

**Title of Session:** Classroom Assessment

**Moderator:** Maryann Durland

**Title of File:** 20081211assess

**Date:** December 11, 2008

Room: Classroom Assessment Group

**MaryannDu:** so Patrick, have you been to tapped in before?

**PatrickRC** smiles

**PatrickRC:** many times

**MaryannDu:** very good.

**BJB2** smiles and hugs Patrick. Patrick started out as a student volunteer

**MaryannDu:** very nice. So you are the one I call when I get lost

**MaryannDu:** lol

**PatrickRC:** lol if you need it :) I'm a little rusty

**MaryannDu:** what are you doing now?

**PatrickRC:** I'm finishing up college to be a secondary history teacher

**BJB2** . o O ( he's now a husband and daddy )

**MaryannDu:** nice

**PatrickRC:** that too :)

**MaryannDu:** I just moved back to WV from Chicago. to be closer to my parents

**MaryannDu:** 40 years after leaving!

**MaryannDu:** lol

**PatrickRC:** wow! lol

**MaryannDu:** hard to believe

**MaryannDu:** so do you have an interest in classroom assessment?

**PatrickRC:** yes. My classes at the university cover assessment, but I guess it is still a little vague

**BJB2:** I really enjoyed the last discussion, Maryann...it helped me understand the RTI we discussed during special ed

**MaryannDu:** good.

**MaryannDu:** anything else come up that you'd like to talk about?

**BJB2 . o O** ( Teachers should have LOTS of assessment information...it's so critical to student success )

**MaryannDu:** yes

**PatrickRC:** the part that confuses me the most is explaining assessment to the parents and principals

**MaryannDu:** I was thinking about that today, that there are so many types of information that we need - what is assessment, what are the types of assessment, validity, reliability of assessment, tests, why use assessments, etc

**PatrickRC:** it tends to look too subjective

**BJB2:** your topic is creating an assessment and grading framework...might that help?

**MaryannDu:** yes that might help

**MaryannDu:** what kinds of assessments do you tend to favor

**PatrickRC:** I like observing and watching students participation

**BJB2:** the problem with that question is that the type/kind of assessment varies so much according to each student and their needs

**MaryannDu:** ok

**BJB2 . o O** ( that's my problem anyway )

**MaryannDu:** I think that when you develop an assessment and grading framework, then explaining assessment is easier because it relates back to the objectives and to the learning activities

**MaryannDu:** in a way, the goals and objectives should drive the assessment and this drives the learning activities and instructional practices.

**PatrickRC** smiles

**PatrickRC:** I think we just covered that in class (my first observation class)

**MaryannDu:** for example, if a learning objective is that a student can discuss the causes or the underlying reasons for the civil war

**MaryannDu:** oh...

**MaryannDu:** and did it make sense

**PatrickRC:** yeah

**MaryannDu:** good

**MaryannDu:** do looking at the objective I just wrote

**BJB2:** how would the student 'discuss'?

**MaryannDu:** the assessment has to be some sort of discussion, and the content of the assessment or the information we are looking for the student to be able to do is to talk about in some way the c or ul reasons for the cw

**MaryannDu:** good question

**MaryannDu:** discuss - you could literally take the word and expect a panel discussion

**BJB2** nods.

**MaryannDu:** or you could look for other words that are similar.

**PatrickRC:** hmm - maybe an essay question too

**MaryannDu:** when we ask students to write an essay

**MaryannDu:** right

**MaryannDu:** or

**BJB2:** more than 'list' though

**MaryannDu:** yes,

**MaryannDu:** not a list

**MaryannDu:** discuss implies talk about in the sense here of how or why,

**MaryannDu:** so you might have a list and the students identify which are true or false -

**MaryannDu:** but very good items

**MaryannDu:** and then take the true and explore how

**MaryannDu:** in a short paragraph

**MaryannDu:** or even how they are related to each other

**PatrickRC:** I used to make acronyms to remember the answers to questions about causes

**MaryannDu:** the test item should be developed first, though it might get edited.

**MaryannDu:** remember is knowledge level

**MaryannDu:** no comprehension, just list

**MaryannDu:** to discuss you have to understand and be able to explore in depth

**PatrickRC:** yeah - I never really applied much of what I learned in class, though I could recite almost everything

**MaryannDu:** right

**MaryannDu:** lol

**MaryannDu:** application is the key, even if you don't have all of it, if you can discuss then you have it.

**MaryannDu:** so part of the assessment process is also to decide what is enough

**MaryannDu:** do you have to know every thought on the issue or be able to talk about it well, and what you do know you know well.

