

Socially Just Assessment

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AACUSS Presentation

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Heather Doyle, M.Ed.

She/Her

(Director, Assessment & Special Projects)

1. Woman, Daughter
2. Passion for social justice, especially in the field of SA
3. Love travelling for live music

Introductions

ABSTRACT

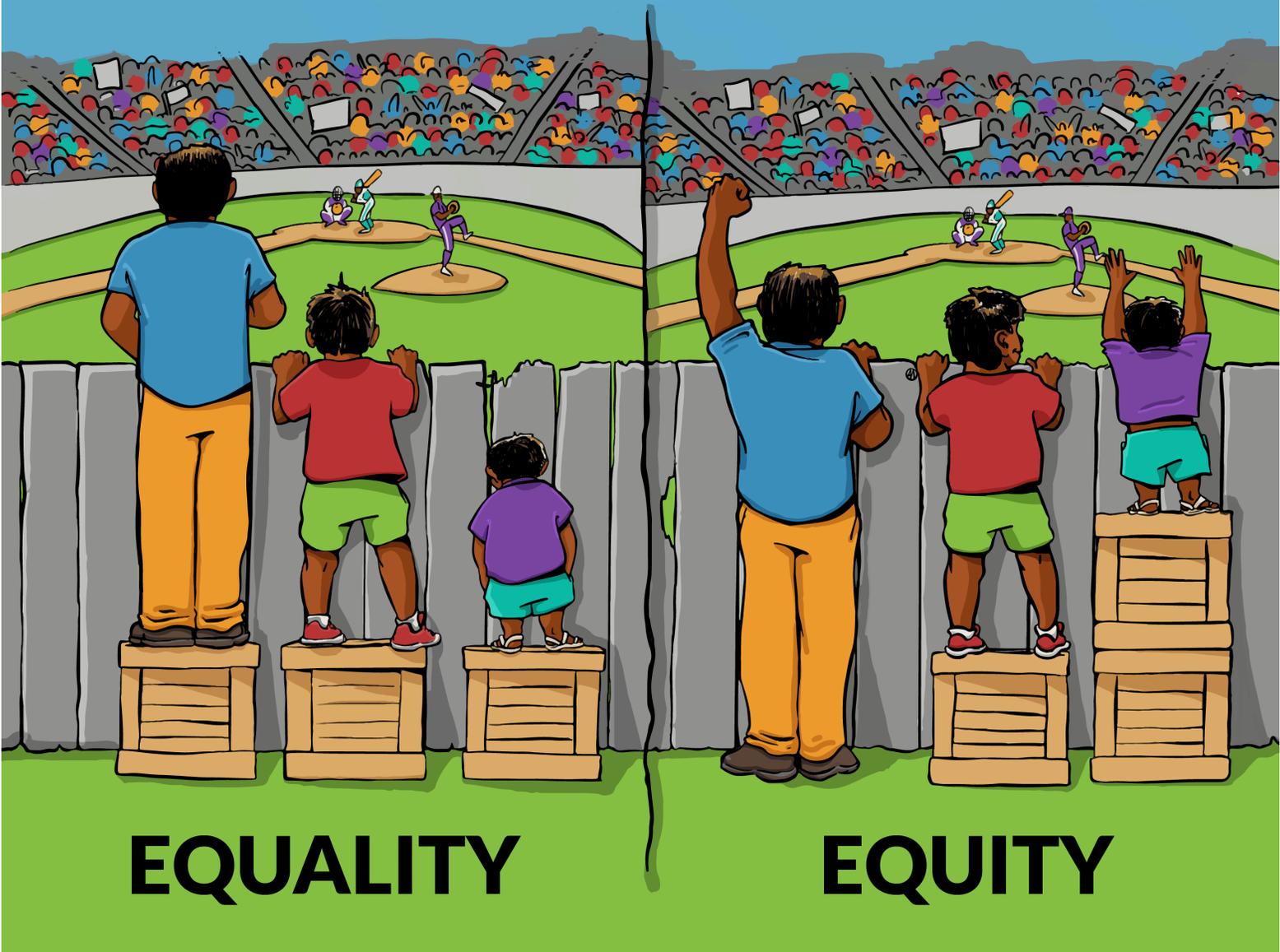
Allies of social justice in universities are facilitating conversations around equity, diversity and inclusion to develop impactful programs and services. Assessment is the mechanism to measure impact, identify gaps, and expose disparities.

