

Abstract

This paper argues for organic initiatives that supplement the assessment work already being done, by blooming naturally from faculty and staff's expertise while also pollinating each dimension of assessment with cultural responsiveness. The theoretical framework draws from two leading paradigms—Culturally Responsive Assessment and Assessment 2.0. The Grounded Theory methodology uses Universal Design for Learning (UDL) guidelines to analyze (a) course-level assessment reports, (b) campus-wide activity on student engagement, and (c) campus-wide discussions around assessment, including gains and gaps in student learning. The study finds that assessment data emerge spontaneously across numerous spaces on campus, can be collected in flexible manners, and can be analyzed through an equity lens in order to support a diverse student population. Through this fresh approach findings show that faculty members are implementing inclusive practices in their instruction and assessment, and closely collaborate with units in student affairs to engage all learners.



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Culturally Responsive Assessment 2.0: Revisiting the Quest for Equity and Quality in Student Learning

This paper examines how assessment can illuminate the extent to which teaching practices support learning of all students in a diverse environment. It highlights the significance of diversity theories and diversified methodologies in the field of assessment. On one hand, culturally responsive pedagogies have gained vast ground in education, but institutional assessment has only recently started to consider its intersect with equity (Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017b). While the process through which students demonstrate their knowledge and development is increasingly different, the criteria on which they are evaluated generally remain the same (Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017a). On the other hand, graduation rates, achievement gaps, institutional benchmarks, and other numerical data are insufficient to support equitable imperatives (Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017b). Assessment has to emerge organically from data sources that already exist, including thick and rich descriptions, beyond the preconceived evaluation plans and rationalized systems that still dominate literature and practice (Metzler & Kurz, 2018).

The theoretical framework draws from the field of quality and equity assurance in higher education. However, both areas are often heavy in practical prescriptions and light in theoretical bases, as both diversity and assessment professionals “remain focused on the details of practice—getting it done” (Hershock, 2010; Metzler & Kurz, 2018, p. 4). Therefore, I build on relevant theorists inside and outside the field of assessment to contribute to a Culturally Responsive Assessment 2.0 paradigm. Culturally responsive assessment concerns matters of equity, such as shaping evaluation tools through culture-based lenses, disaggregating the data by student background, and using results to improve learning of all students (Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017b). Assessment 2.0 refers to flexible and yet robust approaches, including bottom-up processes, collective meaning-making, and organic assessment designs—whether formative, summative, quantitative, or qualitative (Metzler & Kurz, 2018). In this study, I integrate the two models because I claim that on one hand innovating approaches to assessment in the 21st century requires explicit culture-based considerations and on the other hand culturally relevant assessment can only exist within malleable paradigms as Assessment 2.0.

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This pilot study represents a first attempt to bring a variety of organic data sources about student learning in conversation with one another through the lens of diversity. It triangulates three sets of data: (a) course-level assessment reports, (b) a campus-wide activity on student engagement, and (c) discussions around assessment at the Honolulu Community College in Hawaii (United States of America). The first instrument was designed as an assessment tool but provided wide flexibility, whereas the other two methods emerged organically outside preconceived assessment plans. The methodology follows Grounded Theory principles, including two cycles of coding and tallying via NVIVO software (Charmaz, 2010). Through the first coding cycle all emerging patterns resonated with the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) model, which is pertinent to our diverse and inclusive institution (Rao, in press). Therefore, the second coding cycle mapped the three datasets to UDL guidelines.

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This paper argues for organic initiatives that supplement the assessment work already being done, by blooming naturally from faculty and staff's expertise while also pollinating each dimension of assessment with cultural responsiveness (Metzler & Kurz, 2018, p. 4; Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017b). The study finds that assessment data emerge spontaneously across numerous spaces on campus, can be collected in flexible manners, and can be analyzed through an equity lens in order to support a diverse student population. Through this fresh approach, findings show that faculty members are implementing inclusive practices in their instruction and assessment, and closely collaborate with units in student affairs to engage all learners.

