AAC Professional Learning
Developing a Performance Assessment Task

Workshop Goals:
➢ to become familiar with the characteristics of an effective performance assessment task
➢ to recognize the importance of alignment between curricular outcomes and assessment criteria
➢ to write an effective and engaging student task
➢ to develop a well-constructed rubric for assessing the task
➢ to commit to using the task with students

Performance assessment is a valuable tool to engage students deeply in their learning and provide teachers with credible evidence about what students know and can do. With its focus on the big ideas of the curriculum, performance assessment plays a vital role in a balanced classroom assessment program.

You will develop a performance assessment task to provide assessment evidence during or at the end of a unit of study, for a subject and grade level of your choice. Through your task, students will demonstrate their understanding of high priority outcomes in a real-world context. You will identify assessment criteria and develop a rubric to accompany your task, and then use the task with students.

Characteristics of an effective performance assessment task:
- Assessment criteria are **directly linked** to curricular outcome(s), and are evident in the task and rubric. The work you ask your students to do is directly connected to the criteria.
- The task is **authentic** and **open-ended**, and offers students **"entry points"** at a variety of levels.
- The task **engages students** in important skills and ideas, and **provides evidence** that students are meeting the curricular outcome(s).

The Process:
1. Identify outcome(s) and a suitable context.
2. Establish assessment criteria.
3. Write the student task.
4. Develop a rubric.
5. Use the task with your students, and share samples of student work with colleagues.

Step 1: Identify Outcomes and Context

- ➢ Begin with the Alberta Programs of Study.
- ➢ Your context should allow you to task address "big ideas" from the curriculum.

Outcome(s):

Context:
Role – Who might need to do this?
Audience – Why would you do this? Who will be interested in the work you're doing?
Product or Performance – What will be the end product of your work?

Important note: At this point, you are simply coming up with a brief idea for a context connected to curricular outcomes. You are <u>not</u> yet writing the student task.

Example from "Young Canada Reads":

Students imagine they are nominating a book for the television show "Young Canada Reads." They will prepare and present a

retelling of a story they have read for a CBC television producer and film crew.

Step 2: Establish Assessment Criteria

➢ Criteria must be clearly linked to the curricular outcome(s) you have chosen.
➢ Keep your criteria clear and concise.
➢ Identify a reasonable number of assessment criteria, in order to make it possible to assess them in a meaningful way.

Criteria: an AAC definition
Criteria are statements, beginning with strong verbs, that identify the learning to be achieved, based on the Alberta Programs of Study.

It might help to think of criteria as concise statements completing sentences that begin, "Students will…"

Criteria from "Young Canada Reads":

- **retell story events**
- **explain choice**
- **select and use props**
- **present orally**

LEARNER OUTCOMES

CRITERIA

RUBRIC DESCRIPTORS

Remember these cautions when establishing criteria:

1. *Respect the level of cognition: focus on the verbs!*

2. *Focus criteria on what students will **do** to provide assessment evidence.*

3. *Criteria are derived from learner outcomes, not teacher preferences.*

4. *Make sure you gather evidence of learning in an appropriate manner.*

5. *Always record the original outcomes alongside the criteria in teacher planning documents.*

Record your outcomes and criteria on p.1 of the Development Template.

Step 1: Record the **complete outcomes** using the exact language of the program of studies.

Step 2: Highlight the verbs in the outcomes and consider what students are being asked to do to provide evidence of learning.

Step 3: Create assessment criteria for your performance task: **concise** action statements beginning with **strong verbs.**

Step 3: Write the Student Task

- Plan a task likely to provide evidence that students are meeting the outcomes you've identified.

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE TASK:

- *Assessment criteria are evident in the task. The work you ask your students to do is directly connected to the criteria you've identified.*

- *The task is authentic and open-ended, and offers students "entry points" at a variety of levels.*

- *Focus on "big ideas"! The task engages students in important skills and concepts, and provides evidence that students are meeting the outcomes.*

Providing Feedback on a Student Task: What went wrong?

