Authentic Assessment in Social Studies

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A holistic assessment plan should address the full range of goals including attitudes, values, and dispositions along with knowledge and skills. Different assessment tools (provided as an attachment) might be more or less appropriate at different stages of learning. However, the unit's assessment components should build toward authentic applications.

Currently, teachers are faced with many obligations, responsibilities, new initiatives, and challenges. Many of these are prompted by changes in the curriculum and high stakes testing. It follows, however, that if the teacher's assessment plan for students matches the curricular goals and is multi-faceted – and if the results are used to inform planning and modify instruction, student performance on standard measures will be positively affected and teacher accountability will no longer be in jeopardy.

Introduction

Just when the tendency to 'measure' entered education and the schools is not definitely known. We do know, however, that even early teachers including Socrates challenged their students with carefully prepared questions which undoubtedly were used to determine students' intellectually capacity and abilities to exercise higher order thinking. No outstanding advancements in educational measurement were reported until about the middle of the nineteenth century. By the 1920s, quantitative measurement appeared in literature associated with educational tests and a little later the quality of tests became a part of the conversation. In 1922, the first edition of the Stanford Achievement Test was published. Initially the emphasis was on mastery, however, later attention was directed toward student strengths and weaknesses and the use of data for enhancing the learning

process (Loeck, 1952).

Now fast forward to 2012. The discourse about assessment and testing has exploded, primarily due to standards and high stakes testing with a dramatic shift from almost exclusively student performance and accountability to include teacher performance and accountability. In some school districts, teachers have lost their jobs due to poor student performance and in other instances teachers' salaries are determined, in part, by student performance. While this article will not enter the debate about where the emphasis should be or who is to be praised or blamed, this author advocates a balance and argues that attention to student ongoing assessment correlates with teacher performance if the assessments are multi-facets and aligned with curricular goals and if the results are used to inform planning and modify instruction.

Assessment: Integral Part of the Learning Cycle

Imagine assessment as an integral part of the learning cycle that takes multiple snapshots of each student. The teacher needs a host of data types in order to create a profile of each learner. Think of the profile as telling a story of each student – his/her assets/successes as well as areas that need attention. While the renewed interest in assessment seems to be based on the onslaught of standards and standardized tests, it behooves the teacher to avoid this narrow perspective and instead seize this opportunity to rethink assessment within the content of curricular goals. Consider it in terms of its potential for determining students' progress in learning, for curricular improvements, for instructional planning, and for grading.

Assessment should be a natural part of

teaching and learning with the student in the loop and acquiring skills to self-monitor. Assessment should be ongoing, frequently cast as preliminary formative, and summative. Different forms and times for assessment should be determined according to the purpose of the learning situation, the kind of information sought, and how the assessment will be used to accomplish the subject's goals. Since assessment is ongoing, many instructional activities can be used as assessment tools. The key is for the teacher to realize the difference between using an activity for teaching (processing information, etc.) and for "testing" a student's performance.

Authentic Assessment

The key to keeping standards and high-stakes testing in perspective is viewing assessment as an integral part of the curriculum and not just an add-on. This view expands the notion of assessment beyond the paper-pencil test, an expansion that is needed in order to address the range of curricular goals. Newmann (1997), Wiggins (1989a, 1989b), and other scholars refer to this expanded notion as authentic assessment and note that the authentic tasks have the following attributes:

- Tasks go to the heart of essential learning (i.e., they ask for exhibitions of understandings and abilities that matter).

- Tasks resemble interdisciplinary real-life challenges, not academic busywork that is artificially neat, fragmented, and easy to grade.

- Tasks are standard-setting; they point students toward higher, richer levels of knowing.

- Tasks are worth striving toward and practicing.

- Tasks are known to students well in advance.

- Tasks strike teachers as worth the trouble.

- All tasks are attempted by all students.

- Tasks generally involve a higher-order challenge that requires students to go beyond the routine use of previously learned information.

