

**Title of Session:** Classroom Assessment

**Moderator:** Maryann Durland

**Title of File:** 20080214assessment

**Date:** February 14, 2008

Room: Classroom Assessment Group

**BrianaH:** Hi, Bj. Can I participate in the event, or do I have to become a member of this group first?

**BJB2:** you can participate in any calendar event, Briana

**BJB2 . o O** ( you don't have to join a group to participate )

**BrianaH:** good

**MaryannDu** joined the room.

**BJB2** hugs Maryann!

**BJB2:** happy Valentines Day :-)

**MaryannDu:** happy Valentines Day

**MaryannDu:** how are you?

**BJB2:** doing well, thanks. Ready for Spring

**MaryannDu:** me too!

**MaryannDu:** I am in west virginia and it has been cold, warm, a little snow etc. but I am on my way back to Chicago, and I have heard there are feet of snow!

**BJB2:** Briana, this is your lucky day...a private discussion with Maryann!

**BrianaH** smiles

**MaryannDu:** Hi Briana

**BrianaH:** Hi

**MaryannDu:** lets start by telling a little about ourselves

**MaryannDu:** I can even go first

**BJB2** nods.

**MaryannDu:** I am a consultant, and I specialize in program evaluations, research on ed and classroom assessment

**BJB2:** I teach communication and am located in Pennsylvania.

**BrianaH:** I live in Houston, Texas, go to UH, and am currently doing my student teaching.

**MaryannDu:** excellent. I am between Chicago and West Virginia!

**MaryannDu:** today in WVA

**MaryannDu:** so how is student teaching going?

**BrianaH:** really good.

**MaryannDu:** what are you teaching and what grade(s)

**BrianaH:** I got a very nice and helpful SBTE which is always nice

**MaryannDu:** SBTE??

**BrianaH:** I am in a Multi-Age class right now (K & 1) and after next will be fourth grade

**MaryannDu:** very nice

**BrianaH:** Site-Based-... um...

**MaryannDu:** ok

**BrianaH:** teacher... educator? something like that

**BrianaH** smiles

**MaryannDu:** right

**MaryannDu:** that is very nice

**MaryannDu:** so someone who is really knowledgeable and helpful

**BrianaH:** yes, she is still quite new herself

**MaryannDu:** interesting

**MaryannDu:** so what brings you to classroom assessment

**BrianaH:** but in a way that can helpful because she still remembers the 'new' fears well

**MaryannDu:** lol

**MaryannDu:** those we never forget

**BrianaH:** well, I am a sponge right now trying to take in everything I can

**MaryannDu:** anything special that interests you about classroom assessment?

**BrianaH:** how to make sure I do it correctly

**BrianaH** laughs

**MaryannDu:** lol

**BrianaH:** I mean, make sure that I get the most from it, get know to the most I can from my students by using proper assessment

**MaryannDu:** well, and are we ever sure that there is one correct way!!!

**MaryannDu:** right

**MaryannDu:** what are some things you would like to do concerning assessment?

**BrianaH** thinks

**MaryannDu:** when you think about proper assessment, what are you thinking aobut?

**BrianaH:** it worries me some. One assessment is one thing, but there are a lot more than just one or two

**BrianaH:** I think of authentic assessment

**MaryannDu:** ok.

**BrianaH:** Also, lots of times I see teachers just put a check and send it back

**MaryannDu:** like one assessment meaning one test, or one verification

**BrianaH:** yes, for UH we have had to do assessments, but it is usually one at a time

**MaryannDu:** right

**MaryannDu:** and assessment meaning test

**BrianaH:** when I am a teacher, I will have all different subjects to consider

**MaryannDu:** right

**MaryannDu:** so how to be assessing all the time and specifically

**BrianaH:** yes, and how to provide good feedback?

**MaryannDu:** I think that is a very good question you have

**BrianaH:** I don't know if that makes sense, but I want my students to not just shove their work in the backpack

**MaryannDu:** right

**BrianaH:** I want them to learn from their mistakes and be more responsible with their own learning

**MaryannDu:** well, for starters I begin with a definition of teaching-learning, which I define as a conversation

**MaryannDu:** because only in a conversation do we find out what kids know, how they think and can we provide guidance and feedback

**BrianaH** nods

**MaryannDu:** I agree with you. we want students to own learning,

**MaryannDu:** it is theirs and we facilitate it.

**MaryannDu:** guide, sometimes, illustrate and instruct,

**MaryannDu:** but if kids don't think about what they are learning, there is no learning

**BrianaH:** right

**BrianaH:** that was a lot of my education

**MaryannDu:** so the first thing that you have to do, is to know what the conversation would be like if kids are engaged and own their learning

