

Title of Session: Teaching Teachers  
Moderator: Dianne Allen  
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**DianneA:** To get our session rolling today would you please introduce yourselves, where you come from, what area of teaching you work in

**CarrieAH:** Hi there!

**DianneA:** I work in Australia with pre-service K-6 teachers

**BJB2:** I'm a communications teacher in Pennsylvania

**SherryL:** I teach first grade in the Los Angeles area

**DianneA:** Thanks Sherry, Bj

**CarrieAH:** I am from Lee's Summit, Missouri (a suburb of Kansas City). I have been a special ed teacher off and on for the last several years, but am currently a stay-at-home mom getting my Master's in Ed. Tech. My goal is to work in the community college setting, either as a professor or as a resource to faculty.

**DianneA:** Thanks Carrie

**DianneA:** now, I have posted some questions on the whiteboard to get us going ...

**DianneA:** but we can be flexible and move to other areas of teaching, or teachers

**DianneA:** if someone else has a burning concern

**DianneA** listens to hear if someone has a FAR MORE IMPORTANT practice concern

**MaryFT** joined the room.

**DianneA:** Hello Mary!

**MaryFT:** Sorry! - I was having a moment

**DianneA:** welcome

**BJB2:** Hi, Mary!

**MaryFT:** I was sitting in my office thinking that I was in the right place

**MaryFT** sighs

**DianneA:** we are just trying to establish an agenda for today's session

**MaryFT:** Lily is cranky - that's my excuse and I'm sticking to it

**DianneA:** I have a couple of questions on the Whiteboard

**DianneA:** has everyone seen those

**SherryL:** yes

**DianneA** nods and passes a quietener/pacifier with sweetener to Lily

**DianneA:** we are not limited to my questions

**DianneA:** so if anyone else wants to raise an issue please feel free

**MaryFT:** I've been doing a lot of thinking about assessment

**DianneA:** would you like to elaborate Mary

**CarrieAH:** assessment of students? teachers? both?

**MaryFT:** I'm interested in knowing how you all employ assessment in the classroom - with students

**MaryFT:** whether you are comfortable with the process yet

**CarrieAH:** what kind of assessments do you mean?

**DianneA** 'can't have one with out the other' Carrie?

**MaryFT:** formal, informal - whatever you use to inform your instruction

**MaryFT:** I've been working with preservice teachers (student teachers) for a long time and assessment seems to be a major stumbling block

**DianneA:** I am more than comfortable with 'formative' assessment - where I am checking whether the students are with me, and making progress with the course ...

**MaryFT** nods

**DianneA:** that tends to be 'informal'

**SherryL:** I use little white boards on the carpet with my students

**CarrieAH:** Do you mean assessment of their progress as student teachers? Sorry, just trying to follow and make sure I understand.

**DianneA:** I am a lot less comfortable with 'summative' assessment where I am required to grade a student's performance

**MaryFT:** Carrie - they have all taken classes on how to assess student learning but they seem to have trouble applying it in the real classroom

**MaryFT:** I don't see connections between their assessments and their instructional goals

**DianneA:** The first time of being asked to assess a final work, in an essay form, to a structured criteria list was a major culture shock for me Mary

**MaryFT** nods

**MaryFT:** for me too

**MaryFT:** what I guess I'm looking for is a better way to help them make that connection

**DianneA:** Sherry, I am interested ... how do you use white boards on the carpet with your students?

**MaryFT:** for instance, when you use the whiteboards Sherry how do those inform your instruction?

**SherryL:** I do spelling words with them and math problems

**MaryFT** . o O ( Dianne and Mary thinking about the same thing at the same time )

**MaryFT:** so the kids show you their work on the whiteboard?

**SherryL:** I have the students hold up their boards so I know which ones know the material

**SherryL:** yes

**MaryFT:** and then what do you do?

**CarrieAH:** Sherry, I can see how that would be really useful for immediate feedback on who gets it and who doesn't

**SherryL:** that's an informal assessment, that way I know which students I need to call over later to work with more on the material

**DianneA** nods to Sherry

**MaryFT:** see that's great - your assessment has an immediate impact on the course of your instruction

**DianneA:** and it gets wiped off as if no big deal, and on to the next task?

**CarrieAH:** I did a lot of that type of assessment as a special education teacher. It was very useful for gathering my data and figuring out who needed more help.

**MaryFT** nods vigorously

**MaryFT:** okay - so how did you learn to do this?

**CarrieAH:** are you speaking to me?

**MaryFT:** did you observe other teachers, learn from ed classes, trial and error?

**MaryFT:** either you or Sherry

**SherryL:** the white boards are there for informal assessments so I don't keep a record

**SherryL:** the district assessments and assessments on paper are kept as record

**DianneA** remembers getting feedback from an adult staff member of the importance of having formative assessments which were 'no big deal'

**SherryL:** I actually saw one of my master teachers use the white boards and learned from her

**CarrieAH:** I would say that it was forced upon me because of special ed. The IEPs of the students dictate what they are to be focusing on, so that gave me a lot of guidance as to what to assess. Honestly, my last year teaching it was much simpler to use those informal questioning sessions because my students all had such different needs. To answer your question, I guess it was a bit of trial and error, but I definitely had some guidance from other special ed teachers.

