Chapter 2 - Assessments and Evaluations*

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Figure 1: Afghan boy selling carrots

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1 Teacher Assessment Overview

Assessment is the process of gathering information about what you know and can do. Evaluating is the process of interpreting and making judgements about that assessment information.

There are numerous assessment models. The three most often used are:

1. Observations, or information gathered mainly by Mentors in their daily work with you (via assignments that you complete and send to your Mentor).
2. Performance samples, or tangible products that serve as evidence of Learner achievement (in the form of your electronic Teaching Portfolio).
3. Tests and test-like procedures, or measures of a Learner's achievement at a particular time and place.

Your Mentor shall assess your progress ten different times, over the course of the Certificate of Teaching Mastery. S/he will rely upon the first two forms of assessment from above - observations of assignments and performance samples.

2 Evaluations and Evaluation Form

Once Mentors have collected assessment information, they engage in the process of evaluation - that is, interpreting and making judgements about the assessment information.

Written Evaluations

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Teachers Without Borders has 10 evaluation periods during the Certificate of Teaching Mastery program - one at the half-way point for each course, and one at the end of each course. Each course, therefore, results in two, brief, written evaluations.

At each evaluation point (starting with the half-way point in Course 1), your Mentor will assign a number: 5 or 4 for "Ready", or a 3, 2, or 1 for "Not Ready." When you receive a "Ready" from your Mentor, you proceed with the course.

Click below to review the evaluation form:

Evaluations[1]

The six criteria for determining "Ready" or "Not Ready" is as follows:

1. Learner demonstrates understanding and engagement with course material.
2. Applies understanding to classroom practice.
3. Connects with wider web of colleagues.
4. Takes growth-oriented risks.
5. Accomplishes work in a timely manner and with care.
6. Maintains professionalism in local classroom and local community, and within the Teachers Without Borders CTM community.

3 Six Qualities TWB Mentors Use To Determine Readiness

Your Mentor shall use the criteria below to determine whether you are "Ready" or "Not Ready" to continue:

Criteria #1: Demonstrates understanding and engagement with course material.

Ready - Learner demonstrates competence in understanding the course material. Learner demonstrates his/her thinking "on paper" in the assignments - one can "hear" him/her wrestling and playing with ideas, posing questions, etc., in assignments and WebBoard discussions.

Not Ready - Learner demonstrates limited ability in his/her understanding and critical thinking with regards to the course material.

Criteria #2: Applies understanding to classroom practice.

Ready - Learner is actively engaged in connecting what s/he is learning to classroom practice. Shows signs of developing on-going activities influenced by new course material.

Not Ready - Planning and execution is disorganized and unchanged; there is no difference or growth in the use of different pedagogical skills.

Criteria #3: Connects with wider web of colleagues.

Ready - Learner readily engages in active listening of the ideas of others; gives effective feedback when assignments ask for "Learning Circle feedback"; and accepts and incorporates feedback in his/her work. Actively participates in WebBoard "discussions." Demonstrates hospitality, thoughtfulness, gratitude, collaboration and cooperation in actions and words.

Not Ready - Learner isolates him/herself in the learning process with little engagement with Learning Circle and Mentor in terms of giving and receiving feedback, using WebBoard and other collaborative opportunities.

Criteria #4: Takes growth-oriented risks.

Ready - Learner asks questions when s/he doesn't understand something and asks for help. Learner takes risks in his/her thinking and teaching; stretches him/herself as a learner and as a teacher applying what s/he is learning.

Not Ready - Learner is stuck in non-productive habits and patterns of thinking and action. Narrow range of skills or extension of intellectual engagement. Doesn't ask for help when s/he needs it.

Criteria #5: Accomplishes work in a timely manner and with care.

Ready - Learner promptly gives Learning Circle feedback and communicates regularly with Mentor in direct relation to computer/internet accessibility.

[1] http://cnx.org/content/m13347/latest/file:Evaluations.doc

Not Ready - Learner delays feedback and communication in an untimely manner in relation to computer/internet accessibility.

Criteria #6: Maintains professionalism in local classroom and local community, and within the Teachers Without Borders CTM community.

Ready - Demonstrates behavior in speech and action that honors oneself, others, the teaching profession and the organization that s/he represents while in the CTM program - Teachers Without Borders.

Not Ready - Any Learner who strikes a child will be immediately removed from the CTM program. Any Learner who engages in any type of harassment or inappropriate behavior towards students or colleagues will be put on review for possible expulsion from the CTM program.