These attributes add up to an "exhibition of mastery" (Parker, 1991).

Authentic assessment should always reflect the full range of curricular goals, so multiple-choice, true-false, or essay tests sometimes will be appropriate. Other times however, will require measures such as observation check lists, self-assessment checklists, open-ended "I learned" statements, "open-closed" windows, reflective journal entries, laboratory-type performance assessments, portfolios that include a range of student work, or observation measures such as graphs for evaluating discussions. All of these tools can help students and the teacher to get a 'reading' of how learning is progressing. Attached to this article, you will find a host of examples taken from the 2013 3rd edition of *Powerful Social Studies for Elementary Students* (Brophy, Alleman, & Halvorsen, 2013) and shared at the *Humanities Educators Conference* in Singapore, May 2012. Most of the examples can be easily modified and used in the other core subjects.

Guiding Principles

- Guiding principles to consider for creating, monitoring, and implementing appropriate social studies assessment practices (as well as those in the other core subjects) are as follows:

- Assessment practices must be goals-driven, at an appropriate level of difficulty, feasible, and cost effective.

- Assessment should be considered as an integral part of the curriculum and instruction process.

- A comprehensive assessment plan should represent what is valued instructionally. Local initiatives should draw on state and

national standards and any other sources that can enhance local developments and practices.

- Assessment should be viewed as a thread that is woven into the curriculum, beginning before instruction and occurring at junctures throughout, in an effort to monitor, assess, revise, and expand what is being taught and learned.

- Assessment should benefit the learner (self-reflection and self-regulation) and inform teaching practices.

- Assessment results should be documented to track responses and develop learner profiles (Alleman & Brophy, 1997).

Summary

Assessment should be treated as ongoing and an integral part of the learning cycle. The results should be scrutinized to detect weaknesses in the assessment practices themselves as well as any special learner needs, misconceptions, or misunderstandings. The results of the ongoing analysis should serve to inform future planning and instruction.

A holistic assessment plan should address the full range of goals including attitudes, values, and dispositions along with knowledge and skills. Different assessment tools might be more or less appropriate at different stages of learning (preliminary, formative, summative), however the unit's assessment components should build toward authentic applications. While this article and the assessment tools provided focus on social studies, the basic underlying principles as well as many of the tools can be easily modified and applied to other content areas.

Conclusion

Currently, teachers are faced with many obligations, responsibilities, new initiatives, and challenges. Many are prompted by changes in the curriculum and emphasis on standards and high stakes testing. The professional literatures, as well as national and international conference agendas extol the use of standards and the importance of accountability. It follows that if a teacher's assessment plan for students matches curricular goals and is multi-faceted – and if the results are used to inform planning and modify instruction, student performance will be positively affected and thus teacher accountability will no longer be in jeopardy.

I encourage the teachers in Singapore to adopt, adapt, refine, and expand classroom practices that "bring the standards to life" for their students including assessment components that enhance their students' sense of self-efficacy because they are aware of their academic successes and challenges and rebalance the accountability discourse with teacher and students as equal partners.

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Sample Formal Assessment Tools

Examples are drawn from Brophy, J., Alleman, J., and Havorsen, A. 2013 Copyright

Multiple choice Items

The multiple choice format is probably the most versatile form of objective test items. Every item has two parts: the stem which represents the problem or question, and three or more response choices, of which one is the correct answer and the others are distracters, plausible alternatives for students who do not know the answer (Good & Brophy, 1995). Consider the following illustration built around a unit on communication with the goal being for students to recognize and understand various kinds of media and their purposes:

Which of these inventions is of least help to a disc jockey?

1) record
2) microphone
3) camera
4) studio

A person whose main job is to find out news is a:

1) reporter
2) printer
3) typist
4) proofreader

If you wanted to purchase a pet, which part of the newspaper would you check?

