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March 9, 2015

Reflection on Artifact 2:

Ted Talk on the future of FSA/Standardized Testing in the New BC Education plan

EDTE 613 Learning Intention: *I can demonstrate that I understand there are multiple external factors that impinge on classroom assessment practices, including parental beliefs, ministry and district policies and societal expectations (connects with TRB standard 5).*

In my Ted Talk, I examined the BC government's motives behind standardized tests such as Foundational Skills Assessment (FSA). I also looked at the position of the BC Teachers Federation and studied relevant research on how standardized testing affects teaching and learning. Parental beliefs, district policies and societal expectations also connect with this topic as the results of standardized testing within a district or school can affect the amount of external pressure that teachers will receive to increase tests scores, from parents and administrators. This pressure to increase tests scores is directly linked to the fact that the results are made public and the schools are ranked by the Fraser Institute, who publishes the results yearly in the newspapers. This school ranking is highly publicized in the media every year even though there are a lot of factors that influence the results of these tests that are well beyond the control of teachers.

The FSA are only one amongst all the factors that impinge on classroom assessment practices. For example, the format of report cards (such as the district's decisions to use letter grades or to choose portfolio assessment) greatly affects the type of assessment practices that a teacher will integrate in her/his teaching. In the same way, the use of innovative assessment practices must be accompanied by parental education to allow for a better understanding of the reasons behind the teacher's choice. I understand that most parents are used to letter grades and they want to know where their children stand in comparison to their peers, or at least against a set standard of performance.

I believe that novel tools such as e-portfolios - supported by comprehensive formative descriptive feedback of students' work and progress, as well as frequent communication with

parents - offer a great alternative to the traditional report card. However, I understand that I will have to use a traditional report card system, along with grades, if this is the policy of the school district that I work in. In the same way, I will need to integrate standardized testing in my classroom assessment practices as long as it is mandated by the district and provincial authorities.