Effective Authentic Assessment Strategies in Early Childhood and Elementary Classrooms

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What comes to mind when you hear the word “assessment”?
AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT

- Situated in real-life experiences or scenarios
- Based on multiple forms of measurement, including observation and documentation
- Considers the life experiences, culture, personality, and dispositions of children
- Occurs over time in multiple contexts
- Informs practice
- Must include teacher reflection to be effective (Ratcliff, 2001/2002)
- May feel overwhelming to teachers unless naturally integrated into daily life of classroom
- Children are still learning during assessment times
- Standardized test data should inform authentic assessment data and visa versa
ASSESSMENT CONTINUUM

Traditional ......................................................... Authentic

Selecting a Response ................................................. Performing a Task

Contrived ........................................................... Real-life

Recall/Recognition ................................................. Construction/Application

Teacher-structured ............................................. Student-structured

Indirect Evidence ................................................. Direct Evidence
GOALS OF AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT
HTTP://WWW.PARK.EDU/CETL2/QUICKTIPS/AUTHASSESS.HTML

- “Enhance the development of real-world skills
- Encourage higher-order cognitive skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation)
- Promote active construction of creative, novel ideas and responses
- Promote the integration of a variety of related skills into a holistic project
- Enhance students’ ability to self-assess their own work and performance”

*Planning for assessment video clip
OBSERVATIONS

- “Plan time to observe.
- Consider what you want to find out about the child or children.
- Observations may be short and frequent throughout a day or focused on a particular activity.
- Decide whether to observe without direct engagement or to engage the child to test a hypothesis.
- Plan what to look for and how to document what you observe.
- Be ready:
  - Have handy a pencil and small sticky notes, a notepad, or other means of recording.
  - Write observations down right away.
- Pick times when:
  - Other teachers are around.
  - Activities do not require your full attention.
- Ask for help—other teachers can also observe and document.”

http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/eecd/Assessment/Ongoing%20Assessment/lfa.html#presentations
ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

What should we document?
- Complete story
- One topic, in-depth
- Individual & collective growth and development

Why should we document?
- Accountability
- Extend learning
- Make learning visible

The Power of Documentation in the Early Childhood Classroom (Seitz, 2008)
EXAMPLE: DAILY ASSESSMENT AREAS CHART

Here is an example of a partially completed assessment chart that is used to remind staff which areas of learning will be the focus of assessment each day. There is a blank copy of the Daily Assessment Areas Chart on the next page for use in your own classroom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of:</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/12</td>
<td>Playing with peers</td>
<td>Balancing skills</td>
<td>Using language to express needs</td>
<td>Classification</td>
<td>Phonological awareness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of:</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/19</td>
<td>Emergent writing</td>
<td>Number concepts and operations</td>
<td>Knowledge of self</td>
<td>Exploration of visual arts</td>
<td>Use of writing tools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of:</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of:</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT TOOLS FOR DOCUMENTATION

- Anecdotal notes/ event samples
- Narratives & running records
- Jottings
- Checklists/rubrics
- Time samples
- Language samples
- Parent information (interviews, surveys)
- Functional behavior assessment (FBA)
- Photographs
- Videos
- Work samples
- Portfolios
- Documentation Panels
- What else?
ANECDOtal note/Event Sample

Name: 
Observer: 
Date: 
Time: 

General Context:

Social Context:

Challenging Behavior:

Social Reaction:

POSSIBLE FUNCTION:
Directions: Observe the child for 10 minutes in each of the following routines. First, rate the amount of time the child is engaged with adults, peers, and materials. Second, rate the complexity of the child's engagement. There is space to add additional or alternate routines at the end of the scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arrival</th>
<th>Almost none of the time</th>
<th>Little of the time</th>
<th>Half of the time</th>
<th>Much of the time</th>
<th>Almost all of the time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With Adults</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Peers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Materials</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complexity*</td>
<td>Nonengaged</td>
<td>Unsophisticated</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Sophisticated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Nonengagement = inappropriate behavior, zoning out; Unsophisticated = repetitive play, casually looking around; Average = following routines, participating; Advanced = talking, creating; Sophisticated = symbolic talk, pretending, persisting.

[http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~inclusion/Instruments/instruments.htm](http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~inclusion/Instruments/instruments.htm)
### EXAMPLE: SKILL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

This checklist example documents multiple children's progress in retelling a story, on three data collection points, over a four-week period. There is a blank copy of the Skill Assessment Checklist on the next page for use in your classroom.