1) letters to the editor
2) movie section
3) classified section
4) comics

If you wanted to find out quickly how you could locate an unusual coin to add to your collection, what source would you check?

1) e-bay
2) local newspaper
3) radio
4) telephone directory

It is challenging to build good multiple choice items. Writing a stem that provides sufficient pertinent information but is not too wordy is very important, especially if some of your students have reading

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difficulties. Hints for writing good items include, first write the stem and correct answer simultaneously. Next, carefully analyze both question and answer to ensure accuracy and clarity. Finally, write your distracters. Are they worded to flow from the stem? Are they believable but incorrect or not as good as the correct alternatives? Are any of the distracters weird, odd-ball alternatives that students are likely to recognize as incorrect? If so, get rid of them. Are the distracters roughly the same length? If not, edit them or write new ones. [Steps in Writing Good Choice Items: (1) Write the stems and correct answers. (2) Check for accuracy and clarity. (3) Write the distracters. (4) Do distracters flow from the stem? (5) Are they believable but incorrect?]

The advantages of multiple-choice items—if they match your goals—are that they can be scored objectively, and some of the effects of guessing are mitigated. Selecting this format, at least once in awhile, also prepares students for a format that is typically used on standardized tests

True-False and Yes-No Items

True-false and yes-no items can be constructed much more quickly than multiple-choice items. However, a major limitation of this type of question is that much content built around big ideas is difficult to express in this format. Also, students will be correct 50% of the time by guessing, because they are choosing between only two alternatives rather than four or five. Consequently, this type of question can be used successfully when only a general estimate of performance is needed.

There are strategic ways of building higher order thinking into this type of assessment. One is to ask students to make false items true. Another is to ask them to explain the reasoning for their responses. Still another is to include a short text selection followed by a series of yes/no or true-false questions.

Here is an example based on the goal of developing strategies for being a wise consumer and applying them to real-life situations.

GRAND OPENING

42-inch TV sets

Beautiful picture, fine piece of furniture.

Hurry. They won't last at this price!

$999.95

JEFF'S TV SHOP

After reading this ad, Mark and his dad hurried over to Jeff's TV shop. "You don't really want this TV," the salesman pleaded. "It's two years old and doesn't have a factory warranty. But if you insist on buying it and it causes you problems within 30 days, I'll try to get it fixed for you." Pointing to another TV, the salesman said, "This brand new set with a five-year warranty is a steal for $1,499.95."

Directions: Circle "yes" if the answer to the question is yes. Circle "no" if the answer to the

question is no.

   <u>Yes</u>.   No. 1. Was Jeff's TV shop using bait-and-switch advertising?

   <u>Yes</u>.   No. 2. By using such words as "beautiful picture" and "fine piece of furniture," was Jeff puffing the TV set?

   Yes.   <u>No</u>. 3. Was the salesman's offer to "try and repair the set" a binding contract?

   Yes.   <u>No</u>. 4. If Mark's dad bought the used TV and it broke in a few days, would the manufacturer be likely to repair the set free of charge?

Reluctant readers and the time factor need to be considered when deciding whether to use a short text with yes/no or true/false items. Another consideration is that narrative followed by a series of items is a format frequently found on standardized measures. Often students are stressed not by the questions being asked but by the form in which they are presented; therefore, it is a good idea to take advantage of opportunities to prepare students for new encounters when they match learning goals.

Short Answer and Completion Items

Short answer and completion items require students to finish a statement from recall rather than just recognize the correct answer. In a short-answer format, students provide their own responses. Suppose you were teaching a lesson on hunger and the goals were to (1) develop an understanding that in extreme cases, people are unable to pay for the food they need, and (2) help students acquire a sensitivity for people in need and to practice citizenship as it relates to other people. You explained to your students what soup kitchens were, plotted the locations of soup kitchens on a local map, and discussed reasons why people come to soup kitchens. Finally, you read the story of <u>Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen</u> (DiSalvo-Ryan, 1991). You provided some background information and set the stage for "minds-on" listening by posing a couple of questions. After the debriefing and a large-group activity that had the students write an editorial for the local newspaper explaining the class's ideas for helping local people who are in need of food, you prepared an open-ended assessment as follows:

1. A soup kitchen is _____.
2. People go to soup kitchens because _____.
3. Uncle Willie is a good citizen because _____.
4. People in need can _____.
5. Being a volunteer is _____.
6. Places in our community where people can go to get free food or food at a lower price include _____, _____, and _____.