**DianneA** thinks that the issue of 'correction' - for it to be immediate, and 'as a matter of course' is important in the area of self-efficacy and not upping the ante for defensiveness (but this may only be an issue for work ing with adults)?

**MaryFT:** I had a similar experience Carrie

**MaryFT** . o O ( that strikes me as a distinct possibility Dianne - I like it )

**DianneA:** although as adults sometimes we are not aware of how devastating some of our routine approaches may be for children

**MaryFT:** so...any suggestions for what to do if you see new teachers who are not making the leap from assessment to instruction?

**CarrieAH:** can you offer them a challenge within their next lesson? Say, with at least one of their lessons this week, they have to formally/informally assess their students and then email you what the results were?

**MaryFT:** developing a warm and caring environment might help avoid some of that Dianne

**MaryFT:** good idea Carrie

**CarrieAH:** Sorry, I have to leave the computer for a minute, my baby needs to go to bed- -he is unhappy. I will be back.

**MaryFT** totally understands!

**MaryFT:** anyone else have thoughts about assessment or is it just me?

**BJB2:** assessment is a big issue, Mary...

**BJB2:** not just for NCLB

**BJB2** . o O ( but that is a big motivator )

**DianneA:** it is so when it gets taken out of its proper context BJ, and used for OTHER THINGS

**MaryFT:** perhaps I have gotten a bit myopic grading lesson plans this week

**MaryFT:** I think assessment is essential for a functional classroom

**DianneA:** Mary, what is causing your myopic reaction?

**MaryFT:** they approach lesson plans as discrete bits - they write them that way and teach them that way

**DianneA:** what else were you looking for?

**BJB2:** any correlation to standards?

**MaryFT:** they list the standards at the beginning of the lesson but the assessments lack a real connection to them

**DianneA:** they wouldn't be the first, or the last, to not make the right connection!

**DianneA:** I remember doing management plans in local government

**DianneA:** Peter Drucker talks about doing right things, rather than doing things right

**MaryFT:** I guess I'm looking for an understanding that assessment will inform the progress of instruction - that the lesson proceeds based on how the students do - not what's next in the lesson plan book

**DianneA** nods to Mary

**CarrieAH:** That is hard to teach...

**DianneA:** and yes, assessment has been disconnected from its fundamental function

**MaryFT:** I think that's what I'm seeing Dianne

**DianneA:** yes Carrie, it involves thinking about what you are doing and why

**CarrieAH:** We are in too big of a hurry to finish all of the curriculum!

**MaryFT:** what is assessment really for?

**MaryFT** nods to Dianne and Carrie

**CarrieAH:** To determine if the students understand and if it is ok to move on and build upon what has been taught.

**SherryL:** I agree

**DianneA:** yes and finishing the curriculum and getting the exam results for other purposes is what teaching has become

**CarrieAH:** It can be quite frustrating.

**DianneA:** not an engagement with knowledge and understanding

**MaryFT:** and assessment is modeled incorrectly I think

**DianneA:** and lesson plan books help stop us from thinking about curriculum for ourselves

**DianneA** brushes off her soapbox

**MaryFT**: so how do you mentor new teachers to a better understanding of how assessment impacts instruction

**DianneA**: so has anyone seen innovative ways of dealing with real valuable in-class assessment about learning?

**BJB2**: some of the web 2.0 tools are good for assessment...

**CarrieAH**: I am not sure if this is what you are asking, Dianne, but have you all seen the "clickers"?

**DianneA**: in what way BJ?

**BJB2**: wikis are especially good for collaborative work

**DianneA**: no Carrie, any references?

**DianneA** nods to BJ why is that web2.0?

**BJB2** is not familiar with clickers

**MaryFT**: I've used them Carrie - they're wonderful for helping students participate in their own assessment

**BJB2**: because it's interactive, Dianne as opposed to a static web page

**CarrieAH**: I am searching for the site.

**MaryFT**: <http://www.einstruction.com/>

**MaryFT**: interactive response systems

**MaryFT**: eInstruction is just one of the brands out there

**DianneA**: BJ, there were web pages that were interactive before web2.0 (or do I not know what web2.0 is?)

**CarrieAH**: Thanks Mary!

**MaryFT**: the system allows the teacher to create questions and it allows the whole class to respond anonymously

**MaryFT**: the benefit is the immediate feedback in the form of percentages and graphs

**MaryFT:** allowing the teacher and the class to see how they did on the question

**BJB2:** web 2.0 includes a group of tools like blogs and wikis

**BJB2:** thanks, Mary

**BJB2:** . o O ( and Carrie )

**MaryFT:** I think it allows the students to be active participants in their own assessment

**CarrieAH:** I like the feedback and how varied it is for students and for teachers.

**BJB2:** also provides opportunities for authentic audience

**DianneA:** OK, can I act dumb here (and note it is o act ..) ... are we looking at the eInstruction.com site?

**MaryFT:** I love the small classroom sets - very nice but we used the system for the HigherEd lecture classes and it was a total nightmare

