

Humanizing High Impact Practices through Assessment



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Housekeeping

Openness to new ideas and feedback

Looking within our own practice

When we know better, we do better

Reflection

Thinking of yourself and your connection to research, assessment, or education:

Why do you do what you do?

What gets you riled up, and what do you want to change?

What would you like to create?



High-impact Practices (HIPs)

Capstone Courses

Collaborative Assignment and Products

Common Intellectual Experiences

Diversity/Global Learning

ePortfolios

First-year Seminars and Experiences

Internships

Learning Communities

Service Learning/ Community-based Learning

Undergraduate Research

Writing Intensive Courses

Why These Practices

Demonstrating institutional quality

Reaction to flawed campus rating systems

Originated as showing structural opportunities

Adapted to individual participation

Engagement Indicator

Measurability

Participation can be measured on a survey at many different institutions

Consistent definitions

Accessible terminology for students

[8 key elements of a HIP](#)

High Impact Practices

What HIP(s) did you participate in?
What impact did it have on you?
Who was involved in those experiences?



HIPs in Isolation

Now imagine those experiences **without the people.**

What would it look like?

What would the impact be if your experience was in isolation, without connection or community?



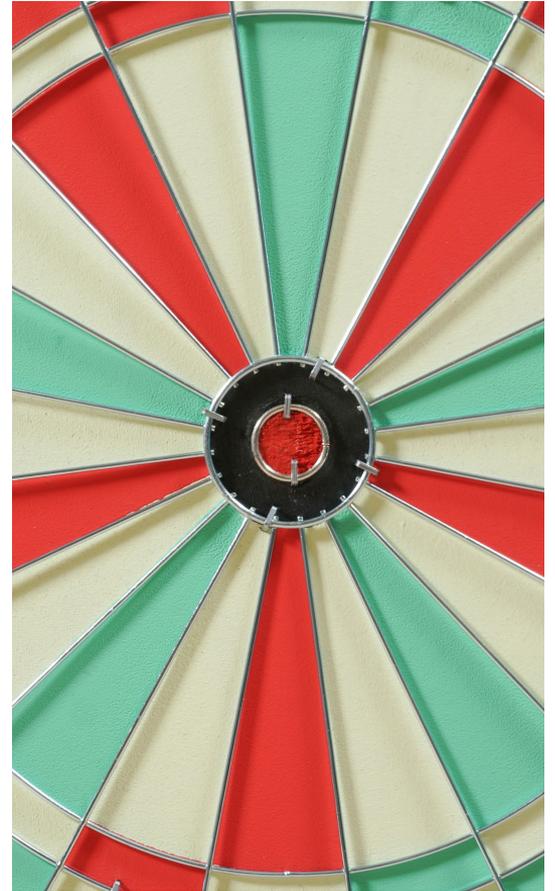
HIPs without you

Now imagine those experiences on
any other person

What would the impact look like if
other people had that same
experience but had different life
experiences, connections,
cultures, privileges, supports...

