

Title of Session: Classroom Assessment

Moderator: Maryann Durland

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Room: Classroom Assessment Group

BjB: Have you participated in any other TI discussions, Magdalene?

MagdaleneD: No, this is my 1st.

BjB: well, you picked a wonderful chat for your 1st experience!

MaryannDu: welcome!

MagdaleneD: This really is a new experience for me. Thanks!

BjB: to help you read the scrolling chat, Magdalene, go to Actions in the top right of your chat and select Larger Text

BjB: then go to Actions again and select DETACH

BjB thinks Maryann needs to put some resources in this group room

BjB . o O (when she gets some time ;-)

MagdaleneD: Thanks, that really helps!

MagdaleneD: I have Detached.

MaryannDu: yes, I'll get to that some day!!

BjB: I'll announce in a minute...just ignore the announcement, Magdalene. You're in the right place

MagdaleneD: I am really excited about this opportunity to collaborate and learn.

BjB: |** ANNOUNCEMENT: The Classroom Assessment discussion is starting in the group room. To participate type /join MaryannDu in this chat window. **|

BjB: let's start with introductions, please

BjB: I'm a retired communication teacher located in Pennsylvania

MaryannDu: and I am a consultant who works with schools and am interested about assessment

MagdaleneD: I'm a Curriculum Facilitator at a rural middle school in Louisiana.

MaryannDu: nice

MaryannDu: I am in rural West Virginia and used to live --- for 17 years --- in Louisiana

BjB: wow...big contrast!

MaryannDu: yes it is.

MagdaleneD: I've been in LA all my life.

MaryannDu: and this is classroom assessment

MaryannDu: what brings you here Magdalene?

MagdaleneD: This is a course requirement.

MaryannDu: ok

MaryannDu: are you interested in anything particular?

MagdaleneD: I'm enrolled in an Effective Integration of Technology course.

MaryannDu: ok

MaryannDu: integration into the classroom?

MagdaleneD: However, I am really interested in learning about the use of assessment for learning.

MaryannDu: other classroom teachers integration of technology>

MagdaleneD: Yes, integration in the classroom.

MaryannDu: ok

MaryannDu: and one of the things that teachers are interested in is how to assess technology

MaryannDu: and there are other things too

MaryannDu: like how to use technology to assess

MagdaleneD: Yes, that is true. However, in my opinion, knowing how to use technology tools to enhance students' learning is important and essential

MaryannDu: are you finding that there are questions coming up?

MaryannDu: yes

MaryannDu: both from the teacher's use of technology and the student use

MagdaleneD: Yes

MaryannDu: I tend to focus on the two aspects

MaryannDu: one, it is critical for teachers to use technology

MagdaleneD: Which is essential

MaryannDu: and from that use they can assess students in multiple ways

MaryannDu: and then on the other hand students can use technology to create products that can take the place of tests and such

MagdaleneD: Right, make learning accessible to all

MaryannDu: yes

MagdaleneD: It is also motivating to today's students

MaryannDu: do you find that this is happening, that technology makes learning accessible and motivates students?

MagdaleneD: It can if educators know how to effectively use it

MaryannDu: do you work directly with teachers to use technology in the classroom?

MaryannDu: or do you work with the students

MagdaleneD: Yes, I do in that when I present strategies to help I try to incorporate technology as much as possible

MaryannDu: ok

MagdaleneD: I find that many of our teachers use technology to present info rather than as a tool for students' use and assessment

MaryannDu: right

MaryannDu: what kinds of technology do they use? white boards?

MaryannDu: ppt?

MagdaleneD: Yes, LCD projectors, document cameras, ppt.

MaryannDu: yes

MaryannDu: what are the kinds of things they do?

MagdaleneD: That use it mostly to present information

MaryannDu: are you able to work with them to move in different directions? like i use the white board for my students to present class discussion summaries

MagdaleneD: I have been working with some of our teachers to plan lessons in which students use this the technology to demonstrate their learning

MaryannDu: right

MaryannDu: that is so much fun

MagdaleneD: I find that I am more successful with those teachers who have confidence or comfortable with using technology

MaryannDu: but it also means more planning and really knowing what it is you are teaching and how you measure the learning

MagdaleneD: That is true.

