Designing Quality Programming and Assessment

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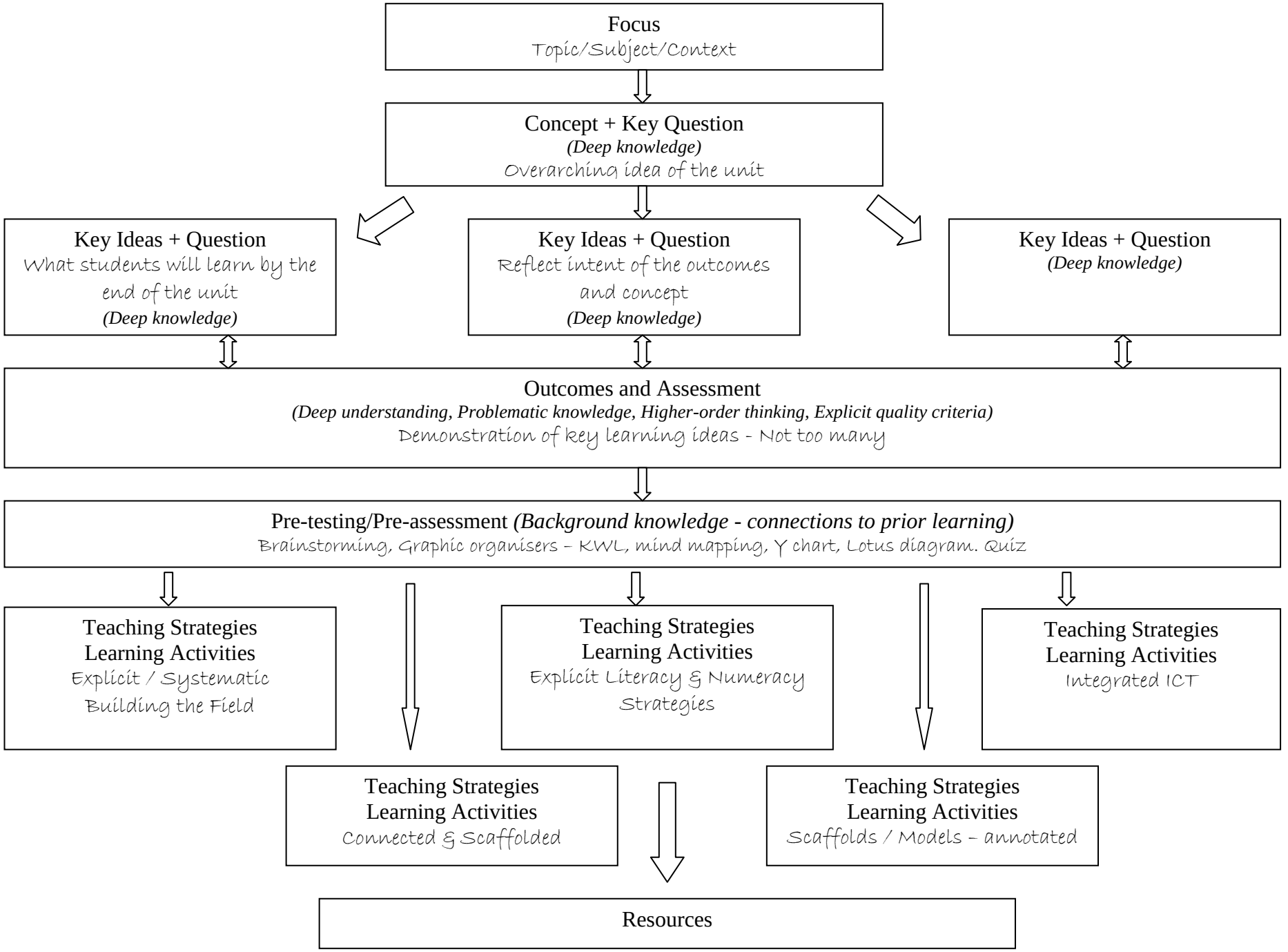

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Designing Programs Process

"It is about learning to learn, about becoming independent thinkers and learners. It is about problem solving, team-work, knowledge of the world, adaptability, and comfort in a global system of technologies, conflict and complexity. It is about the joy of learning and the pleasure of productivity of using one's learning in all facets of work and life pursuits" (2006, Fullan, Hill and Crevola, *Breakthrough*)

Transformation through Quality teaching

The Quality teaching model can be used as an effective and transformative tool for programming and assessment for all students. With its focus on deep knowledge and deep understanding through conceptual frameworks, it reminds us about our core business of teaching: the learning of students.

