

Assessment Handbooks Series

Portfolio Assessment

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Assessment Handbooks Series

Performance Assessment



**BRITISH
COLUMBIA**

Ministry of Education



Assessment Handbooks Series

Performance Assessment

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About this document

Rationale

Surveys of teachers (B.C. Ministry of Education, 1992) and studies (Bachor and Anderson, 1991, 1993) show that assessment practices in B.C. classrooms are changing. Teachers are seeking alternatives to traditional testing methods by rethinking their assessment practices and changing their evaluation techniques. With this evolution in practice have come practical questions regarding methods for assessing student achievement. A key request has been for support in the development and implementation of assessment methods.

The Assessment Handbooks Series



This series has been developed to provide guidance for teachers as they explore and expand their assessment repertoires. The four handbook series includes *Student Self-Assessment*, *Student-Centred Conferences*, *Performance Assessment* and *Portfolio Assessment*. For the sake of clarity, the handbooks separately address each of these assessment methods. However, in practice, the methods are not used in isolation. For example, self-assessment is an important component of portfolio assessment and both can contribute to a successful student-centred conference.

Each of the handbooks contain a definition and rationale, reflective questions, ideas for getting started, and samples in varying forms. While each handbook includes information

specific to a particular type of assessment, cross-referencing is used to identify important links between them. *Student Self-Assessment* is particularly central to the other handbooks as it expands on self-assessment, goal setting and establishing criteria, topics common to the whole series.

This Handbook

Performance Assessment outlines the advantages of performance assessment, offers samples of performance tasks from across curricula, and includes ideas to help teachers modify and extend the tasks.

What is performance assessment?

Performance assessment is the gathering of information about student learning based on students demonstrating what they can do. It is assessment which values process as well as product and incorporates a variety of strategies, from observation to self-assessment.

Assessment of student performance may be an informal observation of students at work or a structured situation using a recording device to focus observations on specific behaviours or attitudes.

Performance assessment is a powerful classroom tool because it:

- integrates assessment and instruction
- may occur at any point during an activity
- involves student and teacher collaboration
- includes students in assessment and evaluation
- values both process and product

Why use performance assessment?

One benefit of performance assessment is that multiple means of assessment may be used. Informal observations, checklists, video and audio taping, conversations, and conferences can all provide important information regarding student learning. Another benefit is that performance assessment facilitates collaboration between students and teachers, and promotes a diversity of approaches and responses to learning situations.


For teachers, performance assessment:

"The more I used performance assessment, the more students became involved in every step of the process."

"I feel as though I know my students better since I can observe and discuss with them the various parts of the process."

Various Teachers

- is an effective way to integrate assessment and instruction
- includes multiple assessment strategies
- enables teachers to observe the processes students use to demonstrate their learning
- gives a comprehensive picture of each student
- provides information for planning instruction
- gives important reporting information



During the first student-centred conferences, an Intermediate teacher included performance assessment on the agenda. Parents and students were encouraged to discuss how it was used in the classroom, and the students included some representations from their performance assessment as concrete examples for parents.

Performance assessment allows students to:

- be actively involved in their own learning and assessment
- become aware of strengths and areas for growth through reflection and discussion
- extend their learning by assessing processes as well as products
- demonstrate knowledge, skills and attitudes in practical contexts
- practice skills that are transferable to other areas of their lives
- practice assessment techniques used in the workplace
- be risk takers, critical and creative thinkers, and problem solvers

"I had more say in the kinds of projects and how I worked on them."

"My teacher had more time to help us when we were all working on our projects."

Various Students

For parents, performance assessment:

- provides direct information about student performance based on clear criteria
- gives a profile of student achievement based on multiple means of assessment
- provides ongoing information of students' educational progress

"My son talked more at home about what he was doing at school."

"My children worked harder on their projects when they had input into them."

Various Parents

Setting the stage for performance assessment



A teacher, beginning implementation of performance assessment, focused on the classroom environment with his students. Together they came up with "class guidelines" which stated, among other things, that everyone had a say in designing projects and that all opinions were valued. This way, student involvement was recognized.

Classroom Environment

If performance assessment is to become an integral part of learning, teachers need to create an environment which promotes:

- student choice/autonomy
- representing learning in a variety of ways
- individual and cooperative work
- the sharing of ideas
- risk taking

In such an environment, there are ongoing opportunities for performance assessment. Initially structure may come from the teacher, but as students and teachers become more familiar with performance assessment, increased student autonomy and choice can be integrated into the planning.