What we look at, we move towards

The way we see, measure, and assess
student experiences shapes those
experiences

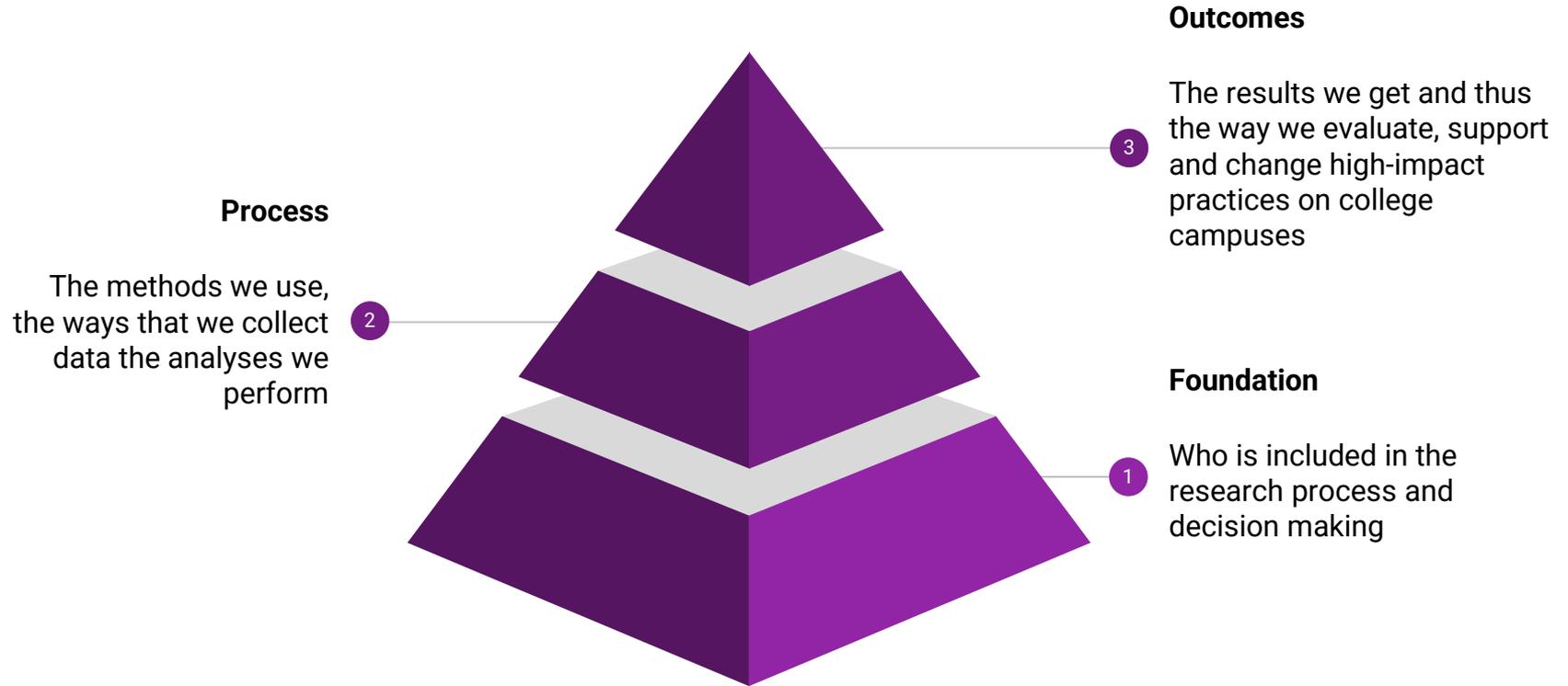


Humanizing Research and Assessment

Savage, S.S., Johnson, R.M., Kenney, A.J., & Haynes, D.D. (2021) Perspectives on conducting humanizing and liberatory qualitative research with racially minoritized youth. *Health Care*, 9(10), 317. <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare9101317>

*“We define humanizing research as work that is predicated on the nurturing of relationships of care and dignity among researchers and participants [10]. There is no single way to humanize research [11]; however, humanizing perspectives can frame elemental research practices, such as fieldwork, participant observation, and interviewing. By employing humanizing perspectives, **researchers can work to unlearn practices of engaging participants as sites of exploitation and, instead, consider ways to give to and learn from participants.** Liberatory research is freedom-focused and seeks to acknowledge the individual and the communal worth of racially/ethnically minoritized students [12]. Liberatory research can emancipate racially/ethnically minoritized populations from prescribed narratives of pain and damage in the literature and in society at large.” pg. 317*

The choices we make matter



History of research and assessment that

“Naturalizes” differences by constructs (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, social class...)

- Define issues as individual or group “deficiencies” instead of structural problems ([Gunaratnam, 2003](#))

Ignores intersectionality of experiences, identities, and social structures

- Flattens the intricate diversity of personal, social, and cultural experiences in education
- Perpetuates harm by justifying and normalizing whiteness ([Stewart & Nicolazzo, 2019](#))

How we define and control the production of knowledge in assessment and research can (unintentionally) perpetuate a legacy built on exclusion

- Perpetuating racist, sexist, classist, heteronormative, colonial structures in education and in assessment

Example of “achievement gap” research ([Quin, 2020](#))

- Intention: expose academic inequality
- Research illustrates inequalities
 - *BUT does so in a way that frames issue as individual and/or group deficiencies*
- Unintended consequence:
 - *Activating stereotype threat in students*
 - *Increasing racial bias in educators and general public*

