

## FAQs and Resources

As the district moves to Competency-Based Education (CBE) and quality performance assessments (QPA), many questions have come up about CBE and performance assessments. These Frequently Asked Questions are ordered from introductory questions to district-specific resources. If you have questions that aren't included in this document, please see your building rep.

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### 1. What is CBE and why do we need it?

- a. Article: [What is Competency Education?](#)
- b. [jheysler@jacksongrammar.org](mailto:jheysler@jacksongrammar.org) Infographic

**SMART SERIES**

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**EXHIBIT: Confused by the Terminology**

Terms such as online and blended learning, personalized, customized, and competency based, are flooding our educational dialogue and are often used interchangeably. The ideas are related, but not the same. It's important to understand the difference.

**Competency Education**  
Competency Education is a system of education, often referred to as proficiency or mastery based, in which students advance upon mastery. Competencies include explicit, measurable, transferable learning objectives that empower students. Assessment is meaningful and serves as a positive learning experience for students. Students receive timely, differentiated support based on their individual learning needs. Learning outcomes include the application and creation of knowledge, along with the development of important skills and dispositions (Source: [CompetencyWorks](#)).

**Online Learning**  
Online Learning is teacher-led education that takes place over the internet, with the teacher and student separated geographically, using a web-based educational delivery system that includes software to provide a structured learning environment. It may be synchronous (communication in which participants interact in real time, such as online video) or asynchronous (communication separated by time, such as email or online discussion forums). It may be accessed from multiple settings (in school and/or out of school buildings) (Source: [Keeping Pace](#)).

**Blended Learning**  
Blended Learning is a formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through the online delivery of content and instruction, with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace, and at least in part at a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home (Source: [Innosight Institute](#)). Compared to high-access environments, blended learning includes an intentional shift to online instructional delivery for a portion of the day in order to boost learning and operating productivity.

**Personalized Learning**  
Personalized Learning is paced to student needs, tailored to learning preferences, and customized to the specific interests of different learners. Technology gives students opportunities to take ownership of their learning (Source: [National Education Technology Plan](#)).

**Customized Learning**  
Customized Learning is informed by enhanced and expanded student data, which will boost motivation and achievement – keeping more students on track for college and career readiness (see [Data Backpacks: Portable Records and Learner Profiles](#)). The authors use the term customized learning to refer to a sequence of multi-modal learning experiences queued by a smart recommendation engine that is driven by a comprehensive learner profile.

### 2. What is the difference between a competency and a standard?

- a. Article: [Is a standard a competency? \(part 1 of 2\)](#)
- b. Article: [Is a standard a competency? \(part 2 of 2\)](#)

**3. How are competency-based assessments different than traditional assessments?**

- a. [Assessment 101: Performance vs Traditional Assessments](#)
- b. Publication: [Assessment to Support Competency-Based Pathways](#)
- c. Jay McTighe Blog: [What Is a Performance Task?](#)
- d. TedX Video: [Testing, Testing - Linda Darling-Hammond](#)
- e. Infographic

**What Characteristics Differentiate Assessment that Supports CBP?**

In a competency-based system, like in a traditional education system, assessments have a variety of uses such as to inform instruction, diagnose student needs and communicate student progress and outcomes to families and broader communities. Assessment in a competency-based system has an additional use – to help validate the determinations that teachers make about student proficiency or mastery of standards.

Additionally, assessments that support CBP often have these characteristics:

- Allow students to demonstrate their learning at their *own point of readiness*
- Contribute to student learning by encouraging students to *apply and extend their knowledge*
- Require students to *actually demonstrate* their learning
- Where possible, provide flexibility in *how* students demonstrate their learning (e.g. through a presentation, research paper or video)

