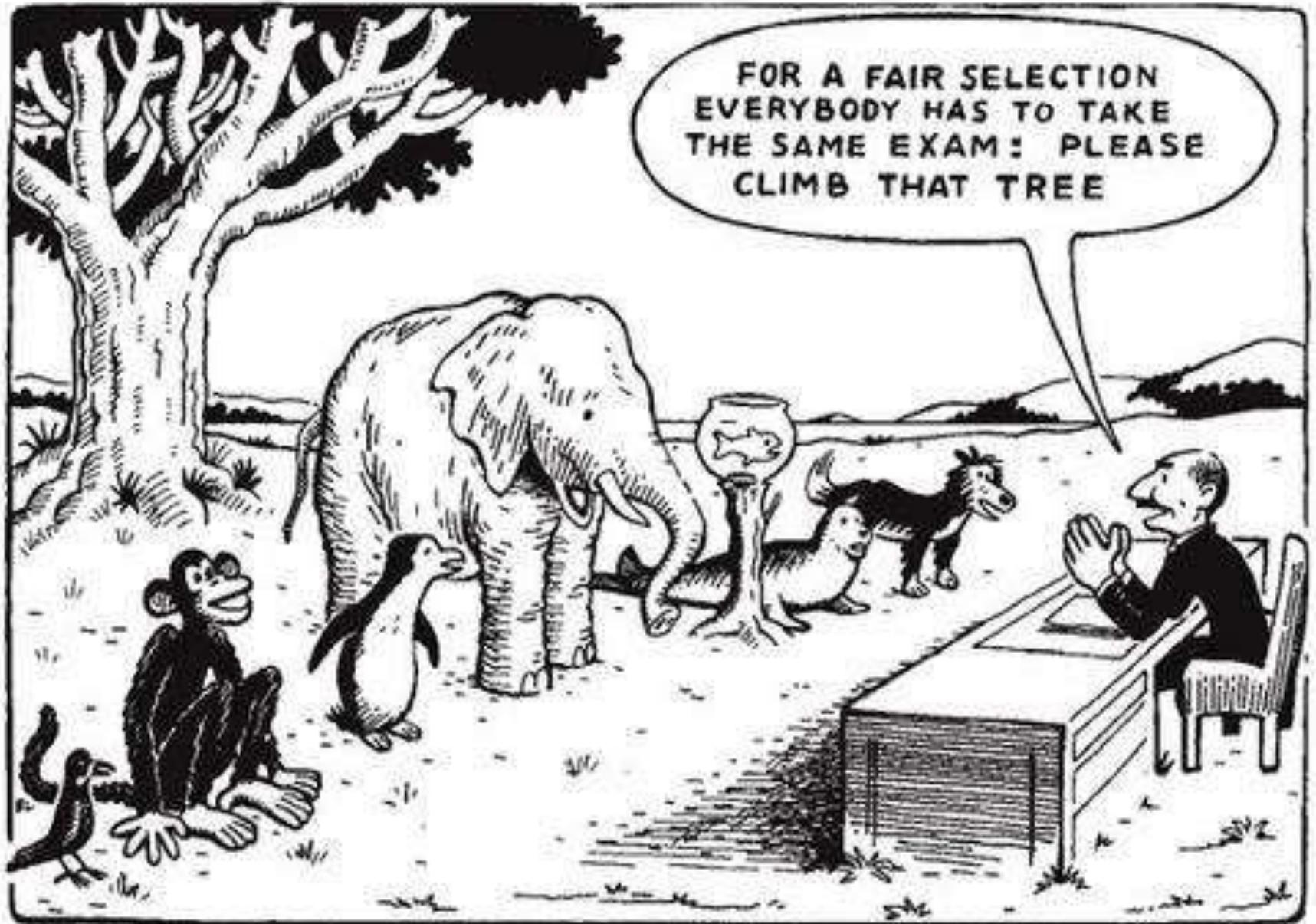


Formative Assessment: *Embracing a broader conception of assessment*

Juliana Harris
Beaufort County Schools



NAESP Competency 4

Support teachers in using multiple forms of assessments, along with **observation**, portfolios and **anecdotal records**, to guide student learning and growth all along the Pre-K-3 continuum.

Embracing a broader conception of assessment

- * In response to demands and expectations that are now becoming outdated, by and large teachers have assessed children by asking questions that have one right answer and conducting tests that focus on isolated skills .
- * These methods give us some information about how children are developing and learning. They are not however sufficient to address all developmental domains, nor do they promote opportunities for teachers to simply step back and watch students .

What is Formative Assessment?



'Formative Assessment is' Partner Activity

- * Take 2-3 minutes to write your definition of formative assessment.
- * Share your definition with your shoulder partner.

North Carolina Formative Assessment

Vision Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H2qCY3sOrUc>

More often, more interactive

- * Formative assessment occurs within the instructional routine rather than as an isolated event apart from instruction .
- * Formative assessment allows teachers to watch, listen, and take notes; and reflect and respond (Jablon et al ., 2007)
.

