

# Instructor Guide for Quality Test Construction

Topic Area: Assessment

Module: Quality Test Construction

Case Study: Assessing Student Vocabulary in a Middle School Literature Course

Summary: Yvonne Alden was pleased with her transition to teaching in a middle school setting. She had spent the previous seven years at an elementary school, and it was time for a change. Two of her teaching partners had made the jump a year before and had pleaded with her to join them. The eighth graders she now taught were so much different than her third grade students, and she was surprised by how much fun she was having. She was currently in the midst of a unit of the Holocaust that she had planned with her language arts/social studies team. She enjoyed the teaching aspect of the unit but was struggling with how to assess student learning.

Assessment was the biggest obstacle she had encountered as a result of her building transition. She was a natural when it came to planning and delivering instruction, as well as interacting with kids. Testing was a completely different topic. She realized the middle school importance of preparing tests, giving tests, grading tests, reviewing tests. It went on and on. The focus at the elementary level had been on instruction and less formal evaluation tools such as teacher observation, checklists, and hands-on projects. Middle school hinged on a whole new view. Intertwining that new world view with the students, especially those with special needs, was a definite challenge.

Characters and Roles:

- Yvonne Alden, Eighth Grade Teacher
- Becca, Eighth Grader with Asperger's Syndrome
- Mark Shalaman, Yvonne's Mentor and Seventh Grade Language Arts Teacher

Tools:

- Multiple Choice Questions
- Bloom's Taxonomy
- Matching Items
- Multiple Choice Items
- Testwiseness and Guessing

Artifacts:

- List of Vocabulary Words for *Gentlehands* by M.E. Kerr
- Yvonne and Mark's Initial Brainstorming List
- Original Test
- Audiotape of Conversation between Mark and Yvonne
- Final Test

Glossary Terms:

- Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
- Open-Ended Questions
- Multiple-Choice Questions
- Matching Items
- Bloom's Taxonomy
- Resource Teacher

Web Sites:

- [www.nichey.org](http://www.nichey.org)

Discussion Points:

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of working with a cross-curricular team in middle school?
- What should an English teacher take into consideration when choosing a book for an entire class to read?
- What are the advantages of new teachers having a mentor teacher?
- What are the pros and cons of creating your own tests as opposed to using ones provided with your textbooks?

Activities:

- Create an assessment for something you are teaching.
- Compare and contrast the teaching models of departmentalization and integration. Debate the value of each.
- Invite a guest speaker to discuss Asperger's Syndrome and working with students who have special needs related to it.

Reflective Question: Scene 5, Question 2 - Yvonne reflected upon her learning during this process. What suggestions would you offer Yvonne so that she could remember these suggestions? Do you have any tools that help you record new professional knowledge? *There are several things teachers can do to remember professional tips they learn during collaboration, meetings, workshops, conferences, etc. First of all, teachers should be encouraged to keep a professional journal where they regularly reflect on their instructional strategies, student learning, assessments, professional development, etc. Some educators regularly blog their reflections on the computer. When educators receive printed information, they should create files, so they can access it when needed. Finally, post-it notes provide a means for teachers to record things they want to remember in teachers' editions of textbooks and other books.*

Connections:

- Topic Area: Assessment; Module: Grading
- Topic Area: Assessment; Module: Test Accommodations and Modifications
- Topic Area: Instruction; Module: Reading Comprehension