

## Principally Speaking Testing and the Knowing-Doing "Gap"

WooHoo! Spring is here!

As winter ends, and the year turns the corner and heads "down the stretch," we enter, perhaps, the busiest of times. For our seniors in the Class of '19 - who always couldn't wait for it all to be over - the end will approach so quickly that they will really "never want it to end!" Make it a great finish to your ALHS careers!

For everyone else, we enter "testing season." In addition to our in-class unit tests, we now take 7 OST's (Ohio State Tests), required for graduation, and, all Juniors (11th grade) take a state-required college entrance exam (SAT) annually (March 6th), and our AP exams the first two full weeks in May.

So many tests. Tests, tests, tests! Which ones are REALLY IMPORTANT, and WHY? As long as you get good grades, and have a good GPA, that's all that matters. Right? Or, wait a minute, is it the college test(s) that open(s) doors to your future. Yes! Wait a minute - to which one? OK, both. Got it?

If a teacher says you know it, and your classroom tests support your grade, why all these other tests?

The answer - as much as we either like it, or not - is really fairly simple.

The Ohio assessments measure student content learning in State Standards across the state, understanding that districts, schools and teachers are all different. The OST's assess student competency, regardless of location, and are used, in combination with other variables, to determine eligibility for a high school diploma in the State of Ohio.

Likewise, the SAT measures student performance nationally, and provide data to post-secondary institutions. Colleges rely very heavily on these tests. So much so that a very high SAT can help overcome a less than stellar school GPA. So, why bother?

Ultimately, all of these tests and grades help us determine the existence of a "knowing-doing gap," and what to do about it.

Knowing - doing gap? What's that?

In school, a knowing-doing gap can be when you "know" the material, and perform well on assessments, but receive a poor grade because you haven't completed assignments. Because you didn't "do", you haven't made the teacher confident that you really "know." Likewise, if you perform really poorly on exams, but work really hard and complete assignments, a good grade really says you can "do," not necessarily that you "know." We are really Getting Better at this at ALHS .Our teachers work with you and the faculty to get to know you better. They discuss how to include what's important, and exclude the "noise" (penalty for late work, subtracting credit for talking, etc.) to accurately reporting on learning. We need your best effort to inform us about your learning and our teaching. We are all doing awesome stuff!

It is vitally important that colleges make good admission decisions, ensuring, to the extent possible, that enrollees succeed, stay and graduate. To this end, they give strong consideration to student school performance, including GPA, rigor, service and activities - as well as ACT/SAT. Learning and doing in all areas is important! No gaps = admission.

We have learned a lot about student "knowing-doing" at ALHS. We face our own "knowing-doing gap" as educators, and examining student results helps us all GBED. It's what makes us A-von Lake!

Do your best - Every Day!

Think Warm Thoughts!

Peace.