

Authentic Assessments Playlist Guide

Getting Started

Welcome to the Authentic Assessments Playlist! Our current education system is consumed with standardized testing anchored to an obsolete and inequitable model. We built this collection to provide educators with ideas and resources for improvement. Opportunities are everywhere to adopt authentic, personalized assessments that give students voice and agency in their learning goals and outcomes. Removal of standardized testing requirements during the pandemic gives us even more freedom to innovate, and the Digital Exhibition Track includes great tips for shifting student exhibitions online and reasons to consider this format even after the pandemic. We have more Tracks in the works for this Playlist. Check these options out and let us know what you think!

Navigating this Playlist

We'll create a suggested progression for you once we have more of this Playlist published. To help with your exploration in the meantime, we've included a brief description of each of the Authentic Assessments Tracks below, along with suggestions for how to use them. As you move through the Playlist and the individual pages where the Tracks reside, you'll find details and supports, including reflection questions, additional resources, and ideas for activities.

The Tracks

- 1) [Share Your Learning / Exhibition](#). Exhibition allows students to celebrate their work and showcase what they've learned, including the process of their learning. That's the essence of assessment! Connecting with the world outside the classroom makes the process meaningful and engaging. Learning exhibitions can happen at many different times and settings in the school year. This Track guides you in setting up an Exhibition event that works for your unique needs.
- 2) [Digital Exhibition](#). If you're confined to interacting virtually, we offer insights as to how virtual exhibitions can be extraordinary. In fact, this option is more appealing than in-person exhibitions in many settings.
- 3) [Student-Led Progress Conferences](#). There is no more effective assessment of student learning than the student's own evidence-based reflection and evaluation of their work. This Track is a twist on the traditional parent-teacher conference that places students in control. Students lead preparation for the conference and guide the discussion using evidence from their work. They discuss successes, challenges, and plan next steps with teachers and parents. This practice takes time to perfect, but it builds reflection and communication skills and gives teachers greater insight into student experiences. It also allows for celebration of accomplishments and energizes future work.

- 4) [Student Assessment](#). When students work together to assess learning, they pay more attention to feedback and gain valuable skills in the process. The Student Assessment Track shows you how to use student-led peer assessment and self-assessment in a variety of contexts to promote engagement and increase the effectiveness of assessments. Invest some time to help students learn how to give and receive feedback, and you've introduced them to skills they will use throughout their lives. This focus has big advantages -- 1) learning how to offer constructive criticism to others is an important skill for a student to develop, and 2) students are often far more motivated if they know their work will be critiqued by peers, and 3) as students become great evaluators, it lessens the burden on the teacher to provide all of the feedback.

- 5) [Fundamentals](#). This Path collects several very short videos discussing key concepts in assessment. The questions posed here help teachers plan and design assessments that serve students' needs. These videos are great conversation starters for faculty meetings, department or PLC meetings, or any time you want to focus on the world beyond standardized tests and outdated testing models.
 - a) [Deeper Learning](#) - What things they've studied do students actually retain?
 - b) [Breadth vs. Depth](#) - Is the amount of deeper understanding developed a better learning goal than the amount of raw content covered?
 - c) [A Test of Value](#) - Is assessment nothing more than a hurdle students need to pass in order to get a grade?
 - d) [Failure and Growth Mindset](#) - Are we doing students a disservice by making failure a catastrophe rather than a key part of growth and learning?
 - e) [No Child Left Behind?](#) - Inductees to the National Teachers Hall of Fame share their frustrations with NCLB, the standardized testing framework, and the damage done to students and the teaching profession.

The Promise

Thank you for your vision and your mission. We believe in you. We believe in the urgency of this work and in your desire and ability to innovate and make change happen. You know that life-ready is not an outcome on a standardized test. It is what happens when we prioritize student agency, voice, creativity, and engagement. We are here to support your efforts to prepare your students for their futures, not our past. We want to hear from you. Contact us at WeCare@whatschoolcouldbe.org.