

**Title of Session:** Classroom Assessment -Designing, Implementing, Using

**Moderator:** Maryann Durland

**Title of File:** 20081009assessment

**Date:** October 9, 2008

Room: Classroom Assessment Group

**DavidW:** We can start with a quick round of introductions as is customary. Say a bit about who you are and what/where you teach

**DavidW** waves to Huda

**MaryannDu:** ok

**MaryannDu:** I am in West Virginia

**ErinR:** My name is Erin, I am a sixth grade teacher in Chantilly, VA.

**MaryannDu:** and I am an independent consultant for program evaluation with special interests in assessment, and classroom practices

**DavidW:** I'm David Weksler. I'm one of the HelpDesk staff for Tapped In and I work with teachers and technology. I'm in New Jersey

**MaryannDu:** hi Erin

**ErinR:** Hi Maryann

**HudaJ:** I am in graduate school in NY and I am a substitute teacher

**MaryannDu:** where is Chantilly. I get to Charlottesville often

**MaryannDu:** super

**ErinR:** It is about 20 miles outside of Washington DC..near Dulles Airport

**MaryannDu:** do you work with elem, sec? Huda

**MaryannDu:** ok

**HudaJ:** elementary

**MaryannDu:** ok

**MaryannDu:** so what brings you to this site?

**MaryannDu:** I am here because I am exploring what teachers want to know about assessment

**MaryannDu:** I like to connecting to teachers and what they want to know

**HudaJ:** My prof. wants us to explore it and write about it. and this group seemed very interesting to me

**MaryannDu:** ok

**ErinR:** I came to this website after my professor recommended it to us. I am taking a class on Assessment and Differentiation, so I thought this discussion would be a valuable one!

**MaryannDu:** nice

**MaryannDu:** we do have great discussions here!

**HudaJ:** Do I get a transcript afterwards to send to my prof?

**MaryannDu:** ok, so any burning questions?

**MaryannDu:** yes, I can forward you one, if I have your email. or you can email me at [mdurland@durlandconsulting.com](mailto:mdurland@durlandconsulting.com) and I will send it to you

**DavidW:** You'll get a transcript after you logout, Huda

**HudaJ:** ok thank you

**MaryannDu:** good

**DavidW:** It will be sent to your email address - you are using AOL; if it does any filtering for you, check the SPAM or JUNK folder if you don't see it

**DavidW .** o O ( sometimes it gets filtered )

**MaryannDu:** lol

**DavidW** smiles

**DavidW:** but you should receive it within 30 minutes of logging out

**HudaJ:** thanx David

**HudaJ:** lol

**MaryannDu:** I am interested in what you both think about assessment, since you are both working with elem students and you are in two different parts of the country

**MaryannDu:** anything specific come to mind?

**ErinR:** I think assessment on a daily basis is very important but I would like to learn more ways of assessing the students' knowledge, rather than always giving them a written test or quiz

**MaryannDu:** right

**HudaJ:** Well I think that one of the most important assessment tools is observation

**MaryannDu:** yes

**MaryannDu:** I agree with that

**ErinR:** I do too

**DavidW:** How can assessment be relevant to both students and teachers so students also understand where their strengths and weaknesses are

**MaryannDu:** I think that when we think about classroom assessment as opposed to state accountability that what students learn from the assessments is critical

**ErinR:** I think assessments can be more relevant to students if they are having a say in what they are doing, such as a choice between an oral report or a written one for example

**MaryannDu:** for me, assessment in the classroom begins with what I call "conversation" which is what teaching is - a conversation with the learner so that the learner increases understandings,

**MaryannDu:** yes

**MaryannDu:** that is so true

**MaryannDu:** I think that the key to assessment is based in goals and objectives

**MaryannDu:** and that we have to allow deep learning to occur and measure high level skills

**HudaJ:** For example, if you are teaching a math lesson, you may decide to walk systematically through the classroom once you have given your students a problem to work on for the purpose of identifying students who are experiencing difficulty

**MaryannDu:** yes,

**MaryannDu:** that is very true.

**MaryannDu:** this becomes assessment for guiding instruction

**MaryannDu:** which is critical

**ErinR:** I find that having short "conferences" with the students, such as during writing workshop, can be a valuable way of informally assessing the students, and seeing where they might not have a complete understanding of the material

