CHAPTER 2

AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT

It is important to have authentic assessment when assessing ESL [CLD] students. Authentic assessment allows teachers to be able to look at the results and know that they truly represent where the students are, at that time. We all know that assessments can often offer different struggles when it comes to ESL [CLD] students. Often students can struggle on some assessments just because of the way the question is asked. Authentic assessments allow teachers to not test the students over language, but test them over content to make it an accurate assessment. Teachers can use authentic assessment in a variety of ways to benefit future learning in the classroom.

Rick Malone, High School Mathematics Teacher

Chapter Outline

Introduction

Reliability and Validity of Authentic Assessments

Types of Authentic Assessment
- Performance-Based Assessments
- Portfolios
- Self-Assessment and Peer Assessment
- Interview-Based Assessment
- Play-Based Assessment
- Cooperative Group Assessment
- Dialogue Journals and Scaffolded Essays

Using Authentic Assessment to Inform Instruction
- Rubrics
- Checklists

Summary

Learning Outcomes

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- Justify use of alternative and authentic assessments in today's classrooms.
- Hold informed conversations with administrators, colleagues, and parents about issues of reliability and validity in assessment.
- Explore CLD student learning using multiple types of authentic assessment.
- Create authentic assessment tools to document learning gains.

INTRODUCTION

One of the primary purposes of this text is to explore the range of ways for gathering and interpreting information about culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) student learning to inform instruction. For years, standardized and teacher-made tests (e.g., multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank) have dominated our views and practices about measuring student learning. These tests typically require memorization and do little to encourage students' independent thinking. The assessments fail to demonstrate whether or not the students are able to process the new information to produce clear understanding of the material covered. The results of such assessments have not always yielded information useful to classroom teachers for creating instructional accommodations for CLD students. Although the data generated by traditional tests are certainly helpful in comparing students, programs, and schools on quantitative bases, what the data actually mean for each individual student is often much more obscure and tells us little about language and academic growth.

The ability of an assessment tool or strategy to measure incremental gains is especially critical for CLD students, who often are struggling to simultaneously acculturate to new living and school environments, acquire a second and unfamiliar language, and perform according to grade-level standards in the content areas. Not surprisingly, there is increasing recognition that alternative forms of assessment are essential to best practices. Especially needed are assessments that are authentic, that are process- as well as product-focused, and that are capable of measuring incremental gains. Such assessments are the focus of this chapter.

Many classroom teachers are seeking or have already developed their own forms of assessment that provide more usable information about how well their students are learning what is actually being taught in class. These instruments are sometimes referred to as *alternative assessments* because they can supplement formal assessments and may also help refine or enhance current assessment practices. Because alternative assessments usually represent nontraditional or accommodated approaches to measuring student learning, they are often considered more authentic than the formal assessments they replace; however, not all alternative assessments can be characterized as authentic.

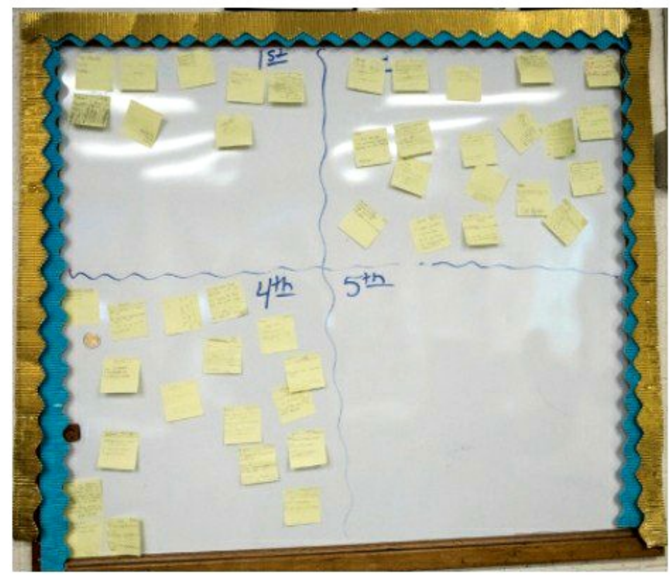
For example, one teacher may provide CLD students with a closed set of responses in a multiple-choice format as an alternative to an open set fill-in-the-blank format. Although such a format may increase the students' abilities to recognize targeted responses, it does not increase the authenticity of the assessment for measuring acquired knowledge and skills. Conversely, a teacher across town may feel that such a multiple-choice format is constraining for CLD students and alternatively provide an open set format to allow for a broader range of potentially appropriate responses. In this case, the alternative design may in fact be considered more authentic if it elicits and credits the students for both on- and off-curricula responses that demonstrate understanding of the desired content.

As is evident from these examples, the terms *alternative assessment* and *authentic assessment* are not strictly synonymous. However, the many common reasons for using alternative and/or authentic assessment approaches leads to overlapping references that can confound our understanding of such means of assessment. Because well-designed alternative assessments are also more authentic and may be used additionally as well as alternatively, we simply refer to these as *authentic* assessments throughout the remainder of this text.

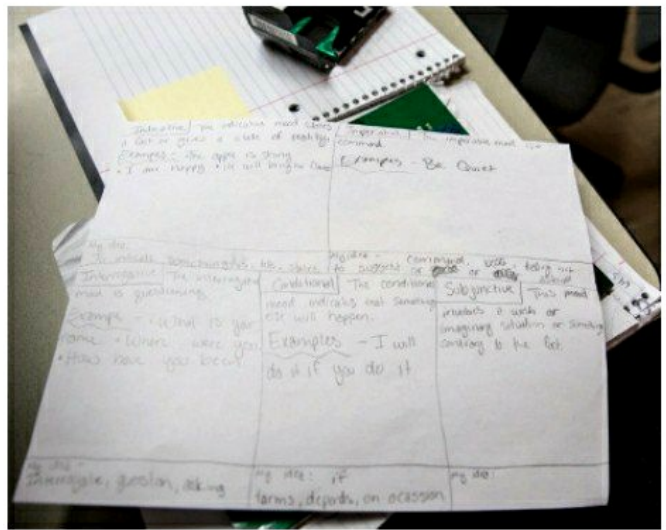
Although the literature of assessment has employed a variety of criteria to define *authentic assessment,* such definitions tend to share certain commonalities (Cooper, 1999; Crawford & Impara, 2001; Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2006; Hancock, 1994; Linn & Miller, 2005). Among these commonalities, authentic assessments:

- Are generally developed directly from classroom instruction, group work, and related classroom activities and provide an alternative to traditional assessments
- Can be considered valid and reliable in that they genuinely and consistently assess a student's classroom performance
- Facilitate the student's participation in evaluation processes
- Include measurements and evaluations relevant to both the teacher and the student
- Emphasize real-world problems, tasks, or applications that are relevant to the student and his or her community.

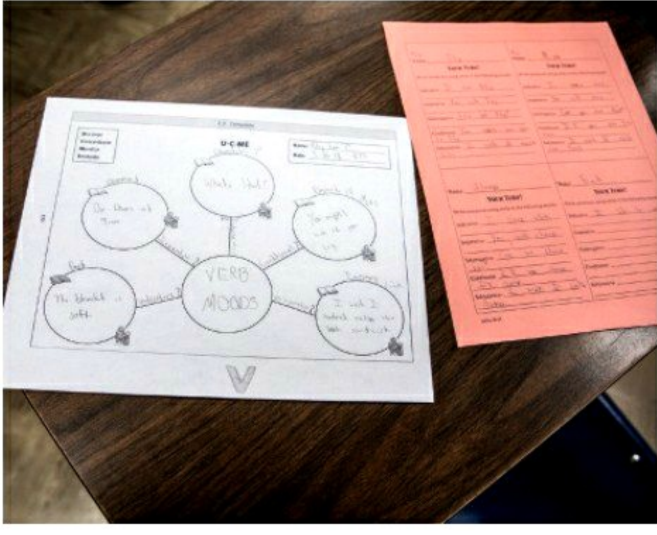
Figure 2.1 Authentic Assessment Embedded Throughout the Lesson



Ms. Kerr began her English lesson by providing the eighth-grade students with an opportunity to record initial thoughts about the target concept. In this case, the focus of the lesson was verb moods. Students from each class used sticky notes to document different forms of verbs that came to mind. These ideas allowed Ms. Kerr to preassess students' background knowledge and provided her with a springboard into the lesson.



