



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	5
SECTION 1: ASSESSING ASSESSMENT	9
• The Nation’s Report Card Goes Home: Good News and Bad About Trends in Achievement	13
<i>by Robert L. Linn and Stephen B. Dunbar</i>	
• Budgets, Politics, and Testing	31
<i>by Chris Pipho</i>	
• Why We Need Better Assessments	37
<i>by Lorrie A. Shepard</i>	
SECTION 2: TESTING AND THOUGHTFULNESS	49
• Testing and Thoughtfulness.....	53
<i>by Rexford Brown</i>	
• Project Spectrum: An Innovative Assessment Alternative	59
<i>by Mara Krechevsky</i>	
• Teaching to the (Authentic) Test	69
<i>by Grant Wiggins</i>	
SECTION 3: ALTERNATIVES TO TESTING	83
• Searching for Alternatives to Standardized Tests: Whys, Whats, and Whithers	87
<i>by Walter Haney and George Madaus</i>	
• Assessment Literacy	101
<i>by Richard J. Stiggins</i>	
• Performance Assessment: The Message from England	115
<i>by Desmond L. Nuttall</i>	
• But...the Curriculum	123
<i>by Carolyn Mamchur</i>	

- Linking Restructuring to Authentic Student Achievement 133
by Fred M. Newmann
- What Teachers Learn from “Kid Watching” 149
by Richard VanDeWeghe
- Assessment: A Thoughtful Process 157
by Steven Ferrara and Jay McTighe

SECTION 4: JOURNALS AND PORTFOLIOS 179

- Assessing Reflective Responses in Journals 181
by Elaine Surbeck, Eunhye Park Han, and Joan E. Moyer
- Using the Computer as a Reading Portfolio 187
by Judy Hetterscheidt, Lynn Pott, Kenneth Russell, and Jakke Tchang
- Teachers’ Stories: Our Ways of Knowing 191
by Mary Renck Jalongo

SECTION 5: SIGNIFICANT OUTCOMES 201

- Learning From an Outcomes-Driven School District 205
by Tom Rusk Vickery
- Thinking: How Do We Know Students Are Getting Better At It? 213
by Arthur L. Costa

Authors 221

Acknowledgments 225

Index 229

A Authentic Assessment: A Collection

We are interested in observing how students produce knowledge rather than how they merely reproduce knowledge. A critical characteristic of intellectual ability is not only having information, but knowing how to act upon it.—Arthur L. Costa

What is authentic assessment? Is it just another “buzz word” of the 1990s that falls under the ubiquitous umbrella of restructuring? If it is a new direction in education, does that mean that all the prior assessment used in schools for hundreds of years has *not* been authentic? Have we been using bogus ways to assess learning? Is it possible that teachers have been subjecting their students to unauthentic means of assessments; therefore, all of the grades have been inaccurate?

Not to worry! Skillful teachers have been utilizing *good* assessment techniques successfully long before the term authentic assessment appeared in educational journals or on the national seminar circuit.

Skillful teachers do not rely solely on standardized tests, commercial tests, ditto worksheets, or the questions at the end of the chapter to show them what their students can do. They construct meaningful tasks that require students to synthesize information, apply what they’ve learned, and perform or demonstrate their understanding of the material according to specific criteria. In short, they motivate students to learn, and they require students to perform tasks or create products to demonstrate their understanding of the process. They teach students how to “produce” knowledge not “reproduce” knowledge. Unfortunately, the tremendous emphasis on standardized testing has clouded our vision of what’s really essential for

life, and we rely more and more on multiple-choice tests and paper-and-pencil tests to measure growth.

Authentic assessments are real-life tools that reflect skills necessary for learning and for life. Like the Olympic rings, assessment tools must be linked to be effective. Students need to construct learning for themselves, link it to prior knowledge, and bridge it to other subjects and real experiences. They need to be able to see the connections between what they are studying in school and what they are experiencing in life.

Educators must practice Costa's principle of "selective abandonment" when it comes to curriculum realignment. Factual knowledge is doubling approximately every eighteen months; therefore, teachers cannot practice the "pour and store" philosophy of learning where the student is the empty vessel into which the teacher pours content with very little retention taking place. Moreover, much of the "knowledge" base will soon become obsolete. Teachers must teach students how to learn for themselves. As Costa says, "Intelligence is knowing what to do when you don't know what to do," and students must learn how to make learning relevant for themselves. Tests cannot always measure or predict students' abilities to apply what they learn in school to life.

What do we want our students to know twenty-five years from now? Memorizing discrete bits of knowledge and practicing mundane drill and skill activities will not be as important as being able to solve problems, communicate with others, make decisions, think critically and creatively, and to participate in the global community as lifelong learners.

If our significant outcomes include helping students survive in the 21st century, then they must also include opportunities to practice these skills and processes and perform meaningful tasks in the classroom. If we want students to transfer classroom learning to life, we must integrate our learning and help them make connections with other subjects and life experiences.

Authentic assessment allows students to practice and to perform meaningful tasks that mirror life outside the school room walls: tasks such as writing, giving speeches,

creating projects, working with others, engaging in problem-solving activities, making decisions and choices about what and how they learn, and using clear criteria to evaluate their own work. Teachers can help by providing opportunities for meaningful interactions with other students, introducing them to multiple resources and speakers, allowing them to reflect on their own work and all formative and authentic assessments.

Teachers can use a wide variety of formative assessments to foster their students' success despite individual learning styles, learning disabilities, and language or behavioral problems. Teachers can also monitor assignments to determine who needs help and who needs enrichment. More emphasis can be placed on genuine and formative tasks rather than on summative evaluation tasks such as unit tests that signal the end of a learning segment and the end of a student's chance to learn it. If it is important enough to learn, it is important enough for *all* students to learn.

We need to expand our repertoire of teaching strategies and formative authentic assessment tools to help students interact with the material, the teacher, and other students in order to enhance higher-order thinking skills and cooperation. The following articles describe how teachers can best accomplish these goals. Authentic assessment cannot stand alone. In order for the assessment to be authentic, the content has to be authentic. Also, the outcomes that drive the curriculum must be authentic. Significant student outcomes, meaningful content, and quality instruction must be components of the instructional package in order for the assessment to be valid. Moreover, educators need to develop "assessment literacy" so they can recognize and deliver meaningful content. We cannot afford to give our students anything but quality instruction and that quality can only be enhanced by the use of authentic tools to assess students' cognitive, social, and emotional development.