Performance Assessment Quality Criteria

These criteria aim to communicate design principles for the creation of quality performance assessments. Performance assessments ask students to think and to produce—to demonstrate learning through work authentic to the discipline and/or real world.

Quality performance assessments have the following characteristics:

Clear and Worthwhile Performance Outcomes
- Require developmentally appropriate integration and demonstration of disciplinary understandings, language, and practices
- Are tightly aligned to content, language, and practice standards and other learning outcomes
- Make connections to the big ideas and/or enduring understandings of the course and discipline
- Are assessed using scoring criteria that address the targeted content and language learning outcomes
- Are clearly defined, measurable, and reasonable in quantity for the task duration and purpose

Task Focus, Clarity and Coherence
- Task prompt is focused and asks students to demonstrate mastery of disciplinary understandings, language, and practices
- Task prompt, directions, and criteria for scoring are clear, accessible, and unambiguous
- Task prompt, materials, and work products are coherent, aligned, and developmentally appropriate
- All elements of the task build toward accurate, deep understanding of content and are consistent with current disciplinary understandings and practices.

Elicit and Develop Rich Student Language
- Provide deliberate and appropriate opportunities to access, understand, and use the language of the task and discipline
- Provide opportunities for interactive communication, such as constructive conversation with peers
- Include scoring criteria that address the purposeful use of language

Student Engagement: Choice and Decision-Making
- Offer opportunities for student choice (e.g., selecting a research question or topic, selecting sources, deciding how to present findings)
- Provide for diverse ways of responding to the task
- Require student-initiated planning and management of information/data and ideas
- Provide opportunities for self-assessment, peer and teacher feedback, and revision
Student Engagement: Accessibility
● Developmentally and linguistically appropriate and accessible content, context, and task prompt
● Use task materials that are carefully selected, excerpted, or adapted to improve participation and access for all students
● Use a variety of task materials and language supports to engage students and provide different entry points into the task (e.g., multiple sources representing different perspectives, audio, visual, hands-on experimentation, etc.)

Student Engagement: Purpose, Relevance, and Authenticity
● Provide a clear purpose as to why students are being asked to engage in the task that makes a connection to disciplinary content
● Reflect a real-world task and/or scenario-based problem that is culturally sensitive and developmentally and linguistically appropriate for particular students
● Represent content in a way that is authentic, critical, and meaningful to students
● Has an authentic purpose and/or audience

Connected to Curriculum and Instruction
● Aligned to the taught curriculum
● Aligned to the disciplinary understandings, language, and practices that have been developed over time
● Reflects the learning and language experiences students have had prior to the assessment