mentor's introduction

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As someone with an extensive background in the conduct of art education at a district-wide level, Christa Volk is better placed than most to comment on teachers' assessment practices. Interest in assessment is now widespread; there is even a certain vogueishness about it. Christa's involvement predates current preoccupations, yet asks the still-topical question: What do teachers draw upon, in making judgments about student work?

Assessment has always existed in a continuum, with numerical data at one end, and evaluative statements at the other. Christa's approach has been to mirror that continuum in her investigative design. Some sections are quantitative, others qualitative. The result should present assessment as a vehicle that is more sensitive than standardized testing, yet draws from a commonality of art experience, rather than pure whimsy.

Christa Volk's study will, I predict, find its way into the body of material on assessment and evaluation accumulating across the continent. But I suspect that Christa will derive even more satisfaction from seeing her material put to use in her own school district. One of her objectives is the development of a taxonomy representative of teacher assessment behaviors, as they are used, rather than as teachers say other teachers should use them. Hers is a pragmatic goal, and a laudable one.