As students worked with the curricular material, they used a tool to document their new learning and personal thoughts about each of the new vocabulary terms (indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive verb moods). For each, they wrote the meaning of the term, an example of that form of verb, and their personal ideas. These individual connections increased the relevance of the material and promoted comprehension and retention. While students collaborated with peers to share ideas and worked individually to record information, Ms. Kerr was provided with a wealth of formative assessment data.



Ms. Kerr provided students with a U-C-ME graphic organizer (Herrera, Kavimandan, & Holmes, 2011) to support their self-monitoring and evaluation of what they had learned during the lesson. This tool served as a bridge to the more typical, curriculum-bound post-instructional assessment, which required learners to write sentences using verbs in each of the moods. Given the scaffolding they had been afforded through Ms. Kerr's use of authentic assessment throughout the lesson, students were able to approach this final assessment with confidence.

Across the nation, many classroom teachers already have embraced authentic assessment techniques as useful for gathering information that helps them plan, adapt, and individualize instruction. These techniques may prove even more valuable for CLD students because, with careful planning and implementation, teachers can avoid a number of cultural or linguistic biases inherent in traditional assessments.

When assessing CLD students, it is particularly important to design tasks that help us distinguish what we are in fact actually testing (e.g., language, content knowledge, acculturation). We must also assess CLD students in ways that allow them to demonstrate how they understand, access, and apply their knowledge in novel or real-life contexts. Use of authentic assessments need not be restricted to add-on or follow-up components of a lesson. They can often be embedded within the actual context of instruction. Figure 2.1 illustrates how authentic assessments can be integrated in instruction throughout the course of a lesson.

Authentic assessments identify and build on student strengths such as language, prior experiences, interests, and funds of knowledge (Moll, Armanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) to facilitate learning. They typically invite CLD students to become much more engaged, emphasizing student-constructed (rather than prescribed or regurgitated) responses. Student involvement in the assessment process facilitates learning by increasing motivation and ownership and lowering anxiety levels

SNAPSHOT from *CLASSROOM PRACTICE* 2.1

In this picture, 2nd graders in Ms. Wilhite's class are writing about the topic of *weather*. Ms. Wilhite first had students document their initial connections to the key vocabulary using words (in their native language or in English) and pictures. Then throughout the lesson, as the vocabulary words were read in context, Ms. Wilhite had students discuss word meanings with peers and record new learning on the same tool. This process allowed students to confirm/disconfirm their original associations and document new understandings that would support their writing at the end of the lesson. Strategies such as this enable Ms. Wilhite to authentically assess students' background knowledge, their evolving understandings and perspectives, and ultimately their comprehension of the lesson's vocabulary and content.

Stephanie Wilhite

VOICES *from the* FIELD 2.1

When teachers use observations as forms of assessments and allow students to bring their own schema to each vocabulary word, it helps teachers identify any misconceptions that may need to be addressed during instruction. When the teacher continues to observe and question as the students work in groups to show connections between the words, the assessment process becomes part of the instruction. This allows us as teachers to consider the following: Are the students able to read the words correctly? Are their connections making sense? Are all students participating? If a student is not participating, why? Does he or she need more opportunities exploring the words? Maybe more visuals or manipulatives need to be used. So, in a way, the assessments that are happening during instruction help us with the instruction process.

Mika Rutherford, Kindergarten Teacher

assessment FREEZE FRAME 2.1

Authentic assessments identify and build on student strengths such as language, prior experiences, interests, and funds of knowledge to facilitate learning.

(Chappuis & Stiggins, 2002; Sajedi, 2014). Authentic assessments center on strategies and activities that challenge students and encourage them to integrate knowledge and skills. Well-designed authentic assessments promote higher-order thinking and self-evaluation as students monitor their growth and progress. Because we create and employ authentic assessment to sample what students can actually do as well as what they know, most assessments, regardless of format, include a focus on individual growth and learning over time.

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENTS

When creating authentic assessments, it is important to keep in mind:

- *Why* they are used
- *What* information can be obtained from them
- *How* can this information help improve instruction and learning

As with other forms of measurement, we judge authentic assessments by their reliability and validity as indicators of student learning.

Reliability is best understood as the power of an assessment to gather consistent evidence of skills, regardless of the examiner, time, place, or other variables related to its administration. Reliable tests are also those that prove sensitive to measuring the incremental changes that reflect growth and improvement in the areas being assessed (Stiggins & Chappuis, 2017). This is a critical feature when assessments are used to inform instruction rather than merely provide baseline or end-term indices of achievement. The reliability of an assessment can be compromised or threatened by numerous factors. The presence of distracters (internal such as hunger and anxiety, or external such as ambient noise) can affect the performance of a student or group of students in ways that render those results less reliable or representative than if the assessment had occurred under different conditions.

An important measure of reliability is *inter-rater reliability*. This is the degree to which a student's product or performance is rated the same by different raters or evaluators. Ensuring inter-rater reliability is especially important for authentic assessments, which generally lack the discrete point scales of more objective forms of assessment such as multiple-choice and true/false tests. Inter-rater reliability for authentic assessments is often achieved through well-defined criteria and training for teachers and students in how to rate works according to specified criteria. This practice helps enhance rater reliability, and the resulting focus on key criteria sharpens the teacher's attention to those skills during teaching and learning activities.

assessment FREEZE FRAME 2.2

Reliability is best understood as the power of an assessment to gather consistent evidence of skills, regardless of the examiner, time, place, or other variables of its administration.

Validity refers to the ability of an assessment, process, or product to measure the knowledge or skills it is intended to measure. Teachers of CLD students are particularly concerned with *content validity*, which is the extent to which the assessment tasks and items represent the domain of knowledge and skills to be measured (especially regarding the most critical content). For example, we might question the content validity of a test that purports to measure only computational skills but includes problems such as the following:

> The players on Morgan's baseball team take turns bringing water bottles for their teammates. Last week, Tyler brought 12 bottles, and one player was absent. The coach decided to save the extra bottles and just have Morgan bring the remaining number needed the following week. How many bottles does Morgan need to bring next week so there are just enough for each player on the field?

Teachers should consider the level of knowledge and skills needed to answer this question, as well as language cues a CLD student might misinterpret. Although seemingly simple, this problem requires much more of students than basic computational skills. The question also requires:

- Knowledge of baseball (number of players on the field and on a team)
- An understanding that water bottles come in individual sizes
- The cultural assumption that bottles are not shared
- The linguistic savvy to understand that *just enough* implies exactly the right amount (a one-to-one correspondence), whereas *enough* may signify at least enough for everyone, but more may be fine

Much cultural knowledge is implicit in questions of this sort. An astute teacher may notice such content bias right away or, as often happens, only later begin to wonder why certain groups of students have greater difficulty than others with specific assessment items or formats. Because the goal of assessment is to provide information about student learning related to specific content, assessments must be meaningful indicators of whether—and how—that learning occurs.

