

Agenda

Montreal, QC • October 17–19

Wednesday, October 17

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration	710 Foyer
	Continental Breakfast	
8:00–9:45 a.m.	Keynote —Tom Schimmer <i>Essential Assessment: Building Hope, Efficacy, and Achievement</i>	710
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	Breakout Sessions	(Options on p. 3)
11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)	
1:00–2:30 p.m.	Breakout Sessions	(Options on p. 3)
2:30–2:45 p.m.	Break	
2:45–3:45 p.m.	Role-Alike Discussions — <i>An expert-facilitated conversation with others who share similar responsibilities:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Office (Tom Schimmer) • Building Administration (Katie White) • Instructional Coaches (Cassandra Erkens) • Elementary Teachers (Nicole Dimich Vagle) • Secondary Teachers (Mandy Stalets) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 710 • 520c • 520a • 522 • 520b

Thursday, October 18

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration	710 Foyer
	Continental Breakfast	
8:00–9:45 a.m.	Keynote —Nicole Dimich Vagle <i>Instructional Agility: Assessment in Real Time</i>	710
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	Breakout Sessions	(Options on p. 4)
11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)	
1:00–2:30 p.m.	Breakout Sessions	(Options on p. 4)
2:30–2:45 p.m.	Break	
2:45–3:45 p.m.	Topic-Alike Discussions — <i>An expert-facilitated conversation about a specific assessment topic:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grading (Tom Schimmer) • Culture Shifts (Katie White) • Homework (Cassandra Erkens) • Assessment Design (Nicole Dimich Vagle) • Feedback (Mandy Stalets) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 520b • 520c • 520a • 710 • 522

Friday, October 19

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	710 Forum
8:00–9:30 a.m.	Breakout Sessions	(Options on p. 5)
9:30–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	Keynote —Cassandra Erkens <i>Getting to the Good Stuff: Resiliency and Investment</i>	710

Agenda is subject to change.

Day 1 Breakouts

Assessment Architecture

10:00–11:30 a.m.

Cassandra Erkens Collaborative Common Assessments	520a
Tom Schimmer Grading From the Inside Out	710
Mandy Stalets Standards-Based Learning in Action	520b
Nicole Dimich Vagle Design in Five: A Process for Effectively Creating Assessments	522
Katie White Softening the Edges: Refining Our Assessment Practices	520c

1:00–2:30 p.m.

Cassandra Erkens Rubrics and Scales	520a
Tom Schimmer Quality Assessment Items	710
Mandy Stalets Standards-Based Reporting in Action	520b
Nicole Dimich Vagle Developing Culturally Relevant Performance Tasks	522
Katie White Softening the Edges: Making Assessment Decisions That Honour Teacher and Student Needs	520c

Agenda is subject to change.

Day 2 Breakouts

Instructional Agility

10:00–11:30 a.m.

Cassandra Erkens Engineering Engaging Conversations	520a
Tom Schimmer Effective Leadership in Assessment and Grading	520b
Mandy Stalets Feedback in Action	522
Nicole Dimich Vagle Assessing Student Collaboration	710
Katie White How Changing One Thing Can Change Everything: The Power of Learning Continuums	520c

1:00–2:30 p.m.

Cassandra Erkens Making Homework Count	520a
Tom Schimmer Redefining Student Accountability	520b
Mandy Stalets Self-Assessment in Action	522
Nicole Dimich Vagle Assessment as Instruction: Using Common Formative Assessment to Increase Learning and Confidence	710
Katie White Using Formative Assessment to Nurture Creativity	520c

Agenda is subject to change.