Responses would be shared and discussed in a follow-up to the assessment.

Matching Items

Matching tests present two lists and require students to pair up items from one list with items from the other. These tests lack the flexibility of multiple-choice tests because they require items with common properties, such as names, processes, events, or objects. A well-constructed matching test, however, contains a range of options from which the student chooses in attempting to match terms and definitions, important persons and their contributions, events and dates, etc.

Imagine that one of the goals of your fourth-grade unit on regions was for students to develop an

understanding of energy sources and be able to explain how they are produced. A set of matching items might be used as part of the assessment:

Directions: Match each source of energy in Column 1 with the way in which it is produced in Column 2. Write the letter on the line in front of the question number. Some of the sources are produced in more than one way.

	Column 1	Column 2
a, c, d	1. oil	drilling
a, c, d	2. gas	b. digging
b	3. coal	c. manufacturing
c	4. gasoline	d. collecting
d	5. solar heat	
c	6. kerosene	
b	7. peat	
c	8. steam	
c	9. water power	
c	10. electricity	

To avoid cuing answers, it is helpful to have more response alternatives than items, or as is the case above, to include response alternatives that may be used more than once.

Essay Questions

Essay questions provide students with the greatest latitude to construct their own responses. Students are required to produce their own answers. They have the freedom to decide how to organize their response, and the conclusions they will draw. Essay questions are most useful for assessing higher cognitive processes. The main limitations are the amount of time needed for writing and reading the responses and the ability to assess only a limited amount of student learning.

Providing students with multiple key words or phrases they might use in formulating their responses can "jump start" even the most reluctant writer/speller. This tactic is often referred to as a modified word wall. It can also be used as a stimulus for "table talk" prior to responding individually to the essay questions. [Modified Key Word Wall: government, responsibility, plaintiff, defendant, citizen, legislature, jury.]

Many types of essay questions might be asked. Imagine that you have just completed a unit on government and your overarching goal was for students to develop an understanding and appreciation for the influence of government and the legal system on our daily lives. We have listed 10 types of essay questions and an example of each. It would be unlikely, however, that you would use all of these types in a single unit test.

1) Comparison of two things:
    In what ways are rules and laws alike and different?
2) Decision (for and against):
    Suppose that there is a law in your state that you cannot ride a motorcycle until you are 16 years old. Is this a fair law? Explain your answer.
3) Cause and effect:
    Why do stores have signs posted that read: "Shoplifters will be prosecuted."?
4) Explanation of the use or meaning of some phrase or statement in a passage:
    A sign in front of a store reads, "Handicapped Parking Only." Explain what the sign means.
5) Analysis:
    It is dark and you are riding your bike without any lights. Why is this dangerous?
6) Statement of relationships:
    Why are older students instead of younger ones on your school's safety patrol? Explain your reasons.
7) Discussion:
    Explain what a lawyer and a judge do in the courtroom.
8) Reorganization of facts:
    Tell the steps you would follow if your bicycle were stolen.
9) Formulation of new question (problems and questions raised):
    Suppose that there were no laws against smoking. How would this affect the health of the people?
10) Criticism (as to the adequacy, correctness, or relevancy of a pointed statement):
    "Students can come to school only when they want to." Explain what is good and bad about that idea.

