

Creating and Using Performance Assessments: An Online Course for Practitioners

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Creating and Using Performance Assessments: An Online Course for Practitioners

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This self-paced online course provides educators with detailed information on creating and using performance assessments. Through five 30-minute modules, practitioners, instructional leaders, and administrators will learn the foundational concepts of assessment literacy and how to develop, score, and use performance assessments. They will also learn about the role of performance assessment within a comprehensive assessment system.

CREATING AND USING PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS

This course provides guidance to help practitioners, instructional leaders, and administrators develop a performance assessment appropriate to their needs. Performance assessments are assessments that require students to craft their own responses to problems by constructing an answer, producing a product, or performing an activity (Parsi & Darling-Hammond, 2015).

Research has shown that performance assessments can produce positive instructional changes in classrooms (Koretz et al., 1996) and improve teaching (Darling-Hammond & Wood, 2008). In particular, performance assessments can support teachers in developing strategies to deepen students' critical thinking and problem-solving (Faxon-Mills et al., 2013). Their use is also associated with student skill development, student engagement, and postsecondary success (Foote, 2005) and with stronger understanding of complex concepts (Chung & Baker, 2003). Performance assessments ideally take place within a comprehensive, balanced assessment system that includes a variety of instruments and processes to produce information and data for stakeholders (Gong, 2010).

Through the course's five modules, which are based on seminal and current research on assessment literacy, performance assessment, and balanced assessment systems, users will:

- Increase their proficiency in basic concepts of assessment literacy.
- Increase their understanding of performance assessment, including the purpose, application, scoring process, and use of results.
- Become familiar with performance assessment strategies, including how to engage students in development and scoring processes and how to facilitate collaboration among teachers developing and scoring performance assessments.
- Learn how to develop high-quality performance assessments and scoring rubrics that are aligned to standards and performance outcomes.
- Understand the role of performance assessment within a comprehensive assessment system.

The course provides several tools to help users develop their own performance assessment, including a Performance Assessment Development Template and a Performance Assessment Quality and Validation Review Tool. Users who fill out the Performance Assessment Development Template during the course will end up with a complete, high-quality performance assessment.

The course also includes downloadable readings, writing tasks, quizzes, and reflection activities to further users' understanding of the material.

Users can access the course at <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northeast/onlinetraining/>.

Module 1: Introduction to Performance Assessment

This module prepares users to define performance assessment, to articulate the main reasons for using performance assessments, to know when and how to use performance assessments, and to identify the relationship of performance assessment to standards and performance outcomes.

Module 2: Developing a Performance Assessment—Part 1

This module leads users through the first steps and considerations in developing a performance assessment: identifying an assessment’s population, specifying the assessment’s purpose, unpacking standards, and creating performance outcomes. The module also addresses equity considerations, such as differentiation, fairness, and bias. Users also have the opportunity to begin creating their own performance assessment.

Module 3: Developing a Performance Assessment—Part 2

This module continues the process of developing a performance assessment introduced in Module 2 and covers how to design and prepare a performance assessment, including how to create performance tasks. It provides an overview of strategies for engaging students in developing a performance assessment and explores assessment preparation and administration. The module concludes with a discussion of validity and reliability and their importance in developing a high-quality performance assessment.

Module 4: Developing a Performance Assessment—Part 3

This module discusses how to create a rubric and engage students in that process and how to use the rubric to evaluate student work. The module also describes how to evaluate a performance assessment for quality and how to conduct a validity check.

Module 5: Performance Assessment—The Big Picture and Next Steps

This module closes out the course by framing performance assessment within the larger context of assessment systems and discussing the role of performance assessment in a comprehensive assessment system. The module explores the types of evidence users can collect from performance assessments and offers ideas for how students, teachers, and school leaders can use the results.

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