

Activity 1.5

Clapping Hands (modified by Solution Tree Assessment Team to incorporate student involved strategies)***Purposes:**

- To develop guidelines for high quality performance assessments
- To explore the importance of quality: the impact of our assessments on students

Uses: This activity, set at an early elementary level of difficulty, can be used to illustrate features of quality alternative assessment, providing a gentle introduction to quality issues. It can also be used to illustrate design options and the effects these can have on teachers and students.

Rationale: Assessment is a deeply affective thing. It is about success and failure, about deeply held feelings, and about our sense of self-esteem. This activity is designed to show the impact of assessment both on performance and on the feelings at the receiving and rating ends of the process. It provides a graphic demonstration of the unintended consequences of how performance assessments are designed. It also results in a set of guidelines--do's and don'ts--for performance assessment.

Materials:

- chart paper and markers (or chalkboard)
- Ten volunteers from the group (7 if the group is small)
- Eleven chairs arranged in semi-circle--facilitator in center (8 chairs if the group is small)--see the diagrams below
- One printed applause certificate – see as hidden slide in presentation

Slides: [Clapping Institute Criteria](#)

Handouts: [Applause Please observation page](#) (1 for each person); [Clapping Institute Award Certificate](#) (1 per group)

Time Required:

45 minutes

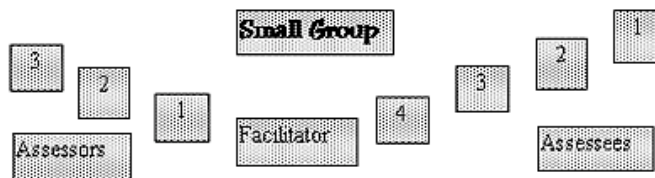
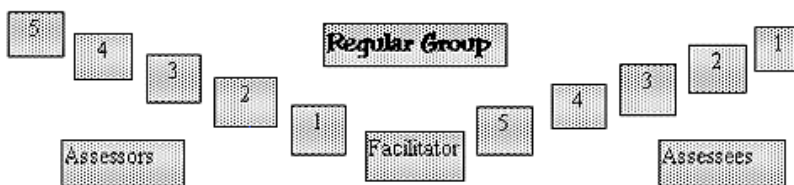
Facilitator's Notes:

The activity is experiential--it asks participants to commit and invest themselves in the process. As such, it might make some participants uncomfortable. Therefore, it is extremely essential to manage the activity well. Keep it light-hearted.

Once this exercise has been done with a group, it can't be done again with the same group. The complete exercise requires at least 15 people. (You can get by with 11--instructions for "small group" are included where needed.)

The presenter's outline below is set up for ease of use (list style; questions to participants in bold, etc.). Typical comments made by participants at various steps of the process are included at the end.

1. Facilitator needs: paper and pencil, 1 copy of the award certificate [Clapping Institute Award Certificate](#), and this outline.
2. Arrange 11 chairs (8 if the group is small) in a semi-circle. (See diagram below.)



3. Introduce the exercise by calling for volunteers. Identify 4 – 5 people to sit on your right and 4 -5 people to sit o your left. Identify one person (near the door) to be hall monitor. Identify one person to be the mathematician (calculators possible). Then:

Five people (4 if the group is small) will be asked to do a simple performance task, and five other people (3 if the group is small) will assess the performances. At the end everyone will be asked to describe how it felt to be in the position they took. The audience will participate at the end by questioning the volunteers on their feelings and adding their own observations.

4. Ask for 10 volunteers (7 if the group is small) to come up and sit in the 10 (or 7) chairs arranged in a semi-circle. (Facilitator sits in the center chair--see diagram.)

5. Note names of volunteers on a seating chart

6. Note (but do not mention) that the participants to your right are the "assessee"-they will do a simple performance task

7. Note (but do not mention) that the participants to your left are the "assessors"-they will evaluate the quality of performance on the task.

8. Tell the volunteers:

This activity was developed to be fun and to explore the pluses and minuses of performance assessments.

B. Assessment Task Administration (10-15 minutes)

1. Assessee #1 (fifth person to your right; fourth person if the group is small)

(Name), please clap for us.

(clap)

Thank you, (name).

(Give no verbal or non-verbal feedback.)