Before giving the essay test, write down what you would regard as the best answers to each of your essay questions. Doing this can disclose some inherent deficiencies to the questions, but more importantly, the answers can serve as standards for evaluating your students' responses. If you decide to use rubrics, consider engaging your students in the conversation for creating them. For example, if you were to ask students to write a journal entry focusing on the reasons for taxes or comparing the Vietnam War to the war in Iraq, talk about how many ideas should be included, the role of examples for adding credibility to the response, and the importance of spelling and grammar. Consider modeling (using a different example) what a strong journal entry would look like. Co-constructing rubrics can build ownership and enlist students as partners in designing and using them. Make sure you start with a sharply focused vision of a good response (Stiggins, 2001). [Rubric Co-constructed: X number of ideas to be included. X number of examples to illustrate each idea. Writing mechanics: (1) Capitalizing, (2) Complete Sentences, and (3) Correct spelling.]

Essay tests are most appropriate in classrooms that are literacy rich. Students will be most successful if they have had lots of in-class opportunities to be verbally active in both large- and small-group settings. Primary-grade students who are still mastering the basics of writing are not yet ready to compose written responses to essay questions, but they can respond orally during interview assessments.

Analytic Rubrics

Describe the degree of quality, proficiency, or understanding along a continuum. Then answer the following questions.

By what criteria should performance be judged and discriminated?

Where should we look and what should we look for to judge performance success?

How is each level of understanding differentiated from the others?

Rubrics are often used in judging the quality, proficiency, and understanding of an essay response. Below is a rubric for an assessment that involves writing a letter expressing an opinion on a public policy issue.

Objective	No Evidence	Beginning	Developing	Meeting
Expresses a position on a public policy issue and supports the position with a reasoned argument (e.g., using a core democratic value or data).	Does not take a stand.	Expresses a position on the public policy issue based on a personal belief or experience that is vague.	Expresses a position on the public policy issue and supports the position with an argument based on a personal belief or experience accompanied by example.	Expresses a position on the public policy issue with an argument based on a core democratic value or on supporting data.
Sets a purpose, considers audience, and begins to use styles and patterns typically used in crafting informational pieces.	Does not set a purpose, consider audience, or use styles and patterns from informational pieces.	Sets a vague purpose, vaguely considers audience, and shows minimal usage of styles and patterns from informational pieces.	Does one or two of the following: sets a purpose, considers audience, and uses some styles and patterns from informational pieces.	Sets a purpose, considers audience, and uses some styles and patterns from informational pieces.
Writes a letter that is grammatically correct, clear, and well-organized.	Writing is not grammatically correct; writing is not organized or clear.	Writing has several grammatical errors, writing shows minimal organization and clarity.	Writing has few grammatical errors, arguments are mostly clear, and the letter is fairly well-organized.	Writing is grammatically correct, clear, and well-organized.

Student Work

Students should be given opportunities to analyze their own work given the guidelines and/or rubrics provided.

Carefully scaffold the process.

Preliminary questions:

Is this your best work? Explain.

Did you complete the assignment? If not, please explain.

What improvements would you make next time?

While the analysis of student work serves as an internal audit for students, it is equally important for the teacher. It is an essential part of teaching and serves to inform planning

Sample Informal Assessment Tools

Participation in Discussions

The kind of assessment implied by constructivism flows from the belief that students develop new knowledge and make it their own through an active process of "meaning making." The following tools can be used to assess students' participation in classroom discussion and activities.

TEACHER'S EVALUATION OF INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO DISCUSSION				
Select a few students each day for observation and feedback. Use checkmarks to indicate a successful meeting of behaviors.				
Student Names				
Student Behaviors				
Helps define the issues				
Sticks to the topic				
Is an interested and willing listener				
Considers ideas contrary to own				
Synthesizes information presented by peers				
Generalizes when appropriate				
Arrives at conclusions that produce new meaning				

GROUP EVALUATION OF DISCUSSION	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
1) We checked to make sure everyone understood what to do.				
2) We responded to questions, giving explanations where needed.				
3) We clarified what we did not understand.				

