



## **AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT: Engaging Product and Performance Measures**

**AUTHOR:** Sandra Schurr  
**PUBLISHER:** Hawker Brownlow Education 2015  
**REVIEWER:** Ingrid Lange

The title of this book quickly engaged me. The format and presentation of the text was easy to read and simple to follow. The layout of the second section was reader-friendly. The suggested research check lists, the information location list and the lists of product formats and performance tasks were also easy to make connections with in relation to a learning program.

This book provides the reader with many assessment strategies that could very easily be utilised in upper primary and lower secondary classes. With the aim of engaging students in the middle years through appropriate and student-centred assessment measures, the book clearly outlines assessment products, performances and portfolio options. The wide range of ways outlined to measure what students know gives a much deeper insight into student capabilities rather than simply answering test questions. The process of these authentic assessments would take much longer to complete as they are research-based and interactive, allowing for student involvement. The close connection to the use of technology also allows for a number of possible product and performance options. The suggested websites would be beneficial to teachers and students.

The author identified that it is essential to challenge students in the middle years of their schooling through meaningful tasks that 'are closer to real-life, authentic applications of learning'. Performance assessment encourages a more holistic approach to student progress through a much wider range of assessment tools, rather than relying on standardised testing formats alone. These tasks also provide students immediate feedback. This is supported by the creation of a criteria-based rubric which guides the students in assessing their progress, along with opportunities for peer assessment. Throughout the process it must be clear to teachers, students and parents what the educational goals are and how they link to the performance assessment task.

Samples of rubrics are included in Part 2 as ways of collecting relevant feedback and as a method for assessing the authentic tasks. Part 3 makes links to Williams' and Blooms' Taxonomies as useful tools to support the student focus on research-based learning tasks. Again the levels of each of the taxonomies are clearly outlined and skill type examples are given.

As the author is American, some of the examples given are American, especially in relation to the areas of history and geography. Australian teachers could easily adapt these to suit their students and their specific learning content. The strategies and methods for authentic assessment would still be relevant but with an Australian focus on history or geography. This book does not directly refer to the American Core Curriculum statements.