MagdaleneD: I recently participated in a state sponsored training on formative assessment.

MaryannDu: oh very cool.

MaryannDu: like performance assessments?

MagdaleneD: This is an area that I think would really help us to close the achievement gap

MaryannDu: yes

MaryannDu: very much so

MagdaleneD: It's more using assessment for learning

MaryannDu: I see that one issue is that teachers often don't know how assessment is a process not a test

JeffC joined the room.

MaryannDu: yes.

BjB waves hi to Jeff

MaryannDu: assessment to determine instructional practices

MaryannDu: it is a hard thing for teachers to move towards

MagdaleneD: Right

MaryannDu: you really have to know the learning process and how the learning occurs and all the assumptions and little steps.

MaryannDu: not just know or not know

MagdaleneD: This presents a new way of doing things.

MaryannDu: yes. it is really based on very good research on how learning occurs

MagdaleneD: It entails involving students in all steps of the learning process

MaryannDu: and how instruction should be aligned to what students need

MaryannDu: yes

MaryannDu: I really like students in the mix

MagdaleneD: Yes, assessing to guide instruction

MaryannDu: I believe that teaching learning is a conversation

MagdaleneD: I agree

MaryannDu: what is the meaning, what is going on in the process, what is the thinking

MaryannDu: you only get that when you have a conversation

MaryannDu: the questions, the probes

MaryannDu: the listening to kids

MaryannDu: the letting them talk

MagdaleneD: Yes, and helping students to know where they are in the process

MagdaleneD: A big thing was creating clear learning targets

MaryannDu: yes

JeffC: getting them involved and engaged with their own education is key. how does one do that when the assessment driving schools now are mandated NCLB tests? I'm about to have parent/teacher conferences with my kids' teachers... and I'm livid!

MagdaleneD: It has to start in the classroom

MaryannDu: oh no.

MaryannDu: what is going on Jeff?

JeffC: same ole same ole

MaryannDu: lol

MagdaleneD: It is frustrating

MaryannDu: are the conferences about poor assessments? or dealing with parents?

JeffC: I laid into the edtech cadre at the monthly meeting. half didn't show up (as usual)... and I'm furious with them for not holding online meetings and/or office hours.

MaryannDu: oh that is not good. There is so much we can do~!

JeffC: all the focus is on AYP... you should read the newsletter my daughter brought home for Tom McCall Upper Elementary... it's all about "rigor and academics and testing"

MagdaleneD: So where do you go from here?

JeffC: into a hobbit hole

MagdaleneD: I know the feeling

JeffC: well... I got good news... I might be getting a free ride for an MS at Capella... in professional studies

JeffC: and I owe edweek an article or three

JeffC: so yeah... a lot of typing and no more mr. nice guy

JeffC: because the assessment you're alluding to sounds wonderful

MaryannDu: well, I do think that the rigor and academics is good --- however what schools often all rigor is not --- rigor meaning high expectations, and lots of good instructional practices

JeffC: something that could start in K with e-portfolios and individualized education programs

MaryannDu: yes

MaryannDu: and you would still have rigor and high levels of academic expectations.

JeffC: rigor to them means taking the state test 3 times if necessary to raise their scores a few points

JeffC: and the kids hate it

MagdaleneD: What about learning

MaryannDu: well, I think we have to begin to get at the schools. that we have to begin saying no. do better, this is not what is good for your kids.

JeffC: and are bored... and indeed... many teachers don't use computers at all because they know 4 months will be stuck with testing... so yeah... what *about* learning?

MaryannDu: yes

JeffC: exactly

JeffC: and I'm going in as a parent

JeffC: I've been trying to officially get work with them for years... and they nod their heads and always say no for one reason or another

MaryannDu: and I am concerned that teachers don't push their own learning. do more now to teach better

JeffC: they can't

JeffC: they're locked into power standards etc.

