

Learning Activities or Performances of Understanding?

Here is a test to see if you have a learning activity or a performance of understanding: Ask yourself if your students can complete the activity and still not really understand?

If you answer, yes, then ask: How can I adapt this learning activity to transform it into a Performance of Understanding?

Activities that could become Performances of Understanding include examples such as the following:

Brainstorming	Doing research
Watching a film	Taking Notes
Role playing	Making a collage
Debating	Writing a song
Practicing a play	Collaborating in a small group
Responding to peers	Reading
Writing autobiographies	Dancing
Designing a display	Singing
Making a map	Writing Dialogue
Interviewing	Exploring a topic
Conducting an experiment	Talking with a peer about an assignment
Making a model	Making a presentation

Performances of Understanding transform activities by deliberately integrating thinking such as:

Comparing and contrasting	Identifying relationships among facts
Analyzing	Assessing work using criteria
Inferring	Presenting evidence
Generalizing	Identifying assumptions
Synthesizing	Evaluating and weighing evidence
Interpreting	Seeking and comparing multiple perspectives
Explaining	Theorizing
Predicting	Categorizing
Defining distinctions	Decision-making based on evidence
Making connections	Problem-finding and problem-solving
Classifying	Creating analogies

Performances of Understanding have these qualities:

- PURPOSES are that learners develop, demonstrate, and expand understanding of one or more Understanding Goals through student's ACTIONS and REFLECTIONS.
- "Hands-on" activities take on the additional quality of "mind-on" learning experiences.
- They support students in thinking and reflecting in ways that expand or reconfigure present understandings into new and deeper understandings.
- They challenge students' misconceptions, stereotypes, and rigid thinking,
- They aim at flexible USE of what is learned both in the learning context and beyond.