Methodology: Grounded Theory Meets Universal Design for Learning

This study took place in 2018 at the Honolulu Community College in Hawaii—a very diverse campus in a very diverse state, with widespread commitment to indigeneity, inclusion, and equity (Accreditation Taskforce, 2018). It offers both vocational and liberal arts degrees, allowing students to transfer credits to achieve junior class standing at four-year higher education institutions within the state. It also offers noncredit courses in apprenticeship and continuing education as well as college credits for seniors in high school. Students at the college seek affordable and flexible education, as many have families, work full time, and return to college or the workforce after years of absence.

People of color constitute 91% of the students, including 47% Asian, 24% Hawaiian, and 13% mixed ethnicities (Arbuckle, 2018). The five pillars of the university highlight student focus, Hawaiian values, diversity, sustainability, as well as community partnerships. For instance, the Hulili Ke Kukui Hawaiian Center supports the enrollment pathway for Hawaiian students as well as the integration of Hawaiian language, culture, and values into the campus community, including through faculty and staff development (Ho'āla Hou). A variety of platforms connect academic and student affairs in order to promote student retention and completion.

A triangulation approach is at the foundation of this study because a robust assessment program draws on multiple sources of evidence at multiple levels within the institution (Metzler & Kurz, 2018). The three data sources merged organically from improvement-based initiatives, but sat in compartmentalized spaces. This study is an attempt to break their isolation so they can talk with one another and create meaning together. The focus is on data sources that illustrate the paradigm shift from teaching to learning, which is at the core of our student-centered institution (Barr & Tagg, 1995). Meaningful assessment emerges when faculty and staff integrate assessment into their normal work (Allen, 2004). For instance, assignments play a key role in assessment because generally (a) faculty are strategically positioned to determine the quality of student work (Cain, 2014); in addition (b) students generally make their greatest efforts under required tasks, (c) assignments are pedagogically powerful in communicating faculty's expectations, and (d) making a difference in student learning happens in the day-to-day work (Hutchings, Jankowski, & Ewell, 2014). From classroom data practice can grow to departmental and institutional levels (Barr & Tagg, 1995).

First, I analyzed course-level assessment reports for the 2014–2018 cycle. These documents are preconceived assessment plans but leave room for personalized approaches as they ask broad questions about Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs). I examined CLO reports from three of the six campus academic divisions. The three divisions provided CLO reports for 210 out of their 267 courses (79%), covering 1833 CLO and including qualitative data analysis about assessment strategies that supported student mastery of the CLOs. Second, I examined index cards from a campus-wide activity that took place at commencement in Fall 2018, when a top administrator asked the staff and faculty members in attendance to write down their current practices for purposefully engaging students. One hundred and forty-five participants submitted 233 practices. This activity was not designed as an assessment plan and emerged organically.

Third, I analyzed notes that I took at campus-wide meetings, namely Assessment Taskforce, Assessment Townhall, Assessment Showcase, and assessment workshops as well as commencement and faculty development series, which featured faculty discussing best practices. These dialogues were not preconceived assessment activities per se; instead I saw them as glimpses into the many faculty conversations that informally take shape across campus about improving student learning and institutional performance. Capturing them was a challenge that was worth facing, since they are rich examples of thick description (Geertz, 1973). The dialogues engaged faculty and staff while fostering their ownership of assessment, as they are the creative forces in the process (Baker, Jankowski, Provezis, & Kinzie, 2012). These discussions provided the opportunity to analyze the course-level assessment reports and index cards. They became a space to validate the findings from the previous two methods. According to the participants, the results looked like “a typical day in the classroom.” These campus-wide experiences were possible with the support of the administration, which allocated the necessary time, space, and resources while also endorsing the overarching flexible and organic approach to assessment on our campus (Baker et al., 2012).

My methodology follows a constructivist approach to Grounded Theory, including the leading principles of saturation and coding (Charmaz, 2010). I achieved deep familiarity with the researched phenomena but did not superimpose theories on the data. In Charmaz’s (2010) words, “preconceived theoretical concepts may provide starting points for looking at the data but they do not offer automatic codes for analyzing these data” (p. 68). I coded the three data sources through two cycles and I ran descriptive statistics via NVIVO software. Through the first coding cycle all patterns that emerged resonated with the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) model, which is relevant to our institutional commitment to diversity, indigeneity, and serving our variegated student population (Rao, in press).

