



Looking in the Mirror

The Impact of Paradigms and Positionality on Assessment Practice

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Land, Labor, and Knowledge Acknowledgement

Colleges and universities were built on the stolen lands of many Indigenous peoples.

Colleges and universities are built and maintained on the labor of others, including those enslaved and oppressed.

The information presented in this session is built on the knowledge created by many others. No one person holds knowledge—a community holds knowledge.

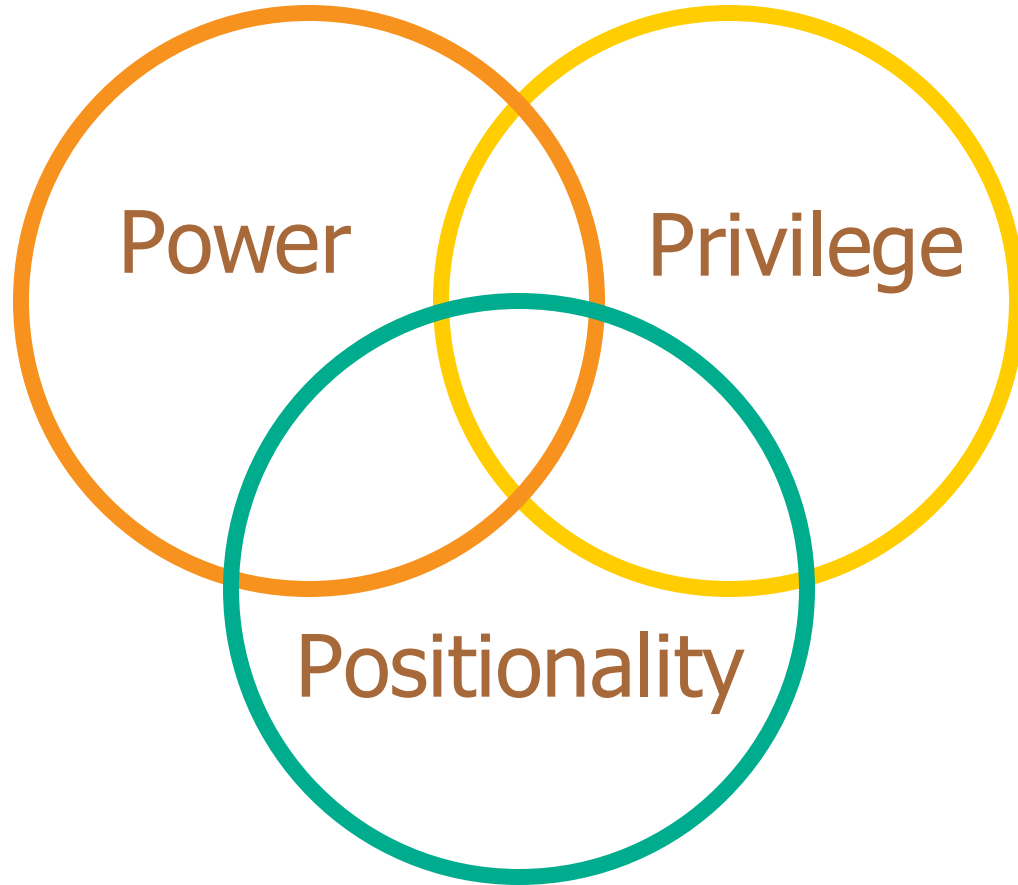


Resources



https://bit.ly/PP_AI2024

3 Ps



**How might your privilege,
power, and positionality
affect your assessment?**



Paradigms





Paradigm Parts

- **Ontology** – beliefs about reality
- **Epistemology** – ways of knowing
- **Axiology** – values and ethics
- **Methodology** – beliefs regarding process



Why?

An iceberg floating in the ocean. The tip of the iceberg is visible above the water surface, while the much larger, jagged base is submerged below. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. The water is a deep blue, and the submerged part of the iceberg is illuminated from above, showing its intricate, crystalline structure.

Beliefs
Attitudes
Behavior

Systems of Power
and Oppression

Patriarchy
White supremacy
Heteronormativity
Cisgenderism

Research Paradigms





Research Paradigms

- Positivism
- Post-positivism
- Interpretivism
- Constructivism
- Critical theory
- Poststructuralism
- Pragmatism
- Transformativism
- Indigenous

Positivism

Facts are observable, static, and measurable

One TRUTH for all people

Objectivity is crucial for understanding

Objectivity is obtained through distance between knower and known

Post-Positivism

Facts are observable, static, and measurable

One TRUTH for all people

Objectivity is crucial for understanding

Objectivity is a goal, but not a reality

Research cannot be totally objective

Interpretivism

People interpret their reality differently

There are multiple truths, not one TRUTH

Reality is mutable

Researcher must interact with participants as phenomenon isn't necessarily observable

