

Agenda

Macon, GA • August 5–7

Monday, August 5

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration	x
	Continental Breakfast	x
8:00–9:45 a.m.	Keynote —Tom Schimmer <i>Essential Assessment: Building Hope, Efficacy, and Achievement</i>	x
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	Breakouts	x
11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)	
1:00–2:30 p.m.	Breakouts	x
2:30–2:45 p.m.	Break	
2:45–3:45 p.m.	Role-Alike Discussions	x

Tuesday, August 6

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration	x
	Continental Breakfast	x
8:00–9:45 a.m.	Keynote —Nicole Dimich Vagle <i>Instructional Agility: Assessment in Real Time</i>	x
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	Breakouts	x
11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)	
1:00–2:30 p.m.	Breakouts	x
2:30–2:45 p.m.	Break	
2:45–3:15 p.m.	Topic-Alike Discussions	x

Wednesday, August 7

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	x
8:00–9:30 a.m.	Breakouts	x
9:30–9:45 a.m.	Break	
9:45–11:30 a.m.	Keynote —Cassandra Erkens <i>Getting to the Good Stuff: Resiliency and Investment</i>	x

Agenda is subject to change.

Day 1 Breakouts Assessment Architecture

10:00–11:30 a.m.

Angela Freese Analyzing Standards for Assessment Planning	X
Tom Schimmer Grading From the Inside Out	X
Nicole Dimich Vagle Design in Five: A Process for Effectively Creating Assessments	X
Katie White Softening the Edges: Refining Our Assessment Practices	X

1:00–2:30 p.m.

Angela Freese Assess-O-Mania: Moving From Chaos to Clarity on What, When, and How Much	X
Tom Schimmer Quality Assessment Items	X
Nicole Dimich Vagle Practical Rubrics Design and Use	X
Katie White Softening the Edges: Making Assessment Decisions That Honor Teacher and Student Needs	X

Agenda is subject to change.

Day 2 Breakouts Instructional Agility

10:00–11:30 a.m.

Cassandra Erkens Engineering Engaging Conversations	X
Angela Freese Engaging the 3Rs to Leverage Student Achievement	X
Tom Schimmer Effective Leadership in Assessment and Grading	X
Katie White How Changing One Thing Can Change Everything: The Power of Learning Continuums	X

1:00–2:30 p.m.

Cassandra Erkens Making Homework Count	X
Angela Freese A Leader's Guide to Assessment Literacy	X
Nicole Dimich Vagle Assessment as Instruction: Using Common Formative Assessment to Increase Learning and Confidence	X
Katie White Using Formative Assessment to Nurture Creativity	X

Agenda is subject to change.

Day 3 Breakouts Student Investment

8:00–9:30 a.m.

Angela Freese Unstoppable Assessment: Using Evidence-Based Practices to Champion Student Achievement	X
Tom Schimmer Assessing Critical Thinking	X
Nicole Dimich Vagle Writing Effective Items and Tasks	X
Katie White Building Strong Self-Assessment Skills in Young Learners	X

Agenda is subject to change.

Keynote Session Descriptions

Day 1: Assessment Architecture

Tom Schimmer

Essential Assessment: Building Hope, Efficacy, and Achievement

To maximize its effectiveness, assessment must build hope, efficacy, and achievement. Based on his book *Essential Assessment: Six Tenets for Bringing Hope, Efficacy, and Achievement to the Classroom* (Solution Tree Press, 2017), Tom Schimmer emphasizes why, more than ever, assessment fluency and capacity are the most effective and efficient professional investments teachers can make. Tom outlines the six assessment tenets that allow teachers to create a culture of assessment that leaves learners optimistic about their success. Participants also focus on how these tenets transfer seamlessly to assessing student attributes and cross-curricular competencies.