4) We helped one another and made sure we all understood and could apply what we learned.				

INDIVIDUAL'S SELF-ASSESSMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO DISCUSSION				
How well do I work with my peers?	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
I make constructive suggestions when asked for help.				
I cooperate with others as we work toward our group's goal.				
I keep on task.				
I contribute new ideas.				
I give others encouragement.				

Anecdotal Records

Anecdotal records enable you to record specific incidents of student behavior over a period of time. Interpersonal relations, the development of language, geographic or problem solving skills, contributions to class discussions, and changes in interest or attitudinal patterns are among the many types of information about students that can be described in anecdotal records.

[Example of anecdotal record 4/12/12: Jamie asked three higher-order thinking questions during our class discussion about world hunger; she also contributed two key ideas regarding how our class could help. She brought an informational text on the topic from the library.]

Open-closed windows is another useful tool to gauge where students are in their learning.

Provide students with a piece of lined paper. Have them fold the paper in half (vertically), write "Open" at the top of the left-hand side, and write "Closed" at the top of the right-hand side. Then ask them to think about what they have learned and list those things under the open category. Most students will probably have a long list. Then ask them to think about what things from the lesson (or series of lessons) they still are unclear or confused about. Ask them to list these questions on the closed side. Then ask them to share in pairs. This tool is particularly useful when you want to encourage students to discuss what they have been learning among themselves. Closed windows can be opened by peer conversations, and those that remain closed can be addressed during subsequent instruction.

Open	Closed
• Governments are classified as democracies or dictatorships. • Customs and beliefs are reflected in governments.	• Why do some countries have kings and queens yet they have freedoms similar to ours?

"I learned" statements are simple but they can reveal a lot over time. At the end of an activity or lesson, ask students to write down or share verbally what they learned. This provides each student with an opportunity to reflect on the experience. The responses will give you a measure of what students thought was important.

• I learned that voting is:

_____
_____

• I learned that a democracy is:

_____
_____

• I learned that people must have certain qualifications to vote including:

_____
_____

Assessing Attitudes, Values, and Dispositions

Techniques for assessing attitudes, values, and dispositions are especially useful when attempting to determine students' previous experience with a specific issue or topic. The results can inform your planning, which should incorporate experiences and life applications whenever possible. Imagine you are planning a unit on government and one of your goals is for students to develop an appreciation for rules and laws and why we have them. You might design a Likert scale to generate a preliminary "reading" of students' attitudes about rules and laws. A Likert scale asks students to express the extent to which they agree or disagree with a series of statements. Usually a 5- to 7-point scale is used, with the most positive response being the highest number. Below are two examples relating to rules and laws.

Directions: Make an X on the line that best tells your feelings about these statements.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1) If you don't like a law, you should follow it anyway.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2) If you see kids breaking windows in the school, youshould tell the principal.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

A semantic differential is another useful tool. Below are examples of semantic differential terms which might be used in evaluating students' beliefs, values, and dispositions about government. Ideally, this instrument would be administered prior to teaching the unit and again at the end to determine if and how their attitudes changed.

Directions: Make an X in the space that best shows what government means to you.

Good	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Bad
Democratic	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Authoritarian
Closed	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Open
Valuable	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Worthless
Strong	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Weak
Impersonal	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Personal
Necessary	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Unnecessary
Responsive	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Unresponsive
Greedy	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Generous
Considerate	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Inconsiderate
Wasteful	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Saving

Performance Assessment: The Laboratory Model

The "laboratory" model is another useful tool. This form is usually implemented at the end of a unit. You probably have experienced it in high school or college science classes. On "test" day, stations are located at desks, bulletin boards, whiteboards, murals, wall charts, computer screens, or other appropriate places. Each station displays material such as a chart, artifacts, or an open book with a marked passage. Students visit the stations with clipboards, answer sheets, and pencils in hand. When instructed to do so, they move to the next station. Some time should be allowed for returning to stations where questions have been left unanswered. When all the students have finished, answers are checked.