**MaryannDu:** is it how many facts, or that you know and could find more and you would be able to do something with what you learned later

**MaryannDu:** that is a key to assessments.

**MaryannDu:** and it then also guides the instructional practices

**MaryannDu:** if you have to know all the various reasons and causes, then in a short period of time you might know a little about many things

**MaryannDu:** but another way is that you might really learn a lot about one or two and share information with others in presentations and discussions. actually classroom talk

**MaryannDu:** so on a test, you could answer a question well, but it might be different from someone else's.

**BJB2 . o O ( jigsaw )**

**MaryannDu:** hard to grade

**MaryannDu:** yes

**MaryannDu:** but, there are other ways than taking them home and spending hours

**MaryannDu:** I believe in peer and self grading to a degree

**PatrickRC:** would you then create a rubric to grade?

**MaryannDu:** yes

**MaryannDu:** but not like in a list of things

**MaryannDu:** more like in what would be a quality answer, based on what was taught

**PatrickRC:** I guess that is the part that is a bit vague to me

**MaryannDu:** so if you had to know most causes, then I should not expect a class who has only spent two weeks on the unit to go into details

**MaryannDu:** ok

**PatrickRC:** do you have an example?

**MaryannDu:** think in terms of what you will teach

**MaryannDu:** yes

**PatrickRC:** ok

**MaryannDu:** If I had taught this as project based

**MaryannDu:** more the jigsaw

**MaryannDu:** with groups going into more details on pieces and then sharing

**MaryannDu:** my assessment item might be an essay - something like thinking about the

causes you studied, how well do you feel your cause is related to another cause

**MaryannDu:** not really very good

**MaryannDu:** but in general, take what you know, now think about what you heard others talk about and how do you think they all fit.

**MaryannDu:** I would have a rubric that would look for specific things I had taught

**PatrickRC:** hmm - or how it related to today?

**MaryannDu:** no

**MaryannDu:** that is not in the objective

**BJB2:** what about asking if there could be a civil war like the one in the 1800's today?

**MaryannDu:** only if you had that as an objective

**MaryannDu:** or

**MaryannDu:** let me think

**BJB2:** what is the purpose of learning history?

**BJB2** . o O ( sorry...I know that is off topic. )

**MaryannDu:** you could write an item asking that and answered by explore the possibility of those reasons being here today

**MaryannDu:** lol

**MaryannDu:** well yes

**MaryannDu:** but for an assessment it has to fit the objective

**MaryannDu:** and it has to be taught

**MaryannDu:** this is what often happens

**MaryannDu:** but if there were no class lessons or instructional activities on this, then you are asking an unfair questions

**MaryannDu:** you are saying ok, now do synthesis, when we never talked about how to do it

**BJB2** nods.

**PatrickRC:** "to do it" what was it?

**MaryannDu:** compare to today

**PatrickRC:** hmm...

**MaryannDu:** you couldn't teach about causes and reasons and then say compare to today

**MaryannDu:** as the assessment

**BJB2:** in a world where we have to teach to the standards, you almost have to 'teach to the test'

**MaryannDu:** because you didn't teach that nor was it in the objective

**MaryannDu:** not that it couldn't be

**MaryannDu:** and it would be good to do it

**BJB2:** but in an ideal classroom, the objective would be to that synthesis

**PatrickRC:** I guess that is my thought - maybe every objective should contain a clause connecting it to today

**MaryannDu:** but what often happens is that after the lesson, the teacher has this great question like this, and then boom.