This presentation is intentionally designed to dig deeper into the tenants of socially just assessment and examine how to ensure that our process is representative, culturally responsive, actively minimizes bias, and respects the dignity and differences of students.



Socially Just Assessment Outcomes

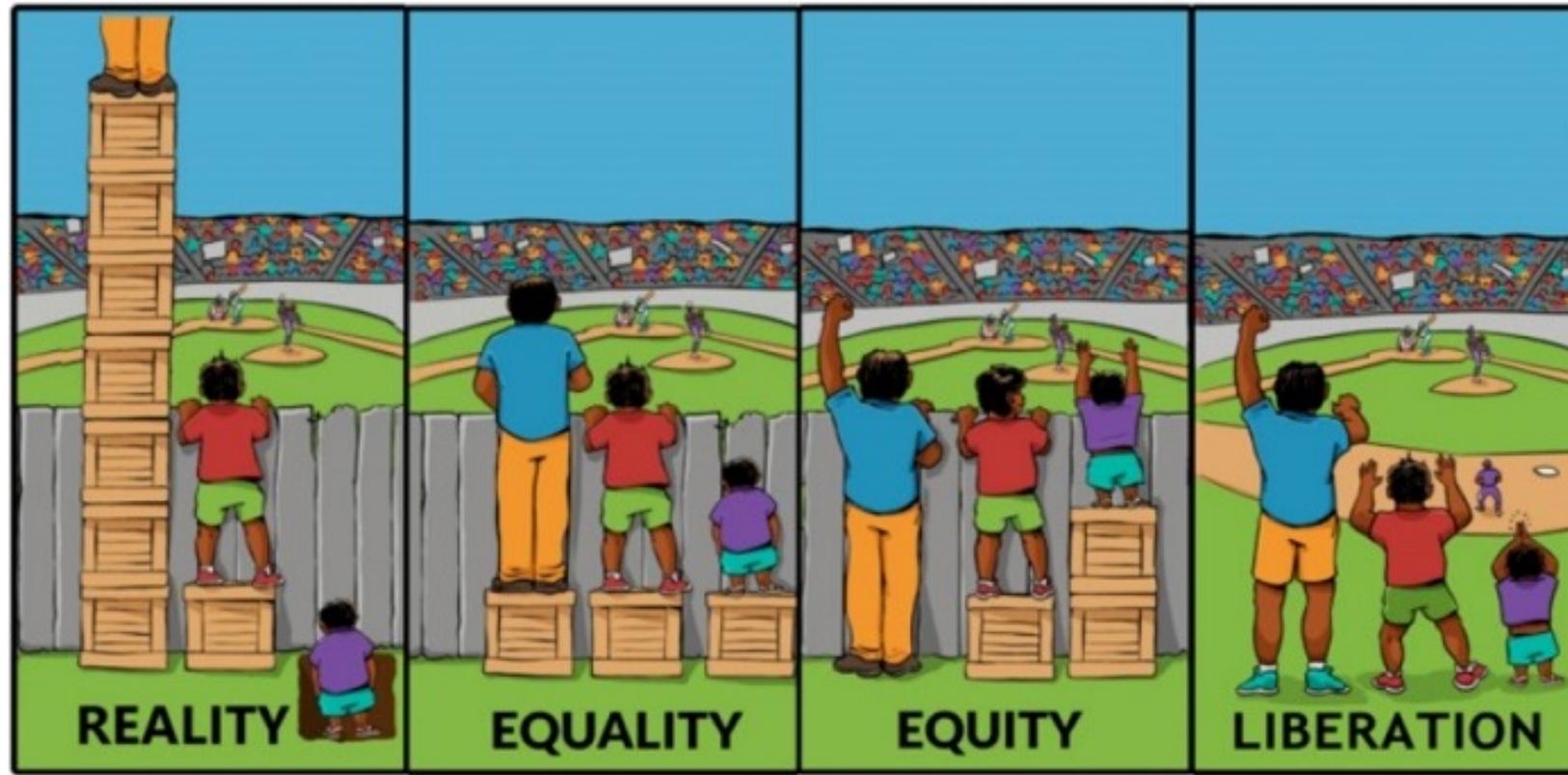
- Define culturally responsive practices in assessment
- Examine the concept of assessment as inquiry
- Critically reflect on biases in assessment
- Discuss how assessment can help to foster equity and inclusion
- Deconstruct the assessment cycle by using a critical lens and considering cultural responsiveness
- Incorporate tenants of culturally responsive practices into the assessment process



