

# The Assessment Center Institute Agenda

## Las Vegas, NV • May 24–26, 2023

### Wednesday, May 24

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration	ROOM/LOCATION TBD
	Continental Breakfast	
8:00–9:45 a.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —Tom Schimmer <i>Grading From the Inside Out</i>	
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	See page 3.
11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)	
1:00–2:30 p.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	See page 3.
2:30–2:45 p.m.	Break	
2:45–3:45 p.m.	<b>Topic-Alike Discussions</b>	

### Thursday, May 25

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration	ROOM/LOCATION TBD
	Continental Breakfast	
8:00–9:45 a.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —Anthony R. Reibel <i>Grade With Me: Relational Grading Practices That Can Change a School Culture</i>	
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00 a.m.–11:30 p.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	See page 3.
11:30–1:00 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)	
1:00–2:30 p.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	See page 3.
2:30–2:45 p.m.	Break	
2:45–3:45 p.m.	<b>Team Time</b> —Presenters aid in your collaborative team discussions.	

### Friday, May 26

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	ROOM/LOCATION TBD
8:00–9:30 a.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —Katie White <i>Intersections and the Art of Assessment</i>	
9:30–9:45 a.m.	Break	
9:45–11:30 a.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —Cassandra Erkens <i>Getting to the Good Stuff: Student Investment</i>	

Agenda is subject to change.

## Breakout Sessions and Learning Labs at a Glance

Presenters & Titles	Wednesday, May 24		Thursday, May 25	
	10:00–11:30 a.m.	1:00–2:30 p.m.	10:00–11:30 a.m.	1:00–2:30 p.m.
<b>Cassandra Erkens</b>				
Re-Engaging the Disengaged	X			
Feedback That Feeds Forward		X		X
Designing Scales and Rubrics: Tools for Monitoring and Evaluating Performance			X	
<b>Anthony R. Reibel</b>				
Proficiency-Based Assessment: How Assessment Design Informs Reliable Grading Practices	X			
Relational Teaching: How Better Relationships With Your Students Can Lead to Learning		X		X
Pathways to Proficiency: Creating an Implementation Plan for Grading Change			X	
<b>Tom Schimmer</b>				
Redefining Student Accountability	X			X
Repurposing Homework		X		
Assessment Planning to Drive Deeper Learning			X	
<b>Mandy Stalets</b>				
Coaching Your Classroom: Delivering Actionable Feedback to Students	X			
Making Reassessment Manageable		X		X
Assessment as a Catalyst for Learning			X	
<b>Katie White</b>				
Assessment That Nurtures Social-Emotional Health	X			
Analyzing and Responding to Assessment Evidence		X	X	
Designing Assessment Effectively				X

# Session Descriptions—Day 1

## **KEYNOTE**

### **Tom Schimmer**

#### **Grading From the Inside Out**

Developing a standards-based mindset is the often 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* (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, plus the three essential practices that are cornerstones for developing a standards-based mindset.

Learning outcomes include:

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

## **MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

### **Cassandra Erkens**

#### **Re-Engaging the Disengaged**

It would be inappropriate to assign a zero as a grading mark in the absence of evidence. Yet, some students refuse to generate evidence, and it seems as if levels of apathy have never been higher. How can educators re-engage the disengaged learner? In this session, Cassandra Erkens focuses on specific strategies that call for the changes educators must make to the system to capture the attention and commitment that are so desirable, but that not all students have or that some students seem to have lost along the way. This session is not about designing and employing new extrinsic reward systems; rather, it is about redesigning the purposes and use of assessment information for the student's benefit in a manner that leads to improved intrinsic motivation.

Participants can expect to:

- Understand why student engagement continues to be such an issue in today's classrooms.
- Explore key factors that may inhibit engagement.
- Learn strategies and actions you can take to reignite student interest and re-engage today's learners.

### **Anthony R. Reibel**

#### **Proficiency-Based Assessment: How Assessment Design Informs Reliable Grading Practices**

This session explores the nature of formative assessments and how formative assessments—if used properly—can support, develop, and evaluate a student's proficiency and lead to more reliable grading

practices. Anthony R. Reibel demonstrates the important role of the assessment process in supporting a conversation between teacher and student.