Self-Assessment

Self-assessment is an ongoing process of students getting to know themselves as learners by reflecting on their performances, products, thinking and learning. This is essential in performance assessment because students need to be able to analyze their work and work habits in order to establish criteria and set goals for further learning. As students work on their projects they may use self-assessment to determine if they are on track and meeting their goals.

Goal Setting

Another essential part of performance assessment is goal setting. Students can set goals for skills they want to improve, for new ideas or techniques they want to try, or for assistance in visualizing their finished product. Within a class, the goals may be different for each student. Setting goals, working towards them, and then reflecting on growth and success, are integral to student self-awareness and learning.

Student Self-Assessment Sheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Project: _____

By doing this project, I learned:

I had difficulty with:

My overall performance was:

If I were to do it again, I would:

The most enjoyable part of the project was:

The part I liked least was:

I would have liked:

What surprised me was:

Goal Setting Sheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Project: _____

These are the goals I have set for myself for this project:

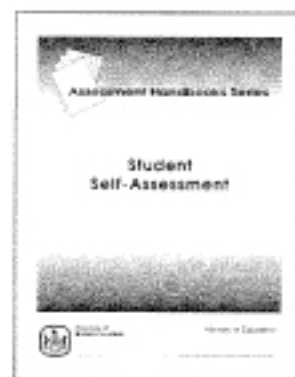
For each goal, these are the specific things I can do to make sure I reach my goal:

If I get stuck or need help, I will:

When I achieve my goals, I will celebrate by:

Two teachers interested in implementing performance assessment in their classrooms chose to address the concepts of classroom environment, self-assessment and goal setting with their students. Together they brainstormed what the words meant and how they contributed to students' learning. The teachers modelled and the classes practised self-assessment and goal setting. Thus, when the first performance assessment task was introduced, the students were already familiar with several of the steps.

For more information on goal setting and student self-assessment, see *Student Self-Assessment*.



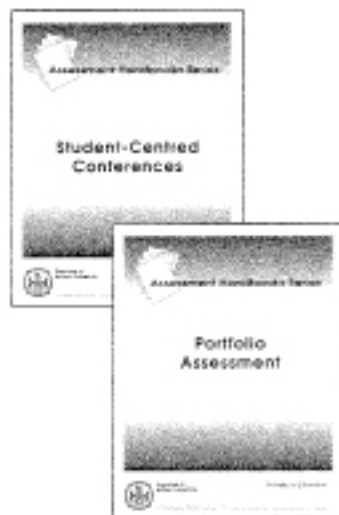
Getting started

Using specifically designed performance tasks is one way of incorporating performance assessment into current practise. It is essential that performance assessment tasks:

- are meaningful
- have explicit evaluation criteria
- involve students in establishing criteria
- involve assessment of process as well as product

Tasks can be designed for all areas of the curriculum and for

For more information, see *Student-Centred Conferences* and *Portfolio Assessment*.



Considerations for Designing Performance Assessment Tasks

What knowledge, skills and/or attitudes will the students demonstrate?

How will this activity enhance the class curriculum?

Will the assessment of the performance be formal or informal, structured or unstructured?

Who will design a structured activity?

- teacher
- teacher and students together through collaboration
- students as part of their project will decide on the format and presentation

How can the activity be developed?

- consider individual or group involvement
- consider individual learning styles
- decide on materials, equipment, people

What time factors may be involved?

Who will assess and evaluate the process and/or product(s)?

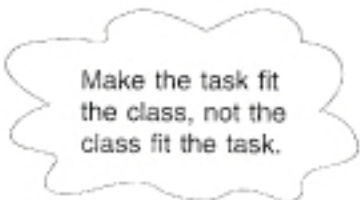
How will the process and product(s) be evaluated?

How can the information from the process and the product(s) be used for further evaluation, reporting and/or planning instruction?

- self assessments for conferences and portfolios
- reflecting on goals, revising action plans, setting new goals
- putting task with evaluation criteria and products in a portfolio

all age levels. Teachers can easily turn existing activities or project ideas into performance assessment tasks. Students can also set up tasks given a format to follow.

"Considerations for Designing Performance Assessment Tasks" and the two planning guides outlined here are designed to help teachers plan for the effective incorporation of performance assessment.



Make the task fit
the class, not the
class fit the task.