2. Assessee #2 (fourth person to your right; skip this step if the group is small)

(Name), please clap for us.

clap)

(Name), please leave the room and come back when asked.

(Tell the designated "hall monitor" to ask the person to come back in when asked and to make sure the person can't hear the discussion.)

Turn to the right and state: You are my Assessors. At this time, please assess (name)'s clapping on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being low and 5 being high. (give no more information than that).

(Record each rater's score beginning with the person on your immediate left; ask your volunteer mathematician to compute average; report to panel. Ask the participant to return, but give NO feedback.)

3. Assessee #3 (third person to your right)

(Name), please clap for us.

clap)

(Name), please leave the room and return when called.

Assessors please assess (name)'s clapping on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being low and 5 being high.

(Record each rater's score beginning with the 2nd person to your left; compute average; report to panel. Ask the assessee to return.)

OK, (name), you got a score of _____. I hope you find this information useful.

4. Assessee #4 (second person to your right)

(Name), clap for us.

(clap)

(Name), please leave the room and return when called.

After the assessee leaves the room, turn to the assessors:

I have good news and bad news. The good news is that I have heard from the International Clapping Institute. As you know, that's the organization that is developing the international standards for clapping that all our students must meet by the year 2020. They have begun a handbook on how to conduct the assessment. From now on they want us to assess all clapping performances on three traits--volume, appropriateness, and creativity. (Get up to write these terms on the flip chart at this time – leave space between the words for added definitions later)

The bad news is that they haven't yet finished the handbook, so they really can't give any more guidance than that. So we just have to do the best we can. So, from now on we'll assess performance on each of the three traits, where 1 is low and 5 is high.

(Record the score for each trait--volume, appropriateness and creativity. Begin with a different assessor each time; for example, start with the 3rd person on your left for volume and the 4th person for appropriateness. Average the scores for each trait. Ask the assessee to come back, give him/her the scores, and shake his/her hand.)

(Name), here are your scores. I hope you find them useful. (give certificate if you have one ready – otherwise skip).

5. Assessee #5 (first person to your right): This participant gets special treatment. Ask these questions:

(Name), tell me about your previous clapping experience. In what kinds of situations do you find yourself clapping?

You've obviously had some experience clapping. What do you feel are your strengths as a clapper?

Is there anything in your clapping you would like to improve? Anything you'd like the panel to give feedback on? (student goal setting)

Is there any guidance that you'd like to give the assessors?

In just a little bit, I'm going to be asking you for the context of your clapping performance. First, let's hear from our assessors and see if we can't get some clarity on our criteria. Would that help you?

To Assessors:

You're the experts on clapping; that's why you are here. So, let's discuss the criteria given to us by the Clapping Institute.

Ask the panel of assessors to describe their standard of excellence for each of the criteria, one criteria at a time. List their descriptors on the board. After each, clarify back what you believe the standards for excellence will be for _____. (e.g. Describe volume, then have assessors give an example of what they mean by volume; then do appropriateness; then do creativity).

After describing each criteria say **I will need one of you to provide an example of your standard for the criteria of _____ (volume, appropriateness, creativity).**

Now ask the assessee – **Name, with this example and these descriptors, are you clear on what the panel is looking for related to this criteria?**

Once the 'rubric' is built and the exemplars have been shared, ask the assessors **Is there anything else you want (name) to know that you'll be looking for when he/she claps?**

To Assessee #5:

Would you like to describe the setting in which you'd use the clap you are about to demonstrate?

Again, what is the goal you want to accomplish with this clap?

Are you ready? Any more discussion prior to the clap?

(Name), please clap for us.

(clap)

Now, we're going to engage you in the evaluation process and assessors, we're going to seek a consensus score, providing verbal feedback as we do so.

Name, let's begin with you. What did you think of your clap relative to volume?

Panel of experts, what feedback would you give Name relative to volume?

Can you identify a consensus score?

Name, the panel has offered some feedback and they think your score is a _____.

Do you agree? Do you have a sense of what you would do differently next time related to this criteria of volume?

Repeat the process for appropriateness and creativity.

C. Debriefing (15 minutes)

1. Quickly, each person will have the chance to describe how he or she felt during this process and the thoughts and realizations he or she had. After each individual has had a chance to talk, the floor will be open to the audience to ask questions or provide observations.

Go through the assessees first and the assessors second, clarifying all the while what it felt like to operate without clear criteria in advance.

