

Unit Standards Differentiation 2017-18

Overview

- There are 5-6 units per school year in both English Language Arts (ELA) and Math in grades 1-6. Kindergarten has 4 units for each.
- Each of these units is assessed via a Pre-Test and a Post-Test
- Teacher instruction and student work during the course of each unit is aimed at helping students acquire mastery of the Illinois Learning Standards for that particular unit

Differentiation

- Differentiation is a teaching strategy that involves providing the appropriate levels of challenge and support for students based on their needs
- There are many ways teachers differentiate. The focus of this presentation is the differentiation of learning tasks based on students' performance on the Pre-Test and subsequent unit work

The Flowchart

- Please see the separate attachment entitled, “Unit Differentiation Flowchart 2017-18”, which serves as a guide for teachers to provide the appropriate support and challenge to students through the course of the unit work.
- Subsequent slides will explain each element of the flowchart in greater detail, and provide some philosophy and context with respect to this work.

Four Levels

- There are four levels of achievement on our unit assessments:

Beginning

Developing

Proficient

Extending (on Post-Test)

Important Questions

- 1) What do we do to help students who scored Beginning or Developing on the Pre-Test?
- 2) What do we do to challenge students who scored Proficient on the Pre-Test?
- 3) How do we measure growth of students who are already proficient on the Pre-Test--how do we know we have extended their thinking?

Answer to Question 1

- In many cases, students will score Beginning or Developing simply due to the fact that they have not yet been taught the concepts and standards being assessed. For many students, the regular daily instruction of the teacher will help them gain mastery of the given standards.
- For some, a “Scaffolded” activity may help them break the concept down into more manageable pieces to enhance understanding.

What is a Scaffolded Activity?

- For students who did not master a given question/standard on the pre-test, these scaffolded activities are intended to break the question down into more manageable and understandable pieces. The goal of these activities would be to prepare the student for success on that particular question/standard on the post-test. The post-test question would be comparable in rigor to the pre-test question. Students will be assigned scaffolded activities based on individual need. As mentioned in the previous slide, sometimes students score lower on the pre-test merely because they have not been exposed to the content. Therefore, scoring Beginning or Developing on the pre-test does not automatically require a scaffolded activity.

- Language you may have noticed on such an assignment:

You will be successful! Your Pre-Test showed that you need to work on Standard _____ . This Scaffolded Activity will allow you break down the concept and help you gain a solid understanding so that you will achieve your learning goals on the Post-Test.

Answer to Question 2

- For students who are already proficient on certain standards on the Pre-Test, additional challenge is required to extend their thinking. Students in this category will be assigned an Enrichment Activity
- Students who do not qualify for the Enrichment Activity may still attempt it if desired, based on teacher discretion or student/parent request. Parent assistance may be required for students who are struggling to complete the Enrichment Activity.

What is an Enrichment Activity?

- A rigorous task or project that is related to a certain question/standard on the pre-test. This activity is intended to challenge students by requiring a more sophisticated application of the standard. These types of activities would be completed between the pre-test and post-test for a given unit. Students may work on these projects at home, but classtime will typically be given for their completion. Time allocated for completion of these tasks will be at the teachers' discretion.

- Language you may have noticed on such an assignment:

Nice work! You have demonstrated success on Standard _____! This Enrichment Activity will allow you to challenge yourself, apply your thinking, use creativity, and deepen your understanding of this concept.

Answer to Question 3

- In order to measure growth for students who already demonstrate proficiency on certain standards on the Pre-Test, the corresponding question or task on the Post-Test must be more rigorous than on the Pre-Test. Students who are ready for this more rigorous task will be assigned a Post-Test Extension Task on the Post-Test.

What is a Post-Test Extension Task?

- For students who demonstrated mastery on a given question on the pre-test, and who showed success on any associated Enrichment Activity, a more rigorous question or task will be given on the post-test. The post-test extension task will require a more sophisticated understanding and/or application of the standard than the corresponding question on the pre-test. Successful completion of this post-test extension task would demonstrate that a student is secure in their understanding of this standard.

Language students may have noticed on their Post-Tests:

The post-test questions you are assigned are based on your pre-test results and your work during the unit. In some cases, you may be required to complete a more rigorous extension task to demonstrate your mastery of the standard. For testing purposes, you are only responsible for the questions that your teacher has assigned you.

Consistency of Language

- The language that you or your children may have noticed this year is consistent across all grade levels, and will be re-taught to the students at the beginning of next year.
- Placing these explanations on assignments this year was as much to inform the parents as it was to explain to the students. Beginning next year, with these explanations formally introduced to you and taught to the students, the explanatory language will not be placed on the assignments themselves in the interest of space.

Key Take-Aways from Flowchart

- Goal is to provide enrichment and support based on students' abilities, effort, and current levels of performance; NOT to limit students' opportunities based on their pre-test.
- Even if a student is not assigned the more challenging Enrichment Activity, students may attempt it, possibly with parent assistance

Commitment for 2017-18

- For each English Language Arts (ELA) unit in 2017-18, teachers will develop or refine Scaffolded Activities, Enrichment Activities, and Post-Test Extension Tasks for TWO Learning ***Standards***. These activities may take the form of separate activities for each standard, or one, more complex, assignment that addresses two of the standards. This may vary from unit to unit.
- For Math, teachers will work collaboratively with administration and specialist teachers to explore and align pre-existing resources to unit standards for the purpose of presenting scaffolded or enrichment math problems to students.

Additional Questions

- On Curriculum Night, I will be hosting a 30 minute explanation of this process and any other building-wide initiatives that you should be aware of. You will also be able to ask questions during this presentation. This will be in advance of the usual introduction of the teachers and opening remarks. I will advertise this as we communicate the details of Curriculum Night next fall.