Day 3 Breakouts

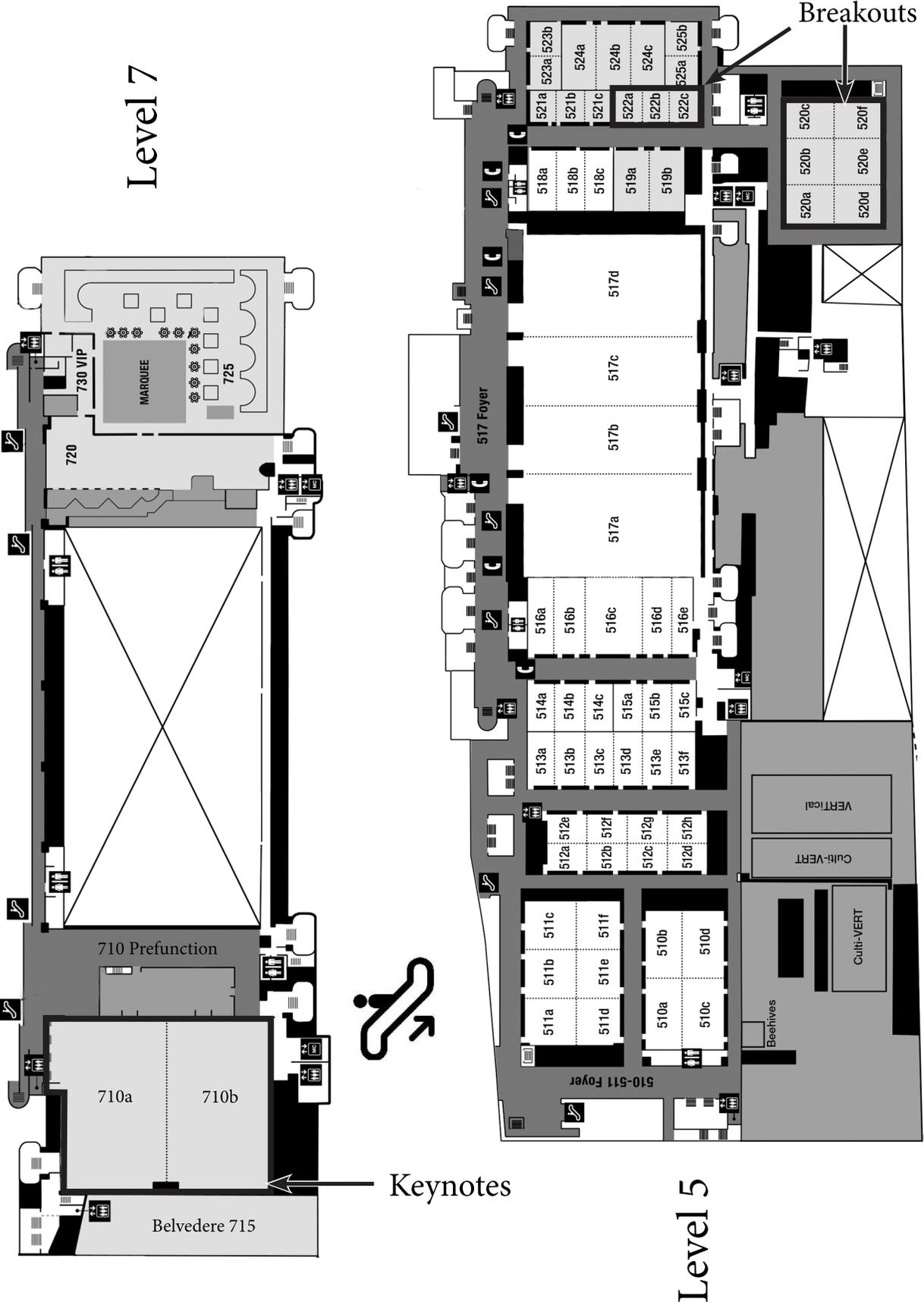
Student Investment

8:00–9:30 a.m.

Cassandra Erkens Modeling What Matters: Leading Assessment Literacy	710
Tom Schimmer Assessing Critical Thinking	520a
Mandy Stalets Reassessment in Action	520b
Nicole Dimich Vagle Changing Assessment Practices Through Student Voice	522
Katie White Building Strong Self-Assessment Skills in Young Learners	520c

Agenda is subject to change.

