Activity One: Equity and Cultural Responsiveness

Lisa, a colleague of yours, is always looking for ways to improve the department. She often introduces promising initiatives during meetings and has the reputation of being an equity champion. During the last meeting, Lisa presents an observation that many areas of the institution are implementing more equitable approaches to their work as a result of the current social realities related to COVID-19. She thinks it is a good opportunity for the department to consider implementing more equity-minded approaches, too, and asks everyone to please think of ways where equity might be integrated into their work.

After the meeting, you approach Lisa with the idea of changing the department's assessment approach to include more equitable and culturally responsive practices. Lisa thinks it is an idea worth considering, but she doesn't know where to start nor does she see assessment as a practice where equity considerations fits. She is concerned if she presents the idea to the department that it will be categorized as another one of her "pet projects" and will fall on deaf ears. Lisa encourages you to present the idea in the next department meeting and gives you a few guiding questions to answer so you can present a compelling argument.

Discussion Questions:

1. How are you defining equity?
2. What is the connection between equity and assessment for faculty or the department? Basically, how does assessment connect with issues of equity?
3. What examples of equitable or culturally responsive assessment practices occurring at the institution can you share?

Activity Two: Involving Students

You just wrapped up an assessment campaign, and 'closed the loop' by using evidence to inform changes that you believe will lead to improved student learning outcomes attainment. However, as changes are implemented, you notice disparate impacts across student populations; and some student populations are even doing worse on certain outcomes now! You have no idea why this might be the case, and in the institution-wide assessment committee meeting someone presents the idea to hold a focus group with students to learn more about what might be going on.

You wonder: "How many other assessment efforts are having negative unintended consequences for students? How many of those negative impacts are going unnoticed? How many could be resolved by simply creating opportunities for students to lend their voice and become active participants in assessment? How do we engage with students?"

As you begin to support your colleague's idea, you hear others on the committee comment:

- What could students tell us that we don't already know?

- We already have a student on the committee.

- We don't have capacity or the time for such things.

- No. Students barely engage in coursework, why would they engage in assessment?

- Involving students in assessment delegitimizes, devalues, and invalidates the assessment process and data gathered.

- Nobody cares about our students more than me, but, honestly, students don't know what assessment is. They barely know what they want from their education. *We* know what is best for students.

Discussion questions:

1. What other comments or concerns are you likely to hear at your own institution? What might be your counter to these comments?
2. What assumptions about students are at play within the comments you are likely to hear?
3. How might you embed the student voice and/or student involvement into assessment efforts?

Activity Three: Interrogating the Assessment Process

Think about the assessment process and practices you follow. These can be at the course-, program-, or institution-level. This activity serves to bring together the previous discussions from today, and the various topics discussed, to help consider where to embed student-focused, equitable approaches within the assessment process. A common representation of the assessment process is provided below. As you interrogate each step discuss:

1. How might this step be implemented in a more equitable and/or culturally responsive manner?
2. How might students be involved in this step?
3. What professional development or support is needed to implement this step?