

“The Assessment - Reporting Continuum: Tips from the Field:”  
The Co-Sponsored University of Manitoba Faculty of Education and  
Manitoba Middle Years Association Professional Development Session  
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On a wintry January evening the Middle Years Stream of the Faculty of Education and the Manitoba Middle Years Association hosted an interactive evening of discussion and collegiality around the topic of assessment and reporting. The January meeting is an annual event that brings together teachers and administrators from Winnipeg and surrounding area with professors and middle years teacher candidates from the University of Manitoba. Teachers from the Manitoba School for the Deaf also joined us this year. The evening’s focus, “The Assessment – Reporting Continuum: Tips from the Field” was part of a year-long exploration by the MMYA into the topic of student engagement.

The evening began with some refreshments and collegial chatting. This was followed with a welcome from Ann-Marie Dooner, President of MMYA and myself. I introduced the panel of middle years educators. The panel included

- Shelia Alexander from Island Lakes Community School, Louis Riel,
- Doug Jononson, V.P. Bairdmore School, Pembina Trails,
- Grant Page, Ecolie Leila North School, Seven Oaks, and
- Tom Stimpson, H.S. Paul, Louis Riel.

They provided personal insights, from their experiences and from the context of their school jurisdiction, on student assessment and reporting student progress; tips from the field.

Panel members had ten or so minutes to outline their thoughts. The essence of what was outlined by the panel pointed toward the ongoing nature of assessment as learning for both the teacher and students. They suggested the need for using a variety of modes of assessment, the need for students to have a voice in their own assessment, and that assessment is not just an add on, judgment activity. Teachers need to see student assessment as an integral part of student engagement. It is part of a cycle of teacher reflection in that we consider assessment while we teach (assessment in learning), after we teach (assessment on learning), and while planning for teaching (assessment for learning). Assessment must not be by accident but designed to assist student learning.

The final speaker described the assessment cycle as a journey, not just for the teacher but also for the students. He described the use of student-led conferences and portfolios as one way to help both students and teachers provide the authentic assessment. This not only allows for the reporting of achievement but also provides student voice and an opportunity for them to set and work to achieving goals for the future. Student assessment needs to be more about providing feedback for ongoing learning and less about judgment of achievement.

After the panel presented their insights, they joined the audience for small group discussions. During this time, current teacher candidates had the opportunity to listen, question, and share ideas about student assessment with their colleagues from the field. It was a lively few minutes. We followed up with a whole group summary of the individual conversations. Although no definitive answers were developed, it was apparent from the comments that everyone felt that this topic was relevant. Further discussion will take place at monthly MMYA meetings. Feel free to attend any of our meetings. For more information, go to the associations website. <http://www.7oaks.org/mmya/>

Many attendees, including teacher candidates, came away with an understanding that student assessment is an area in their teaching that will need to be a continuous part of their professional development. Like most things in teaching, student assessment and engagement is a process not an event. It is journey for all.