**March 2023**

*Please share with your faculty:*

**Creating equitable assessment practices**

Current best practices in education highlight the importance of distinguishing between equality and equity when designing and implementing fair and effective assessment practices. Equality suggests that each student is provided with the same treatment and resources. For example, timed, standardized tests provide equal assessment conditions since all students are asked to perform the same task under the same conditions. While on the surface equal assessment practices such as standardized tests may seem most fair, in reality they do not accommodate for the diversity that exists in classrooms including, differences in cultural and linguistic backgrounds, as well as differences in learning needs and styles. For example, for a student who is just learning English demonstrating his/her knowledge through an essay assignment will be an extra challenge compared to a student whose first language is English. As another example, for a student with ADHD concentrating on a timed, multiple-choice assessment will be more challenging than for a student who does not have attention difficulties. In both of the above examples, the additional challenges faced by these students can interfere with their performance on the assessment, making it harder to gauge their true abilities in the material being assessed.

For this reason, it is important to create equitable assessment practices. Unlike equality which strives to provide equal conditions for all, equity means providing each individual with the tools and resources that they need to succeed at a learning task. In other words, equity entails taking into account a learner’s needs and providing the learner with optimal conditions to succeed and fairly demonstrate their abilities. For example, for a student with ADHD this may involve providing extra time on a test. Or, if a student is just learning English an equitable strategy would be providing him/her with supports in their native language to demonstrate their knowledge in a given subject area. According to the [University of Minnesota’s Center for Educational Innovation](https://cei.umn.edu/teaching-resources/assessments/equitable-assessments) there are several ways to make assessments more equitable. These include:

* ***Using multiple assessment types*** – varying assessment methods so that students are not just assessed in one format
* ***Providing reasonable accommodations and deadline expectations*** – providing students with extra time when needed, making tests untimed, creating open book or open note assessments
* ***Provide options/choices for students to demonstrate their knowledge*** – allowing students to choose among writing a paper, doing a project, making a presentation, or a video
* ***Ensuring materials are accessible*** –providing technology such as computers or Ipads to those who may not have access to the same technology at home
* ***Using clear language understood by all*** – making sure assignment directions are clear and do not contain references that would be difficult for non-language learners to understand
* ***Be specific and transparent about student expectations*** – making learning goals, objectives and criteria for performance transparent
* ***Counter any implicit biases when creating and grading assessments*** – including diverse representations of people and topics, using grading rubrics, and grading work by removing students’ names

**Check out!** Soisson, A. (2023). Resilient and equitable teaching and assessment require a paradigm shift. *Faculty Focus.* Retrieved February 7, 2023, from https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/educational-assessment/resilient-and-equitable-teaching-and-assessment-require-a-paradigm-shift/

**Please share examples** of how your program creates equitable assessment practices and I will feature those examples on [YU’s Learning Assessment Website](http://yu.edu/provost/assessment/).

**Important reminder:** If you have not already done so, please email me your Fall 2022 program assessment report, and please contact me with any questions about your Spring 2023 assessment report.