

In response to an increased focus on twenty-first century skills essential for college, career, and civic success over the last decade, educators and policymakers have returned to the strategy of using performance assessment to measure students' academic knowledge and interpersonal skills (Conley, 2015; Darling-Hammond & Pecheone, 2009; Gagnon, 2010; Parsi & Darling-Hammond, 2015). Researchers have found that the use of performance assessments may be related to positive instructional changes in classrooms (Koretz, Mitchell, Barron, & Keith, 1996, Lane, 2013); increases in student skill development (Niemi, Baker, & Sylvester, 2007), student engagement, and post-secondary success (Foote, 2005); and strengthening of complex conceptual understandings (Chung & Baker, 2003). Less is known about the connection between performance assessment and its use as a tool to promote equity, though advocates of performance assessment hypothesize that because it provides increased student choice and deeper engagement, it will benefit students who historically have been marginalized.

The use of performance assessment has been shown to drive positive changes in teacher practices, including supporting teachers in developing strategies to deepen students' critical thinking and problem-solving (Faxon-Mills, Hamilton, Rudnick, & Stecher, 2013). Darling-Hammond and Wood (2008) report that the use of high-quality performance assessment also improves teaching. For example, after the state of Maryland adopted an assessment program that included a stronger emphasis on performance tasks, teachers reported increasing their use of complex problem solving and reasoning in the classroom. These teachers were encouraged to use performance assessment results to better understand student learning and had opportunities to explore how to effectively use information from different data sources to guide their instruction (Hofman, Goodwin, & Kahl, 2015; Lane, Parke, & Stone, 2002).

Research on the use of performance assessment can inform how practitioners engage in the work of developing these assessments and how this can enhance teaching. Several studies and proceedings (Linn & Burton, 1994; National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017; Pellegrino, Chudowsky, & Glaser, 2001) describe the need for high-quality models of performance assessment tasks and rubrics and for tools to support both rubric development and inter-rater reliability for scoring performance assessments. Several studies highlight the value of engaging teachers in the task of developing and collaboratively scoring performance assessments and how this can enhance teaching. For example, Darling-Hammond and Falk (2013) identify the development of performance assessment as a key strategy to support teachers in implementing new standards and deepening student learning:

*Teacher involvement in the design, use and scoring of performance assessments has the potential to powerfully link instruction, assessment and student learning, and teacher professional development. ... If used wisely, this approach has the potential to address multiple important education goals through one concentrated investment. Not only will overall pedagogical capacity be enhanced, but also teaching and assessing will remain focused on its central purpose: the support of learning for all involved. (p. 1)*

As performance assessment continues to be implemented across classrooms, it is important that researchers continue to study its utility for both students and teachers. In particular, more research is needed on the connection between performance assessment and equity.

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