

Professional Dialogue Paper

Baylee Anderson

ECS 401

Chris Atkinson

March 6th, 2024

As quite a lot of the assignments in this course are based around my classmates and I supposedly being in or already completing our Pre-internship/ Internship. I have not completed that part of my educational journey yet. I took this class now on my schooling timeline, being that there are no prerequisites that I have not completed as a way to alleviate my class load for my future self as I am trying to finish this degree in a three and a half year time frame. For me to complete this assignment, I was able to reach out to two teacher friends of mine to conduct collaborative conversations where we were able to delve deeper and develop a practical knowledge of assessment. I will leave their names anonymous for confidentiality purposes. Going into the conversations, I explained to them the premise of the assignment, while guiding conversation with questions based around assessment and the topics brought up in the *Making Classroom Assessment Work* textbook.

The first conversation was with Teacher K. Teacher K teaches in a Grade $\frac{2}{3}$ split classroom. When starting out the conversation, I explained this assignment and started out very broad by asking “What do you think of assessment as a whole?” This question took them a couple moments to answer, they said that their thoughts on assessment have been constantly changing and evolving for as long as they have been teaching- “I have been teaching for about 8 years. I was taught that assessment is unified and should be based on performance and the students ability to fulfill the product to the expectations of that student's grade level. Now, I see assessment as a way to learn from my own teachings and to help myself learn what the students need from me, for themselves in order to understand what is being taught.”. This reminded me of when I used to take spelling tests. Every student would get the same list of words to practice every week, and on Friday, we would have our test. I have always been a phonetic speller, and I am also someone who lives with Dyslexia. I would be extremely overwhelmed with spelling as I

knew that it did not matter how hard I studied, sometimes I would unknowingly mess up the words I was the most confident in. Instead of a test every week, if we were able to write a paragraph or sentence that involved the word and being able to understand the meaning of the word (whether I could spell it or not) could get me to be more comfortable with the word and work our way up to the test with different forms of memorization. By utilizing Setting and Using Criteria this “outlines a process for developing criteria with students: 1. Make a brainstormed list. 2. Sort and categorize the list. 3. Make and post a T-Chart. 4. Use and revisit and revise.” (Davies, 2020, p. 35). This is a great way to keep all students on the same track and come to a common ground that will benefit all learners. I continued on to ask Teacher K how they like to apply their views on assessment to when they are assessing students and themselves. Teacher K said “I like to create a classroom contract, where myself and the students create guidelines to how we should behave, how we should try our best, and create a space where everyone feels safe to say how they feel... I go over what I call is a ‘checkup slip’ and I give the students a paper on how they feel they are doing, if they understand what they are learning, and how they feel about the way I taught it... sometimes the results are tough to read, but usually there are more than one opinions that feel the same way. I connect the slips with the students' performances and with how I taught the lesson and go from there. I am always changing and evolving my lessons. What works for a class this year, might be different for the next. It is all about growing together as a team.” When listening to Teacher K, they had many ideas and strategies that I would like to use going forward. I connected them to when I was growing up and how this would have been beneficial to me and almost every student in the education system.

The second conversation I had was with Teacher H. Teacher H teaches in a Grade $\frac{4}{5}$ split classroom. This teacher has been teaching for over 20 years. When I asked them the question,

“what do you think of assessment as a whole?” they knew the premise of the conversation, however, I do not think they were prepared to feel the questions I was asking. They said to me “you know, there has been a lot of change since I went to school to become a teacher. Sure there are personal development days to give additional training of perspectives now, but us “older” (they said with air quotations) teachers never got the proper how to on how to look at every student as an individual with their own different learning needs. We were more guided on how to create a lesson, teach it, then mark it with a big red pen. Over time, I have come to learn new ways to assess and about what assessment should really mean. Throughout the years I have definitely made mistakes and I now understand why some of the things I used to do were not successful for every student.” This was also a touching conversation to me as I was able to relate to the teacher who taught me and was roughly the same age as my teacher friend. When I was younger (and even till this day) I struggled with learning and comprehending, my teachers would often sweep me under the rug and I was left to fend for myself and not get the best grades or support, especially with the product form of assessing. This did lead me to push myself, however, it would have been beneficial for me to have the proper support as a young kid and not be stressed out about my grades when I was already trying my best. I asked Teacher H: what is something that they recommend for new and experienced teachers to look at and understand when approaching assessment? Teacher H followed with “I would recommend not having too much pride to better yourself. Do not become defensive or set in your ways. Understand that the role of being a teacher is not just to teach, but to provide a space for growth and learning. How can you expect your students to grow when you won't grow yourself.” They also said later “do not be afraid to try new things, you'll learn from it, maybe it works, maybe it doesn't, you never know unless you try!” Going forward, there were a plethora of great examples from the *Making*