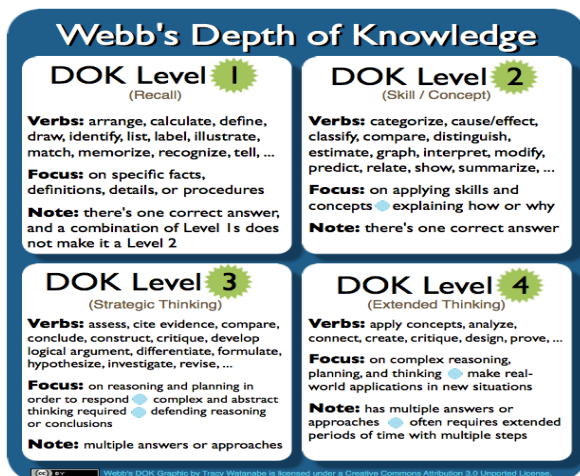
**4. How many performance assessments do I need to have?**

- a. An assessment system should be *balanced* with a combination of performance assessments and traditional assessments. The goal for SAU9 assessment maps is that each competency (*not each standard*) is assessed by a performance assessment at least *once* a year. It is not necessary to have a performance assessment for each standard, or for each competency each trimester.

**5. When would I use a performance assessment? When would I use a traditional assessment?**

- a. Performance assessments are great for measuring the competency of a variety of skills in a novel setting. They provide students with a real-world context for the skills they are learning but take time to administer. A strong performance assessment gives students the opportunity to show high levels of depth of knowledge and are not for low DOK skills.
- b. Traditional assessments can still be used and are particularly helpful for assessing just a few standards at a time. They should also be used for gaining insight in lower level DOK skills (ex. fact fluency) that are not well suited for performance assessments.

**6. What is “Depth of Knowledge”?**



- a.
  - i. [Webb's DOK Video](#)
  - b. [Folder of Karen Hess' Depth of Knowledge by Subject](#)

**7. Where can I find performance assessments to use in my classroom?**

- a. Links to sample assessment maps are on the SAU 9 website. Within the assessment maps, there are hyperlinks to summative assessments aligned to particular competencies and standards by grade and subject.

**8. How can I create my own quality performance assessment?**

- a. If you don't know how to create a quality performance assessment, use the [Performance Assessment 101 training modules](#) and linked [handouts](#) posted on the SAU 9 website.
- b. If you already know how to create a quality performance assessment, use the [SAU 9 Task Template](#).
- c. The folder of resources below provides support in creating a quality task that is connected to real-world applications.
  - i. [Quality Performance Assessment Question Resources](#)

**9. Where do I submit a performance assessment that I have found or created?**

- a. For now, email a PDF to Kadie Wilson ([k\\_wilson@sau9.org](mailto:k_wilson@sau9.org)); it will then go through a review process.

**10. Where can I get more information?**

- a. [Holmes Center NG2 Free and Open Education Resources](#)
- b. SAU9 Task Development Leadership Team Members
  - i. KHS - Chris Wong ([c\\_wong@sau9.org](mailto:c_wong@sau9.org)); Laurel Zengilowski ([l\\_zengilowski@sau9.org](mailto:l_zengilowski@sau9.org))
  - ii. KMS - Jennifer Chalmers ([j\\_chalmers@sau9.org](mailto:j_chalmers@sau9.org))
  - iii. CES - Steve Bamsey ([s\\_bamsey@sau9.org](mailto:s_bamsey@sau9.org))
  - iv. JFS - Sarah Neugebauer ([s\\_neugebauer@sau9.org](mailto:s_neugebauer@sau9.org)); Rebecca Skelton ([r\\_skelton@sau9.org](mailto:r_skelton@sau9.org))
  - v. PTS - Abby Calitri ([a\\_calitri@sau9.org](mailto:a_calitri@sau9.org)); Kate Jenkins ([k\\_jenkins@sau9.org](mailto:k_jenkins@sau9.org)); Sheila Sanfillippo ([s\\_sanfillippo@sau9.org](mailto:s_sanfillippo@sau9.org))
  - vi. JGS - Joan Heysler ([j\\_heysler@sau9.org](mailto:j_heysler@sau9.org))
  - vii. JBES - Carole Penza ([c\\_penza@sau9.org](mailto:c_penza@sau9.org))