KEY POINT

- * **Teachers can learn about students throughout the day in a variety of settings**
 - * whole group
 - * small group
 - * centers/stations
 - * pairs
 - * individual



The pendulum is swinging

“For a long time now we have focused on lots of mandated testing. So for teachers to actually now be asked to observe children in their normal run of the mill day... it’s almost like teachers have forgotten how to do that, or they don’t feel comfortable because they’re not sure that there is value in their day to day assessment of children as opposed to a more formalized assessment.”

There is some optimism and enthusiasm

“It’s a really exciting shift in thinking. That the standardized assessments that we’re all used to are not the only piece of evidence we have for our children, and we have other supporting documentation to show growth which is really more helpful than just having that one piece that only tells us a little bit.”

Power of Observation

Observing children as they:

- * interact with peers
- * use tools and materials
- * try new things
- * practice skills
- * solve problems
- * use motor skills

.....provides teachers with a wealth of information .



“I was watching these boys build in the block area and asked them how many stories tall their building was. They looked blankly at me and said “What do you mean stories?” So I had this opportunity to build their vocabulary and then we got into the question of if it’s seven stories now, if you added another story, how many stories would that be?” and this little boy couldn’t figure it out, and he went back and counted again, and then he was like “Oh, eight.” And then finally we had to figure out whether their structure was as tall as they were... Was it taller? Was it shorter? In this one conversation I got to find out so many things about what they knew and what they needed.”



“Early in the year, we spent some time in the classroom looking at books that have a lot of rhythm and rhyme, and this usually quiet girl took what she had learned as we read through books like Chicka Chicka Boom Boom and went home and made her own book and wanted to share it with the class. This gave me the opportunity to value her work from home and to give her a chance to talk. And so although there were no real words written on the pages, she began to tell a story with rhythm and rhyming words, and it went on page after page after page. I thought...Oh, my gosh. She understands rhyming words. She can create them herself on the fly. She understands the concepts of print, the front of the book, and how to turn the pages.”



“I had a student who struggled with finding the motivation to write. He was at the art easel, and in his typical fashion had taken all the paint and just made this big blob on paper, and my first instinct was just to think “Oh, he just made a mess, and he’s not really focused.” But I took the time to ask him to tell me about his painting. He began an elaborate story about a fireball in the sky. We were able to take it to the next step where he wrote about his painting and over time he got his writing where he wanted it, and displayed it with his painting. It happened because I took a moment to listen to him, and had I not, I probably would have just thought “Oh here’s another big scribble painting.”



“I had students who were interested in knowing how large structures were built. They had a notion of how to do it but had to go to some sources that talked about the Great Wall of China and the building of the Golden Gate Bridge. The students had to plan and organize and figure out how to work together over a period of time in order to bring their idea to fruition. They had to persist, measure, count and use concepts of balance and strength in order for their plan to work. They had some problems where their ideas did not work and they had to reflect, evaluate and re-think their plans. They had to be open to the ideas of others.

Teachers need support

“But I keep hoping nobody walks in who assesses me or who evaluates me while I’m doing this.”

Table Talk

Why do you think teachers feel this way when they are providing experiences such as the ones just shared?

Observation and Documentation

- * Being a “careful observer” means planning opportunities so that children can demonstrate skills in a variety of ways while making good decisions about when to move from the role of an observer to a more interactive role of asking questions and listening closely to children’s answers .
- * Being a careful observer also means being organized in note-taking and documentation to keep track of important information and using this information to decide what to plan next for instruction .

Observe with a purpose

What lens are you using?

- * Social-Emotional Development
 - * Interactions, self regulation
- * Cognitive Development
 - * Organizing, planning, skill development
- * Health & Physical Development
 - * Fine and gross motor skills
- * Language Development
 - * Articulation, communication, participation

Improved quality and quantity

“The beauty of anecdotal notes versus the more rigid standardized forms is that you observe two or three kids and assess multiple objectives all at the same time. So what in the past would be “Okay, now I’m going to pull Johnny and now Rosie and whoever and whoever and whoever, and it’s going to take me five minutes for each of them.” In the same amount of time, in a more normal setting using anecdotal notes, you get to see and assess a whole lot more.”

CVC Go Fish



Two more...



For example....

- * In a small or large group setting, children are invited to solve a problem. The problem is related to an instructional unit with familiar vocabulary and content, includes opportunities for children to interact with one another and children are furnished with appropriate materials.
- * The teacher carefully observes and makes notes about the children's problem solving abilities, paying attention to attempts to solve problems

Being Systematic:

Keeping track of how our students are doing

Problem Solving

- A. Considers a problem without attempting to solve it.
- B. Attempts to solve a problem by mimicking others.
- C. Seeks support from others.
- D. Attempts to solve a problem using trial and error.
- E. Attempts to solve a problem using procedures and tools learned in previous experiences.
- F. Solves a problem using procedures and tools learned in previous experiences.

The Playground Map



Where are you now?

Considering the thoughts you have had, talk with your team about where you are in the formative assessment process.