

# COMPOUNDING ERROR: WHAT IS MISSING AND ILL-DEFINED IN ASSESSMENT SCHOLARSHIP AND THE PATH FORWARD

Marjorie  
Dorimé-Williams, Ph.D  
Department of  
Educational Leadership &  
Policy Analysis  
University of  
Missouri-Columbia

Cindy Cogswell, Ph.D.  
Division of Student  
Affairs  
Ohio University

Gianina Baker, Ph.D.  
National Institute for  
Learning Outcomes  
Assessment  
University of Illinois  
Urbana-Champaign

Pamelyn Klepal Shefman,  
Ph.D.  
Academic  
Affairs/Institutional  
Effectiveness and  
Research

Alvin Community College

# SESSION OVERVIEW

- Introductions
- What We've Learned
- Connecting Practice & Research
- Scholar Practitioners of Assessment
- Q&A



LET'S GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER



## MARJORIE DORIME-WILLIAMS, PH.D.

Dr. Marjorie Dorimé-Williams is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis in the College of Education at the University of Missouri.

Her research focuses on assessment, evaluation, and institutional effectiveness in postsecondary education, particularly as it relates to access, persistence, and retention of historically marginalized students, faculty, and staff. Specifically, Dr. Dorime-Williams' work examines the role of assessment and evaluation in improving student learning environments, as well as the impact of marginalized students' identities on engagement, learning, and other educational outcomes. At the macro level, her work explores how assessment can support institutional effectiveness and encourage outcomes that are more equitable for marginalized students in higher education.



## CINDY COGSWELL, PH.D.

Dr. Cindy Cogswell is the Director of Strategic Planning and Assessment at Ohio University and an adjunct instructor in the College Student Personnel Program on campus.

Her work focuses on strengthening student affairs efforts to measure and demonstrate impact. Cynthia has delivered over 40 peer reviewed sessions in four countries, on an array of topics in higher education. Through her work and research, she aims to enrich the national dialogue about student learning, engagement, and institutional change in higher education. She is interested in understanding how institutions use the process of assessment to improve student learning; the relationship between institutions and accreditors; and supporting institutional improvement through regional accreditation.



## GIANINA BAKER, PH.D.

Dr. Gianina Baker, is the Assistant Director at the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA).

She researches, writes, and presents on all topics related to the assessment of student learning outcomes on college and university campuses. She holds a Ph.D. in Educational Organization & Leadership with a Higher Education concentration from the University of Illinois, a M.A. in Human Development Counseling from Saint Louis University, and a B.A. in Psychology from Illinois Wesleyan University. She is interested in student learning outcomes assessment at Minority Serving Institutions, access and equity issues for underrepresented administrators and students, assessment in athletics, and higher education policy.





## PAMELYN KLEPAL SHEFMAN, PH.D.

Dr. Pamelyn Klepal Shefman is the Dean and Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Research at Alvin Community College.

Her work focuses on strengthening continuous improvement campus-wide. Strategic planning, goal setting and tracking, academic and student services outcome assessment, access, persistence, and retention data tracking and strategic enrollment management are the regular tasks that fills the days. She holds a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology and Individual Difference with a Higher Education concentration from the University of Houston, a M.B.A. from Duquesne University, and a B.S. in Psychology with an Ethics concentration from Carnegie Mellon University. She consults on accreditation, culture of assessment, and student advising. Outside of the office, Pam can be caught coaching U14 non-competitive soccer or ballroom dancing.

# SESSION LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Describe an assessment research study & process
2. Discuss what you want to see in assessment research
3. Leave with 3 strategies to advance scholarship



WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

# ORIGINAL STUDY: EXPLORATORY THEMES OF STUDENT LEARNING IN RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

## Research Questions:

- a) What is the current dialogue on various forms of postsecondary assessment in scholarly assessment-focused journals?
- b) How does scholarly assessment research attend to student learning?

## Reviewed 9 scholarly journals:

- American Journal of Evaluation
- Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education
- New Directions for Institutional Research
- The Journal of Case Studies in Accreditation and Assessment
- The Journal of Higher Education
- The Journal of Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education
- The Journal of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness
- Research and Practice in Assessment
- Review of Higher Education

Keyword: Assessment



## FINDINGS

Five thematic domains emerged from our analysis:

- Assessment for measurement
- Assessment for policy
- Assessment for improvement
- Assessment for equity
- Assessment for change management

# GAPS IN RESEARCH: FOCUSING ON STUDENT LEARNING



Assessment is more than just measurement



Intentionality in assessment policy



Focus on outcome improvement



Promoting equity in postsecondary education



Change management, assessment, and institutional culture



Prioritize students as learners

# CONNECTING PRACTICE & RESEARCH

# HOW DID WE GET HERE?

- Creation of NILOA: the “go-to” place for assessment
- Assessment Institute sessions
- Jankowski Assessment Update article
- Disconnect between assessment practice and scholarly writing
- Challenges of staying “current” and in-practice with literature?