Palais des congrès de Montréal



Day 1 Session Descriptions

Focus: Assessment Architecture

KEYNOTE

Tom Schimmer

Essential Assessment: Building Hope, Efficacy, and Achievement

To maximize its effectiveness, assessment must build hope, efficacy, and achievement. Based on his book *Essential Assessment: Six Tenets for Bringing Hope, Efficacy, and Achievement to the Classroom* (Solution Tree Press, 2017), Tom Schimmer emphasizes why, more than ever, assessment fluency and capacity are the most effective and efficient professional investments teachers can make. Tom outlines the six assessment tenets that allow teachers to create a culture of assessment that leaves learners optimistic about their success. Participants also focus on how these tenets transfer seamlessly to assessing student attributes and cross-curricular competencies.

Learning outcomes include:

- Understanding the value of assessment literacy to teachers
- Examining the interconnectedness of the six essential assessment tenets
- Exploring how the assessment tenets transfer to student attributes and cross-curricular competencies

MORNING BREAKOUTS

Cassandra Erkens

Collaborative Common Assessments

In recent years, an explosion of information has proven the power of, and need for more, formative assessments and fewer summative assessments. It seems odd then to add the idea of teams using common assessments to an already test-heavy culture. However, when managed properly, the development and use of common formative assessments can support a culture of learning for students and teachers. Participants in this session collectively step back and examine assessment practices from the lenses of *where we are now, where we are going, and what we can begin to do to address the gap*. In teams—with experience behind us, research beside us, and a vision of learning before us—we develop our assessment literacy and promote learning for all.

Learning outcomes include:

- Exploring current assessment fallacies that prohibit learning
- Identifying the rationale for using common formative assessments
- Understanding the process and products of common formative assessments

Day 1 Session Descriptions

Focus: Assessment Architecture

Tom Schimmer

Grading From the Inside Out

Developing a standards-based mindset is the oft overlooked, but essential, first step of long-term grading reform. Based on his book *Grading From the Inside Out: Bringing Accuracy to Student Assessment Through a Standards-Based Mindset* (Solution Tree Press, 2016), Tom Schimmer outlines how to take a standards-based approach to grading, even when a traditional grading and reporting paradigm exists. He discusses the non-negotiable, true north of grading for accuracy and with confidence and the three essential practices that are the cornerstones for developing a standards-based mindset.

Learning outcomes include:

- Understanding how to audit any grading practice through the lens of accuracy and confidence
- Exploring the faulty logic behind traditional grading practices
- Identifying replacement routines and practices that establish a standards-based mindset and approach to grading, independent of any changes to school or district policy

Mandy Stalets

Standards-Based Learning in Action

The goal of a standards-based learning environment is the development of the whole child. The means to achieve that goal is the purposeful separation (for clarity and instruction) of those aspects—academic achievement, behavioral characteristics, and continual growth—that complete the picture of student success. When seeking to implement standards-based grading, a firm foundation of standards-based learning, instruction, and assessment must be in place first. Participants explore the importance of deeply understanding standards, developing sound assessment practices, and changing the language within the classroom to focus on learning, not compliance.

Participants in this session:

- Understand the importance and benefit of separating academic achievement, behaviors, and growth.
- Learn how to change the language within the classroom to focus on learning and growth.
- Gather ideas about how to create a standards-based learning environment.

Nicole Dimich Vagle

Design in Five: A Process for Effectively Creating Assessments

Assessments, when designed well, reflect student learning in meaningful ways. Nicole Dimich Vagle introduces an assessment design process called *Design in 5* (Vagle, 2014). Specifically, participants dig into the five phases of designing high-quality formative or summative assessments. They discover how to choose standards, find learning goals, plan assessment methods, and communicate learning to ensure accuracy in describing student learning and levels of proficiency. Administrators and others who support teachers will find these resources useful in facilitating quality assessment design in their contexts.

