EFOP 3209: Equity Informed Assessment in Higher Education

SPRING 2025 | 5602 Posvar Hall

February 2, 2025

Instructor

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Instructor Communication: My goal is to reply to messages within 48 hours Monday-Friday.

Office Hours: My office hours are by appointment; I am flexible to meet virtually or in person on campus. I ask that you send me an email with three or four possible times for the week you want to meet, and we will schedule a mutually convenient time to chat.

Course Description

This course centers on the design of assessments and the interpretation of data through an equity and justice lens, with a secondary focus on assessment for higher education learning, development, and engagement of students, employees, and campus partners. Students develop practical methodological and analysis skills for creating inclusive assessments that foster equitable outcomes. The topics covered include foundational principles of higher education student learning, advanced assessment design techniques, and interpreting data to support equitable outcomes.

We operationalize equitable assessment and evaluation as a process that prioritizes fairness, inclusivity, and transparency in gathering, analyzing, interpreting, and applying evidence to improve institutional, divisional, departmental, or program effectiveness. It recognizes that assessment is not a neutral act and intentionally accounts for the diverse contexts, identities, and power dynamics that influence the creation and interpretation of evidence. Equitable assessment involves more than just measuring outcomes; it requires critical reflection on who designs and conducts assessments, whose voices are included or excluded, and how the findings are used to drive change. Evaluation builds on this by iteratively applying assessment evidence to improve structures and practices in ways that advance equity, shared governance, and drive sustainable institutional change.

Learning Goals

By the end of the course, students will:

- Collaborate with peers and instructor to co-create course content, assignments, and learning activities, fostering shared ownership of the learning process and promoting a culture of equity, inclusion, and mutual accountability.
- Effectively communicate the purpose, value, and impact of equitable and justice-oriented assessment and evaluation practices to leadership and all concerned parties, emphasizing opportunities for equity-driven improvements that maximize the sustainability and meaningful outcomes of these practices.

- Understand effective ways to analyze and interpret assessment data using triangulation methods to identify trends, address inequities, and make informed decisions that promote equity, inclusivity, and sustainable institutional change.
- Demonstrate an understanding of equitable assessment and evaluation practices by recognizing and addressing the unique needs of their local, professional contexts with confidence and ease.
- Identify when assessment and evaluation practices do not meet equitable and justice-oriented best practices and take intentional, informed actions to address and correct inequities within these processes.
- Reflect on and analyze one's positionality, including how personal identities, privileges, and biases influence an equitable assessment and evaluation process.
- Apply foundational and advanced assessment principles to create an equity-informed and sustainable assessment strategy tailored to their local and institutional context.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Henning, G. W., Jankowski, N. A., Montenegro, E., Baker, G. R., & Lundquist, A. E. (Eds.). (2022). *Reframing Assessment to Center Equity: Theories, Models, and Practices.* Stylus Publishing, LLC. E-book available at https://pitt.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01PITT_INST/g3767l/alma99100326908306236Links to an external site..

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance and Course Engagement
Regular and prompt attendance in the Saturday class sessions is an essential part of the educational experience in the EdD program. Each course meets only four times throughout the term – missing one of those sessions constitutes a significant portion of the time for synchronous interaction with instructors and peers.

While class attendance is critical to the full examination of the scheduled topic and allows for students' individual and collective learning, our collective health and well-being must be our top priority. For that reason, students who are sick/symptomatic (regardless of vaccination status) and/or need to quarantine/self-isolate should not attend class and follow all procedures outlined on www.coronavirus.pitt.edu.

If you are going to be absent from class because of a required work-related commitment, illness, or 5 valid emergencies, please follow the following instructions: 1. Email the course instructor(s) with a copy to your advisor with the reason for missing the class. 2. Complete the course or instructor-specific make-up requirements for missed classes before the next class meeting. 3. Adhere to the acceptable reasons for missing class outlined in the policy above. Please note that they do not include vacation and/or personal events.

