

Performance-based Assessment for Health Education

Moving Beyond Multiple Choice

Multiple choice questions play a useful role in quickly measuring what students know in terms of health facts. In contrast, performance-based assessment in health education goes beyond gauging the health *facts* students retain to measuring the *skills* students gain. It also provides opportunities to view student growth in a rich and dynamic way, thus providing a more complete and authentic picture of student achievement.

The Michigan Department of Education is a partner in the Health Education Assessment Project (HEAP) of the State Collaborative on the Assessment of Student Standards (SCASS), a program of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The HEAP identifies three kinds of performance-based assessments:

1. Short, constructed responses, which elicit brief written answers.
2. Extended constructed response, which include essays.
3. Performance tasks, which engage students in more complex tasks that are completed in or outside of the class period, over an extended period of time.

Performance-based assessments may take many forms, such as writing an essay, making an oral or visual presentation, or assembling a collection of representative work known as a portfolio. Good performance-based assessment makes the learning process applicable to students' interests, their everyday lives, and the world around them. When students actively engage in constructing their own responses, as they do in performance-based assessment, they are more likely to develop real, usable health knowledge and skills.

Criteria for Good Performance Assessment

Good performance assessment meets the following criteria.

- It aligns with the standards, benchmarks, student learning objective, and actual instruction.
- It requires students to synthesize what they *know* with what they can *do*.
- It emphasizes higher-order thinking skills.
- It clearly indicates what students are asked to do, but does not instruct how to do it.
- The reading level is appropriate.
- The criteria are clear to both students and teacher.
- The assessment task is engaging and relevant to students.
- Students receive feedback on how to improve their performance.
- It reflects real-world situations.