4 Area of Focus 1: Pedagogy and Planning

In addition to the six items outlined in the criteria on the previous page, it is important to note that Mentors will also include the following categories of evaluation developed from "best practice" research on the qualities of effective teaching for the 21st century. These include guidelines in the following 3 areas:

1. Pedagogy and Planning
2. Creating a Productive Learning Environment
3. Work with Parents and the Community

1) Pedagogy and Planning

General Understanding of Teacher Training Materials

The teacher will be evaluated based upon the demonstrated ability to understand and implement the course material and access additional resources, when available. Such resources include, but are not limited to, bulletin boards (via the internet) through Teachers Without Borders and other web-based information clearinghouses; books; journals; email; periodicals.

Effectiveness in Teaching Strategies

Multiple approaches (culturally, too) to teaching. In this category, teachers must demonstrate several techniques for reaching all students, regardless of background. It is particularly important that teachers familiarize themselves - and practice - the implementation of Howard Gardner's "Multiple Intelligences" (as described in Course 1).

Curriculum Planning and Pedagogical Skills

Teachers will be evaluated based upon their ability to plan a curriculum that meets professional standards, but to do so with the inclusion of meaningful experiences (i.e. experiences that students can identify with). Again, a multicultural, interdisciplinary approach has shown to be most effective in this regard. Furthermore, the most successful teaching involves a wide array of community resources. These include, but are not limited to: guest speakers, field trips, alternative teaching experiences (community mentors, elders, work experience, community service, problem-solving research).

5 Area of Focus 2: Creating a Productive Learning Environment

Motivation

Teachers Without Borders has determined that an inclusive learning community, including parents, elders, and community resources, are instrumental in student motivation. Teachers should be responsible, within reasonable contexts, to ensure that student motivation is sustained. Skills in doing so include: multicultural competence, verbal and non-verbal pedagogical strategies, use of technology (where appropriate).

Assessment

The true test of effective teaching is student performance. Therefore it is imperative that through the assessment process teachers can demonstrate student success. Teachers must demonstrate the use of both formal and non-formal assessment practices and show how student success was correlated to teaching practices. Teachers Without Borders recognizes the difficulty of making such claims, nevertheless, we will

look at appropriate criteria in the assessment process, and, wherever possible, ask for verification of learning impacts.

Classroom Management and Discipline

Teachers Without Borders understands well that classroom management must be distinct from discipline. A well-managed, orderly, engaging classroom rarely has problems with discipline. We shall look for the degree to which teachers demonstrate clarity, monitoring, procedural consistency, and follow-through in order that their classrooms are: a) clean b) vibrant and inviting c) accessible to all students - including the disabled. Similarly, we will look for student involvement and leadership to ensure that the classroom atmosphere is conducive to learning.

Promotion of Critical Thinking

Here, again, we'll look for evidence that students are able to both absorb information and apply it to solve problems. This requires an ability for teachers to demonstrate that students are thinking critically, rather than mimicking particular lessons. In this way, just as we ask for a teacher portfolio, so, too, shall we expect to see examples of student work.

6 Area of Focus 3: Work with Parents and the Community

Teachers Without Borders clearly sees how collaborative, personal, timely communication with parents is a key to success, especially when done in an atmosphere of kindness and respect. Here, too, we shall look for such community team building. Where parents are inaccessible, it is the teacher's responsibility to connect with all who interact with the students they teach and to provide support for their work so that students are given the maximum ability to learn.

If students come to school hungry, they must be fed; if students come to school sick, they must receive medical attention. Though these necessary conditions are not the teacher's primary responsibility, teachers do need to acknowledge these obstacles, report them to authorities, and participate in some way toward their remediation.

It is important for you to show evidence of your care for the "whole child."

7 Advancing Your Career

Mentor Letter of Recommendation

Teachers Without Borders wants to dignify the teaching profession by doing our part to help nurture the very best there is to offer. We are proud of those who have gone through our program. Therefore, when you complete your Certificate of Teaching Mastery, your Mentor will write a final Letter of Recommendation addressing your work for the entire Certificate of Teaching Mastery. This letter will be sent to you 3 - 4 weeks after the completion of your work for the Certificate of Teaching Mastery. We have also created a special place for you to post this letter in your E-Porfolio.

Becoming a Mentor

Your participation and completion of the Certificate of Teaching Mastery does not automatically grant you a position as a Mentor for the CTM program, nor does enrollment guarantee employment by Teachers Without Borders or any other hiring agency. Upon successful completion of the Certificate of Teaching Mastery, you may **apply** to become a Mentor.

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To Go to the Next Page in the Course

You have come to the end of another section. Click on the "Outline" button, which is on the bottom, right-hand side of the page. Look underneath the blue bar and click on the word "Outline."

When you click on "Outline," a screen will "pop up" that will show you the outline for this entire Introductory Seminar. Look for the next section to read and click on the first topic in that next section. For example, when you get to the outline now, look under the next section called "CTM Now and Later" and look for the first topic called "Revisions." Click on "Revisions."