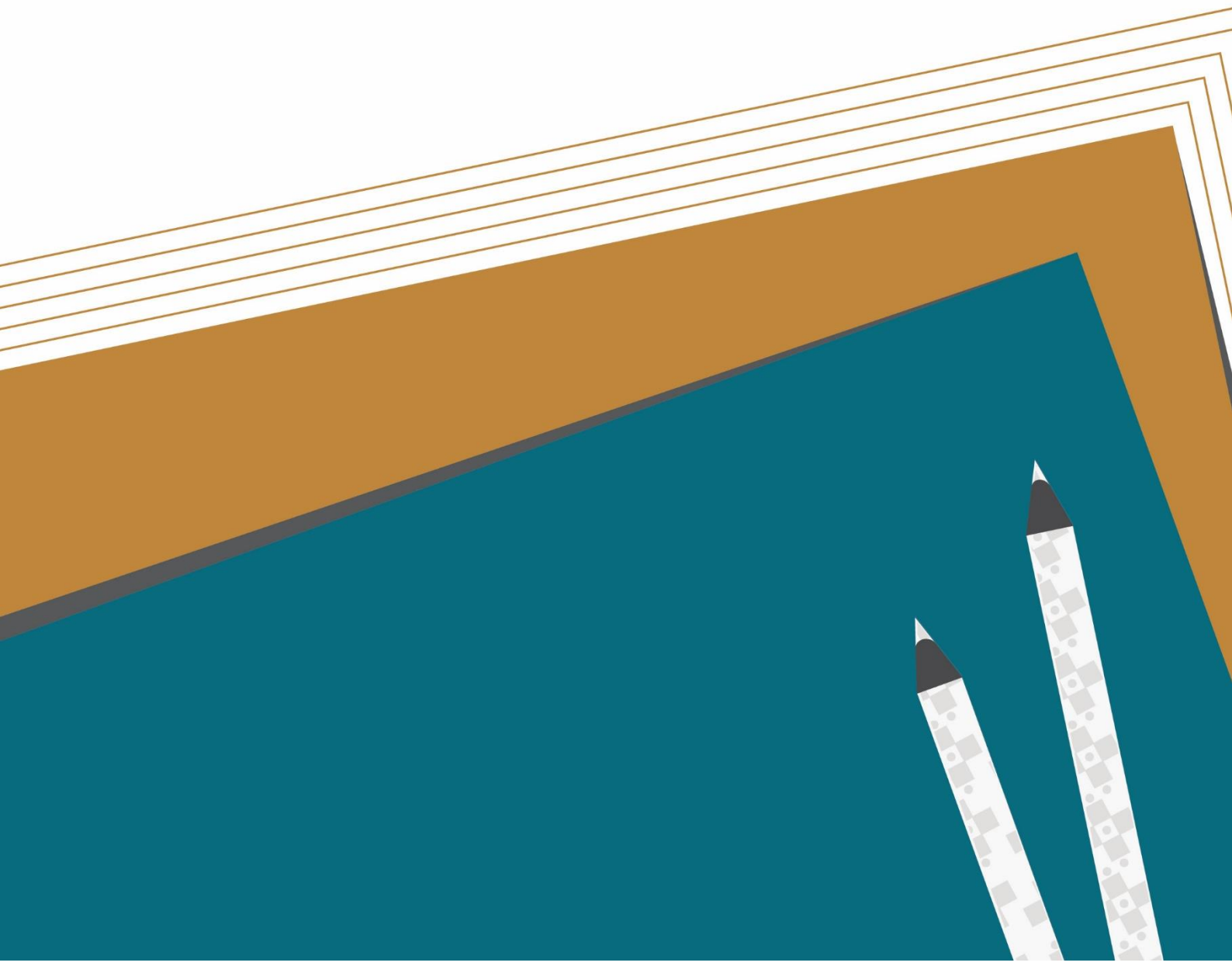


Authentic Assessments



Authentic Assessmentsⁱ

Introduction

Authentic assessment is a form of assessment in which students are asked to perform real-world tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills. In other words, in such type of assessment, the students demonstrate knowledge by doing and use higher-level thinking skills in real-life or authentic situations (Al Ruqeishi, 2015). Such assessment is comprehensive in nature as it assesses the input, process, and output of students' learning.