Another area of assessment validity is *construct validity*, which deals with the question: How well do the skills required for the test items reflect the student's targeted knowledge bases and competencies in that area? For example, a science assessment that focuses on student recognition of target vocabulary in print may fail to sample (and therefore inform

assessment FREEZE FRAME 2.3

Teachers of CLD students are particularly concerned with *content validity,* which is the extent to which the assessment tasks and items represent the domain of knowledge and skills to be measured (especially regarding the most critical content).

instruction about) the deeper levels of understanding intended by the curriculum. It is important to continually calibrate the purposes of assessment (what we intend to measure) with the outcomes obtained by the tools, and the manner they are used. If the constructs of a given assessment are not well defined, the results will not adequately reflect students' skills in those areas. It is crucial that we consider validity and reliability when choosing and administering all forms of assessment, including those considered authentic, to ensure that they are consistently measuring what they are supposed to measure.

TYPES OF AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT

We can authentically tap into our CLD students' formative (along-the-way) learning processes and summative (endpoint) grasp of curricular material through many different forms of authentic assessment (see Chapter 6 for in-depth discussion of formative and summative assessment). Many types of authentic assessment are popular for the ease with which teachers can adjust them for their own class of diverse learners. Authentic assessments include experiments, projects, observations, interviews, and student narratives. However, these are only a sample of the many ways academic skills can be assessed relative to their uses in the real world. Although a variety of authentic assessments are suitable for use with all students in the classroom, the following discussion explores some of the types most useful with CLD students. Many of these authentic assessments can be adapted for multiple purposes and for almost any content area.

Performance-Based Assessments

If we think of assessments as snapshots of student learning in time, *performance-based assessment (PBAs)* provide a longer exposure with a panoramic lens, or real-time video. PBAs typically involve the "actual doing of a task" (Linn & Miller, 2005, p. 7). This type of authentic assessment prompts higher-order thinking and integration of skills. PBAs encompass a variety of ways to observe and monitor student learning over various spans of time and involve much more authentic applications than do traditional paper-and-pencil tests.

Grade-level teachers who use PBAs generally embrace the idea that knowledge is constructed during learning—that students *discover* knowledge for themselves rather than *receive* knowledge from the teacher. Applying this *constructivist perspective* to learning and assessment facilitates how students take in information as well as how they store and retrieve this information and apply new thinking to novel situations. Some educators think of constructivist learning as teaching students to scuba dive rather than water ski. Because water skiers are able to stay upright and cover a relatively large amount of territory, their skills are easier to see and may, at first glance, be more impressive. Unfortunately, this ability to skim the surface does not speak to what lies underneath and does not guarantee the necessary skills to swim in deep or unfamiliar waters.

By contrast, scuba divers intentionally learn to investigate more deeply and propel themselves to areas of further interest. This can result in far greater

knowledge at ever-deeper levels, as well as an ongoing desire and ability to continue the learning process. As with scuba diving, much of the learning that takes place in constructivist contexts occurs at these deeper levels and may be neither obvious on the surface nor measurable by traditional means. PBAs are designed to create situations that tap into the depth as well as the breadth of student learning. Instead of asking students to reiterate static facts or volumes of superficial content, PBAs allow students to demonstrate how deeply they understand and can navigate the waters of novel concepts, as well as the degree to which they can make new discoveries through self-directed learning.

It is relatively common for classroom teachers to acknowledge hands-on activities, such as PBAs, as appropriate and beneficial for young children. However, these activities are equally powerful for older students. For example, science applications facilitate content instruction and assessment because they generally lend themselves to students' storage of information both as procedural memory (information on the steps or sequences involved in a process) and as declarative memory (factual information about the science content). Figure 2.2 provides an example of a science-related PBA.

Because PBAs help to scaffold student learning naturally and sequentially, they are particularly appropriate for CLD students, who may have little prior exposure to the information, language, or process involved. Teachers can encourage CLD students to create their own personalized scaffolds to document their learning as they engage in PBAs. Learners can use the resulting tools to help answer questions that appear on more traditional assessments.

Figure 2.2 Science PBA

Preparation of a Dry Mount Microscope Slide

This performance-based assessment is designed to document the student's ability to independently prepare a dry mount microscope slide.

The following materials must be among those available to the student:

- Microscope with which the student has familiarity
- Slides
- Cover slips
- Object to be examined

The following steps are considered essential elements of this procedure. Circle each as it is completed by the student. Add observational notes as desired.

1. Place slide on a flat surface.
2. Lay specimen on top of slide.
3. Attend to thickness of specimen (does student seek thinnest sample?).
4. Place cover slip slowly on top of specimen.

If a student has been exposed to the creation of and rationale for both wet and dry slides, this PBA can be modified to require the student to determine and execute the appropriate procedure for one or more objects or organisms.

SNAPSHOT from *CLASSROOM PRACTICE* **2.2**

In this picture, Ms. Melton is seen at the end of the lesson assessing a group of 6th-grade students on their understanding of the characteristics of prisms. The students are working with different shapes that represent a prism and explaining their characteristics. By doing such types of performance-based assessments, a teacher is able to help students discover knowledge for themselves.

Lisa Melton

Portfolios

Ms. Carpenter was a 1st-grade teacher who once believed that her instructional time was best spent directly teaching to curricular goals. She would follow up her lessons with quick, objective quizzes to assess student mastery of content. However, the addition to her class of students who spoke English as a second language inspired her to adopt a host of new teaching and assessment practices. A case in point was how she altered her methods to incorporate the portfolio assessment of language arts objectives related to story skills.

Ms. Carpenter began by leading her class in discussions of books she read aloud, in terms of the main characters, setting, possible solutions, and so forth. Together they discovered and discussed the essential components of a "good story" and formulated a simple class rubric (see Figure 2.3) for judging future story-time selections. Over the next few weeks, Ms. Carpenter intentionally chose stories she knew would be rated either exemplary or poor, according to the class criteria. Such exercises built the students' skills in applying the criteria and reinforced their understanding of the usefulness of the criteria. These skills would be needed when students later assessed their own story-writing efforts.

Figure 2.3 Story Rubric

STORY ELEMENTS

	The Main Character?	**The Setting?**	**The Problem?**	**The Solution?**	**Score (add here)**
Does this story describe . . .	Yes = 2 A little = 1 No = 0	Yes = 2 A little = 1 No = 0	Yes = 2 A little = 1 No = 0	Yes = 2 A little = 1 No = 0	

One day, after a particularly disappointing selection, Ms. Carpenter guided the group in revising the lower scoring elements of the story. As she wrote the new version on poster paper, she also modeled the use of rebus cue drawings (e.g., I was riding my and a drove by.) for words that were unfamiliar or hard to spell.

The next day, students were anxious to write their own original stories. Although all the students were excited about this, Ms. Carpenter's experience told her that many students would not know where or how to start. As she reviewed the story elements featured in the rubric, she focused first on the importance of setting. To demonstrate the vital importance of the setting to a story, Ms. Carpenter told all the students to line up and, with digital camera in hand, she led them on a walk around the school building and grounds. As they talked about different settings, Ms. Carpenter took photos of students in settings they had chosen. Once they returned to class and printed these photos, the students took turns talking about the various settings in which each classmate appeared (e.g., "James is on the bench in front of the school," "Ana is under the big slide near the swings").

Ms. Carpenter hoped these visuals would trigger experiences and memories students could use as scaffolds for writing their first stories. These stories were drafted with an emphasis on content, so Ms. Carpenter encouraged students to use invented spellings and rebus pictures for words they could not spell. Students would search for these words in the dictionary and correct them later.

She then recorded students as they read their short stories aloud in groups. No one interrupted the readings with comments. When the recording was replayed, however, group partners listened for and commented on the simple elements of the story rubric that the class had devised earlier. Group members also attended to key curricular objectives and practiced the important skills of explaining and supporting their opinions.

The primary purpose of the recordings was to document students' developing narrative skills. However, the recordings also documented other parameters of language acquisition such as vocabulary, word order, sentence length, and pronunciation. Because all students were allowed to use rebus pictures for words they could not spell, vocabulary gaps were less of an issue. Students could still demonstrate their knowledge of the concept of setting. At this point, the students were able to add the written story (to be revised later) and the recorded narrative to their portfolios. Both would be strong benchmarks by which to measure future progress. Ms. Carpenter then planned an extension of the lesson to build on this new learning and stimulate students' imaginative thinking skills.