Participation ground rules
Our learning community is built on shared values that foster meaningful engagement, collaboration, and respect. Clear and thoughtful communication is essential, and we commit to actively listening and engaging with one another's ideas. We practice accountability with grace, taking responsibility for our contributions while allowing room for growth and understanding, recognizing that mistakes

are opportunities to learn. When something is unclear, we will seek clarification, assuming good intent while striving for deeper understanding. Knowledge sharing is a collective responsibility, and we will contribute our insights and experiences while remaining open to learning from others. Showing up for our peers means being present, engaged, and responsive in discussions and collaborations, ensuring that we support one another's learning. Above all, we will maintain respect by honoring diverse perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds, engaging in discussions with kindness and professionalism, and disagreeing with ideas rather than people. By upholding these principles, we create an inclusive and productive space where all voices are valued, and learning thrives.

Technology
Present engagement in class discussion is a foundational element of our collective learning in this course. Technological distractions (e.g., email, text messaging, social media, web browsing) can detract from the quality of the discussion and limit our present engagement with one another. Students are encouraged to respect our shared classroom environment when using cell phones, laptops, and other technological gadgets in class and to refrain from checking email, text messages, and social media during class time. Students may find it useful to close out of these applications during class to be fully present.

Equity and Justice Statement
This course will challenge you to consider and advance equity and justice in higher education. While you will be challenged, I also believe in providing support. If you are having any challenges with the readings or in the course, please reach out to me so I can provide additional resources. My goal is to create a learning environment where everyone, including myself, is challenged and supported to grow and learn.

Written Assignments
Writing is an important part of professional practice, and this class is an opportunity to refine your writing skills. All written assignments are to be of professional quality and free of spelling, grammatical, and typographical errors. Assignments must follow the grammar, formatting, and usage guidelines contained in the 7th edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA). If you need assistance with APA, please do not hesitate to ask the instructor. The University Writing Center offers valuable services for graduate student writing, and their services can be reviewed at http://www.writingcenter.pitt.edu/graduate-services. The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) also contains helpful web resources that may assist in better understanding APA style. It can be located at https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/.

Basic Needs Security Statement
Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact The Care and Resource Support Team (412-624-5756 or PittCares@pitt.edu). Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable doing so. This will enable her to provide any resources that she may possess.

Class Structure
This seminar course is a condensed hybrid (i.e., monthly, weekend in-person meetings with asynchronous components in between via canvas.pitt.edu). The online threaded discussions serve to engage and facilitate online conversations relative to the readings and assignments. Full and active engagement in meaningful dialogue regarding relevant issues concerning assessment, evaluation, and planning research in higher education is expected of each student. During class meetings, there will be

activities and exercises related to assorted topics or concepts being covered. Students should come to class prepared to discuss and apply readings to course activities and/or exercises. Participation in these activities will contribute to the participation portion of your final grade. Please note, a hybrid course is not a reduced-time course. According to the University's definition of a credit hour, a one-credit course should have 14 contact hours, where a contact hour is 50 minutes of instruction. Thus a 3-credit course should have 2100 minutes of instruction (50 minutes/hour x 14 hours x 3 credits = 42 hours), and a two-credit course has 1400 minutes or 28 hours of instruction. In addition, students are expected to spend a minimum of 1.5 hours outside of class for each in-class hour. Therefore, you need to spend 1.5 x 28 course hours = 42 hours across 11 weeks, in addition to the core of 28 hours. This includes reading, completing weekly exercises, and working on graded assignments.

Saturday In-Person Sessions:
Fifth Floor Conference Room Wesley W Posvar Hall, 1:00-5:00 PM
January 11, 2025
February 1, 2025
March 1, 2025
April 5, 2025

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION POLICIES

Departmental Grievance Procedures
The purpose of grievance procedures is to ensure the rights and responsibilities of faculty and students in their relationships with each other. When a student in EFOP believes that a faculty member has not met his or her obligations (as an instructor or in another capacity) as described in the Academic Integrity Guidelines, the student should follow the procedure described in the Guidelines by (1) first trying to resolve the matter with the faculty member directly; (2) then, if needed, attempting to resolve the matter through conversations with the chair/associate chair of the department; (3) if needed, next talking to the associate dean of the school; and (4) if needed, filing a written statement of charges with the school-level academic integrity officer.

