

Professional Staff Development

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Marching in Step With the Mentors

This is the time of year to look for postings related to Mentor internships. For those of you who feel that some day you may wish to be a member of our Mentoring Cadre, you may want to apply to become a Mentor Intern. We have recently been receiving some questions related to the Mentor Program. The best approach to becoming a mentor is to become an intern first. This program helps you become familiar with the expectations related to mentoring. Soon, applications will be taken, and interviews will be held for intern positions.

To apply you must have taught at least five years, hold a Master's Degree, and have three letters of recommendation. National Board Certification or similar advanced credentials are recommended. For more specific information on applying, please look for the posting coming soon.

*May you have all the
happiness
and luck that life can
hold—
And at the end of all your
rainbows
may you find a pot of
gold. ❖*



Julie Salley

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Assessment For Learning

By: Dr. Rob Allen, Director for Assessment

→ **Would anyone dispute the optimal goal for education is success for all students?** However, how that success is defined is the issue at hand.

→ **Should all students get A's (grade inflation)?**

→ **Should all reach minimum competency on state standards (NCLB)?**

→ **Should all make significant progress from his own starting point?**

→ **And "how" and "with what" reliable, valid instrument or method is that proficiency or progress measured—national (NAEP, AP exams) and international measures (TIMSS), state tests (AIMS), district benchmarks (SAMs), common teacher-made formative and summative assessments, multiple choice tests, authentic performance tasks, or portfolios?**

→ **And what is measured — content knowledge of standards, inquiry process, problem solving, critical thinking?**

This would seem to be a complicated issue with no simple solutions. The following discussion seeks not to answer all of these questions, but to provide a brief background on the evolving role of testing and assessment and the current trend of *Assessing FOR Learning*.

Rick Stiggins, one of the foremost scholars in assessment, outlines the evolution of the mission of schools from a sorting and ranking of students to a certain level of achievement for all. The role of assessment has evolved along with this from motivation of students through anxiety and competition to a mission of motivating continuous effort based on continuous feedback on individual progress. He argues that the "trigger" for the degree of student effort and academic risk-taking is based on their perceived performance on the assessment at hand

with the result being a commensurate sense of confidence based on the outcome.

This previous result of winners and losers has been transformed into a new mission of creating an environment of confidence, optimism, and persistence for all students fueled by evidence of individual personal progress and academic success. A mechanism contributing to this developing mission is Formative Assessment.

Formative Assessment itself has been a dynamic and evolving methodology and philosophy for the past four decades. Recent research by Black and Wiliam, however, has elevated the approach to its current level of interest. At a transactional level, it can simply mean testing more frequently. This can lead to early identification of standard and concept mastery levels such that instructional pace can be adjusted. This level of assessment also results in a proliferation of student data and the need for management systems to store, sort, and summarize data.

At a higher transformational degree though, **Formative Assessment for Learning is believed to yield the most significant results in student achievement.** Whereas the previous implementation primarily informs the teacher of student progress, at this stage the student becomes the data-driven consumer. This level of practice identifies up front for students achievement expectations, curricular maps and assessment blueprints, and models of quality work. Students set personal goals and contribute to self-planning and monitoring their own progress. The ultimate goal is to "trigger" increasing student effort and risk based on perceived

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What's Working: The Greenway Honors Core and MYCE (Museum Youth Curator Experience) Partnership

By The Greenway Honors Core Teachers and Sue Robinson, Differentiated Instruction Trainer

How do you connect state standards, student engagement, student relevancy, integrate all core subjects, and transfer knowledge to the real world using real world criteria? The MYCE Partnership is what works for us.

The Honors Core teachers at Greenway Middle School are engaged in a joint venture with the Arizona Historical Museums. Our objective is that the students will be historians and curators. From the teachers' perspective, 8th grade Social Studies standards include American History. From the Historical Museums' perspective, some time period exhibits are incomplete or not yet created. Our students will research and create these exhibits for permanent display.

