



Ethics, Assessment, P1 & Teachers

Sue Ellis
University of Strathclyde



Phonically regular text – learning to think only in the moment, as right/wrong

Bob is a bug

Bob bug has a mum

His mum is big

Bob has a dad

His dad is fit

Bob has a cup

His cup has a lid

Bob has a cot

His cot has a rug

Mum! Dad! A big bad rat.

Bob bug has a hug



Different habit: thinking across the text

It was Kipper's birthday

Kipper wanted a party

Everyone wanted to come

Biff put up balloons

Mum made a cake

Dad took a sandwich [PICTURE]

'Stop it!' said mum

Everyone came to the party

Dad wanted to play a game

But Kipper put the television on

Oh No! said mum [PICTURE]

What a mess.

The children played with the bubbles

What a good party everyone said.



Ethics 1: Literacy as social practice

- Literacy and numeracy – all learning– is shaped by families and communities
- For many children from low literacy backgrounds, school is their main literacy experience
- So what do we teach? Is reading about pleasure & relaxation or worksheets & getting it right? Does it define & grade, or create friendships & laughter?
- Schools can make assumptions
- Schools can skew the focus

Ethics 2: SNSA data are just numbers; we give them value & meaning

So what value and meaning do we bestow?

Assumptions of Predictive capacity:

- The percentage of children whose test score at 6-7yrs roughly predicts their score at 10-11 yrs?
- The percentage whose 10-11yr score roughly predicts their 13-14yrs score?
- The percentage whose score at 13-14yrs predicts their results aged 15-16?

The ethics of differentiation

- Pupil progress is not a straight line

- Age 6-7 to 10-11yrs : **55%**

Most unpredictable for lowest-scoring pupils

- Age 10-11 to 13-14: **45%**

- 13-14 to 15-16: **33%**

- Across all 4 tests: **9%**

(Becky Allen: Education Datalab)

Predictive capacity

This may indicate

- poorly aligned tests **OR**
 - that learning is not a linear and constant trajectory – that there are plateaus and sudden rises. Whether a child is assessed on a plateau or just after a rise is complete chance. ***It is just a helpful snapshot.***
 - Predictive capacity of SNSA is an empirical question – we need 12 consecutive yrs of data to answer it.
- Until then, do not harm. So rethink current policies on:**
- Setting, streaming, grouping
 - Traditional differentiation may limit & constrain, not support & grow

What would happen if ...

We stopped talk of 'able' or 'less able' children, and spoke of 'experienced' and 'inexperienced' instead?

How would it re-position our response about the kinds of experiences children need?