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00:00:01,460 --> 00:00:07,290

Our next speaker is Deborah Crusan, who is a professor of TESOL and applied

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00:00:07,290 --> 00:00:12,960

linguistics in the Department of English, where she teaches assessment and grammar

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00:00:12,960 --> 00:00:19,680

in the MA TESOL program. Her research interests include writing assessment for

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00:00:19,680 --> 00:00:25,680

placement of second language writers, directed self placement, and the politics

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00:00:25,680 --> 00:00:32,160

of assessment. Her book, "Assessment in the Second Language Writing Classroom" was

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00:00:32,160 --> 00:00:37,440

published by the University of Michigan press. She is currently working on three

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00:00:37,440 --> 00:00:43,469

book projects and edited collection to  
be published by Rutledge an assessment

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00:00:43,469 --> 00:00:48,829

text in proposal with Michigan press and  
a co authored book on writing groups.

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00:00:48,829 --> 00:00:53,789

Crusan is a frequent keynote speaker  
at national and international

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00:00:53,789 --> 00:00:59,730

conferences. She will talk with us about  
assessment, how to do it, and why it's

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00:00:59,730 --> 00:01:08,310

important. Okay, so assessment, how to  
do it, and why it's important. So I'm

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00:01:08,310 --> 00:01:15,780

obviously switching gears here. I'd like

to thank Stephanie Dickey especially for

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00:01:15,780 --> 00:01:19,650

her organizational skills and and then  
to my colleagues in the College of

14

00:01:19,650 --> 00:01:25,229

Liberal Arts who chose my project from  
among so many strong proposals for

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00:01:25,229 --> 00:01:28,799

professional development leave and I'd  
like to thank the Dean for organizing

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00:01:28,799 --> 00:01:38,640

this. I would also like to thank this  
group of women who they're my writing

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00:01:38,640 --> 00:01:43,229

group and they keep me sane they make me  
laugh and they keep me writing. My wish

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00:01:43,229 --> 00:01:50,670

for all of you is that you're able to  
find such a group. So today I'm going to

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00:01:50,670 --> 00:01:58,200

talk about two things that I feel are  
very important, and it's I'm talking

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00:01:58,200 --> 00:02:00,899

about assessment but most of all I'm  
talking about writing assessment because

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00:02:00,899 --> 00:02:07,110

it's what I repeatedly focus on and I'm  
sure many of you do that pretty

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00:02:07,110 --> 00:02:12,120

regularly as well. Further, writing  
assessment was the focus of my personal

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00:02:12,120 --> 00:02:15,870

development leave  
and from which several publications are

24

00:02:15,870 --> 00:02:20,000

emerging. One in particular is the book  
"The Politics of Second Language Writing

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00:02:20,000 --> 00:02:24,480

Assessment in Global Context" from which  
my co-author and I of them were awarded

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00:02:24,480 --> 00:02:31,050

a contract from Rutledge. For this  
presentation then I'll talk about the

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00:02:31,050 --> 00:02:34,739

lack of writing and other assessment  
literacy and the nuts and bolts of good

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00:02:34,739 --> 00:02:44,130

assessment in the classroom. But first  
it's impossible to divorce ourselves

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00:02:44,130 --> 00:02:49,530

from assessment. I consider assessment to  
be the most important issue in the

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00:02:49,530 --> 00:02:53,550

writing class room, and for that  
matter in many of your classrooms as

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00:02:53,550 --> 00:02:58,050

most of you assign writing. So it's  
impossible to divorce ourselves from

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00:02:58,050 --> 00:03:02,790

running assessment. Assessment is  
everywhere. We make judgments every day

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00:03:02,790 --> 00:03:07,709

about our students and their work and  
other things. Some teachers believe that

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00:03:07,709 --> 00:03:12,870

assessment isn't their job, even though  
they do it every day. However assessing

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00:03:12,870 --> 00:03:17,280

student writing is quite possibly one of  
the most time-consuming and scary but

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00:03:17,280 --> 00:03:21,600

most significant things teachers do. Is generally considered one of the biggest

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00:03:21,600 --> 00:03:26,489

problems confronting instructors because assessing writing requires patience, a

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00:03:26,489 --> 00:03:31,560

great deal of conscious preparation of assignments, and criteria and painstaking

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00:03:31,560 --> 00:03:36,239

decision-making. Teachers at every level and in every context are gradually

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00:03:36,239 --> 00:03:46,079

realizing the importance of responsible assessment practices. I often think that

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00:03:46,079 --> 00:03:50,519

talking about teachers needs to be aware

of good assessment is like beating a

42

00:03:50,519 --> 00:03:54,329

dead horse, but then i went to  
collaborate in New Mexico with my

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00:03:54,329 --> 00:03:58,859

colleague and visited his grad  
seminar and in which we talked about

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00:03:58,859 --> 00:04:03,980

assessment because I was there and I'm  
the person who does assessment in TESOL.

