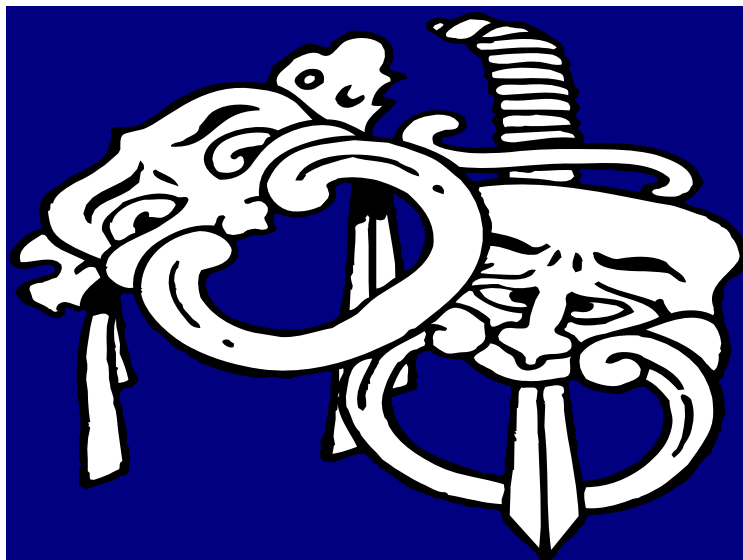


Authentic Assessment



A Step-by-Step Process of Creating
Authentic Assessments for the Classroom



THINK ABOUT



What is inspected signals what is expected.

Typical tests, even demanding ones, tend to over-assess student "knowledge" and under-assess student "know-how" with knowledge. *Grant Wiggins*

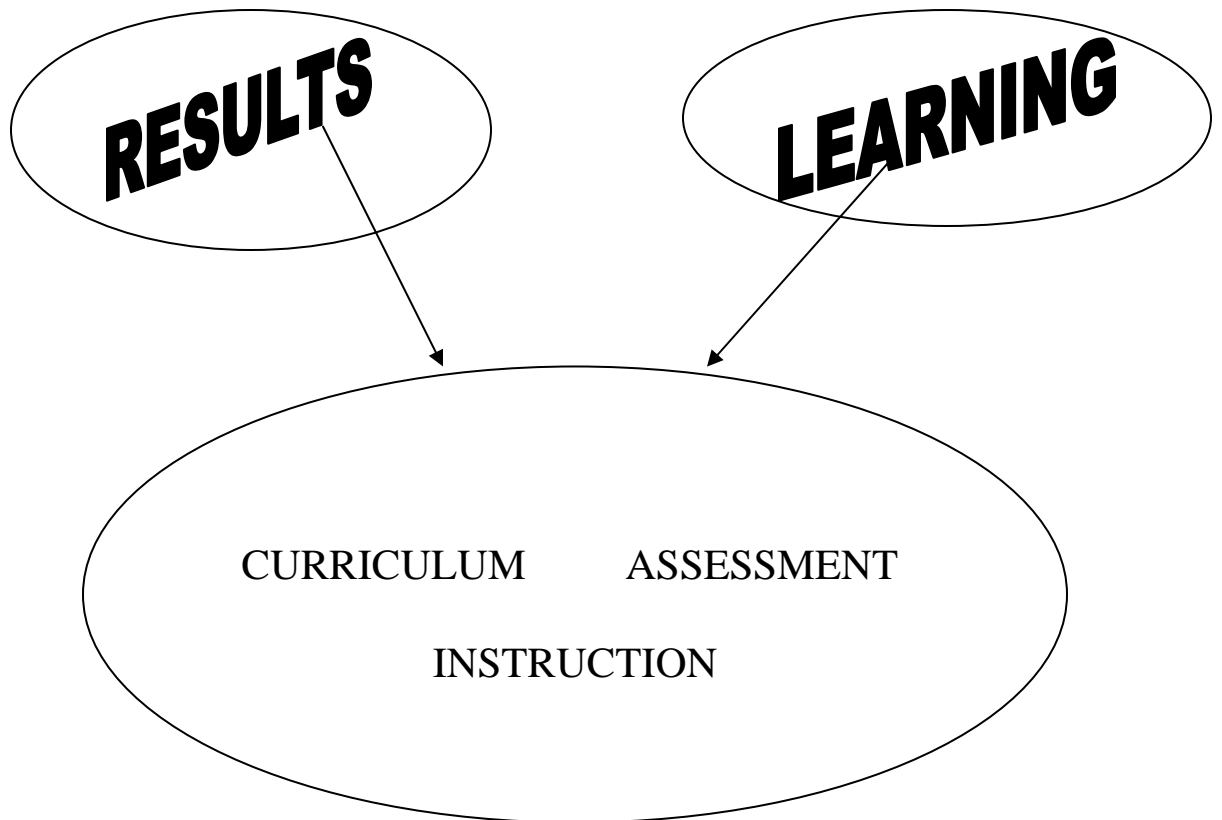
Assessment tasks should be . . . redesigned to more closely resemble real learning tasks. Tests should require more complex and challenging mental processes from students. They should acknowledge more than one approach or right answer and should place more emphasis on uncoached explanations and real student products.