Paradigm shift in assessment: traditional to authentic

Authentic assessment largely emerged in response to the perceived inadequacies of the traditional forms of assessment which prevailed during most of the 20th century. Traditional assessment was underpinned by behaviourist learning theory. Students were assessed by a separate activity at the end of a period of instruction (summative assessment). In other words, the activity of instruction and the activity of assessment were kept separate. The prevailing tool in such assessment were paper-pencil tests, made up of closed questions with one correct answer. The questions tested the rote recall and mastery of factual knowledge of the students. The main purpose of assessment was to evaluate students' achievement and provide an accurate account of the students' knowledge. Students were ranked based on grades and marks awarded to them. Such type of assessment created a lot of unhealthy competition, stress, and anxiety among students. As the focus of the assessment was on testing rote memorization and not on application of knowledge, it failed to assess deeper forms of learning and hence provided a surface preview of a student's capabilities as per the norms set by the regular curriculum.

Towards the latter part of the 20th century (1970s – 1980s), the behaviorist theory of learning was replaced by the constructivist theory. The notion that knowledge is '*not given*' but children '*construct knowledge*', led to change in the dynamics of the classroom together with the role of the teacher. The assessment practices that dominated the classroom so long was no longer considered the best way to assess student's learning and was challenged. A new method emerged known as authentic assessments. This form of assessment is based on constructivist and socio-cultural learning theories (Shepard, 2001) and is more inclusive and practical in its approach and has yielded some excellent results.

The table below shows a comparative analysis between the two approaches of assessment.

Indicators	Traditional Assessment	Authentic Assessment
Approach	The traditional assessment approach is underpinned by behaviourist learning theory and the psychometric paradigm.	Authentic assessment is based on constructivist and socio-cultural learning theories (Shepard, 2001).
Purposes of assessment	Traditional assessment centres on summative assessment. Its main purposes are: certifying students' attainment at the end of a period of instruction, and classifying or ranking students.	Authentic assessment moves from sole concentration on summative assessment towards an emphasis on formative assessment with the main purposes of advancing students' learning and informing teachers as they make instructional decisions.
Integration of assessment	Traditional assessment is not integrated with teaching-learning; students are assessed by a separate activity (a test) specifically designed for this purpose. <i>Focus on product</i>	Authentic assessment is an integral part of instruction - teachers need to derive much of the information on student performance and achievement during the process of regular instruction. <i>Focus on both process and product</i>
Tools and Methods	The prevailing tool in traditional assessment is paper-pencil tests made up of short standard items with closed question formats concentrating mainly on rote recall and mastery of factual knowledge. <i>Requires one right answer</i>	In addition to paper-and-pencil tests administered at specified times, authentic assessment uses a combination of various assessment methods and tools (portfolio, project, journal, anecdotal records etc.) <i>Includes complex tasks for which there may not be one right answer. Requires high-quality performance or product, along with justifications of decisions (Students must be able to think through why they made decisions that resulted in final product.)</i>
Implication	Traditional paper-pencil tests are disconnected from the real world. It focusses more on facts and skills are usually overlooked. It often fails to assess deeper forms of learning.	Authentic assessment is tied to real-world contexts and constraints. Rather than merely providing facts as answers to specific questions, students can develop meaningful and applicable skills, and advance their knowledge of the "how" over that of the "what".
Nature and grading of tasks	Questions must be unknown to students in advance Given a score in the form of marks and grades	Tasks that are to be assessed are known ahead of time. Rubrics are shared with students. Provides opportunity to give diagnostic feedback which helps to improve students' future performance.
Process	Overall, more simple, straightforward and time-saving. The teachers are efficiently able to manage more students in a lesser amount of time	The process becomes rigorous for the teachers as it is harder to evaluate. More efforts demand more time. Hence this method is highly time-consuming

Adapted from Indiana University's Tip Sheet, Authentic Assessment, n.d.

Why use authentic assessment?

Authentic assessments have several advantages over traditional assessment. Traditional assessment through paper-and-pencil techniques expects students to read and respond to the assessment materials using some type of written response, for e.g., ranging from single words to complex and elaborated essays. Students' abilities to carry out actual experiments, to carry out library research, or to build a model, for example, are not assessed directly with paper-and-pencil techniques. Further, it is usually difficult for teachers to craft paper-and-pencil tasks that require students to apply knowledge and skills from several areas to solve real-life or "authentic" problems. 21st century world demands the application of knowledge to solve real life problems and that is what authentic assessment is all about. .

In authentic assessment, in addition to paper-pencil tests administered at specified times, a combination of various assessment methods and tools (example: portfolio, projects, journals, anecdotal records etc.) are used. This not only provides a more comprehensive, rich, and multi-dimensional account of what students know and understand, but also serve as powerful instructional tools. Teachers need to derive much of the information on student performance and achievement during the process of regular instruction. In such a case, the activities of instruction and assessment often happen simultaneously. Such integration of assessment to teaching-learning would entail assigning students a task which would serve both functions— advancing as well as assessing student learning. Thus, authentic assessment moves from sole concentration on summative assessment towards an emphasis on formative assessment with the main purposes of advancing students' learning (based on student self-assessment and peer assessment) and informing teachers on instructional decisions.