The Greenway Honors Core teachers, Helen Begay – Math, Heidi Cocco – Social Studies, Rebecca Kabaj – English, and Laura Retts – Science, are collaborating with Historical Museum staff, Kyle McCoy – Curator of Education and Community Programs, and Megan Gately – Administrative Assistant. Together, we have formulated the following step-by-step plan and time line to achieve our goal:

- ♦January 26 — Tour Arizona History Museum (library/archives, collections, graphics, exhibits). Discuss possible exhibits.
- ♦February 6 — AHM — Graphics and Problem

Solving Tutorial with a AHM staff specialist. Learn to scan, discuss and begin research project

- ♦February 12 — Greenway Computer Lab — Explain and start bibliography / documentation.

- ♦February 22 — AHM — Artifacts / Archives, Primary Sources. Explore collections and library with staff archivist. Primary Source activity. Select artifacts according to topic.

- ♦February 26 through March 5 — GMS Computer Lab— Writing, Researching, Rewriting.

- ♦March 8 — Scottsdale Center for the Arts and AHM. Museum exhibits exploration from “BIAS” point of view

- ♦March 12 — GMS Computer Lab. Writing, Researching, Rewriting

- ♦March 19 — Exhibit Forum Day at GMS — Students present to AHM Governing Board, “Why should we

include your exhibit in this museum?” (Students have 7 minutes for presentation of exhibit and research, the Board has 3 minutes for questions)

- ♦March 20 — Exhibit Forum Day at GMS. Present the “so-what” factor to the Governing Board. **(Students need to rewrite and rework exhibit until it is accepted. They must meet the same standards as any exhibit / exhibitor at the AHM.)**

- ♦March 22 — Science Center — Museum exhibit exploration “BIAS” point of view.

- ♦April 16 — Mounting/Prepping/Focus on Opening. Students prepare for Grand Opening of new exhibits: refreshments, invitations, publicity, programs, and donations. Invitations will be sent to the governor, mayors of Phoenix metropolitan and surrounding cities, other various city, state, and museum dignitaries.

- ♦April 27 — Turn in all publicity and opening materials

- ♦April 30 through May 11. Set up exhibits, place artifacts, texts, graphics, measurements, and dimensions.

Our objective is that the students will be historians and curators.

Keeping Students on Task

Assess Students During the Learning Process



Students often tune out during learning — when the material is either too easy or “over their heads.”

Assessing student progress during learning can help you know what students understand so that you can adapt your teaching accordingly.

Try some of the following strategies to keep students focused:

- Thumb tales. Ask students to convey their understanding with their thumbs. Thumbs up for “a lot.” Thumbs sideways for “a little.” Thumbs down for “next to nothing.”
- Up to five. Show students how to use their fingers to create a

scale of one to five. Ask them to rate their understanding by showing the appropriate number of fingers— from one (I’m just starting) to five (I know this so well, I can teach it to someone else.)

- Reach for the sky. Have students raise one arm to the ceiling to form a gauge. Have them move the opposite hand up the raised arm to show their understanding on a one to five scale. The shoulder is one. The elbow is three. The fingertips are level five.

- Facing facts. State a fact about a topic that students can respond to with an emotion. Let them hold up a card with a face that matches the emotion—happy, neutral or sad. ❖



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Assessment For Learning

performance of progressing ever closer to personal targets.

Assessment for learning requires some redefining of both teacher and student roles for it to become a common practice.

In Paradise Valley we are already moving forward with periodic assessments tied to curricular maps and blueprints (SAMs). A data management system (pDAT) is being made accessible to instructional staff, and Personal Plans of Progress (PPP's) are being developed by students and woven into school action plans. To complement this transformation of our assessment practices, targeted

professional development will soon become available to instructional staff. Effective application of all of these components will continue to build the framework and momentum to lead us to the goal of success for all.

Recommended Reading;

Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam, "Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards Through Classroom Achievement", retrieved at: <http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/kbla9810.htm>

Rick Stiggins, "From Formative Assessment to Assessment FOR Learning: A Path to Success in Standards-Based Schools", Phi Delta Kappan, Vol.

