

## About Michael Fryda

Michael has taught at Westside High School in Omaha for seven years, since he received his Master's Degree in Science Education and Assessment. During his first year of teaching, he and his colleagues revised the district's 9th and 10th grade Natural Science curriculum to ensure that all students received a high-quality science education. In his third year of teaching, he became team leader, working with his co-teachers to create the best possible 9th grade science course they could. Michael said his continued education through the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Nebraska Assessment Cohort program fueled the changes that helped Westside High School students excel in science.

Michael has presented workshops for his own school district, Educational Service Units and at the state level on the effective use of formative and summative assessments, writing rubrics, grading for learning and classroom technology.

His focus on assessment and his philosophy are aligned with his classroom practices. He strives to focus grades on learning, using positive reinforcement rather than punishment. Michael says his experience has shown him that children understand the learning process better when assessments, grading and behavior policies match what their teachers say their expectations are.

Michael said: "My choices have rewarded me with evidence that shows it is possible to foster responsibility in children by giving them credit for what they know and understand."

Michael received the Ike Friedman Teacher Leadership Award and was a national semi-finalist for ASCD Outstanding Young Educator.

## QUOTES FROM PEOPLE WHO HAVE ATTENDED MICHAEL'S WORKSHOPS:

"Very well organized – information I can go back and share with colleagues that they can use immediately."

"Thank you for taking the time to talk with us. That really helped us feel much better about what we are doing."



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## SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS

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Nebraska State Education Association  
SMARTer Kids Foundation  
Dillard's Department Store, Lincoln





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# WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS

CONTACT MICHAEL IF YOU WOULD LIKE HIM TO SPEAK ON THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:

## Separating Practice from Evaluation: Working with Formative Assessment

Traditional assessment practices ask students to run before they can walk. Every assessment is graded. Students are evaluated on their understanding of concepts whether they have just begun to work on those concepts or have worked with the concepts for weeks. And, teachers unnecessarily work themselves toward a stressful experience. Educators can change this practice and restore a common sense approach to assessment, Michael said. This workshop focuses on understanding the differences between formative and summative assessment, developing techniques to separate those assessments in the classroom and highlights oral feedback as the 'lost' form of assessment. The workshop builds a case for focusing assessment efforts where those efforts will do the most good.

## An Education Technology Philosophy

New technologies offer exciting tools for educators to use to further student learning. However, a word of caution: Don't fall into the trap of using technology without first aligning it to student learning and to your assessment goals. This workshop will help guide you to appropriate decisions on when to use technology as a teaching tool and when it is more appropriate to choose a traditional learning method. Michael draws on his six-year experience with his school's 'One to One Initiative' to discuss the successes and the dangers of using technology in teaching. Workshop participants will begin to develop a framework about when to use technology to increase student learning.

## Identifying & Addressing Misconceptions in the Science Classroom

Humans have a strong drive to understand the world around them. When we can't explain an idea, we often construct our own meaning, based on our own experiences and logic skills. Unfortunately, this approach oftentimes does not match natural phenomena and our logic is flawed. The biggest obstacle to student learning frequently is incorrect yet logical ideas that students bring with them to the classroom. This workshop identifies some common misconceptions, helps teachers spot unique misconceptions and addresses the challenge of accurately interpreting student feedback.

## Aligning Grading Philosophies with Teaching Practices

Responsibility is an important life skill that teachers work hard to foster in their students. However, to make responsible decisions, students must draw on a multitude of life experiences. It takes time for them to acquire those experiences. Traditional grading practices require students to be responsible instantly, oftentimes before they are prepared. When students are irresponsible in the classroom, punishment is often the educator's response, yet there is no research-based evidence that supports the idea that punishment fosters responsibility. How do we evaluate student learning while fostering responsibility? This workshop highlights Ken O'Connor's educational research that is known for bringing common sense back to grading practices. O'Connor's ideas about grading for learning and the role of responsibility in grading are well respected.