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Therefore, I decided to conduct the second coding cycle according to UDL checkpoints. I indicated percentages of how many times each of the nine UDL guidelines emerged from the data; at the same time, I was mindful that all strategies are equally important and used in different contexts (Rao, in press). My student assistant also coded the data, providing a learner’s perspective in the study (Desiree, Hernández, & Berumen, 2018; Driscoll & Wood, 2007; O’Neill & Maguire, 2017). As we moved from course-level assessment reports to index cards and faculty’s conversation, we reached a saturation point—no more new information emerged.

Theorizing Assessment in Relation to Quality and Equity Assurance in the Fourth Industrial Revolution

Quality assurance refers to embedding quality in all aspects of higher education, from student learning and development to administrative processes, rather than inspecting quality in unmonitored systems that have already been finished (Ryan, 2015). Quality within the higher education environment has historically been one of the most difficult specifications to measure (Neubauer, 2019). Globalization challenges all facets of higher education, including its efforts to develop systems of quality assurance that are useful and sustainable in the 21st century (Neubauer, 2010). Over the past two decades, reductionist approaches have established quantitative tactics, such as the ranking phenomenon (Neubauer, 2018). Yet, what Klaus Schwab defines as the Fourth Industrial Revolution or Work 4.0 is already pushing quality in higher education towards

more complex progressions (cited in Neubauer, 2018). Implications will likely affect the manner in which university teaching is organized, due to student mobility, interdisciplinary demands, and need for self-learning skills as well as learning that is immersive, interactive, and responsive to students (Neubauer, 2019).

Student variability is possibly the most complex feature in the 21st century classroom. Globalization is not only an “intensifier of interdependence, it is a multiplier and magnifier of differences” (Hershock, 2010, p. 30). Each individual identity holds both cosmopolitan (i.e., humanist and global) and grounded (i.e., local and national) affiliation (Kahn, 2004; Logli, 2016; Nilan & Feixa, 2006). Within education, variety tends to relate to gender, ethnicity, religion, and social class as well as learning styles (Hershock, 2010; Hershock, Mason, & Hawkins, 2007). Concerns of access, survival, output, and outcome that relate to differentiated student populations are widespread (Farrell, 2007; Hawkins, 2011). Underrepresented students’ probability of getting into college, completing their degree, learning the same knowledge and living relatively similarly post-graduation lives is slimmer compared to students who more traditionally attend higher education (Farrell, 2007).

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Hershock (2010, 2012) expands the lens of analysis on diversity. Variety is “a quantitative index of simple multiplicity that connotes things simply being-different” (Hershock, 2010, p. 35). University campuses can host varied student populations, program offerings, and partnership types while remaining mere coexistence. Like zoos, their variety is externally imposed. By contrast, diversity is “a qualitative index of self-sustaining and difference-enriching patterns of mutual contribution to shared welfare” (Hershock, 2010, p. 35). Diversity refers to “the extent to which differences are activated as the basis of meaningful contribution to sustainably shared flourishing” (Hershock, 2012, p. 44). Diversity requires making differences as the basis for mutual contribution. Educating for diversity is focused on “discerning how most effectively and sustainably to enable the differences of each to make a difference for all” (Hershock, 2010, p. 38). It means “shifting the locus of concern from how much we differ-from each other to how we might best differ-for one another” (Hershock, 2010, p. 38). Like ecosystems, their diversity can only rise from within.

This theory of diversity can find two entryways into the assessment field—through Assessment 2.0 because it is contextual, flexible, and open (Metzler & Kurz, 2018) as well as culturally responsive assessment because it zooms into matters of equity (Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017b). Assessment 2.0 is designed to “supplement the assessment work already being done” and to be “organic”—growing naturally from faculty and staff’s professional judgment and experience, rather than over-imposed structures and linear procedures commonly followed in standard assessment practice (Metzler & Kurz, 2018, p. 4). Its premise is that assessment must lead to action—assessment should not be done unless there is real possibility and openness to instructional and institutional change in the students’ best interest. Campuses are filled with data, but data without rigorous analysis and usage are useless (Allen, 2004; Kuh et al., 2014).