The Six Facets of Understanding



When we truly understand, we

- ♦**Can explain:** via generalizations or principles, provide justified and systematic accounts of phenomena, facts, and data; make insightful connections and provide illuminating examples or illustrations.
- ♦**Can interpret:** tell meaningful stories; offer apt translations; provide a revealing historical or personal dimension to ideas and events; make it personal or accessible through images, anecdotes, analogies, and models
- ♦**Can apply:** effectively use and adapt what we know in diverse and real contexts - we can "do" the subject.

♦**Have perspective:** see and hear points of view through critical eyes and ears; see the big picture.

♦**Display empathy:** find value in what others might find odd, alien, or implausible; perceive sensitivity on the basis of prior direct experience.

♦**Have self-knowledge:** show metacognitive awareness; perceive the personal style, prejudices, projections, and habits of mind that both shape and impede our own understanding; be aware of what we do not understand; reflect on the meaning of learning and experience. ❖

Source: *Integrating Differentiated Instruction + Understanding By Design* by Carol Ann Tomlinson and Jay McTighe

"Mathematics students whose teachers emphasize higher-order thinking skills outperform their peers by about 40% of a grade level...students whose teachers conduct hands-on learning activities outperform their peers by more than 70% of a grade level.

Harold Wenglinsky, Educational Testing Service



Improving Study Skills

Encourage Students, Provide Tips During Busy Testing Season

End-of-year testing holds importance for all your students. For some, the stakes may be very high indeed. Your students may approach testing with more readiness and confidence if you:

- **Express your confidence.** Tell them you know they can do well. After completing a good review session, say, "You really showed me you're prepared. I am very optimistic. You can do this!"
- **Suggest that they spend** the last 10 minutes of each evening reviewing concepts that they haven't fully mastered. Research shows that our brains really do continue to process information while we sleep!
- **Encourage students to write** down formulas and other memorized facts on an area of the test where they are allowed to figure out the problems before filling in answers. Some students are greatly relieved by the idea that they can "dump" the information swirling around in their heads.

One big caution, however: Make sure your students know not to write anything down until after a proctor has inspected their testing areas and found them clean of anything that could be considered cheating material. ❖

Source: Jane Bluestein and Eric D. Katz, *High School's Not Forever*, ISBN: 0-7573-0256-1 (Health Communications, Inc., 1-800-441-5569, www.hcibooks.com) and Mel Levine, *A Mind at a Time*, ISBN: 0-7432-0222-8 (Simon & Schuster, 1-800-223-2336, www.simonsays.com).