As she carried out the photo-taking activity with her class the following year, Ms. Carpenter remembered observing a CLD student who was not following directions—and yet she *loved* what he was doing. This year she deliberately incorporated that student's "detour into fun" as an extension of the lesson. After writing and recording their first stories, the students cut themselves out of the photos they took during the "setting" exercise. Then came the really fun part. Students were encouraged to place the picture of themselves anywhere and any way (such as upside down) on a blank piece of drawing paper. This step served as the launch point for their creating an entirely new setting and story for their main character. It also helped Ms. Carpenter focus on the next element of the rubric (the problem). She always marveled at how these new stories reflected the students' interests, background experiences, and creativity.

For example, Joel (who was swinging on the monkey bars in his original setting) was suddenly transported to a locale in which he hung precariously from the lower lip of a *Tyrannosaurus rex*. Tuyen, no longer poised at the water fountain, was now bending over to smell the abundant flowers in her grandmother's garden. Ms.

> Carpenter noticed how the stories that evolved from this activity were more personal and animated than those elicited by her typical story starters. The students were eager to share these new stories with peers. When the drawings were finished, they were laminated and added to each student's portfolio.
>
> Throughout the year, students had other opportunities to practice and build narrative skills, such as reporting the news (e.g., family, community, world) and retelling events or stories from different perspectives (e.g., the perspective of one of their favorite action figures). As the year progressed and Ms. Carpenter conferenced with students about their portfolio entries, she was amazed at how often students commented that their earlier stories could have been better. Some students even contrasted them to more recent selections. For instance, Magda said, "That story didn't have a very good ending. This one has a better problem and solution. I tell you more about my characters now, too." By the end of the year, Ms. Carpenter felt that she, her students, and their parents had a much better grasp of student progress than they ever could have gained through traditional indicators of achievement.

Portfolio in various forms have been in use for some time. However, early versions often amounted to undifferentiated compilations of student work, sometimes judged merely by overall heftiness or mass. Although portfolios were appreciated as indicators of student (and teacher) effort, many parents felt that this abundance of academic memorabilia provided little information about the actual progress of their children in school. Following are tips for moving away from simply collecting student work and toward a systematic collection of documents/artifacts that exemplify socioemotional, linguistic, and academic growth.

Teaching Tips:

- Create an oral language rubric for informal observation of language production three times a year.
- Create a checklist to document the learner's ability to take risks when working in groups.
- Gather writing samples for each grading period.
- Video the student two or three times each grading period sharing information orally (Simple computer applications for recording speech samples enable creation of powerful audio portfolios of students' developing oral or narrative skills.)

These are but a few suggestions for systematically collecting informal and authentic artifacts produced by the learner that move assessment to a new level.

Portfolios also can include:

- Samples of student work that illustrate either mastery or progress
- The sequential planning, process reflections, and product outcomes of a project
- Some indication of how the student rated him- or herself on the samples, processes, or products included
- Student justification and insight regarding the work included

The criteria for judging portfolio pieces should reflect outcomes that align with curricular standards. In many cases, school districts align these standards with relevant state and/or national benchmarks.

Portfolio assessments are beneficial for CLD students because they offer learners the opportunity to share in their own words what they have gained. Portfolios provide a safe space for students to communicate with the teacher and showcase their work. The tangible proof that they are learning, growing, and contributing is especially motivating for CLD students. Having students create a portfolio sends the message not only that their ideas and thoughts matter, but that regardless of their language proficiency, they can demonstrate their knowledge. The final portfolio serves as a treasure trove of artifacts students can look back on and be proud of.

E-portfolios offer the distinct advantage of increasing accessibility of the portfolio with peers, parents, and other educators. With such access comes opportunities for individuals who are influential to the student to provide additional feedback. The exchange of ideas made possible through electronic sharing can benefit students and the larger learning community. E-portfolios have been shown to positively affect students' literacy and metacognition (Nicolaidou, 2013).

In summary, portfolio assessments have the power to authentically connect classroom instruction and the assessment of its impact on students. They are *alternative assessments* in the sense that:

- They incorporate both teacher and student perspectives on learning and the assessment of learning.
- They offer a longitudinal perspective on academic and language development.
- They measure incremental gains in knowledge, skills, and proficiencies.

Portfolio assessments are *authentic assessments* in that:

- They derive directly from classroom activities.
- They effectively assess student performance.
- They reflect in-process adaptations to instructional methods and assessment.
- They assess learning in a way that is relevant to and motivating for the student.

Self-Assessment and Peer Assessment

Student *self-assessment* can be an extremely valuable tool for learning as well as measurement. When CLD students are engaged in assessing their own work, they more thoroughly and purposefully understand the criteria for high-quality products and performance—and experience greater motivation for meeting those criteria (Sajedi, 2014). Rather than simply attempting to produce work that will satisfy the teacher, students involved in effective self-assessment work toward a positive vision of the instructional goals. This vision is enhanced and authenticated by their own perspectives and interpretations. In addition, many teachers report notable improvements in students' ability to regulate their own behaviors related to time and task management.

Figure 2.4 depicts a self-assessment rubric that can be used to supplement a content scoring rubric. This rubric requires students to assess not only their overall achievement but also the *effort* they actually put into the task. Students' completed self-assessment rubrics then support teacher–student conversations about the task outcomes.

Figure 2.4 Effort and Achievement Comparison Rubric

Name: ______________________________ Date: _______________

Assignment/Project: ______________________________________

Effort & Achievement Comparison Rubric	
Effort	**Achievement**
5 = I put maximum effort into this task. I stretched myself to complete this task despite its difficulty. I approached task difficulties as challenges to be overcome. I built new capacities as a result of confronting these challenges. 4 = I put exceptional effort into this task. I stretched myself to complete this task despite its difficulty. I approached task difficulties as challenges to be overcome. 3 = I put moderate effort into this task. I stretched myself to complete this task despite its difficulty. I approached task difficulties as challenges to be overcome. 2 = I put average effort into this task. I stretched myself to complete this task despite its difficulty. 1 = I put limited effort into this task.	5 = I exceeded the objectives of this task. 4 = I met all of the objectives of this task. 3 = I met most of the objectives of this task. 2 = I met at least half of the objectives of this task. 1 = I met less than half of the objectives of this task.
Scale: 5 = Excellent, 4 = Outstanding, 3 = Good, 2 = Improvement Needed, 1 = Unacceptable	

Teaching Tips:

Use student self-assessment results in the following ways:

- Identify patterns of low interest or low self-confidence in the learner
- Discuss why the task was low effort (or what served to motivate high effort)
- Support the learner in setting goals to improve in the area he or she feels least confident
- Create a plan of action to be successful in the future.

Peer-assessment is equally beneficial because it provides students with additional opportunities to identify and evaluate targeted skills related to established criteria. Peer assessment requires students to consider how examples of other students' work meet the criteria. Such comparisons enable students to discern outstanding elements of their own *and* their classmates' performances and products, as well as those components in need of improvement. This type of critical consideration often prompts students to refine their concept of a quality product.

Another advantage of peer assessment is that many students are more apt to engage in dialogue with and accept criticism from peers than from teachers, and they are more likely to do so using language that is uniquely comprehensible to them. This is particularly important for CLD students, for whom peers who share the same native language may more effectively mediate and clarify the concepts of instruction.

