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TE 844

Professional Portfolio

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**My Assessment Beliefs and Practices**

When I first began TE 844 “Classroom Literacy Assessment,” I felt that I already knew quite a bit about assessing students in my classroom. Shortly after the class began, I found out there was much more to know about assessment than I had ever realized.

Stiggins (2008) talks about two types of assessments, both of which are important, but serve very distinct purposes. These two types of assessments are assessments OF learning and assessments FOR learning. What I already knew about assessment was related to assessments OF Learning. In my classroom, each time I do an assessment I am checking to see if the students have met a specific standard. I then use these assessments OF learning to give them a grade on their report card. This type of assessment would always happen at the end of a unit or at the end of the marking period. At this point it was too late for me to work individually with the student or to adjust my teaching strategies.

What I did not know about assessing and what will be very beneficial to my teaching and to my students in the fall is that, it is equally important to also assess FOR Learning. The purpose of assessment FOR learning is not to check learning, but to increase it. I can use these assessments to better guide my instruction based on what the students’ needs are. Assessment FOR learning will also help my students to feel more in control of their own learning. This type of assessment also allows the students to see their own individual growth along the way. When students are able to see their learning growth they have a higher level of self-confidence and are motivated to keep learning.

Another important strategy that I learned was how to properly assess students with disabilities in my classroom. Stiggins (2008) says that when assessing students with disabilities their achievement targets should match the goals that are outlined in their IEP. His reasoning for this is that these children probably do not have a chance of meeting the grade level expectation. However, if we assess them FOR learning based on their IEP goals they will be able to see their progress. In my classroom I have always assessed my students with disabilities using the same assessments that I use for the other students. Prior to taking this class I did question this method. The response I got from the special education staff was, these children are in the mainstream classroom, and therefore they should be assessed the same way as everyone else. After reading Stiggins, I am now more confident about assessing these children based on their IEP goals. Now when I am assessing the students FOR learning, the students with disabilities will be able to see their growth as learners also. These are the children who tend to truly need a self-confidence boost when it comes to academics.

Conley (2005), talks about the importance of having clearly defined standards. Clearly defined standards provide a clear vision of what is to be achieved. When a school district implements clearly defined standards, parents are less anxious because they are aware of what the academic goals are for their child. On page 7, Conley states that there are three questions that parents often ask:

1. What are you trying to accomplish with my child?
2. How is my child doing?
3. What are you doing to help my child do better?

As I conclude TE844 I feel that I am now better equipped to answer all three of these questions. At my school we do a nice job, for the most part of informing parents about what we are trying to accomplish with their child. We do this by providing them with clearly defined standards and rubrics at the beginning of the school year. I am able to show them how their child is doing by providing them with the assessments their child has completed. As I begin to implement assessments FOR learning in my classroom, I will now be able to confidently answer question number three about what I am doing to help their child do better.

In the above paragraph I mentioned that my school does a nice job for the most part of informing parents about what we are trying to accomplish with their child. However, my school does not do this well in science. That is why I decided to base my assessment project for this class on the kindergarten science standards. Up until now if a parent asked me one of the three questions above, I would have truly struggled to give them an honest and accurate answer. As a result of this class, I have developed an outline of how I plan to implement the science standards in my classroom. While implementing this outline I will be using assessments FOR and OF learning. I have also created a rubric to go along with this. Beginning this fall, I will now be able to honestly and confidently answer any of the above three questions in each subject area.

**References**

Conley, M. (2005). *Connecting Standards and Assessment Through  
     Literacy*. Boston: Pearson.

Stiggins, R. (2008). *An Introduction to Student-Involved Assessment  
     FOR Learning* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.