Assessment 2.0 re-envision assessment by using awareness of George Ritzer’s theory of rationalization in order to avoid its most problematic expressions (Metzler & Kurz, 2018, p. 5). As all other system of rationalization, assessment has four interrelated dimensions. First, efficiency refers to streamlining processes to fulfill the end goal; yet, the risk is to diminish learning to shallow objectives. Second, calculability emphasizes measurable data; yet, the danger is that quantity takes precedence over quality. Third, predictability is concerned with limiting variability; yet it can brush off fine and contextual distinctions around student learning. Fourth, control aims to manage the volatility that is part of human dynamics; yet it can veer to collection of meaningless data. Without rationalized processes, chaos would prevail. However, the more a structure is rationalized, the greater the risk that its rationalization will undercut its own purpose, leading to lack of validity, reliability, reflection, and usage in assessment data. The Assessment 2.0 paradigm avoids the irrationality of rationality by infusing the four dimensions of rationalization with bottom-up processes, collective meaning-making within departments, and organic opportunities to provide assessment data, whether via formative, summative, quantitative, or qualitative approaches.

Culturally responsive assessment reveals the flawed assumption that “while there are multiple ways for students to learn, students need to demonstrate learning in specific ways for it to count” (Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017b, p. 6). Where one assessment approach is dominant there is a risk that it will not accommodate individual learning preferences (O’Neill & Maguire, 2017). Assessment approaches have a powerful impact on students’ behavior, engagement, and attendance as well as institutional performance. For equity gaps to be addressed, the entire institution needs to explore resolutions to support student success—from pedagogies to assessments that foster inclusion while upholding high standards (Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017b). Equity-based approaches do not benefit underrepresented students only, but all students (Finley & McNair, 2013). For example, a “culturally responsive assessment” involves students throughout the entire assessment process, develops evaluation tools that are appropriate for different learners, uses results to improve the academic experience of all students, and disaggregates the data to understand the student population (Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017b). Once we know who our students are we can tailor assessment processes to better encourage their flourishing.

Institutions have started using a variety of approaches to get a more holistic picture of student learning and development rather than relying solely on exam-taking abilities. In the United States, community colleges and Minority-Serving Institutions integrate mainstream measures with locally developed instruments that are better suited to gauge their learning (Montenegro & Jankowski, 2015). Various campuses have centered assessment work on social justice principles through democratic, participatory, inclusive, affirming, and collaborative practices (Desiree et al., 2018). Examples from other English-speaking countries include (a) the University of East London, which gives the option to do a presentation, poster, or debate; (b) the University of Dublin, where students are able to make a poster instead of taking an exam; and (c) a study in Canada that has shown that students who took advantage of the option to add a term project through preparing a mini-class or participating in community service improved their performance (Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017b). Allowing students to choose how they are evaluated improves student engagement, achievement, and the quality of the learning experience while addressing student variability (Gosselin & Gagné, 2014).

The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach provides a useful application of culturally responsive assessment. UDL is based on the premise that variability among learners is the norm and individuals can become expert learners in varied ways—there is no one path to mastery (Rose & Gravel, 2009). To design for variability instructors can begin by identifying common barriers to learning, students’ preferences, and specific needs for supports (Hehir, 2009). By being mindful of these factors, teachers can design instruction and assessment from the outset for a broader range of learners (Rao, in press). The UDL model is comprised of three main principles—representation, action and expression, and engagement. Each principle has three guidelines (nine in total) and each guideline has a series of checkpoints (31 in total) that proactively build in flexibility, choice, and scaffolds as well as other pedagogical practices to facilitate the learning experience for all.