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00:04:03,980 --> 00:04:09,090

These this was a class of extremely  
bright PhD students and I don't mean to

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00:04:09,090 --> 00:04:14,100

disparage them but when we began to talk  
about writing assessment I was stunned

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00:04:14,100 --> 00:04:19,500



at their lack of even basic knowledge  
above fair and transparent assessment so

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00:04:19,500 --> 00:04:24,049

here I am continuing to beat that dead  
horse.

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00:04:24,430 --> 00:04:33,470

But I actually have data, so there's  
data to support my assertion, if there's

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00:04:33,470 --> 00:04:38,240

little training and less knowledge than  
we would like about writing assessment. I

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00:04:38,240 --> 00:04:42,470

along with two colleagues did a study  
the subsequent articles cited here was

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00:04:42,470 --> 00:04:46,160

published in the academic journal  
"Assessing Writing". I know you're

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00:04:46,160 --> 00:04:51,590

surprised that it has assessing and writing in the topic, right? This graph

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00:04:51,590 --> 00:04:54,560

shows self-reported data about how teachers learned about writing

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00:04:54,560 --> 00:04:58,760

assessment and assessment in general. Lots of teachers profess to have a fair

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00:04:58,760 --> 00:05:03,139

amount of training. Four hundred teachers cited coursework in writing assessment

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00:05:03,139 --> 00:05:08,510

and nearly 450 cited course working and assessment in general. For this question

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00:05:08,510 --> 00:05:12,650

we asked participants of course to select all that apply. The N in this

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00:05:12,650 --> 00:05:18,680

study was 702 so there is some overlap  
in the numbers. Of course I'm happy that

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00:05:18,680 --> 00:05:23,660

so many teachers have been trained in  
assessment, however what is troubling to

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00:05:23,660 --> 00:05:28,639

me is that over 100 teachers in our  
study about eighteen percent, claimed no

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00:05:28,639 --> 00:05:34,930

training in either assessment in general  
or writing assessment in particular.

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00:05:35,470 --> 00:05:39,440

Despite the large numbers of teachers  
claiming to be trained in writing

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00:05:39,440 --> 00:05:43,030

assessment their comments at the end of  
the survey paint a different picture.

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00:05:43,030 --> 00:05:47,419

Teachers noted many frustrations with writing assessment. Some of the remarks

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00:05:47,419 --> 00:05:51,200

are listed on this slide and I'm sure if you assign writing in your classes

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00:05:51,200 --> 00:05:57,710

you'll be able to identify with some of the comments for instance, they find it

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00:05:57,710 --> 00:06:02,060

challenging, what I do find in is interesting and challenging I also find

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00:06:02,060 --> 00:06:07,669

it very difficult. Things like that came up again and again besides the survey

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00:06:07,669 --> 00:06:12,080

and comments, follow-up interviews

provided even more data that speak to

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00:06:12,080 --> 00:06:16,190

the insecurities of teachers regarding  
writing assessment and the scope of

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00:06:16,190 --> 00:06:24,110

their knowledge. So the verdict is many  
teachers we interviewed spoke of the

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00:06:24,110 --> 00:06:29,090

need for more training and reported  
their feelings of inadequacy when faced

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00:06:29,090 --> 00:06:33,800

with heaps of student writing. They  
didn't know what to do they felt lost

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00:06:33,800 --> 00:06:36,729

and a little bit hopeless and I'm sure  
you have

76

00:06:36,729 --> 00:06:41,690

you have felt that way too I do every  
time I see that stack of papers. This

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00:06:41,690 --> 00:06:47,360

data supports a belief I've held for a  
long time that assessment not is that

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00:06:47,360 --> 00:06:52,760

about about assessment knowledge that  
many teachers do not have it. So the

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00:06:52,760 --> 00:06:56,930

relatively simple answer here is that  
teachers those who assess student

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00:06:56,930 --> 00:07:04,490

writing need to be trained and many of  
them are not. Part of what I do is train

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00:07:04,490 --> 00:07:08,770

teachers to be good assessors based on  
the international language testing

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00:07:08,770 --> 00:07:13,160

associations code of ethics and language testing, I've adopted a kind of code that

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00:07:13,160 --> 00:07:20,660

I like to call transparent assessment.