Learning outcomes include:

- Understanding the value of assessment literacy to teachers
- Examining the interconnectedness of the six essential assessment tenets
- Exploring how the assessment tenets transfer to student attributes and cross-curricular competencies

Day 2: Instructional Agility

Nicole Dimich Vagle

Instructional Agility: Assessment in Real Time

There is power and possibility in the moments teachers recognize students' confusion or understanding. What they do with this information can push students to gain more confidence or shut them down. Through questions, observations, and feedback, teachers—individually and collaboratively—maneuver and pivot to intentionally use assessment to inspire learners to gain confidence and achieve at high levels.

Day 3: Student Investment

Cassandra Erkens

Getting to the Good Stuff: Resiliency and Investment

In the ideal classroom, all learners would be deeply invested in their learning, demonstrating motivation, persistence, passion, and high levels of intellectual risk taking and engagement. Is that even realistic? Yes! But changes to current assessment practices and systems are essential if learners will ever be able to self-regulate as they engage in the work of deep learning. This keynote explores the mental mindset and strategies that educators must employ to support learners in *getting to the good stuff*.

Learning outcomes include:

- Identifying barriers that block learners from truly investing in their learning
- Exploring the educator's mindset that is required to support deep learning at the classroom level
- Identifying strategies and tools that teachers can use to support learners in self-regulation

Day 1 Session 1 Descriptions

Assessment Architecture

Angela Freese

Analyzing Standards for Assessment Planning

This session digs deeper into analyzing standards for accurate assessment design. Participants work through a process of determining what the standards are actually asking students to do—to what cognitive level—as well as determining how to prioritize and map out those standards across academic learning action plans.

Participants in this session:

- Dig deep to collaboratively determine the level of rigor the standard requires.
- Explore what evidence is needed from students to ensure the appropriate depth of knowledge and understanding of the standard.
- Understand how to design assessment tools or tasks that accurately represent the learning progression toward mastery of the standard.

Tom Schimmer

Grading From the Inside Out

Developing a standards-based mindset is the oft overlooked, but essential, first step of long-term grading reform. Based on his book *Grading From the Inside Out: Bringing Accuracy to Student Assessment Through a Standards-Based Mindset* (Solution Tree Press, 2016), Tom Schimmer outlines how to take a standards-based approach to grading, even when a traditional grading and reporting paradigm exists. He discusses the non-negotiable, true north of grading for accuracy and with confidence and the three essential practices that are the cornerstones for developing a standards-based mindset.

Learning outcomes include:

- Understanding how to audit any grading practice through the lens of accuracy and confidence
- Exploring the faulty logic behind traditional grading practices
- Identifying replacement routines and practices that establish a standards-based mindset and approach to grading, independent of any changes to school or district policy

Nicole Dimich Vagle

Design in Five: A Process for Effectively Creating Assessments

Assessments, when designed well, reflect student learning in meaningful ways. Nicole Dimich Vagle introduces an assessment design process called *Design in 5* (Vagle, 2014). Specifically, participants dig into the five phases of designing high-quality formative or summative assessments. They discover how to choose standards, find learning goals, plan assessment methods, and communicate learning to ensure accuracy in describing student learning and levels of proficiency. Administrators and others who support teachers will find these resources useful in facilitating quality assessment design in their contexts.

Learning outcomes include:

- Exploring a five-phase protocol to use, design, and revise assessments for quality
- Applying tools to review and revise assessments to effectively guide instruction, involve students, and communicate learning

Katie White

Softening the Edges: Refining Our Assessment Practices

Sometimes, despite best intentions and dedicated work, assessment practices provide challenges for students and educators. Katie White explores assessment in a new way, using the analogies of hard and soft edges. Participants reflect on ways the “edges” of assessment practices make or break relationships and understand that these relationships can provide support within a classroom setting. To refine assessment practices, participants explore how strong assessment design can “soften the edges” for educators and learners by attending to the needs of everyone involved in the assessment conversation.

