


Assessing Through Oral Assessment: Seeing What the Students Really Know



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Digging Deeper - “I know they know more...”

“An Investigation of Why Students Do Not Respond to Questions,”
National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1999.

- Almost all omitted questions were short or extended constructed-response questions.
- Some students were able to answer the question correctly when the question was rephrased.
- Many students would have been able to get some credit on the question if they had attempted to write something down, but they were reluctant to “guess” on open-ended questions...

Digging Deeper

“I know they know more...”

No Response (Omit Rates)

- Motivation
- Missed Questions
- Time
- Lack of Knowledge/Understanding

Other Factors:

Test-Taking Strategy

Testing Conditions

Assessment Format

Your Students



High Achiever

Typically does not leave questions unanswered while responding for accuracy



Unsure and/or Unclear

May know the correct answer but fails to respond due to uncertain over a specific word or phrase, often resulting in confusion over what is being asked



Unmotivated

Often does not leave questions unanswered, however, their responses are often guesses

WHY ORAL ASSESSMENTS?

Knowing - Understanding - Applying

“Teaching for understanding is a deeper type of learning. It involves critical thinking, making personal connections, and being able to have discussions and make arguments about the information.”

~Dale Carnegie

WHY ORAL ASSESSMENTS?

Laura Stoutenburg, “Oral Assessments: Benefits, Drawbacks, and Considerations,” *Teaching and Learning Conestoga*, July 13, 2023.

1. Functions Across All Subject Areas
2. Requires Higher Order Thinking
3. Leads to Better Learning Outcomes
4. Alters Study Methods
5. Develops Communication Skills
6. Increases in Academic Integrity
7. Provides Alternative Means of Expression



Practical Steps



Practical Steps

1. How to Create the Test



Practical Steps:

1. How to Create the Test

Grammar - Facts; Specific Details

Logic - Connecting the Details

Rhetoric - Persuasively Expressing
Original Ideas in relation to
Assessed Content



Practical Steps:

1. How to Create the Test

Oral Assessment (Units 2-4)

Grammar:

1. What are the two major rivers around which Mesopotamian civilization developed? (Tigris and Euphrates)
2. Who developed a series of laws in Mesopotamia as a way to bring about a sense of order and in what specific culture? (Hammurabi, Old Babylonian King)
3. Define ethical monotheism? (the belief that there is only one god and that god is the source of one's standard for morality)
4. What is the name of the two major written documents of the Israelites (one biblical; one extra-biblical)? (Torah and Talmud)
5. What are the natural borders that allowed ancient Egypt to develop with less outside interference? (Mediterranean to the North; Sahara Desert to the West; Cataracts to the South; Red Sea to the East)
6. What structure was designed as a tomb for the Pharaoh? (Pyramid)

Logic:

1. What role does geography play on the development of Mesopotamia and Egypt?
 - a. Mesopotamia
 - i. Fertile Crescent - Water (is Life) - Travel in specific areas
 - ii. Uncontrollable flooding - cultures come and go more frequent (less stable)
 1. Relationship between nature and gods (less relational and gracious; more vindictive and harsh)
 - iii. Two major civilizations - Assyria (Nineveh) and Babylon centered around these two rivers (Assyria - Tigris; Babylon - Euphrates)
 - b. Egypt
 - i. All civilization located within miles of the River
 - ii. Types of Jobs - relate to the river and its usefulness
 - iii. Form of transportation (boats) / used for communication
2. What is one of the major central ideas shaping Israel?
 - a. Ethical Monotheism - Yahweh; one authority (the Shema)
 - b. Image of God - Value; taking care of oppressed, helpless

Rhetoric:

1. In what ways can the value and/or devaluation of humanity be seen in the civilizations of Mesopotamia, Israel, and Egypt?
 - a. Humanity with various values (Mesopotamia - Hammurabi's Code 3 classes)
 - b. Human life beyond this present day and age (Egypt - Emphasis on the afterlife; Book of the Dead)
 - c. Humanity as Equals, all possessing inherent value (Israel - Image of God; Gen 1:27; Evidenced in their laws and practices)
 - d. Relationship between God and man
 - i. Mesopotamia - people live in fear of the gods; seen as distant and unconcerned with the people, or harsh and petty in their treatment
 - ii. Israel - people live in submission to Yahweh; relationship between God and HIS people, i.e. Israel; Ethical guidance provided in 10 commandments, unpacked further by rabbis in the Talmud
 - iii. Egypt - God-man like figures (heads of animals yet with human bodies; the Pharaoh seen as mediator, becoming a god upon his/her death; gods are seen as guides into the life to come, i.e. Anubis - jackal-headed god)

Grammar Questions:

1. What two main groups made up the Roman Republic? (Patricians/PATS and Plebeians/PLEBS)
2. Which brothers were murdered roughly a decade apart for trying to bring about reforms that provided more benefit to the small farmers and tradesmen of Rome? (Gracchi Bros)
3. Explain what is meant by the phrase "Crossing the Rubicon"? (Julius Caesar - no turning back now!)
4. What significant event occurred on March 15th, 44 B.C.? (Ides of March)
5. Who was the mythical founder of Rome? (Romulus)
6. What series of wars eventually lead to the rise of Rome as the dominant force throughout the Mediterranean? (Punic Wars)
7. What is the term given to the roughly 250 years of Roman peace and stability? (Pax Romana)
8. What dynasty are the following three emperors a part of: Vespasian, Titus, Domitian? (Flavian Dynasty)
9. What is distinct about the 5 Good Emperors from all previous emperors of Rome? (Not chosen for familiar connections; rather, chosen by predecessor for their character)
10. Which emperor was known for famously engaging in over 1,000 gladiatorial fights? (Commodus)
11. What organizational structure is associated with the reign of Diocletian? (Tetrarchy)
12. What figure is responsible for the sack of Rome in 410 A.D.? (Alaric I, Visigoths)
13. In addition to Jesus, what other major individual provided the church with a majority of the written scriptures? (Paul)
14. Who were the Christian 'heroes' within the Early Church? (Martyrs)
15. What vision did Constantine have before the Battle of Milvian Bridge? (Chi-Rho)
16. What event provided a freedom to Christianity within the Roman Empire not previously experienced? (Edict of Milan, 313)
17. What is the term given for "right belief" within Christianity? (Orthodoxy)
18. What is the name of the version of Greek that the New Testament is written in? (Koine)

Logic Questions:

1. Republic - Explain what is meant by the abbreviation "SPQR" within Rome. What led to its eventual downfall?
 - a. *Senatus Populusque Romanus* - The Senate and the People
 - i. Senate - Patricians (Optimates)
 - ii. People - Plebeians (Populares)
 - b. Downfall - Killing those who disagree, rather than allowing the two to work together (easier, but goes against the idea of republic); Feeling power being challenged (leads to irrational action)
 - i. Gracchi Bros / Marius and Sulla
 1. Reform Efforts
 2. Taking Power by Force
 - ii. Optimates and Populares - Threat on Power...Tightening Grip (control)
2. Empire - Explain the impact of the Pax Romana. How can it still be felt today?
3. Christianity - Explain what is meant by the "3 Cs" discussed in class. What role did they play in the development of Christianity in the West?

Rhetoric Question:

1. Explain how we can see precedent being set with the Roman World?
 - a. Killing for Power
 - i. Gracchi Bros, Marius/Sulla, Julius Caesar/Brutus, Barrack Emperors, Constantine
 - ii. Rather than following an established order, one takes matters into his/her own hands - eventually this is seen as the only way to bring about change
 - b. Christian Emperors - Relationship between Church and State
 - i. Constantine, Theodosius, Charlemagne
 - ii. When the leader is on board, many will follow, though not always for the right reasons
 - iii. What should be the appropriate relationship?

