



**Use Assessment:  
Help Your Students  
Connect  
God's World and Word**

Part 2 of a 4-Part Series

Copyright © 2010 by Michael B. Essenburg  
All rights reserved.

Reprints may be made for workshops  
facilitated by the purchaser or held at the purchaser's place of employment.

## Table of contents

### Facilitator guides

Use assessment.....	I
Let's help each of our students connect God's world and Word in each subject.....	2
What makes a good facilitator good? .....	3
Frequently asked questions .....	4
My plan for facilitating Session # _____ .....	5

### Session guides

Session 1: How effectively are you using assessment to help your students connect God's world and Word?.....	6
Session 2: How can assessment help your students connect God's world and Word?.....	7
Session 3: What types of assessment can help your students connect God's world and Word? ...	8
Session 4: How can you make your assessments even better?.....	9
Session 5: How can you prepare your students for your assessment?.....	10
Session 6: How can you use your assessment data to help your students connect God's world and Word?.....	11
Session 7: How committed are you to using assessment to help your students connect God's world and Word?.....	12

### Readings

Reading 1: Reflect on assessment.....	13
Reading 2: Assessment helps students make connections.....	15
Reading 3: What types of assessment can you use? .....	16
Reading 4: What makes a good assessment good? .....	17
Reading 5: Prepare your students for your assessment.....	18
Reading 6: Use your assessment data to help your students make connections.....	19
Reading 7: How committed are you to using assessment?.....	20

#### What can you do to get started using this kit?

- Look at the session guides, noting the title and goal of each session.
- Read “Session 1: How effectively are you using assessment to help your students connect God's world and Word?” (page 6) and “Reading 1: Reflect on assessment” (page 13).
- Read through the facilitator guides, especially “Let's help each of our students connect God's world and Word in each subject” (page 2) and “Frequently asked questions” (page 4).

## Use assessment

**Assessment helps your students learn.** Assessment can also help your students connect God's world and Word.

### These 7 sessions will help you...

1. Evaluate and improve your use of assessment to help your students connect God's world and Word.
2. Analyze and explain how assessment can help your students connect God's world and Word.
3. Identify and explain what types of assessment can help your students connect God's world and Word.
4. Make one assessment even better.
5. Prepare your students for and give an assessment that requires your students to connect God's world and Word.
6. Use your assessment data to help your students connect God's world and Word.
7. Increase your commitment to using assessment to help your students connect God's world and Word.

**I would enjoy learning about how you are using assessment to help your students connect God's world and Word.** Please email me at [learnmore@closethegapnow.org](mailto:learnmore@closethegapnow.org).

—**Michael B. Essenburg**



**Michael**

I'm passionate about helping students connect God's world and Word.

Key ways to do this include targeting connections, using assessments, using questions, and meeting student learning needs.

## **Session 1: How effectively are you using assessment to help your students connect God's world and Word?**

### **Connect with a colleague**

1. What is one good thing that happened recently in your class(es)?
2. What do you teach your students about God's world and how people are using it?
3. What is one assessment you've given your students?

### **Focus on this session's goal**

To evaluate and improve your use of assessment to help your students connect God's world and Word.

### **Read**

Knowing what exemplary use of assessment looks like can help you find ways to better use assessment. To explore what exemplary use of assessment looks like, read "Reading 1: Reflect on assessment."

### **Discuss the reading**

1. What is one thing that interested you? Tell me about that.
2. What do you like/dislike about using assessment to help students connect God's world and Word?

### **Find ways you can use assessment**

To find ways you can more effectively use assessment to help your students make connections, complete this self-assessment. Rate each item, using the following scale:

4: *Strongly agree* • 3: *Agree* • 2: *Disagree* • 1: *Strongly disagree*

- \_\_\_ 1. I can readily explain how assessment can help my students connect God's world and Word.
- \_\_\_ 2. I can readily explain what types of assessment (for example, tests and projects) help my students connect God's world and Word.
- \_\_\_ 3. My assessments that require my students to connect God's world and Word are exemplary.
- \_\_\_ 4. I prepare my students for my assessments that require my students to connect God's world and Word.
- \_\_\_ 5. I use my assessment data to help my students better connect God's world and Word.

### **Reflect on your self-assessment data with a colleague**

1. How many 4s, 3s, 2s, and 1s do you have?
2. What is encouraging/discouraging about your data?
3. To help your students make better connections, what is one self-assessment item you want to make progress on? What are your reasons for selecting that item?
4. What could you do to make progress on that item?

### **Commit to action**

1. What 2 or more action steps are you going to take before our next session to improve your use of assessment to help your students connect God's world and Word?
2. What are your highlights/insights from this session?
3. How can I pray for you? (Pray together.)