Lori Shepard

Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning

1. The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.
2. Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.
3. Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.
4. Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.
5. Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.
6. Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved.
7. Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.
8. Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is a part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.
9. Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.

SCHOOL STRUCTURE



We must focus on results to build the curriculum.
What we know about learning must also define curriculum.

The real power, then, of assessment comes when the curriculum (now defined) is evaluated by results and learning.

How do we do this?

First—understand *results*.

Three types of *results*:
declarative knowledge
procedural knowledge
attitudes

Second—*knowledge* means “the capacity to apply facts, concepts and skill in new situations in appropriate ways.” Dr. Howard Gardner

Third—*curriculum*

Think of curriculum in terms of desired “performances of understanding (knowledge).

Plan backwards to identify needed concepts and skills.

An Elementary Example

Your class has been studying a unit on nutrition—an authentic assessment of students understanding could be designed in the following way.

You are having a birthday party. Your friends are expecting tasty treats, but your mother has been reading about good nutrition. She said she will not serve anything that has a lot of sugar, salt, saturated fat, artificial sweeteners, or preservatives. She has agreed to allow you to plan a healthy menu. Here is your assignment: Plan a menu that will please your friends and meet your mother's demands. Use the USDA Food Pyramid in your text book to help you plan a menu.

Think about??

What knowledge will students need to complete this task?

Declarative

Procedural

Authentic Assessment Umbrella



TASKS—short activities that provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate knowledge and skills. They can be content specific. They may be used to provide a checkpoint and define further instructional needs. They may be summative assessments for end-of-unit or end-of-year mastery. They do not have a single best answer or one right way to accomplish the task. They must be evaluated on established criteria.

For Example—after reading three fairy tales that have the same general pattern (characters overcoming a confrontation with an animal when the animal's intent is to harm the characters) the teacher might assign the follow task. Your task is to write a story that includes all the characteristics of a fairy tale and also uses the same general pattern. You will then read your story to your kindergarten reading buddy and teach him/her about the characteristics and general pattern of a fairy tale.

Grades 3-4

Authentic Assessment Umbrella



Projects—longer term activities requiring students to gather and synthesize information, apply their knowledge and skills to new situations, and create tangible products and performances. They are usually more “open-ended” than tasks. Students usually have more choice in topics, freedom in the way they carry out the project, and options in presenting the project. Projects can last several days, weeks, or months. Projects must be evaluated by specifically established criteria.

For Example—You and your partners are to compare advertisements for two supermarkets, then design and complete a research study to determine which of the stores has the best values. For three weeks you will gather, organize, and evaluate the data. Then you and your partners will prepare a display of your findings. Next, you will write an article for the PTA newsletter to summarize the conclusions of your study. **Grades 4-5**

PROJECTS

Projects usually result in a tangible product or performance. Teachers and parents are able to make inferences about student content understanding and skills. Some examples are listed below:

| | | | |
|-----------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Audiotape | displays | manuscripts | reports |
| Artwork | essays | musicals | simulations |
| Books | experiments | oral presentations | stories |
| Cartoons | games | pantomimes | surveys |
| Designs | invention | teaching episodes | plays |
| Drawings | logs & journals | puppet shows | videotapes |

REMEMBER

Evaluations for projects—like tasks—are based on clearly established criteria. This criteria is shared with students and parents **at the time the assignment is made.**

Authentic Assessment Umbrella



Portfolios—We will save these for a rainy day!

Getting Started

Authentic assessment tasks and projects sound like fun for both students and teachers. More importantly, they sound like they would challenge students to do more than give a rote answer to a single question. **So why don't teachers use these types of assessment more often?**

Knowing the Steps

There are several steps in creating, assigning, and evaluating authentic assessments—whether a task or project. Once teachers become familiar and comfortable with these steps—the fun and learning can begin!