Participants can expect to:

- Explore the importance of proficiency-based learning targets in the assessment process.
- Engage with examples of quality formative assessment.
- Reflect on how a teacher can use assessments to generate more reliable grades.

## Tom Schimmer

### **Redefining Student Accountability**

The need for students to be held accountable is often cited as a reason why some hesitate to implement sounder grading practices. In this keynote, Tom Schimmer focuses on how schools can seamlessly utilize sound grading practices along with their PLC and RTI frameworks to proactively teach students to be more responsible. Specifically, the systems, structures, and routines that can redefine accountability and reshape a school's culture are highlighted. Rather than using zeros, issuing late penalties, or employing any other traditional punitive grading practice, participants learn that real accountability can be achieved without compromising the integrity of a student's proficiency grade.

Participants in this session understand:

- How sound assessment practices along with the PLC and RTI frameworks can create a proactive approach to redefining student accountability
- How to teach and reinforce responsibility as well as other important habits of learning and student attributes
- How to shift from a teacher-centered to a student-centered model of self-monitoring and self-correction

## Mandy Stalets

### **Coaching Your Classroom: Delivering Actionable Feedback to Students**

How can effective feedback create reflective learners and build hope in your classroom? It is time that we start using feedback to help inspire our students to grow, take ownership of their learning, and create a more hopeful classroom environment. When we look at sound assessment practices, feedback plays an essential role in making learning attainable for all. So how can we provide this feedback—the kind that inspires, that students listen to, and that promotes growth? How can we effectively coach our students through learning? This session explores how to provide each learner with the coaching and effective feedback they deserve, while keeping the process manageable.

Participants in this session:

- Explore how to include learners in the feedback loop and make them active participants in their learning.
- Gain strategies to implement effective feedback in a meaningful and manageable way.
- Learn how to evolve their role to ensure that each learner is coached forward.

## Katie White

### **Assessment That Nurtures Social-Emotional Health**

Making assessment decisions in any learning context can be challenging, especially when assessment holds many purposes. Sometimes, despite best intentions and dedicated work, assessment processes result in holistic needs not being met and practices not being aligned with beliefs and values for students and teachers. This can ultimately affect the validity of our assessment processes and the assessment culture we are trying to nurture.

Katie White explores assessment using the analogies of hard and soft edges within the paradigm of assessment that powers learning and nurtures social-emotional health. Participants learn to maximize assessment to ensure efficacy and healthy outcomes for learners and educators

Participants in this session:

- Explore the metaphor of hard and soft edges relating to assessment decisions and comprehensive needs for teachers and students.
- Consider how to “soften the edges” of assessment to ensure hope, efficacy, and achievement for every student.
- Reflect on personal contexts and plans to leverage assessment to nurture holistic health and empower learning at the same time.

## **AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

### Cassandra Erkens

#### **Feedback That Feeds Forward**

Before any grading can be done, students must have the opportunity to learn. Feedback is the formative tool teachers use to reduce the discrepancy between where a learner is and where the learner needs to be. Unfortunately, not all feedback generates the productive responses that empower learners to increase achievement and improve their grades. In this session, Cassandra Erkens explores the characteristics of quality feedback, engages educators in practicing giving quality feedback, and identifies strategies educators can readily use for generating fast but meaningful feedback.

Participants can expect to:

- Identify the characteristics of quality feedback as a means to keep learners engaged in the learning process.
- Practice the use of productive feedback that feeds forward.
- Explore strategies for self and peer review and evaluation techniques that can be used to support learning, increase motivation, and impact achievement.

## Anthony R. Reibel

### **Relational Teaching: How Better Relationships With Your Students Can Lead to Learning**

Teachers creating meaning and knowledge with their students' lived experiences—relating to students—is invaluable. This session invites participants to think about learning as an emergent concept resulting from interdependent collaboration, relational pedagogy, and productive discourse. Anthony R. Reibel discusses putting the student before the score, the process before the product, and relationship before the evaluation. This keynote moves from a definition of relational pedagogy to grading and assessment practices that affirm students for who they are and unconditionally support them in who they want to become.