**MaryannDu:** yes, unfortunately.

**MaryannDu:** I'm glad you are moving in the other direction!

**MaryannDu:** that is why learning objectives are so critical,

**MaryannDu:** learning objectives define the content of the conversation - even if students write it out on a test

**MaryannDu:** they tell us what to look for in the outcomes

**MaryannDu:** and they tell us how to then construct learning activities so that students reach the objectives

**BrianaH:** I used to think of objectives as just for the teacher to think about, but the more I taught the more I thought it was helpful to have students think about their own learning and why it is important

**MaryannDu:** and they form the framework for any kinds of assessments. once you have the learning objectives then you decide on how to assess,..... any one objective could be by authentic, true false, essay, etc. it just depends on what it says to guide and also if it fits the obj

**MaryannDu:** right. objectives tell students, that in the end, they will know enough to do something that they don't do now.

**BrianaH** nods

**MaryannDu:** and if you have the conversation as ongoing, ie ongoing assessment, then you know who needs more, and who is ready for higher levels

**MaryannDu:** objectives are the key,

**MaryannDu:** how many tests have you seen, where the objective was to write an expository or descriptive paragraph and the test was to grade it on spelling, punctuation, etc. but not sentence structure,

**MaryannDu:** or the rubric

**MaryannDu:** in a case like that

**MaryannDu:** what do you do with objectives now?

**BrianaH:** So, if your objective is for writing about a subject, you need to assess what the student has written about the subject, not so much spelling, etc. But, you could make marks so they know the spelling wasn't write, just not 'grade' them on that?

**BrianaH:** What do you mean?

**BrianaH:** as a student teacher?

**MaryannDu:** right

**MaryannDu:** or that should also be an objective

**BJB2** smiles

**BrianaH:** ha, yeah

**BrianaH:** I am just a bad speller

**MaryannDu:** if the objective is to write a descriptive sentence, in first grade, then .....

**MaryannDu:** oh... that is the nature of this

**MaryannDu:** !!!!

**MaryannDu:** lol

**MaryannDu:** but

**MaryannDu:** if the objective is descriptive sentence or paragraph

**MaryannDu:** then the objective might be to identify, write, select,

**MaryannDu:** depending on the grade level, ability of student, state standard, etc.

**MaryannDu:** identify --- what does that mean..... could be just like select

**BrianaH** nods

**MaryannDu:** so after talking about description and what it is, etc. an assessment might be that a teacher has several sentences on big cards and reads them one at a time

**MaryannDu:** for k-1

**MaryannDu:** and the class might vote for whether it is descriptive or not

**MaryannDu:** assessment comes as the teacher is noting who is not getting it, who hesitates,

**MaryannDu:** I would then take the sentence, and read again, and ask a student, we voted that

**MaryannDu:** her house is on a corner. was not descriptive

**MaryannDu:** but the big blue house sits back from the corner was

**MaryannDu:** I would then ask students why is one descriptive and the other note

**MaryannDu:** conversation

**MaryannDu:** now if my objective was to write a descriptive sentence

**MaryannDu:** then the assessment must meet that

**MaryannDu:** even if I have to do the select first, to get to the write

**MaryannDu:** I think that one of the biggest issues I see is that teachers have an objective, but do not see what is needed before that objective

**MaryannDu:** I do a task analysis

**MaryannDu:** what do students need to do before they do this

**MaryannDu:** what are you thinking?

**BrianaH:** sometimes I can remember the just of what each student has said, but sometimes I can't, but wouldn't it distract them if i tried to make a note?

**BrianaH:** and, task analysis?

**MaryannDu:** well, part of it is that you don't have to do every student all the time.

**MaryannDu:** task analysis helps with that.

**BrianaH:** what is that?

**BrianaH** blushes

**MaryannDu:** for example. On the descriptive paragraph for say 4th graders

**MaryannDu:** a task analysis would list what does a student need to know before passing this test

**MaryannDu:** so they need to know paragraph, that you edit and correct, spelling is important and should be corrected for the final version,

**MaryannDu:** that a paragraph has a main idea and several supporting statements

**MaryannDu:** 'etc.

**BJB2:** vocabulary?

**MaryannDu:** yes

**MaryannDu:** so I might do a check list, that is ongoing even,

**MaryannDu:** and note what students really know.

**MaryannDu:** often we bore kids to death, with what they already know.

**MaryannDu:** so before this lesson, maybe over a month I have been watching a making notes, and I know that everyone is really ready but three kids. they really are bad at editing.

