

PELHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
THE ABCs of ASSESSMENT
A Glossary of Terms

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Pre-Assessments

- Used to discover students' knowledge, understanding, and skill BEFORE a unit of study
- Used to identify specific and general interests that may inform instruction in a unit
- Used by teachers (along with standards, texts, curriculum, etc) to guide instructional decisions
- Should not be graded

Formative Assessment (for learning)

- Administered during a unit of study
- Provide a check of student knowledge, understanding, and skill as a result of a specific learning experience
- Inform instruction and provide insight into ways to adjust the unit plans to meet existing and emerging student needs
- May or may not be graded

Summative Assessment (of learning)

- Take place at the end of a unit of study
- Formats may be negotiable depending on student need and teacher goals
- Should reflect all or most of the unit KUD statements
- Typically graded

Authentic Assessment

- A form of assessment in which students are asked to perform real-world tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills (Jon Mueller)
- "...Engaging and worthy problems or questions of importance, in which students must use knowledge to fashion performances effectively and creatively. The tasks are either replicas of or analogous to the kinds of problems faced by adult citizens and consumers or professionals in the field" (Wiggins, 1993).

Standardized Assessments

- Any form of test that (1) requires all test takers to answer the same questions, or a selection of questions from common bank of questions, in the same way, and that (2) is scored in a "standard" or consistent manner, which makes it possible to compare the relative performance of individual students or groups of students.
- In addition to the familiar multiple-choice format, standardized tests can include true-false questions, short-answer questions, essay questions, or a mix of question types. While standardized tests were traditionally presented on paper and completed using pencils, and many still are, they are increasingly being administered on computers connected to online programs.

Traditional Assessments

- A "traditional assessment" (TA) uses a forced-choice measures of multiple-choice tests, fill-in-the-blanks, true-false, matching and the like that have been and remain so common in education. Students typically select an answer or recall information to complete the assessment. These tests may be standardized or teacher-created. They may be administered locally or statewide, or internationally.

Project-based Learning (PBL)

- PBL is the ongoing act of learning about different subjects simultaneously. This is achieved by guiding students to identify, through research, a real-world problem (local to global) developing its solution using evidence to support the claim, and presenting the solution through a multimedia approach based in a set of 21st-century tools.

Problem-based Learning

- Problem-based learning a subset of project-based learning -- that is, one of the ways a teacher could frame a project is "to solve a problem."

Performance-based Assessments (PBA)

- A synthesis of cognitive engagement, constructivism and 21st century learning outcomes:
 - Cognitive engagement attributes
 - Sustained and engaged attention
 - Planning and managing own learning
 - Effort to understand
 - Sustained, disciplined and critical thinking
 - Challenging activities
 - Constructivist Learning – generating new knowledge and meaning from an interaction between prior experiences and learning through discovery, often in a social environment
 - 21st Century Learning (Pelham Strategic Plan)
 - Think critically and creatively to solve problems with multiple literacies
 - Collaborate and communicate effectively as self-directed learners
 - Integrate technologies seamlessly to enhance excellence in learning
 - Become productive members of a diverse global community

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