

Comprehensive PreK-3 Assessment: Setting the Stage

Minnesota Leading PreK-3 Learning Communities

Dr. Sharon Ritchie
FirstSchool

NAESP Competency 4

Develop and Ensure a Culture of Collaborative Inquiry

Educators actively construct professional knowledge through treating their schools and classrooms as places for investigation.

- * Support open and collaborative discussions about assessment data.
- * Share information about program effectiveness among educators, schools and other providers.

CI-squared

A culture of collaborative inquiry and a mindset of continuous improvement:

When leaders at all levels support educators' competence and autonomy through relationships built on genuine trust and respect, then fertile ground is created for real change to occur.

How are you doing?

As you think about your strengths and challenges in working effectively with assessment data, and sharing information about program effectiveness, where are you in:

- * Providing structures and regular opportunities for staff to connect?
- * Ensuring that staff know they are viewed as competent and able and/or are supported to become increasingly capable?
- * Ensuring that staff feel they are encouraged and supported in their efforts to test novel practices?

How do we set the stage for optimal assessment?

- * Develop a culture of collaborative inquiry and a mindset of continuous improvement for students
- * Optimize children's ability to be independent and collaborative learners
- * Develop and assess the whole child

Three Universal Needs

- * Relatedness
 - Connect with others
- * Competence
 - Experiencing success
- * Autonomy
 - Possessing agency



Mindset

Components for Students

A teachers job is to instill in each student the belief that:

- * I can succeed at this and will be supported to do so.
- * My ability grows with my effort.
- * I belong in this school community and I am valued
- * The work has value for me.

Zaretta Hammond

Take this seriously

Attention and behavior problems that interfere with students' ability to learn are often related to a diminished capacity for executive function, self-regulation, or metacognition (Kreppner, O'Connor & Rutter, 2001; Vuontela et al ., 2013)

Our job is to TEACH..

- * There is no difference between teaching a child how to count or write a paragraph and teaching them how to focus and attend
- * Most of what we call discipline problems are simply undeveloped, immature executive skills
- * Our job as teachers is to be children's frontal lobe as it develops.

Avenues for Change

Teaching children to:

- * regulate their emotions
- * be flexible
- * persist
- * be a productive and contributing member to their classroom and their school

What are executive functions?

Executive functions are a set of mental processes that support our abilities to manage ourselves (**self-regulation**) and find and use resources in order to achieve a goal.

These mental processes enable us to:

- * plan
- * focus attention
- * remember instructions
- * juggle multiple tasks successfully

Children cannot learn to **self-regulate** when regulated by adults.

Students need to practice self-regulation just like they practice reading, counting, and writing.

- * Offering choices within learning activities
- * Supporting children's autonomy
- * Believing in children's competencies
- * Teaching children how to be productive when working alone and with peers
- * Make practicing fun!

Why does this matter?

As you think about your strengths and challenges in setting the stage to effectively assess children, where are you in:

- * Ensuring children can function independently and collaboratively?
- * Ensuring children see themselves as competent learners, and members of their classroom and school community?

Assess the Whole Child

Given the integrated nature of development and learning across domains, supporting children more adequately in **all domains** promotes increased positive outcomes in student achievement

- * Social-Emotional Development
- * Cognitive Development
- * Language Development
- * Physical Development

Social/Emotional Development

Interactive learning provides opportunities for children to:

- * Recognize and manage emotions
- * Establish positive relationships
- * Make responsible decisions
- * Negotiate and compromise
- * Navigate challenging situations

(Epstein 2009; Sutton-Smith 2007)



Social Emotional Development

...affects development in every other domain

- * Children who develop a positive sense of self are more likely to try new things and work toward reaching goals.
- * Children who experience positive, supportive climates tend to accept new challenges and feel more confident about their ability to handle problems or difficulties.

