



Dr. Elisabeth Zuska Oroh, M.Hum

RETHINKING ASSESSMENT ***in* ELT:** **Traditional Assessment vs** **Authentic Assessment**



Editor:

Devilito Prasetyo Tatipang, S.Pd., M.Pd

RETHINKING ASSESSMENT IN ELT: TRADITIONAL ASSESSMENT VS AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT

Dr. Elisabeth Zuska Oroh, M.Hum



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Dr. Elisabeth Zuska Oroh, M.Hum

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PREFACE

Language Assessment is one of the vital pedagogical practices to both language teaching and learning that entails a sum of instruments and techniques which are used in classrooms and help teachers accurately define their learners' needs and competencies. The purpose of this textbook is to provide students with knowledge of language assessment particularly traditional and authentic assessment; the characteristics and types of traditional and authentic assessment, advantage and disadvantage of these assessment so that they can arrange language assessment instrument and assess the four language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing and able to carry out language teaching research. This course is given to semester six students who have passed the subject of planning on English Language Teaching (ELT) and strategy on ELT.

Author
Elisabeth Zuska Oroh

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CHAPTER I

PURPOSES OF ASSESSMENT ; TEST, MEASUREMENT, ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Objective:

Students are expected to be able to understand the meaning of test, measurement, assessment and Evaluation and their relationship. This chapter explain the role and function of assessment and the different between assessment and testing. Assessment plays an integral role in identifying the level of effectiveness of a certain process and the result of the learning itself, while testing is formal and often standardized, assessment is based on a collection of information about what students know and what they are able to do.

Testing

Test is a method, a tool or an instrument for measuring students' ability, mastery, or achievement of learning (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010: 3). A test is a method. It is an instrument a set of techniques, procedures, or items that requires performance on the part of the test-taker. The tool or instrument can be in the forms of questions to be answered by students, true-false items or multiple choice items for students to answer. The questions, true-false items, multiple choice items, or any other forms we make, are tools or instruments which are called tests. Tests are always formal because we prepare and construct them, whether they are written or spoken.

CHAPTER II

TRADITIONAL ASSESSMENT

Traditional assessments, as stated by Bailey (1998), are indirect and inauthentic types of testing that are one-shot, speed-based, and norm-referenced. These assessments measure what learners can do at a specific time. The term traditional assessment refers to a paper and pencil- based test used to determine what a student knows and can recall. However, test scores cannot tell anything about the students' progression. Similarly, they cannot tell what difficulties the student had during the test (Dikli, 2003). Traditional or conventional assessment is limited to standardized paper-and-pencil/pen tests, which emphasize objective measurement (Koh, 2017). These standardized assessments employ closed-ended item formats, such as multiple choice, matching, essays, short-answer questions, or true/false. The use of these item formats is thought to increase the efficiency of test administration, scoring objectivity, test score reliability, and cost effectiveness as machines are used for scoring; thus, large-scale administration of test items is possible. However, it is widely recognized that traditional testing limits the assessment of higher-order thinking skills and other essential 21st-century competencies due to the nature of the item format (Koh 2017). Bailey (1999) also mentions that there is no feedback provided to students in this type of assessment. Similarly, Simonson et al. (2000) state that traditional or conventional assessments focus on learners' ability to memorize and recall, which are in the lower level of Bloom's Taxonomy from a psychometric perspective, rigorous and higher-level learning outcomes, such as critical thinking.

Traditional assessment methods are the tests, quizzes, and written assignments that most of us are pretty familiar with. They're designed to measure a student's knowledge, skills, and abilities in a structured environment. One key feature of traditional assessments is that they're

