



## Exercise Four - Design Assessment

Assessment Design as Integrated as Your Definition of Student Success

*"Truly, assessment can be a powerful force for knowing our students...We simply have to move past the baggage that comes with the term assessment, and understand that it can mean a lot of things. We can assess for content and skills, yes, but we can also assess for passions, interests, success skills, and the like for the purposes of the right instruction at the right time."*

- Andrew Miller, Edutopia blog

What should next gen assessment for broader and deeper competencies look like? The ability to "measure what we value" in a world that has shifted is a mission-critical challenge to next generation educators. There is not yet a finished blueprint for next generation assessment; no glossy catalog of proven assessment tools and methods; no formula for replacing low-cost, narrow accountability testing with thoughtful investments in gauging the progress of the whole learner. On the other hand, there are pockets of extensive research and some developing practice in measuring learning and competency in specific settings and skill areas.

This exercise focuses on assessment, digging into how well your designed assessment activities support and gauge student progress on the broader competencies you're focused on. The tools in this exercise will help you (and, ultimately, the students as participants themselves) answer this crucial question:

**How do we gauge students' progress in developing richer competencies?**

### ◆ Here are two tools that can help you get there:

- [Assessment Strategy Analysis Worksheet](#) - This tool helps you map assessment of individual projects to the five MyWays assessment strategies: Performance Assessment, Formative Assessment, Quality Reviews, Badges and Micro-credentials, and Multiple Measures.
- [Assessment Competency Correlation Worksheet](#) - This tool asks you to map your use of the five assessment strategies to the MyWays competencies, which helps you see the big picture of your assessments.

## ◆ Key Concepts

Before you dive into using the tools, there are some important concepts about next gen assessment to dig into first. As we have mentioned in other exercises, reading the associated reports will be most beneficial to deepen your learning and understanding. But we want you to be able to roll your sleeves up and play with these tools even if you haven't yet read the reports. Understanding these concepts will let you do that.

### Concept 1 - Why Assessment as It Is Designed Now Just Isn't Working

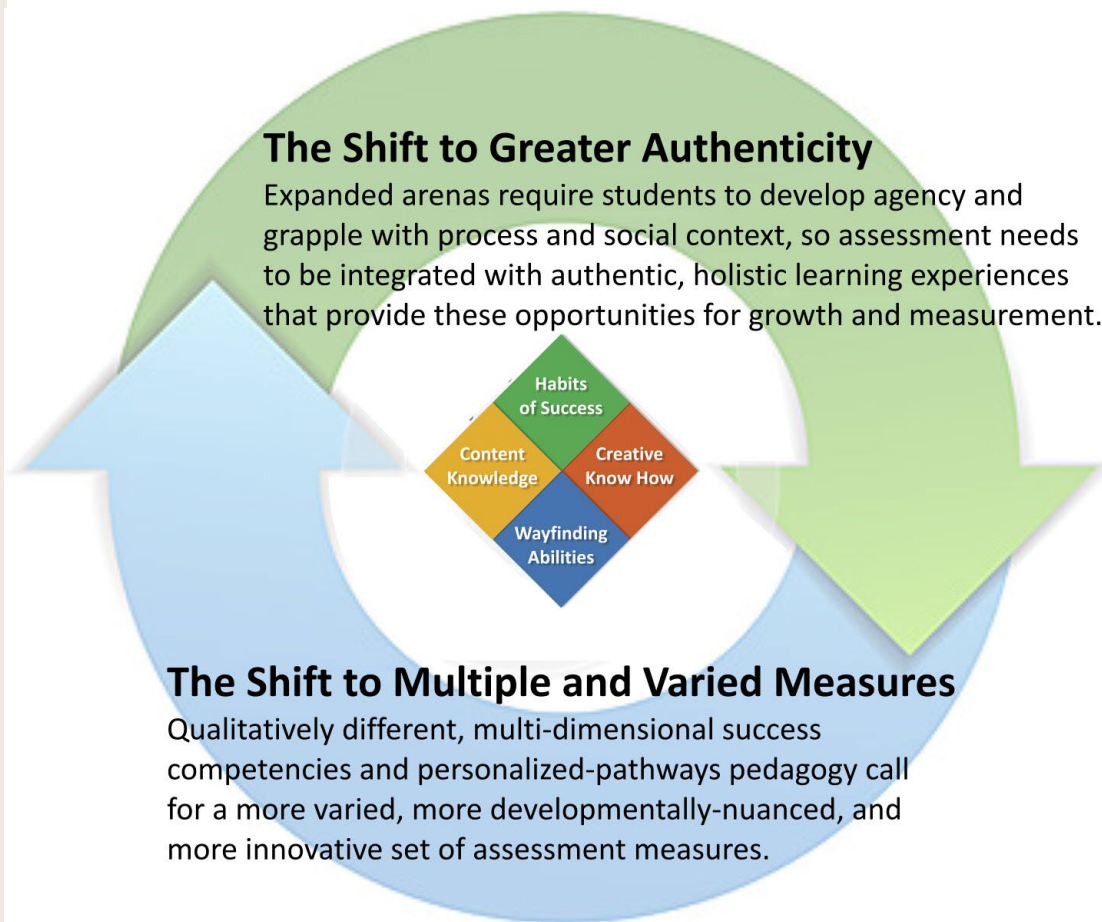
The state of assessment today across the broader competency range is fragmented, uneven, and fails to support the goals of next generation learning. Some of the shortcomings in current assessment practices have to do with the narrow range of what is measured, but much of the challenge arises from the nature of the assessments commonly carried out, even for traditional competencies, due to the ongoing preoccupation with accountability. The graphic to the right illustrates how the MyWays competency arenas are typically assessed, if they are measured at all.

