



The Kindergarten Chronicles

Robyn Markovic, Early Literacy Trainer, RPDP

Kimberlie Bayer, Kindergarten Teacher, Darnell ES

Putting it to the Test - Assessment in K

School has been in session for almost two months now. Students and teachers are comfortable with classroom routines. Centers are running smoothly and independently. The Halloween and Thanksgiving holidays are just around the corner. Interim testing and conferences are soon to follow. This is the time of year when the thought of assessment is foremost in our minds and ample time is spent discussing what to assess. The CEF Benchmarks and Standards provide clear objectives. Additionally, different schools and regions utilize different assessments. At Darnell, we use the GRIP-K literacy assessments (Letter Identification, Concept of Word, Phonological Awareness, and Spelling Dictation) and DRA leveling, when appropriate. However, the question of when to assess, how to organize assessment results, and what to do with the results deserves careful consideration.

When is a good time to assess students? Many students' literacy skills are better assessed individually. The large number of students in kindergarten classrooms can make individual assessments a daunting task. Even

seasoned teachers suffer from "individual testing anxiety". I have found two ways to alleviate this dilemma. First, I write anecdotal records on each student nearly every day. It only takes a moment to jot down which students are struggling with writing their names, forming letters, following directions, etc. Conversely, I note which students are meeting and exceeding literacy standards. These notes provide quick data and are my fist tool in developing small groups for instruction. During guided reading and literacy groups, I continue to observe and evaluate students' progress through anecdotal records. Second, work stations or classroom centers, allow time for more direct individual and small group assessments. By the end of September, work stations are routine. Each work station has an "expert" student present who is able to explain the station to other students without my assistance. As a result, I am able to assess five to seven students each day because of minimal interruptions.

Written By: Kimberlie Bayer, Darnell ES

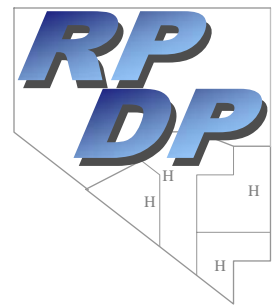
Organization is the Key

You have finished your initial assessments... Now organizing this wealth of information can be a challenge. Not sure what to do with all of the anecdotal notes you have taken? Try using sticky notes and legal size clipboards. The clipboards are perfect for holding the sticky notes and recording individual student observations. At the end of the day, the sticky notes can be placed in student files. More formal assessments can be kept in large binders with sections marked for literacy, math, etc. Organizing your observations and formal assessments in this manner ensures an accurate understanding of students' strengths and weaknesses, which is key to increasing student achievement

Southern Nevada
Regional Professional
Development Program

Volume 1, Issue 2

October 2005



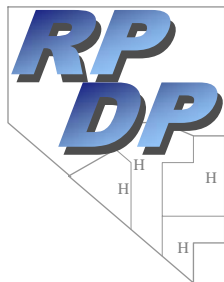
Bill Hanlon, Director

Food for Thought

Mailing labels are convenient for taking anecdotal records. Simply keep a sheet of 30 labels on a clipboard. Quickly jot down each student's notes on a separate label. Later, peel off the label and place it in a child's file or in your assessment notebook.

Separate clipboards for your AM and PM classes will help with organization.

515 West Cheyenne, Suite C
North Las Vegas, NV 89030



Literacy Centers Class for K-1 Teachers

Due to popular demand, the class will be offered again in February. Register on Pathlore.

Dates: Saturday, February 11 & Saturday, February 25

Times: 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Location: Givens ES

Cost: \$45 for one graduate credit from SUU

Second Trimester Benchmark Classes

- * December 1, 2, and 3 at Whitney ES
- * Variable Credit Option
- * Register on Pathlore (Keywords: Literacy/Benchmark)

Planning for Instruction

The final question is what to do with the information gathered from assessments and observations. The end of the line for many of these results is report cards, progress reports, and parent/teacher conferences. Every year, I strive to use these results, not only to individualize instruction, but to improve my teaching. Just recently, I experienced one of the precious teaching moments when every student understands the skills and concepts taught.

We were finishing a unit on bats. The objective of the lesson was for students to draw a bat and write one sentence about bats. Prior to the writing portion of the lesson, we created a KWL chart on bats. We also created a Tree Map listing all of the things bats have (like wings) and the things bats do (like soar).

I reinforced and modeled using print around our classroom to assist us with

our sentence writing. We brainstormed possible sentences together. A short directed drawing lesson on bats provided students with ideas on how to illustrate their completed sentence. The results were amazing!

Every student, whether struggling, on grade level, or exceeding, wrote a sentence and drew a bat. The sentences all included the word "bat" and

either phonetic spelling, print from our KWL chart or Tree Map, or letter strings comprised the sentences. I have taught this lesson many times and a handful of students usually copy words from the

charts without completing a thought about bats or illustrate something other than a bat. This year, all of the students accurately completed the task. Why was this year different?

The differences were few, but criti-

cal. First, the increased amount of interactive and shared writing in my classroom has prepared my students for independent practice. Second, the *explanation* of the purposes of graphic organizers and Thinking Maps allowed students to learn through the process of creating these tools, instead of simply focusing on the end results.

K	W	L
- bats fly - bats hang upside down	What do bats eat?	Some bats eat fruit.

Third, exposing the students to multiple genres on bats (non-fiction, fiction, and poetry) reinforced their bat schema. Lastly, the students were confident in

their abilities. Analyzing assessment and observation results has driven my instruction resulting in greater implications for my students.

Written By: Kimberlie Bayer, Darnell ES