Best Practices for Classroom Assessment in a Virtual or Blended Environment
Event Overview

Opening Keynote

Cassandra Erkens—*The Promise of Hope Through Assessment*

Breakouts

Nicole Dimich—*Analyzing Student Work to Plan Instruction and Intervention in a Remote Learning Context*
Nicole Dimich—*Formative Feedback in Action: Instructional Agility to Ensure Students and Teachers Thrive*
Nicole Dimich—*Designing and Using Assessment to Ensure Learning in a Distance Learning Context*
Cassandra Erkens—*Student Agency in a Virtual World*
Cassandra Erkens—*Checking for Understanding in a Remote Context*
Cassandra Erkens—*Designing 21st Century Assessments*
Tom Schimmer—*Raising the Rigor through Performance Assessment*
Tom Schimmer—*Assessing Critical Thinking*
Tom Schimmer—*Reassessment the Right Way*

Closing Keynote

Tom Schimmer—*Grading From the Inside Out*

Keynote Session Descriptions

Cassandra Erkens

The Promise of Hope Through Assessment

These unprecedented times have intensified the need for us to reexamine our assessment and grading practices. The external concerns of safety, security, and equity are exposing internal processes that are exacerbating the issues for students and teachers alike. Assessment sits at the center of creating a culture of learning that promotes hope efficacy and achievement. This keynote highlights considerations that will help teachers navigate the tumult with a new perspective regarding assessment and some tools and strategies to support focused and streamlined assessment practices.

Tom Schimmer

Grading from the Inside Out

At no time has it been more relevant and essential to ensure that there is a seamless relationship between the culture of learning and what ends up being reported about student achievement. Whether in a full-remote or hybrid learning model, teachers now realize that determining student proficiency has to be about the quality of evidence produced and not just the accumulation of points. In this keynote, Tom Schimmer outlines the principles of a standards-based mindset that are universally applicable in all modes of instruction. As well, Tom will highlight how teachers can produce accurate grades while developing confident learners.

Breakout Session Descriptions

Nicole Dimich

Analyzing Student Work to Plan Instruction and Intervention in a Remote Learning Context
We have an overwhelming amount of 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 the extent students learned essential standards. When analyzed, these insights guide teachers to design instruction and intervention that meets the needs of students and helps them achieve at high levels and gain confidence. This session offers a process for examining student work to plan effective instruction and intervention with tips to doing this in a virtual environment. (Tenets: Instructional Agility, Interpretation)

Participants will:
- Identify and explore effective intervention and instruction strategies.
- Learn how to analyze the student work from an assessment to plan instruction and intervention.

Formative Feedback in Action: Instructional Agility to Ensure Students and Teachers Thrive
Instructional agility is real-time moves teachers make as they recognize where students are and take action to increase their learning. Feedback and checking for understanding has been identified in practice and in research as key to student achievement and success. This session will share practical ideas to check for understanding in any context, including distance learning. Participants will learn practical ideas and key ideas to consider when providing feedback and helping students invest in learning. (Tenets: Instructional Agility, Student Investment, Communication)

Participants will:
- Identify the key characteristics of the process of instructional agility and formative assessment and the action and strategies that lead to high levels of achievement for all students.
- Learn to provide feedback and create a culture of trust so students use feedback and grow.
- Determine challenges and learn strategies and problem-solving methods to employ effective and efficient feedback practices in these unprecedented times.

Designing and Using Assessment to Ensure Learning in a Distance Learning Context
In these uncertain times where things are changing quickly, how do we effectively and efficiently engage in assessment practices that empower teachers and increase confidence and achievement for students?

Individual teachers and collaborative teams are tasked with linking essential standards, assessment, instruction, and interventions. In this inquiry-based learning experience, individual or collaborative teams of teachers will learn how to put assessment into action in a manageable and meaningful manner. Nicole Dimich shares key insights into how to 1) identify essentials (the "real" essentials given our current reality); 2) determine and create meaningful assessment evidence, and 3) analyze assessment results to plan instruction (Tier 1) or intervention (Tier 2) that leads to deeper student investment and learning.