This model can work very successfully as a means of fostering authentic performance assessment in elementary social studies. Of course, like every type of assessment considered it must be driven by the social studies goals. If one of the goals of a unit on community is to develop understandings related to transportation systems, then students might learn about how to read and interpret bus schedules, locate bike paths, or find the most direct routes for reaching certain sites. Later, they might be asked to resolve transportation dilemmas using a city map, bus schedules, and other pertinent artifacts at one or more testing stations.

Given the goals for the community unit, it is likely that charts, murals, passages from books, slides, flat pictures, newspaper ads, student projects, and so on, would be used to develop major understandings. These could easily be placed at individual stations accompanied by a series of questions that address the big ideas and draw upon skills such as location, decision making, advertising techniques, and so forth.

Here are some helpful hints to consider when planning laboratory-type assessments:

- Try to make the exercises similar in length.

- Begin each sequence with an easy question and build toward the most challenging one.

- Consider providing optional questions at some of the stations.

- For younger students, arrange for adults or older students to help with reading items or manipulating materials.

- If you are concerned about having a station for each student, divide the number of stations in half. You can have half of the class take the test while the other half works on a project in the library, then switch roles. Students can later work in pairs to correct their responses. For younger students, invite upper grade mentor-partners to do the reading and writing.

- Plan a "dry run" of the model before you use it.

- After administering several lab tests in social studies successfully, gradually add student projects at stations. More advanced students can design questions around their individual and group projects based on the goals of the unit. Provide them with whatever guidelines needed to ensure that they include questions that address higher-order thinking.

- Be open. There are no hard and fast rules for this model, except that the items must be based on

your goals and matched to your teaching modalities.

To stimulate your thinking regarding these of authentic assessments, I have provided sample station plans from two units.

Sample Stations for a Laboratory Assessment in Geography

STATION 1. Questions about the Globe

Turn the globe slowly. Find the country marked with an X.

1. What is the name of this country?_____

2. In what hemispheres is it located? (Circle two of these.)

   Eastern   Western   Northern   Southern

3. Is the time of day earlier or later in this place than here?_____

4. Approximately how many miles is it from this country to here?_____

5. What would be the fastest mode of transportation to take from here to this place?_____

6. If you were to travel southwest from here, would you reach this country or the Hawaiian

   Islands first?_____

STATION 2. The Kyoto Billboard

(A student project of a billboard advertising Kyoto is displayed at this station)

1. Is Kyoto an old or a young place?_____

2. Is it a country, province, or city?_____

3. If you were a gardener, would you expect to find work here?

   Why or why not?_____

4. If you were a deep sea fisherman, would you find work here?

   Why or why not?_____

5. According to the billboard, what is the most unique characteristic of Kyoto?_____

6. According to the billboard, what is one thing a tourist could do for entertainment?_____

7. (Optional) According to the billboard, what is one thing that Kyoto and (a city near you) have in

common?_____

Performance Lab Test for Third-Grade Unit

STATION #1: Pictures of people in our school community who help our school run smoothly