That is I believe that students need to

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00:07:20,660 --> 00:07:26,990

know the criteria by which I will be assessing them. I give them all kinds of

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00:07:26,990 --> 00:07:32,210

models of papers, I give them the rubric up front, I explain what the things mean

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00:07:32,210 --> 00:07:37,880

on the rubric. I believe that assessment is not punishment and I think that

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00:07:37,880 --> 00:07:43,370

that's bad pedagogy when people use assessment as punishment like the pop

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00:07:43,370 --> 00:07:48,979

quiz, which I do not believe in. There's  
no secrets because that's not what the

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00:07:48,979 --> 00:07:53,000

assessment is about. Rather, the purpose  
of assessment is to gather information

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00:07:53,000 --> 00:07:59,900

to guide instruction. I also believe that  
assessment of any kind should be

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00:07:59,900 --> 00:08:03,889

developed any teachers who teach the  
courses. They should be contextualized

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00:08:03,889 --> 00:08:08,510

and again never be used as punishment.  
For me at the forefront is always the

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00:08:08,510 --> 00:08:13,780

question "how do I plan to use this  
information I'm gathering to guide my



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00:08:13,780 --> 00:08:18,139

instruction?" and if I can't answer that question, I shouldn't be gathering the

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00:08:18,139 --> 00:08:26,539

data. Teachers need to understand the differences between formative and

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00:08:26,539 --> 00:08:30,830

summative assessment, create assignments that elicit data needed for various

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00:08:30,830 --> 00:08:36,050

purposes, understand the importance of criteria fronting, comprehend the uses

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00:08:36,050 --> 00:08:44,660

and abuses of assessment and be able to create rubrics. I'm the rubric queen,

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00:08:44,660 --> 00:08:48,890

my students will tell you that. I believe

in rubrics. I give rubrics for every

100

00:08:48,890 --> 00:08:51,680

assignment

because I believe in transparent

101

00:08:51,680 --> 00:08:58,760

assessment. I passed them out the

students we talked about them we create

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00:08:58,760 --> 00:09:03,950

them together so when we create them

together I find that they are more

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00:09:03,950 --> 00:09:09,500

invested in the assignment and engaged

in learning and in assessment. Further,

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00:09:09,500 --> 00:09:14,720

areas of confusion are often recognized

and wording can be clarified, like what

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00:09:14,720 --> 00:09:20,500

does good development look like? What's a thesis statement? Those kinds of things.

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00:09:20,500 --> 00:09:24,830

One of the most powerful reasons for using rubrics is that students are less

107

00:09:24,830 --> 00:09:28,850

likely to question their grade if the rubric is carefully constructed and if

108

00:09:28,850 --> 00:09:32,900

students have been involved in its creation and understand the language of

109

00:09:32,900 --> 00:09:37,010

the rubric thoroughly. The use of a well-constructed rubric will justify

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00:09:37,010 --> 00:09:41,300

students grades for them by clearly showing them ways in which their work

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00:09:41,300 --> 00:09:46,730

will be evaluated and what is expected of them further. Rubrics allow for more

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00:09:46,730 --> 00:09:52,210

objective and consistent evaluation and provide feedback to teachers regarding

113

00:09:52,210 --> 00:09:55,940

instructional effectiveness and there's that feedback piece again. That's what

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00:09:55,940 --> 00:10:05,570

assessment is about. Even though they are invaluable to writing assessment, rubric

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00:10:05,570 --> 00:10:10,130

creation isn't easy, and they're in constant need of tweaking, just like your

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00:10:10,130 --> 00:10:14,510

assignments. So with my students what I do is I kind of go through a number of

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00:10:14,510 --> 00:10:18,860

steps. We look at models. We look at models of good writing not so good

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00:10:18,860 --> 00:10:23,990

writing really bad writing to get an idea of what good writing because

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00:10:23,990 --> 00:10:27,860

it's all up here what good writing is, right? And then we look at rubrics and

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00:10:27,860 --> 00:10:32,180

then we look at see your teaching summary for instance we look at

121

00:10:32,180 --> 00:10:37,040

summaries we figure out what what is in a summary, what has to be there, what

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00:10:37,040 --> 00:10:41,900

shouldn't be there, how does it look? All those kinds of things then we list the

123

00:10:41,900 --> 00:10:47,630

criteria. Then we articulate levels of quality what's a zero? It's not there.

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00:10:47,630 --> 00:10:54,170

What's a five? Wow whatever and then we distribute it and we try to use it on a

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00:10:54,170 --> 00:10:58,700

sample of writing and keep in mind that this is a recursive process just like

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00:10:58,700 --> 00:11:03,620

writing is and we do it over and over again and we tweak and make better.