## Reading 1: Reflect on assessment

Interview with Kim Essenburg, English 10 teacher

### What assessment did you give your students?

*Kim:* My students wrote 750- to 1000-word essays on the following: Part of what's wrong with the world is the tendency to disregard human dignity. Analyze this tendency, using examples from literature, history/current events, and your own experience. Articulate a Christian response to this tendency, using the biblical principles we studied in class on respecting others because they are God's image bearers and on loving our neighbors. Quote *Night* and the Bible at least 3 times each.

### What were your students studying?

*Kim:* The tendency to disregard human dignity as depicted in Elie Wiesel's Holocaust memoir *Night* and the biblical basis of human dignity. At the end of the 3-week unit, my students wrote essays.

### How did you prepare your students for the essay?

*Kim:* To help my students grapple with the tendency to disregard human dignity, I used 2 questions to frame my unit: "What's wrong with the world?" and "Who is my neighbor?" And to prepare my students to write about this tendency, I had them review the feedback they received on the previous essays and had them practice writing a Christian response about disregarding human dignity.

To prepare my students to use literature to analyze this tendency, I had them read *Night*, journal to note instances where human dignity is regarded and disregarded, and talk in small groups. To help my students use history/current events to analyze this tendency, I showed them clips from *Hotel Rwanda* and had them jigsaw 2 articles about war in Darfur and about backlash on Muslims following 9/11. And to help my students use their own life experience, I had students share examples of when they've mistreated others and when they've been mistreated.

To prepare my students to articulate a Christian response to the tendency to disregard human dignity, I taught 2 biblical principles. I also had them work in groups of 4 to study Leviticus 19.18 (which talks about loving our neighbors) and the 7 Bible passages mentioned in the study note. For each of the passages, they identified the speaker, occasion, audience, and purpose.

### What connections did your students make between God's world and Word?

*Kim:* I've typed up the connections my students made. It took awhile, but I think it was worth it because I can easily analyze them now. Here are 4 examples:

1. "Whether it is in the form of murder, bullying, or stealing, people are being treated with less dignity than they deserve....as Christians, we must honor one another as created in God's image and love both our neighbors and our oppressors."
2. "The tendency of humans is to ignore their own mistakes and find fault in others. We look at the Holocaust, World War II, slavery, the nuclear bomb in Hiroshima, and say that these kinds of tragedies should never be repeated.... Yet, we never say, 'I should try my best not to disregard humanity even in small daily cases.'"



**Kim, English 10**  
World literature  
52 students

**Key assessment result**  
"We must honor one another as created in God's image."

**Tip**  
Be sure to teach the biblical principles you want students to use in your assessment.

**Unit**  
*Night*, 3 weeks

**Essential questions**  
What's wrong with the world? Who is my neighbor?

**Assessment type**  
Writing

**Teaching strategies**  
Small groups, discussion, jigsaw, journaling

**Resources**  
*Night*, Bible, various articles, *Hotel Rwanda*

3. "People always say that they want to make the world a better place, but they think too big or they don't think at all or say that's awful and sit and do nothing. But...one specific thing that I can do is to stop criticizing people.... (Mark 12.31, Matt. 22.39)."
4. "No matter how much you go to church, pray, and read the Bible, if you discriminate against certain people and treat them as though they have no value, you might as well treat God as though He is worthless."

**What excites/concerns you about the connections your students made in your assessment?**

*Kim:* I'm excited that more of my students made connections—progress! I'm excited that when they articulated a Christian response to the tendency to disregard human dignity, more students used biblical principles and verses—not just verses, which is what a lot of students had been doing. And I'm excited that they connected biblical principles to their lives.

I'm concerned that some of my students didn't follow the prompt in terms of using the biblical principles we studied in class and in terms of quoting the Bible at least 3 times. I know that some students wanted to be original and used different biblical principles and verses. But the problem is that these often weren't on target. And then some students cited principles without verses, and some cited verses without principles.

**How could you help your students connect God's world and Word?**

*Kim:* I could give feedback on the importance of following the assessment prompt. I could do another mini-lesson on how to use both biblical principles and verses when articulating a Christian response. I had them practice writing Christian responses, but I didn't give feedback. I could have them write another Christian response and this time give feedback. For students who are determined to use additional Bible verses, I could teach them how to use cross-references in order to help them find relevant verses.

**What will you do?**

*Kim:* On the papers I turned back, I gave feedback on the importance of following the assessment prompt and on using appropriate biblical principles and verses. When I have students practice writing their Christian responses, I'll collect them and give feedback on citing both biblical principles and verses, and on how effectively they used their biblical principles and verses.

**Take action:** Find ways to improve your use of assessment to help your students connect God's world and Word. You can do this by discussing this reading, by taking a self-assessment on using assessment, and by using your assessment data to identify 2 or more action steps you will take to help your students make connections.