

QUESTION 02

HOW DO WE KNOW IF STUDENTS ARE LEARNING?

Question One asks what we want our students to know, understand, and be able to do. Equally important is Question Two: How are we going to know that students know something?

What evidence are we going to accept from a student that demonstrates they've met proficiency on the learning objective?

This speaks to how we are going to assess a student's proficiency. Are we going to assess it in a written document? Are we going to assess it through a project? Are we going to assess it through oral communication? What means will students use to demonstrate mastery or proficiency?

We also must define levels of proficiency. We need to understand as learning communities what it means to get a certain score when it comes to a particular skill. What does it mean to get a three or a six or a seven when it comes to demonstrating understanding of a mathematical or literary concept?

Teachers need to have clarity as to what proficiency means in each of the learning targets. Because we have a team of teachers working with students in a given grade level or subject area, we need to have consistency and unified understanding.

When we establish clarity and consistency, students have more ability to own their assessments. When students understand the learning objective and the way they are going to be assessed, they're going to do better. This improves their ability to recognize why they received a certain score and what they need to do to improve. Students can more purposefully progress toward mastery of whatever it is that they are intending to learn.