As a learning teacher, I have, through effort and collaboration, come to a conclusion regarding assessment. Assessment is the driving force behind effective education. Through conversations with teachers at PDS sites, I have found that assessment must be fully integrated into everything that we do. The relationship of practice to coursework in EU 499 D, Implementing Curriculum 487 Extension, is a fully integrated one. As teachers, we must be acutely aware when planning, implementing and recording our practice that we have evidence as, for and of learning in order to be properly effective in our craft. Preparing to teach in Ontario’s public schools requires learning how to develop teaching and learning plans where assessment as, for and of learning is fully integrated into the process. I have also learned that achieving full integration of assessment as, for and of learning within the regular teaching and learning process can be challenging and that I have much to learn in this area as a developing teacher. Growth in this professional practice will remain a priority.

*Growing Success* outlines seven fundamental principles:

*To ensure that assessment, evaluation, and reporting are valid and reliable, and that they lead to the improvement of learning for all students, teachers use practices and procedures that:*

*• are fair, transparent, and equitable for all students;*

*• support all students, including those with special education needs, those who are learning the language of instruction (English or French), and those who are First Nation, Métis, or Inuit;*

*• are carefully planned to relate to the curriculum expectations and learning goals and, as much as possible, to the interests, learning styles and preferences, needs, and experiences of all students;*

*• are communicated clearly to students and parents at the beginning of the school year or course and at other appropriate points throughout the school year or course;*

*• are ongoing, varied in nature, and administered over a period of time to provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate the full range of their learning;*

*• provide ongoing descriptive feedback that is clear, specific, meaningful, and timely to support improved learning and achievement;*

*• develop students’ self-assessment skills to enable them to assess their own learning, set specific goals, and plan next steps for their learning*

Growing Success, Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools, First Edition Covering Grades 1 to 12. Queen’s Printer for Ontario, 2010. Page 6.

In attempting to follow these principles, I learned that it all begins with planning. Teachers must plan not only with the end in mind, but also with a mechanism that will fairly, effectively, transparently, clearly, supportively and facilitate self-regulation in children. The end goal in teaching is to effectively create an avenue to further student learning. Without assessment one can never be sure they have accomplished this. The need for relevant and timely information regarding the effectiveness of a lesson not only allows for conformation of success but also any shortcomings. Beyond this one must formulate future lessons broken down into groups of similar understanding in order to ensure that full class learning has taken place. This is directly facilitated through assessment for learning. Assessment as and for learning is central to all teaching/learning plans. Assessment of learning is required to make judgements when meeting the evaluation and reporting mandate.

From my practicum work; I have come to realize that the WLU planning template provides a comprehensive framework for fully integrating assessment into the teaching/learning process. The template provides a discipline for ensuring that students are full partners in the learning process and that teachers will be able to plan forward to meet individual and group learning needs. The template also works to assist in generating appropriate culminating tasks when an assessment of learning is needed for reporting purposes. I used the template in planning for my Grade 6 Social Studies lessons through February and March 2018. The unit involved student collaboration and group work so it was necessary to plan not only for students to assess how well groups had accomplished their goals but also to build in a process for assessing individual students’ achievement of learning expectations. I used the following process to check for individual learning as well as to plan future instruction.

**Assessment: Success Criteria**

Students will use oral language to apply concepts learned in this social studies unit when responding to a provided environmental scenario. Specifically, being able to identify and discuss, cause, interrelationships and how we as citizens can affect this situation.

**Assessment strategy relating to Success Criteria**

The purpose of this formative assessment is twofold. Firstly, to provide the teacher with information regarding student learning of the specific expectation listed and secondly, to allow students to receive oral feedback and prompts as they use oral language explain their understanding.

A checkbric will be used for record keeping.