MaryannDu: I want to break all this

MaryannDu: to move ed forward

MaryannDu: when and how do we do it?

JeffC: but unless the power standards truly get into engaged learning... starting with all teachers knowing what "androgogy" means... we're doomed

MagdaleneD: I think they must because that's the only thing they have control of

JeffC: teachers need to rebel and get NCLB repealed or drastically altered

MaryannDu: or fear, or not knowing how to do things differently. it is always I can;t

MagdaleneD: I have a feeling that's coming

JeffC: and really start thinking nationally and internationally as educators and students (and parents and communities)... rather than classrooms in boxes.

MaryannDu: it is often the districts who interpret nclb in these ways

MaryannDu: who put the process in that are not effective

ShayneTr joined the room.

MagdaleneD: I agree

BjB waves hi to Shayne

MaryannDu: we need different thinking

MaryannDu: what is the meaning of being a teacher

MaryannDu: I am teaching reading methods now to secondary students who say no

MagdaleneD: We need to think about learning

MaryannDu: I won't ever teach that

MaryannDu: and I say it is about learning

MaryannDu: how to think

MagdaleneD: Yes

MaryannDu: it takes leadership

MaryannDu: for sure

MaryannDu: how do we get the system to change

MaryannDu: this is a system issue.

JeffC: yup

MaryannDu: district, principals, teachers, and parents

JeffC: politics of education

MaryannDu: right now parents are not included

JeffC: can you get Obama here for next month's session?

MagdaleneD: it's like climbing a mountain...one step at a time

MaryannDu: lol

MaryannDu: but you also know the mountain is there

JeffC: I once spent an entire spring vacation going over student folders and calling 150 parents

MagdaleneD: it would be interesting to get his take on things

MaryannDu: and what happened

JeffC: are we gonna have to bring Mohammed into this?

MaryannDu: lol

JeffC: well... some things changed... most things didn't

MagdaleneD: lol

JeffC: of course now I could use a variety of online tools for many... but not all... which is always an excuse that teachers use for not using tech

MaryannDu: one thing I find is that the research and all the people who are calling for change say one thing is critical. -- that you know that is is an issue and that it is urgent to do something

JeffC: well... that's why I became a teacher... because school sux

MaryannDu: and what I FIND is that no one things that it is urgent . we are doing ok

MaryannDu: fix a thing or two

JeffC: ya THINK?

MaryannDu: but it is urgent that we change and change in significant ways

MaryannDu: yes

JeffC: really? I think the whole thing is still seriously screwed up

MagdaleneD: I find that solving problems means losing jobs

MaryannDu: but you are one in a sea of many

JeffC: when I go to the PT conference, the teachers will tell me how wonderfully my kids are doing and show me their high test scores as evidence. how do you think I should respond?

MaryannDu: well, another thing is do you think of being a teacher as a union job or as a high level profession?

MagdaleneD: So, don't allow yourself to get eaten

JeffC: it's not a job... it's a career

JeffC: it's life work

JeffC: I get paid zip here... but I've been volunteering at tapped in since it started in 97

JeffC: so no... it's not a job

JeffC: jobs are like tasks... onerous things that nobody really wants to do but you either get paid or graded as your incentive

MaryannDu: I would ask the teacher... well this is nice that my kids have good grades. but I wonder if you could tell me what standards you have been focusing on, and how are they doing on the key ones you have targeted for the class

JeffC: and punished when you don't reach some carrot level

MaryannDu: are you able to differentiate your class?

MaryannDu: lol

JeffC: not sure of your question

MaryannDu: I would ask the teacher that

JeffC: my class? I have no class!

MagdaleneD: And how do you know whether or not they have hit the learning target

MaryannDu: I would ask the teacher, can you show me

MaryannDu: yes

MaryannDu: get the teacher to talk at a higher level, what are you doing, why are you doing it and how does it fit my child

JeffC: my basic question is "when I talk to my daughter about how school was... almost every day she says 'boring'. What can you do about it?"