Cracks in the foundation of HIPs Assessment

Outcomes

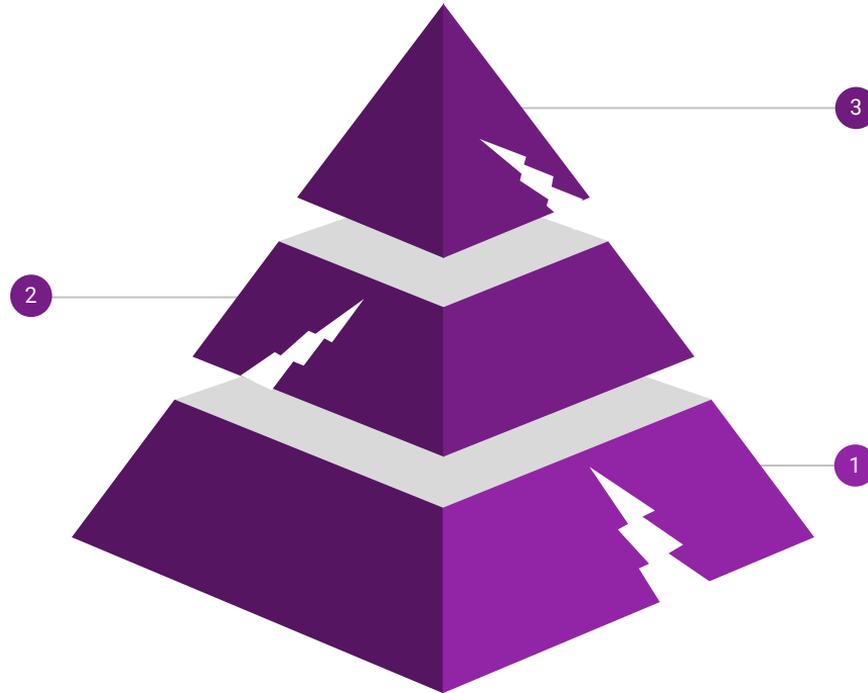
The results we get and thus the way we evaluate, support and change high-impact practices on college campuses

Foundation

Traditionally privileged* researchers, educators, faculty and administrators

Process

Oversampling of traditionally privileged populations, deficit based models, and individual rather than structural focus



Example:



Research done by an assessment professional in ways that meet grant reporting requirements...

Q: Does participation in _____HIP matter; does it improve student outcomes?

A: Yes, doing something is helpful to someone, in some ways, sometimes...

The underlying questions:

Who has access to those experiences?

It's helpful but to whom? And who is harmed by it?

Impactful, but at what cost and under what circumstances?

Example: Undergraduate Research (UR)

Q: Does participation in UR matter; does it improve student outcomes?

A: Yes, doing undergraduate research is helpful to some, in some ways, sometimes...

The underlying questions:

Who has access to those experiences? **Traditionally privileged students**

It's helpful but to whom? And to who is harmed by it? **Example from field research**

Impactful, but at what cost and under what circumstances? **What do we lose by focusing on just these impactful experiences? Whose experiences do we value and support? How can we shape structures and policies to reduce harm?**

Who has access to undergraduate research experiences?



Traditionally privileged students

Unequal access even at Minority Serving Institutions and Hispanic Serving Institutions

Historically Black Colleges & Universities had more equitable participation

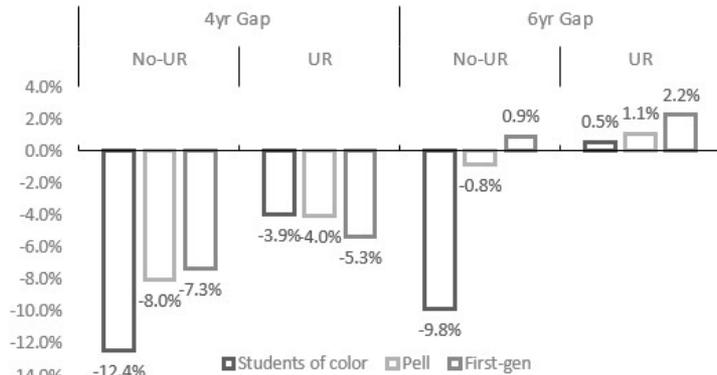
Institutions with programs specifically aimed at diversifying research had more equitable participation

Haeger, H., BrckaLorenz, A., & Webber, K. (2015). Participation in Undergraduate Research at Minority Serving Institutions. *Perspectives on Undergraduate Research and Mentoring*, 4(1). <http://blogs.elon.edu/purm/files/2015/11/Haeger-et-al-PURM-4.1-1.pdf>

Haeger, H., & Fresquez, C. (2016). Mentoring for inclusion: the impact of mentoring on undergraduate researchers in the sciences. *CBE – Life Sciences Education*, 15(3). doi.org/10.1187/cbe.16-01-0016

It's helpful but to whom? And to who is harmed by it?