Although implementing authentic assessment is time consuming compared to traditional testing, but the benefits of authentic assessment far outweigh for the time sacrifice. What is needed to implement authentic assessment is careful planning.

Tools and Methods of Authentic Assessment

Authentic assessments can be done with the use of several tools such as individual or group projects, portfolios, journals, open book exam, observation, self-assessment or even peer-assessment.

Authentic tasks must –

- be challenging and tied to real-world problems where students can apply knowledge
- be on performance or some type of finished product
- encourage students to monitor their own learning- self- evaluation and reflection
- give opportunities for students for group collaboration, discuss and receive feedback from others

The following pages provides descriptions about some of the tools / methods for authentic assessment.

Portfolio

A student portfolio is a purposeful collection of student work that tells a story about the student's efforts, progress or achievement in one or more academic disciplines. In other words, portfolios are students' own stories of what they know, what they believe that they know and why others should be of the same opinion. A portfolio is opinion backed by fact. Students prove what they know with samples of work. No two students would have the same story and as portfolios reflect individuality, no two portfolios could be alike.

Possible contents in a portfolio may include writing samples that may vary in genre, content, and style, laboratory reports, journals, artwork, short surveys and research papers, projects, photos, worksheets, tests, map work, teacher's qualitative comments on the student's work, peers feedback and the student's own reflections on his or her learnings.

Portfolios can be classified into three types:

- Show-case portfolio: contains student's best work
- Working portfolio (process portfolio): shows work in progress. Such portfolios concentrate more on the journey of learning rather than the final destination or end products of the learning process.
- Online or e-portfolios: Online or e-portfolios may be one of the above portfolio types or a combination of different types a general requirement being that all information and artifacts are somehow accessible online.

Portfolio assessment demands the following:

- Clarity of goals (purpose)
- Work samples tied to those goals (multiple entries)
- Explicit criteria for evaluation (rubrics / checklist / rating scales)
- Student participation in selection of entries
- Teacher and student involvement in the assessment process (teacher, self and peer assessment)
- Self-reflections that demonstrate students' metacognitive ability, that is, their understanding of what worked for them in the learning process, what did not, and why?

Anecdotal Records

An anecdotal record is a written description of a student's progress that a teacher keeps on a regular basis (what a student says or does within the context of classroom activities and routines). Teacher-generated anecdotal records provide an insider's perspective of the student's educational experience (Baumann & Duffy-Hester, 2002; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990). This perspective is vital to communication with the student and the student's family about his/her academic progress. Such records provide a wealth of information across different developmental areas (*social, emotional, choices, interests, relationships, strengths, weaknesses and progress*) of the student.

Suggested guidelines for documenting and analyzing anecdotal records

A single anecdote does not give conclusive information and need to be collected on a regular basis. This way the teacher creates a record of the student's learning process over time.

When to record observation: Observing students need planning and preparation. In order to address the time constraints of the classroom, it is better to select students to observe ahead of time. It is better to avoid observing all the students all at once – instead teacher should focus observing a handful of students each day.

How to do a focused observation? Reality is complex. When confronted with innumerable situations that take place during instruction, it is easy for the teacher to get distracted. It is important for the teacher to train the eye for focused observation. For a first time observer, the focus could be based on the learning outcomes as a point of reference. But slowly with experience, the teachers would be able to observe and record multiple features of student performance at a glance.

What to record?

- The recorded information must be non-evaluative - should be recorded in a factual, objective manner. Writing quality anecdotal records is facilitated by keeping in mind the following considerations – write only observable data for e.g. “wrote 3 sentences”, “read for 5 minutes” rather than “wrote a few sentences”, “read a lot” etc..
- It should not include why something happened. Neither should it imply what happened is wrong, right, good or bad;
- Use significant abbreviations to speed the writing of records,
- Write record in the past tense;
- Support records with examples as evidence.

- Do not use the “C word” i.e., ‘can’t’. It is much more accurate to state that a student did not do a particular task than to imply that the student is unable to perform the task by writing ‘can’t’. For example, “can’t write a five-line poem” versus “did not write a five-line poem”
- Labelling should be avoided; No judgements or conclusions should be inferred; ‘Red Flag Words’ should be avoided (example: feelings – such as happy, angry or lazy; intelligence – such as smart, dumb, overachiever; reasons for doing things - such as out-of-control, on purpose, determined; self-concept - such as pretty, secure, athletic).

