



Activity 3.6

Auditing an Assessment for Bias and Distortion

Learning Target for the Activity

- Know how to help the teacher identify sources of bias that can distort assessment results.

Purpose

Assessment-literate educators do not use assessment results they know to be inaccurate; yet many times the causes of these inaccuracies slip under the radar of our attention, and so we are unaware that the information is not accurate. This activity is designed to raise awareness of the myriad sources of bias, so that participants will be able to watch for them and eliminate or work to counteract them.

Time

60–90 minutes

Materials Needed

- Two or three copies of each participant's assessment they currently give to students
- A copy of Figure 3.6, "Potential Sources of Bias and Distortion Common to All Assessment Methods," for each participant
- Chart paper and markers

Suggested Room Setup

Tables and chairs for small groups (content or grade-level teachers may prefer to work together)

Directions

Ask participants to work in teams of two or three to complete this activity. Have enough copies of each participant's assessment so that each team member has one.

1. Begin with a short whole-group discussion of what the terms *bias* and *distortion* mean. Then ask for examples of causes of bias in assessment. Make a list on chart paper.
2. Ask what problems inaccurate results are likely to cause. If participants don't mention the effect on students, suggest that as a topic.
3. Hand out a copy of Figure 3.6 to each participant. Ask participants to compare what is on the checklist shown in Figure 3.6 with what is on their group list, noting similarities and differences.
4. Have participants review one of their team members' assessments as a group, then individually audit it for sources of bias and distortion using the checklist shown in Figure 3.6.
5. Each team member shares the results of their audit with their small group.

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6. The team discusses possible changes to the assessment or the conditions as recommended by the audit.
7. Repeat the process for each team member's assessment.

Closure

Conduct a team discussion and then a whole-group share-out of the following questions:

- Were any sources of bias a surprise to you?
- Which of your assessments may be yielding inaccurate results for some or all students due to one or more of these factors?