

Reimagining Assessment for Student Learning Beyond COVID-19.

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Scholarly Area(s)

1. Student learning
4. Academic development

Format

Open space methodology in the form of a fishbowl with provocative elements.

Session Proposal

The threat of COVID-19 presented some difficult, yet exciting challenges for lecturers who were required to transition to Emergency Remote Teaching and Learning (ERTL) in 2020. As we approach two years since the advent of the pandemic, it is essential that we consider what can be learnt from our experiences of ERTL that will help us teach and assess better in the years to come. We are a cross-faculty project team from a large, research-intensive public university in South Africa that has embarked on a multi-year project aimed at exploring the assessment and feedback landscape at our institution. Owing to anecdotal concerns raised over assessment practices and outcomes prior to and during ERTL, we see this as an opportunity to promote the exchange of scholarship on assessment and feedback across various disciplines and faculties, while aiming to identify factors that may influence assessment practices, beliefs, and behaviours more broadly. Following [Scott \(2019\)](#), we place the equity of learning outcomes and student success at the heart of the higher education agenda. Consequently, the project allows for an intentional and purposeful interrogation of assessment practices prior to and during Covid-19, and to provide insights on how best to support staff with the conceptualisation and design of fair, valid, and equitable assessments and feedback.

We are currently in phase one of the project. During this phase we are conducting an analysis of students' performance across all five faculties at our institution, to help us gain insight into performance trends before and during ERTL. The outcome of this analysis is intended to assist us with the identification of "outlier courses" (e.g., courses with notable decreases or increases in student performance). This, in turn, will allow us to garner lecturer input during faculty-based interviews, where lecturers have the opportunity to reflect on the observed shifts in student performance and on the assessment strategies they adopted. However, we find ourselves grappling with a series of questions: i) How accurate are pass and throughput statistics in identifying so called "problematic" courses? ii) Can these data be used to interrogate assessment practices and beliefs about the purpose and value of assessments? iii) (How) are others using pass and throughput statistics to inform teaching practice and assessment design? iv) Does high/satisfactory pass or throughput statistics equate to good assessment practices and/or design? v) What are the effects of threshold-ranges between pass

and throughput statistics on the identification of problematic courses (e.g., should a course with a pass rate of 48% be treated differently from a course with a pass rate of 53%)?

The impetus for our cross-faculty project is based on the project team's shared belief that current and future teaching and learning paradigms in higher education will require (and already requires) a wider range of collaborative work. Thus, during this collaborative engagement with higher education stakeholders from across the country, we hope to engage in robust conversation about the questions we are grappling with, both for our own project and to the benefit of those in attendance. **[Words: 499]**.

Key words

Assessment | Assessment for Learning | Assessment Design | Equity of Learning | ERTL | Student Learning | Student Performance Data

Two key questions for further engagement

1. (How) are others using pass and throughput statistics to inform teaching practice and assessment design?
2. What are the assessment-related challenges other South African higher education stakeholders are grappling with?