



**Queen's**  
UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Education

# Our Evolving Conceptions of Classroom Assessment and its Role in Teaching and Learning

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# My Experience in Assessment

- Former teacher and educational coordinator
- Professor, Assessment and Evaluation in Education
  - Psychometrics and large scale testing
  - Predicting achievement and the role of assessment in learning
- Ongoing Contributions
  - Psychometric panel (Provincial testing program in Ontario)
  - Co-chair: JCSEE task force on *Classroom Assessment Standards*
  - Assessment policy and practice

# Challenging Environment



- ◆ We work in increasingly strained and complex teaching environments.
- ◆ Internal and External Accountability.
  - ◆ Need to demonstrate a commitment to increasing student achievement
- ◆ Students have growing albeit unequal access to social and information networks.
  - ◆ Knowledge acquisition becomes more complex

# Challenging Expectations



- ◆ Help students develop increasingly complex knowledge and skills
- ◆ Help students become more independent self-regulated learners
  - ◆ Monitor personal strengths and weaknesses
  - ◆ Set short- and long-term learning goals



# Assessment in the Classroom

The historical role of using assessment as a tool to select and sort students is disappearing to be replaced by an evolving and more complex view of assessment

- ◆ Criterion-referenced assessment
- ◆ Formative assessment
- ◆ Complex and non-cognitive skills



# Criterion-referenced Assessment

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There is now a recognition that a student's performance should be based on her/his ability to meet specified standards of performance.

- ◆ Curricular expectations
- ◆ Performance Standards and Rubrics
- ◆ Ongoing monitoring



# Formative Assessment

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***Increasingly, research suggests that well structured formative assessment and feedback supports learning and increases students' abilities to monitor their own learning (self-regulated learning).***

# An Underlying Philosophy



- ◆ Instruction, learning and assessment are integrated parts of the “learning experience.”
- ◆ Students and teachers both have very active roles in the assessment experience.
  - Before, during, and after instruction
- ◆ The goal of assessment is to provide feedback.



# Grading



- ◆ We are actually quite good at separation and sorting.
  - ◆ We recognize differences in quality
- ◆ We are good at providing quick encouraging comments.
  - ◆ Good work; You are getting there; Good effort...

*These activities do little to support teaching or learning*

# Feedback



- ◆ Teaching and learning requires more focused feedback.
  - ◆ **Linked to learning expectations**
  - ◆ **Descriptive (strengths, next steps)**
- ◆ Feedback can be written or verbal.
- ◆ Feedback can come from teachers, peers or oneself.