Participants will learn to:
- Identify an essential standard on which to focus.
- Learn the process of choosing a valid method of assessment.
- How to design an assessment to use formatively or summatively (measuring the essential standard or competency).
- Consider implementation tips that move the knowing to the doing that gets results.

Cassandra Erkens

Student Agency in a Virtual World
We must reach them to teach them! But how do we do that in a virtual world? And, more importantly, what can we do to engage them as agents of their own learning? How do we empower students of all ages to learn how to learn—a skill that has never been more important than it is today.

Participants will:
- Identify strategies or processes to engage students in self-regulation.
- Explore templates and tools to support student goal setting, tracking, self-assessment, reflection, and other self-regulatory processes.

Checking for Understanding in a Remote Context
Even when we can't see our students in person—and maybe even more so during these times— it's imperative that we check for understanding throughout our instruction. What does formative assessment look like in both synchronous or asynchronous settings? This K–12 session is intended to help teachers explore options for such challenges.

Participants will:

- Identify and explore core processes to check for understanding.
- Explore applications to support remote learning, whether synchronous or asynchronous.

Designing 21st Century Assessments

We are preparing learners today for a world we have not experienced and may even have difficulty comprehending. How can we create and use assessments that tap into a global and technological realm? How can we ensure that assessments move us beyond the practice of regurgitating information to the practice of co-creating new insights and new solutions for a complex and rapidly changing world? Cassandra Erkens explores the integration of rigor, relevance, and 21st century skills in assessment design.

Participants will:

- Explore widely accepted 21st century skills.
- Identify the criteria for, and non-negotiables of, quality assessment design.
- Explore designing a 21st century, skill-based assessment.

Tom Schimmer

Raising the Rigor through Performance Assessment

Rigor is about cognitive complexity, not volume. With the learning outcomes for students becoming increasingly sophisticated, teachers are going to be forced to utilize more performance assessments to ensure accurate results; this session will focus on the fundamentals of developing performance assessments. Specifically, participants will come to know the strengths and limitations of every assessment method, how to design sophisticated, authentic tasks, and the various types of rubrics that can make criteria transparent. The quality of performance assessments is critical to creating a rigorous learning experience that supports students in their pursuit of 21st century learning outcomes.

Participants will:

- Understand the fundamentals of designing high-quality, authentic, and sophisticated performance assessments.
- Understand the strengths and limitations of every assessment method.

Assessing Critical Thinking

Critical thinking sits at the heart of the critical competencies essential for learners to develop in the 21st century. This session highlights how educators can take advantage of their assessment fundamentals to seamlessly assess critical thinking. Specifically, participants will come to know how the specifist and generalist views of critical thinking can both contribute to schools

developing a comprehensive approach to critical thinking, the variety of tools that can be developed in support of assessment, the instructional implications for creating the critical thinking opportunities, and the dispositional habits of critical thinkers.

Participants will:
- Understand both the overlap and contradiction between the two dominant psychological views of critical thinking.
- Understand why and how the assessment of critical thinking will rely heavily on clearly articulated performance criteria.
- Explore how learners can, through the cultivation of habitual behaviors and dispositions, develop into critical thinkers.

Reassessment the Right Way
The process of reassessment can be one of the biggest hurdles for teachers to overcome as they transform their assessment and grading practices; they know it's important but it's challenging to find the time. This session will focus on how teachers can create a more standards-focused approach to reassessment and avoid the trap of believing that all assessments need to be duplicated. Second, the focus will move to creating a student-teacher social contract that ensures reassessment is a productive, learning-centered experience. More than just a do-over, reassessment is an essential part of an effective instructional approach to ensuring all students reach their potential.

Participants will:
- Understand how to refocus their reassessment lens on standards rather than weighted task-types.
- Understand how to create and utilize an effective "social contract" to ensure that reassessment is a productive learning experience.