CHAPTER III

TRADITIONAL ASSESSMENT VS ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT

There has been a movement from traditional assessment toward alternative assessments. Alternative assessment started being used as a means for educational reform due to the increasing awareness of the influence of testing on curriculum and instruction (Dietel, Herman, and Knuth, 1991). Similarly, Reeves stated that traditional assessment, which is generally called testing, is challenged by alternative assessment approaches (2000, p. 103). According to Bailey (1998), traditional assessments are indirect and inauthentic. She also adds that traditional assessment is standardized and for that reason, they are one-shot, speed-based, and norm-referenced. Law and Eckes (1995) To underline the same issue and state that traditional assessments are single-occasion tests. That is, they measure what learners can do at a particular time. However, test scores cannot tell about the progression of child. Similarly, they cannot tell what particular difficulties the students had during the test. Bailey (1998) also mentions that there is no feedback provided to learners in this type of assessment. The projects are mainly individualized and the assessment procedure is decontextualized. Law and Eckes (1995) point out most standardized tests assess only the lower-order thinking skills of the learner. Similarly, Smaldino et al. (2000) state that traditional assessment often focus on learner's ability of memorization and recall, which are lower level of cognition skills. Additionally, traditional assessment tools require learners to display their knowledge in a predetermined way (Brualdi, 1996). Alternative assessments, on the other hand, assess higher-order thinking skills. Students have the opportunity to demonstrate what they learned. This type of assessment tools focus on the growth and the performance of the student. That

CHAPTER IV

AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT

4.1 AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT

There might not be a very clear cut explanation as to which assessments are traditional or alternative. Actually, both can serve different purposes of assessment. However, there are some features that can be used to identify traditional assessment tools. First, a traditional assessment tool is likely to be considered a standardized test with decontextualized test items. Second, the focus is on discrete answers. Third, it tends to be a summative test which is oriented towards the product. Finally, it evaluates non-interactive performance, so it fosters extrinsic motivation (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010, p. 18). Examples of traditional assessment types are true-false, matching, and multiple-choice formats.

Alternative assessment can be continuous long-term assessment with contextualized communicative tasks. In addition, it encourages open-ended, creative answers. It is considered a formative assessment which is oriented towards the process. Finally, it involves inter-active performance, so it fosters intrinsic motivation.

Alternative types of assessment can present new ways of motivating and inspiring students to learn as well as evaluating students' language ability on a basis of authenticity in their use of language. Reeves (2000, as cited in Nasab, 2015) proposed two approaches in alternative assessments which are performance assessment and portfolio assessment. These categories are similar to the types of assessment mentioned by Brown & Hudson, 1998. The two important features of performance assessments are performance and authenticity. The concept of authenticity encourages

CHAPTER V

AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT IN ASSESSING LISTENING

Assessing listening is the process of assessing the spoken text through the auditory insight. It requires the ability to recognize the spoken input with the auditory capacity and the knowledge of spoken language. The task and the activities are served in six listening types (reactive, intensive, selective, responsive, extensive and interactive listening) (Rohaniyah,2021).

According to Clark & Clark (1977), the following happens when we listen :

- 1) Process the “raw speech” (the actual phrases, clauses, etc)
- 2) determine the type of speech (conversation, speech, etc)
- 3) infer the objective of the speaker (to persuade, request, etc)
- 4) recall schemata (own background knowledge)
- 5) assign literal meaning to utterance
- 6) assign intended meaning to utterance
- 7) determine whether information should be retained in short term or long term memory.
- 8) Delete the form in which the message was received.

Furthermore, Brown (2004) stated that designing appropriate assessment tasks in listening begins with the specification of objectives, or criteria. Those objectives may be classified in terms -of several types of listening performance and the following processes flash through your brain:

- 1) You recognize speech sounds and hold ~ temporary "imprint" of them in short-term memory.
- 2) You simultaneously determine the type of speech event (monologue, interpersonal dialogue, transactional dialogue) that is being processed

CHAPTER VI

AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT IN ASSESSING SPEAKING

This chapter is intended to provide students with ability to assess speaking.