Constructivism

People interpret their reality differently

There are multiple truths, not one TRUTH

Reality is mutable

When people get together, they collectively construct reality

Critical Theory

People interpret their reality differently

There are multiple truths, not one TRUTH

Knowledge is socially constructed

Knowledge creation is not neutral

Knowledge creation is affected by systems of power and oppression

Poststructuralism

People interpret their reality differently

There are multiple truths, not one TRUTH

Knowledge is socially constructed

Knowledge creation is not neutral

Knowledge creation is affected by systems of power and oppression

Systems of power are perpetuated by social structures

Transformativism

Knowledge creation is affected by systems of power and oppression

Systems of power are perpetuated by social structures

Research is a method to address systems of power and oppression

Participants play active role in addressing oppression

Pragmatism

Knowledge is based on experience

One method cannot access understanding of real world

Method decision is based on what is best for research question, not ideology

Focus is the consequences of research, not methods

May ignore role of power in knowledge and research

Indigenous Paradigm

There are different Indigenous paradigms that can vary by nation, tribe, clan, and band

Based on Indigenous ways of knowing

Key tenets include a holistic perspective, relationality, reciprocity, community impact, and participant agency

**What research paradigm
resonates with you?**



Assessment Paradigms





Assessment Paradigms

- Compliance paradigm
- Measurement paradigm
- Accreditation/program review paradigm
- Equity-centered paradigm