When we focus on the three dimensions - Intellectual quality, Quality learning environment and Significance - to inform our programming and assessment we are ensuring that the key elements that invite life-long learning are present. Research has demonstrated that pedagogy focusing on high levels of intellectual quality and connected to the real world has the potential to improve the learning outcomes of all students.

Step 1: FOCUS OF THE UNIT

Select the *focus or aspect* of the stage 4, 5 or 6 courses the unit is covering. This focus could be:

- **English Year 7:** Wide experience of poetry
- **English Year 8:** Shakespeare
- **English Year 9:** Persuasive texts

The list is endless! Factors such as the needs and interests of your students, what has been covered already in a stage and available resources will impact on your choice.

Step 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Consider the *key concepts* or ideas that could arise from an exploration of the focus or aspect and select one overarching concept that reflects the focus and purpose of the unit of work. This ensures that the focus is on learning not just content. Ask the question, "What do I want the students to learn?" The concept must come from the content, skills and understanding that students need to learn and apply.

One simple way to select a concept is to focus on the process using a noun that captures what students need to learn about and learn to do in your subject based on the outcomes you will be assessing.

In determining whether or not concepts or ideas are 'key' concepts, consider their broader meaning. Ask:
"Does its meaning hold across a wide range of locations in the syllabus and on to subsequent stages?"
"What is it I want students to understand and know about a topic or focus?"
"What is the main process that students need to be able to understand by the end of this topic or focus?"

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Examples of concepts:

- **Year 7 - Voices:** Students explore poetry to experience and analyse how unique voices are shaped and conveyed to the reader.
- **Year 8 –** Rhetoric: Students consider through Shakespeare's soliloquies and a range of speeches how composers use language to convey meaning and influence the reader or listener
- **Year 9 - Persuasion:** Students understand the processes of how composers employ specific language features and form to shape meaning and influence responders in persuasive texts.

Step 3: OVERARCHING QUESTION

Ask what key question encapsulates what you would like the students to learn by the end of the unit and then design one for the unit. This question should reflect the concept and the content that is to be covered in the unit.

A challenging question that is contentious is one way to encourage creativity and differentiate the learning. A 'What' question is not as higher order as a 'How' or 'Why' or 'What if' question.

E.g.
Year 8 English
Topic: Speeches/Shakespeare's soliloquies
Concept: Rhetoric
Question: Why and how do effective speeches continue to resonate?

Step 4: DEEP KNOWLEDGE

Now that you have the focus and the concept identify the ***Deep knowledge*** you want the students to learn – one to three key ideas for each unit. These key ideas must reflect the overarching concept. Ask the question, "Why does the learning matter?"

You could then add a key question that captures the intent of the key learning ideas.

> ***Deep knowledge requires relevant syllabus content to be organised in such a way that a small set of ideas or concepts is clearly established as the focus of the unit.***
>
> ***- QT Classroom Practice Guide***

E.g.

English Year 9:
Focus: Media texts such as advertisements, websites or propaganda texts.
Concept: ***Manipulation:*** How do and why do texts invite empathy through textual features and details?
Deep knowledge:

- How textual features and details manipulate the responder: Why do composers manipulate responders through textual features and details?

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- The power of the image to challenge our way of thinking: Do images and graphics challenge our way of thinking about the world?
- Persuasive features of a text: What are the key persuasive strategies employed by composers in a text?

Description: Deep Knowledge

Knowledge is deep when it concerns the central ideas or concepts of a topic or subject or KLA and when the knowledge is judged to be crucial to the topic or subject or KLA. Deep knowledge is evident when either the teacher or the students provide information, reasoning or arguments that address the centrality or complexity of a key concept or idea, or when relatively complex relations are established to other central concepts.

