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Workshop Objectives

- Evaluate the benefits of including student voice in assessment.

- Discuss strategies to incorporate student voice in your program assessment process.

- Hear from current students on how SBU is incorporating student voice in assessment at an institutional level.

Student Voice in Assessment

What is Student Voice?

"Student voice is the inclusion of student opinions, thoughts, and experiences into assessment planning and practices **to inform programmatic changes**."

"Ongoing reflective self-assessment **expressed in the words of the learner for the purpose of improving** teaching and learning."
(edTPA Teacher Certification Requirements)

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Why is Student Voice important to assessment?

Assessment done entirely by staff or faculty cannot give a full picture of student learning because it relies on "**implicit assumptions about the experience of students.**"

This could pose a problem in validity of assessment practices as **it doesn't reflect real student experiences, which are diverse and varied across program populations**.

Comparing Student Involvement & Student Voice

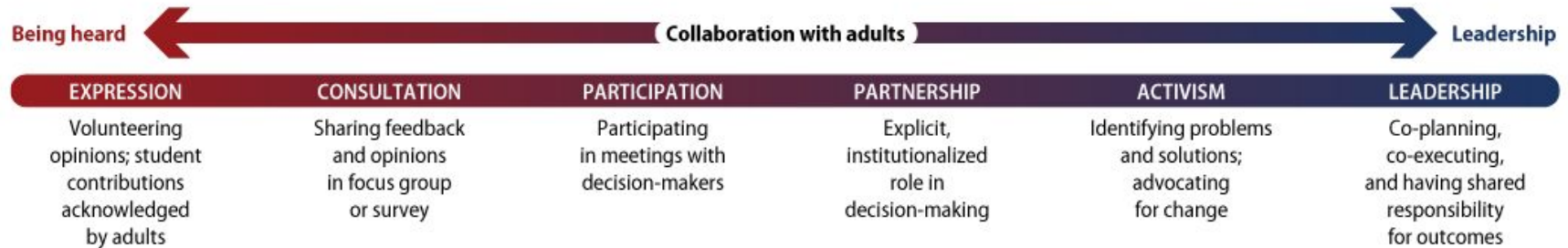| Student Involvement	Student Voice
- Encouraging students to **provide** feedback **Collecting** quantitative or qualitative data from students about their learning experience	**Using** information gleaned from student involvement to **influence program decision-making** - Promoting reciprocal **student-faculty partnerships** - Promoting engaged learner agency and **co-ownership** of their learning experience

The Student Voice Spectrum

FIGURE 1

Types of student voice

Adapted version of Toshalis and Nakkula's "The Spectrum of Student Voice Oriented Activity" and Mitra and Gross' "Pyramid of student voice"

Being heard ← **Collaboration with adults** → **Leadership**

EXPRESSION	CONSULTATION	PARTICIPATION	PARTNERSHIP	ACTIVISM	LEADERSHIP
Volunteering opinions; student contributions acknowledged by adults	Sharing feedback and opinions in focus group or survey	Participating in meetings with decision-makers	Explicit, institutionalized role in decision-making	Identifying problems and solutions; advocating for change	Co-planning, co-executing, and having shared responsibility for outcomes

Sources: This graph is adapted from Eric Toshalis and Michael J. Nakkula, "Motivation, Engagement, and Student Voice" (Boston: Jobs for the Future, 2012), available at https://jfforg-prod-prime.s3.amazonaws.com/media/documents/Motivation_Engagement_Student_Voice_0.pdf; Dana L. Mitra and Steven Jay Gross, "Increasing Student Voice in High School Reform: Building Partnerships, Improving Outcomes," Educational Management Administration & Leadership 37 (4) (2009): 522–543, available at http://www.buildingpublicunderstanding.org/assets/files/increasingstudentvoiceinhighschoolreform.pdf.

