

## **5 Big Ideas**

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At the beginning of the semester, my thinking process related to assessment is not what it is now. I used to think that assessment and evaluations were the same thing, but they are not. I used to think that assessing is how you mark someone or a student based on their performance, but that is not it- it is way more than that. I have learned that informal assessments are non-standardized measures that are often personalized to the student, these can include: work samples, portfolios, observations, checklists, etc. A formal assessment is a data-driven method of evaluating students, usually with well-defined grading parameters, these can include: testing at the beginning and ends of the school year, reading assessments, standardized math tests, etc. I have learned that when you assess, you are gathering information about student learning, to inform teaching, to then better support student learning. This is A for L which is Assessment for learning and it is based off of the students results. Then there is evaluating which is where we have to decide whether or not the students have learned what they needed to learn. While evaluating you collect evidence to verify how well the students have learned, this is also known as A of L which is Assessment of learning. This was my main generalized goal in my Personal Learning Plan. I have also followed my SMART goal where I want to be continuously growing and re-evaluating how I am assessing and what I can do to better myself and the lives I am impacting around me.

When it comes to my 5 big ideas, there are certainly sub ideas within the big ones. This assignment was difficult in the sense of having to choose and narrow my ideas to just 5. The overarching theme of my big ideas is to create a classroom space where students (and their families) feel heard, safe, happy, and able to be their best selves. In my opinion, my 5 big ideas are what helped to fuel and support my learning goal. This leads me to my first idea of **having an open mind and an open heart, being open to change, growth, criticism, and mistakes.**

Yes, this is a big, big idea, however this one connects to each concept within it. Every school year, I plan to be a dry sponge- I will still have all the pieces from the last year and all of my experiences and knowledge learned, but I want to start in a new state to absorb all the ways the students and families need to be supported. I want students and families to know that I am human, and I will make mistakes, I will also do my best to learn, grow, and change to make those mistakes into a step in the right direction. I want them to know that we are all on the same team and I want to be the best support I can. Onto my next big idea of **beginning with the end in mind**. This was a newly learned term for me from this class, once I heard it, I was hooked! I love the idea of looking at the journey as a whole, understanding that things happen and change, which is okay. I think it is important to understand where it is we need to go, and work from there. This coincides with another one of my big ideas which is **involving students in classroom assessment**. When we involve students, we are opening up doors to different worlds of assessment! We can have an open line of communication, expectation and understanding, starting by working with students and keeping them in the loop with “the end in mind”. There are more pros than cons with this idea as students want to know what lies ahead, even better, to be in charge of their own journey. Students can make **mistakes, provide feedback, and perform self assessments** (which is my 4th big idea). Knowing that it is okay to make mistakes takes the pressure off and makes it easier for me to learn, knowing that I can give feedback and be listened to makes it easier for me to learn, and being able to reflect and self assess myself makes it easier for me to learn. I am just one person, I want to know the other ways that having students involved in their own learning can and will be beneficial to not only themselves, but future students as well. Getting feedback and making mistakes is also part of that process. My final big idea (included in this paper) connects with my other big ideas as well, it is to have **constant**

**communication with staff, parents, and students.** Having a space where all can be heard and feel safe is key! If everyone is on the same page, we will go further. If we are not on the same page, we will go nowhere until we are able to come together and move forward together. All of my big ideas connect with one another, however, I believe that it is a beautiful beginning to having a flow in the classroom where everyone is in charge of their education.

As for what other assessment learnings that resonated with me and will change my teaching practices in the future, this list gets longer and longer everyday. Even if they do not all connect with my Personal Learning Plan goal, they still are working towards my goals of being the teacher that can change someone's life. I want to be that teacher to make a difference- big or small. Assessing in a way that suits all students and can make everyone feel accepted and welcome is one of my top priorities. Using the textbook *Making Classroom Assessment Work*, really opened my eyes to different ways of looking at assessment as well as conducting it. One activity that we did in class was the Learning Circles! It is a beautiful way of having students share what they know in a setting that they will become more and more comfortable in with their same peers. We each took turns with different roles, talking and reflecting about what we read. This was a space where we were not right or wrong, we were sharing. I then talked about this in my blog which is a way of assessing the process of the learning circle. I would do this in a future classroom.

All in all, this class broadened my understanding of not only assessment, but also my teaching career. I am able to walk away from this class asking for more and being in a place to accept it from wherever it comes. I guess you could say I did not achieve my goal in its entirety, however, achieving the elements of my goals through day to day experiences, you could also say that I did.

References

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