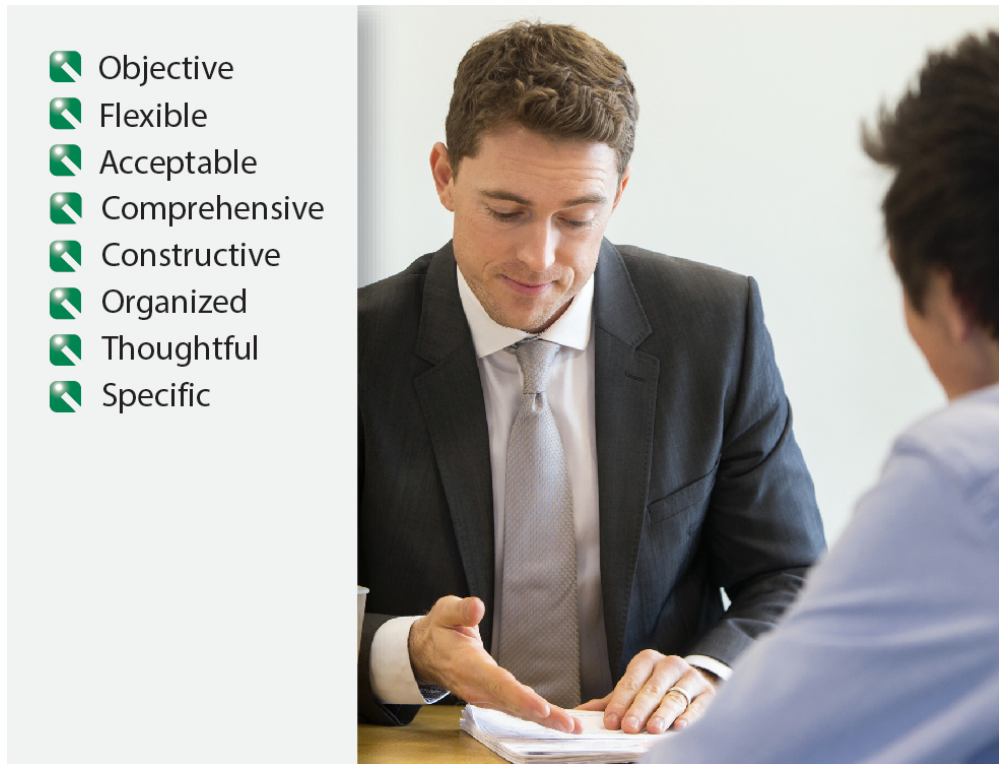


A well-designed assessment highlights the areas in which a learner's performance is incorrect or inadequate, it helps the instructor see where more emphasis is needed. If, for example, several learners falter when they reach the same step in a weight-and-balance problem, the instructor should recognize the need for a more detailed explanation, another demonstration of the step, or special emphasis in the assessment of subsequent performance.

## General Characteristics of Effective Assessment

In order to provide direction and raise the learner's level of performance, assessment needs to be factual, and it should align with the completion standards of the lesson. An effective assessment displays the characteristics shown in *Figure 6-1*.



**Figure 6-1.** *Effective assessments share a number of characteristics.*

### Objective

The personal opinions, likes, dislikes, or biases of the instructor might affect an assessment. A conflict of personalities can alter an opinion. Sympathy or over-identification with a learner, to such a degree that it influences objectivity, is known as “halo error.” To what extent does effective assessment need to focus on objectivity and actual learner performance? If an assessment is to be effective, it needs to be honest; and it must be based on the facts of the performance as they were, not as they could have been.

### Flexible

The instructor should evaluate the entire performance of a learner in the context in which it is accomplished. Sometimes a good learner turns in a poor performance, and a poor learner turns in a good one. A friendly learner may suddenly become hostile, or a hostile learner may suddenly become friendly and cooperative. The instructor fits the tone, technique, and content of the assessment to the occasion, as well as to the learner. An assessment should be designed and executed so that the instructor can allow for variables. The ongoing challenge for the instructor is deciding what to say, what to omit, what to stress, and what to minimize at the proper moment.

### Acceptable

Consider that learners do not like negative feedback. What makes an honest assessment acceptable to the learner? A certificate or credential alone rarely suffices. Learners need to have confidence in the instructor's qualifications, teaching ability, sincerity, competence, and authority. Usually, instructors have the opportunity to establish themselves with learners before the formal assessment arises. If not, however, the instructor's manner, attitude, and familiarity with the subject at hand serves this purpose. Assessments presented fairly, with authority, conviction, sincerity, and from a position of recognizable competence tend to work well.