On what basis should an anecdotal record be analyzed? The compiled anecdotal records should be periodically analyzed. As one goes through the different records, it is a good practice to code the records – for e.g., mark the records with ‘S’ to indicate an area of strength in comparison with the appropriate standard; mark the record with ‘N’ to indicate an area of need; or ‘U’ with unique features. Once the records are coded for strengths, needs or any unique features, it would be good to compile the areas of strengths and needs. Separating the records into ‘strengths’ and ‘needs’, allows the teacher to summarize the patterns exhibited by the student. The summary also helps to clarify and generate appropriate instructional recommendations.

A sample of an anecdotal tool is given below:

Name: Priya Teacher: Savita	Age: 4 yrs Setting: Sandpit	Date: 4 th April 2019 Time: 11 AM	Learning and Development
<p style="text-align: center;">OBSERVATION</p> <p>Priya walked over to the sandpit and picked up a toy truck. Carrying the truck with both hands, she walked over to 2 of her friends who were also in the sandpit. Priya said, “I got a dumping truck, there is more over there, get one too”, pointing to where the trucks were. Priya sat in the sandpit with the truck in front of her. She used both her hands to scoop sand and fill the back of the truck. When priya filled up the back of the truck, she pushed it across the sandpit while kneeling. Then she said, “too heavy, hard to push”. She stopped pushing and began to empty the sand from back of the truck. Once the sand was completely off the back of the truck, she pushed it again saying” look I can push it fast now.</p>			<p>Openly explores feelings and ideas in interactions with others</p> <p>Provides solutions to simple problem situations</p> <p>Compares and uses vocabulary like more and less</p> <p>Uses vocabulary to express capacities</p> <p>Shows interest in other children and being part of a group</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">INTERPRETATION</p> <p>Through this experience it is evident that priya explores her environment and manipulates objects and experiments with cause and effect, trial and error and motion.</p>			<p>Future planning</p> <p>To weigh different objects- heavy and light</p>

Projects

Projects are long-term structured activities completed by individuals or groups that result in a product such as a model, a substantial report or a collection of artefacts. As students engage in projects (individually or in groups) they solve challenging problems that are authentic, curriculum-based, and often interdisciplinary. According to Nitko and Brookhart (2014), projects can call a broad range of skills and knowledge, including creativity, communication skills, problem solving, critical thinking and subject matter knowledge. At the end, students demonstrate their newly acquired knowledge and are assessed on their learning and how well they are able to communicate it. For example, when students write a library research paper as an individual project, they must apply the skills of locating and using reference materials and sources: outlining, organizing, and planning a report; communicating using written language, word processing, and presentation style; and demonstrating their understanding of the topic.

As mentioned earlier, projects can be individual or group projects. While individual projects focus on the work of one student, group projects focus on the activities of several students working in a group. In a group project, apart from evaluating the students' final product, the students are also evaluated whether they can work together cooperatively and collaboratively to create a high-quality product. Research on cooperative learning indicates that students achieve most when the learning setting requires both group goals and individual accountability (Slavin, 1988).

Throughout the process of project making, the teacher's role is to guide and advise, rather than to direct and manage student work.

Why Projects?

- In projects, students learn by working for an extended period of time. They investigate, explore and respond to complex questions, real-world challenges and problems - in the process they acquire deeper knowledge on their subjects
- Project integrates knowing and doing. Students not only gain knowledge and elements of the core curriculum but they also learn the skill to apply what they know to solve authentic problems and produce results that matter
- Project work challenges students to think beyond the boundaries of the classroom, helping the students to develop skills (e.g. collaboration, problem solving, decision making, and communication), behaviors and confidence that are necessary for success in the real world.
- A shift mandated by the global world, which rewards intangible assets such as drive, passion, creativity, empathy, and resiliency. These cannot be taught out of a textbook, but must be activated through experience – as students' deep-dive into projects, they gain those experiences which in future would help them to face real-world challenges.

Open Book Exam (OBE)

An "open-book examination" is a system of examination where the students have varying degrees of access to resources and references (textbooks and class notes) while answering the questions. The questions asked in an open-book examination are not simple recall, rather it tests the ability to process or use information provided in their textbooks or notes and apply the same in various contexts that reflect real-life situations. For example, instead of asking 'what are multipurpose projects?'- the answer for which the students can easily find in their textbooks, an open-book exam, may ask questions like- do you think multipurpose projects and large dams should be constructed – justify your statement. In such cases, the answers have to be well thought through and students have to use their analytical and critical thinking skill to find solutions to different problems. Since in an open-book exam the focus is on developing abilities and not on recall and memorization, it not only makes the examination stress free but even equips students with intellectual abilities and skills which enable him / her to face the real-life challenges which they may encounter in future.