As discussed in earlier exercises, the expanded arenas of MyWays require students to develop agency within all the competencies, and grapple with process and social context, so assessment needs to be integrated with authentic, whole learning experiences that provide opportunities for growth and measurement across multiple competencies at once.



## Concept 2 - Greater Authenticity & Multiple, Varied Measures

Measuring broader and deeper competencies comprised of both capability and agency (since, MyWays researchers have found, that can be understood to equal competence) requires new approaches to assessment. Not only must we begin to assess hard-to-measure competencies like creativity, social skills, and wayfinding abilities; we must also gauge how well students “own” these competencies and apply them in real-life settings. To do this, we believe the crucial first step for next gen educators is to adopt these two paradigm shifts in assessment practice, highlighted in the visual below:



**The shift to greater authenticity** is what you learned and practiced when it came to Whole Learning in Exercise Three. The learning design needs to be holistic and authentic *and* so do the ways we measure it. Assessment needs to move away from poor proxies, like measuring a single competency via a multiple choice test, to, instead, measuring competencies in the big, real, wild and crazy world in which our students live and spend their time. Currently this is not how assessment typically looks. You can see in the table below, traditional assessments, especially most state testing, focuses on performance on non-authentic measures like multiple choice questions. Better state tests and Advanced Placement assessments include essays that enable students to construct responses at higher orders of thinking, but do not incorporate more complex, authentic contexts or

settings, nor do they generally ask students to apply skills and knowledge across domains — as they'll certainly have to in the real world.

Assessment of broader and deeper competencies is *only* fully possible through measurement embedded in Whole Learning approaches involving rich simulation, extended projects, or immersion in real world settings — contexts that increase the development of student agency, capability, and adaptability. See the table below for more examples of this.

	Standardized Student Assessments	Tasks in the Outside World
Knowledge is:	Measured <b>within a subject</b>	Applied <b>across disciplines</b> , along with other skills, to solve real world problems, create products, and generate new knowledge.
Asked to address:	<b>Facts and application of simple procedures</b> to well-defined problems	<b>Complex, disorderly problems</b> in real world contexts.
Work is done:	<b>Individually</b>	<b>Individually and in groups of others</b> with complementary skills to accomplish a shared goal.
Resources available:	<b>Without access to outside information</b> , and use only paper and pencil	The challenge is to <b>evaluate information from a wide range of tools and resources</b> to find <b>what's relevant</b> to analyze problems and create solutions

Adapted for the Stupski Foundation from *Transforming Education: Teaching and Assessing 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills* (Cisco, Intel, Microsoft), 2010

**Dig Deeper** - Check out the report [Assessment Design for Broader & Deeper Competencies](#), and take a look at the field of learning and the examples of next assessments from places like Big Picture Learning, High Tech High, New Hampshire PACE, among others for more fodder as you work through these tools.