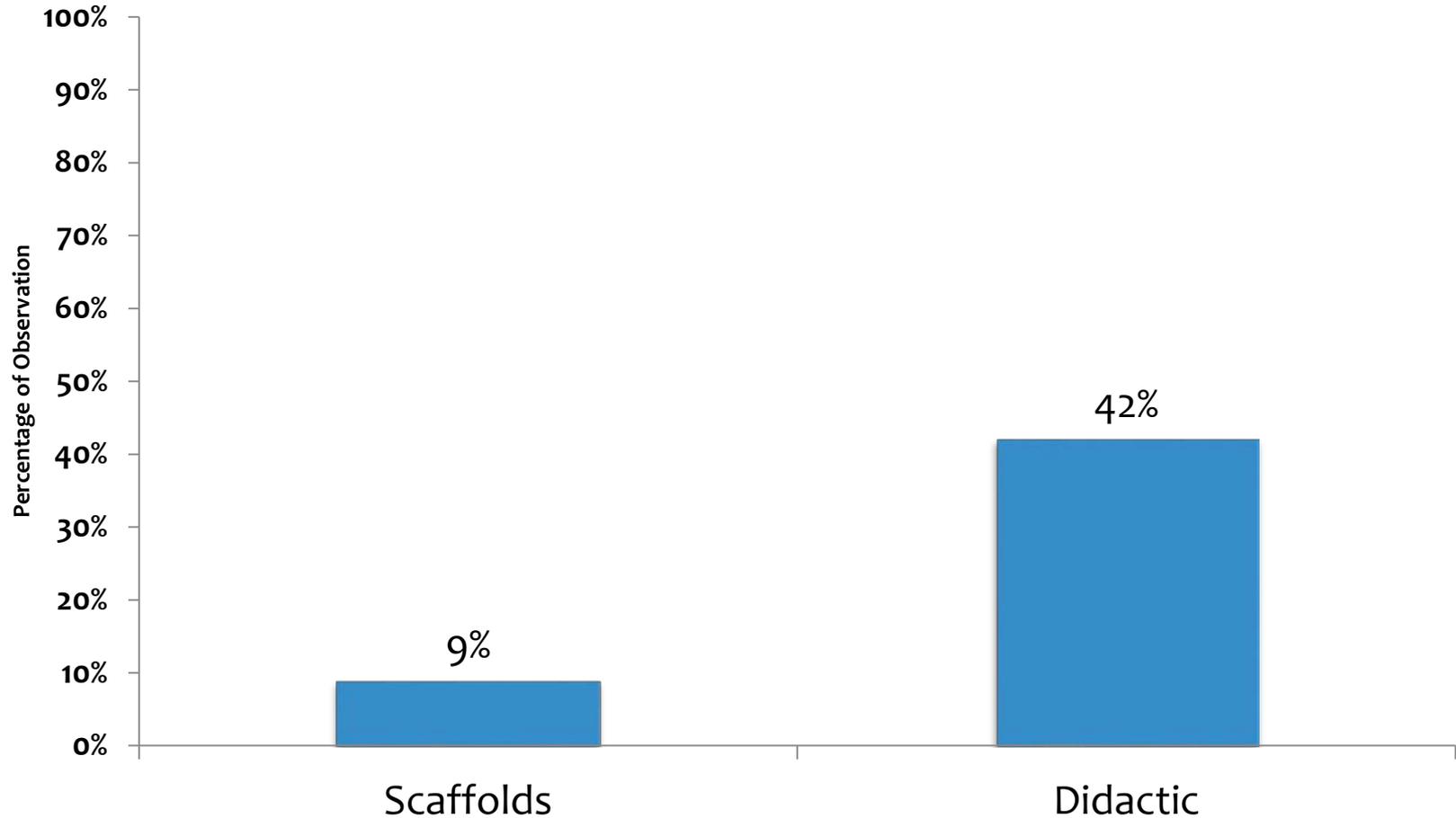


Children develop cognitively....