Planning Guide 1

Activity

- states clearly what is to be done

Preparation

- knowledge and skills necessary to complete the activity are developed
- time line and evaluation criteria are established

Guidelines for students

- developed with students to provide specific directions for successfully completing an activity (perhaps with a checklist)
- connected to evaluation criteria

Evaluation criteria

- basis for evaluation of process and/or product
- may incorporate opportunities for reflection, self-assessment and peer-assessment

Variations and Extensions

- provide alternatives to incorporate all students (Special Needs, ESL)

Planning Guide 2

Reason(s) for Assessment

- identify purpose and decision makers

Performance to be Evaluated

- specify content and/or process focus of the assessment

Select Exercises and Events

- plan how students will demonstrate what they can do
- decide how the information about student learning will be gathered

Performance Rating Plan

- determine who is to evaluate
- decide on recording method

What might it look like?

The following sample tasks show how some British Columbia teachers have designed performance assessment tasks for their own classes. These tasks are a starting point for teachers to begin using performance assessment. There is an emphasis on “Variations and Extensions” to allow for student choice and to suggest applications to other areas of the curriculum.

SAMPLE TASK

Tourist Brochure

Activity:

Research a Canadian city and create a tourist brochure, demonstrating knowledge of advertising techniques and skills in research.

Preparation ideas:

- analyze professional travel brochures
- investigate advertising techniques
- practise research skills
- develop evaluation criteria and time lines with students
- identify local tourist attractions and discuss what attracts tourists
-

Guidelines for students may include:


- choose and research a Canadian city
- design and create a tourist brochure
-

Sample evaluation criteria:

- student marked for their active participation in setting criteria and time lines
- brochure clearly displays at least five interesting facts about the city, through pictures and captions
- effective advertising techniques are used
- research is accurate and up to date
-

Variations and Extensions:

- make a travel itinerary to visit the city of your choice, including expenses, methods of transportation, etc.
- collect other materials on your city and create a booth at a travel fair
- complete the assignment using second language skills
- create a brochure for an intergalactic travel agency specializing in trips to different planets in our solar system
- create a travel brochure advertising the setting from a novel
- advertise a scientific discovery or process
- create a brochure advertising time travel, including details of life in that time
- advertise a real math formula or technique that will help a student learn
- advertise a PE game you have learned
-



An English and Art teacher collaborated and expanded this activity in order to emphasize both the visual and written components of the task.

STUDENTS...

What effective strategies did you use to plan and organize your time?

What sources were helpful in your research?

Based on the brochures, what cities would you like to visit? Why?



One class that adapted this activity presented their models during a student-centred conference.

STUDENTS...

What was the hardest part about constructing your machine?

Who do you think would like to use your machine?

How could this machine change your life or improve someone else's?

SAMPLE TASK

Creating Machines

Activity:

Create a machine, with one or more moving parts, that meets a need or solves a problem.

Preparation ideas:

- demonstrate and analyze simple machines
- investigate problems that could be solved with the invention of a machine
-
-

Guidelines for students may include:

- create a plan for your machine, considering function, available materials and construction.
-
-

Sample evaluation criteria:

- need or problem is identified
- machine will meet this need or solve the problem
- machine has at least one moving part
- student seeks assistance when necessary
-
-

Variations and Extensions:

- create a machine which could have existed 100 years ago, or might be needed 100 years from now
- create a machine to make chores easier at home
- demonstrate your machine to the class
-
-

SAMPLE TASK

Animal Habitat

Activity:

Build a model habitat for an animal of your choice. Present your model to the class, demonstrating knowledge of habitat components and animal survival skills.

Preparation ideas:

- discuss the essentials for survival in natural habitat (i.e. water, food, space, safety)
- brainstorm sources for information
- model and practice presentations
-
-

Guidelines for students may include:


- establishing research and presentation criteria
- assembling necessary materials and resources
-
-

Sample evaluation criteria:

- habitat is suited to chosen animal
- model includes essentials for animal's survival
- presentation is organized and clear
- class time is used effectively and efficiently
-
-

Variations and Extensions:

- Choose one aspect of the environment that could realistically change. Model and explain what the change might look like and how the animal could/could not adapt to the change.
- Write a paper/make a display of examples of animals that have been affected by a changing environment. How did they adapt, or, if they didn't, why not?
-
-



A teacher who used this activity invited a biologist in to evaluate the habitats and discuss her comments with the class.

STUDENTS...

How did you decide what should go into your habitat?

What was the biggest problem in making your model? How did you solve it?

If you were the animal in your habitat, what would be your biggest worry?

How are you helping this animal by understanding its habitat?

SAMPLE TASK



English and Art specialists worked together on creating a class booklet containing the portraits and autobiographies.

STUDENTS...