The second paradigm shift is moving to **multiple and varied measures**, and away from single, narrow assessments. A simple quiz or test might be able to confirm basic mastery of multiplication tables, but what about competencies like building relationships or practical life skills, like managing personal finances? These broader competencies require multiple forms of measurement that are more varied, more developmentally-nuanced, and better integrated.

For example, consider the multiple measures given to new drivers. At first glance, one might associate the road test as the qualifier for getting one's license, but that's not the case. Over the past century, states have evolved their systems of mandatory requirements to ensure the safety of drivers (and everyone else on the road!). The act of getting a

license is now an assessment-embedded learning experiences with multiple forms of measurement, addressing content knowledge, application, and creative know how, through authentic performance. This is how you should be thinking as you design your own assessments. Check out the table below for the driving requirements in Massachusetts as an example of this.

### Assessment elements for MA driver's license

MA requirements	Assessment involved
<b>Written test of road rules — to get permit</b>	<b>Multiple choice, fact-based</b> ; summative gateway to learner's permit
<b>30 hours of classroom instruction, with test at end</b>	<b>Formative feedback</b> ; scenarios for understanding of skills, consequences; summative knowledge test
<b>Computer simulations</b>	Incorporating <b>application of knowledge and skills</b>
<b>6 hours of official driving observation</b>	Introduction to the <b>authentic learning environment</b> ; group/peer learning
<b>12 hours of official driving practice</b>	Practice loops in <b>authentic environment with instant instructor feedback</b>
<b>40 hours additional practice, usually with parents</b>	Practice loops in <b>varying circumstances</b> (different adult, different car), confirming transfer
<b>2-hour parent education class</b>	No assessment. Requirement is “programmatic”/seat time
<b>The road test</b>	<b>Performance-based assessment in complex, authentic environment</b>

## Concept 3 - Five Assessment Strategies

As you contemplate and design these authentic assessments, there are five key strategies we recommend focusing on. Here's a brief summary of each one:

**Formative assessment:** Frequent iterations of measurement; verbal, written, and peer feedback; and, perhaps most importantly, reflection — aligned and integrated with learning design — have proven to be some of the most powerful strategies in enhancing achievement. Formative assessment is a vital tool for the learner as well as teacher; done right, it encourages the ownership of one's learning. Accordingly, a crucial area of innovation for next generation educators is tying formative (as well as performance) assessment to learning progressions and rubrics for hard-to-recognize, hard-to-measure Creative Know How, Habits of Success, and Wayfinding Abilities competencies such as creativity, social skills, and finding needed resources.

**Performance assessment:** Although they are not commonly found in traditional school models, performance assessments have been used for decades. Here, we focus on authentic performance assessments through which students demonstrate the broader range of knowledge and skills by performing real-world tasks that require those skills.

