

Bay region 4 Analysis
Year One

Analysis and Question
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As I have reflected on the narratives I have written this year, I am struck with how uncertain I am about how much I know about my students and their English language proficiency. Initially, I believed that the equity issues that I wanted to address lay in the structure of the program. For example, there weren't enough English models in the classroom and it was an unnecessary challenge to ask the students to work with a different teacher for English language instruction. However, after putting my narratives together and reading them as one long reflection on my own practice, I realized that a huge gulf existed between myself and my English language learners. I simply don't know what they know.

Over and over again in my narratives I express frustration that my students are not speaking English or that I am only hearing Spanish being spoken. I also have tremendous concern about particular students who seem to be "stuck" (as measured by their IPT score). My assumption is that they are not learning English and that there is something within the structure of the program that is preventing them from being successful. However, as I was rereading my narratives it dawned on me: how do I know that they aren't learning any English? I know that they are not speaking very much English but I have no idea what their listening, reading, or writing skills are like in English. My entire measure of success, and failure, has been based on their oral English capabilities. Furthermore, I was only administering the assessment once a year, at the end of the year. The assessment was not informing my practice and was only giving me limited information about my students. In many ways I might be misinformed by the assessment about my students, assuming that they know less than they actually do.

I began to think about other areas of my practice where I feel in touch with my students and what they know and don't know. I thought about my primary language reading program and how much the students, and parents, are an active part in their learning to read. The students know what they are really good at and they know what they need to work on. They make goals for themselves and we share these goals with their families. I also know what the students need and am able to make changes routinely in my practice to meet the needs of the students. As a result, the students learn to read.

I realized that the biggest difference between my English program and my reading program is the use of standardized routine assessment. I am able to make changes to my reading program on a regular basis because I know what my students know and don't know. Because I am not

reflecting on anything in my English program, I am not making any changes in my practice. I want to begin to make informed decisions about my English language instruction and be more cognizant of what my student's know.

First, I need to investigate English language assessments that assess more than a student's oral language fluency. A large part of my English language program is based on the idea that students are able to transfer skills that they learn in their first language to what they are learning in a second language. We spend a lot of time making and reading small thematic books with English sight words. The IPT does not assess student's reading, writing, and listening skills, even though these skills are being explicitly taught in my English program. Second, I need to collect data more regularly on my student's progress. Currently, the IPT data is only used for placing students in their English class for the following year. I would like to use the data to inform and reflect on my own practice, as well as try and include the students in their English language development. Finally, I hope to make a recommendation to the Melrose staff about standardizing ELD assessment. This would include the ways in which the assessments have impacted my teaching, as well as what supports (release time, etc.) would be needed to do the assessments routinely .

Question: How does routine and systematic English language development assessment impact student achievement and teacher practice?