Academic Integrity
Students in this course will be expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity. Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy. Furthermore, no student may bring any unauthorized materials to an exam, including dictionaries and programmable calculators.

Disability Services
If you have a disability that requires special testing accommodations or other classroom modifications, you need to notify both the instructor and Disability Resources and Services no later than the second week of the term. You may be asked to provide documentation of your disability to determine the appropriateness of accommodations. To notify Disability Resources and Services, call (412) 648-7890 (Voice or TTD) to schedule an appointment. The Disability Resources and Services office is located at 140 William Pitt Union on the Oakland campus.

Statement on Classroom Recording
To ensure free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures,

discussions, and/or activities without the instructor's advance written permission. Any such recording approved in advance may be used solely for the student's private use.

Student Opinion of Teaching Surveys
Students in this class will be asked to complete a Student Opinion of Teaching Survey toward the end of the term. Responses are confidential, and I do not see the results until after final grades are posted. Please take time to thoughtfully respond; your feedback is important to me.

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Assignments

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Assigned readings as outlined in Canvas modules
All chapters of Henning et al., 2022.

Assessing Equity: A Critical Review of an Organizational Artifact
Posted to the discussion board by Monday, February 17, 2025, 11:59 pm EST

For this assignment, identify an artifact, such as an assessment tool, learning goals, or other protocol, used within your organization and critically review it through an equity lens. In your discussion board post, address the following questions: Is this artifact regularly used in your organization? In what capacity is it utilized? Does it align with principles of equitable assessment? If so, how? If not, what improvements could be made to enhance its equity? Your analysis should be thoughtful and supported by examples, highlighting ways to ensure fair and inclusive assessment practices.

Designing for Equity: Creating or Improving Assessment Tools
Posted to the discussion board by Monday, March 24, 2025

For this assignment, create your own assessment tool or protocol (e.g., learning objectives, an interview protocol, a survey, or an assessment procedure) or improve an existing one by incorporating equitable assessment practices. Upload your tool to the discussion board and provide a brief reflection (4-6 sentences) explaining why you chose to create or modify it and how it aligns with an equitable orientation. In your reflection, identify specific areas where you would like feedback from your peers to help refine and strengthen your tool. Your response should highlight how your tool promotes fairness, inclusivity, and accessibility in assessment.

Peer Review for Equity
Posted to the discussion board by Monday, March 31, 2025

For this assignment, you will be paired with a partner to engage in a peer review of assessment tools. Review your partner's post, focusing on the specific areas where they requested feedback. Provide constructive feedback using the ***Rose, Thorn, Bud framework***: identify strengths (Rose), areas for improvement (Thorn), and opportunities for further development or innovation (Bud). Your feedback should be thoughtful, specific, and grounded in equitable assessment principles to help your partner refine their tool.

American Journal of Evaluation (AJE) Co-authored Article

First draft due: March 10, 2025
Instructor full review and edit by: March 24, 2025
Final sections incorporating feedback due: April 7, 2025

Peer reading of full paper completed by: April 18, 2025
Final integration of peer edits/comments due: April 30, 2025
*All assignments due by 11:59 pm on due date

Each student will contribute to the research on equitable-centered assessment and evaluation and write an article that critically examines the co-creation of a syllabus as a justice-oriented teaching and learning practice. The paper should critically examine how this process shifts power dynamics, values students' voices, and fosters shared ownership in educational spaces. Begin by framing syllabus co-creation as an equity-driven assessment practice and outlining the guiding research question. Engage with relevant literature, particularly on liberatory approaches to co-creation and its role in the evaluation, teaching, and learning contexts. Ground the analysis in evaluator competencies and professional evaluation standards, considering ethical complexities related to equity, integrity, and systematic inquiry. A key component of the paper will be a case study describing the course, the co-creation process, and the equity principles that shaped it. Reflect on how this experience impacted learning, engagement, and belonging. Connect these insights to broader assessment principles and discuss how co-creation aligns with course readings, lectures, and professional practice. Finally, consider how the lessons from this process can inform equitable assessment in your future work. Conclude by reflecting on the intersection of equity, teaching, learning, and assessment. The final submission should be well-organized, evidence-based, and reflect the course's core co-created goals.