Step 5: DEEP UNDERSTANDING – DESIGNING ASSESSMENT

"The quality of teaching and learning provision are by far the most salient influences on students' cognitive, affective, and behavioral outcomes of schooling – regardless of their gender or backgrounds" (Rowe, 2003).

"The aim of assessment is primarily to educate and improve student performance, not merely to audit it" (Wiggins, 1998).

The design of assessment is an integral aspect of this process as it provides teachers with essential information for planning and adjusting each subsequent unit of work, evaluates the quality and extent of student achievement or performance in learning and provides students with the information they need about their learning and what they need to do to develop and grow as learners. It must be valid and reliable.

All students must participate fully in learning experiences and assessment tasks - including those accessing life skills outcomes and content. Therefore, assessment tasks should be adjusted to reflect any adjustments to teaching and learning for students with special needs.

The four types of assessment that need to be considered and should be addressed in a balanced way in units of work and programs are:

- **Pre-assessment:** This can be informal but it is important as it informs teachers what the students know so that a unit of work or program can be differentiated to suit the learning needs of the students. The assessment from the previous unit of work provides rich information to inform the design process.

- **Summative assessment:** Assessment *of* learning is used to provide a snapshot of what the students know at a key point in time such as half way through or at the end of a unit of work. It enables teachers to monitor and evaluate student progress.
- **Formative assessment:** Assessment *for* learning is ongoing and builds the depth of students' learning and provides valuable information to students about what they can do and what they need to do to improve their learning outcomes.
- **Self assessment:** Assessment *through* learning occurs when students are critically evaluating and assessing their own learning. The skills and understanding needed for self assessment must be explicitly taught.

Effective assessment practice is:

- embedded in the syllabus having clear, direct links with outcomes
- planned deliberately and integral to teaching
- balanced, comprehensive and varied
- fair, inclusive, valid and reliable
- ongoing and sequential
- engaging and student-centred
- time efficient and manageable
- supported by models, scaffolds or annotated exemplars that demonstrate what is expected and what can be achieved
- reflects any adjustments made to teaching and learning.

> Assessment is the process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about students' learning. The central purpose of assessment is to provide information on student achievement and progress and set direction for ongoing teaching and learning.
>
> - *Principles of Assessment and Reporting in NSW Government Schools* DET NSW, 1996)

In this step of the design process teachers begin by designing the assessment for learning and then plot sequentially the other types of assessment in the unit of work or program when they are planning what will happen during the course of the unit.

Assessment for learning
Where are my students now?
How do I know when my students get there?

The assessment task or tasks must assess the targeted outcomes and the skills, knowledge and understanding that are being taught. It has to be explicit in what students are required to do or produce. A clear and precise rubric and marking guidelines that reflect the outcomes being assessed and enable teachers to make consistent valid and reliable judgements are essential. The task expressed in the language students can comprehend should include:

- The outcomes being assessed: Include the full wording of the outcome. Only choose those outcomes that are to be the main drivers of the learning. Even if you will 'hitting' on other outcomes, do not use them as you want deep knowledge not wide, shallow knowledge.
- The nature of the task: Set the task in a context and inform students what they are expected to do and why it matters.
- Expectations: Derived from the outcomes and shaping the marking guidelines, and informing students how well they are expected to do the task.
- Exemplars or models
- Marking guidelines or scheme

Focus tasks on relating central concepts and ideas with other concepts, or to particular contexts. Linking the task to previously addressed ideas (from either prior class work or other tasks) or to new, as yet unexplored, concepts or contexts are two ways to strengthen the deep knowledge of a task. Ensure that the task connects and supports the key concepts being addressed.
-QT Framework

As much as possible plan for authentic assessment that is connected to the real world and requires students to be creators and producers! When appropriate have students present or design their work for real audiences.