Outcomes include:

- Learning a five-phase protocol to use, design, and revise assessments for quality
- Applying tools to review and revise assessments to effectively guide instruction, involve students, and communicate learning

Day 1 Session Descriptions

Focus: Assessment Architecture

Katie White

Softening the Edges: Refining Our Assessment Practices

Sometimes, despite best intentions and dedicated work, assessment practices provide challenges for students and educators. Katie White explores assessment in a new way, using the analogies of hard and soft edges. Participants reflect on ways the “edges” of assessment practices make or break relationships and understand that these relationships can provide support within a classroom setting. To refine assessment practices, participants explore how strong assessment design can “soften the edges” for educators and learners by attending to the needs of everyone involved in the assessment conversation.

Participants in this session:

- Identify and explore the needs of the whole person (teachers and students) in relation to assessment design.
- Reflect on examples of the “hard and soft edges” of assessment, the reasons these edges exist, and the impact they have on teaching and learning.
- Apply the concept of “softening the edges” to assessment scenarios.

AFTERNOON BREAKOUTS

Cassandra Erkens

Rubrics and Scales

As educators move toward integrating next-generation standards and standards-based grading, many questions arise about rubrics and scales as tools to measure proficiency. What are these tools? Where do they come from? How do we best use them? Do they interact or work in isolation?

Well-developed rubrics and scales are windows through which students see what teachers require of them. Such tools also are mirrors that reveal what students know and still need to learn. Cassandra Erkens explores the purpose, design, and management features of rubrics and scales. She shows how to invest students in the process.

Participants learn criteria for quality measurement tools that certify and promote continued learning. They also practice creating rubrics and scales within a case study.

Day 1 Session Descriptions

Focus: Assessment Architecture

Tom Schimmer

Quality Assessment Items

The quality of assessment information depends on the quality of assessment items. Participants focus on developing quality assessment items that increase accuracy for teachers interpreting assessment results. How do we design high-quality multiple-choice questions? How do we ensure that extended written response questions address the appropriate cognitive complexity? What are the keys to eliciting evidence through non-traditional assessment methods? Tom Schimmer addresses these questions and shares the latest research and practices for designing selected response, constructed response, and performance assessments that allow teachers to best discover evidence of learning.

Learning outcomes include:

- Understanding the effective and efficient structure of selected-response questions
- Ensuring that constructed response items address appropriate and applicable cognitive complexity
- Understanding how performance assessment can allow teachers to assess content, cognitive processes, and cross-curricular competencies

Mandy Stalets

Standards-Based Reporting in Action

The final step in transitioning to a standards-based learning environment is reporting academic achievement by standard rather than by task. Organizing evidence of learning in this way enables students and parents to see specifically where there are strengths and areas of growth to maximize learning. Participants explore grading and reporting methods that move away from traditional points-based systems and percentage scales, as well as how to set up a standards-based gradebook and create standards-based report cards.

Participants in this session:

- Learn to organize and report assessments by standards in order to elicit accurate evidence of learning.
- Explore ways to communicate the change to standards-based grading and reporting to students and parents.
- Examine different grading methods, rubrics, and report cards in a standards-based grading system.

Nicole Dimich Vagle

Developing Culturally Relevant Performance Tasks

Meaningful assessment engages students and helps them learn at higher levels. Culturally relevant performance tasks capitalize on the strengths of our diversity—race, culture, interests, experiences, communities, and more. Nicole Dimich Vagle identifies key elements of culturally relevant tasks and applies them to designing performance tasks that are engaging and relevant in the current context. Participants review and design a performance task that relates to their grade levels, content areas, and contexts.

Outcomes include:

- Learning elements of culturally responsive performance tasks
- Applying a process for designing culturally relevant performance tasks

Day 1 Session Descriptions

Focus: Assessment Architecture

Katie White

Softening the Edges: Making Assessment Decisions That Honour Teacher and Student Needs

Grounded in the dual belief that all students can achieve, while maintaining emotional safety, and that their teachers deserve the opportunity to reflect and address their own needs, this session explores a process for refining five key assessment practices: pre-assessment, formative assessment, self-assessment, summative assessment, and reporting. Employing each of these practices ensures positive outcomes for educators and learners simultaneously.