Many assessment scholars suggest similar practices, but the UDL guidelines explicitly point out their relevance for student variability and provide a comprehensive model. For example, the literature on assessment and equity highlights the importance of fostering students’ self-esteem, motivation, engagement, critical thinking, and leadership skills by integrating their indigenous cultural practices, appropriate language, and unique learning interests (Montenegro & Jankowski, 2015). Research on assessment and learning has also demonstrated the high impact of practices such as diversity and global learning, collaborative assignments, research opportunities, and all forms of service-learning (Kuh, O’Donnell, & Reed, 2013). Similarly, students indicated group work, application of knowledge, interaction with peers, and real-life connection as the activities that engaged them the most (Ewell, 2009). Studies on human learning suggest the importance of practice at retrieval, varying conditions under which learning takes place, and re-representing information in alternative formats as well as integrating theory with practice (Halpern & Hakel, 2003). Scaffolding should infuse all aspects of teaching from

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instruction to assessment, for instance through sequenced lesson plans, rubrics that illustrate criteria, opportunities for student self-reflection on learning, and assignments that build on one another and prepare the student for a culminating demonstration (Hutchings et al., 2014).

Culturally Responsive Assessment 2.0 in Practice: Three Approaches

Three sets of data are the focus of this paper: (a) course-level assessment reports, (b) a campus-wide activity on student engagement, and (c) discussions around assessment, including gains and gaps in student learning as well as prospective improvements in all facets of institutional performance. The results consistently confirmed each other across the three datasets; therefore, I will present the two key findings from the three datasets collectively.

Diversified Assessment Methods

All three data sources revealed that faculty members diversify their assessment methods within a course but students are rarely given a choice on how to be assessed. According to the assessment reports, 29% of the CLOs were assessed through exams, 21% through embedded questions, 18% through lab tasks, 9% through activities, 8% through presentations, 7% through projects, 4% through papers, and 3% through practica. During the discussions faculty shared specific examples of current practices and upcoming plans around culture-based assessment in their classroom, based on what they learned about different assessment methods. They expressed interest in diversifying their assessment methods further and providing choice to students on how to be assessed, as they realize that our diverse population benefits from it. Deeper considerations about student learning and matters of equity lie underneath this combination of assessment methods. Two examples clarify this multifaceted approach.

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On the first day of class, a faculty member asks students to fill out the “About You Questionnaire,” which allows her to get to know her students and to draft assessment methods accordingly (Hartline, 2018a). For instance, (a) if some students do not have a computer she allows hand-written submissions; (b) if some students do not have a printer, she allows digital submissions; (c) if some students have dyslexia, she allows submissions via audio recording; (d) if some students deal with anxiety disorders, she replaces whole-class presentations with group work; (e) if some students are veterans with medical and readjusting challenges, she views behavior that may seem otherwise antisocial (putting their head in their hands or standing up at odd times) as a response to easily triggered migraines and physical pain; (f) if some students are not native English speakers, she slows down and interprets roadblocks from a cultural lens; (g) if students take the bus, she ensures to open her classroom door ahead of time, so that they’re not waiting in the hallway, and to end class on time, so they do not miss their public transportation (Hartline, 2018b).

Another department conducted a longitudinal study on its assessment methods and found that they are all informative but in different ways (Patterson, 2018). First, students’ self-reported Knowledge Surveys provide a good overview of what they are learning, primarily in terms of content areas, because in the cultural context of Hawaii students appear to be modest in their self-reporting. Second, embedded assessment adds more specific understanding about students’ analytical skills. Third, faculty’s reflections on outcomes solidify the identification of better teaching strategies.

These findings are in line with principles of culturally responsive assessment (Gosselin & Gagné, 2014; Montenegro & Jankowski, 2015; O’Neill & Maguire, 2017). Faculty members diversify their assessment tools to accommodate for student variability. They also contextualize their evaluations within the reality of Hawaii and integrate mainstream measures with locally developed instruments that are better suited to gauge learning. The faculty’s autonomy in designing assessment methods also resonates with the Assessment 2.0 model (Metzler & Kurz, 2018). Faculty members prefer embedded assessments to use data sources that already exist and supplement the assignments already being done. They freely choose either formative or summative approaches, by drawing from their professional judgment and experience, rather than over-imposed standardized assessment plans. They find faculty development, fresh resources,

and collegial conversations around assessment useful as they strategize on how to improve student learning.