**MaryannDu:** and the more that we know about the learning process - where are they getting stuck and why, the better we are able to adapt instruction

**MaryannDu:** yes

**MaryannDu:** that is very good

**MaryannDu:** I believe that the more students talk about what they are doing, how and why, the more they learn

**HudaJ:** When several students have failed to understand the lesson , I would then decide to change my instruction

**MaryannDu:** and clarify what they learn

**MaryannDu:** you two must be really good teachers!

**MaryannDu:** I love what you are saying!

**HudaJ:** because maybe they were not understood

**MaryannDu:** yes

**HudaJ:** and need to clarify them

**ErinR:** exactly. There have been lessons that I have taught where I can tell the students are not grasping the material, and then I have had to adapt it to fit in with their understanding

**MaryannDu:** yes,

**MaryannDu:** that is the exciting part of assessment - or diagnostic assessment

**HudaJ:** I am a big supporter of informal evaluations

**MaryannDu:** as an ongoing part of the instructional process

**MaryannDu:** yes

**MaryannDu:** me too

**ErinR:** me too!

**MaryannDu:** lol

**DavidW** wonders if anyone is using portfolios as part of the assessment process

**MaryannDu:** there are so many purposes for assessment and as you have pointed out, the most important part is for instructional practices

**MaryannDu:** I am working on evaluating some

**ErinR:** I don't have a portfolio for each student per se, but I do have a file folder in a cabinet for each student and I collect examples of student work to have as examples of how they are learning/progressing during the year

**MaryannDu:** portfolios are nice for showing change, so that as a child learns you don't have to keep track of every single point, but you have a record, that can be changed and summarized.

**MaryannDu:** yes

**MaryannDu:** that is a nice way to use a portfolio

**HudaJ:** They're good to show the child's parents as well

**ErinR:** definitely

**MaryannDu:** they are nice as a summary kind of tool, but I really prefer them as a site for showing change

**MaryannDu:** yes

**MaryannDu:** and they are so flexible in terms of use, you can take things out and reduce, and begin new content

**MaryannDu:** I am working with teachers on portfolios, as samples of expertise. which is a totally different view of them

**MaryannDu:** you only see the end result, which is also ok

**MaryannDu:** what do your students say about assessment?

**MaryannDu:** do they think of classroom assessment any particular way?

**ErinR:** the students in my class are usually fine with assessments, by sixth grade they seem used to having a lot of assessments, they often are very anxious about how they did on something and want immediate feedback, which is not always possible!

**MaryannDu:** right.

**MaryannDu:** to them it is often a judgment not a process in learning; which is what they have often learned

**MaryannDu:** learning is often so iterative, and when assessment is right or wrong, right now, that is not what we are teaching.

**HudaJ:** When children are stressed out about doing well, the learning becomes external rather than internal learning

**HudaJ:** they just want a good grade

**MaryannDu:** I think it is really important to map out assessment prior to planning the instructional practices

**DavidW** thinks that happens too often

**MaryannDu:** yes, that is so true

**MaryannDu:** yes

**MaryannDu:** I agree

**ErinR:** yes definitely

**MaryannDu:** when you map out the assessment, then you can plan for formal, informal, and what you want students to do to demonstrate performance.

**HudaJ:** Yes I agree with that...that the assessment has to be planned out first

**MaryannDu:** after that, you have a map of how you have to teach in order for the students to attain the objective as measured by the assessment you planned

**MaryannDu:** yes,

**MaryannDu:** to often we say the obj is to evaluate, but we teach facts and expect only

simple comprehension then test on evaluate

**ErinR**: right, because if you don't know how the students are going to be assessed, there might be gaps in what they learning, that's why I think it is better to have it planned out ahead of time

**MaryannDu**: yes

**MaryannDu**: that is really good

**HudaJ**: because teachers have to be able to use different strategies to accomplish various goals

**MaryannDu**: yes

**HudaJ**: so maybe one lesson can have to kinds of assessment to meet all the needs of the students

**MaryannDu**: if you have a specific objective, and assessment item for something, how do you decide what instructional practices to use? say you want students to summarize historical events

**ErinR**: I think you definitely have to consider the needs of the students when choosing the method of assessment and find the method that will work best for those students

**MaryannDu**: and the assessment item is a list of 25 events that students are to do something with; they can choose, list them in order, write a par using them, etc. the assessment product is up to them.

