PLS Reflection

Teacher Competency

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At my PDS site, Bridgeport Public School, I have been able to observe a very competent teacher at work. She has utilized a variety of assessment techniques and fosters ongoing communication with parents. The following is a reflection pertaining to the practises that I have observed.

The assessments I have observed fall under the three categories which are identified as, 1) assessment for learning, 2) assessment as learning 3) assessment of learning.

*Assessment for learning* refers to the process of collecting and interpreting evidence for use by learners and teachers to ascertain where the learner is in their learning. It identifies where they need to go and how to get the student to that point. Assessment for learning is also known as formative assessment. My AT has read with every student in our class and used this to understand where each student is with their reading. She has jotted down notes pertaining to fluency, number of errors and corrections. This closely mirrors running records. She states that this exercise gives her knowledge of what level books she will expect each student to be reading. My AT gains insight into where students struggle, she uses this information to construct a strategy to support student learning, moving it forward to where it needs to be. When I become a teacher, I will make sure to continually assess my students in order to gain knowledge of where they are, where they need to be and how to help them get there. This will allow me to be cognisant of child needs and to determine where my energy is best focussed so at my whole class can be successful.

*Assessment as learning* is the process of students reflecting on and monitoring their progress both formally and informally. This enables students to take responsibility for their own past and future learning. At my PDS site, after a writing exercise was marked and handed back, my AT distributed a sheet of paper which had three questions on it: 1) What did I write?; 2) What did I not write?; 3) What can I do to improve my writing? The students were given time to read over their papers and to comment. Learners were then asked to reflect on their work by answering the questions on the sheet. In this way, students became aware of their work and were afforded a concrete system to improve their writing. When I become a teacher I will utilize assessment as learning techniques, such as student reflection, to create a team-like mentality in which students and teacher work in harmony to support student learning.

Assessment of learning refers to evaluations designed to confirm what students know, demonstrate whether a student has met curriculum or individualized goals (IEP), or to make decisions regarding future programs or placements. In my PDS, I have observed two formal assessments in mathematics. These assessments were in the form of tests. The tests were designed to allow the students the ability to demonstrate their acquired knowledge on mathematical concepts of the previous unit. My AT used the information to gauge whether students met curriculum standards and where students needed aid to do so. It is important to know what students have learned so one can reflect on one’s teaching methods. A teacher can identify which lessons have been successful in conveying concepts and where learning has not yet occurred. I will employ assessment of learning when I am a teacher to understand which students have met curriculum goals, reflect on my own teaching and identify areas that need more work. I will also use formal assessments to help identify, if pertinent, a need for an IEP.

My AT communicates diligently with parents regarding a wide range of issues. If a student is having trouble she will make a phone call to the parent to relate this. If a student has a bad day she will do the same. She is also receptive to parent emails and phone calls. I have witnessed several phone calls between my AT and parents. Keeping communication avenues open goes a long way to creating a team mentality where students, teachers and parents all work together to optimize student learning. I will make sure that, when I am a teacher, I keep communication lines open and create a team mentality regarding a student’s success in scholastic endeavors. Communications that include the student can help to empower the learner. As a teacher, empowered learners will always be a goal.