USING ASSESSMENT TO MAKE MEANINGFUL DECISIONS ABOUT TEACHING AND LEARNING

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Welcome -
Thanks for Coming!

I’m Judy Jablon -
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Thanks to my colleagues at NAEYC for your sponsorship.
And to my colleagues at Early Childhood Investigations: Fran Simon and Andrea Miles.
POLL - Who has joined us today?

A. Teacher/Provider/Caregiver/Ass’t Teacher
B. Home Visitor/Family Outreach
C. Coach/Specialist/Mentor
D. Consultant/Higher Ed Faculty
E. Director/Supervisor/Manager/Owner
Today’s Topic

Using Assessment to Guide Decisions about Teaching and Learning

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Assessment:
Answering Questions about Children’s Learning
An Important Question: Are Teachers Doing or Using Assessment?
POLL – Are you/your teachers doing or using assessment?

A. Doing it...
B. Using it...
C. A bit of both...
Using Assessment *not* Doing Assessment…

- The more teachers use assessment, the less “hit or miss” decisions will be.
  - Basing decisions on knowledge of individual children is the essence of individualizing.

- When decisions are purposeful and intentional, teachers can do an even better job supporting children and families.
A Stance of Persistent Curiosity

Hmmm. Sherelle is working alone. She is constructing ramps. She’s placed them at two different inclines.
Observation

- Watching and listening with intention to learn about children

- What we see children do from the outside helps us to ask questions about what children are thinking, feeling, and experiencing on the inside
What Is Happening Here?

- Imagine you are watching these children building in the block area.
- What do you see?
- What does it make you wonder about?
Assessment: Formative and Summative

- **Formative** – assessment for teaching and learning
- **Summative** – assessment for reporting
The Assessment Cycle

1. Ask Questions
2. Collect Evidence
3. Interpret Evidence
4. Take Action

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The Assessment Cycle Happens During Powerful Interactions

- Ask Questions
- Collect Evidence
- Interpret Evidence
- Take Action

Stay Present
Connect
Extend Learning

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With a stance of persistent curiosity, Maggie begins a Powerful Interaction, using the assessment cycle.

Hmmm. Sherelle is working alone. She is constructing ramps. She’s placed them at two different inclines.

Hi Sherelle. May I join you?

I see that you’ve used long blocks to create 2 different sized ramps.

Yep.
The greatest opportunity for learning lies in moments of teacher-child interaction when the teacher crafts learning experiences that stretch children just beyond their current skill level.

Munro, 2008
Using the Assessment Cycle During Powerful Interactions

Ms. Angela with 3-year-old Tallon

- **Ask questions:** What does Tallon know about books and reading?
- **Collect evidence:** As Ms. Angela interacts with Tallon, she watches and listens to find out what he knows and can do.
Tallon reading Dinosaur book

3/2 I join him

T: turning pages of book w/left hand, page by page
Points and says (accurately), “Stegosaurus.” Also Ankylosaurus

T: points and says Triceratops

Me: How does the tri... look different from other dinos

T: This one is a triceratops

Me: What do they have that tells you that is what it is?

T: have horns
Let’s Think About EVIDENCE -

10/14 Jayda MathCtr
Works w/Ryan
Task: Choose from frames (5, 10, 15, 20); choose mat’ls, make sets
J: I’m doing 10. And I’m gonna use spiders
R: I’m using the worms
J: I like spiders better
Starts placing s in each box counting 1, 2, etc. to 9

10/14 Jayda Math Ctr
Puts spiders in ten frame; counts w/1-1 Corres.
Assessment: Observing and Decision-Making in the Moment

Should I...

- Introduce a new material, book, or vocabulary word
- Join the children to model a new skill or strategy
- Offer a suggestion, information, or guidance
- Use *mirror talk* as feedback to describe, validate, or demonstrate vocabulary
- Use open-ended questions to encourage the child to describe, explain, predict, compare and contrast
Use Assessment to Talk about Thinking and Learning

- Use the words “learning” and “thinking”
- Tell children what they’re learning and why
- Ask children what they learned
Use Assessment to Give Effective Feedback

- Specific and descriptive
- Immediate and frequent
- Relates to learning goal/standard
- Relates to effort or successful use of strategies
- Offers guidance
- Not evaluative

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Include Children in the Process

- “How do I know what you know and can do?

- What do you want me to write down so that I can remember about what you know?

- What do you want me to share with your family?

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Assessment Informs Planning
Assessment Guides Decisions

- Individual children
- Small groups
- Classroom challenges
Assessment Guides Modifications to the Program

- Adapt the physical environment by moving furniture, changing materials or altering the ambiance
- Adjust the daily schedule and routines
- Plan a learning experience targeted to individual children’s interests and needs
Use What You Learn!

- Gaps in curriculum
- Overlooked skills
- Strengths to build on
- Areas to support
Plan for Assessment

- After reviewing data:
  - What new questions do you have about individuals or curriculum objectives for the entire group?
  - Plan how, when and where to collect data.
  - Make recording sheets if necessary.
  - Decide if you need to provide particular experiences to make sure you’re able to get the information you need.
Assessment Fosters Partnerships with Families
Assessment and Partnerships with Families

- When families recognize that you see and appreciate their child, they appreciate you!

- Staying open-minded and thoughtful helps you better understand families and help you build more useful and productive relationships.

- Powerful Interactions can make children and families feel heard, appreciated and understood.
Assessment Informs Decisions within Districts and Schools

- Collaborate
- Based dialogue on evidence
- Establish habits of using formative assessment evidence

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Assessment Enhances Professional Conversations
Examining Data

- With a partner, review one piece of documentation (evidence, data, anecdote, work sample).
  - Is it comprehensive?
    - Who, what, where, when, and how
  - Is it factual?
    - What you saw and/or heard (action verbs)
  - Is it rich?
    - Dialogue, questions, scaffolds
  - Are the notes accurately interpreted?
    - Linked to indicators on a formal instrument
    - Do you agree on the interpretations?
Assessment with Dual Language Learners

- It’s vital because it strengthens the relationship with the child so that the teacher knows how to extend learning.

- What might the teacher do?
  - Learn a few key words in each child’s language, you can see how children respond.
  - **Build non-verbal communication skills** (gestures, facial expressions, silly voices, pictures, props).
  - Fine tune observing skills to pick up on the non-verbal signals coming from the child.
  - Slow down and listen to self — doing too much talk? Sshhhh.

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Make Formative Assessment Work!

- Make it a habit.
- Work as a team.

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Let’s Revisit: Using Assessment Not Doing Assessment Means Teachers Are Decision-Makers

- The more assessment is used, the less “hit or miss” decisions will be.
- Basing decisions on knowledge of individual children is the essence of individualizing.
- When decisions are purposeful and intentional, teachers can do an even better job supporting children and families.
Your Turn

- What questions do you have?
Thank you
Stay in touch...

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