# EXAMPLE

- Gaudino-Goering Assessment in Practice article
  - Sturz et al. Assessment in Practice article
- Examples from presenters



LET'S TALK!

When poll is active, respond to **Pollev.com/niloaniloa538**

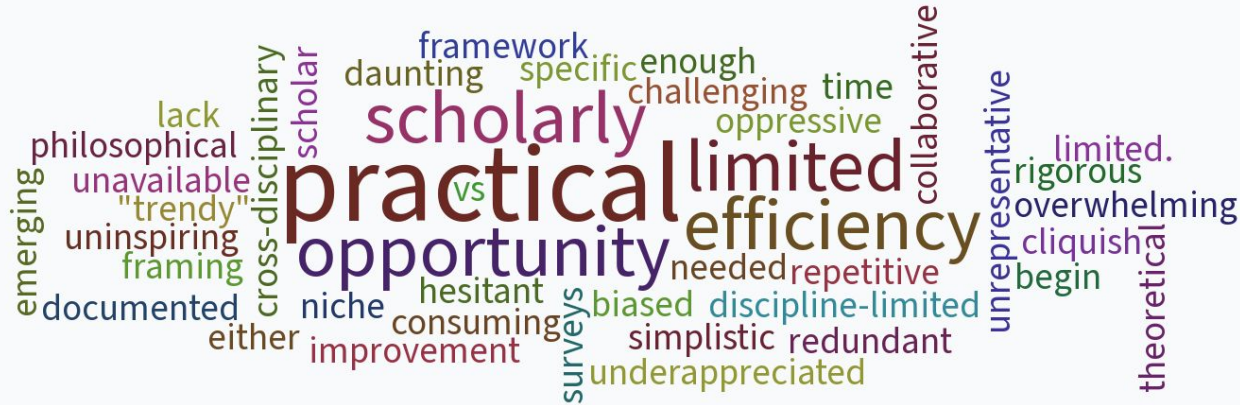
Text **NILOANILOA58** to **37607** once to join

# What words or phrases come to mind when you think about

When poll is active, respond at [pollev.com/niloaniloa538](https://pollev.com/niloaniloa538)

Text **NILOANILOA538** to **37607** once to join

## What words or phrases come to mind when you think about assessment research?



Powered by  Poll Everywhere

Powered by  Poll Everywhere

Start the presentation to see live content. For screen share software, share the entire screen. Get help at [pollev.com/app](https://pollev.com/app)



# What would you like to see in future assessment research?

- Development and reversion
- More staff voices
- Students' uneven progress
- Assessment as a function of institutional knowledge management
- Collaboration
- Tools
- Inspiring ways to make assessment not only student-focused, but also a valued research area
- Tie classroom to institution
- Strong connection to discipline-specific approaches
- value of
- community activism
- student-centered approach
- Theoretically-focused
- Connection to tenure and/or promotion
- Strategy
- teaching and learning centered
- HOW to do things
- space for the practical integration of scholarship
- moving beyond required to useful
- richness
- pipelines
- equity
- Equity-focused
- staff-centeredness
- imagination
- justice
- Diverse-voices
- students



# OPPORTUNITIES TO CONTRIBUTE TO ASSESSMENT DISCIPLINE

## Resources:

- NILOA Assessment Journal document
- NILOA “What is your assessment philosophy?” activity

# SCHOLAR PRACTITIONERS OF ASSESSMENT

# TRANSLATING PRACTICE INTO RESEARCH

## Ideas from daily work

- What from your work should the field know about?
- What part of the assessment cycle is most interesting to you?
- Where could writing be an easier lift?
- Where could writing help you in multiple ways?
- Do you have a graduate student who you could collaborate with?

## Ideas from scholarship

- What resources weren't there when you needed them?
- What article have you read that you want to further advance?
- Are there faculty on your campus that you want to work with but haven't yet had the chance?

# FUNCTIONAL WRITING STRATEGIES

Seek out a mentor

Reach out to senior scholars

Writing time (schedule it) (track it)

Writing groups

- Meet to write together groups
- Peer review writing groups
- Writing challenge groups



# HOW WE WROTE THE PAPER COLLABORATIVELY

Idea

Group agreement

Do the work

Submit as a conference proposal

Present

Write the paper

Submit for review

More in the details..

- Divided up journals to search
- Checked in via email
- Checked in and worked through emergent themes via many zoom calls

PLACES TO SHARE AND  
DISSEMINATE

# DIFFERENT WRITING OUTLETS

## Journals

- See: <https://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Assessment-Journals-List-August-2019.pdf>

## Blogs

- SAAL
- Who else?

## Edited columns and books

- Learn about these via list serves (ASSESS and SAAL)

On your campus!

At conferences

QUESTIONS?

REFLECTIONS?