

Antiracist Pedagogy Workshop Reflection

Kevin Grove , Science Department, Physics

Track C: Anti-Racist Assessment Practices

Fall 2021

I joined the anti-racist assessment practices group that convened in the Fall term of 2021. We met three times over the course of the term, had many good discussions, and shared our work with our colleagues. I decided to focus my project on qualitative assessment that I perform in many classes on a regular basis. As I work through engineering problem solving examples, I consistently ask questions of the class to roughly gage their understanding of the material. It is a way for me to assess their progress and hopefully a way for them to assess themselves as well. I have noticed over the years that I often have 2-3 strong voices that tend to answer my questions the majority of the time. I have done many things over the years to get more engagement from a wider population. Things like 'think, pair, share' are great ways to engage introverts, extroverts and the entire class in the learning process.

For this project, I thought I would focus on the quick assessment questions I ask during problem solving sessions. I thought about who the strong voices belong to and why I don't always get answers sprinkled throughout the entire student population. I thought about what it would feel like to be the only female in a class, and this can happen in my engineering classes. I thought about how it would feel to be the only student of color, or in the minority of students. Is the strong voice the most confident? The smartest? The most engaged? Does it represent what everyone in the class knows or thinks? How could I do a better job of quickly gaging what the entire class knows, or more importantly, some of the sticking points from some within the class population.

I starting thinking about and researching was to ask questions of the entire class. I looked into using popsicle sticks, sometimes referred to as equity sticks. You write all student names down on sticks and instead of asking the entire class to answer, you pick one name from the pot and keep moving through the class roster throughout class. There are pros and cons to this technique and I did find articles saying that this may not be so equitable after all. Perhaps some questions I might ask are harder than others. Perhaps it makes introverted students uncomfortable knowing they might be put on the spot. Perhaps people that are uncomfortable with this process for whatever reason may be worrying throughout class instead of paying attention and learning. All of these were interesting points to ponder and think about.

I considered using Kahoot and/or clickers to attempt to engage the entire group. Kahoot is a way to quiz student's understanding of the material being covered. They log in through a smart phone or a computer to access the quiz. One concern I had was a student might not have a smart phone that could access the internet and would be left out of the learning process. Clickers on the other had could be passed out to each student to quiz the students on the information.

My original plan was to try all three ideas and ask students to compare and contrast how each of them added or subtracted to their learning. Given time constraints, I was only able to implement the clicker quiz, which I determined to be the most equitable learning and assessment tool. The science department has clickers and several faculty members well versed in using them. I had Sarah Fuller give me a quick overview and rundown on the process, teaching me how to use the clickers. I took one class

and developed several quiz questions that corresponded to the learning objectives for the day. We had a short debrief together at the end of the class session. In general, all students said they found the process informative and useful. They liked using the clickers and having a chance to test their understanding in a low consequence and anonymous manner. This gave me a way to gauge the understanding of the entire class and not just the one or two students that tend to answer most frequently. Some students did mention they have used Kahoot before and that they liked the competitive nature as Kahoot keeps a tally of how everyone is doing.

Overall, I found the workshop quite engaging and it made me think much more about anti-racist and equitable assessment and pedagogy. I enjoyed the meetings and conversations with both facilitators and colleagues in the workshop.