

# Assessment Strategy Analysis

## Description:

This tool asks you to analyze how your learning projects incorporate the five strategies of next gen assessment: Formative Assessment, Performance Assessment, Multiple Measures, Badges & Micro-credentials, and Quality Reviews of Learning Experiences.

## Purpose:

Assessment is a means of knowing the whole learner, but like the driver's test, one assessment by itself is certainly not going to get us there! Integrating the five next gen strategies will help you align assessment with holistic, whole learning, and gauge and guide learner progress toward your measures of student success.

## Instructions for Use:

- For this tool, we recommend having the exercise overview to review descriptions of the five strategies handy. (To go even deeper, also reference Report 12: [Assessment Design for Broader, Deeper Competencies](#).)
- Before you begin, review the sample worksheet at the bottom of this document, where we analyze the Mayan Community Project as an example. For a full description of the Mayan project visit the [Tools](#) section on the MyWays' website.
- Choose one learning project to evaluate. Depending on the specific project, you may find it most helpful to work alone or with your co-teachers.
- Work through the tool and describe how each of the five assessment strategies is used (or not used) to assess student progress within that learning project. (Work on hard copy, digitally using the Excel template, or load the template into a Google doc for collaborative editing.)
- Record strengths and weaknesses within each

# Assessment Strategy Analysis

## Project:

### Formative Assessments

To provide the essential foundations for effective learning and personal development

#### How does the project incorporate (illustrative, not comprehensive):

- *Diagnostic assessment as a basis for judging formative progress*
- *Teacher checks for understanding*
- *Self-assessments, reflection, and student-led conferences*
- *Peer assessments*
- *Revisions, iterations, re-dos*
- *Digital adaptive software and simulations with feedback*

### Performance Assessments

To provide the rich context for development and measurement of agency and capability

#### How does the project incorporate (illustrative, not comprehensive):

- *Curriculum-embedded junior versions of real-world tasks and/or bounded performance tasks*
- *Active use by learner as well as teacher of explicit learning objectives, learning progressions, rubrics*
- *Public performances and exhibitions, both arranged by the school, and as natural parts of internships and other real world learning experiences*
- *Student logs and journals*
- *Culminating portfolios, passage, or capstone experiences*

### Multiple Measures

To address the whole learner and the breadth of competencies within next generation learning environments

#### How does the project incorporate (illustrative, not comprehensive):

- *Core formative and performance assessment elements (as above), bolstered by the appropriate use of badges and learning experience evaluation (as below)*
- *The integration of diagnostics, pre- and post-tests, adaptive skills and knowledge testing, and other on-demand summative tests for the purposes of end-of-topic, end-of-course, and progression to next level groupings*
- *Particular focus on multiple and varied measures related to student Agency and competencies for which assessment is still emerging, like Habits of Success and Wayfinding, in order to increase reliability and validity*
- *The addition of other traditional and non-traditional measurement as needed, incorporating simulations, situational judgment, observation by others, improved self-reports, and assessment of individual interests to guide learning paths*
- *The use of data collected in the process of learning (from stealth assessments in learning games and simulations to behavioral or “bio” data on attendance, work completion etc.)*

## Badges & Micro-Credentials

To integrate “anywhere, anytime learning” within personalized learning approaches

### How does the project incorporate (illustrative, not comprehensive):

- *Badges based on demonstrated skills (micro-performance assessments) as well as badges to recognize activity or participation*
- *Badging system created by the school/district/network to capture Agency, Habits, or Wayfinding activity or performance not reflected in core assessments*
- *Incorporation into personalized learning paths of badging systems operating in the wider learning ecosystem*
- *Incorporation into learning paths of other portable, stackable credentials, particularly work- and career-readiness credentials*

## Quality Reviews of Learning Experiences

To ensure the quality of the learner experience when outcomes can't be measured (and even when they can)

### How does the project incorporate (illustrative, not comprehensive):

- *Evaluation of learner experience design*
- *Evaluation of inputs and activities, e.g. using quality standards*
- *Evaluation of educator understanding of human development and use of next gen learning and assessment*
- *Evaluation of school climate and culture to support all four competency arenas*

# Mayan Community Project - Assessment Strategy Analysis Sample

The Mayan sample below provides valuable insight into the multi-layered assessment integrated into the learning experience. You will see in the sample, that the Mayan project demonstrates key elements of the assessment strategies, including:

- While students were challenged to undertake a project beyond their initial comfort zone, many forms of formative assessment were used to give students feedback and direction: writing feedback and revisions, “gallery walks” (what architects call “crits”), peer assessment, content checks, and self-reflection.
- The entire project—a book research and publishing enterprise with both simulated and authentic qualities—includes both an overall performance assessment as well as component performance tasks for the research, book creation, sales and marketing, public performance, and the giving of the charitable donation.
- The project is “a series of assessment-embedded learning experiences with multiple forms of measurement.” Most of the assessments are formative and performance but traditional content assessment is also incorporated. As noted in the analysis, many of the approaches expand assessment into the hard-to-measure arenas like Habits of Success and Wayfinding Abilities.
- The analysis summarizes three ways that evaluation of the Mayan learning experience improved the quality of the project: the application of established design parameters in the project creation,

## Project: Mayan Community Project

### Formative Assessments

#### How these are incorporated:

- **Revisions** : Drafts, feedback, and revisions are central to this project – enabling the students to experience the kind of feedback and revision that takes place in book publishing. As the teacher noted “Students revised the text three or four times. They helped each other make the writing fit the audience and gave suggestions to their peers before I ever saw the work. Their illustrations went through multiple gallery walks, critiques, and revisions before the final was created.”
- **Feedback/Critique:** HTH has some specific protocols for feedback, including, as just mentioned, gallery walks and critiques. “Gallery walks” occur when each team/group posts a piece of work in the classroom and the class spends 15-20 minutes walking around the “gallery” writing feedback on specific parts of the task rubric on sticky-notes. Another type of HTH feedback is the “feature” critique, used to highlight one particular piece of work a team has created, that is never “perfect” but should serve as a good example for others to learn from. All feedback of either type must be “kind, specific, and helpful,” and the intention is that the specific protocols scaffold what will become a “culture of critique,” where students are informally critiquing and thereby supporting each other’s work on an on-going, collaborative basis.
- **Peer assessment:** In addition to the class-wide forms of feedback mentioned above, much of the revision for each student’s personal book page is based on assessment by peers who have applied and been chosen for specific publishing job roles. Peer Senior Editors “...went through every student’s book page to make sure there were no mistakes. They especially loved their editor’s stamp that said APPROVED and CHANGES NEEDED.” Peer Senior Translators were responsible for providing feedback on the Spanish versions of their classmates’ book pages.
- **Formative content checks:** When learning about the Mayan culture at the beginning of the project, the teacher incorporates formative assessments including the sharing of student-created study guides with other class members, and quizzes on student-created presentations. HTH encourages the use of these and other formative assessment on content, including pair-and-shares, and check-ins, both to see how students are progressing against rubrics and how they feel their learning is going. One version of this is the use of exit cards (asking students to explain one thing they learned that day or one question they still had).
- **Reflection:** One of the learning outcomes of the project is that students can “discuss and reflect on the effectiveness of their business and marketing strategies.” At the Book Signing exhibition night all students were expected to “be prepared to explain what you learned from the process” to an authentic community audience.

### Performance Assessments

#### How these are incorporated:

- **Overall experience:** The project is an extended performance learning experience, or (from an assessment perspective) a “classroom-embedded performance assessment.” Students demonstrate their knowledge and skills by working through real-life collaborative processes and creating authentic products over an extended period of time. The engagement level for the project is raised considerably by the authenticity of the simulated publishing process. As the teacher noted, “It was important to me that this be a very real process from the researching of information to the final book signing.... The stakes were very high; published authors can’t cut corners.”

- **Component Performance Tasks** –The set of tasks in the project were rich and integrated but also carefully designed so there were both formative/process and summative/product or performance elements that covered the learning objectives. For the formative elements, see previous row. A selection of the more summative product- and performance-oriented assessment elements include:
  - **Research** – phase culminates in development and delivery of Group PowerPoint presentations, but content knowledge and understanding feeds further into book page creation
  - **Book creation** – writing of a persuasive cover letter and “job” application for publishing job positions/committees; creation of book page with illustrations and Spanish translation;
  - **Sales and marketing** – student creation of website for marketing the book; letter writing, phone calling and other communications, creation of promotional materials, and numerous other tasks for class sales effort. “The communications committee got us TV interview on the local morning show, the fundraisers put on a huge school wide “Battle of the Bands” to raise money.” “It astounded, and humbled, me that the kids could accomplish so much on their own. They made all of San Diego their audience, from chanting, “Help Mayan kids” at their bake sales to having neighborhood car washes, to inviting everyone they knew to our book signings. They took every aspect of their work seriously...”
  - **Public performance** – Some of the “public performances” were embedded throughout the project: “The public relations group would be making calls to radio stations in the office, the sales committee would be down the hall working on a fundraiser, the senior editors would be chasing people to fix their book page...everyone was everywhere. As our classroom transformed into a publishing house, the students learned that book publishing is full of phone calls, debates, deadlines, checklists and meetings.” At the end, the Publication Party served as a summative experience (exhibition/ performance) that showcased the students’ knowledge of Mayan culture and the business skills developed during the project.
  