EQUALITY

EQUITY

Meaning of Equity & Liberation



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Why is socially just assessment important?

- We need to consider the differing needs of our student populations...one size does not fit all!
- If we accept that all students don't learn the same, why do they need to show what they've learned in the same way?
- Assessment, if not done with equity in mind, validates certain types of learning and evidence over others



How assessment contributes to equity and inclusion

- Ensures everyone has a voice
- Increases sense of belonging
- Offers sense of uniqueness
- Helps others to feel valued
- Increases learning and development
- Creates collaborative environment
- Ensures equity in access to resources
- Creates strategic alignment

Managing Bias in Assessment

- Overgeneralization
- Selective/inaccurate observations
- Vested interests
- Illogical reasoning
- Racial/cultural reasoning



“Assessment process that is not mindful of equity can risk becoming a tool that promotes inequities, whether intentional or not.”

(Montenegro & Jankowski, 2020)

Assessment on a Continuum

Bias free assessment

Culturally responsive assessment

Socially just assessment

Deconstructed assessment

Assessment for social justice

Culturally responsive assessment

- Culturally responsive assessment must:
 1. Be mindful of the student population(s) being served and involve students in the process;
 2. Use appropriate student-focused and cultural language in learning outcomes statements;
 3. Develop and/or use assessment tools and multiple sources of evidence that are culturally responsive to current students;
 4. Intentional improvements of student learning through disaggregated data-driven change.

Socially just assessment

- Focuses assessment process within a framework that analyzes the interplay between culture, bias, power and oppression
- Uses the concept of deconstructed assessment to understand why students are achieving, persisting or stopping out, but also to understand the unpinning structures
- Understand how systems of power and oppression influence how students experience university, engage with learning and build knowledge
- Socially just assessment reminds practitioners to be mindful of how the ways in which data are analyzed can also privilege or oppress
- End goal = advance social justice

Critical assessment



Disregarding the objectivity myth and accepting that assessment is inherently subjective and guided by the biases and experiences of those conducting assessment



Varying the types of evidence to assess learning outcomes to not privilege specific ways of knowing

