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Designing Effective Projects: Assessing Projects
Types of Assessment

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Multiple Methods of Assessment

There are many assessment methods and tools; each provides information to both the teacher and students. Similar assessment methods and tools may be used for different purposes depending on how they are structured and what is done with the results. The tables below outline a variety of assessment methods, purposes, and tools in three categories: 1) Methods for Monitoring Progress, 2) Methods to Check for Understanding or to Encourage Metacognition, and 3) Methods to Demonstrate Understanding and Skill.

Methods for Monitoring Progress

Assessment Method	Purpose	When Used	Tool
Informal Observations and Anecdotal Notes	Notes from observations of individual students, group processes, and performances provide objective feedback, clarify misunderstandings, and support teaching adjustments.	Observations and note taking during group and individual work conducted throughout the unit. Notes can guide adjustments to instruction, individual conferences, and final grading.	Comments on sticky notes collected in individual or group folders. Pre-prepared observation questions. Checklists help focus expected behaviors.
Learning Logs, Daily Effort Logs	Logs are short regular updates in a project notebook, journal, or on a short form that are used with structured prompts. (Example headings: *Today I accomplished…*, *I need to….*)	These entries provide regular data for the teacher, the student, or a team to review, reflect, and adjust their work during progress checks in project meetings or conferences.	Forms, Prompts
Progress Checklists	Checklists are necessary where projects require students to meet specific requirements in sequence and on a schedule. They can be very detailed with specific tasks, subtasks, recommended processes, suggested time allotments, and due dates. For greater buy-in, have students help design a project checklist or customize a checklist.	Checklists can be reviewed in team meetings or conferences with the teacher.	Checklist with milestones, due dates, and approval stages
Progress Reports	The report prompts might ask students to explain something new in their understanding as well as document progress. An interim report might be a rough draft, a storyboard, or a data summary.	Students prepare interim reports at key stages of a project, such as at outline or midpoint of the first draft.	Forms, Prompts

Assessment Method	Purpose	When Used	Tool
Project Meetings and Conferences	Team or individual conferences with the teacher can be used for approval or sign off in readiness for next stage or milestone of a project.	Brief regular team meetings for students and conferences with the teacher are used to check progress, maintain commitments in group work, and plan next steps.	Agenda, Goals, and Process Form

Methods to Check for Understanding or to Encourage Metacognition

Assessment Method	Purpose	When Used	Tool
Written Journals or Notebook	Extended written reflections on progress or entries in reaction to prompts. In addition to reflections, prompts can elicit specific thinking skills at key points in the project, for example, *"How has what you investigated or learned, changed or confirmed your viewpoint on this issue?"*	Journals are written throughout the project or at key points. They are checked periodically or at the end of the project.	Prompts for entries, Journal review plan
Video and Photo Journals	Students develop visual documentation of progress in a project in a structured way. The "entries" are meant to capture reactions and reflections or can be used for demonstration of skill development.	These journals are kept throughout the project, but may be integrated into final products or performances.	Outline of photo sequence and topic (shot list), Schedule for video scenes
Structured Interviews and Observations	Teachers or outside experts schedule formal oral interviews with individuals or teams related to development of understanding. Interview questions (protocol) ask students to explain and give reasons for their current understanding. Structured observations are similar but used with skill, process, and performance assessment.	Structured interviews are often done at the end of a project.	Interview or observation protocol (a script)
Written and Oral Tests and Quizzes	Tests and quizzes offer direct evidence of knowledge acquisition and comprehension.	Tests and quizzes are often used at key points within the project and at the end of the project.	Test and quiz questions

Methods to Demonstrate Understanding and Skill

Assessment Method	Purpose	When Used	Tool
Products	Things that students create and build that show learning. (Examples in table below.)	Depends on product and length of project; often completed at end of project.	Rubrics that define quality with several criteria
Performances	Demonstrations, productions, and events that students design and conduct to show learning. (Examples in table below.)	Depends on product and length of project; often presented at end of project.	Rubrics that define quality with several criteria

Products and Performance Tasks		
Products	Reports	Historical research, scientific research, journal article for publication, policy recommendations
	Designs	Product design, home design, building or school design blueprints, transportation alternatives
	Constructions	Models, machines, exhibits, dioramas
	Essays	Letters-to-the editor, guest column for local newspaper or community publication, book and movie reviews, story writing
	Artistic expressions	Pottery, sculpture, poetry, fine art, posters, cartoon, mural, collage, painting, song writing, movie script
Performances	Print media	Nature trail guide, self-guided walk through community history, public service announcement, history scrapbook, photo timeline, investigative documentary, commercial, training manual, animation/cartoon
	Multimedia	Informational kiosk, video, photo journal, slideshow, digital book
	Presentations	Persuasive proposal, inspiring speech, debate, informative lecture, research analysis and conclusions, newscast
	Skill demonstrations	Science laboratory processes, constructions, specific sports skills, teaching or mentoring younger students
	Artistic/creative performances	Interpretive dance, play, skit, character study, docu-drama, readers' theater, radio plays
	Simulations	Mock trial, reenactment of historical event, role play