Compliance Paradigm

Accountability and quality assurance

Reporting

Bureaucratic

Time-consuming

Separate from teaching and learning

Lots of data, minimal action

Is an add-on task

Measurement Paradigm

Objectivity

Testing and standardization

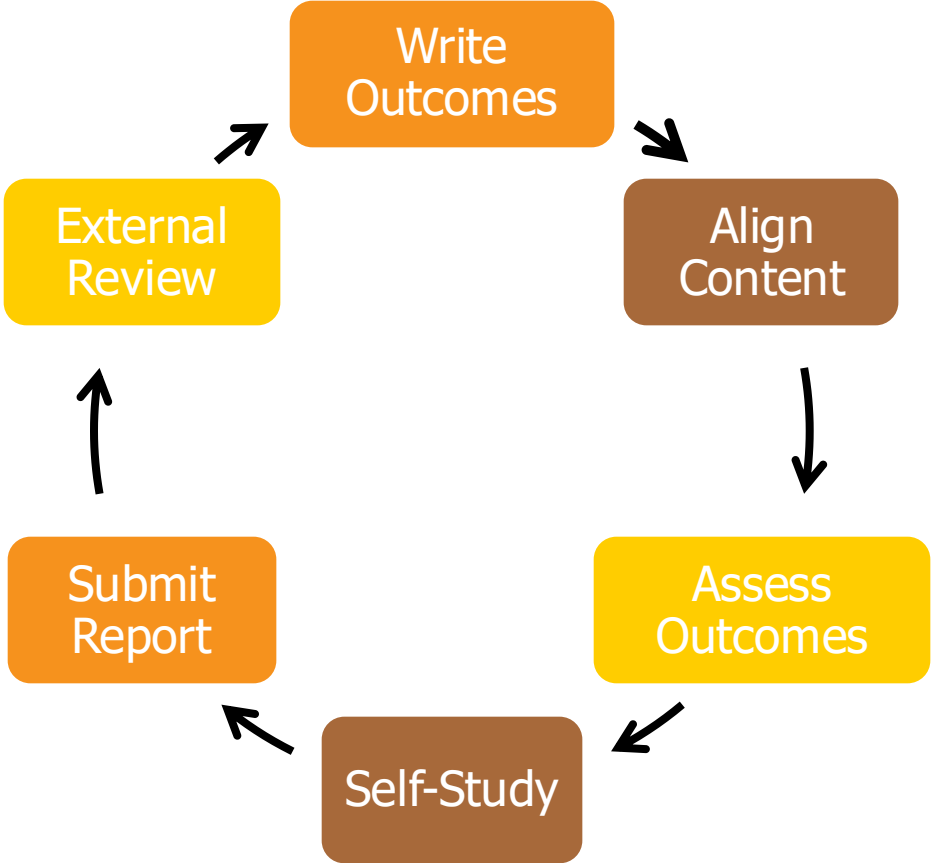
Measurability

Goal-driven

Comparisons

Interventions

Accreditation/Program Review Paradigm



Learning Improvement

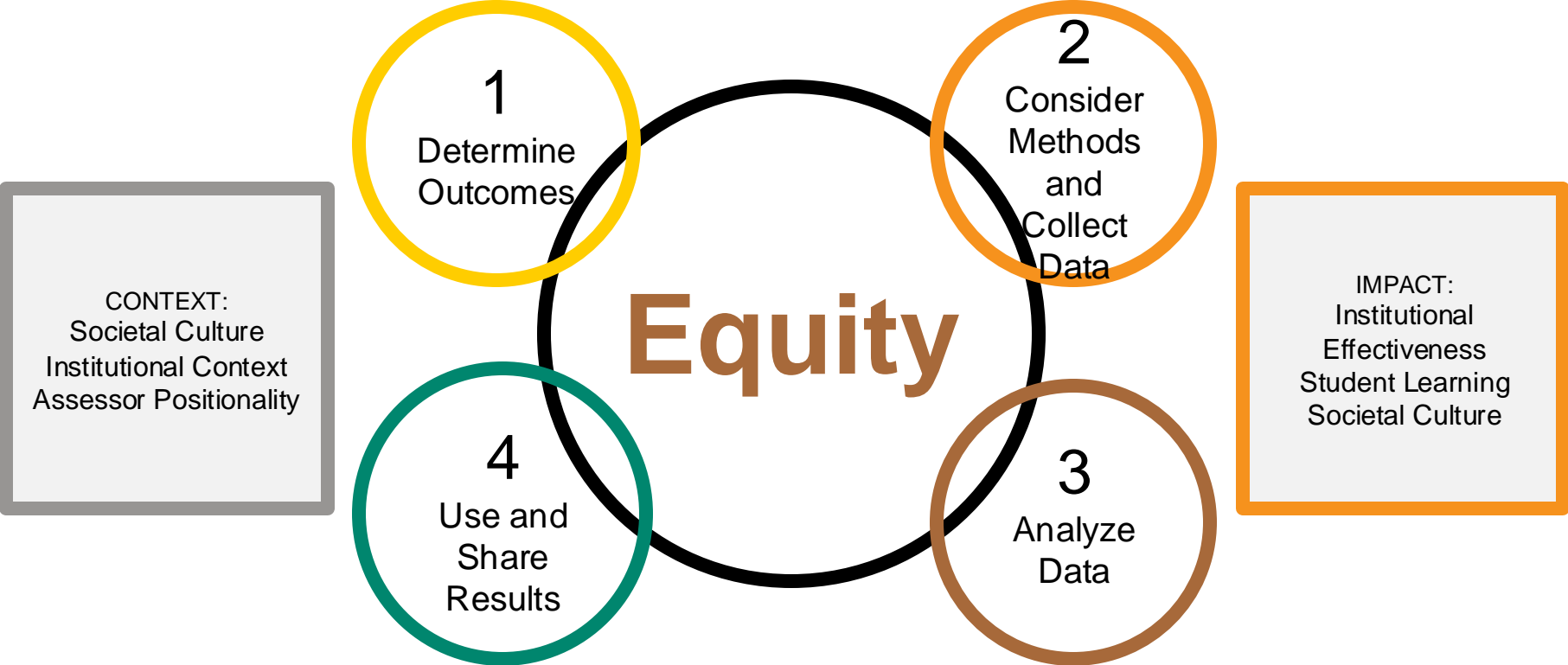
Based on the traditional assessment cycle

Focus on improving learning

Measures growth

Emphasizes the need to gather baseline data

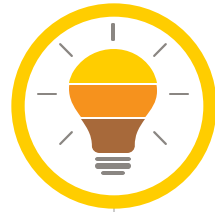
Equity-Centered Assessment Paradigm



What paradigm shows up in your campus assessment conversations?



How might positionality and paradigms intersect?



What are the implications for assessment practice for positionality, paradigms, or intersection of them?





**Think in
New Ways**



Cultivate Awareness

- Explore and engage one's worldview, biases, and cultural assumptions
- Sit with discomfort
- Adopt an inquisitive, compassionate approach to growth and self-awareness
- Actively engage in learning from and with others different from oneself



Cultivate Awareness

- Place a pause when more inclusion, dialogue or reflection is needed
- Move into wise action informed by deep wisdom that is greater than one's own experience and knowledge
- Recognize and address the extent to which assessment work prevents social justice and structural transformations



Equity Pause

- Awareness
- Inclusion
- Relationships
- Acknowledgments
- Process & Practice
- Goals
- Implicit Biases
- Never Would I Ever

A pink speech bubble is centered on a dark, textured wooden surface. The word "Discussion" is written in a bold, dark brown font inside the bubble. The wood grain is visible, and there are some small imperfections and a faint green light streak on the left side of the wood.

Discussion



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