Peers: Our Learning Lifelines

Grade Level: 3–6

Materials:

- Students' lesson-based writing samples
- Copies of the Learning Lifeline template (one per student)

Directions:

- Explain to students that oftentimes we arrive at our best learning by collaborating with others. Share with students that now they will be working with a partner to reflect on and continue to learn from their written work.
- Place students in pairs and give each student a copy of the template.
- Model for the whole class how to complete the top portion of the template.
- Provide students with time to read their partners' writing and complete the "I statement" prompts.
- Then ask partners to take turns to share feedback/questions and to have the peer-authors respond and ask their own questions.
- Next, have partners document questions for you that they are unable to answer for themselves using the resources available. Also encourage them to share comments about the peer-assessment process with you.
- Have partners discuss what they learned from each other.
- Encourage each pair to share with the class at least one thing they learned from the process.

Observing Students:

As students work individually to read their partners' writing and evaluate it using the "I statement" prompts, observe CLD students and take time to talk with them about their observations to support understanding. Note patterns in students' comments and questions about their peers' writing. These observations can serve to inform subsequent instruction. Also make notes about recurring questions/comments directed to you, the teacher, so that you can begin to address them within the context of the lesson. Continue to circulate around the room, attending to what students write in their summaries. Use insights gleaned to highlight assets of the learning community.

Differentiating Instruction:

- For English learners who need additional language support, consider having students read aloud their peer's writing, with the author listening and available to clarify vocabulary/meaning as needed. Then students proceed with the activity according to directions.
- Jot down notes about aspects of the peer-assessment process that challenge individual students (e.g., finding evidence of objective attainment within a peer's writing, responding well to criticism, offering constructive feedback, finding value in another's perspective). These notes can inform subsequent decisions about which peers to pair together, which skills to target for continued development, and which tasks might need additional scaffolding.

Additional Notes:

This activity can be repeated as often as desired throughout the academic school year.

Learning Lifeline Template

Content Area: Writing Reading Science Math

❑ Other Content Area ________________

(Peer 1 Name) ________________

I like the way (Peer 2 Name) ________________ ❑ thought out, ❑ reasoned, ❑ worked, ❑ explored ❑ documented, ❑ visualized, ❑ described, ________________ (another word you could use to give your peer feed back) ________________ (e.g., problem, challenge, assignment).

I can tell that you (Peer 2) understood the objective(s) by:

1.
2.
3.

I have questions about:

1.
2.
3.

What questions do you (Peer 2) have?

1.
2.
3.

Questions and comments **we** (Peer 1 and Peer 2) have for the teacher.

1.
2.
3.

A summary of what we learned from each other:

VOICES *from the* FIELD 2.2

When students are allowed to assess their own work and that of their peers, they are able to develop a level of cultural awareness and commitment. Such assessment practices help to foster intellectual self-confidence and social self-confidence. This is definitely something we need to consider so our students have the self-esteem they need to succeed in society.

Darla Fisher, Middle School, Information Technology Teacher

Interview-Based Assessment

Mrs. Bontrager had always felt that the bilingual paraprofessional, Mrs. Silva, shared more common experiences with and could therefore better relate to the Spanish-speaking CLD students in her 4th-grade class. Over time, Mrs. Silva assumed a more and more significant role in their instruction while Mrs. Bontrager concentrated her efforts on the native English speakers. This seemed to be a reasonable approach given that Mrs. Silva, a Puerto Rican–born New Yorker, was able to communicate with the students in their native language.

Mrs. Bontrager felt confident that, because of this shared language, Mrs. Silva's instruction would foster the students' engagement in a farm simulation that the class conducted. She eagerly anticipated listening to the students' accounts of choices they had made during postproject interviews. However, she got a big surprise when she interviewed Abel. He began with a wonderful explanation for his group's decision to raise cattle instead of sheep. Abel stated, "Sheeps eat the whole grass and it might not grow back. But cows eat just the top, and it keeps growing so you've always got food for them."

Mrs. Bontrager was impressed and, thinking Abel would credit Mrs. Silva or the school library as sources, asked how his group had learned this important piece of information. "We already knew it," Abel replied. "My uncle has cows in Mexico, and Hector's seen sheeps eat grass 'til it's all gone. Mrs. Silva told us sheeps might be better 'cause you can make a sweater, but we decided that doesn't matter because if there's nothing left for them to eat, they die." Of course, this made perfect sense to Mrs. Bontrager, who grew up on a farm.

Suddenly, Mrs. Bontrager felt a sense of loss for what her CLD students could have gained, or for the deeper levels of application they could have achieved, had she been a more active mentor. After all, Abel, Hector, Rosa, and several others were farm kids, just as she had been. Imagine what could have happened if their knowledge had surfaced and been valued as a resource to enrich cooperative groups of mixed-language students.

Mrs. Bontrager decided to continue to use summative interviews but also resolved to conduct a *pre*project interview that would allow her to discover the knowledge and skills her students already possessed. This interview strategy would also provide an opportunity to talk about what students were learning as the lesson moved along. Mrs. Bontrager concluded that both she and the students had missed valuable opportunities.

This scenario vividly illustrates the assessment value of informal interviews with CLD students. Interview discussions often provide the classroom teacher with invaluable insights about the CLD students' prior knowledge and experiences,

cultural backgrounds, language use at home, level of adjustment to a new culture and school, academic history, interests, beliefs, and more. Perhaps one of the greatest potential outcomes of this approach is that it often results in teachers and students having a deeper sense of mutual endeavor.

Interviews can vary from casual to highly structured. Whether through informal conversation or a more detailed interview process, teacher–student interviews are an efficient way of gathering pertinent authentic assessment information. The teacher can then use this data to adapt instruction appropriately for the students' benefit. For example, a math teacher may realize that particular students enjoy cooking. She may find that connecting mixed fractions to measurement conversion during a lesson on baking greatly facilitates comprehension of the math concept.

Informal interviews are a long-standing aspect of professional practice for many classroom teachers. However, most teachers do not consider them a valid form of assessment. This is unfortunate because interviews can be an accurate and effective means of obtaining data crucial to accommodative instruction for CLD students. As tools to evaluate and advance learning, interviews provide a forum in which teachers and students feel free to discuss preexisting ideas, learned information, desired information, and feelings or reflections related to the learning process. Although interviews need not (and probably should not) be highly uniform in nature, Stiggins and Chappuis, (2017) recommend that teachers develop targeted questions in advance, allow ample time for full discussion, and conclude each interview with a summary of noted learnings and future objectives.

Play-Based Assessment

One often-overlooked source of valuable information on student knowledge and skills is *play-based assessment*. Such assessments are especially suitable for evaluating young children and English learners of any age. Children as young as preschool age are often able to use toys or "pretend" objects in ways that signify an understanding of their actual use and function in the real world. Such representational play is a fundamental precursor to comprehending the similar nature of oral and written words. Other ways to promote literacy instruction and assessment during play, as described by Roskos and Christie (2002), include:

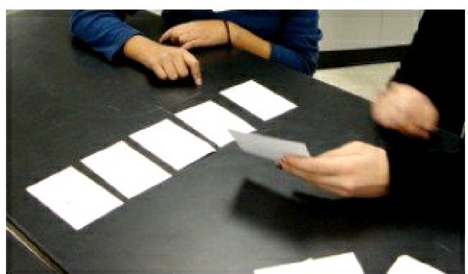
- Creating literacy-rich play settings (housekeeping centers with shopping lists, newspapers, magazines, and cookbooks, in addition to the typical pots, pans, and ironing board)
- Encouraging children to play-act roles and scenarios that require literacy activities (ticket pads for police officers, waiters, and waitresses; prescription pads for doctors; small, dry-erase boards or chalkboards for teachers)
- Promoting social interaction and including literacy-related challenges during play

For English learners, providing props, tools, and opportunity allows them to demonstrate procedural or conceptual knowledge they would not otherwise be able to demonstrate on written or verbal tests. An example of this is the CLD student who cannot verbally explain or understand the words for concepts of relative weight, size, or amount (e.g., *heavy, light, equal, more,* or *less*) but who is amazingly skillful in a game that calls for adding or subtracting just the right number of plastic beans to counterweight a classmate's wooden pegs so that neither pile on

SNAPSHOT from *CLASSROOM PRACTICE* **2.3**

During their science unit, Mr. Pride provided students in pairs with a set of cards with concepts written on them. Students were then asked to take turns informally sharing their knowledge of the concepts. As students shared, Mr. Pride circulated around the room and listened to the kinds of things discussed. These connections allowed him to make instructional conversations more relevant to his learners.