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INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT TASKS

OUTCOMES/CONTENT
KEY LEARNING IDEAS & QUESTION/S
EXPLICIT QUALITY CRITERIA
RUBRIC
MARKING GUIDELINES

INTEGRATED INTO THE UNIT OF WORK

TASK 1

- **TEACHER DIRECTED**
- **SCAFFOLDED**

TASK 2

- **AUTHENTIC**
- **STUDENT DIRECTION: CHOICE, OPEN-ENDED**

QUALITY FEED-FORWARD

'The most powerful single modification that enhances achievement is feedback' *(Hattie)*

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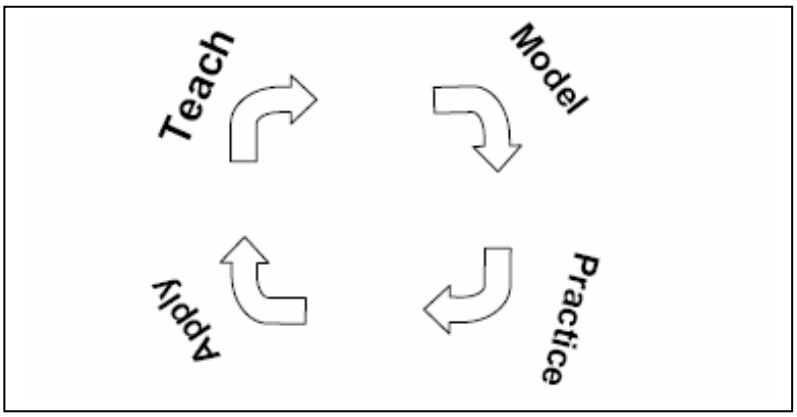
Step 6: TEACHING STRATEGIES AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

You have selected the outcomes/content – not too many as this unit is part of a two year stage – so now you need to select the appropriate ***content indicators*** for these outcomes. Record the indicators and begin planning the strategies and learning activities that are shaped and informed by the indicators. These strategies enable the students to get there – to demonstrate learning!

Considerations:

- Use the *Quality teaching model* as a lens and the concept as a frame that now needs to be fleshed out to become a unit.
- Plan the teaching strategies around the assessment ensuring that they are **sequential and build the learning.**
- Identify the **literacy and numeracy** demands of the unit of work through the assessment task/s and the outcomes you will be assessing, and plan the strategies you will need to teach the students.
- Write the unit for **your students** so use the second person and be explicit.
- Use the one to three key ideas you have selected – **Deep knowledge** – to direct the learning activities.
- Begin with what the students know – **Background knowledge** – and make meaningful connections to the new learning.
- Carefully consider the **Deep knowledge** and **Deep understanding** and how you will assist your students in acquiring and demonstrating learning. Now decide what explicit teaching strategies are needed teach the knowledge and skills.
- Employ activities that build the knowledge and skills each week keeping the assessment task/s clearly in your mind.
- If you have Life Skills students include the relevant outcomes and modified activities.
- For students with disabilities make the necessary adjustments or accommodations. You do not have to create new work, but make the work accessible for all students.
- You could add alternative activities for GATS. Avoid too much extra work, instead aim for alternative work.
- Develop a list of resources for the students to access such as websites.
- Remember **depth**, **enjoyment** and **engagement**!

Explicit Teaching



- Make links with prior learning.
- Model and demonstrate processes, expectations and tasks.
- Provide scaffolds and exemplars.
- Provide opportunities for students to apply new skills with guidance and support before expecting them to succeed independently.

Systematic Teaching

- Have a clear understanding of the skills and knowledge that need to be taught
- Plan an appropriate sequence of activities
- Use a repertoire of teaching strategies to cater for and engage all students
- Break learning into meaningful chunks or scaffold the learning
- Identify the literacy and numeracy demands of the content and the tasks
- Monitor students' progress

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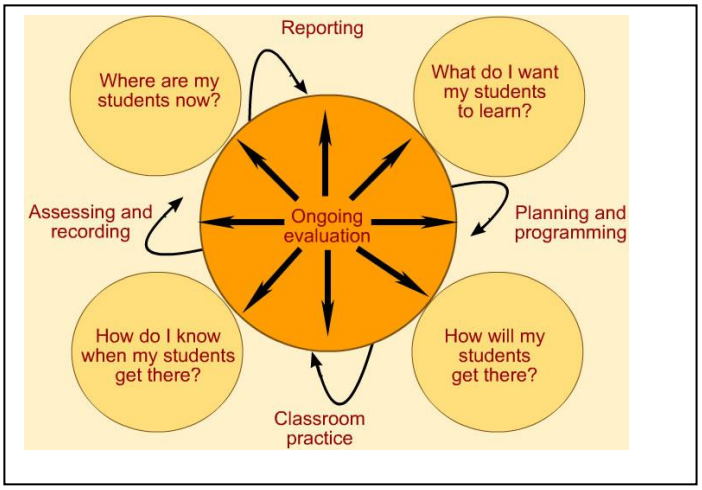
Quality Assessment

'When students from all social backgrounds are required to engage in work of high intellectual quality and with relevance to their prior knowledge as well as to the world beyond the classroom, overall achievement increases and some equity gaps lessen' (Gore, 2001, p. 128).