Participants in this session:

- Identify and explore the needs of the whole person (teachers and students) in relation to assessment design.
- Reflect on examples of the “hard and soft edges” of assessment, the reasons these edges exist, and the impact they have on teaching and learning.
- Apply the concept of “softening the edges” to assessment scenarios.

Day 1 Session 2 Descriptions

Assessment Architecture

Angela Freese

Assess-O-Mania: Moving From Chaos to Clarity on What, When, and How Much

Summative or formative? Rubric or checklist? Before, during, or after instruction? These are a few of the various questions teachers and teams grapple with as they prepare to design their units of study and gather information on what students know and can do. The uncertainty and dissonance that may plague a system's approach to assessment design and delivery is not uncommon. This session helps participants navigate their current realities in order to achieve clarity and cohesion for intentional, effective assessment practices to thrive in classrooms, schools, and districts.

Participants in this session:

- Differentiate instructional intentions from what is actually being implemented to support student achievement.
- Utilize collaborative team structures to determine what to assess, when to assess it, and how to gather evidence of student learning.
- Learn strategies that support evidence of learning to intentionally impact next steps in instructional practice.

Tom Schimmer

Quality Assessment Items

The quality of assessment information depends on the quality of assessment items. Participants focus on developing quality assessment items that increase accuracy for teachers interpreting assessment results. How do we design high-quality multiple-choice questions? How do we ensure that extended written response questions address the appropriate cognitive complexity? What are the keys to eliciting evidence through non-traditional assessment methods? Tom Schimmer addresses these questions and shares the latest research and practices for designing selected response, constructed response, and performance assessments that allow teachers to best discover evidence of learning.

Learning outcomes include:

- Understanding the effective and efficient structure of selected-response questions
- Ensuring that constructed response items address appropriate and applicable cognitive complexity
- Understanding how performance assessment can allow teachers to assess content, cognitive processes, and cross-curricular competencies

Nicole Dimich Vagle

Practical Rubrics Design and Use

Effective rubrics offer students and teachers descriptions of the qualities of student work for various levels of proficiency. At their best, rubrics point students and teachers to their next steps to ensure students are achieving at high levels. Rubrics can be used both formatively and summatively. Participants in this session explore how to effectively and efficiently design and use rubrics so both teachers and students find them meaningful.

Learning outcomes include:

- Identifying key characteristics of quality rubrics
- Discovering how to design rubrics
- Exploring how to use rubrics formatively and summatively

Katie White

Softening the Edges: Making Assessment Decisions That Honor Teacher and Student Needs

Grounded in the dual belief that all students can achieve, while maintaining emotional safety, and that their teachers deserve the opportunity to reflect and address their own needs, this session explores a process for refining five key assessment practices: pre-assessment, formative assessment, self-assessment, summative assessment, and reporting. Employing each of these practices ensures positive outcomes for educators and learners simultaneously.

Participants in this session:

- Identify and explore the needs of the whole person (teachers and students) in relation to assessment design.
- Clarify the purposes and methods by which teachers and systems engage in pre-assessment, formative assessment, self-assessment, summative assessment, reporting, and possible outcomes that reflect “hard edges.”
- Explore a process for refining assessment approaches to “soften the edges.”

Day 2 Session 1 Descriptions

Instructional Agility

Cassandra Erkens

Engineering Engaging Conversations

The quality of formative data a teacher can generate during instruction is directly related to the quality of the questions he or she asks and the classroom conversations that result. Cassandra Erkens provides rationale for using conversation as an instructional foundation and explores options for creating engaging conversations and criteria to monitor student engagement and learning.

Learning outcomes include:

- Understanding the rationale and role of engineering conversations as an instructional foundation
- Exploring frameworks for generating engaging conversations
- Applying a criteria for monitoring student engagement and learning

Angela Freese

Engaging the 3Rs to Leverage Student Achievement

Relationships in the classroom are an essential gateway for promoting investment, ownership, and efficacy for students. We rely on our ability to leverage those relationships in order to engage students on their learning pathway. How do we create and utilize assessments that promote the expected levels of rigor and also engage students in seeing the relevance of the content in their own lives? Participants explore the harmony of relationships, rigor, and relevance in assessment design.

