Authentic Assessment
Resource Bundle

For a complete list of references, refer to the Express On-Demand Module *Authentic Assessment*

Authentic Assessment

Resource (Back to Table of Contents)

Authentic assessments are:
An authentic assessment is a problem, task, performance, or project that can be completed in a single class session or span a longer period of time (Gottlieb, 2006; Wiggins, 1989). Performance on an assessment should reflect a student's ability to apply knowledge and skills both in and outside of school (Popham, 2011). Authentic assessments should meet the following criteria.

Authentic assessment criteria:	
Fair	• Students are able to use previous life experiences, cultural knowledge, and language in their completion of the task (Gottlieb, 2006; Valdez-Pierce, 2003). • The task is flexible enough to accommodate a range of student characteristics (e.g. academic and language needs, interest, and choice) (Puckett, 2013). • The assessment is structured in a way that leverages the background knowledge and experiences of *all* students (Clark-Gareca, 2015).

Real-world and open-ended	• Students use knowledge and skills to complete the task in a way that is similar to how it is done in real-life situations (Wiggins & McTighe, 2006).
	• Students develop and present solutions to real school or community problems as a basis for the task project (Luongo-Orlando, 2003; Valdez-Pierce, 2003).
	• More than one potential solution exists for the task or problem (Luongo-Orlando, 2003; Wiggins & McTighe, 2011).
	• Students encounter challenges in which they have to apply problem-solving skills in order to complete the task (Wiggins & McTighe, 2006).
	• The task provides evidence of students' understanding and their ability to apply skills and concepts (Mueller, 2016):
	  ○ Performance: skit, speech, interview, or debate.
	  ○ Product: essay, portfolio, article review, survey, or constructing an object[1].

Skill-focused	• The task includes more than one learning goal (i.e. not a single isolated skill *or* an overwhelming amount – between 2 and 4 learning goals is ideal) (Gottlieb, 2006; Popham, 2011). • The criteria for the task explain what it will look like for a student to apply it at mastery-level. • Students learn about the criteria for successful task completion *before* beginning the task. (Valdez-Pierce, 2003). • If using a rubric, ensure that the language is clear and concise and that students understand what the different levels of mastery look like (Popham, 2011).

Opportunities for students to self-assess	• Students should self-reflect throughout the authentic assessment (Gottlieb, 2000; Luongo-Orlando, 2003):
	  ○ During: Students use self-reflection to make adjustments and improve their work before the assessment is complete.
	  ○ After: Conference with the student and use data from the self-assessment *and* the teacher's final evaluation to identify future goals.
	• Decide whether to use a yes/no checklist or a rating scale[2].

[1] For more examples of performances and products, visit the Authentic Assessment Toolkit at: http://jfmueller.faculty.noctrl.edu/toolbox/tasks.htm

[2] Checklists are easy to use, but usually lack detail due to the "yes/no" format. Rating-scales help to better express the degree to which "targeted skills are being performed" (Gottlieb, 2006, p. 118.).

Lower Elementary Example[3]:

Grade: 2nd
Content area: Writing
Learning goals:

- Strengthen writing by revising and editing (with guidance and support from peers and adults) (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.5[4]).
- Produce writing with an introduction and concluding statement or section (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.2)

Task: The teacher drafted 3 informational pieces on the following topics: the water cycle, wind patterns, and hurricanes. These drafts are missing introductions and/or conclusions and include punctuation errors. During their science unit on weather, students have learned about all three topics and have background knowledge on each. The final product is that students will revise and produce one of three informational pieces drafted by the teacher. Students will be assessed on: sequencing, ideas, and editing the introduction and conclusion statements to be more interesting. Using a rubric, students will self-assess themselves on the following using "☺, 😐, and ☹":

- It was easy for me to make the introduction and conclusion more interesting.
- I asked for help when needed.
- I used my background knowledge to help me complete this task.

Elementary Example:

Grade: 6th
Content area: Math
Learning goals:

- Use ratio and rate reasoning to solve real-world and mathematical problems (CCS.Math.Content.6.RPA.3).
- Solve unit rate problems including those involving unit pricing and constant speed (CCS.Math.Content.6.RPA.3.b).

Task: Create a brochure that compares the prices of items bought at different grocery stores. The final product will be assessed on accuracy of calculations, design, and presentation. Students will find three items that are in two different flyers, cut them out, and calculate the unit rates for each in order to identify the best buy. In addition, students will consult with family members to identify factors (e.g. convenience or food selection) that impact where one should shop. They will use this information to make a recommendation on where to shop. Students will self-assess by completing the following statements:

- I am confident that I was able accurately calculate the unit rates because…
- I knew how to calculate some of the unit rates because…
- I got confused because…

Middle and High School Example:

Grade: 9th
Content area: U.S. History
Learning goals:

- Describe the impact inventions had on the American Industrial Revolution.
- Develop argument to support a claim that analyzes a topic, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1).
- Gather and assess relevant information from multiple sources (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.8).

Task: As a culminating activity for a unit on the Industrial Revolution, students will identify an invention, learned about in class, that they think had the greatest impact on society. Students will be assessed on the thoroughness of their research, claims, supporting evidence, and explanation of impact. Students can create a product or performance (e.g. a debate, a brochure, poster, or replica of the invention) that persuades the class why the invention they researched had the greatest (positive *or* negative) impact on society at the time. Students will self-assess on the following by first discussing with a peer, then turning in a written explanation:

- Explaining the process they used to research an invention.
- Identifying strengths and struggles in their ability to persuade the audience.
- Explaining how they supported their opinions with concrete facts.