Teaching for Student Variability

All UDL principles emerge as relevant and, as I discuss below, three guidelines are especially intriguing. Faculty use a variety of inclusive practices to enhance student learning, by connecting academic and student affairs (UDL guideline 6), providing options for student persistence (UDL guideline 8), and optimizing students’ motivation and coping skills, mainly through relation-building (UDL guideline 9). Interestingly, over the past years the campus has been increasingly concerned about student retention and providing student support has been a priority, mainly through a caring environment and collaboration between instructional and noninstructional units.

Table 1
Synopsis of findings within UDL model

	I. REPRESENTATION (guidelines 1-3)	II. ACTION/ EXPRESSION (guidelines 4-6)	III. ENGAGEMENT (guidelines 7-9)
Course-level: Assessment reports	47% (312 of 654 CLOs) •UDL guideline 2: 14% •UDL guideline 3: 33%	30% (193 of 654 CLOs) •UDL guideline 4: 4% •UDL guideline 5: 6% •UDL guideline 6: 20%	23% (149 of 654 CLOs) •UDL guideline 7: 1% •UDL guideline 8: 20% •UDL guideline 9: 2%
Institutional level: Student engagement practices	4% (10 of 233 practices) •UDL guideline 2: 1% •UDL guideline 3: 3%	29% (68 of 233 practices) •UDL guideline 4: 6% •UDL guideline 5: 7% •UDL guideline 6: 16%	67% (155 of 233 practices) •UDL guideline 7: 5% •UDL guideline 8: 21% •UDL guideline 9: 40%

First, providing options for executive functions (UDL guideline 6) is at the forefront of faculty’s considerations—they mention it 20% of the time in their course-level assessment reports, 16% of the time in the campus-wide index cards activity, and in discussions. They support planning and strategy development by connecting students to campus resources “that can help overcoming their challenge” (e.g., writing center, testing center, Hawaiian center, veterans center, student success center, library, academic counseling, career services, tutoring, transition coordinator, peer mentors, noncredit ESL classes, financial aid). Bridging classrooms with services has been a focus on campus over the past years and faculty have been responsive by inviting guest speakers from student affairs in their courses, sending students on a scavenger hunt to key spaces on the first day of class, and referring students to a variety of supports. In addition, they guide appropriate goal setting by organizing the syllabus thoroughly, sending various types of e-newsletters to students before the start of the semester, and adjusting the course pace—they either “set quick turnaround time” or “allow more time” depending on the circumstances. They also facilitate managing information by “putting great thought” into structuring mind mapping, practice sheets, and transition projects. Furthermore, they enhance the capacity for monitoring progress by “having an assignment where students plot a course outline to reach their end goal,” “keeping students accurately updated,” and “correcting each deficiency before moving on to the next project” through outside-of-class optional review sessions, in-class practice exams with samples, and graded pre-quizzes.

Second, providing options for persistence (UDL guideline 8) is another faculty priority—they mention it 20% of the time in their course-level assessment reports, 21% of the time in the campus-wide index cards activity, and in discussions. They heighten the salience of goals and objectives by engaging students in activities that are relevant for their lives (e.g., field studies,

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outside-of-the-classroom projects, guest speakers, analyses of real-world problems and current events). In addition, they vary demands and resources to optimize challenge—“I diversify my teaching strategies, I switch mode every 10 minutes to support each learning preference.” They also foster collaboration by engaging families when appropriate and integrating group activities (e.g., ice breakers, get-togethers, partnering in problem solving) so students “get to know one another—who they are and what their interests are—and make discoveries, so they are happy to return to class because their friends are there.” Faculty encourage student participation in campus life (e.g., student clubs, social projects, leadership opportunities) so “they experience values like community and compassion, and can be the positive change that ripples around.” Moreover, they increase mastery-oriented feedback by using comments like “the essay would be better with punctuation,” rather than “you need to work on punctuation,” through lab follow-up, discussions on assignments, well-defined rubrics, peer mentorships, and learning communities where students “share their mistakes, discoveries, and learn from each other.”