**MaryannDu:** or the instructional activities get at that

**MaryannDu:** they expand the objective

**MaryannDu:** tell more of what discuss means

**MaryannDu:** so one could be to compare to today

**MaryannDu:** but compare is different from discuss

**PatrickRC:** right

**PatrickRC:** I guess I don't see why students would "want" to learn unless they had a reason to apply it... or that is the way I am

**MaryannDu:** so each of these is very specific, though we don't always treat them that way

**MaryannDu:** well, do you like to read great stories?

**MaryannDu:** the excitement

**MaryannDu:** etc

**PatrickRC:** only if I can connect them to something else, or something I am doing

**MaryannDu:** we are all learners, some have just not had that interest tapped.

**PatrickRC:** otherwise they take up too much time...

**MaryannDu:** lol

**MaryannDu:** but you like to learn about what you want to do

**PatrickRC:** yeah, I love learning - I think everyone does

**MaryannDu:** kids love reading about the stars, etc

**MaryannDu:** right

**BJB2:** one thing that we often lose track of is how much 'prior knowledge' the students have.

**MaryannDu:** so it is tapping into that which is important

**MaryannDu:** right

**MaryannDu:** and I think also the build up, the excitement, the what does it mean

**MaryannDu:** when kids make decisions, they find meaning and that drives learning

**MaryannDu:** take leaders.

**MaryannDu:** past and current

**PatrickRC:** I think that students do want to know the "Why?" or what does it mean part, but only after they are interested in the topic.

**MaryannDu:** if the objective is to be able to identify the characteristics of great leaders, (not a good obj)

**MaryannDu:** right



**MaryannDu:** first is getting interest... developing a way to talk about what is a great leader

**MaryannDu:** creating some names, talking about knowing great leaders

**MaryannDu:** students like to talk

**MaryannDu:** they know things

**MaryannDu:** they want to explore

**MaryannDu:** so if they start out with a discussion of great leaders and why they think they are great leaders, then you have a framework for more work

**PatrickRC:** but the classroom tends to create a whole different atmosphere that is teacher-centered

**PatrickRC:** ok, that makes sense

**PatrickRC:** but it seems that the same 5-10 students talk and everyone else is quiet... or at least a few never say a word

**MaryannDu:** no, the teacher tends to create a whole different atmosphere that is teacher-centered. the classroom is neutral