**BrianaH:** so, before you do a test, you make sure that the students have the 'tools' necessary...and that sometimes the tools are there, but they still need...practice?

**MaryannDu:** even before the test, the lesson and learning

**BrianaH** nods

**MaryannDu:** so when I do the lesson on descriptive paragraphs, I review very quickly how, to do the things they do well, even let them do a 5 min list. and maybe focus on editing,

**MaryannDu:** just so the three are not pointed out. and editing is good for everyone

**MaryannDu:** but I already know most are good at it, so I will spend my time with the three

**MaryannDu:** during the lesson and writing and work on teaching them to edit better, what to look for, give them some tools, like maybe how to edit for one thing at a time

**MaryannDu:** or look at why it is harder for them. maybe they have really poor eye hand and should start on the computer and not write it out first

**MaryannDu:** etc.

**MaryannDu:** I am trouble shooting, watching, seeing how and why they do things. and asking

**MaryannDu:** this allows me to differentiate the class,

**MaryannDu:** also



**MaryannDu:** and I could also pick something challenging like vocabulary to focus on

**MaryannDu:** I think assessment is a continuum

**BrianaH:** you keep the students who understand going forward, but the students who need help get the help they need

**MaryannDu:** on one end we are watching, observing, listening, moving into asking questions, how, why did you solve that problem like that. tell me how you did it, etc, then at the other end formal kinds of assessments

**MaryannDu:** yes

**MaryannDu:** right

**MaryannDu:** in a very natural way

**BrianaH:** what I said sounds simple,

**MaryannDu:** lol

**BrianaH:** common sense... but getting there is a lot harder

**MaryannDu:** it is simpler than you think

**BrianaH:** yes

**BrianaH:** practice

**MaryannDu:** I think that the first thing is that you have to respect that children have a lot to say, and want to say it.

**MaryannDu:** and that we have to respect that they are always learning

**MaryannDu:** we destroy the learning by our forced stuff

**BrianaH** nods

**MaryannDu:** and that learning is hard, and fun and feels good

**MaryannDu:** and that learning comes from interest and engagement and sharing

**BrianaH:** and connection to real world

**MaryannDu:** students respond to respect

**BrianaH:** yes

**MaryannDu:** I have had three and four year olds from very financially upper class homes, in good preschools, who never did water colors!

**MaryannDu:** too messy and they have to get ready for school!!!!

**MaryannDu:** and in my bible classes I always did stuff

**BrianaH:** it's a bit depressing

**BJB2:** something else that I think a lot of kids don't learn is that it's ok to make mistakes

**MaryannDu:** yes

**BrianaH:** yes, and then they will not take the risk, they can't even start their work unless a teacher is right there

**MaryannDu:** so I would get out the colors and tell them ok, everyone gets to paint for as long as you want!

**MaryannDu:** just share

**MaryannDu:** right

**MaryannDu:** so they knew they would get turn and they would wait.... and be sooooo sweet

**MaryannDu:** but they couldn't wait!

**BrianaH** smiles

**MaryannDu:** and loved the mess!

**MaryannDu:** we have to give them the permission to make a mess of learning and find their way out

**MaryannDu:** and have fun doing that

**MaryannDu:** not feel bad. and we can do that as teachers

**BrianaH:** part of the process

**MaryannDu:** yes

**BrianaH:** its just, I feel like there is a lot a teacher can do, but home life.. well parents

are such a huge role

**MaryannDu:** I personally think we have to totally change schools and forget about home life

**BrianaH:** really?

**MaryannDu:** I believe that children have two cultures they experience

**MaryannDu:** one is home , and one is schools and we have to stop blaming everybody's mother and just create a different culture

**BJB2:** school is a safe place for children...no matter what the home environment

**MaryannDu:** yes

**MaryannDu:** but more than safe

**MaryannDu:** a different culture, a different environment

**MaryannDu:** not diminishing the family

**MaryannDu:** but saying that here, you will be successful because we know how to do that

**MaryannDu:** instead of well, your mother didn't sign that paper , so you are a failure

**MaryannDu:** life is too tough for many people

**MaryannDu:** and we have to stop abusing children because we don't like what families do

**BrianaH:** well, I see your point, I have not learned everything from my parents...but, I see myself making some of their same mistakes because that is what I was around a lot

**MaryannDu:** we can show children that there is something more

**MaryannDu:** right

**BrianaH:** learning a lot of behavior from my parents

**MaryannDu:** yes

**MaryannDu:** we all do!

**BrianaH:** but I feel it is such a strong force, and when children have 'bad' parents, they

suffer from it

**MaryannDu:** I am a little different, though I am my mother also!!!!, I have really said, who am I and what do I believe. but that is me, and not everyone