CAP

Flexible Assessment

Instructional materials allow for responsive and innovative assessments

Inclusive Approaches

Students are able to demonstrate what they know and can do

Student Ownership

Students have more control and ownership over their learning

Choice of Topic/Delivery

Students work with what they are interested in and best able to demonstrate their mastery on

"Incorporating student voice helps students act more like **stakeholders and partners** in their education, **rather than passive recipients of information.**"
(Fontein, 2022)

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Components of incorporating Student Voice into Assessment; *Monash University* [4]

Adapted from the University of Maine, Office of Institutional Research & Assessment and https://thoughtexchange.com/blog/student-voice-in-the-classroom/

Benefits of Student Voice & Faculty Partnership

Faculty Benefits	Student Benefits
● Enhances reflective practice ● Improved understanding of different viewpoints/diversity of student perspectives ● Collaborative approach to teaching and learning	● Increased motivation ● Improved metacognitive skills ● Improved engagement in learning activities/active learning ● Taking responsibility for their learning and academic outcomes

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Integrating the Student Voice in Assessment:
Getting Started

Start by Cultivating Assessment Awareness

- **Share CLOs & PLOs with students.**
  - Syllabus, program handbooks, department website, assignment descriptions, rubrics/evaluative criteria.

- **Explain how course content and assignments align to the CLOs & PLOs.**
  - Make links purposeful and explicit to students.

- **Ask students to reflect on if and how well they are achieving CLOs & PLOs.**
  - Informal: conversational feedback, muddiest point, etc.
  - Formal: surveys, pre-/post-tests, reflective essays, self-assessment methods

- **Share the data you collect with students at the program-level.**
  - Promotes transparency
  - Shows utility of assessment exercises/data
  - Builds community (Ex: "I'm not the only one struggling with PLO #3!")

Steps to Promote Student Voice in Assessment

Check	Use	Include	Increase	Ensure	Make
Check biases and ask reflective questions throughout the data analysis process to address assumptions and positions of privilege	Use multiple sources of evidence appropriate for the students being supported and the related learning experience or support offering	Include student perspectives and take action based on those shared perspectives	Increase transparency in results and actions taken

Invite alternative interpretations | Ensure collected data are meaningfully disaggregated and interrogated – including points of intersectionality | Make evidence-based changes that address issues of equity that are context specific |

Steps to include student voice and student equity in assessment. (From the presentation of "Students and Assessment: Peas In a Pod" by Natasha Jankowski, PhD in March 2023)

Integrating the Student Voice in Assessment:

Practical Strategies

Surveys

Pros

- Fair process to gather information

- Easy to design & administer

- Disaggregate data for insights across student demographic/ academic groups

Cons

- Low response rate / Survey fatigue

- Survey options may not represent full range of opinions

- Students not sure input is valued/used

Strengthen

- Have students create or review questions

- Report out broad themes/findings to survey respondents

- Highlight how previous surveys resulted in program changes

Focus Groups & Feedback Sessions

Pros

- Richer qualitative data

- More authentic, nuanced representation of student perspectives

- Improved student/faculty/staff partnerships, student empowerment

Cons

- Incentivizing and securing student participation

- More administrative work (scheduling, registering, transcribing, analyzing)

Strengthen

- Activity-based focus groups for more in-depth engagement

- Review and react to a PLO or assessment method as group

- Create a student-friendly environment (their spaces, their preferred times)

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Peer & Self-Assessments

- **Offer ungraded pre- and post- self-assessments** on CLOs, PLOs, or key concepts to encourage students to monitor performance & appreciate their own growth.

- **Include reflective assessments** (journals, discussion boards, audio/video reflections) which ask students to tie their learning in your course to the other courses in their program or intended careers.

- **Include opportunities for formal and informal peer assessments:**
  - Draft paper swap with commentary prior to final paper submission, assessed based on quantity/quality of commenter's suggestions (not on the paper itself). Or, dedicate class time to an informal paper swap and peer discussion.

  - Post assignments to LMS and ask students to comment on what they learned from reading/reviewing a peer's assignment.

  - Include a peer assessment as a small portion of a group project evaluation
    - Ex: "On a scale of 1-5, how many points would you give your peer(s) for their contributions to this group project?"
    - Clarify contribution expectations upfront, define the scale, keep students' ratings confidential, and take the average peer assessment rating out of 5 possible points as a component of final project grade.

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Co-Creation of Assessment Tools

- **Ask students what kind of feedback would be most helpful**
  - Critique their writing skills? Identify their strengths/weaknesses? Point out useful citations or resources on the topic? Provide de-identified exemplars of student work for reference?

