

STUDENT PRODUCT ASSESSMENT FORM

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Rationale Underlying this Assessment Form

The purpose of this form is to guide your judgment in the qualitative assessment of various types of products developed by students in enrichment programs. In using the instrument, three major considerations should always be kept in mind. First, the evaluation of more complex and creative types of products is always a function of human judgment. We do not think in terms of percentiles or standard scores when we evaluate paintings, architectural designs, or the usefulness of a labor-saving device. We must consider these products in terms of our own values and certain characteristics that indicate the quality, aesthetics, utility, and function of the overall contribution. In other words, we must trust our own judgment and learn to rely upon our guided subjective opinions when making assessments about complex products.

A second consideration relates to the individual worth of the product as a function of the student's age/grade level and experiential background. For example, a research project that reflects an advanced level investigation and subsequent product by a first grader might not be considered an equally advanced level of involvement on the part of a sixth grader. Similarly, the work of a youngster from a disadvantaged background must be considered in light of the student's overall educational experiences, opportunities and availability of advanced level resource persons, materials, and equipment.

The third consideration relates to the most important purpose of any evaluation—student growth and improvement. This assessment instrument should be used to guide students toward excellence, and, therefore, we strongly believe that it should be shared and discussed with students *before* the product is started. In other words, we believe the instrument should be reviewed with students during the early planning stages of the product. Students should have the opportunity to know and fully understand on what basis their final products will be assessed.

Instructions for Using the Assessment Form

Although most of the items included on the form relate directly to characteristics of the final product, it will also be helpful if you have access to planning devices that have been used in the development of the product. Such planning devices might include logs, contracts, management plans, proposals, or any other record keeping system. A planning device can help you to determine if pre-stated objectives have been met by comparing statements of objectives from the planning device with the final product. If such a planning device has not been used or is unavailable, you may want to request students to complete a form that will provide you with the necessary background information. It is recommended that some type of planning device accompany all products

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that are submitted for rating. If it can be arranged, you may also want to interview the student who completed the product.

In using the *Student Product Assessment Form (SPAF)* it will sometimes be necessary for you to do some detective work. For example, in determining the diversity of resources, you may need to examine footnotes, bibliographies or references, and materials listed on the planning device. You may also want to have the student complete a self evaluation form relating to the completed product. This form may help to assess task commitment and student interest.

The *Student Product Assessment Form* can be used in a variety of ways. Individual teachers, resource persons, or subject matter specialists can evaluate products independently or collectively as members of a team. When two or more persons evaluate the same product independently, the average rating for each scale item can be calculated and entered on the Summary Form. When used in a research setting or formal evaluation situation, it is recommended that products be independently evaluated by three raters. One of these ratings should be completed by the teacher under whose direction the product was developed. A second form should be completed by a person who has familiarity with the subject matter area of the product. For example, a high school science teacher might be asked to rate the work of an elementary grade student who has completed a science-related product. The third rater might be someone who is independent of the school system or program in which the work was carried out.

Item Format

At first glance the items on *SPAF* may seem to be long and complicated, but they are actually quite concise. Each item represents a single characteristic that is designed to focus your attention. The items are divided into the following three related parts:

1. *The Key Concept.* This concept is always present first and is printed in large type. It should serve to focus your attention on the main idea or characteristic being evaluated.
2. *The Item Description.* Following the Key Concept are one or more descriptive statements about how the characteristic might be reflected in the student's product. These statements are listed under the Key Concept.
3. *Examples.* In order to help clarify the meanings of the items, an actual example of student work is provided. The examples are intended to elaborate upon the meaning of both the Key Concept and the Item Description. The examples are presented following each item description.

Important Note: The last item (No. 9) deals with an overall assessment of the product. In this case, we have chosen a somewhat different format and examples have not been provided. When completing the ratings for Item No. 9, you should consider the product as a whole (globally) rather than evaluating its separate components in an analytic fashion.

Some of the items may appear to be unusually long or "detailish" for a rating scale, but our purpose here is to improve the clarity and thus inter-rater reliability for the respective items. After you have used the scales a few times, you will probably only need to read the Key Concepts and Item Descriptions in order to refresh your memory about the meaning of an item. Research has

shown inter-rater reliability is improved when items are more descriptive and when brief examples are provided in order to help clarify any misunderstanding that may exist on the parts of different raters.

