Figure 1.17

High-Quality Assessment Diagnostic and Discussion Tool

Directions: Examine your most recent end-of-unit test and evaluate the quality of the test against the following eight criteria described in figure 1.16 (page 35).

1. **Are the essential learning standards written on the test as student friendly and grade-appropriate "I can . . ." statements?**

   Discuss: What do your students think about learning mathematics? Do your students think learning mathematics is about doing a bunch of math problems? Or, can they explain the essential learning standards and perform on any task that might reflect that standard?

   Note: In order for students to respond to the end-of-unit assessment feedback when it is passed back (HLTA 9, in chapter 3), this is a necessary test feature.

2. **Does the visual presentation provide space for student work?**

   Discuss: Do your students have plenty of space to write out solution pathways, show their work, and explain their thinking for each task on the assessment instrument?

   Note: This criterion often is one of the reasons not to use the written tests that come with your textbook series. You can use questions from the test bank aligned to your instruction, but space problems as needed.

3. **Is there an appropriate balance of higher- and lower-level-cognitive-demand questions on the test?**

   Discuss: What percentage of all tasks or problems on the assessment instrument are of lower-level cognitive demand? What percentage are of higher-level cognitive demand? Is there an appropriate balance? Unless this has been a major focus of your work, your current end-of-unit tests may not score very high in this criterion.

   Note: Use figure 1.15 (page 31) as a tool to determine rigor. This will help you to better understand the level of cognitive demand. Also, see page 42 at the end of this section for more advice on this criterion. As a good rule of thumb, rigor balance ratio should be about 30/70 (higher- to lower-level-cognitive demand) on the assessment.

4. Is there clarity with all directions?

Discuss: What does clarity mean to each member of our team? Are any of the directions for the different test questions or tasks confusing to the student? Why?

Note: The verbs (actions words) used in the directions for each set of tasks or problems are very important to notice when discussing clarity.

5. Is there variety in assessment formats?

Discuss: Does our test use a blend of assessment formats or types? Do we include questions that allow for technology as a tool, such as graphing calculators? Did we balance the use of different question formats? If we used multiple choice, did we include items with multiple possible answers similar to those on the PARCC, SBAC, or other state assessments?

Note: Your end-of-unit assessments should not be of either extreme: all multiple-choice or all open-ended questions.

6. Is the language both precise and accessible?

Discuss: Is the vocabulary for each task used on our end-of-unit assessment clear, accessible, and direct for students? Do we attend to the precision of language used during the unit, and do the students understand the language used on the assessment?

Note: Does the assessment instrument place the proper language supports needed for all students?

7. Is enough time allotted for students to complete the assessment?

Discuss: Can our students complete this assessment in the time allowed? What will be our procedure if they cannot complete the assessment within the allotted time?

Note: Each teacher on the team should complete a full solution key for the assessment as will be expected of students. For upper-level students, it works well to use a time ratio of 3:1 (or 4:1) for student to teacher completion time to estimate how long it will take students to complete an assessment. For elementary students, it may take much longer to complete the assessment. All teachers should use the agreed-upon time allotment.

8. Are our scoring rubrics clear and appropriate?

Discuss: Are the scoring rubrics to be used for every task clearly stated on the test? Do our scoring rubrics (total points for the test) make sense based on the complexity of reasoning for the task? Are the scoring points assigned to each task appropriate and agreed upon by each teacher on the team?

Note: See HLTA 4 (page 46) for more details.

Summary: Using your score from the figure 1.16 assessment tool (page 35), which specific aspects of your current unit assessment instruments need to be improved?