Softening the Edges
Reflecting on Our Assessment Practices
Transforming Learning Summit
Safe Space
The Power of Professional Conversation
Hard and Soft Edges: The Metaphor
Softening the Edges means...

Clarifying our inner voice as connected to:

• Our emotions
• Our beliefs and values
• Our needs
Softening the Edges means...

Clarifying assessment

• Its purpose
• Its impact
• Its potential
Softening the Edges means...

Creating Alignment through:
• Curiosity
• Research and exploration
• Design
Clarifying our inner voice
Describe a time when you felt terrible during and after a personal assessment experience (hard edges).

Describe a time when you felt great during and after a personal assessment experience (soft edges).
Hard and Soft Edges

Hard edges
• System of ranking and sorting
• My value as a human = the grade I get
• Family expectations
• Celebrations – single criterion

Soft edges
• Aware of success criteria
• Time to practice
• Frequent feedback from a caring person
• Time to correct errors
• Summative matched formative
• Relevance
Hard and soft edges are products of their environment.
Emotion indicates hard and soft edges
Emotion is connected to:

- Needs
- Beliefs
- Values
Beliefs and Values

For example:

I believe teachers are developing students who will become increasingly independent.

I value safe and healthy risk-taking as part of a rich learning process.

*What are the implications for assessment decisions?*
Holistic perspectives

- Physical
- Emotional / Social
- Intellectual
- Spiritual
We have to recognize hard edges in our assessment practices before we can start to soften them.
Hope is not a naïve, sunny view of life. It is the capacity not to panic in tight situations, to find ways and resources to address difficult problems.

Fullan, 1997
Reflection...

What do you **believe** about the role of teachers and students in education?

What **values** guide your work in education?

What are your **needs** as a human being who teaches?

What do your students **need**?
Softening the Edges means...

Clarifying our inner voice as connected to:

• Our emotions
• Our beliefs and values
• Our needs
“If you realize you aren’t so wise today as you thought you were yesterday, you’re wiser today.”

Hall and Simeral (2015)
Thank you!

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