Jeremy Pride



the balance falls to the floor. Although this student definitely possesses conceptual knowledge of weight, amount, and equivalence, he would fail almost any traditional test that exclusively examines the acquisition of words we use to describe this knowledge, rather than evidence of the knowledge itself.

Astute teachers at higher grade levels tap into the power of play by having students role-play or dramatize events and concepts from history, literature, or even the sciences. After all, who wouldn't want to be a germ-fighting white corpuscle? Other highly engaging forms of role-play, such as teacher- or technology-facilitated simulations, can provide alternative ways for CLD students to demonstrate acquired skills and concepts. Whatever the format of the particular assessment, reflective teachers observe and value student play as evidence of who these students are, what they know, and how they learn. Such teachers then use this information to construct more responsive instructional contexts.

Cooperative Group Assessment

Mr. Martinez told his sophomore biology students that their new reflection journals would enable him to understand what they were really learning from their group projects. He also planned to rely on their journals to document where students were struggling so that he could reteach material in a different way that might enhance their understanding. He showed his students some exemplary journal samples, as well as a rubric, so they would clearly understand his expectations for this new responsibility. After the next group project, Mr. Martinez's students used their journals to reflect on their individual learning. In these journals, the students:

- Provided written or pictorial demonstrations of how they understood the material presented during the project
- Noted questions, concerns, or misunderstandings for follow-up with the group or Mr. Martinez
- Logged new learning and continued to revise as needed

- Cited related commentary and information from outside resources
- Described and reflected on their own contributions to the process and progress of the group
- Detailed personal feelings, thoughts, hypotheses, and conclusions, even if different from the group's consensus

Because maintaining scientific logs was an identified objective for this course, Mr. Martinez gave students direct feedback on the grammar and organization of their written notes. More importantly, the information available in these journals provided him with a wealth of ongoing (formative) insights about how his students comprehended the subject material. He found the process of discovering *how* his students understood the material—as well as what in their lives they connected it to—much more interesting and helpful to his teaching than the previously used project checklists that simply indicated groups' completion of various project tasks.

In this example, Mr. Martinez used *cooperative group assessment* to advance the teaching, learning, and assessment process. The Western perspective on what constitutes success places priority on individual effort and achievement. This is particularly evident in sports and entertainment in which individual success frequently commands more attention than the accomplishments of collaborative (e.g., team) endeavors. In fact, people in the United States are more often inclined to identify and empathize with the "stars" in activities—even activities that require ensembles or teams. Similarly, educational institutions are most apt to grade, rank, and reward students based primarily on measures of individual achievement.

Schools and educators, however, are increasingly recognizing that many students are better able to demonstrate their genuine skills, knowledge, and proficiencies through cooperative learning and assessment activities. This reality is not surprising when we consider how most children learn the noncurricular, and potentially more critical, lessons of life. In everyday situations across many cultures, children have been taught to work cooperatively and collectively (as a family, extended family, community, or tribe) and to reflect on what they have learned from life's daily "lessons." This experiential, hands-on, real-world education features the most authentic assessment system possible—surviving the continuous challenges of life itself! There is great power and potential in drawing on those natural patterns of cooperative behavior to design and conduct effective learning and assessment environments.

Planning for cooperative group assessment requires us to consider both group rewards and individual accountability. Teachers sometimes have difficulty discerning individual student learning and contributions when projects and activities are carried out collectively. In this section's example, Mr. Martinez, a high school science teacher, overcame this problem by having students create reflection journals to document individual progress.

Teaching Tips:

Additional suggestions to promote individual accountability include:

- Provide students with a tool for documenting individual thinking and learning throughout the lesson (e.g., initial connections to the topic, new understandings gained, writing that demonstrates what was learned)
- Build in opportunities for students to discuss critical questions or key concepts with a partner (within the same group). Listen for individual understanding of the content and document with anecdotal notes.

- Track individual contributions to handwritten compilations of student thought by having each student use a different color of utensil.

Peer assessment also can be effectively used within the context of cooperative groups to enhance each student's experience with and interpretation of processes and products. As with other forms of authentic assessment, the group's understanding of outcome criteria will guide the creation of these products. Opportunities for ongoing refinement enable the group to improve the quality of both their processes and products.

Dialogue Journals and Scaffolded Essays

Teachers can gather valuable information about student learning through carefully accommodated and scaffolded assignments. CLD students in particular are often better able to demonstrate learning through tasks that incorporate supportive structures than through all-or-none applications. Because one goal of authentic assessment is to find out what students *can do* with what they know, focusing on what they *cannot do* is often of limited value. Fortunately, some of the most salient information about student learning is readily available to teachers who purposefully observe and read student responses to instruction.

assessment FREEZE FRAME 2.4

Because one goal of authentic assessment is to find out what students *can do* with what they know, focusing on what they *cannot do* is often of limited value.

Dialogue journals constitute one tool that classroom teachers can use to meld assessment with accommodative teaching. Although they may take many forms, dialogue journals provide a safe space for students to use written language in an ongoing dialogue with the teacher about events, thoughts, feelings, stories, and more (Denne-Bolton, 2013; Stillman, Anderson, & Struthers, 2014). The teacher often responds to the content of the interaction by intentionally modeling grammar, spelling, or vocabulary that would improve the student's communications, though the primary focus is on meaning. When CLD students are genuinely engaged in conversation with someone else, they are more highly motivated to communicate effectively.

Dialogue journals can be used prior to instruction on a topic to provide CLD students with an opportunity to gather their thoughts and engage in initial communication about the topic. This early engagement with the topic supports English learners' subsequent participation in classroom discussions (Denne-Bolton, 2013). Likewise, by having students journal after the lesson, teachers prompt students to reflect more deeply on what was learned and ensure that all students, even those who are shy and reluctant to participate in class, have an additional chance to share what they learned.

Another example of accommodated teaching as a means of assessment is the *scaffolded essay*. With this type of authentic assessment, a more complex essay question is reduced to a variety of prompts that require only short answers. This accommodation ensures that students are being assessed on their knowledge of content-area material and not on their capacity to answer the question in the essay format (Fisher & Frey, 2014). If the teacher wants to ascertain what a developing English learner knows about a given subject, a scaffolded essay often is an excellent option.

If the purpose of the assessment is purely to gauge the student's ability to construct an essay, a scaffolded essay might also be used to help determine whether the student can do so with accommodations. Figure 2.5 depicts a scaffolded essay question that

Figure 2.5 Scaffolded Essay

Essay Question: Who do you think was the most important president of the United States? Why?

1. Who do you think was the most important president?

(e.g., I think ________________ (name of person) was the most important president of the United States.)

2. Why do you think he was the most important president?

(e.g., I think ________________ (name of person) was the most important president because ____.)

3. What other characteristics made this person a great leader?

(e.g., ________________ (name of person) was also very knowledgeable about ______ ________________ and skilled at ________________________________.)

4. How do you know this?

(e.g., I learned these facts about ________________ (name of person) by reading the book ________________ written by ________________.)

5. What else did you learn about this president?

(e.g., I was surprised to learn ________________.)

6. Summarize or restate what you have learned or believe about the topic.

(e.g., In summary, ________________ (name of person) was a very good leader whose ability to ________________ and ________________ made him my choice for the most important president of the United States.)

