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Coaching for better literacy assessment

Coaching in literacy for practicing teachers has been researched and utilised for many years. However, initial teacher preparation programs have seldom had time or resources to enable literacy specialists to provide coaching to future teachers in classroom placements. Meaningful assessment is also a problem for teachers who are unsure about how to conduct it in the current standardised test culture. Children and teachers need to be able to use flexible and informal assessments to identify individually appropriate instructional strategies and levels of reading across the school curriculum. This presentation describes a coaching assessment process; the changes that were made to the process over time; and an examination of the findings from a study of teacher candidates in special education and secondary education (6-12) preparation programs, who have participated in coaching sessions using informal literacy assessment. Data will be presented from a follow-up survey that was conducted over a two year period, including comments from participants. While this particular approach is very time intensive for the instructor, the results of the study indicate the value of the event for increasing pedagogical and professional knowledge.