Sarah Harper

Elaine Adams

Chapter 10

November 21, 2013

Elaine Adams was a student teacher at Roosevelt Elementary School. Her cooperating teacher was Mrs. Lorraine Green in a third grade class. Elaine thought very highly of Mrs. Green, and enjoyed working with her as she was trying to complete her student teaching. Elaine was to step aside from her student teaching role for the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, or ITBS. District guidelines strictly stated that the classroom teacher had to be in charge of administering the tests. In cooperation with this, Elaine was to observe and help the students to follow along on the right page to the directions of the assessment.

 Mrs. Green had begun the standardized tests. The directions were given to the class as a whole and Elaine and Mrs. Green walked around the room to make sure the students were on track. As Elaine was doing this, she noticed Mrs. Green was also whispering to the students. In between sections of the test Elaine confronted Mrs. Green, asking her why she was talking to the students. Mrs. Green, without reluctance, told her that she was helping the students break down the words into syllables for easier understanding, or hinting to the correct answers. Not too long after this incident, students began raising their hands with questions on the next section of the test. Mrs. Green aloud told them to try and figure it out on their own while also providing an example to the students of what the problem word meant. As this was not aloud by the test guidelines, Mrs. Green still encouraged Elaine to do the same if the children needed help.

 Elaine later took a break with other teachers and questioned how they handled the classroom during testing. The other teachers did not do as Mrs. Green did when the students needed help with the questions on the test. The other teachers also said, that as hard as it was to ignore the students that needed help, they had to. The other teachers also believe that if they would have helped the students, it would cause inaccuracy in the test scores and less argument for future changes to the test.

 According to Chapter 10, “…The poor performance of American students on international test scores has led to headlines announcing, America’s Students Fall Further Behind,” (p326). Teachers are thrown into the spotlight for their job performance and their lack of ability to teach, when this very well may not be the case. Tests could be testing inaccurately to the curriculum that is needing to be covered in the school year. Mrs. Green’s motives were accurate to her beliefs but I still agree with the other teachers. I believe it is wrong to go against the rules that the District Guidelines clearly state. While I may not agree with the tests content, and it may be incorrect in its scale of score to intelligence by the way it was presented to the students, it is important to be honest and follow the rules. I do believe that Mrs. Green was cheating to acquire better test scores for her students. I do not think that Elaine should have went along with Mrs. Green. Elaine should have reported what she had done.

 According to Chapter 10, “If students perform poorly in one or more areas of these standardized tests, the government or public pressure pushes school officials to strengthen the curriculum in these weak spots,”(p.321). The amount of pressure and stress that is put on teachers is extreme. They are held accountable for the child’s performance at all costs without the realization that other factors could be playing a huge part in the results or scores of these tests. They are given such a high standard of expectations to uphold in the classroom with little support. While this may true in many cases, I still believe that a teachers should uphold the morals that most try to teach. They should be honest, for if they cheat to achieve higher scores they could never argue the ridiculousness of the questions asked on the tests.

In all, it would be extremely difficult to approach a colleague or mentor that I so strongly respect and that has taught me so much about the profession that I am pursuing with an issue such as the one that was presented in this case study. I would only hope that I would have enough confidence to make a morally conscious decision to do the right thing. I would want to perform the state test as they were supposed to be administered, and I would hope that the relationship that had been formed between my coordinating teacher and I could remain under these circumstances.