Professional Training Opportunities & Events



March

03/01/07	Online Classes Open Lab	2:30-6:00	PDCTR
03/01/07	No More Letter of The Week	3:45-5:45	ERES Room 22
03/01/07	SEI and ESL Teaching Methods	3:30-9:00	GWMS
03/01/07	Developing MetaCognition for Struggling Readers Part I	8:30-3:30	Cholla Room 19
03/02/07	Spanish Class for Educator Using the Rosetta Stone	3:30-4:30	EMI Lab
03/03/07	SEI and ESL Teaching Methods	8:00-4:00	GWMS Room 504
03/05/07	Fred Jones Tools for Teaching	4:00-6:15	CRC Ivory
03/05/07	Spanish Class for Educator Using the Rosetta Stone	3:30-4:30	EMI Lab
03/05/07	National Board Pre-Candidacy Class	4:00-6:30	SCES
03/05/07	Asset/United Streaming in IDEAL	3:30-5:30	DACW
03/05/07	CPI Training	3:30-6:30	FHES
03/06/07	Administer, Score, and Interpret ELLA for SLP's	1:00-3:00	NCHS W. Pod
03/06/07	CPR for Para-professionals	1:00-3:00	PDCTR
03/06/07	Supervisory Staff Safety Training for SHMS and Feeders	1:30-3:30	SHMS
03/06/07	SEI and ESL Teaching Methods	3:30-9:00	GWMS Room 504
03/06/07	Excel II	1:00-3:00	PHS Room C117
03/06/07	Practical Strategies to Differentiate Your Curriculum Part I	3:30-5:30	TBD
03/08/07	Developing MetaCognition for Struggling Readers Part II	8:30-3:30	Cholla Room 19
03/08/07	Differentiating for Gifted and High Ability Students Part I	3:30-5:30	TBD
03/08/07	Online Classes Open Lab	2:30-6:00	PDCTR
03/08/07	TI-73 Graphing Calculator	3:30-5:30	PVHS Room 410
03/12/07	TI-73 Graphing Calculator	3:30-5:30	PVHS
03/12/07	Fred Jones Tools for Teaching	4:00-6:15	EMI Room 304
03/12/07	National Board Pre-Candidacy Class	4:00-6:30	SCES
03/13/07	Practical Strategies to Differentiate Your Curriculum Part II	3:30-5:30	TBD
03/13/07	Multisensory Grammar and Written Composition	8:30-3:30	Cholla Room 19
03/15/07	Kindergarten Connection Meeting	3:45-6:00	Pal 1
03/15/07	SEI and ESL Teaching Methods	3:30-9:00	GWMS Room 504
03/15/07	Differentiating for Gifted and High Ability Students Part II	3:30-5:30	TBD
03/19/07	iPhoto and iTunes	3:45-5:45	CRC Burgundy
03/19/07	Fred Jones Tools for Teaching	4:00-6:15	NCHS Room 259
03/19/07	National Board Pre-Candidacy Class	4:00-6:30	SCES
03/20/07	Practical Strategies to Differentiate Your Curriculum Part III	3:30-5:30	TBD
03/20/07	SEI and ESL Teaching Methods	3:30-9:00	GWMS Room 504
03/22/07	Fluency	1:00-4:00	Cholla Room 19
03/22/07	TI-73 Graphing Calculator	3:30-5:30	PVHS Room 410
03/22/07	Differentiating for Gifted and High Ability Students Part III	3:30-5:30	TBD
03/22/07	Podcasting Overview	03-23-07	3:30-6:00

April

04/02/07	Fred Jones Tools for Teaching	4:00-6:15	Pal II Media Ctr
04/02/07	SEI and ESL Teaching Methods	3:30-9:00	GWMS Room 504
04/02/07	National Board Pre-Candidacy Class	4:00-6:30	SCES
04/05/07	Advanced Google	3:45-5:45	DACW
04/05/07	Practical Strategies to Differentiate Your Curriculum Part I	3:30-5:30	TBD
04/05/07	Kindergarten Connection	3:45-6:00	AHES
04/09/07	Creating an RSS Feed for your Podcast—Advanced	3:00-6:00	PDCTR
04/12/07	Practical Strategies to Differentiate Your Curriculum Part II	3:30-5:30	TBD
04/12/07	NetTrekker and Atomic Learning	3:30-5:30	CRC Burgundy
04/12/07	SEI and ESL Teaching Methods	3:30-9:00	GWMS Room 504
04/16/07	Creating an RSS Feed for your Podcast—Advanced	3:00-6:00	PDCTR
04/17/07	SEI and ESL Teaching Methods	3:30-9:00	GWMS Room 504
04/18/07	Project Based Learning Seminar for Teachers — AzTEA	4:00-6:30	DAC E & W
04/18/07	Differentiating for Gifted and High Ability Students Part I	8:30-3:30	TBD
04/19/07	Practical Strategies to Differentiate Your Curriculum Part III	3:30-5:30	TBD
04/23/07	Creating an RSS Feed for your Podcast—Advanced	3:00-6:00	PDCTR
04/24/07	First Aid for Para-Educators	1:00-3:30	PDCTR
04/24/07	Supervisory Staff Training for Explorer MS and Feeders	1:00-3:30	EXMS
04/24/07	Excel II for Productivity	1:00-3:00	PHS Room C117
04/25/07	Differentiating for Gifted and High Ability Students Part II	8:30-3:30	TBD ❖