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ASSESSMENT MICRO-CLIMATES AND LEARNING CULTURES: A CASE OF THE TAIL WAGGING THE DOG

A RESEARCH PRESENTATION

Tyler Weldon, University of Central Oklahoma
Julie Sanchez, University of New Mexico

ABSTRACT

A positive classroom culture is critical to establishing a learning environment in which students thrive. There is little doubt that the macro-classroom culture is influenced by micro-cultures within it. Researchers have begun to explore the role of assessment within the broader classroom culture (Alkharusi, 2010; Brookhart, 2001; Stiggins & Bridgeford, 1985) to reveal that the assessment environment/climate may motivate student feelings and behavior in important ways. As such, understanding the influence of this micro-climate is central to our ability to transform learning cultures. Student attitudes, beliefs, study habits (Gijbels & Dochy, 2006; Mattick & Knight, 2007; Struyven, Dochy & Janssens, 2005) and achievement (Brookhart, 1997; Brookhart, Walsh & Zientarski, 2006) are impacted by assessment cultures in K-12 classrooms yet little is known about them in higher education. This session explores research on faculty-level perceptions of and contributions to assessment-related matters in higher education. This research uses psychometric descriptive analysis, correlational analysis and group difference analysis to explore survey and syllabi data from faculty (N = 50) across multiple universities. This session makes transformation visible for attendees by operationalizing what might constitute an assessment micro-climate in postsecondary classrooms and providing practical considerations for their impact on learning cultures and student outcomes.

SELECT REFERENCES


For further information, contact the lead presenter:
Tyler L. Weldon
Assistant Professor
College of Education and Professional Studies
University of Central Oklahoma
100 N. University Drive
Edmond, OK 73034
Phone: (405) 974-2107
E-Mail: tweldon2@uco.edu