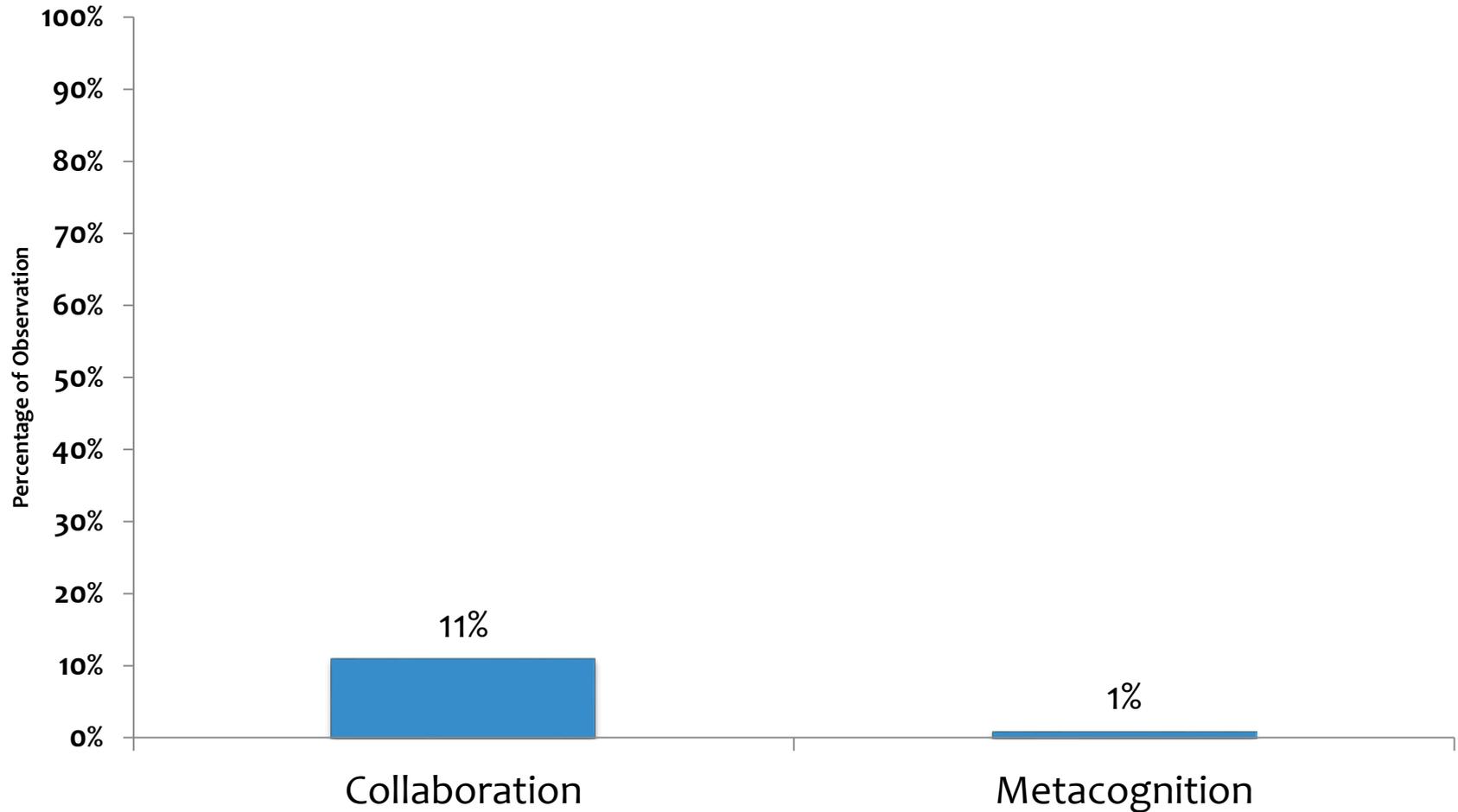
through active **questioning** and information gathering combined with **hands-on experiences** and direct **social interactions**.