“Not Applicable” Items

Because of the difficulty of developing a single instrument that will be universally applicable to all types of products, occasionally there will be instances when some of the items do not apply to specific products. For example, in a creative writing project (poem, play, story) either the Level of Resources (No. 3) or Diversity of Resources (No. 4) might not apply if the student is writing directly from his/her own experiences. It should be emphasized, however, that the “Not Applicable” category should be used very rarely in most rating situations.

How To Rate Student Products

1. Fill out the information requested at the top of the Summary Sheet that accompanies the *Student Product Assessment Form*. A separate Summary Sheet should be filled out for each product to be evaluated.
2. Review the nine items on the *Student Product Assessment Form*. This review will help to give you a “mind set” for the things you will be looking for as you examine each product.
3. Examine the product by first doing a quick overview of the entire piece of work. Then do a careful and detailed examination of the product. Check (✓) pages or places that you might want to reexamine and jot down brief notes and comments about any strengths, weaknesses, or questions that occur as you review the product.
4. Turn to the first item on the *Student Product Assessment Form*. Read the Key Concept, Item Description, and Example. Enter the number that best represents your assessment in the “Rating” column on the Summary Sheet. Enter only whole numbers. In other words, do not enter ratings of 3.5 or 2.25. On those rare occasions when you feel an item does not apply, please check the NA column on the Summary Sheet. Please note that we have only included an NA response option for Item 9a on the Overall Assessment.
5. Turn to the second item and repeat the above process. If you feel you cannot render a judgment immediately, skip the item and return to it at a later time. Upon completion of the assessment process, you should have entered a number (or a check in the NA column) for all items on the Summary Sheet.
6. Any comments you would like to make about the product can be entered at the bottom of the Summary Sheet.

STUDENT PRODUCT ASSESSMENT FORM SUMMARY SHEET

Name(s): _____ Date: _____
 District: _____ School: _____
 Teacher: _____ Grade: _____ Sex: _____
 Product (Title and/or Brief Description): _____

 Number of Weeks Student(s) Worked on Product: _____

RATING SCALES	
Factors 1-8 5 - To a great extent 3 - Somewhat 1 - To a limited extent	Factors 9A-9G 5 = Outstanding 4 = Above Average 3 = Average 2 = Below Average 1 = Poor

FACTORS	RATING	NOT APPLICABLE
1. Early Statement of Purpose	_____	_____
2. Problem Focusing	_____	_____
3. Level of Resources	_____	_____
4. Diversity of Resources	_____	_____
5. Appropriateness of Resources	_____	_____
6. Logic, Sequence, and Transition	_____	_____
7. Action Orientation	_____	_____
8. Audience	_____	_____
9. Overall Assessment	_____	_____
A. Originality of the Idea	_____	_____
B. Achieved Objectives Stated in Plan	_____	_____
C. Advanced Familiarity with Subject	_____	_____
D. Quality Beyond Age/Grade Level	_____	_____
E. Care, Attention to Details, etc.	_____	_____
F. Time, Effort, Energy	_____	_____
G. Original Contribution	_____	_____

Comments:

Person Completing This Form _____

STUDENT PRODUCT ASSESSMENT FORM

1. EARLY STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Is the purpose (theme, thesis, research question) readily apparent in the early stages of the student’s product? In other words, did the student define the topic or problem in such a manner that a clear understanding about the nature of the product emerges shortly after a review of the material?

For example, in a research project dealing with skunks of northwestern Connecticut completed by a first grade student, the overall purpose and scope of the product are readily apparent after reading the introductory paragraphs.

5	4	3	2	1	NA
To a great extent		Somewhat		To a limited extent	

2. PROBLEM FOCUSING

Did the student focus or clearly define the topic so that it represents a relatively specific problem within a larger area of study?

For example, a study of “Drama in Elizabethan England” would be more focused than “A Study of Drama.”

5	4	3	2	1	NA
To a great extent		Somewhat		To a limited extent	

3. LEVEL OF RESOURCES

Is there evidence that the student used resource materials or equipment that are more advanced, technical, or complex than materials ordinarily used by students at this age/grade level?

