

Unit Item: Assessments

Operating Concepts and Principles:

- Formative and summative assessments have distinct purposes and distinct roles to play in instructional decision-making and in assessing students.
- Good assessment informs the teacher, the students and the parents.
- Assessment is never an intrusion; it is not something that happens to the student.
- Your assessment protocols should be used *for* learning, *as* learning as well as *of* learning.
- Always focus on strengthening the alignment of content, instruction and assessment.
- Analyzing the vast amount of data which is provided by assessments should improve classroom instruction and improve learning outcomes for all students.
- Time for data dialogues can be sacred. (Thomas, 2011)

Examples (Do's and Don'ts):

Do

- Begin with the end in mind.
- Allow good assessment to guide your instruction.
- Use higher order thinking questions and processes.

Don't

- Use prepared end-of-unit tests as your only source of assessment ideas.
- Select a commercially-made test and teach to it. That test was not made for your students.
- Administer a test and neglect to give feedback.

Design Tips:

- Start with the intended learning and imagine the ways in which the students can demonstrate their grasp of that learning,
- Your variety of instructional strategies should assist every student in his/her fulfillment of the learning goal to the best of his/her ability.
- The more significant the learning, the more varied and integrated the assessment possibilities become.
- Create assessments that are based on the higher order thinking skills.
- Create questions that encourage students to probe deeper into a text and/or issue.
- Use the Common Core Instructional Shifts as a guide for both teaching and assessing.

Criteria for Success:

- Student learning is improving.
- The classroom environment is inquiry-based.

Additional Resources:

- The works of W. James Popham on formative assessment.
- www.engageNY.org
- "Truths about Data Analysis" by Ronald Thomas in *Education Week* (6/15/2011)
- *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools* (2012)