

Incompatible Math Goals?

Problem Statement

In TIAN, we emphasize understanding over procedures, and encourage students to problem-solve with a variety of methods. Some tests respect that idea, but some are focused on the computational fluency. As a teacher, I want my students to have a deeper understanding of the math, but I also want them to reach their goals—and there's so little time!

Over the course of the TIAN institutes, this was an issue that came up rather often. The following activity intends to get the discussion going among your local or regional teacher group.

1. Check all that apply.

As an adult ed **math** teacher, I prepare my students to do well on math needed for success on/in:

- State-mandated ABE progress tests such as CASAS or TABE
- State-mandated high school high stakes tests
- The GED
- Another HS diploma test (e.g. Adult Diploma, External Diploma)
- Community College Placement Test (e.g., the Accuplacer, Compass)
- College courses
- Life
- Work
- Other _____

2. From the list of goals above, think about those that your students are focused on, and arrange them from easiest to most difficult.

3. Which of the goals emphasize problem-solving and reasoning? Which emphasize procedural knowledge?

4. So, what's the solution to the dilemma?