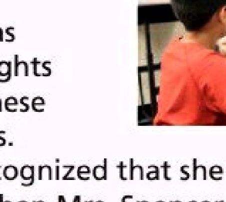
could be used with a history class. As with all assessments, the teacher first must decide what a given tool will assess before implementing and drawing conclusions from it.

In general, authentic assessment approaches, such as dialogue journals and scaffolded essays, benefit teachers and students because these assessment tools:

- Provide more precise information about the student's learning and skills than traditional assessments
- Support identification of the levels and types of scaffolding needed for students to demonstrate what they know or can do
- Embed assessment within an instructional process that helps students acquire targeted skills
- Increase students' awareness of how scaffolds can facilitate their learning

Although they may not be aware of it, many classroom teachers already incorporate authentic assessment into their accommodated instruction for CLD students. Continual daily assessment helps teachers know when to modify instruction and when to strengthen (or reduce) supports or scaffolds to keep students challenged, engaged, and learning.

ACCOMMODATIVE ASSESSMENT PRACTICES 2.1



In the following example, Mrs. Spencer, a 5th-grade teacher, assessed Carmen's writing and scaffolded her response to it, maintaining an encouraging, enthusiastic, and nurturing perspective that focused on the content of Carmen's journal entries.

Carmen [first entry of the week]: Last nite my dad came home with a big sprise. He say close yur eyes and then he say open them. Ther was a cat baby under his chert. I can wate to go home and play with the cat baby.

Mrs. Spencer: What a surprise! What did you think when Dad said, "Close your eyes"? Were you happy there was a kitten under his shirt? I used to have a gray kitten named Tom. What color is your kitten? I can't wait to hear more about your new kitten.

Carmen [next day's entry]: When my Dad said close your eyes I thot the surprise was candy. I like the kitten better than candy. It's a gril and hes white all over. I tol my Dad about your kitten and he said he used to have a gray cat to.

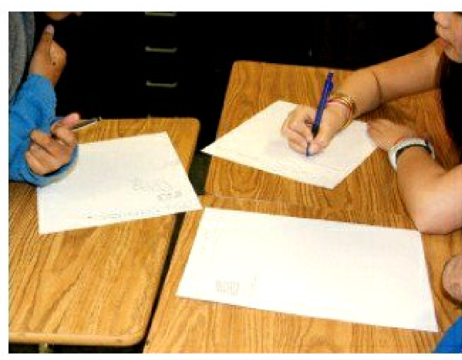
Mrs. Spencer was pleased by the insights she gained from these first few exchanges. Carmen quickly recognized that she spelled words differently than Mrs. Spencer had in her entry and corrected her spellings accordingly (*sprise/surprise, yur/your*). Carmen was able to recognize the new spellings that should replace hers from the context of Mrs. Spencer's reply. Carmen also adopted the word *kitten* over her own quite serviceable *cat baby,* understanding that this was the more commonly used term in English.

Through her authentic assessment of Carmen's writing, Mrs. Spencer was able to identify areas for growth and scaffold subsequent writing. Her indirect corrections were more effective than simply using a red pencil to mark Carmen's errors. Mrs. Spencer's feedback with modeling apprentices Carmen to English vocabulary and spelling. At the same time, it prioritizes relationship building and self-expression. ■

SNAPSHOT from *CLASSROOM PRACTICE* 2.4

In this picture, Ms. Rinne gave her group of 6th-grade students the option of working on a scaffolded essay on the topic of area and perimeter at the end of the lesson. This kind of assessment allowed students to focus on the content rather than on the mechanics of the language. It also provided students with an opportunity to apply what they had learned authentically.

Jennifer Rinne



development. For instance, an assessment checklist of skills related to synthesis of nonfiction text might include the following:

_____ Selected character of interest from California's history
_____ Found three sources of information on this person (list follows)
_____ Highlighted or noted the most important points from each source
_____ Developed a chronological outline of the subject's life

ASSESSMENT IN ACTION 2.1

Let's explore a specific curricular example, such as the way a teacher might create a rubric to address the following 6th-grade social studies standard:

Economics Standard: *The student uses a working knowledge and understanding of major economic concepts, issues, and systems of the United States and other nations, and applies decision-making skills as a consumer, producer, saver, investor, and citizen in the interdependent world.*

Step 1: State the desired outcome.

Mr. Bryant is a 6th-grade teacher of a class in which about 50 percent of the students are English learners. In targeting the economics standard, he focused on the need for students to understand basic principles of market forces. Based on this target knowledge, he stated the desired outcome as follows:

The student will demonstrate an understanding of how the scarcity of resources requires communities and nations to make choices about goods and services (e.g., what food to eat, where to locate food, how to use land).

Step 2: Develop or identify within your current classroom practices a task that will create opportunities for students to demonstrate the target skill.

Mr. Bryant decided to do a simulation that required students to weigh the economic, environmental, and sociological impacts of either preserving a specific area of forested land for recreational use or converting it to commercial use. He chose their town for the setting and selected a wooded tract of land just beyond the school's outermost attendance zone. The students were required to examine the issue from a variety of perspectives and to rely on multiple resources to determine whether this piece of land should remain natural (for recreational use) or be developed commercially as a site for a discount superstore. Although Mr. Bryant recognized there might be disadvantages to portraying a fictitious development opportunity, he hoped local relevance would increase student interest, motivation, access to authentic resources, and opportunities to learn more about the politics and priorities of their own community. As a result, students would be compelled to construct their own meaning and apply the targeted skills in a real-world context.

Step 3: Determine what a high-quality performance on this task might look like. Later, you can revise this vision to reflect the highest-quality responses or products actually produced. A new rubric usually remains a draft, pending its proven capacity to describe and guide student work accurately.

Because half of his students are culturally and linguistically diverse, Mr. Bryant decided they would be allowed to present their final decisions and defend their choices by means of any format that met the rubric criteria of providing "a well-stated and supported decision based on evidence of the financial, environmental, and sociological impact of each option at two or more levels (local, state, national, global)." Whether students chose to demonstrate their knowledge through a written report, an oral presentation, a graphic display (e.g., local polling results on the issue), an object representation (e.g., a model or diorama), a drama (e.g., a re-creation of a city hall meeting or a news exposé), or any other appropriate means, they were required to support their decisions by addressing each element in the criteria to meet the highest rating on the rubric.

Step 4: Complete the rubric by describing the requirements that must be met to attain each quantified level of performance.

Once the target level was operationally defined, Mr. Bryant described the elements that had to be present at each successive level of performance. He continued until all levels of the rubric criteria had been detailed and quantified in a way that could describe almost any type of product or outcome. The lowest levels of achievement included descriptors of unmet criteria such as "student presents few concepts and details related to the assigned situation" or "little evidence of peer collaboration or discussion." Figure 2.6 provides the final rubric that Mr. Bryant used with his class. In the end, the pragmatic value of a rubric depends not only on how much time and detail goes into its development but also (as with all forms of assessment) the degree to which the information is used to improve teaching and learning for each individual student.

This checklist might be used solely for the activity, or it can be included in a student's portfolio along with other components of teacher and student assessment.

Using a checklist to identify steps to task completion helps students recognize and monitor their own progress toward a goal. Students soon understand that each level of the task is built on the knowledge gained at previous steps. Authentic assessment tools of this sort help students recognize their own areas of difficulty and encourage them to seek assistance with specific challenges. Creating such a checklist also requires the teacher to analyze tasks in ways that enhance his or her awareness of subskills with which the CLD student may need additional supports or accommodations.

SUMMARY

In classrooms, CLD students are expected to use their language skills, cognitive resources, and academic knowledge to listen, read, comprehend, synthesize, analyze, compare, contrast, relate, articulate, write, evaluate, and more. Yet attaining these capacities is a long-term process, the success of which cannot be adequately measured through traditional, standardized, or even norm-referenced student assessments. For teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse populations, the best pathway for documenting language and academic growth during the lesson and across time is to compliment more formal forms of assessment with authentic assessment of learning.

