

Now that you’ve learned what validity means, you may be wondering how you can provide evidence to ensure the validity of your assessment results. You can do this, in part, by attending to the alignment, administration, fairness, and impact of the assessment. That said, often, despite a teacher’s best efforts, unexpected events or unforeseen characteristics of the assessment process may affect an assessment’s validity. These topics are a short list of factors to consider when developing, reviewing, or administering an assessment. Ideally, you will want to make sure you have several sources of validity evidence for your assessment.

Alignment

Consider whether the performance assessment task(s) are aligned with the standards, performance outcomes, and indicators by using your assessment blueprint. An assessment blueprint, also known as a table of specifications, is a great tool for mapping the alignment of assessment tasks with the standards and with the instruction and curriculum. A clear connection between these suggests strong validity evidence—or, in other words, that the assessment will lead to accurate inferences about the content and skills identified in the standards, performance outcomes, and indicators.

EXAMPLE

This is an excerpt from the assessment blueprint for the *Infographic* performance assessment presented in this course. This blueprint contains the content standard, the performance outcome which is derived directly from the standard, the indicator which further specifies the performance outcome, and the task, which is aligned with the indicator, performance outcome, and standard.

CONTENT STANDARDS	PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES	INDICATORS	ALIGNED TASKS
<p>CCSS.Math.Practice.MP4 Model with mathematics.</p> <p>Identify important quantities in a practical situation and map their relationships using such tools as diagrams, two-way tables, graphs, flowcharts and formulas. Analyze those relationships mathematically to draw conclusions.</p>	<p>I can map the relationships between quantities using graphs and charts.</p>	<p>Correctly display statistical information related to the topic in a properly labeled table, graph or chart.</p>	<p>Students will create and include one or more charts or graphs that are related to the topic and are based on data.</p>

Other Assessment Results

Another way to provide validity evidence for a performance assessment is to compare a student’s performance on the assessment with another, well-established assessment. There are formal ways to do this using statistical methods, but often, for classroom assessment purposes, it may suffice to use professional judgement about whether student performance on the two assessments is comparable.

EXAMPLE

A 1st grade teacher pilot tests a new English Language Arts performance assessment measuring students' foundational reading skills, specifically reading fluency. Students perform a task that requires reading with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. The teacher compares the ratings for each student to their DIBELS® results to see if students performed similarly on both assessments. The DIBELS® is a measure used to monitor the development of early literacy and early reading skills. The results show similar patterns of performance related to fluency. The teacher concludes that the new performance assessment measures fluency and has sufficient validity evidence to be used with the entire class.

Administration

The administration of an assessment can affect the validity of its results. When unexpected events such as a fire alarm, student illness, or unexpected personal event occur, they may negatively influence student performance and impede students from demonstrating their actual level of learning. In such cases it is best to re-administer the assessment or allow students other assessment opportunities.

EXAMPLE

A health teacher administers a performance assessment that requires students to create an infographic on eating habits and nutrition. Students have five class periods to work on the task. One student is absent for two of the classes and submits a product that the teacher knows is not an accurate reflection of his work. The teacher allows the student to use additional days to complete the task, including time outside of the classroom.

Fairness

For an assessment's results to be valid, the assessment must provide a student with a fair opportunity to demonstrate his or her learning. If results from an assessment indicate flaws in the assessment that might jeopardize a fair and accurate judgment of students' learning, the results should not be used, and the assessment should be revised before it is used again (JCSEE, 2015).

EXAMPLE

A high school biology teacher is developing a performance assessment with his students. He intends to have students dissect frogs as part of a task measuring students' understanding of anatomical structures, their evolution, and their relationship to ecosystems. However, during the class discussion on the design of this performance assessment two students

mention that they are vegetarian and are morally opposed to working with an animal. The teacher and students opt to use a computer-simulated dissection software for that aspect of the performance assessment instead. This method allows every student to fully participate without putting them in a situation that would not allow them to demonstrate their knowledge and skills to the best of their ability.

Student Impact

Another related validity consideration is the impact of the assessment on students and their future learning. The quality of an assessment depends on its validity, but also on how well it encourages future learning. As assessment expert Rick Stiggins states, “Even the most valid and reliable assessment cannot be regarded as high quality if it causes a student to give up.” Therefore, from this perspective, a valid assessment is one that balances quality with student impact.

EXAMPLE

A 7th grade physical education teacher notices that a student is struggling with the course performance assessment. The task requires students to demonstrate knowledge of fitness components and how to stay fit by designing students’ own fitness programs using personal fitness test results. The student struggles to perform the fitness tests, which are needed to design the fitness program. After several failed attempts at the fitness tests, he gives up and will not participate any further. The teacher re-directs the student to helping coach other students and collaborate with them. This boosts the student’s confidence and motivation to try the activities again. The next class period, the teacher provides the student with additional guidance during the fitness test activities, which the student completes. The student is able to successfully engage in each activity and now has the baseline data needed to complete the rest of the performance assessment.