Faculty members involve students throughout the assessment process, draw from culture-based lenses, and use assessment results to improve learning of all students

Third, providing options for self-regulation (UDL guideline 9) was the highlight of the index cards activity—faculty and staff mentioned it 40% of the time. One reason for this predominance is that the ninth UDL guideline falls under the UDL engagement principle and the activity was about purposeful engagement. Yet, discussions confirmed its importance. Faculty members promote expectations and beliefs that optimize motivation, by assisting them to solve issues instead of passing them along, taking the time to understand their needs, and “teaching them how to be students, which can translate to all courses” (e.g., how to take notes, quizzes). In addition, they facilitate personal coping skills and strategies by providing personal stories and professional mentorship around their passions, dreams, difficulties, and strengths. For instance, they make an effort to learn students’ stories (e.g., show up early to class, create talk story/snack time, conduct “I wish my teacher knew” exercise) and provide professional guidance (e.g., provide letters of recommendation, share networking, revise job applications, organize mock interviews, encourage students to think about “short- and long-range goals within the industry”). They also develop self-assessment and reflection through one-minute surveys (e.g., What did you learn today? What did you have more questions about?), end-of-the-semester meetings, course evaluations, and involving them in rubric development.

At this point, I want to touch upon all other culturally responsive strategies that emerged from the data. Their numerical weight is more limited—yet still substantial, considering that percentages are spread across the nine UDL guidelines—and their qualities remain impactful across all three datasets. Faculty clarify vocabulary and promote understanding across languages (UDL guideline 2, mentioned 14% of the time in course-level assessment reports). They provide options for comprehension (UDL guideline 3) by explaining “stories behind place names,” “replacing textbook examples with local examples,” and using familiar images like a rainbow to capture student attention around salient scientific characteristics (mentioned 33% of the time in course-level assessment reports). They “help students make connections with class content”—through hands-on activities in order “to show students that what they are learning is practical, important, and related to both local and global perspectives” (e.g., Malama Aina or Take Care of the Land days).

Faculty optimize access to technologies (UDL guideline 4), for example by “integrating online research skills into some of the hands-on assignments” and “giving extra credit for early online communication” (mentioned 6% of the time in the campus-wide index cards activity). They also provide options for expressions (UDL guideline 5), such as through in-depth engaging questions, experimental learning, and industry networking in order “to create space for students to become part of the program in significant ways” (mentioned 7% of the time in the campus-wide index cards activity). Providing scaffoldings and opportunities for practice is key, not just for content absorption but also for learning the skill “on how to learn more.”

Faculty optimize autonomy (UDL guideline 7) by allowing students to select topics, learning tools, and assignments (mentioned 5% of the time in the campus-wide index cards activity). For example, students chose “the ideas and activities they wanted to plan and share with

classmates,” create ground rules for class, and are in charge of opening and closing the lab. They minimize distractions, for instance, by creating a safe space, respectful learning atmosphere, and friendly environment “so that students feel comfortable to interact with each other and help each other learn better.”

These findings confirm some of the guidelines of culturally responsive assessment (Finley & McNair, 2013; Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017b). Faculty members involve students throughout the assessment process, draw from culture-based lenses, and use assessment results to improve learning of all students. These results also follow the Assessment 2.0 model as our institution has started using a variety of approaches to get a more holistic picture of student learning, including assessment reports that make space for qualitative evidence, including thick and rich reflections (Metzler & Kurz, 2018).

Culturally Responsive Assessment 2.0: Implication for Future Directions

Today’s educational challenges are not problems to be solved but rather predicaments to be resolved (Hershock, 2010, p. 31). Problems are associated with failures of existing practices and are solved by developing improved means, which lead to ends that we intend to continue pursuing. Predicaments arise when changing circumstances bring the awareness of conflicts among our own values and are resolved by creating new meaning, which activates shared commitments. In considering the direction of assessment paradigm changes, matters of difference and equity should not be seen as side effects of education but rather values that can be effectively promoted only when infused into the full spectrum of educational activity.

