

Perceptions of learning data in higher education: A systems perspective



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Methodology

Multi-site interview study

Research Group:

- Ben Croft, Boise State University
- Mary Ellen Dello Stritto, Oregon State University
- Rebecca Heiser, Athabasca University & Penn State University

Stakeholder Groups

- Administrators
- Coaches/advisors
- Data analysts
- Diversity & inclusion leaders
- Instructional designers
- Faculty
- Students

Interviews

- 59 interviews
- Conducted virtually, Mar. - Nov. 2020

To what degree are you concerned with issues of bias in the uses of learner data?

To what degree are you concerned with issues of equity in the uses of learner data?

Code	Description	Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria
Degree of Concern	Participant describes their thoughts and feelings related to their level of concern about learning data. Sub code: None/low; I don't know, High	"Includes: no/low level of concern or specific types of concerns, worries, or conflicting levels of concern, about learner data only include those who talked about learner data - exclude those who talked about research data"
Relationship with Stakeholders	Participant identifies people and stakeholders or relationships with people who are responsible for collecting and analyzing learning data.	Includes: Professors, Deans, Instructors, Faculty, Peers, Review Board, Students, Administrative Offices and Processes, Institutional Representatives. Excludes: only include those who talked about learner-data, exclude those who talked about research data.
Biased decisions in learner data analysis	Participant identifies learner data being used to make decisions about the educational process and describes these decisions being influenced or biased	Includes: Course level learning activities, Grades, Course Evaluations, Exams, Admission, Program Progress, Finals. Includes mention of demographics broadly. Excludes: mentions of specific identity markers (see below)

Issues of bias and equity in learner data

Issues of Bias

Issues of equity

% of student
(n=20)

% of student
(n=20)

Degree of concern

90

70

Biased decisions

50

30

Specific identity
markers

25

15

Limitations of
learner data

25

30

Relationship with
stakeholders

20

20

Non-learner data

10

10

Degree of Concern

"Oh, I see. I'm not very concerned with it."

8 student respondents
minimal/no degree of concern

"I'm definitely concerned."

1 student respondent
strong/high degree of concern

Issues of bias and equity in learner data

Issues of Bias

Issues of equity

% of student
(n=20)

% of diversity
officer (n=5)

% of student
(n=20)

% of diversity
officer (n=4)

Degree of concern

90

100

70

100

Biased decisions

50

30

Specific identity
markers

25

15

Limitations of
learner data

25

30

Relationship with
stakeholders

20

20

Non-learner data

10

10

Student Autonomy

“Until institutions meaningfully engage with students to repair the current information and power asymmetries between themselves and students, the purported obligation to act on LA leans toward the institution actors as self-interested, paternalistic, and unjustifiable.”

-Jones et al., 2020