**MaryannDu:** yes, they do, but we don't have to make it worse

**BrianaH:** I def. see your point

**BrianaH:** too many people say 'well they have a bad family'

**MaryannDu:** for example. I have 8 school districts with high mobility

**BrianaH:** but there are many, many students who are great despite that

**MaryannDu:** and they could create one two or three central locations so that those students who move between the 8 could have a stable environment, but no that is not possible

**BrianaH:** need to have great expectations for everyone

**MaryannDu:** yes

**MaryannDu:** we are too judgmental

**BrianaH:** yes

**BrianaH:** I don't understand about the stable, mobility thing

**MaryannDu:** I have taught in the back woods of wva, Louisiana and Chicago and kids are kids

**MaryannDu:** they move around between the 8 districts,

**MaryannDu:** which are really close, and very small

**BrianaH:** why?

**BrianaH:** .. do they move

**MaryannDu:** the mother is in jail, so the kids go to dad, then dad is gone, so grandma takes the kids. and then mom gets a job and lives with an aunt

**BrianaH:** oh

**MaryannDu:** all within a few miles, but 8 tiny districts

**BrianaH** sighs

**MaryannDu:** and then they are in many schools. when they could do something about this

**MaryannDu:** or better documentation. and we are talking about 50% of the district

**MaryannDu:** each of the 8 is mobile like that

**MaryannDu:** so it is a very important issue for the children

**MaryannDu:** if we said that this was an important issue. but we have not.

**MaryannDu:** the issue is really, well they sure bring down the test scores!!!

**BrianaH:** I hate the tests

**MaryannDu:** lol

**BrianaH:** because of the importance put on them

**MaryannDu:** right

**MaryannDu:** instead of putting the importance on the kids

**BrianaH:** yes

**BrianaH:** it's annoying, so I want to make sure I do assessments right in my class

**BrianaH:** at least

**BrianaH:** observe

**MaryannDu:** there are problems with nclb, but school districts did not take the stand that yes we agree, so how will we do that. instead they said, this is too hard, and we can't do it, so now we have to teach to the test

**MaryannDu:** well, I think you have to think of assessment as a continuum. I believe that if the teaching and learning has occurred, then for the most part, everyone should pass the test.

**BJB2** looks at the clock on the wall

**MaryannDu:** lol

**MaryannDu:** wow this has been so fast

**BJB2:** The next Classroom Assessment will be on March13

**BrianaH:** I like the Dr. Seuss book, "Hooray for Diffendoofer day" (something like that)

**MaryannDu:** yes

**BrianaH:** can I ask one more question?

**MaryannDu:** lol

**MaryannDu:** sure

**BrianaH** smiles

**BJB2:** always goes fast when you are actively engaged in the discussion ;-)

**MaryannDu:** lol

**MaryannDu:** yes

**BrianaH:** is it unreasonable to think of every day at the end of the day, or week, or something to make notes about kids?

**BrianaH:** I mean, not every kid every day

**BrianaH:** but, if something comes up (which a lot should within one day) just make a note later

**MaryannDu:** I think weekly is reasonable, but only if organized and specific

**MaryannDu:** make a note later

**BrianaH:** right, ok

**BJB2:** Thanks, Maryann!

**MaryannDu:** some people tape, but I am hard about that, as I do research and really get used to transcriptions being typed for me!

**BrianaH** smiles

**MaryannDu:** but they are pretty cheap to get done, so actually that might be really good

**MaryannDu:** then they are all done!

**MaryannDu:** and you could make tons of observations!

**MaryannDu:** digital is the way to go

**MaryannDu:** lol

**BrianaH:** I like writing (typing) it helps me remember

**MaryannDu:** me too

**BJB2:** some teachers use a blackberry to take notes

**MaryannDu:** and actually, a debrief at the end of the day is very good

**MaryannDu:** as you are reflecting over things, and remember them. which may lead to noting a specific thing about a student that could be "assessed" more formally on a checklist

**BrianaH:** I really like organizing my thoughts, because I find them unhelpful when they are all zooming at me at once

**MaryannDu:** yes

**MaryannDu:** !

**MaryannDu:** well, I hope to see you next month

**MaryannDu:** thanks for stopping in!

**BrianaH:** no, no

**BrianaH:** thank you

**BJB2:** have a safe trip home, Maryann

**BrianaH:** seriously!

**MaryannDu:** lol

**MaryannDu:** thanks!

**MaryannDu:** see you later

**BrianaH:** try to stay warm!

**BJB2** waves bye and heads for Teachers in Training

**MaryannDu:** lol

**MaryannDu:** bye