Participants in this session:

- Identify and explore the needs of the whole person (teachers and students) in relation to assessment design.
- Clarify the purposes and methods by which teachers and systems engage in pre-assessment, formative assessment, self-assessment, summative assessment, reporting, and possible outcomes that reflect “hard edges.”
- Explore a process for refining assessment approaches to “soften the edges.”

Day 2 Session Descriptions

Focus: Instructional Agility

KEYNOTE

Nicole Dimich Vagle

Instructional Agility: Assessment in Real Time

There is power and possibility in the moments teachers recognize students' confusion or understanding. What they do with this information can push students to gain more confidence or shut them down. Through questions, observations, and feedback, teachers—individually and collaboratively—maneuver and pivot to intentionally use assessment to inspire learners to gain confidence and achieve at high levels.

MORNING BREAKOUTS

Cassandra Erkens

Engineering Engaging Conversations

The quality of formative data a teacher can generate during instruction is directly related to the quality of the questions he or she asks and the classroom conversations that result. Cassandra Erkens provides a rationale for using conversation as an instructional foundation and explores options for creating engaging conversations and criteria for monitoring student engagement and learning.

Learning outcomes include:

- Understanding the rationale and role of engineering conversation as an instructional foundation
- Exploring frameworks for generating engaging conversations
- Applying a criteria for monitoring student engagement and learning

Tom Schimmer

Effective Leadership in Assessment and Grading

With any change effort, leadership matters! Tom Schimmer explores the steps leaders can take to transform grading and assessment practices within any context. Highlights include effective leadership strategies, mindsets, and practices that maximize the potential success of any implementation effort, the natural evolution of new ideas, the ways to plan for short-term wins, and ideas for handling the inevitable challenges and roadblocks. Whether a leader by title or by influence, participants bring together ideas that make assessment transformations possible and sustainable.

Learning outcomes include:

- Identifying the ways leaders cultivate the conditions to support grading reform
- Understanding the natural evolution of new ideas in an organization
- Exploring ways for leaders to manage inevitable implementation roadblocks and challenges

Day 2 Session Descriptions

Focus: Instructional Agility

Mandy Stalets

Feedback in Action

How can effective feedback create reflective learners and build hope in classrooms? It is time to start using feedback to help inspire students to take ownership of their learning and create a more hopeful classroom environment. When looking at sound assessment practices, feedback plays an essential role in making learning attainable for all. So how can teachers provide this feedback—the kind that inspires, that students listen to, and that promotes growth? Participants explore what meaningful and manageable feedback looks like *in action*.

Participants in this session:

- Explore how to include learners in the feedback loop and make them active participants in their learning.
- Gain strategies to implement effective feedback in a meaningful and manageable way.
- Learn how to evolve their roles to ensure that each learner is coached forward.

Nicole Dimich Vagle

Assessing Student Collaboration

Ever have a disastrous group project experience? Dissatisfied with how students work in a group? Collaborating effectively is one of the most critical skills employers identify as essential for success in the global economy. Nicole Dimich Vagle provides insight into the following questions: How do we accurately and fairly assess collaboration? How do we design an effective assessment task that provides accurate information on a student's collaborative skills? Participants learn ways to design tasks that assess collaboration and facilitate effective collaboration in the classroom with students.

Outcomes include:

- Learning key design elements to accurately assess student collaboration
- Learning and experiencing collaboration as an instructional strategy that leads to gathering real-time evidence (instructional agility)

Katie White

How Changing One Thing Can Change Everything: The Power of Learning Continuums

When planning to enhance learning outcomes, it is often hard to know where to start. Learning is complex and each piece of the process has a vital role in the learner's success. However, sometimes changing a single aspect of how we approach the teaching–learning cycle affects everything else, resulting in positive outcomes for learners and educators.

Participants in this session:

- Explore the story of a young learner and her shifting investment in her own learning journey.
- Create a learning continuum in a practical and personal context.
- Use the continuum to enhance assessment design in personal teaching contexts.

