

Title of Session: Classroom Assessment

Moderator: Maryann Durand

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Room: Classroom Assessment Group

MaryannDu: shall we introduce ourselves? I'll start

MaryannDu: I am an indep consultant, I do program evaluation with interest in assessment and instructional practices

ShayneTr: I'm a computer and visual arts high-school teacher in Toronto, Canada

MaryannDu: cool

HannahN: I'm a student teacher in 4th grade in Houston, TX

MaryannDu: were you here last time Hanna???

HannahN: No, this is my first assessment chat

MaryannDu: ok

MaryannDu: so what interests you both in assessment? anything special to talk about?

HannahN: I was just looking for some ideas on assessments other than a standard test or paper.

ShayneTr: Uh hu! I'm having difficulty with assessment in art because there is a strong subjective component. With computers, it's very skills based so that's fairly easy.

MaryannDu: yes

MaryannDu: well, I always start with assessment first. why am I doing this and what do I want students to do in the end.

MaryannDu: then, I go back and design instruction and activities to get to that point.

MaryannDu: but assessment drives the process

MaryannDu: so lets look at some examples. what might you be wanting students to do, why teach something?

MaryannDu: any examples?

MaryannDu: ideas?

HannahN: My students right now are learning about the periodic table of elements

MaryannDu: ok. wow in 4th grade!

HannahN: yes, just the basics though

ShayneTr: What are they expected to know at the end?

MaryannDu: so what do you want them to know about it? so, why it exists? what is in it? how it is built, and maybe one or two items

MaryannDu: right

MaryannDu: like the things I listed?

HannahN: exactly

MaryannDu: ok, so that drives the test. why it exists is a higher level thinking skill. it means understanding several concepts.

MaryannDu: what exactly I am not sure! as this is more than I know about the table!!!!

MaryannDu: but for example, why a table?

MaryannDu: how did it start?

MaryannDu: and so on. this might be a little history, a little, fact finding.

MaryannDu: etc. this is information that I would be assessing over the time of the lessons. say about a week?

MaryannDu: sound right?

HannahN: yes we will be covering this for a few days

HannahN: we have done some background research on its purpose and the man who created it

MaryannDu: one way to assess this would be to start the class with let's review. and then call on two - three students to say what do we know about the periodic table.

MaryannDu: list this on the board.

MaryannDu: this is the type of question that would mostly likely be an essay.

MaryannDu: but you could write an excellent true false or multiple choice if you have the really deep knowledge to do it.

MaryannDu: so this is helping students see what would be in an answer like this. maybe star the critical things that have to be in that responses.

HannahN: ok sounds good

MaryannDu: it is hard for students to put it all together at test time. so the reviews and oral summaries help them to see the most important ideas and to get ready for thinking.

MaryannDu: you could even go and do every other student one day, the others the next day. give me a fact about the pt

MaryannDu: that is just one idea for getting them ready for an essay response. or a really good tf or mc

HannahN: yes, and I always try to gauge the student's knowledge during those discussions so I know whether or not I need to re-teach or brush them up on a few things

MaryannDu: yes

MaryannDu: this is a great way to do that

MaryannDu: I like helping students see patterns also. so that some info is history, some fact about, some purpose for.

MaryannDu: one thing I have done, is to have students use post it notes, write one thing and then put them on the board, cluster them.

MaryannDu: sorry. we are talking about assessment, and about the periodic table for fourth grade

JeffC: hmmm... I'm trying to remember what tf and mc stand for then!

BJB2 . o O (interesting combination ;-)

MaryannDu: and I was saying that I do the assessment thinking first, that one of the things out of the learning would be knowing about pt.

MaryannDu: true false, and multiple choice items

JeffC: plutonium?

MaryannDu: lol

MaryannDu: yep

JeffC: well... it could lead to some very interesting science fair projects.

MaryannDu: so if we wanted students to know about, then that would most likely be a multiple choice item

MaryannDu: lol

MaryannDu: I think that in the teaching what is important, is to have the assessment in mind, ready and to be looking at getting the students to think and work in that direction. so many times we do skill and fact and then give an essay, and that is not how we taught. we taught the fact and skill

MaryannDu: Shayne, any ideas for the visual arts?

MaryannDu: or anyone for that matter!

MaryannDu: as you develop lesson plans, Hannah, where do you start?