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00:11:03,620 --> 00:11:07,400

Once you distribute and use the rubric to grade sample papers they'll be

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00:11:07,400 --> 00:11:14,089

tweaking of course students are good at

articulating positive and negative

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00:11:14,089 --> 00:11:17,950

features and will work to revise things  
if you just let them. They're very

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00:11:17,950 --> 00:11:28,130

conscious of what is fair. So remember  
that every assignment you make is an

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00:11:28,130 --> 00:11:33,710

assessment. So again you should be asking  
yourself what you want to discover about

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00:11:33,710 --> 00:11:39,710

your students. What do you want to know  
about them? What they can do? What they

133

00:11:39,710 --> 00:11:45,860

can't do, and how that that knowledge  
might guide you and them if the

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00:11:45,860 --> 00:11:50,150

information we gather doesn't directly  
inform our teaching it isn't really true

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00:11:50,150 --> 00:11:54,950

assessment. When you think about what you  
do in your classroom and why you do it

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00:11:54,950 --> 00:11:59,540

and then change your practice as a  
result of what you discover then you are

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00:11:59,540 --> 00:12:03,940

using data to inform your pedagogy and  
you are sitting beside your students.

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00:12:03,940 --> 00:12:26,600

Thank you. Questions? Dr. Crusan, you said you work with students to assign their own rubrics, for assignments? And you show them models and you talk about models and the qualities of writing.

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00:12:26,600 --> 00:12:32,900

How do you negotiate when students disagree?  
I beat them over the head and make them

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00:12:32,900 --> 00:12:41,480

submit. We talk about it. I find out why,  
right? And then you've been in norming

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00:12:41,480 --> 00:12:46,250

sessions, right? A norming session is where  
everybody sort of gets a paper and uses

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00:12:46,250 --> 00:12:50,150

a rubric and grades that and then we  
talk about why did you give this a 5?

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00:12:50,150 --> 00:12:54,620

this piece right? or why did you give it  
a 4, and then we talked about it and

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00:12:54,620 --> 00:12:59,750

people come to agreement you know it's  
and what in speech communication they

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00:12:59,750 --> 00:13:04,520

call that group think I think. So you  
aim for group think in a normal session.

146

00:13:04,520 --> 00:13:08,050

right? Yeah. What do you think about your book that you're working on? With things like

147

00:13:11,639 --> 00:13:22,569

politics assessment. What do you mean by that? Well we we've been quite successful and we have

148

00:13:22,569 --> 00:13:27,519

twelve chapters and then five vignettes and they're all from less written about

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00:13:27,519 --> 00:13:32,829

countries like India, Thailand, Vietnam, and the authors are all talking about

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00:13:32,829 --> 00:13:40,990

how assessment is used politically in their institutions. For instance,

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00:13:40,990 --> 00:13:47,170

placement, maybe an outside test is used for placement where it doesn't really

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00:13:47,170 --> 00:13:52,300

fit that school and the kinds of writing  
that goes on there so that's a very

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00:13:52,300 --> 00:14:00,009

political and financial decision right  
to not use the knowledge that teachers

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00:14:00,009 --> 00:14:04,779

in the program has about who the  
students are and the kinds of writing that's

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00:14:04,779 --> 00:14:12,339

going to be done. Instead they hire an  
unknown testing company like UPS or

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00:14:12,339 --> 00:14:18,819

something like that to test and where  
it's not it's not really fitted to that

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00:14:18,819 --> 00:14:21,720

context.

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00:14:23,810 --> 00:14:37,230

Yes. and you said you believed in rubrics, as do I but the rubric is always countered by the "well, Becky, that's fine

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00:14:37,230 --> 00:14:42,600

for you but you know I'm a holistic dreamer. And I wondered if your

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00:14:42,600 --> 00:14:48,750

studies or anything that talk about this  
notion of I'll know it when I see it,

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00:14:48,750 --> 00:14:54,690

felt like a B. Well, it might feel like a  
B to you but when you have to if you

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00:14:54,690 --> 00:15:00,300

are a fair transparent grader. You have there's an  
accountability issue

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00:15:00,300 --> 00:15:05,130

if I see it. You are accountable in your  
students. And when your students aggregate about a

164

00:15:05,130 --> 00:15:09,800

grade, then you should be able to  
articulate why they got it, not as my

165

00:15:09,800 --> 00:15:14,940

professor at St. Francis College in Loretta,  
Pennsylvania used to say "It was a C-

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00:15:14,940 --> 00:15:19,260

because it needs work." Really? and then I  
went into his office I said "What does this mean?" and he goes

167

00:15:19,260 --> 00:15:26,519

"You need to think deeply." So  
that wasn't helpful to me and I and I've had these incidences

168

00:15:26,519 --> 00:15:30,959

and this is probably why I'm very  
passionate about this right? I once had a

169

00:15:30,959 --> 00:15:34,890

supervisor at a community college  
tell me never to teach my students writing

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00:15:34,890 --> 00:15:43,170

until they knew all the grammar rules. So it's that kind of thing right but yeah holismism

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00:15:43,170 --> 00:15:47,010

is one thing and can be used in large scale tests, but it will not give

172

00:15:47,010 --> 00:15:53,310

feedback to students that they need for their way. In my humble opinion. I have to

173

00:15:53,310 --> 00:16:03,690

say that so I don't get sued. Thank you.

s