**HudaJ**: Yes because you have to identify the strengths of different learners while addressing their weaknesses

**DavidW**: I'm guessing with more technology available, the range of instructional practices and types of assessment have grown

**MaryannDu**: somewhat

**MaryannDu**: but not always and everywhere

**MaryannDu**: it totally depends on the teacher, I find

**DavidW**: . o O ( and what technology the teacher is familiar/comfortable with )

**MaryannDu**: right, and has access to!

**DavidW** nods

**HudaJ:** lol

**DavidW:** We were lucky in high school (for me, in the 70s) to use videotape equipment to do things like "60 Minutes explores the Spanish-American War"

**MaryannDu:** so if my objective is to have students summarize historical events. How do we choose instructional practices?

**MaryannDu:** wow, that is really nice.

**MaryannDu:** we had those little rolls of film????

**DavidW:** It was exciting to use the technology and figure out the Q & A for Dan Rather to ask Teddy Roosevelt

**DavidW** smiles

**MaryannDu:** lol

**HudaJ:** Well you can have them do a project. on the event

**DavidW** . o O ( much more fun than writing a term paper )

**MaryannDu:** yes

**MaryannDu:** for some students

**HudaJ:** and have different kids do different things based on their approaches to learning

**DavidW** agrees

**ErinR:** I agree, I think a differentiated approach to this task would be necessary for some of the learners

**HudaJ:** Like one student might be better at a oral presentation, another a paper....

**MaryannDu:** how do we know that the instructional practice we use will lead to enough knowing that the student will be able to do the assessment?

**DavidW:** isn't that a constant question one must keep asking?

**MaryannDu:** I am sort of brainstorming in a way

**MaryannDu:** sort of



**MaryannDu:** but it is also the very first and critical one

**HudaJ:** Informal assessment is an integral part of the day to day life of a teacher

**MaryannDu:** how do I know that with the content I have, that if I do x and y and z, that the student will be able to summarize historical events in way the student chooses.

**ErinR:** I would think that informally assessing the students while they are learning about the historical events might be helpful in determining if they are capable of completing a formal assessment

**MaryannDu:** right, but how do you decide on what instructional practice to do and when?

**MaryannDu:** for example

**MaryannDu:** I once had a group of 7th graders who averaged 3rd grade reading

**MaryannDu:** and I wanted them to learn about world countries and cultures, etc.

**MaryannDu:** and the book was awful

**DavidW . o O** ( change of direction )

**MaryannDu:** and I wanted them at the end, to be able to write about different world cultures and countries, and how they differed in food, clothing, etc.

**MaryannDu:** yes??

**MaryannDu:** to write, or give a talk about, but to know things that they could compare and contrast

**HudaJ:** okay and what happened? did they complete the task?

**MaryannDu:** so I created several games and structured organizers that I used to start the process

**MaryannDu:** on the first day we outlined the chapter

**MaryannDu:** using colored paper, which I pasted on the walls

**MaryannDu:** each child got 4-5 pieces with words on them

**MaryannDu:** as I lectured and talked about the new unit, I would ask, who thinks they have a paper, with a country name

**MaryannDu:** etc

**MaryannDu:** and though a conversation we created an outline on the wall.

**HudaJ:** That sounds fun and creative

**ErinR:** I think that sounds great

**MaryannDu:** it was very fun. and very helpful

**MaryannDu:** then I used it for them again

**MaryannDu:** like they got a blank outline with countries, etc. and they filled it in in groups, from research

**MaryannDu:** finding different things than I had.

**DavidW** smiles

**MaryannDu:** lol

**MaryannDu:** so from the assessment, and all the things you said - learner needs, interests, etc. I figured out a way to get the content and student learning to mix

**DavidW:** you created a much more constructivist environment, Maryann

**MaryannDu:** yes, I am totally a constructivist

**DavidW** smiles

**HudaJ:** lol

**MaryannDu:** except when I am the expert and love to lecture!

**MaryannDu:** lolololol

**ErinR** smiles

**MaryannDu:** constructivism is to me where all the learning is

**MaryannDu:** we only learn what we are trying to make sense of

**MaryannDu:** though we teach our children much about memory!

**MaryannDu:** I do not see that as learning though

**HudaJ:** you are so right

**MaryannDu:** It is like my middle child said about his teacher who wanted everyone to write the math problems on the board and explain them... he said... he just wants tooo much

