” (p. 53)

Cultural relevance involves assuring that the assessment process—beginning with student learning outcome statements and ending with improvements in student learning—is mindful of student differences and employs assessment methods appropriate/valid for different student groups.
Guest Responses to *Equity and Assessment*

“As scholars and professionals proceed, there are many challenges to be faced and questions to be answered as they strive for more inclusive assessment...[T]raditional methods of using assessment results, particularly in the analysis and reporting, should also be reevaluated. Conventional methods can further marginalize minority or nontraditional groups of students...Researchers and assessment professionals should strive to find a reasonable balance between conducting rigorous analyses and respecting cultural differences.”

-Dr. Thomas F. Nelson Laird and Dr. Allison BrckaLorenz
Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research
Guest Responses to *Equity and Assessment*

“Additional research on assessment should consider the ways current institutional assessment efforts center culturally responsive activities and/or serve to marginalize them. In order for students to demonstrate their learning in ways that are meaningful to them, and in ways that allow them to draw from their learning experiences, our institutions must grapple with the realities of culturally responsive assessment. This involves acknowledging the need for institutions to invest in and implement culturally-focused assessment strategies.”

-Dr. Pamela P. Felder, University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES)
How can assessment be more equitable?

There is a difference between assessing all students in the same way on a specific outcome and ensuring assessments are appropriate and inclusive of all students.

Attention to differences in understanding of:
- Intended learning outcomes
- Questions, tasks, and assignments
- Feedback
- Assessment tools
- Use of results/data
How Can Assessment Become More Student-Centered?

Underlying the culturally relevant component is the focus on students—the importance of keeping students at the center, which requires their involvement at every step in the assessment process and builds upon their lived experience.
Resources & References


NILOA Guest Responses http://learningoutcomesassessment.org/Responses_Equity_Paper.html

AAC&U, NILOA, and TILT Higher Ed’s “Transparency & Equity Workshop” presentation https://youtu.be/tG8w6gk6ri8

Thank you!

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