

RE-ASSESSING ASSESSMENT: IMPLEMENTING CONSTRUCTIVIST TESTING  
WITH NEW AND EXISTING CURRICULUM

by

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## Project Summary

### Research Question at Hand

Quality assessment methods are often a point of contention among teachers. Many have their preferred method, maybe due to perceived student success, ease of grading, or simply tradition. The question then becomes: What makes a test *good*? Should assessments be hyper-objective, black and white questions? Should they make their subjects think critically and apply? Or should they be recall-based to ensure baseline proficiency? In my mind, and in those of my colleagues, we have come to agree that summative assessments should be a way to gauge student understandings and proficiencies.

This pushed me to consider other types of testing. We talked through performance-based assessment, project-based assessment and many others until we settled on written or typed essay tests. The idea behind this is that students would be able to present their knowledge in their own words, focusing in on the areas in which they have a greater understanding. The same subjects, standards and questions will be asked, however they will be presented in a more constructivist setting where student choice can be utilized and their actual knowledge of the content can be examined. This type of test can be easily differentiated for Individual Education Plans (IEPs), 504 Plans, and English Learner (EL) students, asking varying requirements of written responses. In our minds this style of testing will both help us address the knowledge growth of students, but also help the students better relay what they know, creating higher rates of academic success. Thus the question I seek to answer in this research is: *How best can educators implement constructivist assessment in a way that benefits all students?*

## **Intended Audience**

This project is intended for educators who teach all ages. While the examples I give are mainly aimed at secondary education (Grades 9-12) the premises of this research is applicable to everyone. This tool is directed at teachers looking to modify and adjust their assessment styles in a way that employs the ideas of Constructivism. This project was first introduced to the staff within my district, both to troubleshoot any issues and to start gaining feedback. I also used this as a way to collect more information regarding testimonials that could modify the application of the project.

The scope of this project is wide enough to appeal to every teacher who would want it. As discussed by most professionals, it should be noticed that this kind of research and project is *not* generalizable. This is a tool and resource for teachers who are interested in modifying their assessments. By no means is this to prescribe Constructivist testing for all classrooms, everywhere.

## **Description of the Project and Format**

The importance of this testing style cannot be understated, as shown in the literature review. The website is divided into a number of sections. The first explains, with links to relevant research, the rationale behind this Constructivist Assessment style. The second section details example Constructivist Assessments, both from my classroom and from the resources of others who utilize this style of test. The final two portions are split into two, offering step by step instructions that give procedural tips and examples of creating these tests from existing, more traditional assessments, and examples for creating these tests from scratch for new curriculum.

This website was created using Google Slide Sites, a program through the Google Suite that allows users to create, modify and share detailed websites with others. It has been created with input from other instructors as necessary and I have asked permission from educators before featuring their testing styles.

## **The Project Itself**

### **Implementing Constructivist Assessments**

<https://sites.google.com/hamline.edu/constructivistassessments>

This website details the rationale and process for changing assessments from more traditional and linear tests, to more constructivist writing assessments. The various pages on it provide instruction for test creation, along with a number of ways to collaborate with other educators through submitting new assessments and interactions.

## References

Brook, J. G & M. G. (1999). *In search of understanding: the case for constructivist classrooms*, Merrill Prentice Hall.

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