



# Assessment within the Classroom Microsystem

Courtney Lambeth

Robin Guill Liles

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# Ecological Perspective

- Bronfenbrenner (1979) forwarded the notion that development occurs in **context**.
- In recent years, Bronfenbrenner has expanded upon this notion to include the concepts of **proximal processes, person characteristics, and time effects**.
- Of interest, is the notion of context and the proximal processes occurring therein.

# A little more...

- **Context**
  - “Systems nested within systems”
  - Differentiated layers of environmental influences, ranging from over-arching contextual influences called macrosystems (e.g., social class) to more immediate influences found in microsystems (e.g., family classroom)

# Still more...

- **Proximal Processes**
  - The concept of proximal process is central to ecological theory.
  - Proximal processes are interactions occurring between a developing individual and the “persons, objects, and symbols” which his or her “immediate environment.” Proximal processes are the “engines of development.”
  - Bronfenbrenner, 1995, p. 620.

# Still more...

- **Person Characteristics**
  - **Individuals bring important personal characteristics to their developmental activities.**
  - **Force Characteristics**
    - Behavioral in nature and can be developmentally-institigative or -disruptive
  - **Resource Characteristics**
    - “constitute biopsychological liabilities and assets that influence the capacity of the organism to engage effectively in proximal processes”
  - **Demand Characteristics**
    - Largely biological and fixed

# Last word...

- Time
  - Bronfenbrenner posited that the effects of time – or the chronosystem – could be examined in two ways:
    - The study of development relative to a particular historical setting
    - The study of development by gathering data across at least two points in time, preferably through an ecological transition.

# So what does all of this talk about ecology have to do with assessment?

- Traditional assessment models
- Alternative assessment models
- Both models have strengths and weaknesses.
- Both models occur in the classroom – or microsystem – where teachers and students – from varying over-arching macrosystems – possessing varying person characteristics – interacting in close proximity – over time – are focused upon student learning.

# Traditional Assessment Model

- Testing →
- High-stakes testing →
- Accountability →
- *Educational reform!*
  
- *Formative assessment*
- *Summative assessment*

# Alternative Assessment Model

- Originates in the classroom
  - Teachers (and students) are empowered to develop and implement assessment strategies.
- Constructivist in theory
  - Ecological influences impact learning.
- Learning measured both qualitatively and quantitatively
  - Mixed methods assessment designs allows for meticulous and on-going assessment.

# Rationale for Assessment

- The purpose of assessment is articulated in the form of a question.
  - *Are students learning the content?*
  - *Is this teaching strategy effective?*
- Evidenced based education
  - Science Practitioner Model

# Assessment Techniques

- Specific strategies should be organized from a developmental point of view.
  - Ex: **Insight Cards**
- Multiple modalities for assessing teaching effectiveness and student learning
- Interactive/experiential components processed in group for learning value
- Implementing strategies where people are observing what they're doing while they're doing it

# Assessment Bias

- Hawthorne Effect
- Halo Effect
- Instrumentation
- Lack of clarity with student learning outcomes
- Student learning outcomes links to content area and standards of accreditation

# Interactive Activity

- Break up into groups