- **Charitable donation to Guatemalan schoolchildren** – One of the three key learning objectives of the project was for the students to “experience the feeling of agency or empowerment in helping others.” The delivery of the donation represented a performance outcome that was just as meaningful to the HTH students as it was for the Guatemalan student who benefited from it. “By choosing to sell the alphabet books they’d made in class, my students took on a huge fundraising project that turned content knowledge into a product of value outside of our walls....The Mayan Community Project raised \$1,500 to pay for schooling for six Guatemalan students in the first year and seven students in the second. The class’s hard work kept those kids in school. No one wanted to let them down; it wasn’t an option.” Teacher Heather Lovell summed this element of the performance assessment beautifully: “Rarely does anything from middle school really last in the minds, much less hearts, of students. I really wanted to make this project continue on outside of our little classroom; I wanted it to affect my students and show them that they can touch other lives with their work.” Students’ learning journals reflected this impact.

## Multiple Measures

### How these are incorporated:

- **A system of multiple, integrated assessments:** like the MA Driver’s License presented in the exercise overview, assessment for the Mayan project is really a “series of assessment-embedded learning experiences with multiple forms of measurement.” Here are the primary components of the Mayan assessment, with their weightings, as listed for the students:

“Since this is such an extensive project, there will be many graded activities throughout the project. The following is a list of some of the primary components of the students’ final grades:”

#### Research

- Individual Research Notes 1: 20 points
- Group Power Point: 50 points
- PP Study Guide/Quiz Questions: 30 points
- Content Quiz: 20 points

#### Book Page

- First draft: 15 points
- Second Draft: 15 points
- Third Draft w/color illustration: 20 points
- Completed Page & Illustration: 80 points

#### Business Phase

- Business Plan: 50 points

- Most assessment is formative and performance assessment, integrated into the “whole learning” junior version learning experience . While the list of components above confirms that the project has a system of multiple, integrated assessments, it does not make evident what “type” of assessments are involved. As the previous sections of this table confirm, the vast majority of the assessment activity in the project is either formative assessment involving feedback, iteration, and reflection aimed at improving skills and knowledge, or performance assessment that focused on research, editing, business planning, public presentation, scheduling, collaboration, study, and self-management skills, among others.
- The project also includes elements of more traditional and on-demand summative assessment, aimed particularly at content understanding, including: teacher grading of research notes; the creation of study guides and PPT presentations by students on specific content areas; the sharing of these study guides and presentations; quizzes and tests to “demonstrate knowledge of the content in the presentations;” and an in-class essay test. Rob Riordan, the co-founder of HTH, [explains](#) that, while the network focuses on assessing what students “really need to know now... how to access content, play with it, transform it, synthesize it, and use it, and how to work with others to do all of that” they also “do content assessment as well, because that can also offer a window on how well you’ve executed some of these processes,” as well as making sure that learners are where they should be with regard to content knowledge and core skills.
- **How well the project assessed the four MyWays competency arenas:** The project provided abundant opportunity for learners to develop aspects of all four MyWays arenas – including Habits of Success and Wayfinding Abilities. (For the learning areas covered, see the completed Competency Correlation Project Worksheet in the Learning Design Exercise. In terms of assessment, it is clear (see cells above) that the project provides continuous, integrated formative and performance assessment for the Content Knowledge and Creative Know How competencies involved. Despite strong development opportunities for Habits of Success and Wayfinding Abilities, there appears to be less explicit “assessment” of how this development progresses. This is common, even in next gen whole learning environments. But it is clear that progress in aspects of these two arenas are attended to in less formal ways, as expressed through student learning journals.