This process of active learning and knowledge acquisition occurs during engagement with materials, ideas, and other people. (Chouinard 2007)

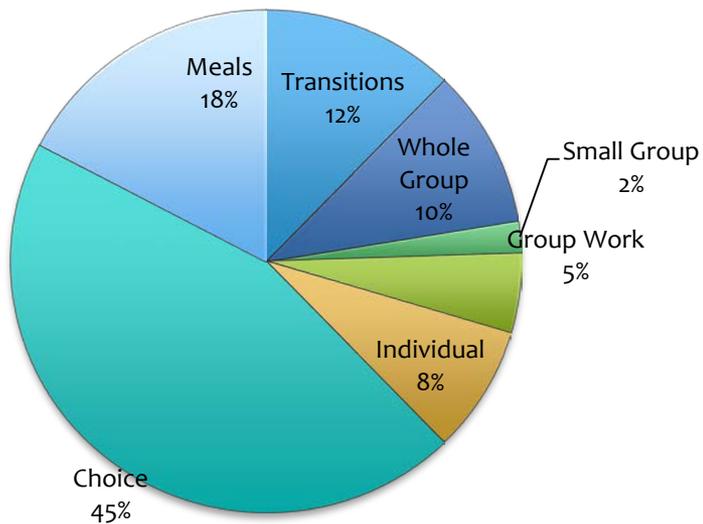
PreK-3 Teaching Approaches



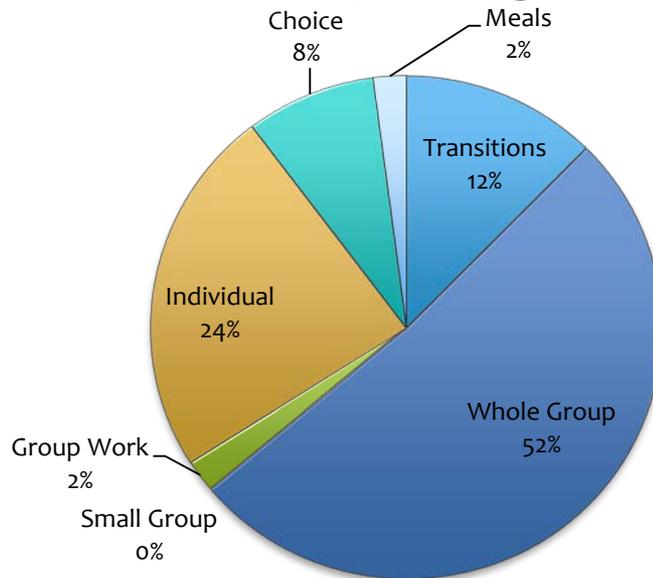
PreK- 3 Student Learning Approaches



