Questions to Guide Your Assessment Planning

Creating assessments for your courses should be based on the learning goals. As you begin creating your assessments, ask yourself these questions:

1) Is the goal for students to learn basic or foundational facts and skills or to show deep understanding? Does my assessment match my response to this question?
2) Does the assessment match the course (unit, assignment) learning goal(s)?
3) Is the unit of instruction framed around an essential question? If so, is the assessment based on the essential question?
4) How will you prepare students to complete this assessment?
5) Will the assessment encourage students to use interdisciplinary skills?
6) What are my desired results of the assessment?
7) Have I created appropriate learning environments for this assessment?
8) Is it clear to students what you are measuring with this assessment?
9) Is engaging in this assessment task a worthwhile learning experience on its own?
10) Is the assessment engaging to all learners?
11) Is the assessment one I really want to review?
12) What will completing this assessment indicate to students about their learning?
13) What assumptions am I making about learner knowledge or performance with this assessment?
14) What type of feedback will I provide students about their progress towards the learning goals?
15) How will I ensure I am grading consistently across students? How can a rubric help me with this assessment?
16) Will this assessment help me to sharpen the focus of my instruction?

Finally, Wiggins and McTighe (2005) posit that when learners understand, they are able to
- Explain - provide accounts or utilize telling evidence to discuss phenomena, facts, or data; able to provide examples
- Interpret - provide meaning through personal, social, cultural, and historical contexts; provides meaning that is contextual and specific through story
- Apply - use and adapt knowledge in context specific ways
- Have perspective - “see the big picture”; take in multiple viewpoints
- Empathize - understand the feelings of another person; expresses critic to functions of -isms; provide responses that are not egocentric or ethnocentric
- Have self-knowledge - aware of what is not understood; reflective of perceptions, prejudices, etc. that affect learning

*Understanding by Design* by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe

Does the assessment capture student understanding?