



Ania Mitros <ania.mitros@gmail.com>

process vs outcome

Ania Mitros <ania.mitros@gmail.com>

Thu, Dec 15, 2016 at 8:30 PM

To: Dominic Liechti <dominic@khanlabschool.org>, Erica Cosgrove <erica@khanlabschool.org>

Cc: Seth LaForge <sethtml@ofb.net>

Hi Dominic and Erica,

Since our meeting, I've been thinking more on Dominic's question about why parents need to see the process and not simply the outcome. It's an interesting and deep question, I would say after some reflection. I've come to three thoughts on why both, and not just the outcome, are important.

My first idea is an observation from KLS itself. Why does KLS do shadow days instead of asking students to take the MAP test or an admissions exam? I suppose your staff believe that they need to see the child's process, not just a snapshot of their present performance, for a good assessment. I suspect they couldn't even fully verbalize everything they look for, and that's part of why it's hard to replace a shadow day with a test. I suspect Orly and Erica might have a more complete description than I of why process, and not just outcome, matter in childhood education.

My second idea stems from my definition of the role of a parent. My job is to make sure my kids are loved, fed enough, fed healthily, have a safe home, feel secure, develop social skills, have access to friends, understand societal expectations, gain academic skills, etc. etc. My job is somewhat like project management: Some tasks I do myself and others I delegate to others. For example, contractors renovated our home so it would be safe and comfortable, and some of the food Moby eats is cooked by others, and much of Moby's academic learning happens at school, and Moby gets some of his exercise at a gym class, and while I tell Moby that I love him I also tell him that his dad and siblings and grandparents love him. As long as I know what's provided by others and what's lacking, I can figure out how to fill in the missing gaps either by myself or by delegating. But when I don't know what's being provided, it's hard for me to know which gaps to fill. If I don't see how my son interacts with peers at school, it's hard for me to know whether I should try harder to invite friends on weekends. If I only infrequently see the products of my son's school learning, it's harder for me to have a dialogue with him about his daily life, and thus to maintain a close parent-child bond. If I don't know how much time/effort he spends on handwriting vs reading vs math vs science vs art, I can't supplement to reflect my family's personal values on emphasis in education.

My third thought is that it is specifics and not generalizations that speak to people. Kat's powerful description of an IL2 student correctly using the newly learned phrase "negative space" was powerful because it was specific and direct. [Khan Lab School's vision](#) is: "Designing student-centered global learning experiences, accessible to the world." (I read through your new web page, Dominic, as you suggested!) Because a key part of the school's vision is to share the new learning approach, I believe KLS inherently must find a way to expose some of the process, both to parents who will spread the word locally and to other educators who will spread the approach more broadly. Related, I've learned a lot from my kids' day care teachers and I'm a better parent because of it. Effective parents who understand how to support their children's learning will be more powerful ambassadors for your school than parents who believe in the outcomes but have no concrete direct observations.

Thank you for the conversation.

Ania