Instructional Resource Quality Criteria

Overview

All Smarter Balanced instructional resources must adhere to the following set of quality criteria. Each instructional resource must be reviewed and approved by three State Network of Educators (SNEs) before final approval and posting by a trained State Leadership Team member.

Criterion 1: Resource Content Alignment

The resource must be developed using Smarter Balanced grade level, claims, and targets, or standards. The resource must include:

❏ Grade level, Claim, and Target (3-HS) and standard(s) (K-2 and select HS Standards)

Criterion 2: Formative Assessment Process

Smarter Balanced defines the Formative Assessment Process as, "a deliberate process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides actionable feedback that is used to adjust ongoing teaching and learning strategies to improve students' attainment of curricular learning targets/goals."

The resource must embed and model all four attributes of the Formative Assessment Process – clarify intended learning, elicit evidence, interpret evidence, and act on evidence. Details, including teacher and student actions and outcomes, are also included in the resource.

1. **Clarify Intended Learning**
   The resource must include a clear description of:

   ❏ What students need to learn (*learning goals*) and how students know they've reached the learning goal (*success criteria*).

   ❏ How the teacher can describe, elaborate on, and/or provide examples of the learning goal(s) and success criteria, as well as describe why they are important for students to learn.

   ❏ How the teacher will confirm students understand what's expected of them:

      ❏ By eliciting clarifying questions from students to confirm their understanding of the learning goals and success criteria.

❏ Asking that students either describe the learning goals and success criteria in their own words or somehow otherwise indicate that they understand.

❏ The resource may also describe how the teacher might co-construct the learning goals and success criteria with students in order to reinforce students' understanding of expectations.

2. **Elicit Evidence**
The resource must include:

❏ A clear description of how the teacher will clarify the purpose of the elicitation activity for students, so that they know what is expected, why it's important, and how the teacher will use the information (e.g., complete a self-assessment, identify potential issues, practice something, push student thinking to the next-level, or evaluate student performance).

❏ The exact elicitation(s) that are aligned to the learning goals in the exact format it should be presented to students (e.g., prompt(s), task(s), question(s), item(s), or other elicitation(s)).

❏ Open-ended and/or performance-based elicitations that allow students to demonstrate what they know and can do, justify and explain how or why they did something, and/or explain their thinking.
Efficiency of interpretation is important however. The prompt, task, or question should demonstrate the maximum amount of information about student thinking, while allowing a teacher, or student, to efficiently evaluate, sort, or score—according to a rubric—a full class set of student responses within a 60-minute or shorter class period.

❏ A clear description of how the elicitation(s) provide evidence of what students are thinking and what they know and can do, including:

❏ A justification for the mode of student's responses (e.g., written, verbal, gesture, performance, or a combination).

❏ How the teacher will collect the evidence if at all (e.g., individual vs. group responses, a sample of students vs. all students, and/or whether student artifacts will be collected or teacher observation notes will be the source of evidence).

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3. Interpret Evidence
The resource must include:

- ❏ Explicit guidance or tools (e.g., look-fors of misconceptions or common errors/misunderstandings, samples, anchor chart, learning progression, rubric, exit ticket, etc.) aligned with success criteria to support educators and/or students (i.e., in a self-or peer-assessment activity) to make sense of the elicited evidence, and understand the gap between where students are and where students need to be.

4. Act on Evidence
The resource must include:

- ❏ A clear description of the ways students and teachers can take action to close the gap between where students are and where they need to be.
  Since the appropriate instructional next steps may not be the same for all students, the resource must include multiple suggestions that take into consideration different contingencies.
  - ▪ Student is the key to taking action.
    Teachers can take action to support students, but students are the ones that ultimately take action to move their own learning forward. Therefore, the most impactful actions are those which are easily understood by students and help students be engaged with moving forward.

  - ▪ Student's written or verbal feedback.
    Feedback is most helpful when it is descriptive (i.e., concrete information about the positive and negative aspects of a student response), prescriptive (i.e., provides specifics on exactly how students can improve their work), and focuses on students' conceptual understanding as well as their meta-cognitive processing. Scores and symbols are not as helpful as written or verbal comments.

  - ▪ Teachers engaging instructional actions.
    Teachers can engage in instructional actions to help students move forward as well. These actions should also focus on a combination of conceptual (standards-related) and meta-cognitive (student thinking process-related) actions.

- ❏ An opportunity for students to demonstrate or affirm growth in what they've learned. This could involve revising or re-doing their response to the initial elicitation(s), responding to a second elicitation(s), and/or completing some type of self-assessment evaluation.

Criterion 3: Easy to use

Instructional Resources are accessed by multiple users. Resource authors need to consider the user could be an educator along a continuum (i.e., the first-year teacher or the veteran nearing retirement).

The resource must include:

- ❏ Step-by-step directions for how to enact the activity.
  Specific teacher actions and things the educator should/could be looking for from students are described at each step.

- ❏ 1-3 formative assessment instructional strategies (as applicable) in the step-by-step resource description.

- ❏ All primary resource materials which are not dependent on external links.

Criterion 4: Differentiated for Student Needs

Each grade-level resource needs to help move the learning forward and include learning opportunities for students with skills identified as below, near, and above the performance expectations of the grade level. The skills identified at each performance level are informed by multiple sources, including the Claim and Target Student Evidence Statements, Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs), and educator expertise.

The resource includes differentiated learning opportunities and provides scaffolding support(s) for students who have not yet achieved the grade-level performance expectations. Also, the resource must provide challenges or extension activities for students who are ready to move beyond the grade-level performance expectations.

Resource supports are differentiated for a range of learners. Differentiation considerations should represent a range of learning needs (e.g., student readiness, interest, learning preferences, background knowledge, or English language proficiency).

The resource must include:

- ❏ Detailed information about how each student task could be differentiated to support or push student thinking, as appropriate considering multiple student factors (e.g., achievement, readiness, interest, learning style, background knowledge, and English language proficiency).

Criterion 5: Equity & Accessibility

Instructional resources must provide equitable access to students. Instructional resources electronic document attachments (e.g., Microsoft Word or PowerPoint) must be free of unnecessary barriers and meet WCAG 2.1 AA document compliance.

Resources reflect the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), as defined by the National Center on Universal Design for Learning, by giving students equitable opportunities to learn by providing flexible approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual needs and preferences.

The resource must include:

- ❏ 1-3 accessibility instructional strategies (as applicable) in the step-by-step resource description.

- ❏ Content that does not anger, offend, upset, or otherwise distract students and educators from the intended learning outcomes.

- ❏ An electronic document (e.g., Microsoft Word and PowerPoint) accessibility review and remediation. When applicable, transcripts, closed captioning, and audio description files are included for video and audio files.