MagdaleneD: I find that differentiated instruction is a foreign word on the middle school level

MaryannDu: I would ask the teacher. Can you tell me what a day is like for my child

MaryannDu: yes

JeffC: I already have a pretty good idea

MaryannDu: what does my child experience in your classroom daily?

MaryannDu: ask and make the teacher say what she does and why

MaryannDu: in a nice way

MaryannDu: a conversation

JeffC: and I'm not keen on it... in part because the teachers don't use tech... I'm done being nice

MagdaleneD: Does she know what she is supposed to learn

MaryannDu: yes

JeffC: of course she knows what she's supposed to learn... she's gifted and tests well... but what she doesn't get is engaged learning

MaryannDu: I would ask about technology. say. my child can type well, can she turn her work in as a doc and would you do edit and review mode with her so I can help her in her work?

MaryannDu: and if no, why not?

JeffC: well... part of the reason is that teachers unplug their classroom computers

MagdaleneD: Unfortunately, that's not the case for many of our students

MaryannDu: ask,

JeffC: because "the kids want to be on them all the time."

MaryannDu: yes

JeffC: I have... I've offered... in my 4th graders class I even created a virtual classroom for them and set up a unit on Oregonian Natives... the teacher's never used it.

MaryannDu: ask teachers. how are you able to assess my child without a test? do you use any tools?

JeffC: so I'm bringing a taser to the meeting

MaryannDu: lol

MaryannDu: well, don't do it for them. but make them think about what you are asking

MagdaleneD: please don't

MaryannDu: ask and get them engaged in the conversation

JeffC: the thing is... I have treaded lightly because I know the conformity standards that these teachers are under from admin

MagdaleneD: Is this an inclusion class or gifted?

MaryannDu: yes

JeffC: been trying that

MaryannDu: lightly and helpfully

JeffC: they're overwhelmed already

ShayneTr: I'm still trying to catch up (sorry for being late). Your kids' teachers don't give any form of assessment, Jeff?

MaryannDu: but you can also be nice and get a conversation going

ShayneTr: Or give tests?

JeffC: all they need is a parent educator who knows more than anyone in the district about getting kids actively engaged suggesting what they should do... or how they could change.

MaryannDu: push through the conversation

MaryannDu: ask

MagdaleneD: So, your child is not being challenged..

MaryannDu: they need to think and be thoughtful

JeffC: I've helped a number of teachers in the district... but it's a crapshoot and very difficult when the status quo is AYP and parents in general bake cookies at most.

MaryannDu: yes that is so true

MaryannDu: but make them talk about what they do

MaryannDu: in a conversation

JeffC: it's not just challenged... it's being part of the test/grading/knowledge mentality... indoctrinated

JeffC: if the district makes it all about tests and grades then what are students going to do?

MaryannDu: get them to have to tell you, well I don't differentiate, well I just do this... or that

JeffC: think that it's all about that... and find out what they have to do to reach the level they and their parents are comfortable with, ignore the rest, and move on.

MaryannDu: talk to the teachers. my child is bored. why is my child bored in your classroom help me to understand what she is experiencing.

JeffC: you want me to sit there and ask rhetorical questions that I already have answers for?

MaryannDu: no.

MaryannDu: ask as if you really wanted to know

MaryannDu: ask and expect the teacher to talk to you like a real person

JeffC: what I want is dramatic change... and it ain't likely to happen during my kids' tenure in school.

MaryannDu: ask to get to a higher level of meaning between you and the teacher

MaryannDu: oh that is so sad/

MaryannDu: but true

MagdaleneD: But, talk to the teacher as if you value his/her as a professional

MaryannDu: so ask and talk

MaryannDu: well, maybe

MaryannDu: no, you are right

JeffC: it happens when I pretty much force myself into the classroom as a volunteer... but I really don't want to take over... I just want my kids to be engaged... and as a parent I know that ultimately that is my responsibility.

JeffC: and I'm not a real failure in that regard... indeed... Owen is hanging out at Funbrain behind me as I type

MaryannDu: I think that parents are not welcome, but we have to be there. we have to say. I want to know and I want to be a part of this

JeffC: of course... he's going after the virtual \$\$\$... he's such a little capitalist (how disappointing for this Berkeley hippie!)