As teachers it is easy to feel defeated when our students are not reaching the benchmarks set forth by states or districts. Yet it is important to remember that such benchmarks oftentimes are determined by those who know little about the complexity of our students' needs. Moreover, the very tools and processes used to assess our CLD students' growth and achievement can suffer from significant threats to reliability and validity, making results difficult to interpret. Using authentic assessments provides teachers, parents, and stakeholders with the necessary evidence and documentation to defend student growth.

In this chapter, we explored multiple types of authentic assessments readily available to classroom teachers. From performance-based assessments to dialogue journals and scaffolded essays, authentic assessments afford educators opportunities to explore the depth of student knowledge. Rather than requiring students to demonstrate learning in ways that fit our preconceived notions or personal preferences for how best to express ideas and structure responses, authentic assessments present a wide playing field for students to demonstrate what they know and can do. When used strategically, authentic assessments provide teachers with windows into students' thinking, which enables us to accommodate our instruction to meet the needs of each unique learner.

In today's age of accountability, teachers understandably are concerned with how they might document the language and academic gains made evident through authentic assessment practices. Rubrics and checklists serve as two highly adaptable means of systematically monitoring and recording student outcomes. Such tools not only inform our grading and subsequent planning and instruction, but they also support students to develop metacognitive capacities for monitoring and evaluating their own learning.

KEY CONCEPTS

Alternative assessments
Authentic assessments
Checklists
Construct validity
Constructivist perspective
Content validity
Cooperative group assessment
Dialogue journals
Inter-rater reliability
Interview-based assessment
Peer assessment
Performance-based assessments (PBAs)
Play-based assessment
Portfolio
Reliability
Rubrics
Scaffolded essays
Self-assessment
Validity

Figure 2.6 Rubric for 6th-Grade Social Studies Project

	Beginning 1	Developing 2	Accomplished 3	Exemplary 4	Score
Evidence Supported Zoning Decision	Student presents few concepts and details related to the assigned situation.	One or more relevant concepts are presented, but the position is lacking in supportive detail or relation to the financial, environmental, and sociological impact at the local, state, national, or global level.	A decision is presented and supported based on evidence of the impact of one to two factors (financial, environmental, sociological) at one or more levels (local, state, national, global).	A well-stated and supported decision based on evidence of the financial, environmental, and sociological impact of each option at two or more levels (local, state, national, global) is presented.	
Collaboration	Final work product (written/oral report, role-play, model/data representation, etc.) reflects little evidence of peer/community collaboration or consideration.	Final work product (written/oral report, role-play, model/ data representation, etc.) reflects and/or describes collaboration with or consideration of another individual (class or community).	Final work product (written/ oral report, role-play, model/data representation, etc.) reflects and/or describes collaboration with or consideration of multiple individuals (class or community).	Final work product (written/oral report, role-play, model/data representation, etc.) reflects and/or describes collaboration with or consideration of individuals from class and community.	

(See Assessment in Action 2.1 to explore how this rubric was designed to target a specified curricular standard.)

Bear in mind that the behaviors or skills you choose as features of an assessment should be measurable. For example, although "pays attention in class" is an important objective, it is comparatively difficult to measure because some students may appear to be attentive when they actually aren't, and vice versa. In this case, the teacher may want to identify a more quantifiable behavior associated with paying attention, such as "responds appropriately when called on" or "follows directions in class." When CLD students are involved, it is important to ensure that their ability to demonstrate the identified skill is not compromised by their level of English language proficiency.

Checklists

Authentic assessments can also take the form of *checklists* as a means of teacher, peer, or self-evaluation. Although the format of these assessments varies, the instruments themselves can be developed the same way as rubrics, starting with the identification of skills, knowledge, and competencies necessary to perform tasks associated with the activity. Once those skills and competencies are clearly defined, a series of questions or statements can describe varying levels of product

USING AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT TO INFORM INSTRUCTION

One of the most common reasons that teachers express hesitancy about using authentic assessments is that the assessments rarely provide information in the numerical format traditionally associated with tests. This has left intuitive and reflective teachers in the awkward position of recognizing that traditional tests often fail to measure actual student achievement, yet feeling somehow unprofessional—or even guilty—about switching to more authentic measures given the current test-driven environment in which they teach. Multiple tools can support teachers' efforts to utilize authentic assessments in their classrooms and still summarize learning in ways that address issues of scoring. Among these tools are rubrics and checklists.

Rubrics

Rubrics are frequent components of performance-based assessment but are also valuable in other contexts. Students can become quite proficient with rubrics at almost any developmental level. For example, even preschool-age children can match the face they have drawn with a rubric that depicts a list of faces (i.e., faces with eyes only; eyes and mouth; eyes, nose, and mouth; and eyes, nose, mouth, and ears). When an "eyes only" drawing earns a smaller sticker than an "eyes, nose, mouth, and ears" drawing, young learners quickly begin to adapt their work.

In the upper grades, teachers can either provide students with examples of work on which to model their efforts or help them select appropriate examples for themselves. Discussion about how to identify key attributes of these examples increases the likelihood that students will attend to these attributes when creating their own products. When used as self-assessment tools, rubrics guide student compilations of ongoing work (such as portfolios described in this chapter) or help students prepare for more summative events (such as written or oral presentations).

Involving CLD students in rubric creation is particularly worthwhile because the ensuing discussion typically provides multiple opportunities to focus on the key features of the targeted criteria and helps build content-area vocabulary. When creating rubrics or other sets of criteria for authentic assessments, teachers must be clear about the skills being targeted. Even though the activity might afford opportunities to measure other skills, a narrower focus helps students thoroughly attend to the target skills. For example, the rubric developed in Ms. Carpenter's class (see Figure 2.3) was designed to focus on grade-level narrative skills. However, the resulting voice recordings and written products also provided a wealth of information and evidence about student growth in other areas, such as spelling, vocabulary, sentence structure, and pronunciation. Although it would be beneficial for Ms. Carpenter to make notes on these additional areas of student progress, such skills would not be included in the rubric.

When creating a rubric, the first step is to determine the desired outcome. In a given content area, what do you want your students to be able to do? This step requires familiarity with the academic standards to which the curriculum is aligned. Some secondary teachers may choose additional outcomes that reflect skills relevant to potential employers or institutions of higher education. Figure 2.6 illustrates a simple rubric designed for a secondary-level social studies project.

PROFESSIONAL CONVERSATIONS ON PRACTICE

1. Explain the use of authentic assessments with CLD students. What sorts of information do such assessments gather that traditional assessments do not?
2. Explore how performance-based assessments may draw on the prior experiences and knowledge that CLD students bring to the classroom in ways that traditional assessments may not.
3. Discuss the advantages of self-assessment for CLD students. How might self-assessments play a role in the portfolio-based assessment of CLD students?

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND REFLECTION

1. What reasons account for the increasing popularity of alternative and authentic assessments with teachers of CLD students? Describe at least two.
2. What are key characteristics of authentic assessments? List at least four.
3. What is the difference between reliability and validity in relation to assessment? Explain.
4. How might you design a portfolio assessment to ensure documentation of CLD students' socioemotional, linguistic, and academic growth? List at least four data sources you would include.
5. What are at least two advantages of peer assessment for CLD students?
6. What types of information might be collected through the use of interviews? List at least three.
7. What is play-based assessment, and why is it useful in the authentic assessment of CLD students?
8. How can teachers design cooperative group assessments to facilitate both individual and group accountability?
9. What are the benefits of dialogue journals and scaffolded essays in the authentic assessment of CLD students? List at least three.
10. Compare and contrast rubrics and checklists. List at least two similarities and at least one difference.