

The ABCs of Performance Assessments

Authentic

The assessment simulates a way information is handled in the world outside of school.

Ask: What do people outside of school do with this learning?

UnBiased

All students have an opportunity to achieve; the assessment doesn't rely on specialized knowledge or narrow interests, and provides for different learning styles as well as being socioeconomic, multicultural, and gender fair.

Ask: Do all my students have an opportunity to be successful doing this assessment?

Constructivist

The student is actively involved and creating meaning for his/her learning by making decisions about the work.

Ask: Are my students doing the work and making decisions that determine meaning for their learning?

Developmental

The assessment task is appropriate to the intellectual, physical, and psychological maturity of the student.

Ask: Is this work of the assessment at the appropriate level for my students?

Embedded

The assessment is an integral part of regular classroom work, not an "add-on".

Ask: Is this assessment integrated into my normal classroom activities?

Focused

The assessment stays on target to assess the process/concept and topic of the learning goal.

Ask: Are my students demonstrating the learning called for in the learning goal and the benchmark?

Generalizable

The specific skills and knowledge required for the assessment represent the larger learning required for the content standard.

Ask: If my students do this assessment, will I be reasonably sure they have the knowledge and skills called for in the content standard?

High in Rigor

The assessment represents a high standard.

Ask: Does this assessment represent high expectations for student learning?

Interesting

The assessment is engaging work for students.

Ask: Will my students be interested in doing this task?

adapted from Performance Center, Minnesota Department of Education (1996)