

Principals frequently ask for ways to help teachers match their curriculum with common assessments. The Keep, Drop and Create (KDC) activity is easy to use, helps pace and align the curriculum, and creates a stop doing list. Focusing on one subject at a time, teachers can easily complete the analysis in an hour-long meeting.

At least once a grading period, teachers bring their lesson plan book and a copy of the essential curriculum to a meeting of their peers. Three pieces of butcher paper are posted on the wall of the meeting room. Each is labeled as one of the three categories; Keep, Drop or Create. Each teacher is given sticky notes in three colors – yellow for Keep, pink for Drop, and green for Create. Meeting by grade level or in departmental teams, teachers begin the process of collaboratively analyzing and reflecting on their instruction.

Aligning the Curriculum and Common Assessments

Using the agreed-upon curriculum document and their lesson plan books as guides, teachers use the “Keep, Drop and Create” process to align their curriculum with their common assessments.

Keep

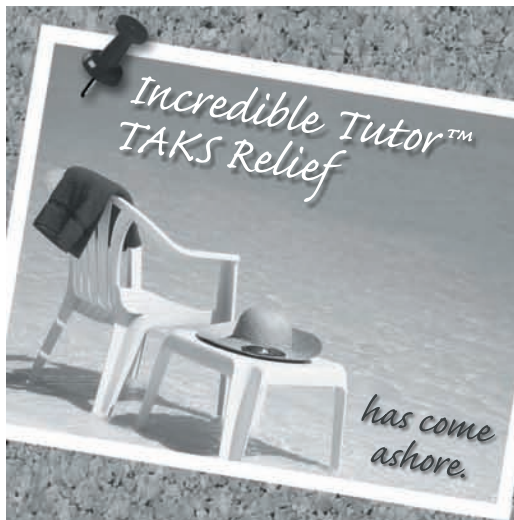
*In the curriculum and
in the plan book*

Drop

*In the plan book, but
not in the curriculum*

Create

*In the curriculum, but
not in the plan book*



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...the formative feedback generated by the KDC activity helps teachers focus their planning, pace their instruction, and coordinate the essential curriculum with the intended curriculum.

Using their plan books as the record of what was taught (the intended curriculum) and copies of the essential curriculum (the prescribed curriculum) the teachers compare one subject at a time and begin the process of categorizing what they taught during the last grading period into one of the Keep, Drop or Create categories.

Topics reflected as part of the essential curriculum *and* included in the teachers' lesson plan books are written on the yellow sticky notes and placed under the Keep column. Topics reflected as part of the essential curriculum but *not* included in the teachers' lesson plan books—either because they haven't been taught yet or were skipped—are captured on green sticky notes and then placed under the Create column. Finally, those topics included in a teacher's lesson plan book but *not* reflected as part of the essential curriculum are noted on pink sticky notes and posted underneath the Drop category.

As each topic is identified, noted on a sticky note, and captured on the butcher paper, a list of topics for each grading period emerges. Teachers check the topics captured underneath the Keep and Create categories and match those topics with four to five corresponding questions on the most recent common assessment.

All teachers have favorite units that may not be reflected in the essential curriculum. Regular use of the KDC activity helps identify non-essential curriculum—those topics listed on the Drop page—and helps create a “stop doing list” of topics. Topics captured on the Drop page are not included on the common assessments.

In addition to creating a framework for the development of common assessments, the formative feedback generated by the KDC activity helps teachers focus their planning, pace their instruction, and coordinate the essential curriculum with the intended curriculum.

Dr. Thomas W. Many is Superintendent of Schools in Kildeer Countryside School District 96 in Buffalo Grove, Illinois, which has developed a reputation as one of the highest achieving/lowest spending school districts in Illinois. A highly-rated Academy speaker, he has worked with schools in the U.S. and Canada on creating learning communities with special insights into developing a culture that supports learning communities, the importance of the principal's role in sustaining that culture, and specific strategies for creating high performing, collaborative teams.

Additional Resource

Richard Dufour, Rebecca Dufour, Robert Eaker and Thomas Many. (2006). *Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work*. Solution Tree: Bloomington, IN.

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