**MaryannDu:** and I said, like knowing it, and being able to explain it

**MaryannDu:** and my son said. yes

**MaryannDu:** being the 'A' student he was, he just did them

**MaryannDu:** we should just do them he said

**HudaJ:** good for him

**MaryannDu:** later he said that that teacher was the best one he had, he really made him think

**MaryannDu:** not just do it

**ErinR:** that's great

**MaryannDu:** yes,

**HudaJ:** Those are the most memorable teachers

**MaryannDu:** I saw a change in my child that has continued until today

**MaryannDu:** the wanting to understand

**MaryannDu:** not just do it

**MaryannDu:** kind of get it, and be able to make great grades, but not really know it

**MaryannDu:** yes they are

**MaryannDu:** those teachers start with an attitude I think

**MaryannDu:** they say and do the things you have said

**MaryannDu:** they are listening to kids

**MaryannDu:** makes it very fun

**MaryannDu:** are there things you want to do, that you haven't done yet in your

classroom with students, about assessment?

**MaryannDu:** I always think it is fun to try new things out

**ErinR:** I'd like to try some performance-based assessments, like creating a song or skit about something and present that to the class

**MaryannDu:** that would be so fun, and very creative.

**ErinR:** I think that could be fun to see and do for some students at least

**MaryannDu:** yes. some would like other things to do

**ErinR:** yes definitely

**HudaJ:** Maryann how do you feel about giving students prizes for doing well on a task?

**MaryannDu:** sometimes I think it is ok, but for the most part I don't

**MaryannDu:** I think that the verbal and positive reinforcement is really good, and making learning fun, and exciting, and having rewards and things for other things

**ErinR:** I kind of like to reserve a "prize" for going way above and beyond...I wouldn't want the students to expect something every time they do something they are supposed to

**MaryannDu:** like a hard unit with lots of time

**HudaJ:** I understand

**MaryannDu:** and I also feel that kids are not like dogs, they don't need a bone for every things

**HudaJ:** lol

**MaryannDu:** I like to do more with talking to kids

**ErinR:** lol

**MaryannDu:** telling them they did well,

**MaryannDu:** that I really respect their work

**MaryannDu:** asking them for ideas

**MaryannDu:** etc.

**MaryannDu:** making rewards come from the child - like what they would really like

**MaryannDu:** working towards something that is special and that all will be successful at... like finishing a really hard unit.

**MaryannDu:** then the whole class celebrates

**MaryannDu:** instead of one getting a prize

**ErinR:** we do that at my school too, whole class rewards for positive behavior, etc.

**MaryannDu:** right

**HudaJ:** Sounds good

**MaryannDu:** I like to have kids think in terms of us, as a team, as well as how some naturally stand out.

**DavidW:** We're just about out of time for tonight's discussion. Any final questions for Maryann?

**MaryannDu:** but that everyone has a right to feel success and good about what they have done

**MaryannDu:** time went fast

**HudaJ:** Yes it did

**MaryannDu:** thank you for visiting!

**ErinR:** yes it did!!!

**MaryannDu:** thank you David for moderating

**DavidW** reminds everyone the next Classroom Assessment discussion is scheduled for 13 November at 8pm

**HudaJ:** thanks David and Maryann

**DavidW:** Welcome, Maryann. Happy to be part of the discussion

**DavidW** . o O ( 8pm EST? )

**ErinR:** thank you! I thought it was a great discussion!

**MaryannDu:** second Thursday

**MaryannDu:** thank you!

**DavidW:** Huda, if you don't see the transcript, email us - wex@pobox.com

**MaryannDu:** have fun

**HudaJ:** I will thanks

**MaryannDu:** bye

**HudaJ:** bye

**MaryannDu:** lol

**DavidW** reminds everyone to check the calendar

**ErinR:** bye!

**MaryannDu:** thanks

**DavidW** wave goodnight

**DavidW:** Good discussion tonight with this small group

**DavidW** waves bye and heads to Reception