MaryannDu: generally

ShayneTr: My problem is that I want the senior students to experiment and become more expressive. My grade 12s are supposed to be covering modern art. Some of them do really interesting work with good composition, some of them do work that I hate, but I know that there are artists hanging in galleries who do the same sort of work.

ShayneTr: It's very difficult to give a number grade to this kind of work.

MaryannDu: right. so you are assessing for experimentation and expressive.

JeffC: is it possible for them to do the work they love and that's enough?

MaryannDu: yes

MaryannDu: also what you can do is research about what does it mean to experiment in art and to be expressive. and develop a sort of rubric about this.

ShayneTr: Unfortunately, I still have to find ways to assess them. I wish I didn't have to give marks.

MaryannDu: for example, if the form is familiar then you are not experimenting

MaryannDu: and maybe work with the class to refine the rubric so that they get it.

MaryannDu: also to experiment, means to do what..... no fear

MaryannDu: be willing to fail

MaryannDu: in the art, not the class!

MaryannDu: to do something new and not like it

ShayneTr: take risks. One girl was very precise in her style, I got her to go a little crazy. I weigh the risk taking and experimentation and creativity higher than the actual product.

MaryannDu: so the assessment has to be on experimenting and expression. what does that mean. and to say that it may be a blend of things not all. like her, the risk.

MaryannDu: some things in experimentation are higher than others, like risk

MaryannDu: you have 10 things in a list that define experimenting and expression and the students had to have 7 out of ten or 5 even,

ShayneTr: But then girls were throwing paint around and acting silly and telling me they were taking risks.

MaryannDu: oh yeah, seniors in high school! of course it might be they were!!!
lolololol

MaryannDu: but I doubt it!!!

MaryannDu: lol

ShayneTr smiles

MaryannDu: but that is an interesting point

MaryannDu: we do not teach kids to take risks

MaryannDu: we teach them do it right, or get beaten up

MaryannDu: no mistakes

MaryannDu: no tolerance

MaryannDu: zero tolerance

MaryannDu: be good girls

MaryannDu: and then we say experiment in art

MaryannDu: emotionally, that is hard

BJB2 agrees

ShayneTr: Many of my students (all girls) are special ed. It's a tiny school and I'm up against physics so I get lots of kids who aren't interested in art.

MaryannDu: ok

MaryannDu: interesting

MaryannDu: so, getting girls to find an interest is also an assessment item

ShayneTr: So I have tried to create a safe environment for creative risk taking. Having to provide marks spoils it all.

MaryannDu: yes

MaryannDu: well, I think that if the marks are on the experimentation, and really helping the girls to know what that means, and on expression, and on finding something new in a topic they may never have thought had value, then the marks will make sense

MaryannDu: and will foster then to be engaged

MaryannDu: also I think that if you have really looked at the research on e, e, i. then you can find things that can guide lessons. like what is creativity, and what is elaboration and are they both valuable.

ShayneTr: But the product needs to matter, too, since it's grade 12 art.

MaryannDu: I would just look for what writers have said on the net and sort of put a page of ideas together for yourself. then you can pull out items that illustrate each thing, and have about two or three items for e,e,i.

MaryannDu: what does that mean, to matter??? to whom???

ShayneTr: Sounds like a good idea. Thanks.

MaryannDu: matter to the kids?

MaryannDu: you could include that also in the assessment scheme. and you could give an essay or oral test to have them explain how they met the items as well as you assessing

ShayneTr: I've had them do artist statements.

MaryannDu: I think part of it, is that you have to teach what you assess, and so in the context of the work they are doing, you have to imbed what it means to experiment, to take risks, maybe talk about it. yes that would be a great idea

ShayneTr: I guess I have to figure out more precisely what I mean by 'taking a risk' so that I can do that.

MaryannDu: I think the conversation is critical in the teaching and learning. because then they begin to understand what does each concept mean, for me, in this class, and what do I carry over in life

MaryannDu: yes, that would be a great first step

MaryannDu: you can also use that as a class discussion

MaryannDu: to build the concept for them

MaryannDu: this sounds like it would be really fun.

MaryannDu: lol

ShayneTr: sometimes we go to a coffee shop for our discussions :)

MaryannDu: and you could do one thing at a time

MaryannDu: nice

MaryannDu: that is great

MaryannDu: so really the discussion, are part of the assessment

JeffC: You could create your own K-12 classrooms here, collaborate, and build on each other's Discussions.