Why open-book exam?

We are now living in the 'knowledge-based society' where knowledge is expanding at an unprecedented rate. Having access to information is not an uphill task today as the internet serves as the huge repository of information. The requirement of the society is not to memorize huge volumes of factual materials but to select the relevant information from the available scattered information and raw data and organize them into meaningful knowledge; analyze and interpret the information; apply the same to solve real-life problems.

An important reason for using open book examinations is that they have a tremendous impact on promoting the right mental sets in both learning and teaching. The most immediate result on students will be that they will stop "mugging" or rote learning. Most students who are used to conventional examinations think of "studying" as the mechanical memorization of information in textbooks and class notes in order to reproduce it in examinations. Open book examinations will have a fundamental change in this attitude. Studying should not be equated with memorizing; instead, it should be understanding concepts, and using these concepts (along with available information) to practise the skills of modifying and building knowledge, thinking critically, and solving problems. In open book examinations, there will be no more mugging. Once the burden of mugging is taken away, education becomes a pleasurable activity, not a painful drudgery. What is learnt with pleasure is learnt more effectively and retained better.

The effects of open book exams on teaching strategies will be equally profound. First, the nature of the examination questions will change. They cannot be of the form: "Write an essay on X", "Explain the term Y with examples", "Define the term Z", but will have to be designed carefully and intelligently to test the students' understanding, and the skills of applying that understanding.

If the nature of the examination questions changes, strategies for preparing students to take those examinations will also have to change. Teachers will have to design tasks that will provide exercises for the appropriate mental skills required in each subject. Instead of the teacher talking all the time and students taking down notes, classes will have discussions, questions, and other active processes. In other words, teaching will no longer be the transfer of information from the teacher to student: it will be the training of the mind in certain intellectual skills.

Benefits of open-book exam

- **Open-book exams are intellectually demanding:** Education should equip the learners with more sophisticated intellectual abilities and skills. There is a need for the learners to develop and demonstrate their abilities to understand, apply, analyze, synthesize and evaluate their knowledge base. It is a challenging task not only for the candidates but also for the question paper setter. The students are not expected to merely copy from textbooks in their examination script. It demands the learners to comprehend the subject from a mind map of the topics and present in clear and precise terms.
- **Time Factor:** The question of time creeps in, as the question paper in OBE is an exercise of logical thinking. The candidate should have read the required text/material previously to locate the answers within the stipulated timeframe. The text serves as reminders and for occasional verification of details. So OBE trains the learners to manage their time, tighten their writing and present it in concise and accurate terms.
- **Open-book exams promote higher order thinking skills:** It creates an environment more conducive to the exercising of higher-order cognitive skills. When working at reduced stress level and with reduced burden on recall, students should be better able to devote themselves to more sophisticated demands. The thought-demanding questions in OBEs make the learners 'think' and apply their knowledge base in answering the challenging questions..
- **Free from exam tension:** In OBEs, learners are free from exam tension. There is no need to learn and remember the facts, as OBEs not only tests the knowledge, but also the students' ability to acquire the knowledge on demand and apply it to the question. OBE removes the anxiety of students before examinations, as it discourages rote learning.
- **Linking and Delinking the text:** OBEs in the broader sense keeps the learner linked with the text in the initial stage and delinked at later stages when they go 'beyond' the text. The learner will have to assimilate the basic facts in a text, evaluate and present it during the examination. After inculcating basic points, they learn on their own and text becomes a redundant factor. This delinking of text becomes a significant factor in making the learner independent. Given certain amount of independence, imagination can go to heights to achieve realistic goals.

Thus, open book examinations can restore the true meaning of the word education for both teachers and students. It is true that it will take some time and effort on the part of students and teachers to adapt themselves to the demands of open book examinations . But the changes will be inevitable. When combined with the mode of teaching that focusses on thinking skills, they will make education an exciting and enjoyable intellectual adventure, the beginning of a lifelong quest for knowledge.

Journal Writing

Journals provide useful information to both teachers and students. Journal writing encourages students to identify questions or needs they have about their learning and reflect on how they could take an active role in addressing these questions or needs. Teachers can respond to student questions with further suggestions and let students decide on the best course of action.