Figure 5: Equity gaps in STEM graduation rates for students of color, Pell eligible students, and first-generation students (n=2,727)



1. Equity gaps are the differences between the average graduation rates and the traditionally marginalized group with the axis representing the average graduation rate.

Contribute to closing equity gaps in STEM education for students traditionally marginalized in STEM (students of color, first-generation, low-income, and transfer students)

Undergraduate Researchers traditionally marginalized in STEM are **more than twice as likely to graduate in 4 years**, and more than 14x as likely to ever graduate than like peers

Underrepresented STEM students who participate in UR graduate with **significantly higher GPA** than like peers even when controlling for background characteristics and prior (first-year) academic performance. $\beta=.24$

Impactful, but at what cost and under what circumstances?



What do we lose by focusing on just these impactful experiences? Whose experiences do we value and support? How can we shape structures and policies to reduce harm?



Field research experiences extremely impactful and, sometimes, harmful



Creating more inclusive research environments

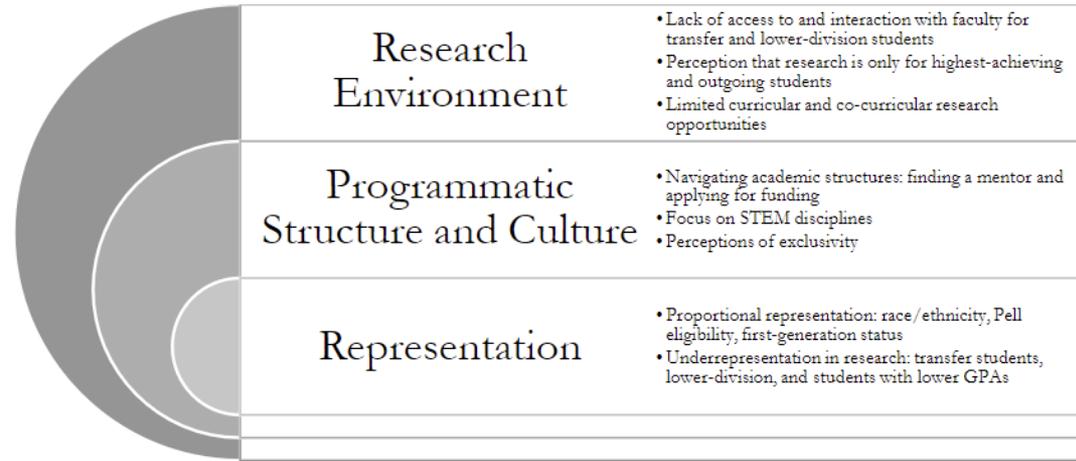


Figure 9: Findings within the Conceptual Model of Inclusivity



Humanizing Assessment

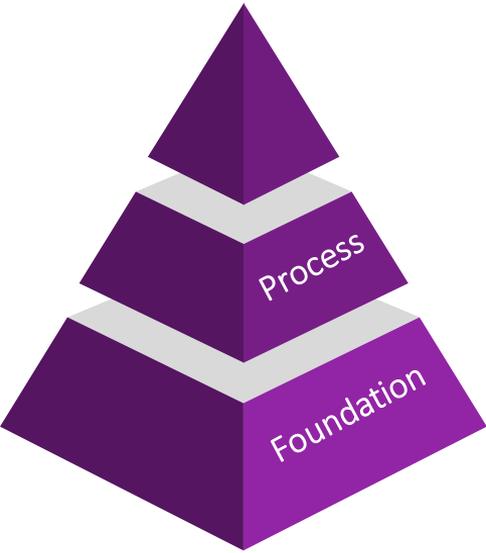
Inquiry and practice that is collaborative, inclusive, and empowering of all stakeholders

Co-creation: interrogate the line between knowledge producer and knowledge consumer

The ends *are consistent with* the means

Results advancing equity & inclusive methods

Reflection



Who is included in your research and assessment decision making?



How are different voices and opinions experienced?



Whose voice is not included?



How could your research and assessment process be more inclusive, or what are areas you can identify for improvement?

