

60-Second SoTL

Episode 69 – Re-Imagining an Exam as a Podcast

Featured Article

Godsell, Sarah. 2025. "Decolonial Impulses for Assessment: Re-Imagining an Exam As a Podcast." *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in the South* 9 (2): 43-73. <https://doi.org/10.36615/reweaw33>.

Transcript

(Music)

0:10

Jessie L. Moore:

What happens when you re-imagine a high-stakes exam—*not* as an essay, but as a podcast? That's the focus of this week's 60-second SoTL from Elon University's Center for Engaged Learning. I'm Jessie Moore.

(Music)

0:28

In "Decolonial Impulses for Assessment: Re-Imagining an Exam as a Podcast," Sarah Godsell shares a case study of a reimaged final assessment in a history methodology course in a Bachelor of Education program at Wits School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand. Her article appears in SoTL in the South, an open-access journal.

0:49

Godsell frames her work as a decolonial impulse—a gesture toward disrupting coloniality in assessment by treating students as knowledge producers, valuing voice, and emphasizing assessment for learning, not just measuring.

With ethics approval, the study uses a qualitative case study design, drawing on two years of student projects from the course and four years of the author's reflective notes from teaching the course. Using inductive thematic analysis, Godsell analyzed 20 student podcasts and 20 student written reflections about the podcasts. She initially identified 38 codes, which she grouped into 12 themes and then narrowed to 10 final themes about students' reflections on the podcast assessment and the course content: decolonization, theoretical learning versus physical application, view broadened or enriched through making a podcast, expansion or change of thinking, voice, active listening, conflicting views, the history curriculum and the importance of history, anxieties about the assessment format, and the contested idea of neutrality related to difficult histories.

1:59

In the article, Godsell explains each theme and offers a sample quotation from her coding. She also offers an extended analysis of several of the themes and a robust discussion of implications of her findings for decolonizing assessment and for critical dialogic pedagogy.

To highlight a few key findings: Students described the podcast format as more humanizing—making space to think out loud, test ideas, and notice shifts in understanding. Godsell suggests that students also were theorizing their own knowledge and that the reimagined assessment and wrap-around supports helped students critically reflect on pedagogical theories and praxis they might engage in their own future teaching. Godsell concludes that podcast exams can open “decolonial cracks” in conventional assessment—while still acknowledging constraints like grading structures, language hierarchies, and the ways that who opted into research participation necessarily shapes her analysis.

2:58

If you’re experimenting with assessment, this piece invites a powerful question: What forms of assessment best support students’ voices, dialogue, and becoming—especially in contexts shaped by colonial histories?

To learn more about this study, visit our show notes for a link to the open access article.

3:14

(Music)

3:18

Jessie Moore:

Join us for our next episode of 60-second SoTL from Elon University’s Center for Engaged Learning for another snapshot of recent scholarship of teaching and learning. Learn more about the Center at www.CenterForEngagedLearning.org.

(Music)