Reflection journals are a type of journal that encourages students to think about what they have learned and make connections to their own lives. A journal reflects students' understanding and knowledge on a subject instead of just reiterating another person's ideas that they have memorized word-for-word. It is an informal style of writing that results in a student thinking for themselves. Reading through the entries that students create gives teachers information that can be used to plan future lessons.

Students with a journal generally have clearer thoughts and an increased ability to explain a concept while the teacher can truly grasp the type of learner that student really is.

The timing of a journal assignment includes different options with before, during, or after a lesson.

There are two general types of journals in a classroom

- A journal that students are given very little direction on and the student writes down their thoughts, feelings and ideas
- A journal where the student is given a prompt or a specific topic to write on that has boundaries and guidelines needed for accuracy (Miami Museum of Science, 2008).

Why Journal Writing?

Journals aren't just for writing either; they can also involve drawing, painting and role-playing (Miami Museum of Science, 2008). The purpose of a journal is to allow students to have a voice. Journal writing assignments can benefit students by enhancing reflection, facilitating critical thought, expressing feelings, and writing focused arguments.

If journaling is done correctly it can provide the following information:

- Help students pinpoint what they know and don't know.
- Connect previous knowledge with what the student is currently studying.
- Summarize what the student understands and their knowledge on a topic.
- Help students understand important questions to ask.
- Help student keep his or her thoughts more organized.
- Support an interdisciplinary approach to education.
- Help student see in a more visual approach to learning.
- Allow student to take a tentative idea and make it more permanent" (Burchfield, 2005).

Some teachers assign journal writing without grades. If this is the case, then the teacher will be more apt to correct grammar and spelling and make comments with appropriate praise. Journals also can be used for more class discussion and participation. If a student writes his/her ideas and understandings down on paper, then in-depth class discussion results. If a teacher uses journals in the classroom it allows that teacher to not only look through a window into how the student is thinking and learning, but *how* they learn. In other words, a journal shows if a student is struggling with a subject, their strengths and weaknesses, and if there are any misconceptions involved in learning.

Journals also answer specific questions for a teacher:

- Can the student organize information?
- Can the student explain a specific concept?
- Does the student use communication skills correctly to communicate an idea?
- Is the student confident in his or her abilities?
- What is the student feeling?
- Is the student's response coherent and well-structured (Burchfield, et al, 2000)

Journals can be as simple as loose leaf papers in a folder, a spiral notebook labelled Journal, or store bought journals.

Grades are not necessary given in journaling, but it is suggested to follow a specific rubric if assigning a grade. If grades are not given on a specific assignment, here are some great ideas on assessing a student's journal (Burchfield, et al., 2005):

- Because some of the writing is informal it is best to focus on content rather than mechanics.
- Be positive, encouraging and accepting of the student's writing.
- Single out one or two things to comment on and don't undertake the entire journal.
- Be specific when you comment on a specific problem.
- When appropriate, have students edit one another's journal.
- Ask students to read aloud, when appropriate, so the classroom becomes more conducive to sharing and confidence levels increase.
- After students have completed three journal entries, ask them to choose their best entry, revise it and have other students begin peer editing.

Some content specific topics for Journal Writing

- Language: If you have to give a different ending to a book you have just read, how would you end the story.
- Science: Record in journal, the stages of a classroom bean seedling during growth stages.
- Math: Your friend was absent in the class when place value was taught. How will you explain the concept to him?

Scoring Authentic Tasks: Rubrics, Checklists and Rating Scales

Rubrics, checklists and rating scales are tools that lists specific criteria and allow teachers and students to gather information and to make judgements about what students know and can do in relation to the learning outcomes. They help in collecting data about specific knowledge, skills and behaviours that the students exhibit, in a systematic way. If two people were to both read, score and provide comments on the same student’s essay without a rubric, checklist, instructions or guidelines it is highly unlikely that they will score the essay the same way. This is because their unique personal values, expertise, and interests will be the key factors that influence how they assign a score and determine what they like and dislike about the paper. This type of scoring is considered biased and unfair because student’s progress towards a learning outcome is exclusively determined by the will and preference of whomever happens to be scoring.

I. Rubrics

Rubric is a powerful and authentic tool that helps to assess students’ work objectively. It provides several different categories or criteria against which a specific task is assessed. For each category or criterion, a rubric defines the specific attributes that will be used to score or judge the student’s performance. The categories or criteria of performance are usually given in the rows of a rubric. For example, developing a rubric for student writing may include the following categories of performance:

Categories / Criteria			
Ideas			
Organization			
Expression			
Conventions			
Legibility			

Once the categories or criteria are identified (rows), to reduce ambiguity and to assist students in their learning, one must think through the different levels of performance for each category and describe the key features that represent each level (columns). For example, for the same rubric on student writing, the following may be the different levels. Each level has a detailed description of the levels of performance.