- **Ask students to describe how they used feedback to improve in the past**
  - Helps instructors identify most effective forms of feedback on their assessments

- **Ask students to identify which PLO they think the assignment aligns with best**
  - Promotes metacognition and can inform program assessment planning
  - Bonus: Ask them to rate how well they achieved it (provide a scale) and why, then respond to their rating in your feedback!

- **Ask students to participate in crafting essay prompts, multiple choice question banks, and study guides**
  - Students co-construct current or future assessment methods by weighing in with their most important "takeaways"
  - Have students critique/offer improvements on their peers' suggestions

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Student Choice in Assessment

- Allow students to choose the topic of their assessment

- Allow students to choose the format of their assessment (paper, vlog, podcast, informational website, portfolio, etc.)

  - "*Multiple Means of Demonstration*" Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Principle

- Incorporate active learning/assessment strategies, such as inquiry-based learning or problem-based learning

> *"Inviting voice and choice honors the humanness of learners.* Students are human, and humans have thoughts, feelings, preferences, ideas, questions, and opinions. …Finding intentional ways to invite voice and choice in service of learning can sometimes mitigate the less prosocial ways students may choose to claim their autonomy" (White, 2020).

Student-Led Council/Committee

Pros

- Students gain leadership experience

- Fosters open communication, feedback, and self-advocacy skills

- Space for equal voting power

Cons

- Securing student commitment

- Engaging students from across the University (not just the type-A students)

- 'Single voice fallacy'

- May need guidance on practicality/feasibility of ideas within existing constraints

Strengthen

- Recruit students from varied majors, years, performance levels, and backgrounds for diverse representation

- Dedicate support staff to advise/liaise with admin/faculty and guide students *as needed*

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Recap: Strategies for Student Voice in Assessment

- Surveys
- Focus Groups
- Feedback Sessions
- Self-Assessments
- Peer-Assessments
- Reflective Assessments
- Co-creation of assessment tools
- Student Choice of assessment topic/method
- Student-led Councils/Committees

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Which strategy to promote student voice are you most likely to incorporate into your program/assessment plan?

Join at menti.com | use code 1623 7258

How is SBU integrating Student Voice in Assessment?

OEE Assessment Initiatives Centered on Student Voice

- 2023 Symposium Student Panel Discussion on Assessment

- 2023 Student-led mini-interviews on assessment topics on campus

- 2024-25 General Education Assessment - Student Focus Groups on select SBC Categories

- 2024-25 General Education Assessment - Student Self-Assessment on select SBC SLOs

- Exploring options for student exit surveys and/or leveraging existing data collected by Alumni Relations to inform a more holistic program assessment process

- Supporting the creation of a student-led Student Assessment Council

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SBU Student Assessment Council

Goals of the SAC

- Educate students on the assessment process

- Engage students in the assessment process

- Help students provide meaningful, constructive feedback to their instructors to prompt programmatic improvements

- Ensure student feedback is heard and promote a sustainable dialogue

- Strengthen partnerships between students, faculty, and staff

SAC's Agenda for 2024-25

- Recruit student members for broad representation on the Council

- Establish a formal charge statement

- Educate SAC on program learning objectives (PLOs)

- Apply PLOs to the work of the SAC

- Analyze Qualtrics Student Survey Data on Feedback to Professors

- Present findings on behalf of SAC at the MSCHE Annual Conference in December 2024

- Connect the SAC with the Career Center for potential internship credit

Upcoming Meeting Topics - PLOs

1. Do you think your program has **fulfilled** all of its objectives?

2. What do you think your program is **lacking** in it objectives?

3. What objectives do you think your program **is fulfilling**?

4. What objectives would like you to **add** to your program?

Help out the SAC!

- Tell your students! We are still recruiting new members - [Sign up here](#)!

- Seeking faculty guest speakers to talk about their PLOS and connect them to their course/discipline.

- Are there any other topics you think the SAC should address?

- Email StudentAssessment@stonybrook.edu to submit suggestions or join us as a guest speaker.

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Wrap Up & Resources

Takeaways

- It's important to collect student feedback, but better to act on it!

- Create formal and informal mechanisms for students to provide feedback on your program.

- Get students familiar with your PLOs and what they mean in the context of your class, assignment, or discipline.

- Grant students agency through flexibility, assessment choice, and co-creation of assessment tools.

- Encourage metacognitive skills through reflection, self-, and peer assessments.

Further Reading & Resources

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Questions & Discussion