Beliefs about Assessment

As teachers we often talk about assessment and what strategies we use but how often do we stop and think about why we do what we do. In the research report, "Accountability: Inclusive assessment, monitoring and reporting," prepared for the Indigenous Education Consultative Body, Queensland by Allan Luke et al., one school lists their shared beliefs about assessment and reporting in their staff handbook. (Page 78).


- Assessment is not to prove but improve
- Assessment should allow teachers to individualise and to meet the learning needs of each student
- Assessment should be seen in terms of individual progress
- Assessment methods should make students feel wanted in themselves and give them a sense of self-worth
- Assessment methods should make students feel they have achieved something worthwhile
- Assessment methods should be clearly defined for all and open to processes of validity, giving students a sense of fair play
- Assessment methods should recognise individual differences, talents and learning styles and give students a sense of being accepted
- Assessment methods should make students feel they are worthwhile and give them a sense of confidence
- Assessment methods should allow parents to be reliably informed of their children’s progress
- Assessment should be continual and ongoing
- Assessment should allow students to participate in assessing their own learning and act on the basis of that assessment

Do the points made raise any questions or issues for you about your own assessment and reporting practices?

Read about Martha Botha who teaches a Special Class at Para Hills Primary School whose assessment methods are indicative of the points made above.
From the Superintendent

Welcome to 2007. I wish everyone a very successful and fulfilling year.
Thanks to Martha Botha for sharing her classroom practice about the wide range of assessment strategies she uses in her classroom in this first newsletter for 2007.
This year we would like to focus on the importance of assessment, curriculum and pedagogy.
I would like to recommend the Allan Luke video as a good starting point for talking about the connections between assessment, curriculum and pedagogy in your school. (See back page)
The new SACSA Achievement Software (SAS) can be used as a tool to both record and analyse student achievement of the SACSA Standards and Outcomes.
Read more about this on the back page.
All the best for 2007.
Jen Emery
Email: emery.jen@saugov.sa.gov.au

How a wide range of assessment strategies can be used

A Teacher’s Story

Martha Botha, a teacher, who works in a the Special Class at Para Hills Primary School understands the importance of using a range of assessment tasks to find out what her students know, can do and understand and to plan for future learning.

Towards the end of last year the class completed a unit of work on the topic, Shrek. Martha focussed mainly in The Arts area: Outcomes 2.1, 2.3 and 2.4 but with the work covered in the unit the students were also able to provide evidence towards English, Mathematics, Health and Physical Education and Society and Environment Outcomes in Standard 2.

Martha determined what assessment strategies she would use at the same time she planned the unit of work.

The strategies included:
- Photos
- Video
- Anecdotal records
- Student/teacher conferences
- Written work

Anecdotal Records

The following notes kept by Martha provides valuable evidence for making judgements of Andrew’s achievement against SACSA Standards and Outcomes.

During the viewing of Shrek, the movie was paused occasionally to allow for discussion of events, feelings and prediction.

Why was Shrek surprised that Donkey wanted to be his friend?
- People don’t usually like ogres
- They are scary and ugly
- Because he was ugly and no one likes him, everyone runs away because they are scared

Why are all of those creatures in the swamp?
- They are all magical
- They are different from humans

What creatures were there?
- Andrew remembered most of the creatures

Andrew’s comments
When Shrek took his helmet off, Princess Fiona was shocked and sad because he wasn’t what she expected (prince, nice looking, human) instead he was ugly, green, an ogre.

Was Shrek happy when he got his swamp back?
- No he missed donkey and Fiona
- Shrek was sad

Discussion about feelings and how Shrek, Donkey and Fiona’s face changed when they felt a different emotion.

Andrew made appropriate comments and comparisons about this.
Andrew commented that Princess Fiona didn’t want people to know she was an ogre because they would call her ugly and not like her.
Andrew asked what consequences, sacrifice and turnstile meant.

From the way Andrew entered the discussion about various points, it was clear he had developed a good understanding of the story and the issues within the story.

“One of a series of photos showing Andrew, a Year 6 student, practising the expressions he wanted to use on the masks he was creating to show Shrek’s different emotions from the movie.”

“Assessment should be continual and ongoing”

“Assessment is not to prove but improve”

“Assessment should be seen in terms of individual progress”
Using Rubrics

Martha developed a number of rubrics to use with various tasks throughout the unit. These allowed the students to know what they needed to do to be successful, reflect on their performance and what they could do to improve future performances.

Making A Mask: SHREK

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**Well done Andrew**

Practising for the Group performance.

**Score**

**Essential Learnings**

In this unit of work there was also a major focus on the Essential Learning: IDENTITY.

- A sense of personal and group identity
- The capacity to contribute, reflect on and shape relationships amongst individuals and groups.
In 2007 as part of the Moving Forward with SACSA Strategy all schools need to select at least one Learning Area of particular interest to their local priorities and formally record SACSA Standards and outcome data. The SACSA Achievement (SAS) Software can be used as a tool to both record and analyse student achievement of the SACSA Standards and Outcomes. SAS is web enabled and will be accessible through the DECS IT Application Portal being entirely web based. It requires no set up and ongoing technical support. Using the unique student identifier and centralised school EDSAS data, SAS enables recorded student achievement to seamlessly move with the child between classes and sites over their life at school.

Data collected through SAS will be used locally with available backdrop data to inform site learning plans.

SAS has been trialled in 8 Data for Learning Innovation schools during Term 4 2006 and will be further trialled, through invitation, in Term 1 2007 by 36 schools across districts who have previously been involved in recording SACSA achievement outcomes as part of the Data for Learning/Moving Forward with SACSA Innovation Strategy.

Those schools wanting to use SAS in 2007 were asked to fill in a SAS Expression of Interest form included in the first 2007 InfoConnect pack. It is intended to be phased into schools who request it in a staggered implementation each term. This will ensure that the software meets the needs of schools in terms of usability, scaleability and speed of access.

If you have any further queries please contact:
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### Allan Luke Video Update (from last newsletter)

The Allan Luke Video will be a part of the next Moving Forward with SACSA CD which will be available early this term.

Professor Allan Luke's November 14th seminar entitled 'Pedagogy and Assessment' has been videotaped for use at staff meetings. Notes from this seminar will also be available to assist leaders to further explore pedagogy and assessment at the local level to achieve targeted improvements in learning.

It will be available from District Offices.
Contact Curriculum Advisors in early March.