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Equity-Centered Assessment: Embedding Equity Throughout the Assessment Cycle

While the assessment cycle—determining outcomes, selecting methods, collecting data, analyzing data, and using and sharing results—takes place in discrete stages, a shift in our lens may help us open our thinking to recognize that the stages are not as separate as we often make them. As practitioners, considering power, positionality, agency, voice, and stakeholder integration are core strategies for embedding attention to equity throughout the assessment cycle. Below is a list of items to consider as you engage in equity-centered assessment.

Throughout the Assessment Process

- ☐ Become an "aware assessor": consider power, positionality, agency/voice of assessors, participants, and recipients of the data/results.
- ☐ Engage stakeholders: Include students, campus partners, community partners in design, administration, analysis and use/sharing of results.
- ☐ Use campus context specific approaches: what works at one institutional type with a particular student population may not be appropriate at another.

- [ ] Draw on non-dominant approaches and methods: identify ways to shift power dynamics and elevate the lived experiences of students by learning from other epistemologies.
    - Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
    - Indigenous research methods and pedagogy
    - Wisdom traditions
    - Critical theory

Determine Outcomes

- [ ] Ensure that your outcomes framework is equity-minded and includes the experiences of marginalized populations.
- [ ] Evaluate learning outcomes and learning outcomes frameworks for dominant epistemologies and beliefs.
- [ ] Include students in drafting outcomes.
- [ ] Engage students in mapping learning outcomes to learning experiences.
- [ ] Reflect on the motivation for outcomes (e.g., reflection? employability? learning?).

Design or Select Methods and Collect Data

- [ ] Select methods that balance demand for rigor and generalizability with cultural attentiveness and justice.
- [ ] Engage students in determining methods for showcasing their learning.
- [ ] Engage students in the design of the method or tool.
- [ ] Solicit student feedback on the questions and prompts developed.
- [ ] For standardized surveys, examine the theory supporting the survey development.
- [ ] Consider multiple methods (e.g., storytelling circles, rubrics, ePortfolios, narratives, photo, voice, document analysis, video blogs, existing data analysis).
- [ ] Triangulate findings for robust and dynamic reporting.
- [ ] Examine and evaluate language for bias (implicit or explicit), inclusion, signals of “normalcy” or homogeneity, and supportive identity orientation.

Analyze Data

- [ ] Engage stakeholders in interpretation and reporting to ensure the results are representative of the voices that matter, bias is mitigated, and any deficit orientated language can be more readily identified, removed, and re-written.
- [ ] Disaggregate data by populations.

- [ ] Engage in multiple types of data analysis (e.g., within group and across group analysis). When comparing across groups, do not hold the white student experiences as the benchmark for comparison. Consider equally the results for each group.
- [ ] When drawing comparisons across groups, contextualize the results in student experiences (e.g., not all students have the same resources, access, or experience).
- [ ] Not all statistical analysis approaches require a large N (e.g., Structural Equation Modeling). Discussions around having "enough" responses can silence historically marginalized populations.

Use and Share Results for Change

- [ ] Be intentional in your approach to data analysis and sharing.
- [ ] Consider how you may be writing results from a deficit-based orientation.
- [ ] Prior to data collection, identify meaningful use of results for action.
- [ ] Consider who has the power to determine if results are valid and accurate and how data reports and summaries will be written and shared.
- [ ] Actionable findings can serve as an opportunity to advance equity.