

Background and Rationale: Classroom Assessment & Evaluation

Establishing clear criteria for evaluation that are aligned with the learning goals and describe, for the student, what quality learning looks, sounds or acts like improves student achievement.

When the K -12 Minnesota Academic Standards in the Arts were first drafted in 1994 and even when they were revised in 2003 (See note below), as a community of arts teachers we had only the concept of declarative and procedural knowledge. We knew that declarative knowledge included factual information that could be assessed with paper and pencil tests, but procedural knowledge needed an assessment activity that required a performance or product.

Rick Stiggins and his associates at the Assessment Training Institute have recently identified **four** specific types of learning (Stiggins uses the word “learning” to refer to what we originally called “knowledge.”) In the Stiggins’ model of learning, declarative knowledge becomes simply *knowledge* while procedural knowledge is broken down into *reasoning*, *skill* and *performance/product*. Stiggins and his colleagues identified these four types of learning—*knowledge*, *reasoning*, *skill* and *performance/product*—by reviewing national and state standard requirements. (For an explanation of the four types of learning, see Stiggins Alignment Chart under **Resources**) It should be noted, however, that generally not all standards require all four types of learning.

Using Stiggins’ four types of learning allows us as arts teachers to be more precise about the best types of assessment activities to use to gather information about the specific student learning called for in a standard benchmark. ***Assessments are activities students complete to demonstrate their learning.*** Students may still demonstrate arts *knowledge* on paper and pencil tests, but for the other types of arts learning such as *performance/product* students may need to develop a portfolio of videotaped music performances (singing or playing an instrument), for *reasoning* they may need to write an artist’s statement for a series of watercolors, for *skill* they may need to edit a short film using specific software. Once teachers have information from the assessment activity by watching, reading, or listening to the student work, they are able to evaluate the quality of the learning. ***Evaluation is the judgment about the level of achievement in student learning.***

To support and facilitate teacher judgments about the level of achievement in student learning, the Perpich staff has analyzed the K-12 MN arts standards using Stiggins’ four types of learning. That analysis was used to develop guideline rubrics for all the arts areas at each of the grade level grouping that are directly aligned to the standards. The guideline rubrics are tools for teachers to use in developing classroom level rubrics that correspond directly to classroom level learning goals based on standards. The important point is that all these—classroom level learning goals, assessment activities and evaluation criteria—must be aligned to improve student achievement.

NOTE: The newly revised 2008 MN K-12 Academic Standards in the Arts were written using the four types of learning defined by Stiggins and his associates. These standards are currently in the process of becoming law. School districts will be required to implement these standards in the school year 1010 – 1011, but many districts are already using these newly revised standards in their work with curriculum and assessment.