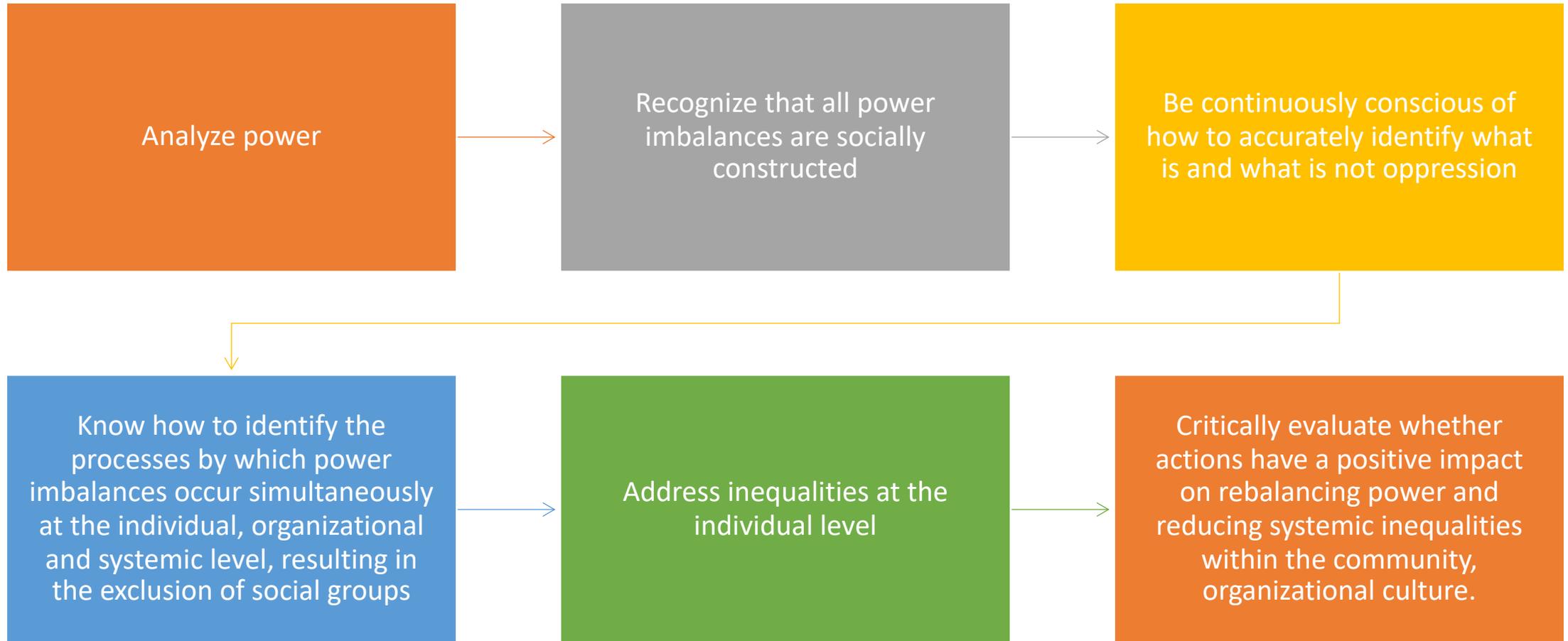


Including the voices of students, especially those who belong to minoritized populations



Using assessment to advance the pursuit of equity across previously identified institutional parameters

Fostering equity & inclusion through assessment



Critical practitioners must:

01

Challenge
power
dynamics

02

Be more
inclusive of
diverse
identities

03

Address
assumptions

04

Disrupt
ideological
neutral claims

05

Acknowledge
implicit bias

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a blue pencil, poised to write on a test paper. The test paper has a grid of bubbles for multiple-choice answers. In the background, another person is seen writing on a piece of paper, but they are out of focus. The lighting is warm and soft, suggesting an indoor setting like a classroom or office.

REMEMBER:

Assessment is something we do *with* students, not *to* them....

Implementing Equity-minded Assessment

Check	biases and ask reflective questions through the assessment process
Use	multiple sources of evidence
Include	student perspectives
Increase	transparency
Ensure	collected data can be meaningfully disaggregated
Make	evidence-based changes

Socially Just Reporting

- Report your participating population
- Fully Label Graphs
- Explain missing data
- Include negative results
- Provide varied perspectives in literature
- Report significance of statistical tests
- Define your terminology & scope
- Identify inferences & facts within analysis
- Keep It Simple

GUIDING ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

- Do no harm
- Be open/honest
- Seek truth
- Weigh competing interests
- Make results accessible
- Protect/preserve your records
- Educate others
- Practice fidelity/responsibility
- Respect the rights, dignity, and diversity of others

“In equity-minded assessment, data related conversations should be interrogated to ensure that data are not weaponized to facilitate self-fulfilling prophecies.”

(Montenegro & Jankowski, 2020)