Classroom Assessment Work textbook. One that specifically stood out and further provides perspective on why we should be understanding the who/what/where/when/why/& how of assessment and educating students and ourselves is the parachute example. This example proves how crucial it is to be looking at those key points in order to be constantly reaching the goal of having a successful, growing, and supportive classroom. The parachute scenario is where students are being taught to pack a parachute: student one gradually declined in success and ended up not passing, student two had roller coaster grades that were unpredictable and finished right on the line of passing, and student three started off by being under the passing line but finished by passing in the end. The quote that followed this was “This scenario highlights a key question teachers need to address before taking action. When should teachers assess and when should they evaluate? What might be the results of evaluating too early or too much? How do teachers know if they are evaluating the right things? How do teachers know what makes sense for the learner and for the course?” (Davies, 2020, p. 2). By asking these questions, this is already a step in the right direction towards assessing ourselves, and how to assess the students we are teaching.

Going forward, with the information I am learning now on my Education journey, and with the information and knowledge gained from the opinions and experiences of the Teaching professionals I have had discussions with, mixed with my own personal experiences and challenges as a student, I want to put it towards change. There are three plans of action I have thought out with plenty of help from my newly absorbed knowledge.

Plan #1: As mentioned in the paragraph with Teacher K about utilizing Setting and Using Criteria. This is a great way to start off the school year by involving students in their learning and having them become part of the expectations being set by themselves and I. With this strategy of

action, we are creating a community of safety and understanding, a place where the students are in charge and we as a team can determine the timeframes and goals for each assessment of their learning. This plan is based off of the provided strategy in Chapter 4 from the *Making Classroom Assessment Work* textbook (Davies, 2020, p. 33-44)

Plan #2: Learning a classroom assessment that works, by observing the students' work and going from there. As mentioned in the Teacher H paragraph, to use and ask ourselves the key question needed to provide success for the students and to learn from what you are doing as an educator. Being able to put yourself in the shoes of the students you are teaching and becoming the student again, is a great way to see all sides of learning and look from the standpoint and understand what everyone needs to be successful, happy and safe. This plan is based on the first Chapter (1) in the *Making Classroom Assessment Work* textbook which outlines and generalizes assessment and how it should be approached (Davies, 2020, p. 1-14).

Plan #3: Based on my own personal learning, stemming from the idea of a way that I learn best, but also a way that includes all learning styles. By looking at the evidence of learning, we can look at the process from multiple ways to create a plan that suits individuals and the class as a whole. By using Triangulation, we will be able to collect evidence from the three different sources: Observations of Process, Conversations, and Collection of products. When utilizing the 3 sources, we are giving students to show what they know in ways that suit their learning. This gives us as educators, and our students the chance to see the trends and patterns and how they relate to the consistency of what they are producing. This plan is based off of the provided strategy in Chapter 5 from the *Making Classroom Assessment Work* textbook (Davies, 2020, p. 45-54).

Thanks to the consent and time that was given by the teaching professionals included in this Dialogue paper, I was able to use their opinions, what I have been learning, and my personal experiences, to create this Paper. Even though there are only three plans of action in this Dialogue Paper, as educators, we should always be looking towards how we can be adding strategies and improving education for the future youths that come into our classrooms.

References

Davies, A. (2020). *Making Classroom Assessment Work* (4th ed.). connect2learning