Learning outcomes include:

- Exploring the content and context of standards relative to assessment design
- Discussing and determining approaches to assessment design that heighten rigor and relevance
- Planning for student investment in learning through integration of 21st century skills

Tom Schimmer

Effective Leadership in Assessment and Grading

With any change effort, leadership matters! Tom Schimmer explores the steps leaders can take to transform grading and assessment practices within any context. Highlights include effective leadership strategies, mindsets, and practices that maximize the potential success of any implementation effort, the natural evolution of new ideas, the ways to plan for short-term wins, and ideas for handling the inevitable challenges and roadblocks. Whether a leader by title or by influence, participants bring together ideas that make assessment transformations possible and sustainable.

Learning outcomes include:

- Identifying the ways leaders cultivate the conditions to support grading reform
- Understanding the natural evolution of new ideas in an organization
- Exploring ways for leaders to manage inevitable implementation roadblocks and challenges

Katie White

How Changing One Thing Can Change Everything: The Power of Learning Continuums

When planning to enhance learning outcomes, it is often hard to know where to start. Learning is complex and each piece of the process has a vital role in the learner's success. However, sometimes changing a single aspect of how we approach the teaching–learning cycle affects everything else, resulting in positive outcomes for learners and educators.

Participants in this session:

- Explore the story of a young learner and her shifting investment in her own learning journey.
- Create a learning continuum in a practical and personal context.
- Use the continuum to enhance assessment design in personal teaching contexts.

Day 2 Session 2 Descriptions

Instructional Agility

Cassandra Erkens

Making Homework Count

Teachers use homework for three primary purposes: practice, preparation, and extension of classroom learning. According to some research, homework is one of the most powerful instructional strategies teachers employ to impact student achievement. Yet other research indicates there is little to no correlation between homework and current achievement results. How might we leverage homework to increase student productivity and achievement? Participants explore necessary considerations for the design and use of homework as a formative assessment tool to positively impact student learning.

Learning outcomes include:

- Aligning the intent of homework with promising practices in homework design and use
- Identifying formative assessment tools and processes to support the use of homework as an opportunity for safe practice
- Exploring error as a means to develop instructionally agile responses to data from practice opportunities for maximizing learning

Angela Freese

A Leader's Guide to Assessment Literacy

The demands of building and district leaders are extraordinary. In an attempt to maintain balance of the varied, demanding roles of educational leaders, how can diligence to the responsibility of ensuring high levels of learning for every child be sustained? The best way to leverage the efforts of building and district leaders is to create a balanced system of assessment and embed time for teachers to collaborate around this critical work. Participants gain tips and perspectives on how to set up teachers (and themselves!) for student success.

Participants also:

- Explore the components of culture, competence, and commitment in developing assessment literacy.
- Understand the balance of assessment to provide a comprehensive picture of what students know and to what level they know it.
- Discuss the shift from using assessment to sort and categorize students to using assessment to motivate and engage students to exhibit a growth mindset and be active partners in their own learning.

Nicole Dimich Vagle

Assessment as Instruction: Using Common Formative Assessment to Increase Learning and Confidence

We have so much data at our fingertips. This can lead to collaborative teams feeling overwhelmed or in a constant cycle of assessing without pausing to maximize the power of this information. Common formative assessments provide insight into how well students learned essential standards. When analyzed, these insights guide teachers to design instruction and intervention that meet the needs of students and help them achieve at high levels while gaining confidence. Nicole Dimich Vagle offers a simple three-step process for effectively designing and using common formative assessments.

