

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

A RESEARCH PRESENTATION

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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

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