

Goal: I will learn and apply new Formative, Summative and Inquiry based assessment strategies to help my students better understand drug use resistance in our substance abuse unit. As a result I will assess how well my students understand refusal skills and how well they are able to apply refusal skills. This will allow me to modify my curriculum to better meet their learning needs. Based on indicator 3.4 Selecting appropriate assessment strategies to monitor ongoing student progress;

Initial Summary: Halfway through the school year I was asked to fill in as the school's health educator for the remainder of the year. Due to the fact that the classes meet for approximately 5 weeks and then switch, I have been able to teach the drug and alcohol unit once before. The first time I taught the unit I used many of the same materials that the other health teacher in the school was using. The second time I teach this unit I would like to incorporate many new assessments and bring in some new perspectives on the drug and alcohol unit.

I began this module by sitting down with my mentor and examining the Common Core of Teaching: foundation skills. We examined domain 3, Planning for Active Learning, indicator 4: "Selecting appropriate assessment strategies to monitor ongoing student progress." As we discussed the indicator, I decided I would focus on incorporating new assessment strategies into my classes. Adding these new strategies will allow me to evaluate their learning and enable me to modify my planning/teaching to their needs.

During the next meeting with my mentor, he mentioned we should examine the curriculum for the school's health program. As we looked through the document it seemed that my teaching was very close to the curriculum. He then challenged me to come up with some new assessment strategies that would stay in line with the curriculum but challenge students to demonstrate their learning in new ways.

After we discussed what I am really trying to assess in class it became clear that if I was going to assess the drug and alcohol part of our unit, the ultimate assessment of how well the students learned in my class would be whether or not they were able to use communication/refusal skills taught in my class to refuse drug and alcohol offered to them. After looking at the curriculum I decided to focus on the essential question, "How do decisions one makes affect physical, mental, and social health? I then wanted to use the principal of backwards design. Seeing as my goal is to incorporate new assessment strategies, I wanted students to work on becoming more "aware of self" and how it can affect total health. We will then tie total health into making good lifestyle choices including saying no to drugs and alcohol, in addition to diet, exercise and sleep.

As I sat down to examine what resources I would use for this module, I decided I would like to observe assessment strategies used by my mentor and other teachers in my school. I also wanted to use new assessment strategies from a school health book that I had entitled, Health Education, Elementary and Middle School Applications, by Susan K. Telljohann. I selected this book because it gives a multitude of activities and assessment strategies directly related to the curriculum I was teaching.

I began to examine my current teaching and assessments and how well they correlate to our curriculum. My mentor and I decided I should try to incorporate at least one new formative, summative and inquiry based assessment into my planning. These additional assessments will provide a much better evaluation of student performance. In addition, using more than just an end of the unit test, will provide students with different opportunities to demonstrate understanding.

For my formative assessment I knew right away what I wanted to do. As I was reading through the Health Education book I had selected as a resource, I came across an assessment entitled, "exit slips". The idea was to have each student turn in a small assignment on their way out of class as a way to check students understanding at the end of a lesson. I decided I will try to incorporate this strategy into one class and I chose to do this during my class on refusal skills. My plan would be to give students a situation where they would be able to use refusal skills. An example might be, "Your friend Joe has offered you a cigarette. You do not want to accept it but you want to keep him as a friend. How could you say no to Joe, and still keep him as a friend?" I will explain that my expectation is for each student to write down a few sentences of possible dialogue, they could use to say no and keep their friend. I will then have them hand their work to me on their way out of class as a ticket or "slip" to be able to leave the room. After I collect the "slips" I will be able to assess how well students are able to express refusal in a simulated situation. I liked this activity so much because it will allow me to assess my students on a day to day basis. This will allow me to adjust my teaching if necessary.