**Child's name:** Amina  
**Domain:** Expressive Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Skills or steps</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/19/14</td>
<td>Retells one event</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/5/14</td>
<td>Retells two events in logical order</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/19/14</td>
<td>Retells three or more events in logical order</td>
<td>✓ Retold three events from favorite story book</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Child's name:** Dylan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Skills or steps</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/19/14</td>
<td>Retells one event</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/5/14</td>
<td>Retells two events in logical order</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/19/14</td>
<td>Retells three or more events in logical order</td>
<td>✓ Retold two events, but not in correct order</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Child's name:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Skills or steps</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retells one event</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retells two events in logical order</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retells three or more events in logical order</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Scaffolded Expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal: Model simple patterns and sort objects</th>
<th>Sort by one attribute</th>
<th>Classify by one attribute</th>
<th>Create simple pattern with words</th>
<th>Create simple patterns with objects</th>
<th>Create simple patterns with actions</th>
<th>Extend patterns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Novice (1)</td>
<td>Does not meet “Competent” status in one or more area</td>
<td>Not Yet</td>
<td>Not Yet</td>
<td>Not yet</td>
<td>Not yet</td>
<td>Not yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent (2)</td>
<td>Meets “Competent” status in all areas</td>
<td>One attribute</td>
<td>One attribute</td>
<td>Creates AB pattern</td>
<td>Creates AB pattern</td>
<td>Creates AB pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient (3)</td>
<td>Meets “Proficient” Status in 4 or more objective areas</td>
<td>More than one attribute</td>
<td>More than one attribute</td>
<td>Creates advanced pattern (eg. ABC, ABBA, etc.)</td>
<td>Creates advanced pattern (eg. ABC, ABBA, etc.)</td>
<td>Creates advanced pattern (eg. ABC, ABBA, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain Score</td>
<td>Reading Strategies</td>
<td>Word &amp; Sentence Recognition</td>
<td>Variety of Texts</td>
<td>Level of Independence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Emerging</td>
<td>Pretends to read. Uses illustrations to tell story. Memorizes pattern and familiar books.</td>
<td>Recognizes some letters, names and words in context. Rhymes and plays with words.</td>
<td>Listens to fiction, fairy tales, poems, oral stories.</td>
<td>Participates in reading of familiar stories or books. Needs teacher support for most reading tasks.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Student Self-Assessment Rating Scale

**Student Name:** _______________________  Date: ____________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I like to read.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I ask questions when I read.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I read at home.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I talk about books (stories) that I read.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I learn new words when I read.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Examples:**

6. My favorite story/book is ____________________________________________

7. When I read, I need help with _______________________________________

8. When I read, I like to ____________________________________________


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Student Name: _______________________  Date: ____________

____ 1. **Brainstorms** prior knowledge in small groups

____ 2. **Makes predictions** about stories and texts

____ 3. **Expresses** interest and curiosity

____ 4. **Generates** questions

____ 5. **Rereads** for answers to questions

____ 6. **Summarizes** stories or content area texts

____ 7. **Talks about** readings and stories with classmates

____ 8. **Identifies** environmental print (street, store signs)


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DOCUMENTATION PANEL POSSIBILITIES

- Experiences/moments
- Units
- Lessons
- Special events/field trips
- For example...😊
  - Clay exploration
  - Human skeletons
  - Edamame
Authentic Assessment Tips

“Assessment should be a reiterative process of applying knowledge, understanding basis for knowledge, and demonstrating relevant skills. Quality authentic assessments emphasize both process and product. A compilation of multidimensional, varied assessments provide a more accurate and valid measure of student learning than a singular assessment. Authentic assessments should include opportunities for self-assessment and revision.”
INTERPRETING DATA

- Do you see patterns individually, within sub-groups, and across the entire class?
- Do you see change over time?
- Do you see areas in need of re-teaching?
- Do you see gaps in evidence of progress toward curriculum objectives, IEP goals, etc?
- Do you understand the data?

*Interpreting data video clip
USING DATA TO INFORM PRACTICE

- Study data to develop flexible groupings and sub-groupings (McAfee & Leong, 2011)
  - Group children in needs related to specific developmental areas, not overall perceptions of abilities
  - All children benefit from repetition and participation in activities over time

- Spend time reflecting on your instructional practices, daily schedule, lessons, activities, classroom arrangement/materials, and procedures
  - Allocate time and space in different ways
  - Select/arrange materials in response to assessment data
  - Use appropriate sequences
  - Possibly change procedures
  - Plan for scaffolding
Directions: Follow the steps of this flow chart to decide how your team may use interpretations of collected data to adjust teaching.

1. Is the child making progress as expected?
   - NO: Adjust teaching: curriculum (simpler goal, different setting/schedule), teaching practices (more practice, more time to respond), available resources (assistance, consequences, specialist)
   - YES: Continue using evidence-based curriculum and teaching practices

2. Has the child accomplished the goal?
   - NO: Set a new goal: next step in same area or goal in new area
   - YES: Continue using evidence-based curriculum and teaching practices
“What should you do if children are not progressing as expected?”

Change what you have been teaching:
- Encourage children to learn during activities they enjoy.
- Have children learn the content at a different time of day.
- If indicated, select a simpler curriculum goal.

Change how you have been teaching:
- Provide more opportunities for practice.
- Provide supportive equipment or materials.
- Allow more time for children to respond.
- Provide more assistance from peers or adults.
- Provide more encouragement through feedback.
- Ask for ideas from a specialist, family members, or others on your teaching team.

Continue to gather assessment information and adjust teaching.
One strategy for parent conferences is to “sandwich” difficult information about a child (e.g. behavior/academic concerns) within positive statements. This means that you start with something positive and end with something positive. How do you feel about this approach? What else works?
It only seems to make sense to share assessment data with children, however how can we do this in appropriate ways?

What are some challenges associated with sharing assessment data with children?
Why is Authentic assessment so challenging?
AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT RESOURCES

- http://www.uwstout.edu/soe/profdev/assess.cfm
- https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/practice/iss-library.html
- www.colorincolorado.org
- http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php