Learning outcomes include:

- Exploring effective and efficient ways to collect meaningful data related to student learning
- Analyzing student work to identify instruction and interventions needed to achieve mastery and beyond
- Identifying effective implementation to ensure this process leads to inspired teaching and learning

Katie White

Using Formative Assessment to Nurture Creativity

The partnership between formative assessment and creativity flourishes when it improves learning outcomes for students and increases their ability to make decisions and take risks in the short and long term. This is how we can leverage assessment to unlock creativity. When we connect strong assessment criteria to self-assessment, goal setting, and feedback, we develop creative learners who accept responsibility for their continued growth and are empowered to share their voices.

Participants in this session:

- Explore criteria-setting, observations, self-assessment, and feedback as critical pieces of formative assessment and creative processes.
- Engage in a practical simulation, consider outcomes, and reflect on the implications for learners of various responses to formative assessment.
- Apply the connection between assessment and creativity in personal contexts.

Day 3 Session Descriptions

Student Investment

Angela Freese

Unstoppable Assessment: Using Evidence-Based Practices to Champion Student Achievement

Assessment is often underutilized in driving a teaching–learning cycle because the focus on measurement and ranking takes away its true capacity to leverage student achievement and teacher development. Using assessment as a tool to focus on students’ strengths and uncover misconceptions or gaps provides the opportunity to build students’ sense of efficacy, hope, and possibility to move forward in their learning. Participants receive templates and tools to enhance this work with their teams.

Participants also:

- Explore methods and tools to seek, gather, discuss, and respond to evidence obtained from students about what they can do with what they’ve been taught.
- Practice using templates and processes for collaboratively engaging teams and students in this work.
- Enhance the “systems design” approach to harmonize the curricular, instructional, and assessment practices in teams, buildings, and districts.

Tom Schimmer

Assessing Critical Thinking

Critical thinking sits at the heart of the competencies that are essential for learners to develop in the 21st century. Tom Schimmer highlights how educators can take advantage of their assessment fundamentals to seamlessly assess critical thinking. Specifically, participants learn 1) how *specificist* and *generalist* views of critical thinking can contribute to schools developing a comprehensive approach to critical thinking, 2) various tools that can be developed in support of assessment, 3) instructional implications for creating critical thinking opportunities, and 4) dispositional habits of critical thinkers.

Learning outcomes include:

- Examining the overlap and contradiction between the two dominant psychological views of critical thinking
- Understanding why and how the assessment of critical thinking relies heavily on clearly articulated performance criteria
- Exploring how learners can, through the cultivation of habitual behaviors and dispositions, develop into critical thinkers

Nicole Dimich Vagle

Writing Effective Items and Tasks

Nicole Dimich Vagle shows participants how to recognize and write meaningful multiple-choice items and constructed response items at various cognitive levels. When written well and used effectively, these types of questions can provide quality information to describe and further student learning. The use of these types of items in instruction can be powerful in helping students achieve at high levels. Teachers and teams will find these ideas applicable to designing assessments and creating engaging instruction.

Learning outcomes include:

- Identifying key characteristics of multiple choice and constructed response items
- Applying tools and templates to write effective multiple choice and constructed response items at various depth of knowledge (DOK) levels
- Discovering ways to use multiple choice and constructed response items formatively

Katie White

Building Strong Self-Assessment Skills in Young Learners

Strong self-assessment in classrooms leads to investment and growth for learners through co-constructed learning experiences that precisely address student needs. So, what do we do when our learners are just beginning their learning journeys and may not yet have refined the skills of self-assessment? We build the sub-skills that provide the foundation for student ownership as they move through the system. Katie White explores the power of self-assessment to nurture hope and efficacy in learners. By empowering students to be in charge of their learning stories, educators can support the development of learners who are confident and capable.

Participants in this session:

- Discover a language of self-assessment that honors the developmental nature of young learners.
- Explore sub-skills of self-assessment.
- Build lessons that invite students to practice these skills in a safe, caring, and student-focused early learning environment.