MaryannDu: lol wow yes

ShayneTr: Only informally if it's orally. Yes, Jeff, I've been playing with different blog ideas for that reason. Maybe here would be great!

MaryannDu: do you have to give a test??? or can you do totally performance

MaryannDu: yes, on here would give you the documentation

MaryannDu: and I find it is better than a blog

JeffC: portfolio assess based on Discussion posts and responses. you could even have them work in groups... collaborate... perhaps use google documents to write collaborative papers.

MaryannDu: yes

JeffC: and use Rubistar for some sort of rubric assessment... why test?

JeffC: test what?

ShayneTr: I don't do tests. An example of what I do is...
<http://www.tiferes.ca/about/classes/art/art11/art11assignments.htm>

MaryannDu: or answer one question, as a discussion thread

JeffC: exactly... and/or have them generate additional questions for additional threads.

ShayneTr: I try to structure assignments so that they can't plagiarize.. eg. personal opinion or interpretation

MaryannDu: wow that is great.

JeffC: after this session is over, I'll be happy to help anyone create a K-12 classroom here. I also give tours and support of the K-12 Campus on Saturday morning at 11a.m. Pacific.

JeffC: that sounds great Shayne

ShayneTr: Right now my school's internet is down but I would like to create a classroom. Can I have discussions like this one?

JeffC: yes

ShayneTr: yay!

JeffC: plus your own threaded Discussion board, File sharing, etc.

MaryannDu: it sounds like part of what you are doing is getting at the why do the things you want them to do,, the discussion that leads to the selection of an activity

JeffC: and you could collaborate with other classes if you wanted to.

HannahN: that sounds really cool

JeffC: have the Discussions turn into Project Based Learning.

MaryannDu: yes

ShayneTr: I'm excited

MaryannDu: I think that the discussion and conversations are the grounding for what you want to do.,

HannahN: my students would love this... they jump at the opportunity to do almost anything on the computers

MaryannDu: yes

MaryannDu: and it may not all be about producing art, but what does it mean, and how do I become more eei, and have meaning because of art

MaryannDu: then the assessment really becomes powerful and interactive and very strong

JadeRHB: assessing visual arts depends on what we're doing,

MaryannDu: ok

MaryannDu: do you teach?

JadeRHB: I like the students to assess themselves and each other by justifying their thoughts on their work

JadeRHB: yes, elementary grade 4

MaryannDu: ok. do you have to give grades? ok

JadeRHB: no we assess through competencies only....although grades have just come back...last week

MaryannDu: I am excited about Shayne's class, please be sure and invite me!!

MaryannDu: I would love to sit in!!!

JadeRHB: a exceeds expectations - d doesn't achieve

MaryannDu: do you your own standards or are they set my the school or district?

JadeRHB: by the province, but its fairly subjective

JeffC: I'm on Tapped In Helpdesk, edtech support, 15 years as an educator mostly high school English, but a lot of tech and curriculum support.

MaryannDu: any last thoughts about assessment?

JadeRHB: I think you can't assess their overall picture but their technique you can assess, like skill in physical education

MaryannDu: maybe

ShayneTr: Except that I have to be realistic in case some are applying for art school or related career

JadeRHB: elementary students do differ slightly :)

MaryannDu: if you can find past research that defines something, or experts that know or have written on things, then you can develop a rubric that can address other concepts

JeffC: I've always hated assessment! Such is the world we live in though... where everything seems to need a number attached. I believe in qualitative... rubrics... etc.

MaryannDu: yes, that is true, but I think that if you have good support for the items, then you are fine

MaryannDu: for example there is lots of research on creativity and what it is, vs elaboration

MaryannDu: great!

MaryannDu: so if a student is more about elaboration, that could apply, instead of creativity.

ShayneTr: And Maryann, I will start trying to find that research

ShayneTr: Thank you!

HannahN: Thanks for your help Maryann!

JadeRHB: Thanks

BJB2 waves bye and heads to Teachers in Training

MaryannDu: no problem. hope it helps!

BJB2: thanks, Maryann

MaryannDu: keep us filled in Shayne!

BJB2: I'll be anxious to hear what you find out too, Shayne

MaryannDu: thanks Jeff

ShayneTr: ok!