Your class is selling 3 types of cookie dough as a fundraiser for the year-end party. The chocolate chunk cookie dough costs $5 per tub, the peanut butter is $4 per tub and the oatmeal is $3 per tub.

Dan sold 2 tubs oatmeal, 4 chocolate and 1 peanut butter. Tina sold 3 tubs of oatmeal, 2 chocolate and 5 peanut butter. Bob sold 1 oatmeal, 3 chocolate, and 4 peanut butter.

Use addition and multiplication to determine how much money each student raised.

Construct and label a bar graph to show the earnings of the 3 students.

Write your task on p.2 of the Development Template.
Remember:

- ✓ Write **clear, concise directions** for your task, and make sure the criteria for assessment are **clearly reflected**.

- ✓ Keep your task as **open-ended** as possible. Don't try to control every aspect of the work your students will do.

- ✓ The work you ask of your students must be **meaningful**: connected to the context and important to the audience. Ask yourself, "Why would you need to do this part of the task.

Step 4: Develop a Rubric

➢ A rubric consists of assessment criteria, a fixed measurement scale, and detailed descriptions of student performance.

➢ In your rubric, include criteria only when it's to describe various levels of quality. A checklist is a better choice for criteria that are "right/wrong."

➢ Refer to the AAC Rubric Sampler and AAC Rubric Wordsmith (available for download at aac.ab.ca) for help when developing your rubric.

Rubrics: Avoid some of the common flaws

#1: Don't identify criteria as topics or categories. Instead, identify actions that students can take.

- Instead of "plan" use "develop a plan"
- Instead of "content" use "explain impact" for example. (Reflect the desired content.)
- Instead of "organization" use "organize information"

#2: Don't include elements that are not part of the curriculum

- no "neatness"
- no "name and date"
- no "effort"

#3: Don't focus on quantity. Instead, focus on quality.

- Instead of "at least 5 facts" use "provides a comprehensive description"
- Instead of "no more than 2 spelling errors" use "spelling does not impede meaning"

Develop your rubric on p. 3 of the Development Template (p.3)

1. **State criteria**
   - Write criteria in the left-hand column
   - Begin with a verb, be concise and precise, stay focused on curriculum
2. **Create descriptor**
   - The descriptor fleshes out the criteria and provides context
   - The same basic statement can be repeated for each level.
3. **Select words to describe each level of student performance**
   - Work within the correct skill focus when using the Rubric Wordsmith.
   - Words may be selected from any row within a skill, but don't "float" among columns.

Example from "Young Canada Reads":

	Excellent	**Proficient**	**Adequate**	**Limited**
Explain choice (2.2.2, 2.2.5, 2.2.8)	Provides **insightful** reasons for selection of book.	Provides **thoughtful** reasons for selection of book.	Provides **simplistic** reasons for selection of book.	Provides **unsupported** reasons for selection of book.

Step 5: Use the Task with Students

➢ Collect samples of student work to review with peers, along with your task and rubric.
➢ Revise your task as needed.

Notes

Excerpts from the AAC Grade 4 English Language Arts task:
Young Canada Reads

Alberta Assessment Consortium
Grade 4 English Language Arts
Performance Assessment Task: Teacher Resource Materials

Young Canada Reads

CONTEXT FOR LEARNING

Students will prepare and present a retelling of a story they have read for an imaginary CBC television producer and film crew.

> Making meaning of oral, print and other media texts is fundamental to English language arts. …Oral, print and other media texts allow for multiple interpretations. Students can respond personally to texts, by relating them to their prior knowledge, to their feelings and experiences, and to other texts. Through personal response, students explore and form values and beliefs. They respond critically to texts, by making interpretations and evaluating ideas, forms and techniques (English Language Arts K – 9 Program of Studies, 2000, p. 17).

Teacher Resource Materials include:
- Learner Outcomes and Assessment Criteria (p. 2)
- For Best Results (pp. 3 – 5)

Student Materials include:
- Student Task (p. 1)
- Rubric (p. 2)
- Student Graphic Organizer (p. 3)

Assessment for Learning Tools:
- Peer Coaching: Retell Story Events
- Student Self-reflection: Explain Choice
- Peer Coaching: Select and Use Prompts
- Peer Coaching: Present Orally

[NOTE: These workshop materials represent only portion of the materials listed above. Visit the AAC website for the complete performance assessment.**]**

Teachers may modify these materials in response to the specific learning needs of their students. Please visit www.aac.ab.ca for the most recent AAC version of these materials.