What other details would enhance your portrait?

What would you do next time that you didn't do this time?

How did you blend your colours to show light and shadow?

How can you tell where the light is coming from?

Explain what aspects of your character you recognize in your picture.

Answer the above questions about a peer's self-portrait.

Self Portrait

Activity:

Complete a self-portrait with pencil and pastel.

Preparation ideas:

- study, model and practice drawing facial anatomy (proportions of face, how parts fit together)
- discuss and display samples from other artists
-
-

Guidelines for students may include:

- designate media: pencil drawing, pastel colour
- using a mirror, create a life-size frontal view self-portrait
-
-

Sample evaluation criteria:

- student shows care in use and storage of materials and equipment
- portrait has correct proportions
- portrait shows effective use of colour and blending
- portrait shows accurate use of light and shadow
-
-

Variations and Extensions:

- make a collage to represent your character
- design a photographic essay about yourself
- create a cartoon caricature of yourself
- create a self-portrait using a computer
- create a mask to represent yourself
- write an autobiography to accompany your portrait
- create a dance to portray your cultural background
- design a t-shirt which represents yourself
- design a family crest
-
-

SAMPLE TASK

Physical Exercise

Activity:

Analyze the results of your fitness test to plan an exercise program and improve personal fitness.

Preparation ideas:

- explain and discuss different body systems, e.g. circulatory, skeletal, muscle system
-
-

Guidelines for students may include:

- select three aspects of your fitness test to improve
- identify body parts and systems primarily used in each exercise
- plan an exercise program to practice your three components of fitness
- perform your program over 30 consecutive days
- repeat original tests for the three aspects of fitness
- compare results and draw conclusions about your program
-
-

Sample evaluation criteria:

- the plan for the exercise program includes duration, intensity and frequency of exercises
- tests are compared and conclusions drawn
-
-

Variations and Extensions:

- draw pictures of the muscle groups used in your exercise program
- make posters describing the components of a fitness assessment
- modify your fitness program for a student with special needs
-
-



In conjunction with Fitness Week, a P.E. teacher adapted this activity so his students presented their information and findings to other classes.

STUDENTS...

How did your exercise program help you to improve your chosen three areas?

How has your exercise program improved your physical fitness?

What other components of the test showed improvements?

What components of fitness would you choose to work on next?



Graduation teachers in other curricular areas (such as Biology and Chemistry) found the idea of games a useful way to reinforce concepts.

STUDENTS...

What aspects of your game were different from the other students' games?

How did constructing and playing your game help your understanding of trigonometry?

What steps did you take to ensure everyone in your group participated equally?

SAMPLE TASK

Board Games

Activity:

Create an original board game which involves players correctly answering trigonometric questions.

Preparation may include:

- work collaboratively with students to formulate criteria for evaluation of process and product
- gather materials and supplies required (Art departments)
- examine commercial games and game boards
-
-

Guidelines for students may include:

- the source for questions are the Math 10/11 trigonometry sections
- the game must be tested by three groups of classmates
- each group must give a written critique of the game
-
-

Sample evaluation criteria:

- the game board is visually appealing
- directions are clear, easy to follow, and include all the rules
- students participated actively in group efforts
-
-

Variations:

- make game boards for another theme: journeys (an ant, explorers), cycles (seasons, metamorphosis), french vocabulary, mapping, literature
- create an "outside" game utilizing three pieces of P.E. equipment
-
-

SAMPLE TASK

Dramatization

Activity:

Assume the role of an historical figure and dramatize their contributions to their country.

Preparation ideas:

- discuss research skills and collect information about historical figures
- make students aware of the daily life and the culture in which an individual lived
- model public speaking, interviewing and role-playing
- have students practice public speaking, interviewing, and role playing
-
-

Guidelines for students may include:

- generate a list of questions that will reveal the life, culture and accomplishments of your character
- research information to answer the questions you have developed
-
-

Sample evaluation criteria:

- student participates in modelling and practising prerequisite skills
- the significance of your historic figure's contributions to their time and country is articulated
- the person is brought to life for the other students—visually or dramatically
-
-

Variations and Extensions:

- have students complete the task using second language skills
- dramatize an interview with a politician, scientist, artist, musician or philosopher
- dramatize a character in a novel, exploring the feelings and reactions of the character to a situation in which they find themselves in a story
-
-



In a similar task, a Social Studies teacher and a Drama teacher worked together with a class to combine the historical content with theatrical components, including costuming, characterization, and voice projection.

STUDENTS...

