Assessment Empowerment Discussion Prompts

Use the categories and questions below to support your examination of your thoughts and actions about assessment. Created by educators, these categories and questions are rooted in **assessment scholarship** and are designed to emphasize considerations that affirm students, families, and educators and engender confidence and self-determination.

Consider starting with one specific assessment, or assessment process, to focus your thinking or discussion. While doing this, you may decide to notice where your answers fall on the provided continuum. When answers fall toward the learner management end, ask yourself, "What can we do to shift toward the learner empowerment end?"

LEARNER MANAGEMENT

LEARNER EMPOWERMENT

Leverage learner context

+ Who are the people in our local context? Think about learners, families, community members, and educators, among others.

+ What are their strengths, interests, and **funds of knowledge**? What are their needs?

+ How do we gather, understand, and use local contextual information to inform assessment processes that fuel learners and learning?

+ In what ways are learners engaged as active agents in contributing, gathering, and using context to inform affirming assessment processes?

Nurture learning environments and relationships

+ How do we gather and use information about our learning environments and relationships?

+ How do students, families, communities, and educators experience our learning spaces and relationships?

+ In what ways do our learning environments and relationships **support learner- and learning-centered assessment processes**?

+ In what ways are learners engaged as active agents in making decisions about our learning environments and relationships?

Engage in responsive learning practices such as shared goals

+ What are our large, shared learning goals (e.g., standards, objectives, essential questions, developmental milestones, social-emotional learning)?

+ How are our goals relevant and rigorous?

+ How do we provide time, access, and opportunity to examine, use, and reflect on our **shared learning goals**?

+ In what ways do we balance academic learning goals with social-emotional learning (SEL) goals?

+ How do we ensure that learning goals are authentic and meaningful to learners, not just adults?

+ What does learning goal success look like? How do we share our understanding of success criteria in ways that inspire learners and learning?

+ What are the best assessment processes and tools that will gather evidence of learning goal progress and success while also affirming learners and learning?

+ How are the learning goals and criteria used to drive **responsive teaching and learning** (cycles of formative practices)?

+ In what ways are learners engaged as active agents in learning goal processes?

Engage in responsive learning practices such as high-quality assessment design and use

+ In what ways can we leverage contextual information to make responsive decisions with respect to how we design and use assessments?

+ What tools do we use to check and refine our assessment processes for quality, accessibility, and inclusiveness?

+ How do we check our assessment design and use processes to ensure an affirming, positive impact on learning?

+ How do we provide time, access, and opportunity to practice designing and using learning goal–aligned assessment processes for different purposes (e.g., formative, summative, interim)?

+ Do our assessment processes match and support learning goal(s) success? How do we know?

+ When is it appropriate to use an existing assessment tool or process without modification? When is it appropriate to revise an existing assessment or create a new one?

+ In what ways are learners engaged as active agents in design and use of assessment processes?

Attend to purpose

+ Is there a match between the learning goals, the purpose (e.g., formative, interim, summative) of our assessments, and how assessment processes are used?

+ Are our assessment processes part of a **balanced and coherent system** that leverages learners' assets and effectively addresses learners' needs?

+ How do students, families, communities, and educators experience our assessment purposes?

+ Is there a disparity between how our assessments are intended to be used and experienced and how our assessments are actually used and experienced?

+ In what ways are learners engaged as active agents making purpose-based assessment decisions?

Exchange learning information

+ How can we leverage local contextual information to communicate and listen in empowering ways?

+ How do we communicate about assessment processes, practices, and outcomes between individuals and groups—inside and outside of learning spaces—in ways that are empowering?

+ How do we actively listen to one another to make informed, affirming assessment process decisions?

+ In what ways are learners engaged as active agents in assessment communication processes?

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