Categories / Criteria	Levels of Performance		
	Strong	Developing	Emerging
Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Establishes a clear focus ➤ Uses descriptive language ➤ Provides relevant information ➤ Communicates creative ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develops a focus ➤ Uses some descriptive language ➤ Details support idea ➤ Communicates original ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Attempts focus ➤ Ideas not fully developed
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Establishes a strong beginning, middle, and end ➤ Demonstrates an orderly flow of ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Attempts an adequate introduction and ending ➤ Evidence of logical sequencing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Some evidence of a beginning, middle, and end ➤ Sequencing is attempted
Expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Uses effective language ➤ Uses high-level vocabulary ➤ Use of sentence variety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Diverse word choice ➤ Uses descriptive words ➤ Sentence variety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Limited word choice ➤ Basic sentence structure
Conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Few or no errors in: grammar, spelling, capitalization, punctuation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Some errors in: grammar, spelling, capitalization, punctuation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Has some difficulty in: grammar, spelling, capitalization, punctuation
Legibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Easy to read ➤ Properly spaced ➤ Proper letter formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Readable with some spacing/forming errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Difficult to read due to spacing/forming letter

The quality of the rubric depends on how precisely the criteria is selected and how sharply the descriptions for each levels are articulated. A well-developed rubric reduces interpretation and subjectivity in evaluating student performance.

Significance of Rubrics

Rubrics can be used to track student performance across time (e.g., across the semester, across an academic program). Rubrics may be co-evolved by the teacher and the students. This will help the students to understand the categories (the criteria / parameters) against which they will be evaluated and the expected levels of performance that represent high quality are. After the evaluation, it helps students to be aware of their strengths and areas of improvement and it gives them a direction on what they need to do next.

For the teachers, rubrics help to objectively evaluate the students work and provide them with detailed feedback. Instead of judging the performance, the rubric actually describes the performance. Infact the judgement here is accompanied by a description of the performance which can be used for feedback and further instruction. Thus, rubric can be seen as a link between instruction and assessment.

Rubrics can be used to assess both the product and the process. For example, the criteria for assessing a project work will not only be based on the finished product but would involve how they have worked in groups, what type of reading they have done, and so on. Some examples of processes could be preparing a slide for the microscope, giving a speech, reading a chapter. Examples of products could be an essay, a presentation on a topic or a piece of painting.

What cannot be assessed using a rubric?

The only kind of work which cannot be assessed using a rubric could be test items or oral questions which are closed ended questions with single right or wrong answer.

2. Checklists

Checklists usually offers a yes/no format in relation to student demonstration of specific criteria. It consists of a list of specific behaviors, characteristics, or activities and a place for marking whether each is present or absent, complete / incomplete, yes / no etc. In some cases, a teacher will use a checklist to observe the students (assessing procedures students use, products students produce, or behaviors students' exhibit). In other cases, students use checklists to ensure that they have completed all of the steps and considered all of the possibilities (evaluate their own performance).

Significance of using checklists

- Easy to use
- Helpful when many different items need to be observed
- May be developed to survey one or more children
- No time constraints; can be quickly recorded
- Data can be easily analyzed

Things to keep in mind while creating a checklist:

- The objectives of the checklist should be clarified to make the checklist more meaningful and useful
- The items in the checklist should be relevant to the goal that one is trying to achieve
- Each item in the checklist should be clear and concise so that it is understood by everyone or to the one using it; checklist should be concise so that it is easy to use and easy to read
- Each item in the checklist should be structured logically; if the checklist is long, it should be grouped or divided into separate sections according to the category to make it more comprehensive
- The items in the checklist should be actionable or doable to ensure that the intent of the items is met

Limitations of a checklist

- Checklist do not indicate the quality of performance, so the usefulness of checklist is limited
- Only a limited component of overall performances can be evaluated
- Only the presence or absence of an attribute, behavior or performance or a parameter may be assured / Lacks detailed information
- It has limited use in qualitative observations / Lack the richness of descriptive narrative

Example 1: Self-evaluation checklist on communication

<i>Suggested targets / item in the checklist</i>	<i>I can</i>	<i>In the process</i>	<i>Not yet</i>	<i>Entry # / Evidence</i>
I can talk about myself, my family and my classroom				
I can meet and greet people				
I can express likes and dislikes when asked				
I can use computers to write and get information				

Example 2: Child Skills Checklist

Child Skills Checklist

(From “Observing Development of the Young Child” by Janice J. Beaty)

Child’s Name: _____

Observer: _____

DOB: _____

Dates: _____

Program: _____

Directions: Put a √ for items you see the child perform regularly. Put N for items where there is no opportunity to observe. Leave all others blank.