In assessing students' speaking skills there are a number of factors need to be considered. These include considering the test taker and their needs, the kind of information you want to know about their speaking skills and the most appropriate ways to elicit and assess these skills so that test is appropriate and accurately scored. Speaking tasks and their evaluation criteria should be designed based on the analysis of the students' needs and the test's aims. To choose the most appropriate tasks for their tests, exam developers should clearly understand what the test scores will be used for and what type of information the test takers need. The speaking assessment tasks must also be authentic (i.e., they should involve realistic and genuine communicative interactions) and contextualized (i.e., as "normal" conversations do not occur in a vacuum, the exam tasks should describe the conversational contexts in as much detail as possible) (Hatipoglu, 2021)

As quoted in British Council Introducing Language Assessment Answer Key -Assessing Speaking, we should know why we communicate with others, and What kind of things we are trying to achieve. For example: We communicate with others for a range of reasons: it could be interactional or transactional. Interactional communication is for social purposes (exchange of news or catching up). In transactional communication, the conversation has an aim, for instance buying something or asking about specific information. There are also presentations and monologues, which have functional purposes, for example, to persuade or complain

CHAPTER VII

AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT IN ASSESSING READING

Authentic assessment is an assessment to assess students about their mastery; to perform their mastery about the subjects of learning. Authentic Assessment is “An assignment given to students designed to assess their ability to apply standard-driven knowledge and skills to real-world challenges¹³”. Further, authentic assessment¹⁴ stated as the assessment tasks that resemble reading and writing in the real world and in school. Based on Mueller authentic assessment is “a form of assessment in which students are asked to perform realworld tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills”. Its aim is to assess many different kinds of literacy abilities in contexts that closely resemble actual situations in which those abilities are used.

Further, there are also three kinds of assessment in classroom assessment based on the learning oriented assessment according to James E Purpura⁷ ; they are alternative assessment, authentic assessment and performance assessment. Alternative assessment “Emphasizes an alternative to and rejection of selected-response, timed and one-shot approaches to assessment, whether they occur in large-scale or classroom assessment contexts”. Further, Alternative assessment encourages assessments in which students are asked to perform, create, produce or do meaningful tasks that both tap into higher-level thinking (e.g., problem-solving) and have real-world implications (Herman et al., 1992) from James Purpura⁸ . Alternative assessments are scored by humans, not machines. Similar to alternative assessment, authentic assessment stresses “measurement practices which engage students” knowledge and skills

EXERCISES

1. Divide the basic types of listening among groups or pairs, one type for each. Look at the sample assessment techniques provided and evaluate them according the five principles (practicality, reliability, validity [face and content], authenticity, and washback). Present your critique to the rest of the class.
2. Construct a listening cloze test for two-word verbs, verb tenses, prepositions, transition words, articles, and/or other grammatical categories.

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CHAPTER

TRADITIONAL VERSUS AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT

<https://abdao.wordpress.com/2015/07/18/traditional-vs-authentic-assessment/>

Traditional assessments refer to conventional methods of testing, usually standardized and use pen and paper with multiple-choice, true or false or matching type test items.

Authentic assessments refer to assessments wherein students are asked to perform real-world tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of what they have learned.

Traditional Assessment	Authentic Assessment
• Purpose: to evaluate if the students have learned the content; to determine whether or not the students are successful in acquiring knowledge; to ascribe a grade for them; to rank and compare them against standards or other learners	• Purpose: to measure students' proficiency by asking them to perform real life-tasks; to provide students many avenues to learn and demonstrate best what they have learned; to guide instruction; to provide feedback and help students manage their own learning; to also evaluate students' competency
• Provides teachers a snapshot of what the students know	• Provides teachers a more complete picture of what the students know and what they can do with what they know
• Measures students' knowledge of the content	• Measures students' ability to apply knowledge of the