For a summative assessment, I had used a test last time I taught the unit and it was made to assess the student's basic knowledge of drug and alcohol use/abuse. When I was thinking about my summative assessment, I decided I still wanted to assess my classes' knowledge on the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol, but I didn't feel that was enough this time. I decided to sit down with my mentor and we discussed using the principle of "backwards design" in my planning. He told me that I should incorporate my goal into my summative assessment. We discussed some life skills I teach the class such as refusal skills, communication and safety. So we looked at the health curriculum and noticed a great objective. The objective was, by grade 8, students will be able to: demonstrate strategies to manage conflict in healthy ways. My mentor and I came up with two great questions I could add to the test. The first was a fill-in-the-blank checklist. The second was an essay relating to refusal skills. It is important that I discuss this objective with students prior to our unit, so they know what I want them to learn by the end.

For the checklist we decided a major issue many teens face is what to do when someone passes out from using a drug or the excessive use of alcohol. Considering that my goal centered on refusal skills, we decided that life skills correlate perfectly. It's important to teach students how to say no to drugs and alcohol, but what if they find themselves in a situation where a friend didn't know how to "say no". So I asked the other health teacher in the school for some help. She told me that she had already created a checklist. The checklist had four steps for students to use if they find a friend passed out from abusing a drug or drinking too much. Looking back, I'm glad that I asked my colleague because the checklist she gave me could help someone save their friend's life. I decided I would incorporate it in my summative assessment. I didn't feel as if I should throw away the first test I made completely, but I feel that adding in this question would be a positive addition to my summative assessment. Due to the fact that my goal was on refusal skills, I decided I needed a question on the test related to the topic. So I decided I would give an essay question similar to the formal assessment I will use with the exit slip. I will ask the students to provide multiple ways they could communicate, "Saying No and Keeping Your Friends". I think these additions to the test I will give at the end of our unit will be a great decision. Knowing my goal ahead of time was pivotal in designing my unit.

My mentor and I then discussed ways for students to demonstrate learning relating to refusal skills. As we discussed what ways we could incorporate an inquiry based assessment relating to refusal skills, I was perplexed. I knew I was going to have the students demonstrate their understanding of refusal skills on the exit slip and on their test. My mentor then asked me to tell him what I teach the students about self esteem. I told him that the core concept was that people who feel good about themselves and have a high-regard for who they are as a person, generally make better decisions. It then occurred to me that I could develop a student centered activity in which students express how the decisions they made relating to diet, exercise and sleep, affect how they feel.

I decided I would make the students a grid consisting of questions they could answer quickly everyday for two weeks. My goal was to compare how their habits could be effected by their schedule. For instance, the two week grid began on Monday during the week of April vacation. It ended on the Sunday two weeks later. I designed the questions for the grid to take no longer than 2-4 minutes per day. Questions I created were based on some topics we had previously discussed such as: What time did you go to bed last night? How many hours of sleep did you get? Based on what you've learned, did you eat/snack healthy? How long were you involved in organized physical activities? How much free time did you spend being physically active? How much time did you spend on Stationary activities?

As part of the activity I need a way to put the students in more control of their learning. As part of my planning resources I decided I would seek assessments other classroom teacher's use in their instruction. After speaking with some

classroom teachers I found Mr. S's English assessment was the closest inquiry based assessment to what I was trying to create. In his English classes he created many different types of assignments. He allowed his students to choose a "path". The paths were based on interests and abilities. For instance a student, who excelled in music, could choose to do writing activities related to music lyrics. Someone who excelled in art, could draw pictures and write about what they chose to draw. Mr. S. did put rules in place so that the students needed to relate their work to the material they were studying. Also, each student could choose what grade they would work for. So for instance, completing 3 assignments would be a C, 5 would be a B, and 7 would be an A. This allowed each student to be in control of their grade. After speaking with Mr. S., I liked this activity so much that I decided I would incorporate some of these elements in my assessment. Using his design, I could create a very similar model to help me achieve my goal.