Participants in this session:

- Learn about challenges schools face when implementing relational pedagogy and grading practices.
- Review practices and policies that make relationships a core tenet of their school.
- Reflect on current needs in grading reform and explore how relationships with students can change grading practices.

## Tom Schimmer

### **Repurposing Homework**

In this session, Tom Schimmer highlights why using homework results as part of a student's overall grade determination can lead to distorted achievement levels. Participants come to understand how homework can be a productive part of student learning, how it can be used as a measure of student habits of learning, and the connection between practice and reassessment. No one disagrees that students need to practice. Where the mindset shift happens is in reshaping the nature of practice within a balanced assessment system and deciding what to do with the results of that practice.

Participants in this session understand:

- How grading homework can distort achievement levels and can disadvantage students who don't learn fast enough
- How grading homework creates issues of inequity
- How homework as practice can fit within a balanced assessment system

## Mandy Stalets

### **Making Reassessment Manageable**

Since it is well known that some students take longer to learn, the fundamental question teachers must ask is whether their assessment and grading practices honor that truth. Subsequently, reassessment must be an integral part of classroom assessment. As reassessment can be an overwhelming exercise for teachers, it is essential to invest time exploring how to effectively manage this practice. This session explores the difference between reassessment, redos, and retakes, as well as the most appropriate and effective use of each.

Participants can expect to:

- Gain an understanding of why reassessment is vital to the learning process.
- Consider effective strategies to make reassessment manageable.
- Examine varied methods for reassessment.

## **Katie White**

### **Analyzing and Responding to Assessment Evidence**

The quality of an assessment process can often best be determined by the quality of the instructional response. When teachers and students can easily identify strengths and needs and work together to design strategies and approaches to enhance learning, our assessment processes are working in the best possible ways.

This session explores the important connection between assessment design and effective response. Katie White investigates practical methods for analyzing assessment evidence that will result in clear next steps, and shares strategies for designing a differentiated response that allows students to grow in the very places the evidence indicated.

Participants in this session:

- Analyze the relationship between analysis and scoring of assessment evidence.
- Engage in practical methods for determining strengths, stretches, and strategies.
- Investigate ways to respond to student needs as indicated by assessment evidence.

## Session Descriptions—Day 2

### KEYNOTE

#### Anthony R. Reibel

##### **Grade *With Me*: Relational Grading Practices That Can Change a School Culture**

Relational grading is a complex process in which teachers use multiple perspectives to interpret student learning to understand who their students are before rewarding grades. In this session, teachers learn what it might mean to use the context of their relationship with each student as the basis for accurate and meaningful grade calculations. Anthony R. Reibel focuses on strategies such as awarding grades after conversations with students, using the gradebook to tell learning stories, and gaining the confidence to use student self-appraisal evidence when considering student grades.

Participants can expect to:

- Explore how school culture can have an impact on grading practices.
- Explore how curriculum design may affect grading and assessment practices.
- Examine how teachers can use their professional judgment, rather than tallying points, to score and grade student performance.

### MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS

#### Cassandra Erkens

##### **Designing Scales and Rubrics: Tools for Monitoring and Evaluating Performance**

How can rubrics and scales be used as tools to measure proficiency in a standards-based setting? What are these tools? How do we best use them? Do they interact or work in isolation?

Well-developed rubrics and scales are windows through which students see what teachers require of them. These tools also are mirrors that reveal what students know and still need to learn. In this session, Cassandra Erkens explores the purpose, design, and management features of rubrics and scales, and demonstrates how to invest students in the process.

Participants can expect to:

- Identify criteria for quality measurement tools that certify and promote continued learning.
- Practice creating criteria and proficiency levels.
- Explore the implications for standards-based grading.