Similar to the case studies featured in Baker, Jankowski, Provezis, and Kinzie (2012), this pilot project sees room for development and does not conclude that it is “yet arrived” (p. 6). Assessment is never completed but it continuously advances through an ongoing process in which closing the loop opens new inquiries. Some of the limitations of this study include its pilot nature, case-study scale, and focus on faculty’s direct assessments rather than also including students’ perspectives. From a theoretical stance, I plan to contribute to studies on assessment approaches first in relation to indigenous contexts and later beyond the dominant Anglo-American axis. From a practical stance, my institution plans to continue implementing assessment approaches that are flexible (as suggested by Metzler & Kurz, 2018) as well as culturally responsive (as suggested by Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017b). Rationalized and yet flexible processes will keep leading assessment efforts.

First, with regard to efficiency, a new curriculum process will allow a more flexible procedure for updating and linking outcomes, while also maintaining the principles that outcomes should be concise and clear for all students. A new Assessment Management System (AMS) will allow data disaggregation by student background and give faculty options, by asking some brief standardized questions and creating a space for additional data on specific interests (Baker et al., 2012). Specific interests will also evolve, for example, around place-based approaches, which remain the essence of our campus as demonstrated by our findings (Baker et al., 2012; Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017b).

Second, with regard to calculability, the new AMS will allow desegregated analytics to investigate how the assessment might affect all students, benefit certain populations, and hinder others. Qualitative methodologies will continue to illuminate the complex predicaments and resolutions that lie underneath numerical values. Student voices will also become part of the data triangulation, for instance, by integrating Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) results as well as many other student surveys that disseminate on campus (Driscoll & Wood, 2007).

Third, predictability will appear through embedding assessment into institutional processes such as program reviews, decision-making by campus-wide committee, and external documents so that assessment efforts are optimized (Baker et al., 2012). For example, both applications and reports for Title III federal grants in support of Hawaiian values need culturally

With regard to efficiency, a new curriculum process will allow a more flexible procedure for updating and linking outcomes, while also maintaining the principles that outcomes should be concise and clear for all students

responsive assessment data. Information from assessment results, including success stories and action plans, should be distributed more widely to both internal and external audiences (Baker et al., 2012). For example, a top administrator integrated the analysis of the index cards into her presentation at the planning council. Predictability will also motivate the drafting of new assessment policy and procedures in order to bring together various perspectives and communicate clearly leading principles—above all assessment data needs to be collected, analyzed, discussed, and used toward improvement in student learning and institutional performance, regardless of specific details.

Fourth, control can frame more widely the spaces where dialogues about student learning and institutional performance become usable data. Conversations about improving student success take place constantly in numerous informal channels and those voices should be included in datasets (Baker et al., 2012). A committee has just stepped forward to become the body to examine five-year program reviews, encourage the integration of program-level assessment analyses, and to find ways to support the department. Fresh efforts have started to include nontenure-line faculty in campus initiatives such as curriculum mapping, optional orientation, and faculty training, including the assessment series (Kezar & Maxey, 2014). The monthly assessment series tries to meet various accessibility preferences—in addition to the face-to-face sessions, I post on the assessment page the full PowerPoint, a one-page handout, and a five-minute online tutorial with captures.

The study finds that assessment data emerge spontaneously across numerous spaces on campus, can be collected in flexible manners, and can be analyzed through an equity lens in order to support a diverse student population.

In conclusion, offering an assessment framework toward a more equitable higher education landscape motivates this study. This paper argues for organic initiatives that supplement the assessment work already being done, by blooming naturally from faculty and staff's expertise while also pollinating each dimension of the assessment with culturally responsive attention (Metzler & Kurz, 2018; Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017b). The study finds that assessment data emerge spontaneously across numerous spaces on campus, can be collected in flexible manners, and can be analyzed through an equity lens in order to support a diverse student population. In particular, the results point out that faculty members are implementing inclusive practices in their instruction and assessment, and closely collaborate with units in student affairs to engage all learners. This flexibility is endorsed by accrediting agencies, which do not prescribe narrow templates but rather leave institutions free to sculpt their own assessment image (Cain, 2014). Accreditation protects institutional autonomy, academic freedom, and institutional diversity (American Council on Education, 2012). Assessment rightly conducted “asks faculty to work together as colleagues to assess student work fairly by criteria respected in the field and to share their knowledge of student strengths and weaknesses, in order to improve curriculum, pedagogy, and other factors affecting learning” (Cain, 2014, p. 12).

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