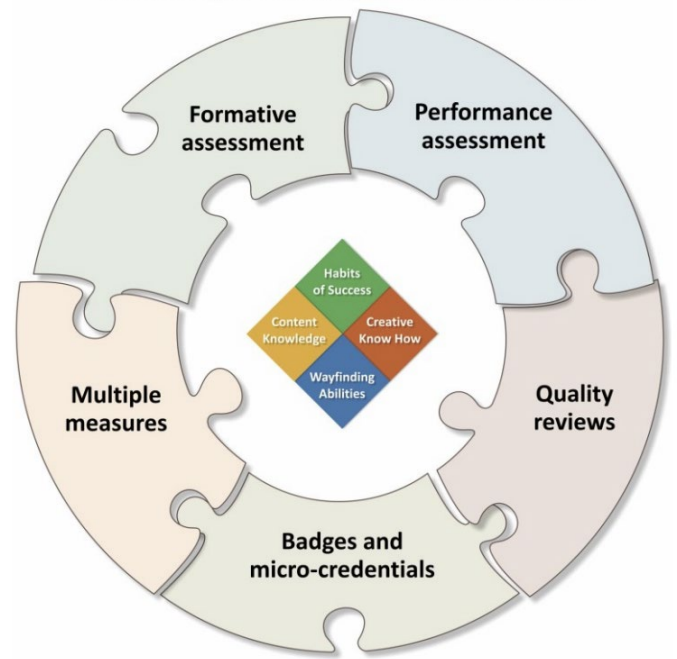
## Five strategies for next generation assessment

Curriculum-embedded performance assessments, within quality project-based or Wider Learning Ecosystem experiences, provide the greatest opportunity for assessing broader and deeper competencies.

**Multiple measures:** Like the driver's license example, any complex competency requires more than one assessment type. This is certainly true of hard-to-measure Creative Know How, Habits of Success, or Wayfinding competencies like entrepreneurship, self-direction, and navigating personal journeys. In addition, multiple measures will likely be needed to gauge both the capability and agency aspects of any competency. Multiple measures should include formative and performance assessments; they might also usefully include diagnostics, pre- and post-tests, adaptive testing, and summative tests for the purposes of end-of-topic, end-of-course, and progression-to-next-level evaluations. In today's world, most educators will also need to include tests for the purposes of accountability. Accordingly, next generation educators need the ability to identify, administer, evaluate, and integrate multiple and varied assessment elements, tailoring the mix with both the learner and the competency's purpose and nature in mind.

**Badges and micro-credentials:** Any system of assessment should make learning visible, transparent, and portable. Badges and micro-credentials help accomplish these goals for the aspiring learner, for teachers and student advocates, and (as screening/signaling devices) for subsequent academic institutions and employers. Badge systems range from those requiring micro-performance assessments to those verifying participation in a quality experience likely to promote competencies. For Wayfinding Abilities, for example, a badge related to exploring college options would require not just "visiting three colleges," but "creating a list of four characteristics most important to my college experience, visiting three colleges, and providing reflections on how each matched up to [or altered] the four characteristics I chose to look for in a college." Schools (especially high schools) across the country are experimenting with badging and micro-credentialing in creative ways; check out Del Lago Academy, a public high school near San Diego, and its [CompetencyX](#) internship badging program.

**Quality reviews:** For some competencies, there is little consensus on valid, reliable, context-sensitive measures of student outcomes. For these hard-to-measure competencies, educators can still evaluate the learning experience itself to ensure quality and maximize the potential for student development. A quality review involves evaluating qualitative and quantitative data on the experience design and



implementation against defined learning objectives and a logic model of how those objectives can best be met. In many cases, quality reviews can be informed by excellent, established quality standards based on longstanding real-world practice such as those for internships in places like [Big Picture Learning](#) and career exploration at [Linked Learning](#). Reviews can focus on user experience and learning design, the school climate and culture likely to support competency development, and educator expertise in human development and brain science. While essential for hard-to-measure competencies, quality reviews can also complement assessment of any student competency and foster program improvement.

**Great tool alert!** Check out Pages 15-23 in [Assessment Design for Broader, Deeper Competencies](#) for two-page primers on each of these assessment strategies.

## ◆ Dig Deeper

The MyWays website is rich with information for you to explore. We recommend taking a look at Report 12 [Assessment Design for Broader, Deeper Competencies](#) as you work through the exercises.

## ◆ Putting Concepts to Work: Download Tools

Now that you have explored the key concepts, it's time to start playing, practicing, inventing and applying. When you download the tools, you will find the tool itself, along with a deeper description of its purpose and simple instructions for use.

Assessment  
Strategy  
Analysis  
Worksheet

Assessment  
Competency  
Correlation  
Worksheet