**DianneA:** and if so is clickers there and where?

**CarrieAH:** Why was it a nightmare for HigherEd?

**MaryFT:** clickers are just what we call the little remotes that the students use to submit their responses

**DianneA:** thanks Mary

**MaryFT:** click on the K-12 link for more info

**MaryFT:** the online log-in system never seemed to work properly

**DianneA:** so too big a class and like them all shouting out the answer at once!

**MaryFT:** it was just too cumbersome for us

**MaryFT:** not a good fit - even though I advocated for the trial

**MaryFT:** we had trouble even getting to that point Dianne

**MaryFT:** but the small class sets work beautifully

**DianneA** notes that we have moved to using technology in the assessment process

**MaryFT:** but you can see that the focus is not necessarily on authentic assessment but on getting assessment done efficiently

**DianneA:** o O ( I have seen them on the TV games shows )

**MaryFT:** see the picture on the K-12 page that shows the teacher turning off the light as she leaves the classroom smiling

**CarrieAH:** I love using technology for assessment--most of the time. I agree, Mary, sometimes technology just helps with efficiency, rather than on authenticity.

**CarrieAH:** Leaving smiling...like she has no more work to do...ha!

**DianneA:** so I am back to Mr Drucker's comment?!

**MaryFT:** full circle Dianne

**DianneA:** hmmm, evaluation is difficult enough an issue without complicating it with technology for technology's sake

**MaryFT:** I think you have to be honest about why you choose to use a system like eInstruction

**MaryFT:** and not make it the sole assessment technique

**DianneA:** if that's the way things are going in the regular classroom then I too would be very worried

**DianneA:** I have been out of the regular classroom for so long it is not funny

**DianneA:** and there are times when I wonder about my luddite tendencies

**MaryFT:** there are many dimensions to this topic I think

**DianneA** nods

**DianneA:** Sherry, have we diverted from your interests in this topic?

**MaryFT:** and that's what troubles me about teaching it (or mentoring about it once teachers reach the classroom)

**SherryL:** I have been absorbing all the information

**MaryFT:** is there a magic assessment bullet?

**DianneA:** any responses or questions then Sherry?

**DianneA:** there never is a magic bullet Mary, that is one of the very unsubstantiated myths out there

**MaryFT:** shucks!

**BJB2** smiles

**SherryL:** My district has us assess the students and input the scores online and it calculates the areas that students need to improve in

**DianneA:** Jorge and Julia we have been discussing assessment ... how you do it, and what for

**MaryFT:** sounds very interesting Sherry

**MaryFT:** is it accurate?

**SherryL:** yes

**JorgeAR:** We use to have district assessments that were suppose to be related to state assessments

**SherryL:** and I can see right away which areas I need to work on with my students

**MaryFT:** what's it called? - is it proprietary or did the district purchase it?

**SherryL:** it's like a spreadsheet

**MaryFT:** that could certainly help those who are struggling with making the assessment connection

**JorgeAR:** My district does have an online portal to get scores from district and st assessments

**SherryL:** and we just enter the names and scores

**SherryL:** the sheet will show which areas students are not performing at grade level

**MaryFT** nods

**MaryFT:** and does it offer instructional strategies for helping them improve in those areas?

**SherryL:** no, if I see that the comprehension section is low then I will work on comprehension with the students

**DianneA** . o O ( I would hope not )

**SherryL**: we use Standards Plus in the classroom

**MaryFT**: some systems do that Dianne

**DianneA** . o O ( otherwise where is a teacher's professionalism to be exercised )

**JorgeAR**: My district sounds pretty similar to Sherry

**JuliaDG**: I've heard of Standards Plus....

**DianneA**: you might as well connect the child to the wires!

**JorgeAR**: That's in the assessment results

**DianneA**: and press the button in the older pavlovian experiments!

**BJB2**: sounds as though this topic may be something to continue, Dianne

**DianneA**: but then again ... sometimes technology is good for minimizing administrative repetition

**BJB2** gets ready to move to Teachers in Training and Mary's discussion for preservice and new teachers

**DianneA**: certainly we have gone past our witching hour BJ

**DianneA**: thanks all for coming

**SherryL**: thank you

**JorgeAR**: Thanks! This was my first time!

**DianneA**: I'll need to negotiate with Mary the next session

**BJB2**: thanks, Dianne...was a thought provoking discussion

**SusanR** has been listening intently and absorbing

**CarrieAH**: Thanks everyone, this was my first time here, I did enjoy it!