Excerpts from the AAC Grade 4 English Language Arts task:
Young Canada Reads

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF STUDENT LEARNING

This performance task addresses the following learner outcomes (shown in Times New Roman font) from the English Language Arts Program of Studies:

Learner Outcomes		Criteria for Evaluation *
General Outcome 2 Students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, print and other media texts. **General Outcome 4** Students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to enhance the clarity and artistry of communication.		Students provide evidence of their learning as they:
Number	**Specific Outcomes**	
2.2 2.2.4 *2.3* 2.3.3	***Respond to Texts*** **Experience various texts** • retell events of stories in another form or medium ***Understand Forms, Elements and Techniques*** **Understand techniques and elements** • identify and explain connections among events, setting and main characters in oral, print and other media texts	• retell story events
2.2 2.2.2 2.2.5 2.2.8	***Respond to Texts*** **Experience various texts** • identify and discuss favourite authors, topics and kinds of oral, print and other media texts • make general evaluative statements about oral, print and other media texts **Construct meaning from texts** • compare similar oral, print and other media texts and express preferences, using evidence from personal experiences and the texts	• explain choice
2.4 2.4.2 *4.3* 4.3.2	***Create Original Text*** **Elaborate on the expression of ideas** • select and use visuals that enhance meaning of oral, print and other media texts ***Present and Share*** **Enhance presentation** • add interest to presentations through the effective use of props, such as pictures, overheads and artifacts	• select and use props
4.3 4.3.3	***Present and Share*** **Use effective oral and visual communication** • adjust volume, tone of voice and gestures appropriately to suit a variety of social and classroom activities	• present orally

* Criteria statements appear again in the first column of the evaluation tools (checklists, rating scales and/or rubrics) and are the basis on which student evaluation is made relative to the learner outcomes.

Excerpts from the AAC Grade 4 English Language Arts task:
Young Canada Reads
Student Task

Imagine that CBC television is planning a special broadcast for Canada Book Week, based on the popular Canada Reads event. This new show is designed for young readers. The show will feature young Canadians talking about books that they have read. Your class has been invited to audition for the broadcast. In order to participate, you will need to do the following:

- *Select an interesting book you have read recently.*

- *Use the graphic organizer provided to help you prepare a retelling of your story.*

- *Explain why you selected this particular book to share with the producer.*

- *Prepare or select appropriate props to make your presentation more interesting. You might choose to use objects, drawings, posters, and/or costuming to enhance your presentation.*

- *Use your graphic organizer to help you practice retelling your story to a classmate. Adjust volume, tone of voice and gestures to make your presentation more interesting.*

You will make your final presentation to the producer of the show (your teacher) and the film crew (your classmates). You may wish to use your graphic organizer to help you make your presentation.

Good luck with your presentation!

Excerpts from the AAC Grade 4 English Language Arts task:
Young Canada Reads
Rubric

Student _____

Level Criteria	Excellent	Proficient	Adequate	Limited *	Insufficient/ Blank *
Retell story events (2.2.4, 2.3.3)	Provides a **purposeful** retelling that makes **skillful** connections among story elements.	Provides a **focused** retelling that makes **meaningful** connections among story elements.	Provides a **simplistic** retelling that makes **basic** connections among story elements.	Provides a **superficial** retelling that makes **few if any** connections among story elements.	No score is awarded because there is insufficient evidence of student performance based on the requirements of the assessment task.
Explain choice (2.2.2, 2.2.5, 2.2.8)	Provides **insightful** reasons for selection of book.	Provides **thoughtful** reasons for selection of book.	Provides **simplistic** reasons for selection of book.	Reasons for selection of book are **unsupported**.	
Select and use props (2.4.2, 4.3.2)	Use of props **enhances** presentation.	Use of props **supports** presentation.	Use of props is **appropriate** for the presentation.	Use of props **interferes with** the presentation.	
Present orally (4.3.3)	Adjusts volume and tone of voice, and uses gestures to **intrigue** the audience.	Adjusts volume and tone of voice, and uses gestures to **interest** the audience.	Adjusts volume and tone of voice, and uses gestures to **partially engage** the audience.	**Little or no attention** given to volume, tone of voice, or gestures resulting in minimal audience engagement.	