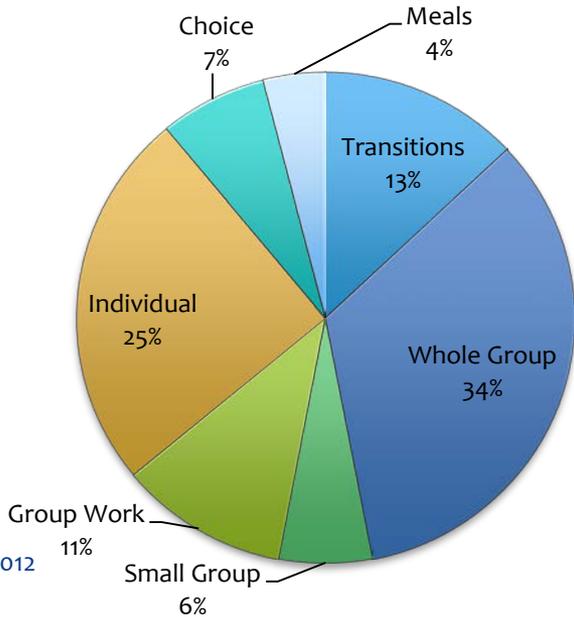
Activity Settings PreK



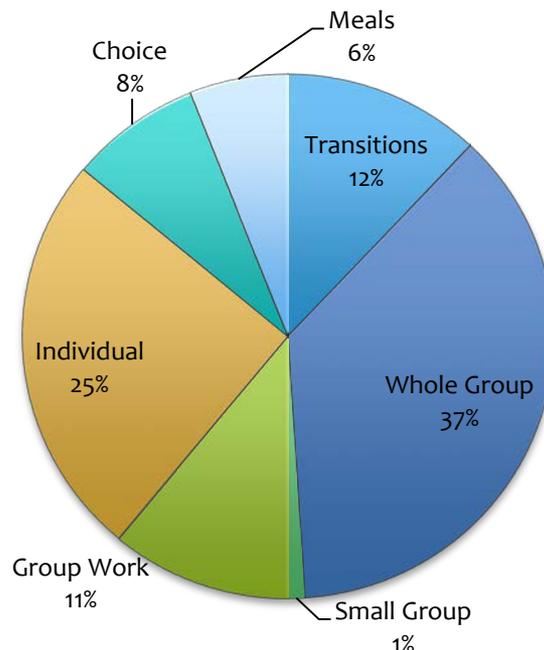
Activity Settings K



Activity Settings-2nd



Activity Settings-3rd



Learning Occurs Through Language

- * Children who are talking are learning.
- * Teachers who are listening are learning.
