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Teacher Interview

For my classroom teacher interview I interviewed Mrs. Cook, a third grade teacher at Manchester Elementary School. Mrs Cook has been teaching for eight years. Preschool, Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd are the grade levels Mrs. Cook has taught. Throughout her eight years as a school teacher, she has the pleasure to experience state tests and different types of assessment. How does she feel and what are her involvements with these assessments and tests?

Being a teacher, we take on many roles in the classroom. What is Mrs. Cook's role in the reading process? Her job is to facilitate the students learning by providing the students with skills they need to comprehend what they are reading. This procedure will also provide them with a good role model of what a reader looks like and does. I say, "easier said than done."

There are many forms of assessment used to interpret students' skills. "The two best forms of assessment I like are Running Records and the NWEA," said Mrs. Cook. She believes the NWEA is a great assessment because it gives a breakdown of areas the children are low in. Running Records, in her opinion, are also a great tool of assessment because a teacher gets to hear the children read and can mark where they are low. "It is more difficult to do Running Records at 3rd grade because of the speed the children (some of them anyway) read," said Mrs. Cook.

While being in Mrs. Cook's class I was able to observe some of the reading portion of the NWEA being taken. For the most part, I agree with Mrs. Cook and I like that form of assessment as well. The whole test is taken on computer. That way the students do not have to

worry about paper, pencils breaking or being dull, or filling in little bubbles completely. The best part is that the test results can be printed as soon as the student is done taking the test.

The ISTEP is another form of assessment that goes along with the NWEA. Mrs. Cook has mixed feelings about the ISTEP. She does not really care for the ISTEP and thinks the NWEA is ok. "I like the NWEA better because we do it 3 times a year and can easily compare the results," said Mrs. Cook.

How are a student's reading level, strengths, and weaknesses assessed at Manchester Elementary? Assessing a student's reading level is not an easy task. Each assessment focuses on different things. Reading levels are assessed mainly by using the NWEA and STAR tests. "Both are great tools." When it comes to the students' strengths and weaknesses, observations, anecdotal notes, and running records are the best tool Mrs. Cook uses.

After these assessments are given what is done with the data collected? Mrs. Cook takes the scores and puts them in order from highest to lowest. First, the scores are compared to the average students at their level are supposed to be in. Second, Mrs. Cook compares the scores to last years or the test score from a previous test. This way she can see where her students are and what subjects or topics need to be focused on more. Mrs. Cook can also look to see if the child has improved at all.

Whether you are a first year teacher or have been teaching for few years, there always seems to be issues or mixed feelings about reading assessments. There are many to choose from but some seem more useful than others such as the NWEA and/or Running Records. No matter how time consuming these tests maybe, they all do the job with interpreting what students excel at and what they need help with. This information can make a teacher's job easier and/or more

stressful.