I decided I like the idea of integrating different subject areas into the assessment. My decision on how the assessment is planned as following: students will complete their grid over two week period. After they complete their grid, they will compare their exercise, diet, and sleep habits over break versus a regular school week. The grid will not be graded, but will be used to help them create a project. I will explain that each student will be able to express the differences they saw between the two weeks in any way they want. I will explain that they will be able to create anything such as an essay, a powerpoint presentation, draw a picture, create a movie on their computer, write a song or part of a song, or anything else they could imagine. The assessment will have two rules. The first will be they need their idea approved by myself before they begin. The second will be they need to write a paragraph explaining how their creation compares "how they felt" on vacation versus a regular week of school. Students will also express in their work or write about how they could use the information they learned from their grid to stick to healthier habits. As part of the explanation for this assignment I created some samples of what a completed assignment could look like. I created a graph comparing sleep, diet and exercise habits of vacation to a regular school week. I also created a PowerPoint presentation with pictures expressing how I might have felt. Then for each I wrote a short description of what I was trying to express. In the end I decided that I would only give this assignment three out of my five classes. Due to it being the first time I tried this type of activity, I decided to count this assessment as extra credit. In the future this assignment will be a significant grade.

In this inquiry based assessment I wanted students to become more aware of their sleep, diet and exercise habits during a vacation week compared to a regular school week. My hope is that students will come to conclusions such as, "I only got one more hour of sleep per day over vacation, but I felt so much better throughout the day. As a result of what I've learned, I would like to try and get to bed a half hour or hour earlier every night so I can feel better throughout the day and do a better job in school." This assessment was intended for students to learn more about how their choices can change weekly, and how changes in their habits can have an effect on how they feel. The ultimate goal is as we value our health and who we are as

people, it should help us make the best possible choice, and in the end, help us, “Say No To Negative Influences”. This assessment in addition to the discussions that tie it in with refusal skills, will tie in with my original goal of understanding refusal skills.

Through the resources I selected, I’ve learned a lot about planning, especially planning assessments. The book I chose to use had so many great assessment ideas including the “exit slip” assessment which I will incorporate into my planning. The best resource I found was the staff in my school. In talking with the other health teacher in the school, I learned that she has great information and was happy to share it. Perhaps if we share our ideas we could work together to help each other and create an even better experience for our students. Also, talking to other teachers in the school was helpful. I found teachers who were working on similar projects as I was. Trading information such as the inquiry based assessment Mr. S. shared with me was a great way to learn new assessments. Learning about some of the things they did that didn’t work out well was a great help in avoiding some pitfalls.

I know that my decision to incorporate new formative assessments into every day class, in addition to adding new topics to my summative assessment, will greatly enhance student learning. The “exit slips” will provide me with a great way to assess my students on a daily basis. The new questions on the test will be the best way for me to achieve my original goal, which was to assess how well my students understand refusal skills and how well they can apply them. I am most excited, though, about the inquiry based assessment I created. I know it might not work out perfectly the first time I try it but I am prepared to make changes as they are needed. I am glad students will be able to demonstrate learning in unique ways that they enjoy working on. Our class discussions after they complete their work will tie in the unit nicely.

Some aspects that I am anticipating might not work are: I asked students to complete homework every day over a vacation. Although it will only take them 2-4 minutes, it might be difficult for some students to remember, especially if they are traveling. Next time, I might try and compare weekends to weekdays. Also, making the assignment extra credit might make some students reluctant to complete it to the best of their abilities. When I assign this assessment a second time, I will definitely make it a graded assignment.

Overall I am hopeful that students will enjoy choosing their own way to express what they have learned about themselves. I know this will help students learn more about themselves and it will be a great step towards helping improve their refusal skills, which was my original goal. This experience has also made me more aware of the benefits of really good planning and how they can drastically improve learning. I used so many great resources that I never realized were so close. In the future I will continue to apply the same concepts I learned in this experience such as differentiated instruction, integrated teaching, and backwards design. My goal for this assignment and for the future is to see the students demonstrate the goal we

talked about initially in their work. When I see that students demonstrate their understanding, it's makes their success so much greater. This experience has also motivated me to speak to my mentor and other teachers in the school to see if there are any other new ideas other teachers are trying in hopes that I can use some of them in my classes to ultimately make the best possible learning experience for my students.