

Assessment, Articulation, and Accountability 1999



Part Four:
What Have We Learned?

Chapter 9 - What Have We Learned?

The evaluation of the project reveals that teachers have benefited greatly from the project. Teachers reported that they were looking at assessment differently and that they had become much more aware of what they wanted to assess and how they wanted to assess it. They felt that the added tools helped them become more effective in the classroom.

Teachers and Assessment

- Participating teachers were very open to new ways of assessing. They recognized the need to develop assessment tools to reflect classroom focus and activities. They were very receptive to the inclusion of students' self-assessments as being a valuable part of assessment.
- The level of familiarity with alternative assessment was very low and teachers needed ample opportunities to implement alternative assessments in their own classroom. For this reason, the focus of the project was changed to include classroom assessment the first year and to focus on assessment for articulation purposes the second year.
- With the introduction of new alternative assessments, there was a tendency for teachers to limit themselves to the use of checklists and rubrics exclusively. Few teams included portfolios as part of their assessments; however, several teachers reported that they wanted to become more comfortable with rubrics, checklists, learning logs, and authentic assessments prior to moving into student portfolio. As they gained familiarity and confidence with these items, they felt more willing to incorporate them in a student portfolio later on.

Articulation

A member of one team reported "the classroom assessment component was much easier to control and share. The articulation component was much more difficult to achieve because it includes some factors beyond our control."

- The team configuration changed drastically, with some members moving out of a school system and not being replaced on the team. This made the task of articulation much more difficult if not unfeasible in some cases.

- Teachers were able to develop useful assessments when there was strong leadership (either through the coordinator or through an individual teacher) within a team. Project coordinators exercised varying degrees leadership role in assuring that team members had an opportunity to meet and to work together to discuss transition from one level to another.
- The degree of teacher involvement in the project varied. This may have been partly due to the fact that not all schools were in feeder patterns and therefore some teachers may not have felt affected directly by what was being developed.

Administrative Support

When engaging in a K-12 project, strong administrative support at the local level is crucial to maintain the program and to provide teachers opportunities to meet regularly. Even when the foreign language coordinator does not have a foreign language background, there are many steps he/she can take to support teachers in their endeavor to better their program. When facing the issue of articulation, teachers from different levels and different schools need to come together to discuss concerns and possible solutions. A coordinator can do any of the following:

- He/she can support initiatives designed to improv
- He/she can facilitate the scheduling of meetings.
- He/she can impress on his/her teachers the need to attend and participate in the meetings.
- He/she can contact principals and/or teachers as needed.
- He/she can plan release time and arrange for substitutes for the teachers.
- He/she can prepare renewal credit to award to those who attend the various local meetings.