HTH as a network has recently started defining and “assessing” these competencies more directly, through reflection, exhibition, and opportunities for advisory groups and individuals to progress through playlists that address Habits and Wayfinding competencies engaged during their project-based whole learning. At HTH Chula Vista, for example, they have established habits of heart and mind (like persistence, mindfulness, and evidence), and created a Presentation of Learning for these competencies where students present artifacts of their learning and talk about how they show the progress they’ve made in these areas. Another HTH middle school teacher also created a playlist curriculum called “[Guts, Goals and Grit: A Socio-emotional Curriculum for Understanding Learning](#).” According to the teacher, “The unit evolved out of student reflections after a challenging year-long project... I was struck by how they were grappling with understanding their own learning and how it related to their ideas of success and self-worth.”

## Badges & Micro-Credentials

### How these are incorporated:

The Mayan project incorporates the wider learning ecosystem in its learning design: learners undertake parts of the project “in the real world” and by interacting with adults beyond their teacher – negotiating with school faculty to arrange Battle of the Bands, booking promotional interviews with the local radio station, interacting with the community at bake sales and car washes to raise funds, selling their Mayan book to businesses, family, and community members. The project does not, however, incorporate badging for this wider ecosystem activity. Should the school wish to do this, they could create badges to “recognize” certain activities or “certify” specific skills developed in the parts of the project taking place outside the school’s walls. Or they could encourage the students to access external badges for activities like the mastery of PPT or website design.

## Quality Reviews of Learning Experiences

### How these are incorporated:

With an expanded goal line that targets not only knowledge and know how but also aims to help students develop Habits of Success, Wayfinding Ability, and the student agency involved in all arenas, sometimes it is either not possible or not desirable to try to gauge progress by measuring specific student outcomes, even through performance assessment. In these arenas, the most important starting point is to at least offer experiences that enable students to engage and practice the competencies. But we don't need to do this blindly. In this case, it is appropriate to step back from measuring outcomes to look at inputs and outputs – evaluating the experiences, programs, to ensure that these experiences are relevant and of high quality. The Mayan project illustrates several aspects of evaluation, and its proactive twin, design based on time-tested and evidence-based principles:

- **The use of design parameters in project creation** – Heather Lovell notes that she followed Adriana Steinberg's guidelines for designing authentic projects (which are similar in many ways to David Perkins' whole learning principles). Here she describes how her project design was influenced by one of these principles, connection to the real world: "Authenticity is necessary to make work in school directly access the real world and have an effect on that world, not simply be a copy or simulation of the real world. In her article, "Real Learning, Real Work: School-to-Work as High School Reform," Steinberg presents several guidelines for designing authentic projects. Many of her ideas really hit home for me, in particular her belief that students should see a reason for doing what they are doing in school beyond getting a grade. In setting up the Mayan Community Project everything tied back to our goal of helping students in Guatemala."
- **Evaluation and calibration of the projects, how they balance challenge and support, and how they are tuned over time.** Heather Lovell referenced this kind of evaluation, which included attention to some of the same factors of junior versions, such as scaffolding of student agency and iteration of project design: "The Mayan Community Project is always an adventure and, to me, illustrates the fun and chaos possible from project-based learning. The beginning is very researched based and somewhat controlled, but as the project moves toward completion, the students take over in their committees, and I feel more and more in the shadows of their work." ... "This year every single student submitted several drafts of their text, several drafts of their illustration, and an attempt at Spanish translation." ... "Being the second year of the project, the precedent was already set at raising at least \$1,500 so that the same six students sent to school last year would be able to continue and not have to stop schooling. My students really tuned into the fact that they had the power to help others and ran with it. I had never seen them so careful with their writing, their researching, their fundraising or their attitudes....So far this year we have already raised much more than last year and still have books to sell."
- **While independent evaluation can also be valuable, HTH has a protocol for teacher reflection on project completion** that encourages a continuous critique and improvement culture. In this protocol, a teacher analyzes:
  - What went well?
  - What would I do differently? (e.g. integration of more content lessons, elements that could be further standardized to enable focus on more important work or to make it easier for students to direct more of their own work)
  - What about support for diverse learners? (e.g. team roles, variety of just in time teaching and learning techniques, exemplars/explicit visualization of end goals, close communication, and ongoing assessment)
  - What might this project might look like with greater curriculum integration? Is it possible to make it more holistic?