Day 2 Session Descriptions

Focus: Instructional Agility

AFTERNOON BREAKOUTS

Cassandra Erkens

Making Homework Count

Teachers use homework for three primary purposes: practice, preparation, and extension of classroom learning. According to some research, homework is one of the most powerful instructional strategies teachers employ to impact student achievement. Yet other research indicates there is little to no correlation between homework and current achievement results. How might we leverage homework to increase student productivity and achievement? Participants explore necessary considerations for the design and use of homework as a formative assessment tool to positively impact student learning.

Learning outcomes include:

- Aligning the intent of homework with promising practices in homework design and use
- Identifying formative assessment tools and processes to support the use of homework as an opportunity for safe practice
- Exploring error as a means to develop instructionally agile responses to data from practice opportunities for maximizing learning

Tom Schimmer

Redefining Student Accountability

The need for students to be held accountable is often cited as a reason why some hesitate to implement more sound grading practices. Tom Schimmer focuses on systems, structures, and routines that can redefine accountability and reshape a school's culture. Rather than using zeros, late penalties, or other traditional punitive grading practice, participants see that real accountability can be achieved without compromising the integrity of a student's proficiency grade.

Learning outcomes include:

- Identifying the perils of punitive grading and the resulting inaccuracies that compromise the integrity of what is ultimately reported about student proficiency
- Understanding an alternative, more productive definition of accountability within the context of learning
- Exploring the multiple systems required to create a culture of real accountability that leaves student optimism and hope intact

Day 2 Session Descriptions

Focus: Instructional Agility

Mandy Stalets

Self-Assessment in Action

When students engage in meaningful self-assessment practices on a regular basis, the classroom transforms from being teacher-centered to being student-centered. It becomes a place where students take ownership, effectively self-regulate, and invest in their learning. Developing learners' self-assessment skills must be a process that is planned and purposeful. It is the teacher's role to recognize that proficient and advanced learners are more likely to be ready for self-assessment, while novice learners may need more support, guidance, and time. Participants explore how to successfully implement self-assessment to achieve these outcomes in learners.

Participants in this session:

- Learn to model and teach the behaviors associated with self-assessment in order to create more self-regulatory learners.
- Explore examples of self-assessment tools to implement in the classroom.
- Gain strategies to implement self- and peer-assessment in a meaningful way.

Nicole Dimich Vagle

Assessment as Instruction: Using Common Formative Assessment to Increase Learning and Confidence

We have so much data at our fingertips. This can lead to collaborative teams feeling overwhelmed or in a constant cycle of assessing without pausing to maximize the power of this information. Common formative assessments provide insight into how well students learned essential standards. When analyzed, these insights guide teachers to design instruction and intervention that meet the needs of students and help them achieve at high levels while gaining confidence. Nicole Dimich Vagle offers a simple three-step process for effectively designing and using common formative assessments.

Outcomes include:

- Exploring effective and efficient ways to collect meaningful data related to student learning
- Analyzing student work to identify instruction and interventions needed to achieve mastery and beyond
- Identifying effective implementation to ensure this process leads to inspired teaching and learning

Day 2 Session Descriptions

Focus: Instructional Agility

Katie White

Using Formative Assessment to Nurture Creativity

The partnership between formative assessment and creativity flourishes when it improves learning outcomes for students and increases their ability to make decisions and take risks in the short and long term. This is how we can leverage assessment to unlock creativity. When we connect strong assessment criteria to self-assessment, goal setting, and feedback, we develop creative learners who accept responsibility for their continued growth and are empowered to share their voices.

Participants in this session:

- Explore criteria-setting, observations, self-assessment, and feedback as critical pieces of formative assessment and creative processes.
- Engage in a practical simulation, consider outcomes, and reflect on the implications for learners of various responses to formative assessment.
- Apply the connection between assessment and creativity in personal contexts.

Day 3 Session Descriptions

Focus: Student Investment

KEYNOTE

Cassandra Erkens

Getting to the Good Stuff: Resiliency and Investment

In the ideal classroom, all learners would be deeply invested in their learning, demonstrating motivation, persistence, passion, and high levels of intellectual risk taking and engagement. Is that even realistic? Yes! But changes to the current assessment practices and systems must be made if learners will ever be able to self-regulate as they engage in the work of deep learning. This keynote explores the mental mindset and strategies that educators must employ to support learners in *getting to the good stuff*.

