

## Assessing & Developing Math Concepts



### Stay Connected!

Kathy Richardson is the author and developer of the *Assessing Math Concepts (AMC)* series of assessments and the *Developing Number Concepts (DNC)* series for Kindergarten through Second Grade Mathematics. Kathy, Program Director for Math Perspectives, is one of the most respected early childhood mathematics educators. Kathy answers questions from teachers across the country who are using AMC and DNC.

If you have questions for Kathy, please send them to Math Perspectives at [info@mathperspectives.com](mailto:info@mathperspectives.com).

### ASSESSING MATH CONCEPTS: Counting Objects

**Q** We administered the Kindergarten Counting Objects to our students. If we are looking to provide intervention to students, which task do we look at - counting an unorganized pile to 32, making a pile, one more/one less with counters, or one more/one less without counters? Please advise? - Kaneohe, HI

**A** I think of Counting: Part One Tasks 1 and 2 as related. I look at both assessments to get an idea of the range of numbers that I should work with. Counting Objects is more foundational than One More/One Less so especially in Kindergarten, I would look first at Part One.

It will be helpful to look at the benchmark report to determine which students need more support. What benchmark do you want to set? Typically, you would want your children to count at least 12 objects and be able to make a pile of 9 by now in Kindergarten. If you have students who are working below that level, then you could go to the DNC activities tab on the AMC Anywhere site and see what activities would be appropriate- using both Counting a Pile and Making a Pile.

Only if the children have met the benchmark for Counting Objects for both tasks, would I go on to work on One more and One less. But even then, I would integrate that into regular counting experiences and not just work on 1 more or 1 less in isolation.

I hope this is helpful. If you have further questions, please let me know. ~ Kathy

**Q** Some of my teachers have posed the following and we'd like to get your thoughts. Many thanks!:

I have a kind of oddly specific question about the Counting Objects test from a Kindergarten teacher.

In Part 2 Task 3 where students need to know one more/one less, the teacher was wondering if she could cover the counters. She said she has done a similar activity in small group with a cup of counters and they were able to tell how many when one more was added to the cup without counting. However, having the counters out was prompting some of the kids to count even if they may not need to.

I see what she is saying, but I also know most kids will not count unless they need to. I was thinking it has something to do with the idea of math "trust" and checking. However, since the goal of the test is to know if the student knows one more/one less without counting, I do see where she is coming from. If the student "counts all" every time it does give them an I or maybe even an N. It might be valuable to know if they were able to do it without counting.

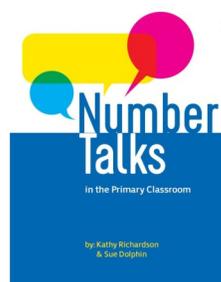
So I guess my question is would it be okay to cover the counters, not for every child, but if needed?. - Manassas, VA

**A** Good to hear from you.

There are a couple of things I would suggest the teacher do, She can say to the child, "See if you can tell me how many without counting."

Another thing I have done when I wonder if a child really needs to count is cover the counters with my hand and say, "Before you count, do you have an idea how many there are?" If the child hesitates or looks worried, I raise my hand immediately. I like just making these "suggestions" as opposed to setting the assessment up differently for different children. If the child continues to count all after these "hints", then I trust they need to count at least for now.

I hope this helps. Let me know if you hear how it goes. I think you are right. Most of the time, kids don't count unless they need to. Once in a while there is a child who just thinks they are supposed to and need permission not to count. ~ Kathy



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Email Sheryl Russell at:

[Sheryl@mathperspectives.com](mailto:Sheryl@mathperspectives.com)

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