∗   When work is judged to be limited or insufficient, the teacher makes decisions about appropriate intervention to help the student improve.

Excerpts from the AAC Grade 4 English Language Arts task:
Young Canada Reads
Graphic Organizer for Story Retelling

Student _____

Use this graphic organizer to make point form notes about the characters, setting, and key events of the story. The organizer will help you retell the story.

Title of Book _____

Author _____

Characters	**Setting**

Problem to be Solved

Key Story Events

How the Problem Was Solved

Excerpts from the AAC Grade 4 English Language Arts task:
Young Canada Reads
Peer Coaching Tool: Retell Story Events

Student _____

Coach _____

How well did I **retell the story events**?

	Feedback from the Coach
• Did I include enough details so that someone who had not read the story could understand it?	I noticed... or I have some suggestions for you...
• Have I included the characters and setting as I described the events of the story?	
• Did I describe how the main problem in the story was solved?	
• Is my retelling concise? (It's not too long – I only included important details.)	

Excerpts from the AAC Grade 4 English Language Arts task:
Young Canada Reads
Self-Reflection Tool: Explain Choice

Student _____

When you present your retelling for the producer and the studio audience, you will need to explain why you selected your book.

In explaining my choice I need to…	Use this space to jot down some ideas that you can use in your oral retelling.

• connect my choice to a specific story elements.
 	
Did I like the book mostly because of the…
   plot?
   setting?
   character?
   language?
   other reason?	

• provide specific examples from the story. Did I include some examples from the story to back up my book choice?	
• express my personal response to the story. Did I describe how I felt about parts of the story, or the way the author told the story?	

After completing your notes, have a conversation with a partner. Ask for feedback on how well you have explained and supported your book choice.

AAC Performance Assessment Development Template (revised workshop copy)

Grade _____ **Subject(s)** _____ **Topic** _____

POINTS TO CONSIDER: Determining the Assessment Focus

☐ *Criteria are based on learner outcomes, which may be cross-curricular.*
☐ *Outcomes and criteria address 'big ideas' from the curriculum.*
☐ *Criteria are concise statements beginning with verbs.*
☐ *Criteria are focused on what students are being asked to do to provide evidence of learning.*

LEARNER OUTCOMES		CRITERIA : concise action statements beginning with strong verbs that identify the learning to be achieved, based on Alberta Programs of Study
Number	**Outcome (copy directly from the program of studies)**	

Alberta Assessment Consortium Development Template (revised workshop copy)

To view the current AAC Performance Assessment collection, please visit www.aac.ab.ca and search under the Assessment Materials tab.

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STUDENT ASSESSMENT TASK

POINTS TO CONSIDER: Designing the Student Task

☐ *Task reflects a real-life context.*

☐ *Instructions are clear: students will see the criteria reflected in what they are asked to do/produce.*

☐ *Task is open-ended enough to encourage creativity and choice.*

☐ *Task offers students "entry points" at a variety of levels.*

☐ *Task provides evidence that students are meeting the outcomes.*

Alberta Assessment Consortium Development Template (revised workshop copy)
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POINTS TO CONSIDER: Creating the Rubric
- ☐ *Criteria are listed in the left hand column.*
- ☐ *The descriptors focus on levels of quality.*

Further support for writing effective rubrics is found in the AAC publication, Building Better Rubrics and on the AAC website under the Professional Learning tab.

Criteria / Level	Excellent	Proficient	Adequate	Limited*	Insufficient/ Blank*
					No score is awarded because there is insufficient evidence of student performance based on the requirements of the assessment task.

* When work is judged to be limited or insufficient, the teacher makes decisions about appropriate intervention to help the student improve.

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