Explain why you chose this historical figure for your presentation.

Describe what you consider to be the strengths of your presentation.

What was the most difficult part of putting together this presentation?

How do you think people would react to this historical figure if that figure lived today?



An Intermediate teacher integrated this activity with a unit on poverty and included a visit to a food bank.

STUDENTS...

What percentage of your budget was actually spent on food?

Does your budget present enough of everything needed to satisfy the needs of every family member? Explain.

Was the \$150 budget enough for your fictitious family? Explain.

If your budget had more money, how would you make it better?

If you were the parent of the family and had \$25 less, what cuts would you make?

SAMPLE TASK

Budgets

Activity:

With \$150, make a grocery budget which fulfills basic needs for one week for a family of four.

Preparation ideas:

- consider products and prices: visit a grocery store, review grocery store flyers
- discuss and list the variety of groceries and sundries that are required for a family (nutritious foods, cleaning products, bathroom products)
- model how to organize and present budget information (quantities, unit price, totals, taxes, coupons)
-
-

Guidelines for students may include:

- define four fictitious family members (e.g. teenager, baby, etc.)
- list your family's needs for one week (you may need help from family members)
- with \$150, budget how to meet those needs
-
-

Sample evaluation criteria:

- adequate and accurate gathering of information on: products, quantities, family needs, prices
- budget is sufficient in all areas to meet the needs of an average family of four (nutrition, variety, practicality)
-
-

Variations and Extensions:

- plan a budget for a specific field trip
- as a pioneer, determine purchasing needs for a specified journey (e.g. Victoria to Barkerville)
- plan a travel budget for a bicycle trip
- plan a food budget for the crew of a boat for one week
-
-

SAMPLE TASK

Research Project

Activity:

A group of four students will research and complete a project on one ancient civilization to present to the class.

Preparation ideas:

- explain and discuss necessary components of a civilization: (developments of urban centres, system of government, written language, other cultural aspects of religion, art, etc.)
- model and practice using research skills
-
-

Guidelines for students may include:

- use at least three different resources
- each group will submit a written report and make a presentation based on their researched information
- include a bibliography
-
-

Sample evaluation criteria:

Written Presentation:

- written text shows evidence of originality (no copying from a book)
- evidence of research resources appear in a bibliography (and at least three sources were used)
-
-

Oral Presentation:

- visual: evidence of the use of illustrations, maps, charts, props, overheads, etc.
- oral: evidence of a rehearsed presentation (e.g. clear voice, confident appearance)
- student works collaboratively with others in the planning and organizing of the presentation
-
-

Variations and Extensions:

- adapt to First Nations studies
- relate to a literature study of mythology or legends
- research an issue which is thematically related to a novel being studied and prepare an oral presentation and a written summary on the assigned topic
-
-



One Humanities teacher expanded this idea to create an "Ethnic Fair" where students designed booths representing different cultural groups.

STUDENTS...

Describe three things you did to help your group during this assignment.

In what ways were lives of the ancient people that you studied like yours? In what ways were they different?

What can our culture learn from ancient people?

Final thoughts

Performance assessment is an important way to facilitate students' learning by linking assessment with instruction. Teachers will find that as they incorporate performance assessment into their practice, students will become increasingly adept at the skills of establishing criteria, reflecting, and goal setting.

Using performance assessment provides teachers with more time and opportunity for observation, discussions, and one-on-one interactions with their students. This will assist both in planning further instruction and enabling the teacher to get a clearer and broader picture of each student's learning.

Glossary

Assessment Assessment is the systematic process of gathering information about student learning, what they know, are able to do, and are trying to do.

Evaluation The process of making judgments and decisions based on the interpretation of evidence of student learning gathered throughout assessment. Evaluation might be done by the teacher or the student independently or in collaboration.

Performance Assessment Assessment that is based on students demonstrating what they can do. The term is sometimes used to describe assessment using performance tasks. More generally, it is used to describe approaches to assessment which value process as well as product.

Portfolio A purposeful collection of student work that shows the student's effort, progress, or achievement over time.

Portfolio Assessment Portfolio Assessment is a method of gathering student work samples for the purpose of evaluating student knowledge and learning.

Reporting The presentation of information gained through evaluation based on identified standards. Reporting may be done in writing, through a scheduled conference, or informally.

Self-Assessment / Self-Evaluation The ongoing process in which students get to know themselves as learners by reflecting on their own performance, products, thinking, and learning.

Student-Centred Conference A meeting of teacher, parent(s) and student to discuss the student's learning.

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