Key Questions

1. Are your tasks inclusive of all learners?
2. Do the tasks relate to what is being taught and what the students need to learn?
3. Have you provided explicit teaching, models and/or annotated exemplars to provide the students with the knowledge and skills they need to achieve the outcomes and to demonstrate the quality of the work expected?
4. Are the tasks integrated and connected to what is being taught?
5. Are the tasks linked to syllabus outcomes?
6. Do the tasks have clear and explicit instructions?
7. Are the tasks challenging and rich, inviting risk-taking and higher-order thinking skills?
8. Do the tasks invite student direction?



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Year 9 Sample Scope and Sequence

Weeks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Term 1	**Unit & Concept: *Contextualisation:*** Context study: Close study of a novel & its author **Assessment task:** Personal response *(Teacher assessment)* **A4L:** Personal biography or an autobiography					**Unit & Concept: *Imagery***: Poetry and extracts from a range of texts and films **Assessment task:** Imaginative response: Composing an original text using technology *(Self & teacher assessment)* **A4L:** Critical response				
Term 2	**Unit & Concept: *Manipulation:*** Marketing & Advertising: The visual and textual features of advertisements and the power of persuasion. **Assessment task:** Marketing Campaign: group work *(Teacher & peer assessment)* **A4L:** A series of original advertisements in different media and analysing persuasive texts					**Unit & Concept: *Hybridity*:** Genre film study **Assessment task:** Imaginative Task – student directed *(Self & teacher assessment)* **A4L:** Group evaluation of a range of film extracts				
Term 3	**Concept: *Representation:*** 'Shakespeare's villains' OR 'Warrior Kings' **Assessment task:** Oral task OR Case for the Defense ***(Peer & teacher assessment)*** **A4L:** Representing the villain: podcast, short film, etc					**Unit & Concept: *Faction:*** 'Voices from the Past' - power of stories through non-fiction study. **Assessment task:** Faction narrative *(Teacher assessment)* **A4L:** Analytical responses to texts				
Term 4	**Unit & Concept: *Framing:*** Fiction – short stories & picture books **Assessment task:** Composing a short story & reflection or picture book *(Self & teacher assessment)* **A4L:** Podcast or vodcast book review					**Unit & Concept: *Craft:*** Special interest – wide experience of a variety of texts **Assessment task:** Reflection on composing, responding & learning *(Self & teacher assessment)* **A4L:** Responding and composing tasks				

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Subject: **Year:** **Duration:**

Topic:	
Concept or Essential Learning Statement: **Key Question:**	
Key learning ideas:	
Significance:	
Outcomes/Content:	**Assessment Task/s:** **Formative:** **Summative:**
General capabilities:	**Core skills:**

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Authentic Assessment Tasks

F.M Newmann, W.G Secada, & G. Whelage

Definition:

The extent to which an assessment task represents construction of knowledge through the use of disciplined enquiry that has some value or meaning beyond success in school.

Criteria for Authentic Assessment Tasks

1. **Construction of Knowledge**

- Students construct or produce knowledge rather than reproducing knowledge
- This knowledge is expressed in written or oral discourse, or by making and repairing things, or and in performances
- Students should hone their skills through guided practice, receive ongoing meaningful feedback, and have the opportunity to refine their task
- Construction of knowledge is based on understanding or prior knowledge, builds on this knowledge, and is connected to other tasks

> - 'The point is not to abandon all forms of "inauthentic" work in school, but to keep authentic achievement clearly in view as the valued end.'