**MaryannDu:** lol

**MaryannDu:** you have to develop the groups

**MaryannDu:** even if only a few start off

**MaryannDu:** you create four groups

**MaryannDu:** number them off, etc.

**MaryannDu:** move it quick

**PatrickRC:** (I would argue that the classroom is not neutral, but that's a different discussion I suppose)

**MaryannDu:** have them come up with three past and three current leaders and why they think they are

**MaryannDu:** lol

**MaryannDu:** I would agree,

**MaryannDu:** as I believe that the classroom is an entity,

**MaryannDu:** they're whole

**MaryannDu:** lol

**MaryannDu:** any way

**MaryannDu:** then you generate a list

**MaryannDu:** and then you decide with the class how can we research this.

**MaryannDu:** are our ideas about great leaders what the rest of the world says

**MaryannDu:** how could we explore this question, what makes a great leader and are our ideas valid

**MaryannDu:** could be each reads a bio

**PatrickRC:** the teacher would decide validity? or how would that work?

**MaryannDu:** or they study leaders as defined by the experts.

**MaryannDu:** no, the research would decide validity

**MaryannDu:** you would have a list the class created.

**BJB2:** a lot of that was done during the presidential race....

**MaryannDu:** great leaders do..... are.....

**MaryannDu:** etc

**BJB2:** citing the strengths of great presidents

**MaryannDu:** maybe adjectives like respected

**MaryannDu:** right

**MaryannDu:** great leaders are people who do what???

**MaryannDu:** people respect them

**PatrickRC:** how would research prove validity?

**MaryannDu:** what ever the class comes up with, it gets written on a big poster and hung on the wall

**MaryannDu:** well, as they read about what others say about great leaders,

**PatrickRC:** wouldn't that be subjective?

**MaryannDu:** they find out that xxx says that these presidents were great leaders because

**MaryannDu:** yes and no

**MaryannDu:** you will have some clear boundaries, but you will not exhaust the field so you won't have everything

**PatrickRC:** hmm...

**MaryannDu:** but the goal is what is a great leader

**MaryannDu:** and there is some consensus on this, and when there isn't that is important also

**PatrickRC:** but "great" is subjective and not assessable, is it?

**MaryannDu:** what you are assessing is can a student describe why and when and how a leader might be described as "great"

**PatrickRC:** it just seems that different people groups would disagree - say democrats vs. republicans, Jews vs. Christians, vs. Muslims, etc.

**MaryannDu:** for example is time always a factor --- you have to be dead to be great?

**MaryannDu:** that may be part of the discussion and learning

**MaryannDu:** so and so is called great by.... but not by

**MaryannDu:** because

**MaryannDu:** very complex

**MaryannDu:** very deep

**PatrickRC:** which needs taught but likely won't be on a state test...

**MaryannDu:** not a simple answer

**MaryannDu:** well, if students can do this kind of thinking, the state test will be a breeze

**MaryannDu:** what you need to know to do this, requires many state test items

**MaryannDu:** state tests are generally minimum standards

**MaryannDu:** if you can do the max, you have to build from the min to get to the max

**PatrickRC:** hmm - makes sense

**MaryannDu:** yes

**PatrickRC:** I loved doing discussion, etc. like you were talking about, and always did well on state tests

**MaryannDu:** and all of those things can be included in higher order frameworks

**PatrickRC:** even though I never liked the tests themselves

**MaryannDu:** see

**MaryannDu:** lol

**MaryannDu:** right

**MaryannDu:** when we limit to the test, we limit thinking and learning

**MaryannDu:** we have to weave things into the bigger picture

**MaryannDu:** for example

**MaryannDu:** if map reading is an item

**MaryannDu:** it can be included in many different projects

**PatrickRC:** good point

**MaryannDu:** even the causes unit - an objective about the geographic location and such

**MaryannDu:** causes were different based on north or south

**MaryannDu:** and the needs of each

**MaryannDu:** and some were direct causes, and some were not

**MaryannDu:** mapping general areas would be great

**MaryannDu:** it is not easy to create a broad framework that weaves all things in, but once you do it, it gets easier and better

**PatrickRC:** I'll remember that

**MaryannDu:** for me, it is all about planning it all out, thinking through it, and being ready to be open and let students take the lead with guidelines

**BJB2:** our time is about up. Maryann, do you have a topic for the January 15 discussion?

**MaryannDu:** no not yet. any ideas?

**BJB2:** . o O ( I'm ignoring January 1 as the first Thursday )

**PatrickRC:** (this was a nice little personal discussion)

**MaryannDu:** lol

**MaryannDu:** thank you. I think so too

**BJB2:** glad you were able to join us, Patrick!

**PatrickRC** smiles

**MaryannDu:** hang in there

**BJB2:** guess unless you have an idea, Maryann, I'll leave the topic blank and we can wait and see what participants need/want

**MaryannDu:** ok

**BJB2:** come back again, Patrick!

**MaryannDu:** and I will think on it, and let you know if I think of something.

**BJB2** nods. Sounds great

**BJB2:** Thanks for being here, Maryann. Have a wonderful and safe holiday

**PatrickRC:** I'll be around - I'll join the group and try to make it if an email is sent out

**MaryannDu:** you too!

**BJB2:** you and your family too, Patrick

**MaryannDu:** great

**MaryannDu:** thanks

**MaryannDu:** yes

**PatrickRC:** thanks

**MaryannDu:** send me an email any time if I can help with anything

**BJB2** waves bye and heads for WriteTalk

**MaryannDu:** bye

**PatrickRC:** bye