



The mission of GISD is to ensure that every student achieves maximum potential.

GISD Curriculum News

rigor/engagement/higher-order thinking

From the Desk of Keri Thoele,
GISD Asst. Superintendent

Understanding the Difference Between Assessment and Accountability

Research shows that effective teachers assess their students constantly, but when we hear that word, we often mistakenly assume that means yet another test.

Assessment should be used for learning, but the use of assessment for accountability – both in the classroom and by the state – has become a perversion. Effective teachers understand that formative assessment occurs often, is on-going, serves to monitor and adjust instruction, and is offered in a safe learning environment where it is understood that misunderstandings and wrong answers are part of the learning process.

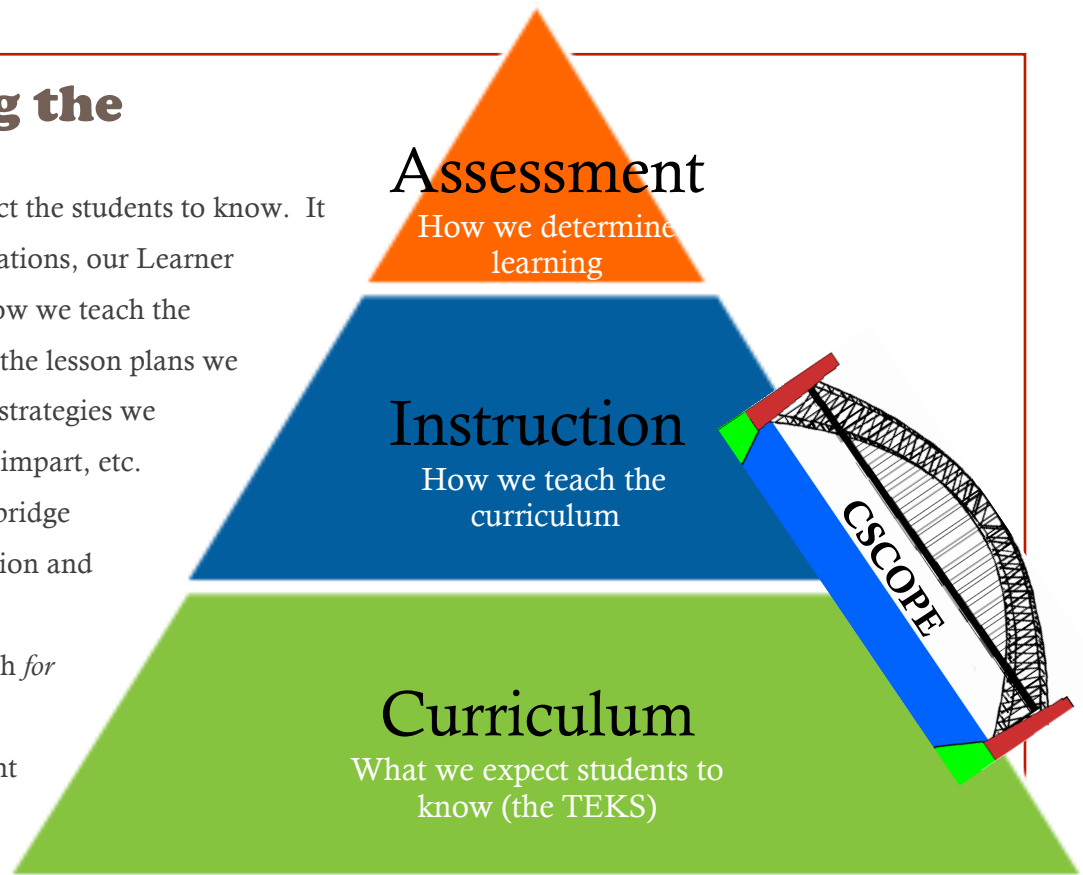


**Strategy
of the Week:**

**Commit
&
Toss**

Understanding the Language

Our curriculum is what we expect the students to know. It is our TEKS, our student expectations, our Learner Objectives. The instruction is how we teach the students. The materials we use, the lesson plans we write, the activities we plan, the strategies we incorporate, the information we impart, etc. CSCOPE documents serve as a bridge between curriculum and instruction and guide and aide the teacher in the planning process. We assess both *for* learning and *of* learning. While some define formative assessment as simply midpoints in the process, effective teachers view it as a tool to adjust instruction or intervene on behalf of students. For this purpose, formative assessment is not graded in the traditional sense.



Assessment = How we evaluate student learning

- Formative – “*for* learning”
 - Ongoing in classroom
 - Monitor and adjust student learning
 - Safe environment for wrong answers and mistakes
 - Guided or “safe” practice (no “grade book” accountability)
 - Frequent
- Summative – “*of* learning”
 - Final evaluation of learning
 - Homework or independent practice
 - Grade book or other accountability
 - Tests, including CSCOPE Unit Assessments and STAAR (EOC)

<http://www.amle.org/publications/webexclusive/assessment/tabid/1120/default.aspx>

Commit & Toss

This simple, but effective and fun formative assessment activity is an anonymous way to get a quick read on the different ideas students have in the class. The teacher poses a question and the students write their answers on pieces of plain paper. Then they wad up the papers into balls, and for a designated amount of time, toss the balls across the room, pick up more, and continue to toss. When the teachers says, “stop,” the students report out their “caught” answers. Because no one knows who provided the answer, students feel free to express their real ideas without worrying if they are wrong or without being embarrassed.