

Envisioned and enacted learning-oriented assessment policies: A Global South perspective

Accountability-oriented assessment policies have been markedly visible in the educational landscape of the Global South. Within this context, such policies have been utilized as mechanisms for ensuring compliance with national/international standards. While serving a legitimate purpose, they have resulted in tension between their primary emphasis on accountability and their potential impact on supporting learning. In response to this dilemma, educational systems in many countries in the Global South have increasingly employed learning-oriented assessment (LOA) policies. LOA is envisioned to alleviate the inherent tension between the aforementioned competing priorities, and to also support student learning and inform instructional decision-making. However, policy enactment is not without challenges and is usually shaped by sociopolitical dynamics and contextual idiosyncrasies. Stakeholders in these instructional settings navigate a complex array of challenges that require pragmatic compromises to fulfil policy objectives. This plenary taps into the intricacies of implementing LOA in the Global south through sharing some examples of assessment reform projects from a number of countries. Research on LOA policy development and implementation will be shared with the audience in order to guide the discussions of reform initiatives. The purpose of this discussion is not to compare assessment practices, but rather to highlight the unique variables in each context and how they have potentially impacted policy development and enactment. The presenter will also tap into a number of pre-conditions critical for a smoother navigation of assessment reform efforts in local contexts. The presentation will conclude with a number of implications for different stakeholders. Ultimately, the discussion attempts to contribute to the scholarly discourse on how learning-oriented assessment can be leveraged to enhance educational outcomes across the Global South.