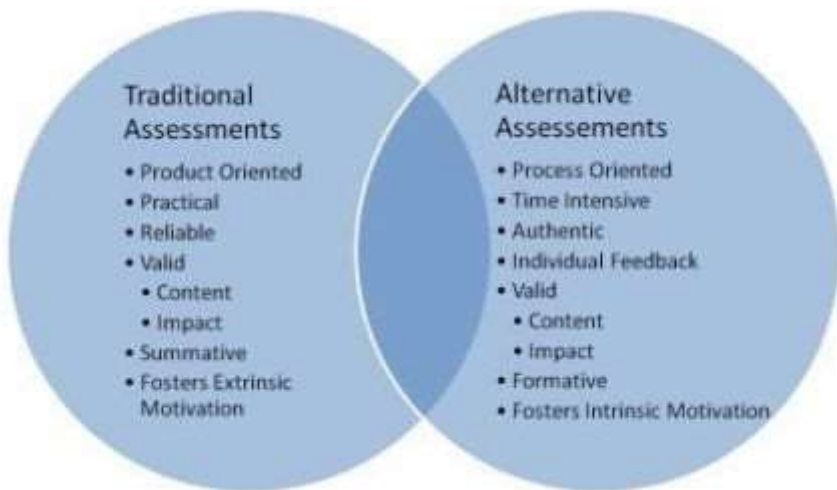
content in real life situations; ability to use/apply what they have learned in meaningful ways	
• Requires students to demonstrate knowledge by selecting a response/giving correct answers; usually tests students' proficiency through paper and pencil tests • Students are asked to choose an answer from a set of questions (True or False; multiple choice) to test knowledge of what has been taught.	• Requires students to demonstrate proficiency by performing relevant tasks showing application of what has been learned
• Provides indirect evidence of learning	• Provides direct evidence of learning/competency; direct demonstration of knowledge and skills by performing relevant tasks
• Requires students to practice cognitive ability to recall/recognize/reconstruct body of knowledge that has been taught	• Provides opportunities for students to construct meaning/new knowledge out of what has been taught
• Tests and strengthens the students' ability to recall/recognize and comprehend content, but does	• Tests and strengthens the students' ability to reason and analyze, synthesize, and apply knowledge acquired; Students'

not reveal the students' true progress of what they can do with the knowledge they acquired. Only the students' lower level of thinking skills, (knowledge and comprehension), are tapped.	higher level of cognitive skills (from knowledge and comprehension to analysis, synthesis, application, and evaluation) are tapped in multiple ways.
• Hides the test	• Teaches the test
• Teachers serve as evaluators and students as the evaluatees: teacher-structured	• Involves and engages the students in the teaching, learning and assessment process: student structured
• Assessment is separated from teaching and learning. Test usually comes after instruction to evaluate if the students have successfully learned the content.	• Assessment is integrated with instruction. Assessment activities happen all throughout instruction to help students improve their learning and help teachers improve their teaching.
• Provides limited ways for students to demonstrate what they have learned	• Provides multiple avenues for students to demonstrate best what they have learned
• Rigid and fixed	• Flexible and provides multiple acceptable ways of constructing products or performance as evidence of learning

Standardized; valid and reliable	Needs well defined criteria/rubrics and standards to achieve reliability and validity
Curriculum drives assessment.	Assessment drives curriculum and instruction.

•

Examples: - True or False; multiple choice tests - standardized tests - achievement tests - intelligence tests - aptitude tests	Examples: - demonstrations - hands-on experiments - computer simulations - portfolios - projects - multi-media presentations - role plays - recitals - stage plays - exhibits
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Authentic Assessment	Low-Impact / Traditional Assessment
Requires students to <i>do</i> something to demonstrate knowledge skills	Requires students to respond to a question to demonstrate knowledge and skills.
Fosters active learning	Fosters passive learning
Requires students to contextualize and apply what they have learned	Asks students about what they have learned out of context and tends to encourage rote memorization
Achieves deep learning, which is more likely to transform students' views and be remembered	Achieves shallow learning that is less likely to be retained over long periods of time
Inspires students to make connections between course content and the real-world	Generally keeps learning confined to a book or other academic context

http://www.google.com.ph/url?sa=i&source=imgres&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CAgQjRwwAGoVChMI7K7d3v_uxgIVQyymCh0ARA1K&url=http%3A%2F%2Feng701sfsu.wordpress.com%2F&ei=P6-vVayTMcPYmAWAiLXQBA&psig=AFQjCNHslcUS5Qn6kq__3PjONYd9_6ZZvg&ust=1437663423985155

Advantages of Traditional Assessment Over Authentic Assessment:

Traditional assessments do have advantages over authentic assessments:

Traditional Assessment	Authentic Assessment
<u>Advantages:</u>	<u>Disadvantages:</u>
• Easy to score; Teachers can evaluate students more quickly and easily.	• Harder to evaluate
• Less time and easier to prepare; easy to administer	• Time consuming; labor intensive • Sometimes, time and effort spent exceed the benefits.
• Objective, reliable and valid	• Susceptible to unfairness, subjectivity, lacking objectivity, reliability, and validity if not properly guided by well-defined/clear criteria or rubrics/standards
• Economical	• Less economical

Advantages of Authentic Assessment Over Traditional Assessment

On the other hand, here are the **advantages of authentic assessment over the traditional assessment:**

Traditional Assessment	Authentic Assessment
<u>Disadvantages:</u>	<u>Advantages:</u>
Provides teachers with just a snapshot of what the students have truly learned	Provides teachers with the true picture of how and where their students are in their learning; gives more information about their students' strengths, weaknesses, needs and preferences that aid them in adjusting instruction towards enhanced teaching and learning
Provides students limited options to demonstrate what they have learned, usually limited to pencil and paper tests	Provides students many alternatives/ways to demonstrate best what they have learned; offers a wide array of interesting and challenging assessment activities
Assessment is separate from instruction.	Assessment is integrated with instruction.
Reveals and strengthens only the students' low level cognitive skills: knowledge and comprehension	Reveals and enriches the students' high level cognitive skills: from knowledge and comprehension to analysis, synthesis, application and evaluation

Assesses only the lower level thinking/cognitive skills: focuses only on the students' ability to memorize and recall information	Enhances students' ability to apply skills and knowledge to real life situations; taps high order cognitive and problem solving skills
Hides the test	Teaches the test
Teacher-structured: teachers direct and act as evaluators; students merely answer the assessment tool.	Student-structured: students are more engaged in their learning; assessment results guide instruction
3) Involves students working alone; promotes competitiveness	Oftentimes involves students working in groups hence promotes team work, collaborative and interpersonal skills
Invokes feelings of anxiety detrimental to learning	Reduces anxiety and creates a more relaxed happy atmosphere that boosts learning
Time is fixed and limited; students are time-pressured to finish the test.	Time is flexible.
4) Focuses on one form of intelligence	- Focuses on the growth of the learner; - Learners express their understanding of the learning

content using their preferred multiple forms of intelligences.

- Provides parents and community with more observable products, proofs of the students' learning which motivate them to support their kids' learning more

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RETHINKING ASSESSMENT in ELT:

Traditional Assessment vs Authentic Assessment

"Rethinking Assessment in ELT: Traditional Assessment vs Authentic Assessment" offers a comprehensive exploration of assessment paradigms in English Language Teaching. Combining theory, practice, and critical comparison, this book invites readers to gain an in-depth understanding of the fundamental differences between traditional and authentic assessment, while evaluating their relevance in today's evolving language learning contexts. Beginning with clear definitions and purposes of assessment, the book guides readers through the core concepts of assessment and testing before delving into the various types and characteristics of traditional assessment both in listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. It then shifts focus to authentic assessment, which has gained increasing attention in 21st-century education, exploring its types, distinctive features, and applications in assessing the four language skills.

The discussion culminates in a critical comparison between traditional and authentic assessment, enabling readers teachers, researchers, and educators to determine the most suitable approach for measuring learners' language abilities. This book does not merely present concepts; it inspires readers to re-evaluate current assessment practices, ensuring they are more relevant, meaningful, and aligned with modern language education demands. This work is an essential resource for students, lecturers, researchers, and ELT practitioners seeking to broaden their understanding of language assessment, develop effective evaluation strategies, and achieve more holistic and sustainable learning outcomes.



IKAPI

CV. Tahta Media Group
Surakarta, Jawa Tengah
Web : www.tahtamedia.com
Ig : [tahtamedia](https://www.instagram.com/tahtamedia)
Telp/WA : +62 896-5427-3996