[3] Adapted from: http://jfmueller.faculty.noctrl.edu/toolbox/examples/tressler09/writingtasks.pdf
[4] Standards taken from: www.corestandards.org

A Brief Introduction to Teaching Through the Test

Supplement (Back to Table of Contents)

What is it?

A strategy that helps ensure that culturally and linguistically diverse students are prepared to take standardized tests in a *culturally relevant* way (Diaz, 2012).

Why teach through the test?

Most standardized assessments:

- Do not acknowledge the diverse backgrounds of *all* students (Darling-Hammond, et al, 1995; Gottlieb, 2006; Valdez-Pierce, 2003)
- Are embedded with ideas and assumptions from the dominant culture that are taken as universal truths.
- Deny CLD students the opportunity to show the depth of their knowledge (Darling-Hammond et al., 1995; Gottlieb, 2006; Siegel et al., 2014; Valdez-Pierce, 2003).

How to teach through the test:

1. Get to know the structure of test items on your local and state assessments. Obtain practice items and learn how they are set up (Wiggins & McTighe, 2006).
2. Work with students to identify local issues of importance and weave them in with state standards to develop your own units and assessments (Diaz, 2012).
3. Create sample questions that embody the standardized test structure but incorporate issues, vocabulary, and themes that students know (Diaz, 2012).

Unit example:

- Students identify bullying and intolerance as a local issues of importance.
- The teacher uses the topic to craft a unit that:
  - Addresses state standards on literary analysis such as character development, comprehension, analysis of mood, setting, and plot (Diaz, 2012).
  - Incorporates non-fiction text such as informational articles and memoirs where students study the impact that bullying and intolerance have on individuals, schools, and on the community.
  - Uses practice items from the state standardized test to incorporate content from the unit.

Test item example:

- As part of a state standardized test, students are assessed on their ability to identify an author's purpose for writing.
- The teacher locates a passage written by a former bully where she reflects on the impact her bullying had on others as well as why she bullied in the first place.
- The teacher shares the passage with students, along with the following question:

> What was the author's purpose for writing the reflection?
>
> A. To persuade readers to take a stand against bullying.
> B. To entertain readers with stories about bullying.
> C. To inform readers about the impact her actions had on others.
> D. To help readers distinguish between victims and bullies.

Resources:

- The National Education Association offers these tips for getting creative while helping students prepare for a standardized test.
- Teaching Tolerance offers the following resources for *free*:
  - Social Justice Standards: The Teaching Tolerance Anti-bias framework
  - Professional development modules
  - Culturally relevant curriculum

Authentic Assessment

References (Back to Table of Contents)

Bailey, A. L. & Huang, B. H. (2011). Do current English language development/proficiency standards reflect the English needed for success in school? *Language Testing, 28*(3), 343-365.

Clark-Gareca, B. (2015). Classroom assessment and English language learners: Teachers' accommodations implementation on routine math and science tests. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 54,* 139-148.

Darling-Hammond, L., Ancess, J., & Falk, B. (1995). *Authentic assessment in action: Studies of schools and students at work*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Diaz, V. (2012). Teaching through the test: Leading students to life-changing academic achievement and critical capacity. In J.A. Gorlewski, B. Porfilio, & D. A. Gorlewski (Eds.), *Using standards and high-stakes testing for students: Exploiting power with critical pedagogy* (67-83). New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing

Ekbatani, G. (2000). Moving toward learner-directed assessment. In G. Ekbatani & H. Pierson (Eds.), *Learner-directed assessment in ESL* (1-11). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Gottlieb, M. (2000). Portfolio practices in elementary and secondary schools: Toward learner-directed assessment. In G. Ekbatani & H. Pierson (Eds.), *Learner-directed assessment in ESL* (89-104). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Gottlieb, M. (2006). *Assessing English language learners: Bridges from language proficiency to academic achievement*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Hernandez, J. (2015). *Pathways toward proficiency: A case study of students' opportunities to learn academic language* (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest (Order No. 3704717).

Luongo-Orlando, K. (2003). *Authentic assessment: Designing performance-based tasks*. Ontario, Canada: Pembroke Publishers.

Moll, L. (1988). Some key issues in teaching Latino students. *Language Arts 65*(5), 465-472.

Popham, W. J. (2011). *Classroom assessment: What teachers need to know* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.

Puckett, K. S. (2013). *Differentiating instruction: A practical guide.* San Diego, CA: Bridgepoint Education, Inc.

Ruíz, R. (2013). Orientations in language planning. *Bilingual Research Journal, 8*(2), 15-34.

Siegel, M. A. (2006). Striving for equitable classroom assessments for linguistic minorities: Strategies for and effects of revising life science items. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching, 44*(6), 864-881.

Siegel, M. A. (2014). Developing preservice teachers' expertise in equitable assessment for English learners. *Journal of Science Teacher Education, 25,* 289-308.

Siegel, M. A., Menon, D., Sinha, S., Promyod, N., Wissehr, C., & Halverson, K. L. (2014). Equitable written assessments for English language learners: How scaffolding helps. *Journal of Science Teacher Education 25,* 681-708.

Valdez-Pierce, L. (2003). *Assessing English language learners.* Washington, D.C.: National Education Association of the United States.

Wiggins, G. (1989). A true test: Toward more authentic and equitable assessment. *The Phi Delta Kappan, 70*(9), 703-713.

Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J. (2006). *Understanding by design* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.