I thought that the process worked well in giving me the information I was seeking. Students also really seemed to enjoy having a conversation with me as the teacher. It was an alternative way for them to show what they understood. I found some surprises as I listened to individual students explain their own thinking. In some cases they had understood more that I had expected. I had a similar experience in my fall practicum in Grade 1 when teaching data management where an individual assessment task in which children graphed representation of two sets of blocks provided. It was important to work collaboratively as we were learning but it was also important to provide an opportunity for individual demonstration. Planning for the culminating task with the Social Studies unit allowed me to apply the *Growing Success* principles. I was able to integrate assessment of the learning expectations into a summative task which involved a written report and a video “news report”. My students were given an assignment as CBC investigative reporters. I also had good success with aligning Grade 1 assessment of learning tasks during the fall. Again, demonstration tasks were developed based on the learning expectations. I used rubrics to establish levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 and to provide anecdotal comments. My AT used these marks and comments on the students’ report card so I believe she had confidence in my work. This was a great learning opportunity for me. In some ways assessment of learning is easier to accomplish than assessment as and for learning. I’ve learned not to rush to assessment of learning. Planning for ongoing self, peer and teacher assessment as and for learning is necessary to support student learning.

I believe that student’s ability to self-regulate their learning is of paramount importance. One’s ability to structure a personal set of goals and systems to accomplish these goals through self-generated criteria, with guided feedback is the most effective system conducive to learning success. By involving students in their own learning, the student owns their success, can effectively strategize a plan for future learning and implement said plan bringing a self-determining sense to the process. When done correctly a student can apply this understanding to any other context they may need in the future. In my placement I have illustrated this effort through my student’s personal PE journal. In this, students were asked to evaluate their day and generate next steps. They were then afforded an opportunity to implement these steps and observe the outcome. This journal also provides an opportunity to record progress and review. By this, students could build self-regulation strategies and exercise their ability to navigate the process independently. Assessment as learning must always involve student reflection. Supporting students to develop these skills is of vital importance. As I develop my teaching skills, I want to focus on effectively supporting students to become agents of their own learning.

The student perspective when considering assessment is sometimes overlooked. If we want students to be active participants in their own learning and to be supported in trying new things with permission to “fail forward” then students must feel safe and respected during all assessment processes. As a teacher, making sure that students experience respectful, constructive feedback is extremely important. The classroom learning community must be conducive to risk taking. This was a big learning from my Alternative Placement at Nusdeh Yoh in Prince George, BC (an Aboriginal Choice School). Sharing circles, restorative practices in response to discipline and basing school conduct on the Seven Wisdom Teachings were more than strategies. They were daily practices that supported students.

Ontario Ministry of Education Policy assures parents and guardians a number of assurances. As a TEC it was very important that where I had taught these assurances were respected. I was able to experience the complete teaching/learning/ assessment as, for and of learning /reporting process in Grade 1 Science, Understanding Life Systems Needs and Characteristics of Living Things, during the fall 2017 practicum. I was diligent with aligning assessments to learning expectations and in collecting evidence to support an assignment of a level of performance. I created descriptive comments that included next steps. I was prepared to discuss student learning with families and was included in the parent/teacher interviews. It is important to remember that discussion of a child’s learning is an extremely personal conversation for families. Preparing to show evidence of positive learning outcomes to parents and guardians was important. I will continue to plan this way.

As a beginning teacher, organization of assessments can be a challenge. When implementing a system of regular, meaningful assessment, one is left with a great deal of text. In order to remain in order, I created a spreadsheet that documents all assessment. In a glance, I can determine the most recent and regular level of achievement. I can also deduce issues with concepts that are throughout the class and formulate plans of action. This will certainly be a practice that I carry forward into professional practice. I will also use recommended resources to assist me with assessment processes and seek out team teaching opportunities in planning and assessment.

Teaching in Ontario’s public schools requires that I develop teaching and learning plans where assessment as, for and of learning is fully integrated. Achieving this full integration within the regular teaching and learning process is a challenging networked process. Careful planning is critical. I will continue to use the WLU planning template so as to meet this mandate. I will also build a set of effective assessment processes, retaining what has worked well and refining where improvement is needed. I will remember to be learning along with my students. I will not forget to consider the perspective of students and families and will seek out team teaching and planning opportunities within my teaching career.

References

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growSuccess.pdf>

Growing Success, Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools, First Edition Covering Grades 1 to 12. Queen’s Printer for Ontario, 2010.