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Title:

Using Reflection to Change Teachers' Assessment Practice

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Abstract of Paper

This paper will describe the use of reflection and reflective dialogue in a graduate level course for teachers on performance-based assessment (PBA). As the teachers proceeded through the course, they had to confront and explain their individual beliefs about teaching and learning in relation to the development of a PBA project. Results showed that the process of self-evaluation using reflection was critical to both the concrete aspects of PBA and to implications for schools, teachers, and students. The diversity of in-service teachers, including a cohort in Guam, indicates that the findings would be applicable to teachers in many different settings.

The wide variety of students' cultural backgrounds, experiences, knowledge, and beliefs offers every classroom a great richness to be shared. Yet many teachers, either not knowing or perhaps not caring, daily ignore this wealth in their classrooms. Teachers who say that they care about their students too often show in their attitudes and their actions that they care only about certain aspects of their students, not the whole person that makes up the unique individual. Thus, this presentation proposes to help teachers understand their own cultural backgrounds and provide means by which they can help their students better understand their cultural backgrounds. Hopefully, this will lead to collaborative research efforts which can be conducted in a variety of settings across the United States to determine what the "cultural environment" is in our public schools.