

SoTL Keynote Panel Conceptual Framework

1. Title

How care-full assessment can enhance student learning

2. Blurb

Stellenbosch University (SU) recognizes that assessment is an integral part of learning and teaching, and that teaching, learning and assessment practices are contextual and relational. An ethic of care also emphasises contextuality and relationality (Tronto, 2010). Although an ethic of care is a universal phenomenon, specific contexts such as assessment of student learning, thus require specific applications (Barnes, 2012). Care-full¹ assessment combines the principles of care with the principles of assessment as described in the SU Assessment Policy's "Framework for effective assessment". With this as background, we can now consider the overarching question: Does effective assessment necessarily equate to "care-full" assessment? In other words, can we draw the conclusion that, if we adhere to the principles of effective assessment, such assessment would necessarily be care-full?

Considering the above, use some of the questions below to critically reflect on your own current assessment practices prior to engagement at the SoTL Keynote Panel Discussion.

- What inference can be drawn from my students' mastery of the module's learning outcomes? Could this be considered as care-full assessment?
- In what way can assessment, that measures what it is supposed to measure, be considered as care-full assessment?
- Why should assessment help prepare students for real life tasks and measure whether they can use their knowledge effectively and realistically?
- How could a conscious selection of the number and variety of assessment methods result in care-full learning?

¹ The simple definition of care-full environments points to environments that are populated with professional care. Such care-full environments are characterised by the presence of support, trust, value, fairness, recognition, clear communication and innovation (Herman, Bitzer and Leibowitz, 2016).

- How can assessment promote learning? Is the main purpose of assessment not to measure learning?
- How can academic integrity be ensured when students cannot be trusted? How do I even know it is my student's own work?
- Do my students need to know HOW their attainment will be assessed? Giving too much information about an assessment is spoon-feeding students. How can this be good for their learning?
- Does every student in my class have a fair chance to show their mastery of the outcomes?
- Are my time expectations care-full to myself and my students?
- Is it necessary for students to have an opportunity to judge their progress and/or learning before being subjected to high-stakes, graded assessment? And if so, do my assessments allow for that?

Join this year's SoTL Keynote Panel Discussion when we apply a care-full lens to consider our assessment practices to enhance student learning.