#### Anthony R. Reibel

##### **Pathways to Proficiency: Creating an Implementation Plan for Grading Change**

Leaders and teachers need strategies to lead conversations about grading practices. These conversations evolve so quickly that staying on track and producing any action or change is often tough. In this session, Anthony R. Reibel offers a simple way to start conversations about grading reform as it relates to a standards-based grading system. Participants receive templates and strategies to keep



these conversations on track and promote actionable inquiry that leads to the successful implementation of new grading ideas.

Participants can expect to:

- Learn about mindsets and strategies that promote conversations that lead to lasting changes in grading practices.
- Assess the essential commitments one must make to ensure a healthy transition to standards-based grading.
- Reflect on current needs in grading reform and explore conversation tools to help manage those needs.

## Tom Schimmer

### **Assessment Planning to Drive Deeper Learning**

Our grades are only as accurate as the assessments they are based on. In this session, Tom Schimmer highlights the importance of assessment planning alongside unit planning. Participants learn how to create a balanced assessment system that employs daily assessment strategies that confirm that students learned what was taught, more formal formative moments at critical intervals, and summative assessments that authentically assess the full cognitive complexity of the standards. In addition, participants come to understand how to choose the appropriate assessment method and how to develop clear and transferrable success criteria.

Participants in this session understand:

- That accurate grading requires a deep understanding of the standards of instruction
- That grading is more accurate and reliable when there are fewer, more clearly discernible levels of performance
- That reliable, professional judgments occur when success criteria is clearly articulated

## Mandy Stalets

### **Assessment as a Catalyst for Learning**

Learning through the process of assessment drives not only academic achievement, but also positive relationships and growth for teachers and students alike. Assessment is not a moment where learning takes pause or stops; it is a process through which learning continues. Assessment is one of the strongest instructional supports a teacher possesses, and it is critical to maximize its effectiveness and power. In this session, participants walk through the entire planning process: accurately defining assessment, designing learning progressions, and planning for and using summative assessment, informal and formal formative assessment, and daily instruction through the lens of assessment.

Participants can expect to:

- Learn how the assessment process fuels learning for students and teachers alike.
- Explore how assessment contributes to a positive classroom culture centered on learning.

- Curate a variety of ideas and tools to maximize learning through every phase of the assessment process.

## **Katie White**

### **Analyzing and Responding to Assessment Evidence**

The quality of an assessment process can often best be determined by the quality of the instructional response. When teachers and students can easily identify strengths and needs and work together to design strategies and approaches to enhance learning, our assessment processes are working in the best possible ways.

This session explores the important connection between assessment design and effective response. Katie White investigates practical methods for analyzing assessment evidence that will result in clear next steps, and shares strategies for designing a differentiated response that allows students to grow in the very places the evidence indicated.

Participants in this session:

- Analyze the relationship between analysis and scoring of assessment evidence.
- Engage in practical methods for determining strengths, stretches, and strategies.
- Investigate ways to respond to student needs as indicated by assessment evidence.

## **AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

### **Cassandra Erkens**

#### **Feedback That Feeds Forward**

Before any grading can be done, students must have the opportunity to learn. Feedback is the formative tool teachers use to reduce the discrepancy between where a learner is and where the learner needs to be. Unfortunately, not all feedback generates the productive responses that empower learners to increase achievement and improve their grades. In this session, Cassandra Erkens explores the characteristics of quality feedback, engages educators in practicing giving quality feedback, and identifies strategies educators can readily use for generating fast but meaningful feedback.

Participants can expect to:

- Identify the characteristics of quality feedback as a means to keep learners engaged in the learning process.
- Practice the use of productive feedback that feeds forward.
- Explore strategies for self and peer review and evaluation techniques that can be used to support learning, increase motivation, and impact achievement.

## Anthony R. Reibel

### **Relational Teaching: How Better Relationships With Your Students Can Lead to Learning**

Teachers creating meaning and knowledge with their students' lived experiences—relating to students—is invaluable. This session invites participants to think about learning as an emergent concept resulting from interdependent collaboration, relational pedagogy, and productive discourse. Anthony R. Reibel discusses putting the student before the score, the process before the product, and relationship before the evaluation. This keynote moves from a definition of relational pedagogy to grading and assessment practices that affirm students for who they are and unconditionally support them in who they want to become.