JeffC: switching from extrinsic to intrinsic rewards regarding learning and instruction... there's the rub.

MaryannDu: in the conversation with teachers we have to have content, deep meaning. we take it to the table and ask them to engage with us

MaryannDu: ok only a few things a night here Jeff!

MaryannDu: we can't; solve everything lololo

JeffC: how much project based learning do you do?

MaryannDu: I try to do everything project based

MaryannDu: I work with college kids now

JeffC: there ya go... you're an educational goddess

JeffC: please come and exorcise the demons here!

MaryannDu: who do not know how to think

BjB nods solemnly to Jeff

MaryannDu: and I pull them and push them through the process

JeffC: I had to teach the last superintendent what PBL was a couple years ago

MaryannDu: but we have to get in there. talk, be a part of their learning

MaryannDu: push it also, but nice.

JeffC: and it continues to be virtually non-existent here.

MaryannDu: now I say this as I spit fire about my students to my peers

JeffC: ok... I'll push it nice... with a lower powered tazer

MaryannDu: but I do know that the conversation is the key

MagdaleneD: Are the resources there

MaryannDu: talk about how what you see is needed

MaryannDu: unless we push schools as parents to get there, they won't go

JeffC: sorta Magdalene... we just pushed for more notebook carts in the schools... maybe if I tell them I'll help work on a 1 laptop grant they'll listen to me... oh wait... I already tried that

MaryannDu: with my kids, I talk. how many have done this.

MaryannDu: etc

JeffC: do you do PBL with your students Magdalene and Shayne?

MagdaleneD: We have to not only push but support

MaryannDu: no doing it for them

MaryannDu: they have to want it

MaryannDu: it is like learning

MaryannDu: you cannot tell

JeffC: right... and they have nothing but tells from the admins

MaryannDu: you have to create the space, conversation, the environment that builds the learning for the learner

JeffC: getting tells from parents...

MaryannDu: resources are nice

MaryannDu: but conversation is the key

MagdaleneD: I agree

JeffC: yeah... the rhetoric of parent teacher conferencing... again... maybe I can get them here... been trying that for a while as well... these yearly PT conferences are a joke

MaryannDu: yes. do it different

MaryannDu: talk about the standards.

MaryannDu: ask deep thoughtful questions that require a meaning full answer

MaryannDu: a conversation. to create shared meaning.

MaryannDu: that is what learning is and what schools need to do.

MaryannDu: continuous life long learner

MagdaleneD: which hopefully leads to shared understanding

MaryannDu: ask the teacher what she learned this year to help her students learn better

MaryannDu: in a nice way

JeffC: right now when teachers hear "life long learner" they shudder at their PD requirements for credential renewal

MaryannDu: ask the teacher how she uses projects to develop skills needed for the tests

MaryannDu: lol

JeffC: that's just it Maryann... there's very little PBL going on here

JeffC: you're outside the platonic cave... I'm dealing with those chained looking at shadows

MaryannDu: I don't know what is going to happen. I just know that we have to push schools to change ,one parent at a time

BjB looks at the clock on the wall

BjB: very passionate discussion....Did you survive, Magdalene?

MaryannDu: I see schools as imploding upon themselves and we can help or wait for it to happen

JeffC heads back to his Capella app... sorry I took over... that's why it's better when I lurk!

MagdaleneD: Yes!

MaryannDu: very passionate

MaryannDu: thanks

JeffC: btw Magdalene... let me know if you'd like to create a virtual classroom for your students here

MaryannDu: Jeff you needed us tonight. glad to be here

JeffC: thanks

BjB: the next Classroom Assessment discussion will be on April 8

MagdaleneD: will do

MaryannDu: see you all later!

JeffC: would like to help Maryann set one up sometime too!

MaryannDu: thanks Jeff. good luck Magdalene

MagdaleneD: I really enjoyed this!

MaryannDu: me too. very good and intense