Step One

Determine what YOU want students to Know

This can be done through your established curriculum, state or local standards, or through your own desires for your students.

For example, if you want your students to have a basic understanding of fairy tale patterns—you must first understand these patterns and provide examples for your students to read and discuss. If you want your students to understand basic nutrition, then, you will need to provide information from the USDA, how to read product information, definition of terms, and how to read a recipe.

Perhaps, however, you want your students to understand time. **What would you need to provide to your students?**

Step Two

Decide what information students will need.

This step is integrated with step one. Once you have determined what you want students to know—you have to decide what information they will need from you or an expert before they can begin. **This may also mean that you will need to supply a materials list.**

Usually this information is directly tied to the information in the students' textbooks. My students used the information in their literature text to define attributes of a hero. I need to ensure that I assigned selections that had recognizable attributes—allowed time for students to read and discuss the literature and had ample time to complete the project.

Recap:

Using my students—I determined based on the curriculum and state standards that my students would demonstrate their knowledge of the attributes of a hero—specifically an Anglo-Saxon hero. I carefully reviewed the literature and listed the attributes found in the selections.

Step Three

Decide on the demonstration.

Decide on the ways students might demonstrate that they have mastered the information.

This is a tricky part. You have to decide what you want students to demonstrate. In the case of a task and some projects, you might decide how the information will be presented. Think about time factors, material constraints, students' abilities, and any other constraint you or your students might encounter. Think about enablers also. My students had access to a computer lab and color printer, for example.

Continuing with my assessment. I decided that my students would create a comic book whose hero demonstrated the attributes of an Anglo-Saxon hero, be interesting enough for fifth grade students to want to read, and be professionally designed and produced (in terms of publication).

Step Four

Determine the evaluation criteria.

Before writing the assignment for your students, you need to create the check sheet and the rubric for evaluation.

CHECKSHEET

This will be given to students to help guide them as they create the task or project. It is just as the name implies: a list of information the students need to be successful.

RUBRIC

This is how you will evaluate your task or project (most likely). Creating the rubric with the check sheet saves time and ensures that you are comfortable with the evaluation criteria.

FOR EXAMPLE

Check sheet for Comic Book Hero (short version)

- ___ 5 attributes of an Anglo-Saxon hero
- ___ comic book format
- ___ illustrations integrated with text
- ___ advertisements appropriate for readers (2)
- ___ story elements evident
 - ___ who
 - ___ villain
 - ___ danger
 - ___ where
 - ___ romance
 - ___ happy ending
- ___ revision and editing evident
- ___ professionally formatted

Rubric for Comic Book Hero (short version)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | TOTAL |
|---------------|----------------------------------|---|---|--|-------|
| Attributes | Not evident | One or two evident | All evident— not clear | All evident Clearly defined | |
| Illustrations | Not integrated | Some integration | Integrated but not fully | Fully integrated | |
| Story | Some elements missing or vague | All elements—not clearly defined | All elements Not interestingly defined | All elements clearly and interestingly defined | |
| Revise/edit | Needs major editing and revision | Some revision or editing needed | Some editing required | Revision and editing complete | |
| Reader | Not appropriate for the reader | Not entirely appropriate for the reader | Appropriate but not interesting | Appropriate and interesting for the reader | |

X 5 =

Step Five

Writing the Assignment

This is the most interesting part of the process. You should not write the assignment, however, until you have completed the first four steps.

Think about how you want to present the assignment to your students and how much time you intend for them to spend on the assignment.

EXAMPLE

We will be studying Anglo-Saxon literature. One of the characteristics of this literature is the treatment of the hero. We will discover that these heroes share several attributes that may or may not exist in heroes today. Your assignment for the end of this unit is to create a comic book hero whose characteristics are those of the Anglo-Saxon heroes. You must use comic book formats—including frames, dialogue balloons, and totally integrated illustrations—have at least two advertisements, professional format, and revise and edit your text. Your comic book must be appropriate for fifth grade students. You may work with one partner, use computer graphics, and use the color printer for your final project. You will have one week after we finish the unit to complete your project.

RECAP

Step One

Determine what YOU want students to Know

Step Two

Decide what information students will need.

Step Three

Decide on the demonstration.

Step Four

Determine the evaluation criteria.

Step Five

Write the Assignment