2. **Disciplined Inquiry**

- The task draws upon prior knowledge
- The task strives for in-depth understanding rather than superficial awareness
- The students use elaborate forms of communication such as: narratives, extended expositions, explanations, justifications, elaborations, and so on, rather than brief responses such as: choosing true or false, multiple choice, filling in blanks, or writing short sentences

3. **Value Beyond School**

- The task has value for the student beyond documenting his or her competence or assessing knowledge
- The task is connected to real world contexts

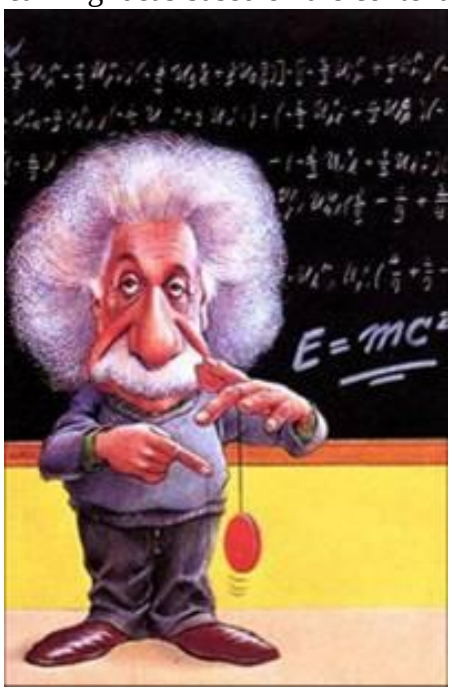
Implications

- Not all tasks will meet all three criteria.
- Authentic tasks promote engagement and motivation.
- There is still a valid place for "inauthentic" conventional tasks such as memory drills that are necessary to build knowledge.

Authentic Assessment

- **What do the students need to learn?**

- Identify the overarching concept/s and the key learning ideas based on the content and outcomes of the syllabus to be assessed.
- Identify the learning goal of the assessment task
- Pose overarching question/s



- **Why does it matter?**

- Ensure that the task assesses the essential knowledge and skills of the syllabus and the subject

- **What do they already know?**

- Pre-assessment
- Use the data
- Connect task to previous and future learning
- Ensure that the task is inclusive of all students

- **What do I want the students to do or produce to demonstrate their learning and understanding?**

- Identify what is to be produced
- Ensure that the product or performance is connected to the real world
- Identify the audience
- Have real deadlines
- Provide scope for student choice

- **How will they get there?**

- Identify any possible misunderstandings
- Provide scaffolds, exemplars, annotated models
- Identify the literacy and numeracy demands of the task

- How well do I expect them to do it?

- Explicit clear directions on what is expected

ENGLISH UNIT OVERVIEW **YEAR:** **FOCUS/TOPIC:**

Concept: *(The overarching idea of the unit based on the skills, knowledge and understanding that you want students to know – it must be drawn from the syllabus outcomes you are addressing)*

Ask these questions to determine the concept:

- *Is the concept grounded in the curriculum and the selected content/outcomes?*
- *Does the concept capture the deep learning that you want students to have by the end of the unit of work?*
- *Is the concept appropriate and relevant for the specified students at that moment in time?*
- *Have you considered the concept in terms of the continuum of learning?*
- *Does the concept have significance and endurance?*

Key Question: *(What is the big picture question that you would want students to be able to answer at the end of the unit?)*
OR
Essential Learning Goal (Significance)*: (A statement of what you want students to know by the end of the unit)*

Key Learning Ideas: *(Two – Three key learning ideas that students should understand by the end of the unit. They are based on the outcomes and reflect the Concept)*

Main Text/s to be Explored in Unit:

Assessment task/s: *(List outcomes and give an overview of the tasks for and of learning)* **Assessment *for* Learning:** **Assessment *of* Learning:**	**General capabilities:**	**Outcomes/Content:** *(In full – no more than four per 5 week unit. You are aiming for depth!)*

Rationale

What do you want the students to learn?
Why is it important?
How will you know that students are learning?(Assessment: summative and formative)
How will the students get there? (Teaching strategies and resources)

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Planning for Assessment

- What do the students need to learn?

- Why does it matter?

- What do they already know?

- What do I want the students to do or produce to demonstrate their learning and understanding?

- How will they get there? Outline teaching strategies and resources

- How well do I expect them to do it?

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