- * Children with larger vocabularies do better in school.
- * Children acquiring a second language need to talk.
- * Children whose words are valued and respected feel good about themselves



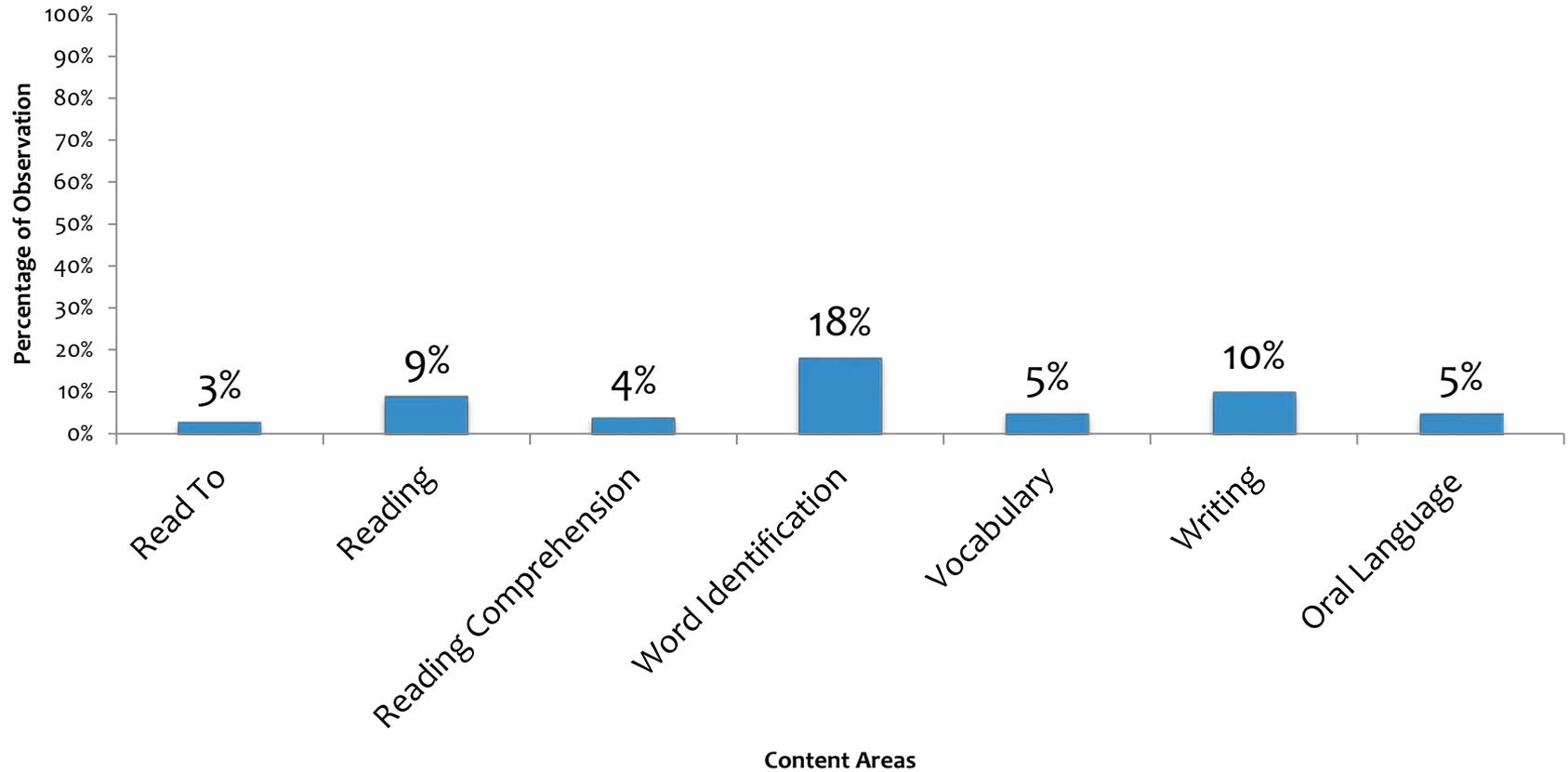
When teachers are talking..children are not