Participants in this session:

- Learn about challenges schools face when implementing relational pedagogy and grading practices.
- Review practices and policies that make relationships a core tenet of their school.
- Reflect on current needs in grading reform and explore how relationships with students can change grading practices.

## Tom Schimmer

### **Redefining Student Accountability**

The need for students to be held accountable is often cited as a reason why some hesitate to implement sounder grading practices. In this keynote, Tom Schimmer focuses on how schools can seamlessly utilize sound grading practices along with their PLC and RTI frameworks to proactively teach students to be more responsible. Specifically, the systems, structures, and routines that can redefine accountability and reshape a school's culture are highlighted. Rather than using zeros, issuing late penalties, or employing any other traditional punitive grading practice, participants learn that real accountability can be achieved without compromising the integrity of a student's proficiency grade.

Participants in this session understand:

- How sound assessment practices along with the PLC and RTI frameworks can create a proactive approach to redefining student accountability
- How to teach and reinforce responsibility as well as other important habits of learning and student attributes
- How to shift from a teacher-centered to a student-centered model of self-monitoring and self-correction

## Mandy Stalets

### **Making Reassessment Manageable**

Since it is well known that some students take longer to learn, the fundamental question teachers must ask is whether their assessment and grading practices honor that truth. Subsequently, reassessment must be an integral part of classroom assessment. As reassessment can be an overwhelming exercise

for teachers, it is essential to invest time exploring how to effectively manage this practice. This session explores the difference between reassessment, redos, and retakes, as well as the most appropriate and effective use of each.

Participants can expect to:

- Gain an understanding of why reassessment is vital to the learning process.
- Consider effective strategies to make reassessment manageable.
- Examine varied methods for reassessment.

## **Katie White**

### **Designing Assessment Effectively**

We engage in assessment for a variety of reasons, but regardless of the purpose, the quality of our response to an assessment experience depends on the quality of our assessment design. We make good decisions when we have good information, and balancing precision and flexibility is the key to getting what we need from the assessment process. Teachers and students depend on strong evidence to advance learning in powerful ways.

This session explores critical considerations when crafting assessment experiences for students. Katie White investigates assessment purposes, discusses the selection of assessment methods, and considers aspects of quality assessment tools and processes. Whether creating new assessment events or analyzing existing assessment practices, this session enables strong assessment design that will result in the best kinds of evidence to support learning.

Participants in this session:

- Explore various purposes for engaging in assessment and how these purposes impact assessment design.
- Engage in practical strategies for selecting assessment methods.
- Refine approaches to assessment design that will lead to strong evidence of the current state of learning.

## Session Descriptions—Day 3

### KEYNOTES

#### Katie White

##### **Intersections and the Art of Assessment**

Have you ever devoted careful attention to designing assessment tools and processes, only to have the actual assessment experience somehow fall short of its potential? When this happens, it is not because educators haven't carefully considered assessment design. Rather, the tension rests in the intersection between assessment and the humans it is intended to serve. It is in this intersection that the art of assessment becomes critical.

This keynote invites an examination of the relationship between assessment purpose and the lived experience for teachers and students. An exploration of some of the challenges associated with assessment, combined with practical solutions, will leave participants with a clear understanding of how to refine the art of their own assessment practice.

Participants in this session:

- Explore aspects of assessment that can present unexpected challenges for teachers and students.
- Investigate nuanced approaches and practical strategies associated with artful assessment.
- Connect the information shared to personal contexts.

#### Cassandra Erkens

##### **Getting to the Good Stuff: Student Investment**

If all learners were deeply invested in their learning, then good grades could abound. But changes to current assessment practices and grading systems must be made if learners are going to be able to self-regulate as they engage in the work of deep learning. In this keynote, Cassandra Erkens explores the mental mindset and the practical strategies that educators must employ to support learners in getting to the good stuff.

Participants can expect to:

- Identify barriers that block learners from truly investing in their own learning.
- Explore the educator mindset required to support deep learning in the classroom.
- Identify strategies and tools teachers can use to support self-regulation in learners.