

AER GAINS Video Series - Assessment for Learning with Young Learners: Transcripts

Segment 7: Using Success Criteria in a Play- and Inquiry-Based Learning Environment (7:58)

Narrator:

As kindergarten educators transform the way they design instruction to embrace play and inquiry based learning, a similar transformation is happening with how they think about assessment.

T1: So one day I was pulling kids aside one at a time to see how high they could count and then they would get to go back and engage with the math materials and my ECE teaching partner was engaging with those students while I was doing my, my assessment one-on-one so, we had one student who came over and counted till 29 and, and then stopped and actually a lot of them stop at 29, I don't know what it is about 29 that then he went over and was working on a tower and my partner said, oh how many cubes is in your tower and he counted to 52 and I

thought, oh my gosh he can count to 52. And you'd want to think oh that was just one kid who quit at 29 and could have gone farther but that was sort of the beginning of thinking is this assessment working and if we're doing this play based learning, can we get the information from the play instead of separating assessment from the learning.

Narrator:

Young children reveal their understanding in what they say, what they do, and what they depict, or represent. Educators observe, listen, and ask probing questions in order to document and analyse the children's thinking and, with the children, co-construct an understanding of what they are learning and what they have learned.

T1: Catherine and Bristol, thank you for your patience. What were you learning when you did this?

S1: I don't know.

S2: I think we're learning about measuring.

T1: Measuring, and can you tell me what makes it measuring?

S1: ...measuring by trying to see which, which one is the longest, which one of these are the highest or the shortest.

T1: Okay so you were trying to see whether the 3 or the 9 was the highest and was the shortest, and what did you learn when you did that?

S2: The 3 was about the.. little.

T1: 3 was smaller than 9, wow, so I'm going to give that to you and you told me that what you were doing is you were seeing which was the smallest and which was the longest, wow. "I was measuring", can you put it on the board where you think it goes?

Narrator:

In Kindergarten, noticing and naming the learning describes what learning looks like for the educators and the child and provides a picture of the learning taking place. As educators “notice and name” the children’s thinking and learning in conversation with the children, they set the stage for using success criteria in Grades 1-12.

T1: You’re mindful of what the children are expected to learn, and at the same point you’re taking of what they have and they’re bringing in to the classroom and you’re trying to bring those two things together. So by knowing what you’re looking for and watching what they’re giving you, you’re going to offer the experiences, the words for them to know what they’re learning and to know what those next steps would look like.

T2: I think what’s happened is that all of the, the actual instruction and the assessment and the communication with the children and the parents and the celebrations have become so interwoven that it’s hard to know what you’re doing at one time because you’re never doing only one of them. And one of the things that’s interesting, and I think how I see assessment ---this form of assessment sits right especially with such little people because it is interwoven.

T1: With success criteria, when I was first hearing about it, it made sense to me because I was looking at the whole child. I was looking at it from a broad lens and I think that's important to do that with success criteria because children enter, their development is so wide, it has to be developmentally appropriate and at this age, children are growing and developing at different rates so you want to ensure that every child it has success.

So as they're creating something, it's wow, I just saw you just made an AAB pattern or you just made a pattern or you just read a pattern, you extended a pattern, you're labeling that learning for them. And in turn, the more you do that, the more you see that come out of the children so that when you're using your bulletin boards and you have your success criteria posted, the children are starting to use that language, they're starting to come to you with the evidence of their learning. "Oh look, I just made a pattern" and you know they're excited to post that up on the board and that evidence is there.

T2: Success criteria comes from the curriculum document. In order to pinpoint your observations and your assessment, you use the success criteria coming directly from the curriculum, you're creating that success criteria so you know what you're looking for in your documentation and that really helps so your focus on what is happening within, within the room and your documentation can then be collected and you know specifically what you're looking for.

T1: It's not a checklist; children don't learn in a linear fashion, it's not here, here, here and here. By keeping it broad, you can gather evidence--The important thing I think whenever you're, you're posting your success criteria I think as a visual, you're not going to post that in a linear manner. It's not going to, you're posting your success criteria on your boards in a random fashion because children enter it at any point.

T2: You have, you're labeling the learning within the classroom and by labeling the learning, it becomes something naturally that happens in, in, in, in your classroom. You're creating that environment of learners so by constantly labeling what is happening, talking about what is happening, using those bulletin boards in an interactive tool with the children, they start to hear those statements. You are showing them what they're doing, putting a name to it and eventually as they hear that, they're doing that themselves. So the boards themselves are a work-in-process so it doesn't mean that you know, you're visiting it once and then it's forgotten. If you are constantly working with those boards and, and putting up documentation and pictures and evidence of learning with the children, then they are constantly hearing that environment of learners and hearing, hearing the language of success criteria, it naturally flows within the conversation.

T1: The most important thing that an educator can do is take the time to sit down and observe and listen and become involved in the learning that's taking place. The learning is happening all around us, it's a matter of sitting down and observing and watching and then taking the time to ask what's happening. They know what they're doing, it's up to us to listen to them and then we can start taking that and, and tying it into the curriculum and labeling it and talking about the learning that's taking place, you're building their confidence when you start talking about, it makes it more meaningful to them, that's the most important thing you could do.