Teachers feel compelled to impart as much knowledge as possible in the limited time frames they are given.

Unfortunately, while the amount of information imparted is greatest when teachers lean heavily on didactic teaching, retention is not.

(Zull, 2002).

PreK-3 Components of Literacy



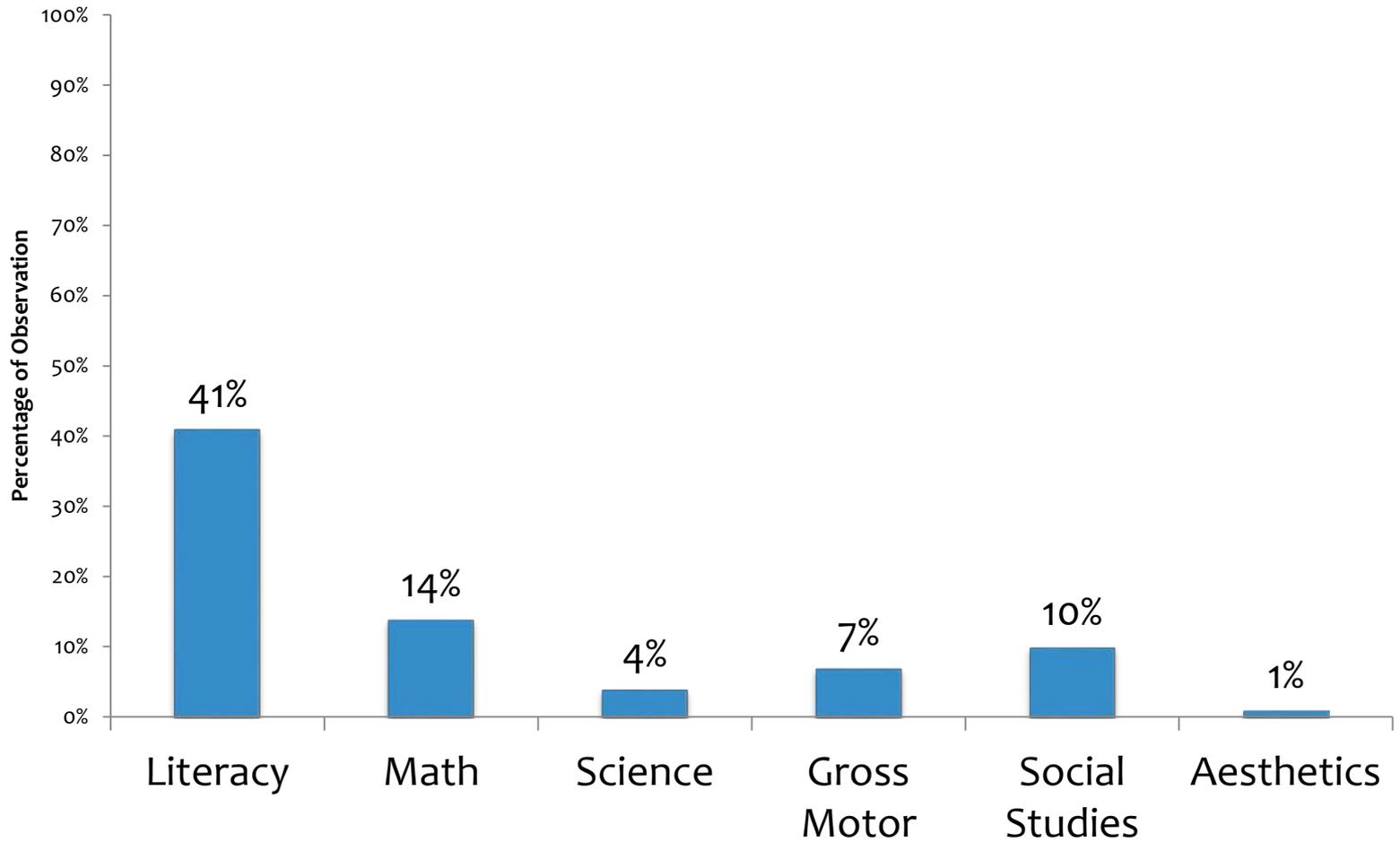
Strength-based Approach

- * African American and Latino students learn more and prefer learning experiences that allow them to **interact with others**. (Dill & Boykin, 2000).
- * African American's **oral-narrative skills** may be a unique area of strength that may promote later success in reading achievement (Gardner-Neblett, Pungello, & Iruka, 2012; Gardner-Neblett, N., & Iruka, I. U. (2015)).
- * African American children's engagement is supported by instruction and activities that are **relevant to their lives** (Cohen et al, 2009).

Fully Developing Our Children

- * Brain research tells us that children need one hour of gross motor activity each day to ensure optimal brain function.
- * Whole child development includes access to a broad and rich curriculum

PreK-3 Content Area Balance

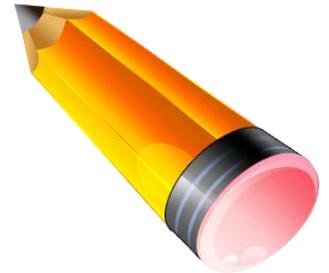


Quick Write

Take a few minutes to jot down your thoughts:

Reflect upon where you are personally and as a school/district/program in believing that:

- hands-on, interactive learning is essential to the development and achievement of young children
- developing self-regulation and executive function should be part of daily curriculum
- when children are talking, they are learning.
- a rich and broad curriculum is essential to optimal growth