For example, a sixth grade student utilizes a nearby university library to locate information about the history of clowns in the twelfth through sixteenth century in the major European countries.

5	4	3	2	1	NA
To a great extent		Somewhat		To a limited extent	

4. DIVERSITY OF RESOURCES

Has the student made an effort to use several different types of resource materials in the development of the product? Has the student used any of the following information sources in addition to the standard use of encyclopedias: textbooks, record/statistic books, biographies, how-to books, periodicals, films and filmstrips, letters, phone calls, personal interviews, surveys or polls, catalogs and/or others?

For example, a fourth grade student interested in the weapons and vehicles used in World War II read several adult-level books on this subject which included biographies, autobiographies, periodicals, and record books. He also conducted oral history interviews with local veterans of World War II, previewed films and film strips about the period and collected letters from elderly citizens sent to them from their sons stationed overseas.

5	4	3	2	1	NA
To a great extent		Somewhat		To a limited extent	

5. APPROPRIATENESS OF RESOURCES

Did the student select appropriate reference materials, resource persons, or equipment for the topic or area of study?

For example, a student who is interested in why so much food is thrown away in the school cafeteria contacted state officials to learn about state requirements and regulations which govern what must and can be served in public school cafeterias. With the aid of her teacher, she also located resource books on how to design, conduct, and analyze a survey.

5	4	3	2	1	NA
To a great extent		Somewhat		To a limited extent	

6. LOGIC, SEQUENCE, AND TRANSITION

Does the product reflect a logical sequence of steps or events that ordinarily would be followed when carrying out an investigation in this area of study? Are the ideas presented clearly and logically and is there a smooth transition from one idea or subtopic to another?

For example, a student decided to investigate whether or not a section of his city needs a new fire station with a salaried staff rather than the present volunteer staff. First the student researched different methods of investigative reporting such as appropriate interview skills. Next the student conducted interviews with both salaried and volunteer fire station staff. He then learned about methods of survey design and reporting in order to analyze local resident opposition or support for the new fire station. After other logical steps in his research were completed, his accumulated findings led him to interviews with the Mayor and

the Board of Safety in the city and then to several construction companies that specialized in bids on such buildings. His final product was an editorial in the local newspaper which reflected his research and conclusions.

5	4	3	2	1	NA
To a great extent		Somewhat		To a limited extent	

7. ACTION ORIENTATION

Is it clear that the major goal of this study was for purposes other than merely reporting on or reproducing existing information, ideas, or knowledge? In other words, the student’s purpose is clearly directed toward some kind of action (e.g., teaching ways to improve bicycle safety, presenting a lecture on salt pond life); some type of literary or artistic product (e.g., poem, painting, costume design); a scientific device or research study (e.g., building a robot, measuring plant growth as a function of controlled heat, light, and moisture); or some type of leadership or managerial endeavor (e.g., editing a newspaper, producing/directing a movie).

For example, a student decides to study the history of his city. After an extensive investigation, the student realizes that other history books have been written about the city. He finds, instead, that no one has ever isolated specific spots of historical significance in the city which are easily located and accessible. He begins this task and decides to focus his research to produce an original historical walking tour of the city.

5	4	3	2	1	NA
To a great extent		Somewhat		To a limited extent	

8. AUDIENCE

Is an appropriate audience specified or readily apparent in the product or management plan?

For example, the student who researched the history of his city to produce an original walking tour presents his tour to the city council and the mayor. They, in turn, adopt it as the official walking tour of the city. It is reproduced in the city newspaper and distributed by the local historical society, library, and given out to registered guests in the city’s hotels and motels.

5	4	3	2	1	NA
To a great extent		Somewhat extent		To a limited	

9. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

Considering the product as a whole, provide a general rating for each of the following factors and mark the space provided to the right of the item:

RATING SCALE	
5 = Outstanding	2 = Below Average
4 = Above Average	1 = Poor
3 = Average	

- A. Originality of the idea. _____
- B. Achieved objectives stated in plan. _____
- C. Reflects advanced familiarity (for age) with the subject matter. _____
- D. Reflects a level of quality beyond what is normally expected of a student of this age and grade. _____
- E. Reflects care, attention to detail, and overall pride on the part of the student. _____