Item	Evidence	Date
Self - Identity		
_____ separates from parents without difficulty		
_____ does not cling to classroom staff excessively		
_____ makes eye-contact with adults		
Emotional Development		
___ Allow self to be comforted during stressful time		
___ Can express anger in words rather than actions		
___ Shows people affection, connection, love		
Social Play		
___ Plays by self with own toys/materials		
___ Makes friends with other children		
___ Gains access to play in a positive manner		
Gross Motor Development		
Fine Motor Development		
Cognitive Development		

3. Rating Scales

A rating scale is a tool used for assessing the performance of tasks, skill levels, procedures, processes, qualities, quantities, or end products, such as reports, drawings. These are judged at a defined level within a stated range. The difference between rating scale and checklist is that, while checklists help to evaluate whether a given step, a specific property, or particular action is present or absent, rating scales are concerned with more than the presence or the absence of these elements. They indicate the degree of accomplishment of a student in the performance task (*the degree or frequency of the behaviours, skills and strategies displayed by the students*) rather than just yes or no. Rating scales state the criteria and provide three or four response selections to describe the quality or frequency of the student work.

Significance of using rating scales

Rating scales can be used by teachers to record observations and also as a self-assessment tool. Rating scales helps students with information on how to improve performance and set goals. In a rating scale the descriptive written for each numbers holds more significance than the number itself. The more precise and descriptive each number is, the more reliable the rating scale is.

Teachers can use rating scales to record observations and students can use them as self-assessment tools.

Sample rating scale to assess understanding of a specific topic from syllabus

Name: XYZ	Grade: IV	Date: 4/09/2020
Subject: Environmental Studies	Topic: Understanding of Seasons	Assignment: Oral Presentation

Criteria	Excellent (4 points)	Very Good (3 points)	Good (2 points)	Can do better (1 point)
<i>Introduction to the topic</i>				
<i>Explains his/her favourite season</i>				
<i>Looks at classmate and makes eye contact</i>				
<i>Speaks clearly and confidently</i>				
Total 16 marks				

Sample rating scale assessing the quality of some of a student’s dispositions toward critical thinking

Name:	Grade:	Date:
Subject:	Topic:	Assignment:

1. Did the student consider different points of views?

0	1	2	3

Acts as if own point of view is accepted by everyone	Aware that own point of view is not accepted by everyone	Shows awareness that others have legitimate points of view that differ from own	Actively looks for and encourages others to express points of view different from or opposing own
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2. How did the student treat others' points of views?

0	1	2	3

Acts in a way that avoids or discourages others' points of view	Shows some attention to others' points of view	Makes a serious effort to consider others' points of view, but is not consistently objective or rational	Attends seriously to others' points of view and consistently reviews them objectively and rationally
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3. Did the student communicate well with others who had less knowledge or ability?

0	1	2	3

Cannot work or communicate with others who have less knowledge or ability	Attempts to work or communicate with others who have less knowledge or ability, but is less than adequate in doing so	Works and communicates adequately with others who have less knowledge or ability	Works and communicates excellently with others who have less knowledge or ability
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4. Was the student sensitive to the feelings of others with less knowledge or ability?

0	1	2	3

Acts apathetically or cruelly toward others who have less knowledge and ability	Does the minimum to help or encourage respect for the feelings of others who have less knowledge and ability	Offers good encouragement and respect for the feelings of others who have less knowledge and ability	Actively seeks to bolster and increase respect for the feelings of others who have less knowledge and ability
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Conclusion

Authentic assessment encourages the integration of teaching-learning and assessment. In today's world, knowing the content of various disciplines is not enough. What we want from our students is to see whether our students can apply what they have learnt in real world situations. The different tools and methods of authentic assessment discussed above provides opportunities to students to demonstrate their learning. Authentic tasks not only serve as assessments but also are vehicles of learning. For example, when students are asked to solve real world problems, the students learn in the process as they try to develop solutions to the problem. As teachers are facilitating the process, the students trying to find the solution to the problem becomes an assessment of how meaningfully they can apply the concepts learnt. The use of multiple and varied assessment tools and methods are recommended in order to get a comprehensive understanding of what the students know and how they apply what they have learned in different ways and from different perspectives.

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