NAESP Competency 4

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

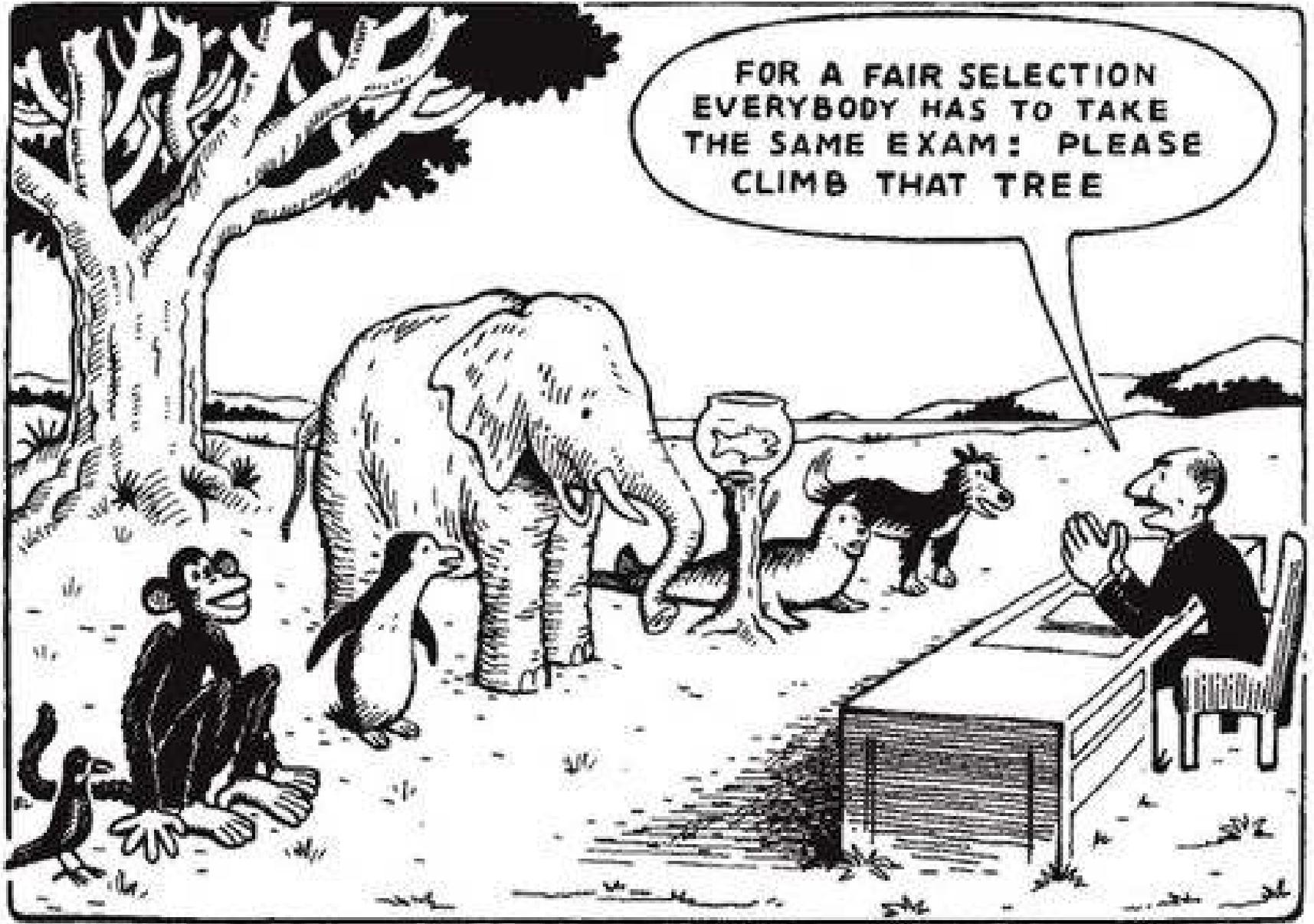
Formative Assessment

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

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 .

FOR A FAIR SELECTION
EVERYBODY HAS TO TAKE
THE SAME EXAM: PLEASE
CLIMB THAT TREE



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) .

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 .

Observation/Interaction

Being a careful observer means:

- * planning opportunities for children to demonstrate skills in a variety of ways
- * 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 thoughts

Observation/Documentation

Being a careful observer means

- * being organized in note-taking and documentation to keep track of important information
- * using this information to decide what to plan next for instruction

Intentionality

How does observation, interaction, and documentation help you assess:

- * Social-Emotional Development
 - * Interactions, self regulation, executive function
- * Cognitive Development
 - * Skill and content acquisition, problem solving
- * Language Development
 - * Articulation, communication, participation
- * Physical Development
 - * Fine and gross motor skills

As a result of our time together..

What is one thing you might
do differently?