Learning outcomes include:

- Identifying the barriers that block learners from truly investing in their learning
- Exploring the educator's mindset that is required to support deep learning at the classroom level
- Identifying strategies and tools that teachers can use to support learners in self-regulation

BREAKOUTS

Cassandra Erkens

Modeling What Matters: Leading Assessment Literacy

Quality leadership is the work of formative assessment. Cassandra Erkens explores formative assessment practices as quality leadership strategies and provides tools and resources for teacher leaders and administrators to model the process of using assessment practices to develop assessment literacy among staff. Systemic change happens when leaders model methods and then engage staff in exploring transparent practices over time.

Learning outcomes include:

- Understanding the role of leadership in supporting significant change efforts
- Identifying leadership practices that align with quality formative assessment
- Exploring options for engaging staff in the experience of quality formative assessment

Tom Schimmer

Assessing Critical Thinking

Critical thinking sits at the heart of the competencies that are essential for learners to develop in the 21st century. Tom Schimmer highlights how educators can take advantage of their assessment fundamentals to seamlessly assess critical thinking. Specifically, participants learn 1) how *specialist* and *generalist* views of critical thinking can contribute to schools developing a comprehensive approach to critical thinking, 2) various tools that can be developed in support of assessment, 3) instructional implications for creating critical thinking opportunities, and 4) dispositional habits of critical thinkers.

Learning outcomes include:

- Examining the overlap and contradiction between the two dominant psychological views of critical thinking
- Understanding why and how the assessment of critical thinking relies heavily on clearly articulated performance criteria
- Exploring how learners can, through the cultivation of habitual behaviors and dispositions, develop into critical thinkers

Day 3 Session Descriptions

Focus: Student Investment

Mandy Stalets

Reassessment in Action

Since it is well known that some learners take longer to learn, the fundamental question teachers must ask is whether their assessment and grading practices honor that truth. Subsequently, reassessment must be an integral part of classroom assessment. As reassessment can be an overwhelming exercise for teachers, it is essential to invest time exploring how to effectively manage this practice. Participants explore the difference between reassessment, redos, and retakes and the most appropriate and effective use of each.

Participants in this session:

- Learn why reassessment is vital to the learning process.
- Consider effective strategies to make reassessment manageable.
- Examine varied methods for reassessment.

Nicole Dimich Vagle

Changing Assessment Practices Through Student Voice

Students are an untapped resource in creating assessment practices for teachers and learners to thrive. Tapping into this voice provides us with important insights into the student experience. Solutions generated from these insights have great potential to create sustainable change and rich learning cultures. How do students describe their classroom assessment experiences and how do those experiences affect their motivation and achievement? How do teachers use student perceptions to change or innovate their practice? Participants learn the rationale, tools, and templates to gather this voice and use it in high-leverage ways.

Outcomes include:

- Identifying the role students can play in developing quality assessment practices
- Analyzing the insights students provide in contributing to effective assessment practices by reviewing actual examples
- Learning ways to (and not to) collect student voice to build trust that leads to sustainable change and improved student investment

Katie White

Building Strong Self-Assessment Skills in Young Learners

Strong self-assessment in classrooms leads to investment and growth for learners through co-constructed learning experiences that precisely address student needs. So, what do we do when our learners are just beginning their learning journeys and may not yet have refined the skills of self-assessment? We build the sub-skills that provide the foundation for student ownership as they move through the system. Katie White explores the power of self-assessment to nurture hope and efficacy in learners. By empowering students to be in charge of their learning stories, educators can support the development of learners who are confident and capable.

Participants in this session:

- Discover a language of self-assessment that honors the developmental nature of young learners.
- Explore sub-skills of self-assessment.
- Build lessons that invite students to practice these skills in a safe, caring, and student-focused early learning environment.