# Formal Feedback

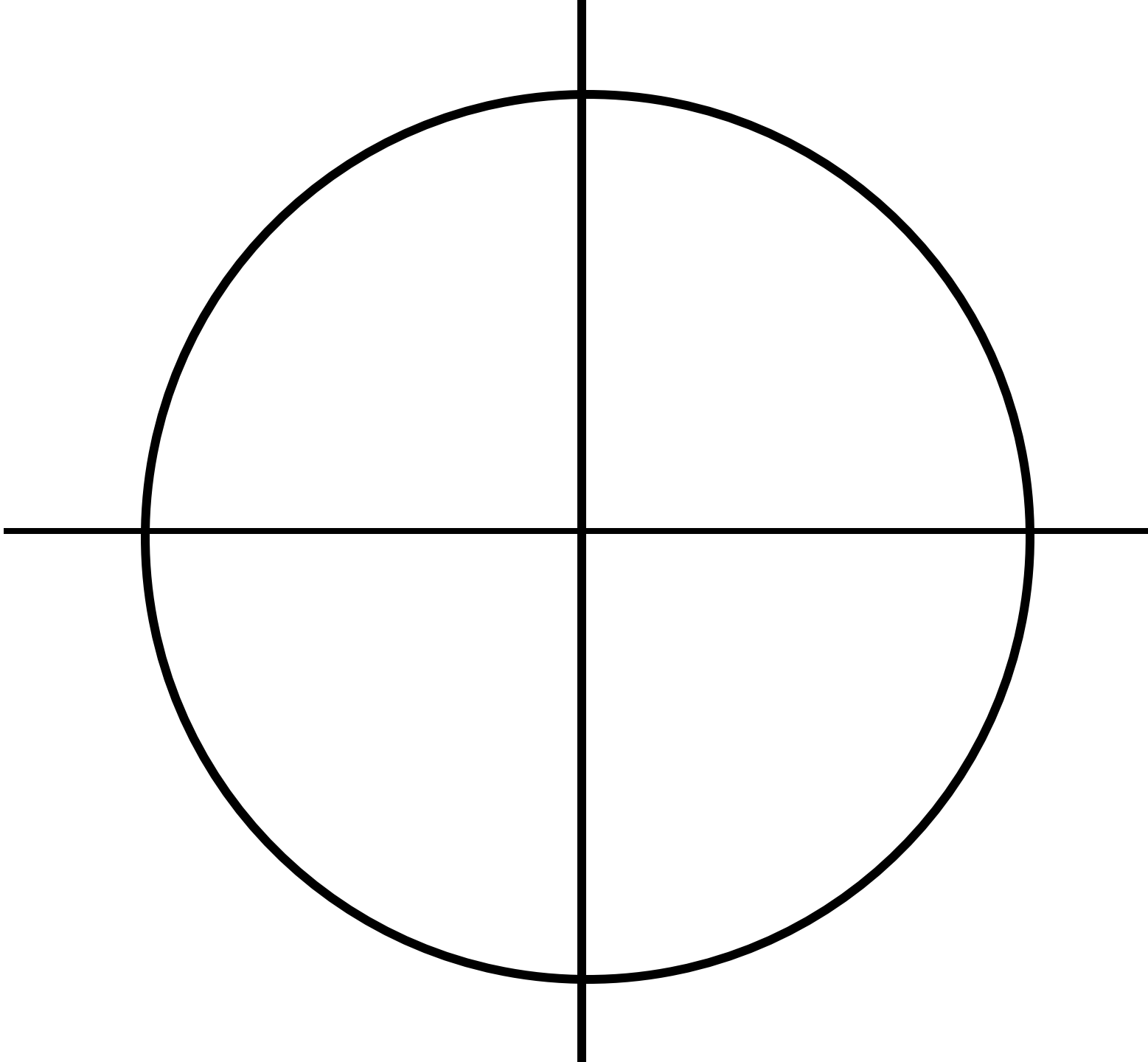


- ◆ Scoring criteria, rubrics, or performance standards are most commonly used to provide formative and effective feedback, but...
  - ◆ Good rubrics are difficult to develop
  - ◆ Rubrics can be difficult to understand
  - ◆ Rubrics do not provide individual feedback
  - ◆ Students need training to interpret feedback



# The Pie Problem

You have just applied for a job with a world famous chef. Before hiring you, he asks you to solve the following problem. What are the maximum number of cuts of pie that can be made with 4 straight vertical cuts? How many pieces can be made with 10 straight vertical cuts?



# Informal Feedback



- ◆ Well placed questions are powerful instructional tools.
- ◆ Well placed directions or “spoken thoughts” can direct students.
- ◆ As a teacher, it is important to listen to responses to monitor students’ thinking.
- ◆ It may be even more important for students to listen to each others’ thinking.

# Deep Learning



- ◆ The need to transition from the role of passive student to engaged learner.
  - ◆ Self-regulated learning
- ◆ As educators we must teach, model, promote, and perhaps even measure the critical aspects of self-regulated learning.



# Our Challenge

***We need to help our youth to become self-directed, self-regulated learners who are driven by their own internal desires to learn, and are able to thoughtfully monitor their own learning.***





**How can we  
promote Deep  
Learning  
in our  
classrooms**

“Some problems are so complex that you have to be highly intelligent and well informed just to be undecided about them.”

Laurence J. Peter



# “Wicked” Problems

Rittel, H. W. J., & Webber, M. M. (1973). *Dilemmas in a general theory of planning*.



- ◆ No rules for solving.
- ◆ Solutions cross knowledge boundaries.
- ◆ Solutions are neither *right* nor *wrong*, only *more or less* useful in achieving goals.
- ◆ Solutions are context dependent.

*Our most important educational problems  
are wicked*

# Wicked Problems in Assessment



Complete Physical Education Plans for Grades 7-12

**TABLE 10.3 Beginner Tennis Performance Assessment Rubric**

STUDENT NAME \_\_\_\_\_

	0	1	2	3	4	5
Forehand	No effort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Uses proper grip</li><li>• Uses correct mimetics</li><li>• Uses the correct side of the racket</li><li>• Able to meet an object in the center of the racket five consecutive times during a self-volley</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meets an object coming from over the net</li><li>• Able to redirect a ball to a target five feet away after it bounces</li><li>• Uses proper body pivot</li><li>• Able to self-volley up and down 10 times</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Moves to meet a ball after the bounce</li><li>• Able to rally over the net 10 times with a partner at 30 feet distance</li><li>• Meets a ball with the racket head up</li><li>• Controls the forehand wall volley three times</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Runs four steps or more and still redirects a ball to a target area</li><li>• Meets the ball in front</li><li>• Returns the ball with a volley</li><li>• Able to rally 10 times over the net up to 60 feet distance</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Moves to cover a wide shot</li><li>• Chooses correctly between a volley and a full stroke</li><li>• Able to control depth or vary speed</li><li>• Backswing and follow-through are complete</li></ul>

How do I construct a rubric that I can use for both assessment FOR and OF Learning?

How do I construct a rubric?

How do I assess growth over time?


How do I engage students in constructing rubrics with me?

Well-structured Problems

“Wicked” Problems

How do I help students value peer- and self-assessment to direct their learning?

# Direct Instruction in Self-Regulated Learning

My Actions	Beginning	Next Steps	Developing	Refining
Independence				
Engagement				
Collaboration				
Use of resources				
Managing Time				
Monitoring Performance				
Problem Solving				

# Using Peer-feedback as an entry to Self-assessment



- ◆ Teach students to use peer feedback.
- ◆ Develop an assessment language in the classroom (success criteria, rubrics, learning outcomes)
- ◆ Use formal peer-feedback structures

# Peer-Feedback Dialogue



- ◆ Peer feedback requires a dialogue.
- ◆ Peers need to ask questions and listen to each other.
- ◆ Why did you do this? What does this mean? What aspect of this was the most difficult? What made it difficult?

# The Important Questions



- ◆ As a result of talking to your peer, what would you do differently?
- ◆ What did you see in your peer's work that you will add to your work?
- ◆ What is something you now know?





# The Challenge for Educational Leaders

Teachers themselves struggle with self-regulated learning (professional learning).

- How do we help teachers promote self-regulation in their students when they themselves struggle with it?



# Potential Solutions

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- Helping teachers to develop an assessment pedagogy.
- Ongoing professional learning and practice (long term).
- Shared practice (instructional rounds).
- The *Classroom Assessment Standards*



# Points to Remember

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- We need to build competence before we can fully use peer feedback and self assessment.
- This takes time and practice.
- Progress is not linear.
- Improvements in teaching and learning will occur.



# Questions???

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