Example:



Research and assessment pulling to the **status quo**:

Researcher as expert,

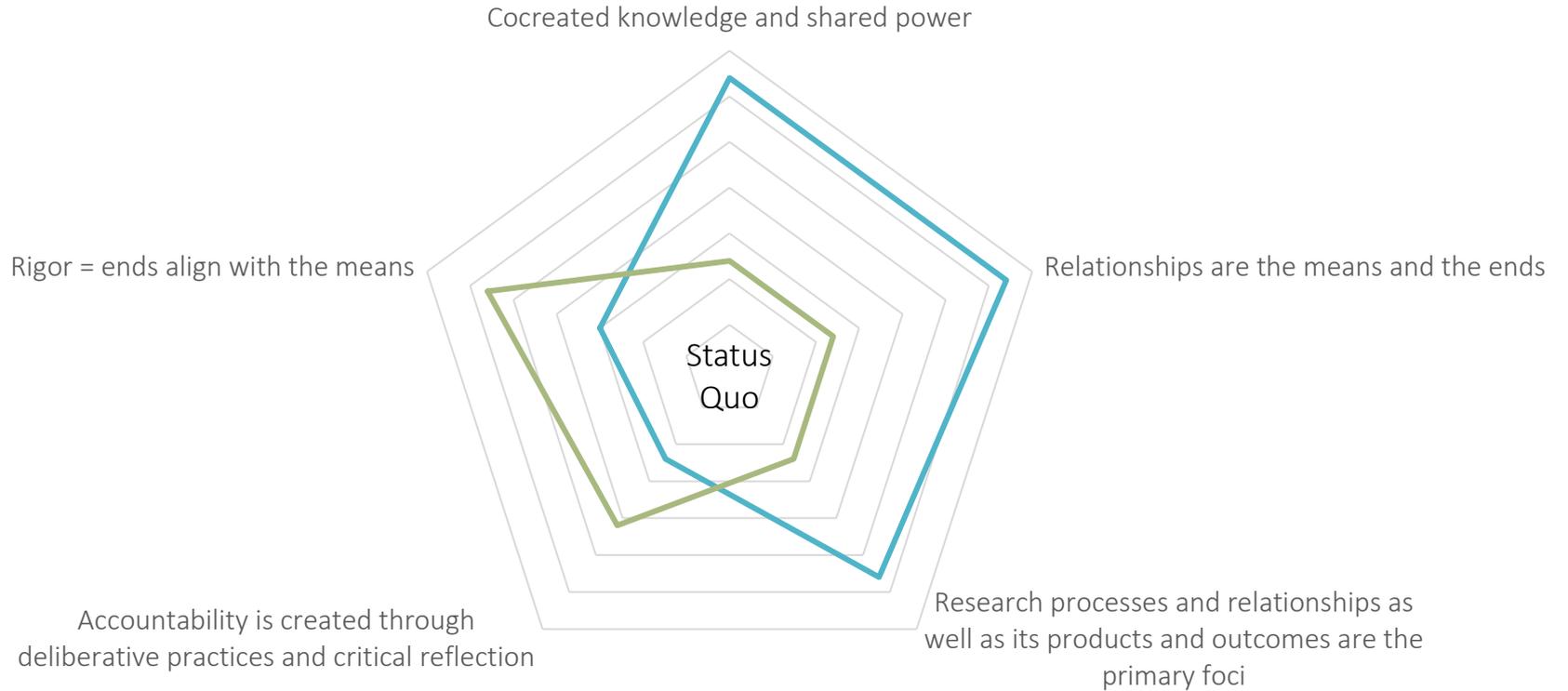
Relationships as a means to an end,

Research products or outcomes are the primary focus,

Accountable to reporting agencies, funders, campus leaders...

Rigor = statistical power and replicability ...

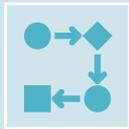
Hummanizing Assessment and Balancing Tensions Creatively



More Inclusive Survey Design Focus on Terminology



Cocreation of assessment instruments to ensure that students understand terminology



Include members of these groups in collecting and analyzing data, planning, and action steps



Non-inclusive demographics are a quick way to alienate already marginalized student groups and further bias your results

More Inclusive Survey Design

Inclusive Identity Language

Be very careful with language, especially when it comes to identity and cultural differences important to **your institution's communities**

