

At the beginning of the school year, all teachers met and agreed that our impending Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's) should address literacy and math skills. We reviewed preschool standards and selected story retelling and counting. I then met with another colleague and we compared the language used for each standard, first from Teaching Strategies Gold (TSGOLD), the assessment tool used at our school, then from the language used in the preliminary version of the new CT Early Learning and Development Standards (CTELDS). We found that the indicators were very closely aligned. Using these resources we created the wording for each SLO, including indicators. We then presented our draft to all teachers at a teacher meeting. As a team we discussed, edited and ultimately agreed upon a final version.

I then requested that a small group of teachers join me in creating a rubric for each objective, so that we would ensure uniformity in our assessment throughout our building. All teachers agreed that a rubric was necessary and 3 of my coworkers joined that committee.

When the rubric committee met I expressed my vision of a developmentally appropriate rubric, using benchmark wording to express each child's progress in the objective. We agreed upon; **Not Yet, Emerging, Proficient and Mastered**. We then looked at the indicators of each objective from both TSGOLD and CTELDS and chose specific skills that each student will demonstrate under each level. Finally we aligned the rubric with TSGOLD numerical rating.

In our meeting we agreed that the next step would be to present our draft at the next teacher meeting, discuss our rationale and open the meeting for conversation, edits and ultimately approval of these tools to accurately and uniformly assess our students. There was also discussion regarding promoting the same SLO's for next year so that we have more than one year of data to accurately assess impact on student learning.

I have also met with our Education Coordinator to learn about the types of reports that she can generate regarding data input to TSGOLD specific to our SLO's. Together we watched the tutorial video for the Performance and Growth Report, which can be generated both by classroom and school wide. This report can be broken down to individual children as well as organizing children into groups. The report displays a blue line which is the age specific "widely held expectation" for the specific objective. This expectation rises as the

year progresses, it then displays where children have been assessed in relation to the expectation, above, on or below for each assessment period and what percentage of growth has been achieved. This snapshot report will be a quick reference and resource for administration and teachers.

SLO 1- Understanding of Stories, target level of performance is 80% of students transitioning to kindergarten will retell a familiar story with prompting and support. This should include some story elements such as setting, characters and/or events.

Approach will be to have each classroom equipped with specific books that will be read no less than 5 times before children are asked to retell the story. If the child gives a loose retell with the book as support he/she will achieve an emerging level. If the child can retell the story with some specific story elements using the book as support he/she will be considered proficient. If the child can retell the story with specific story elements without the book, he/she will have mastered the skill.

We agreed to consult with our Literacy Coach to help us compile a small list of appropriate books. Our thought is the books should be aligned with the season and general units that are taught in our classrooms, for example; *Pumpkin, Pumpkin* for the fall, *The Snowy Day* or *The Gingerbread Man* for the winter and *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* for the spring.

SLO 2- Counting and Cardinality, target level of performance is 80% of students transitioning to kindergarten will count up to 10 objects using 1-1 correspondence, regardless of configuration.

The approach for this skill happens consistently in our classrooms throughout the day in both natural and intentional settings. The child who counts to 10 but requires teacher hand over hand support for 1-1 correspondence will receive an emerging level of progress. The child who scores proficiently will demonstrate accurate counting and 1-1 correspondence of objects in a line. The child will be considered to have mastered the skill if they count 10 objects in a group with 1-1 correspondence.

For both SLO's the children that achieve either proficient or mastery level will be considered to have met the established target level of performance for the SLO.

After our meeting I went to our Literacy Coach and briefed her on our progress. I told her what books we had considered and asked her if she felt they would be appropriate to meet our needs and if there were others that we could add to our list. She said they were all good sequential books. That comment elicited a conversation that we had in our committee meeting regarding the absence of that word in both indicators of this objective. I explained it specifically says characters, setting and major events. She told me about cards that she found online and used as prompts for the *Windy Day* which she had done in another classroom. She agreed to do some research and get back to me.

I did a google search of elements of a story, and found that all sites agreed there are 5 elements to a story; **character** which tells the who, **plot** tells the what, **setting** tells the where and when, **conflict** provides what the problem is and **theme** answers the why. Armed with this knowledge I question if *Pumpkin, Pumpkin* is a good choice.