Practical Steps

1. How to Create the Test
2. How to Communicate Expectations



Practical Steps:

2. How to Communicate Expectations

UNITS 2-4

Ancient Near Eastern Civilizations:
Mesopotamia, Israel, and Egypt

Questions to Consider

1. What are the two major rivers around which the Mesopotamian civilization developed?
2. Who developed a series of laws in Mesopotamia as a way to bring about a sense of order and in what specific culture?
3. What work of literature assists in our understanding of early Mesopotamian culture, religion, and anthropology?
4. Define ethical monotheism?
5. What is the name of the two major written documents of the Israelites (one biblical; one extra-biblical)?
6. Name the two conquering civilizations of the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel (identify which one conquered who).
7. What Persian leader is venerated by the Israelites for offering their liberation following the conquering of Babylon?
8. What are the natural borders that allowed ancient Egypt to develop with less outside interference?
9. What structure was designed as a tomb for the Pharaoh?
10. Which Egyptian pharaoh made an attempt to shift the religious focus onto one god?

Comparisons and Contrasts:

- Describe how the geography of each civilization influenced its individual development
- Describe the central features of each civilization
- Describe the way in which each civilization either values or devalues humanity

Practical Steps

1. How to Create the Test
2. How to Communicate Expectations
3. How to Help Students Prepare



Practical Steps

1. How to Create the Test
2. How to Communicate Expectations
3. How to Help Students Prepare
4. How to Conduct the Assessment



Practical Steps:

4. How to Conduct the Assessment

Randomness of Questioning

Practical Steps:

4. How to Conduct the Assessment

Randomness of Questioning
Developing a Rubric

Grammar (10)	Logic (10)	Rhetoric (5)
Student's answer thoroughly responds to the question(s) being asked, providing specific details that are successful in supporting their position . (9-10)	Student's answer makes thorough connections regularly across the scope of history covered throughout class. (9-10)	Student's answer demonstrates a mastery of the bigger ideas and themes discussed in the class. (5)
Student's response is good , <i>often supported</i> by specific details, but lacking complete clarity of thought . (7-8)	Students accurately and adequately make historical connections, while lacking thoroughness and scope . (7-8)	Students are close to approaching mastery of rhetoric level engagement. (4)
The Student explains their answer completely , though they lack understanding and clarity on some points. (5-6)	Their answer makes a connection generally , although direct and clear connections are difficult to identify . (5-6)	Students can explain how specific data relates to the concepts and ideas discussed through the course, though exactness of thought may be insufficient . (3)
The answer provided by the student is <u>either</u> Incomplete or Inaccurate . This response either lacks a complete understanding of the question and/or material or presents information that is not correct. (3-4)	Historical Connections made by students are unclear , though attempts are made. (3-4)	Students <u>attempts to explain</u> big ideas, however, the explanation is inaccurate . (2)
The answer provided is BOTH Incomplete and Inaccurate . This response lacks a complete understanding of the information AND is wrong. (1-2)	Students <u>fails</u> to make connections with other aspects of history. (1-2)	Students fail to explain ideas and concepts throughout their answers. (1)
Notes:	Notes:	Notes:

Practical Steps:

4. How to Conduct the Assessment

Randomness of Questioning

Developing a Rubric

Access to Answer Key



Practical Steps:

4. How to Conduct the Assessment

Randomness of Questioning

Developing a Rubric

Access to Answer Key

Consideration of Setup / Format

Practical Steps:

4. How to Conduct the Assessment

Randomness of Questioning

Developing a Rubric

Access to Answer Key

Consideration of Setup / Format

Time Allotment

Practical Steps

1. How to Create the Test
2. How to Communicate Expectations
3. How to Help Students Prepare
4. How to Conduct the Assessment
5. How to Follow Up



An Unexpected Outcome:

Expect MORE Conversations

Questions



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