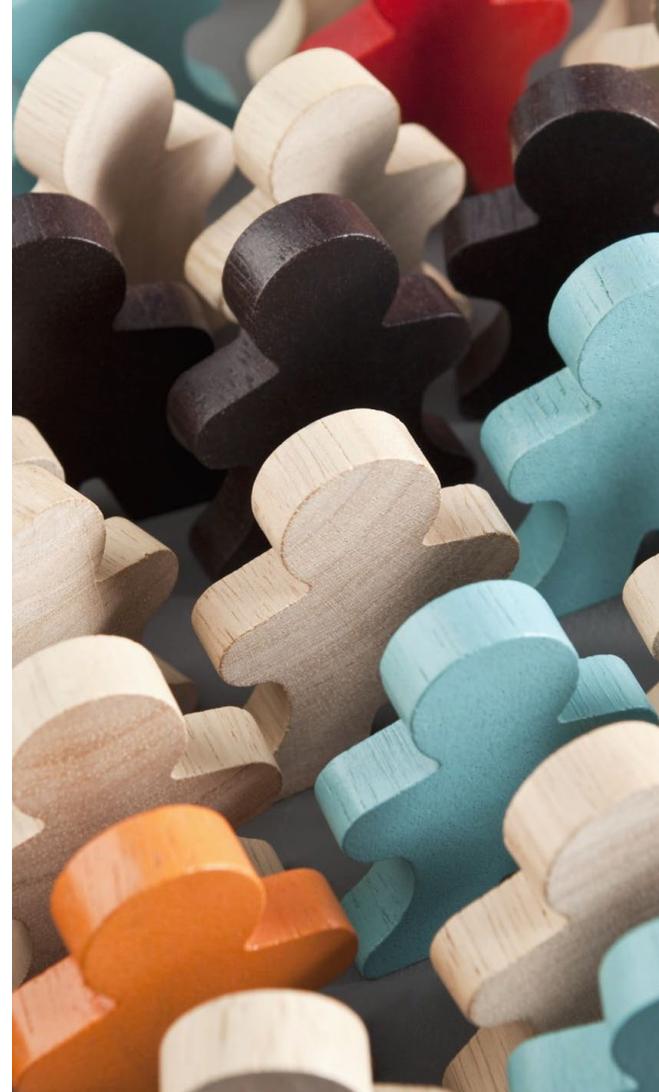
Figure out what exactly you're trying to study

- Sex versus gender, gender identity versus gender expression, etc.
- Sexual identity versus sexual attraction versus sexual behavior, etc.

What language is common among the people you're studying?

- Gender variant, gender minorities, trans*, trans-spectrum, gender non-conforming, gender queer, nonbinary, noncisgender

Cocreation with diverse teams and **do your own homework**



More Inclusive Survey Design

Be wary of “best practice”

Be critical of what, even trusted, groups say about what is “best practice” for asking questions. Generalized suggestions may not be **what’s best for your campus and needs**

“Best practice” language from even a few years ago may be badly outdated as identity language evolves quickly

Consider multiple options from various sources, think of them as **being on a spectrum of inclusivity**. Less inclusive items (majority options and an “other” category) may contain fewer options but will be easier to analyze. More inclusive items (many options, write-ins, check-all-that-apply) may be very difficult to use and analyze

Think about how more inclusive questions translate to more **inclusive analyses** (or not)

Be prepared to compromise, there is **no single right way** to ask identity questions





More Inclusive Survey Design Questions to ask yourself

What is it that you *really* need to know?

How can the creation and use of these items and data build trust?

What is your balance between useful survey data and inclusivity?

Who will you be reporting the information to?

How do you plan to analyze the data you collect?

How will you use, recode, or combine categories?

How will you use the information to disaggregate other information?

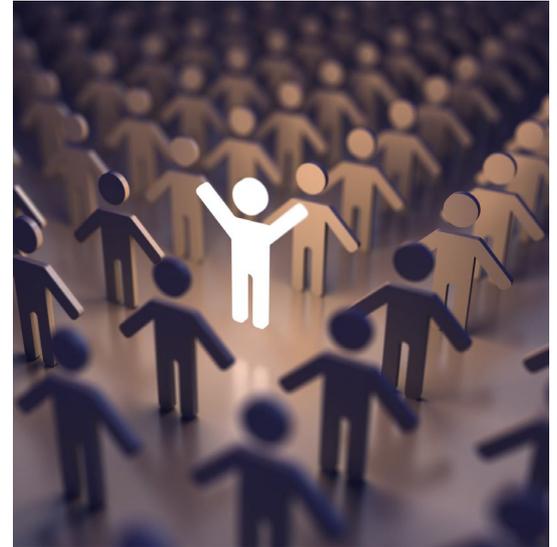
What will be the consequences for choosing a select-all-that-apply question versus select-one?

Reflection

What tensions are you navigating in conducting assessment in the world you encounter vs. the world you envision?

What steps can you take to humanize your research and assessment?

What do you want to change or create through your research and assessment?



Discussion and Questions

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