1. What do these people have in common?

2. What is the purpose of a school community?

3. Which member of the school community is of the most interest to you? Please explain.

STATION #2: Pictures of school community members cooperating

1. Why do community members need to cooperate?

2. What kinds of problems can school community members solve?

3. How are the school and the community alike?

STATION #3: Map of the school

1. When you enter the front door of our school and turn to your right, whose office do you come to first?

2. Give the directions to the principal's office from the front door entrance.

3. How would you get to the library from the principal's office?

4. Explain how you would get to the computer lab from the principal's office.

STATION #4: Map of North America

1. What is the largest country in North America?

2. Is Mexico or the United States the larger country?

3. Where is Central America in relation to Greenland?

4. Which country do you think would have the coldest temperatures in winter? Why?

STATION #5: Regional map of the United States

1. What is the northernmost state in our region?

2. If you were flying from North Carolina to Mexico, how many major rivers would you cross? What are their names?

3. Which ocean is closest to New Mexico?

4. If you are planning a winter vacation and want to experience warm weather, where would you go and why?

STATION #6: Five states, five Great Lakes

1. What is the purpose of the compass rose?

2. Where is Michigan in relation to the Ohio River?

3. Which Great Lake separates Michigan from Illinois?

4. Where is Lake Superior in relation to the Mississippi River?

5. Would you cross any of the Great Lakes if you were flying from Lansing, Michigan to Anchorage, Alaska? Explain.

STATION #7: Michigan county map

1. What county is Lansing in?

2. What county is in the southwest corner of our state?

3. In what direction would you travel (from Detroit) to get to Cheboygan? To Grand Rapids?

STATION #8: Road map of Michigan

1. What is the best way to go from Dansville to Mason?

2. What is the best way to go from Dansville to Stockbridge?

3. Approximately how many miles is it from Dansville to Leslie?

4. How would you get from Dansville to the state capital?

Portfolios as A Means of Documenting Student Progress

Portfolios represent a composite of student work samples.

The work samples should reflect the diversity of reading, writing, questioning, analyzing, and experiences that are incorporated within units of study.

Students should be able to write narrative or discuss verbally the contents using such prompts as: Which piece(s) of work are you most proud of and why? What would you add or do differently next time? What do the portfolio entries say about you as a learner?

*Student-led parent conferences provide an opportunity to talk about what has been learned using the contents of the portfolio as a springboard for discussion.

Suggested Readings:

Arter, J. and Chappuis, J. (2006). Creating and Recognizing Quality Rubrics, Upper Saddle River, N. J.: Pearson.

Chappuis, J. (2010). Seven Strategies of Assessment for Learning, Needham Heights, Mass: Allyn and Bacon.

Stiggins, R. J. (2004): From formative assessment to assessment for learning: A path to success in standards-based schools. Phi delta kappan, Vol. 87, No. 04, December 2005, pp. 324-328. Retrieved from the Assessment Training Institute 4 Apr 2008. Link:

http://www. Assessmentinst.com/forms/FromFormat_ko512sti.pdf

Stiggins, R. J., Arter, J., Chappuis, J. and Chappuis, S. (2006), classroom Assessment for Student Learning: Doing It Right – Using It Well, Needham Heights, Mass: Allyn and Bacon.

Technology:

These web links are also available on the companion website for Powerful Social Studies for Elementary Students at www.thornsonedu.com/education

Portfolio Assessment

http://www.eduplace.com/rdg/res/literacy/assess6.html

This is an article about portfolio assessment related to literacy, but it does contain important ideas about designing portfolio assessments.

http://www.teachervision.fen.com/teaching-methods/grading/5942.html

This website from Teacher Vision offers a step-by-step guide for creating portfolios with your students.

Concept Mapping Software

http://www.uwstout.edu/soe/profdev/conceptmap/50uses.html

This website offers 50 suggestions for using the concept mapping software Inspiration.

Rubrics

http://www.teach-nology.com/web_tools/rubrics/

This website from Teachnology is an online resource for teachers. It has a template for rubrics. You simply fill in your content and the rubric is generated for you.

Standardized tests

http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/students/earlycld/ea51k3.htm

The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory for teachers has an article on standardized testing. It offers basic assumptions about positive and negative aspects of standardized tests.

Classroom Assessment

www.ets.org

Education Testing Service has an informative article entitled "Linking Classroom Assessment with Student Learning."

http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/methods/assment/as500.htm

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory provides a host of materials related to assessment. "Critical Issue: Integrating Assessment and Instruction in Ways that Support Learning" is on example. Select video clips and text versions are included.

Ticket

What is the most powerful thing you learned?

How will you use it?

With whom will you share your new learning?