

Students as Co-creators

A teacher's use of performance assessment can provide students with an opportunity to play an active role in the assessment process, which increases their engagement, and in turn increases their learning (Wang & Eccles, 2012a, 2012b). Students may find performance assessments appealing because of the student choice inherent in them; they often allow students to choose their topic or select the best way to demonstrate their learning. Such roles can be very motivational for students and allow them to take ownership of their learning.

When students engage in a collaborative performance assessment development process, they deepen their knowledge of the standards and performance outcomes that are being taught and assessed. When students take on the role of co-creator of the performance, they:

- co-establish success criteria
- co-develop rubrics
- choose the topic
- choose a way to demonstrate their learning
- perform the task
- provide feedback to peers
- reflect on their experience
- self-assess and/or peer-assess

Several of these actions are demonstrated in the vignette below, including co-establishing success criteria, self- and peer-assessing, and reflecting, which are examples of how to involve students in performance assessment. Students do not need to undertake each of these actions to see a benefit. However, by incorporating students into the role of co-creator, teachers and students can work together to create an assessment experience that enhances student learning, increases engagement and motivation, and positions students for success in the classroom and beyond.

One noteworthy action that students can take in performance assessment is reflection. Reflection is a metacognitive process where students think and reflect on their understanding and performance. Opportunities for reflection during the assessment and post-assessment support a deeper learning experience for students. This process can be especially helpful for struggling learners.

Grade 5 Social Studies Students Performance Task That Demonstrates Co-Developing Rubrics, Self- and Peer-Assessment, and Reflection

Grade 5 students will make a picture book for younger grades that tells the story of a famous person in American history. The teacher shares the relevant Social Studies and writing standards with the students. She informs them that these are the standards that will be taught and that they will be used during the assessment.

The teacher provides a selection of pattern books, such as *Fortunately/Unfortunately* or *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*, and samples of student work from the previous year for students to read. Students take notes about how these examples are illustrative of the learning standards. As a group **they generate some criteria for the book they will make**. They **discuss how the criteria align with the learning standards**.

Next, students look at three examples of mini-biographies of varying quality about famous people. Again, they discuss what makes a good mini-biography and **generate additional criteria that align with the learning standards**. Next, they **add any criteria from the standards that might be missing**. The teacher uses the criteria to make a rubric that **students use to first self-assess and then peer assess** their picture book drafts. **Students reflect on and use the feedback** to edit their work and create their final picture book. The teacher uses the same assessment tool to grade the final product.

Assessment for Learning

In addition to increasing students' engagement and motivation, involving students in the performance assessment process transforms the assessment experience from emphasizing assessment *of* learning to emphasizing assessment *for* learning (Stiggins, 2007). Assessment for learning refers to practices, processes, and conditions that deepen and personalize students' development of knowledge and skills, foster student agency and ownership over learning, and create more equitable classrooms, schools, and systems (Assessment for Learning Project, 2018). As assessment expert Rick Stiggins (2007) explains, traditional forms of assessment are sometimes used to detect and highlight differences in student learning in order to rank students by their achievement. This experience can be detrimental for students who perform poorly. Assessment for learning, on the other hand, turns assessment into a teaching and learning experience that enhances student learning, rather than one that merely monitors it (Stiggins, 2007). Assessment for learning has proven to be an effective strategy for increasing student achievement for all students, and for struggling learners it is especially effective (Black & William, 1998).

Assessment for learning is an inherent feature of performance assessment, whether the assessment's purpose is formative, interim, or summative. Performance assessment allows students to be involved in the assessment development process and the interpretation of results, in addition to performing the task.

References for The Role of the Student in Performance Assessment

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