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PREFACE

From A to Z, *Authentic Assessment* presents high-interest activities that allow students to present their knowledge and their accomplishments through a variety of products, performances, and portfolios. The collection of instructional tools, techniques, projects, and lessons has been designed to stretch the mind and increase problem-solving abilities while at the same time capturing and holding the students' interest and imagination.

Special features include activities:

- that use literature-based research for their design
- with established taxonomies and models for their organisational structure
- that focus on both directed and nondirected teaching methods for their delivery
- that provide options for both reinforcement and enrichment

Teachers will find extensive use of Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Development. Higher-order thinking skills, individual activities, and cooperative learning experiences have been infused throughout the book to add meaning and excitement to the established curricula and/or exploratory and enrichment courses.

In short, this book will provide the teacher of the middle years with a comprehensive resource featuring instructional and assessment strategies and techniques to integrate and enhance authentic instruction throughout the school year.



IS FOR AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT

AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT

DESCRIPTION

Authentic assessment is a type of student evaluation that attempts to make the testing process more realistic and relevant. Specifically, it involves assessing student achievement or performance in situations that closely match the standards and challenges of the world outside the classroom. There are three major forms of authentic assessment. **Product assessment** requires a concrete result as evidence that some skill has been applied or some concept has been learned. These products can range from videotapes or audiotapes and exhibits to scripts, manuals, and reports. **Portfolio assessment** is based on a meaningful collection of student work that exhibits the student's overall efforts, progress, and achievements in one or more subject areas. Portfolio contents can range from paper and pencil tests or worksheets to creative writing pieces and drawings or graphs. **Performance assessment** is based more on the processes the student uses than on the final product or outcome. It relies on the professional judgment of assessors who observe the student performing a pre-determined task. Performances can range from oral reports or speeches to scientific demonstrations and poetry readings.

Some basic characteristics of authentic assessment that are important to keep in mind are:

An audience of some kind in addition to the teacher is involved.

Restrictions by rigid time constraints are to be avoided.

Questions or tasks that are already familiar to students or that students have been advised on well in advance of the assessment occasion are offered.

Some degree of collaboration is required.

The student's own research or application of knowledge is involved.

Scoring is determined by a multifaceted system.

Self-assessment is included.

Strengths as well as weaknesses are identified.

A IS FOR AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT cont.

Allowances are made for individual learning styles, aptitudes, and interests.

Needless and unfair comparisons are minimised.

THINGS TO THINK AND TALK ABOUT

1. How do you think one should be tested, evaluated, and marked in a classroom setting?
2. What things have you learned in school this year, and what evidence do you have that such learning took place?
3. How would you define the word *authentic* as it relates to assessment?
4. Are you better at producing products or giving performances to document your growth in a particular area? Explain.
5. Choose a class and list five things that you would want included in your portfolio from that class to convince your parents or teachers that you have achieved something important.

TASKS TO TRY AND TELL ABOUT

1. Pretend you have been asked to explain what is different about authentic assessment measures when compared with more traditional assessment measures. Outline an oral presentation and be prepared to give it for a group of peers or parents.
2. Design an information bulletin for parents that clearly explains the characteristics of authentic assessment and that gives specific examples of tasks associated with each type of authentic assessment strategy for a class of your choice.
3. Develop a portfolio of artifacts that show the unique characteristics, achievements, and opportunities representative of your classroom group.



IS FOR JIGSAW

COOPERATIVE LEARNING

DESCRIPTION

Jigsaws are cooperative learning activities that are popular with students and teachers alike. In a jigsaw, each student becomes a classroom expert on a special topic which is related to a larger subject; he or she ultimately becomes responsible for sharing that knowledge with the home group or home team members. To organise a jigsaw activity, one first needs to identify several topics which are related to a larger topic or subject area. Next, an expert group, consisting of a member from each home group, is set up for each smaller topic. Once they have mastered the content, each expert returns to his or her home group to share the results of their research with other team members. The home groups then complete an oral presentation.

THINGS TO THINK AND TALK ABOUT

1. How do you think the dictionary defines jigsaw?
2. What fun is a jigsaw puzzle?
3. What is the function of the tool jigsaw?
4. What words or images come to mind when you hear the term *jigsaw*?
5. How would you explain the idea of *jigsaw* to a young child?

TASKS TO TRY AND TELL ABOUT

Plan a jigsaw activity for one of your core subject area classes. Decide on an important subject to learn more about. Brainstorm five to ten subtopics under that subject. Divide the class into small co-operative learning groups of six, and assign each member within the group a number from 1 to 6. Next, decide on six different subtopics from your brainstorming list and give a different one to each group member. Provide time for each member of a home group to leave the group in order to meet with one member from each of the other groups who all have the same assigned subtopic to research. Each expert member in the new group is responsible for mastering the content of the subtopic and developing a strategy for teaching it to the home team. The expert then returns to the home team and teaches all other members about his subtopic, and simultaneously learns the information presented by the other group members as well. To get started planning this activity, complete the outline on the following page.