I presented our progress at the next teacher meeting. The feedback was positive, but there was a discussion debating the value of having specific books, as opposed to types of books. The point made was that if a child is not engaged in the book the teacher has chosen then they may not be invested and therefore a retell may be difficult. It may be that a truer assessment of children will come from a book they have chosen to retell. As earlier specified they must be familiar with the book. It should have only a few characters, and a plot or conflict the children can identify. Books such as *The Three Little Pigs* and *Three Billy Goats Gruff* were suggested. Ultimately it was decided that we would put together a list of books that we felt were appropriate and our Education Coordinator said she would make sure that all classrooms had a complete set. It was agreed that mastery level of a story retell was identifying characters, some events of the story and the setting without the book.

We then addressed the math SLO which there were fewer questions about. We clarified what we would consider emergent behavior and what the teacher's role was in support of those children.

There was a question as to the setting of the assessments, would they be done 1 on 1 or in group, again it was agreed that a natural setting is always best, however that would depend on each classroom dynamic. One teacher commented that she liked to see the behavior in more than one area, which coincides with the goal of three data points for each standard.

It was further agreed that we would meet again after the third round of assessments were complete to discuss the effectiveness of our plan and to make changes or fine tuning before the start of next school year.

I instituted the reading plan in my classroom in many different ways. Every Monday I ask my students what they did when they were not in school. As they told their story I identified the people as characters, established the setting, reiterated the events and identified them as such. Understanding that making connections to their own experiences is best practice for children to learn, I felt that this would help my students to identify elements in a story.

I chose to read *The Three Little Pigs*, as the familiar story. I read it to my students multiple times over a period of two weeks. At the first reading I asked who they thought the characters were by the title and illustration. As I read I stopped and asked questions, pointed out if their predictions were correct or asked them to predict what might happen next. I assisted them by labeling their responses as characters, events and setting. Prior to each other reading I asked who the characters in this story are and what were some of the events.

As the close of the third marking period approached I assessed my students on the elements of the story. I showed them the cover of the book and asked who the characters in this story are. In the version I read the last pig played three different tricks on the wolf, I asked each student what happened in the story.

Six of my students were able to retell the story elements without turning any pages of the book. Many of my students were able to identify the three pigs by which type of house they built and the wolf. If they didn't include the wolf I asked if there were any other characters. With that prompt all students identified the wolf. Six of the students used the book to assist their retell. All of my students were able to retell at least one of the events in the story.

I compared these results to the first assessment period. At that time two of my students retold a story without the use of the book, four of my students used the book and three of my students were not able to identify the elements of the story.

For the math objective, I intentionally had my students counting objects and people in many different configurations. If they counted

correctly I pointed out their strategy for others to see. I differentiated my instruction by also pointing out that they could reconfigure whatever they were counting by putting them in a line.

For the assessment of this objective I put ten counting bears in a canister. I asked each child individually to shake it up, pour it out and count the bears. I watched as four of my twelve students successfully counted the objects where they laid, two attempted to count them in the array but did not have the correct number. I then asked them if they were sure and how they could check, they both put them in a line and recounted. The remaining six students immediately put them in a line and counted accurately.

This compares to the first assessment period where four of my students counted ten objects accurately in a line, three counted five objects accurately in a line and the remaining four students needed hand over hand assistance.

At our final meeting we discussed as a school what the impact of the uniform goals were on both our teaching and our student's learning. For myself I feel that I now have a more concrete path to follow and an observable and measurable behavior to assess. These tools will help my future teaching be more informed and make me a more reliable assessor. This is demonstrated by the positive impact of my student's learning as evidenced by the progress shown over the course of this school year. I have gained much insight from my colleagues and I hope that this experience has opened the door for more collaboration in our building.

After this year each teacher will be able to inform families of our goals, with specific information regarding our SLO's. This year our school instituted Literacy Nights where parents came to learn about the importance of reading to their children, conducted by our Literacy Coach. I will discuss with her whether or not she includes talking about some of the story elements such as characters, setting and events. Of course we don't want to drill our students; our goal is to build a bridge between home and school, which can only be accomplished through communication. As a Head Start teacher we meet with every family before school starts, this provides us with an opportunity to share information and strategies to fun learning, such as counting steps, or Cheerios, asking specific questions and engaging

their children in rich conversations. All a means to an end, a well-rounded child eager and a family invested in their learning.