Spend some time with the last assessee and the panel to clarify how it felt to operate using the student involved strategies.

Turn to the large group – what did you notice? How did you feel watching this? What are the implications for our work with designing high quality performance assessments? (worksheet in handouts about watching clapping hands – See D below)

Optional ways to get more people involved:

Have 2-3 recorders note key comments on chart paper during the discussion (e.g., "lacked clarity," "wanted to try again," etc.).

Have people "buzz" (discuss) their thoughts/feelings as mirrors before the panel reports.

2. Ask Assessee #1 (5th to your right; 4th if the group is small):

What thoughts or feelings did you have?

How did you feel when we came down the line and other people got other kinds of preparation or feedback?

How did you feel about getting no preparation or feedback?

3. Ask Assessee #2 (4th to your right; skip this step if the group is small):

What thoughts or feelings did you have?

How did you feel when you were asked to go out of the room?

How did you feel about getting no feedback

4. Ask Assessors (move these questions to step 6 if the group is small):

How did you feel about rating the second person and not the first?

How did you feel about having no criteria?

Did anyone give any "protest" votes? (E.g., "I'm going to give everyone a '3' or a '5' because I was not given any guidance on what to do.")

Did anyone have the thought, "I better give myself some wiggle room by not giving the first person higher than a '3'."

5. Ask Assessee #3 (3rd to your right):

What thoughts or feelings did you have?

How did you feel when you were sent out of the room?

When you got your score, was the feedback useful?

6. Ask Assessors:

Did it bother you that I asked you to give (name-#3) his/her scores but didn't ask you to give (name-#2) his/her scores?

Did you compare (name-#3) with (name-#2) and (name #1)?

(Implication: when we are given no criteria to make criterion-referenced comparisons, we start comparing students to each other—norm-referenced comparisons)

7. Ask Assessee #4 (2nd to your right):

What thoughts or feelings did you have?

How did you feel when you came back in and got your certificate?

Was the feedback useful?

Could you hear people laughing while you waited outside? What did you think was going on?

Did this method bother you? How did you feel about being assessed on traits you knew nothing about?

Did you focus on any particular scores (like the lowest)?

8. Ask Assessors:

What were your reactions when I gave you criteria categories with no further directions?

Were these criteria useful?

9. Ask Assessee #5 (1st to your right):

What thoughts or feelings did you have?

Did you like the extra attention and information?

Did you feel uncomfortable being treated differently?

10. Ask Assessors:

Was the extra discussion useful?

In general, did hearing other people's scores affect your scores?

11. Ask Assessee:

Would any of you like to clap again? Why or why not?

12. Ask the audience:

Would anyone like to make an observation about what happened or ask the volunteers questions? (Don't let this stretch on too long.)

Has anyone been in the position of any of the assessees or assessors? Please indicate the person and relate what happened. (Keep it to 3 or 4 people.)

D. Part of Debrief with large group. Activity "Applause Please" (This part of the activity is essential. We want participants to be critical consumers of the performance assessments they see.)

1. Ask participants to use *Applause Please* handout to write what they learned from this activity about things to pay attention to when:

- Designing tasks
- Designing performance criteria
- Training raters
- Preparing students
- Reporting results

Considering potential sources of distortion

Participants will probably need "bias and distortion" defined. These are things that can mask achievement; things that can go wrong and result in drawing an incorrect conclusion about the quality of a student's work, skills, or knowledge. For example, (a) a high reading load on a math test, (b) student cultural background, or (c) student personality. See [A1.5,H2](#)—Performance Assessment—The Meaning of Quality for more examples. Note that these things don't always mess up the results. For example, if the purpose of the assessment is to assess reading comprehension, the length or difficulty of the passages is not a source of bias and distortion because that's what you're assessing. But if the amount of reading gets in the way of a student being able to demonstrate his/her math problem-solving ability, that's a source of bias and distortion.]

Give participants 5-10 minutes to make individual notes on **Handout A1.5,H1**.

2. (5 minutes) Ask participants to note several points of agreement in table groups.

3. Make a complete list in the whole group. This list comprises criteria by which to judge the quality of performance assessments. It is the beginning of a rubric for judging quality. (Listing quality statements on chart paper enables the facilitator to post the "criteria for quality alternative assessments" to refer or add to later.)