
How can testing be more inclusive and authentic?

Webinar handout

by Paula Asad

In this practical webinar, we reimaged traditional testing and explore creative strategies to help learners authentically demonstrate their learning. Below are inclusive practices I learned from one of my learners.

1. Provide multiple means of engagement

This is the WHY of learning. When learners understand the purpose behind what they are doing, they feel more motivated and connected to the task.

2. Provide multiple means of representation

This is the WHAT of learning. By presenting content in different ways, we make sure all students can access and understand the material.

3. Provide multiple means of expression

This is the HOW of learning. Learners should have different options to demonstrate what they know and what they can do.

4. Provide multiple opportunities for practice

Before any summative test, give learners plenty of low-stakes practice: mock tests, quizzes, games, and review activities. These help consolidate learning and offer feedback that guides improvement before it “really counts.”

5. Offer one-on-one conferencing

A student–teacher conference is a valuable space to reflect together on progress. It allows students to share their challenges and achievements, while teachers provide personalized feedback and next steps. In larger classes, conferences can also be held in small groups, bringing together students with similar strengths and areas for growth.

Think outside the test

Let's explore creative ways to test our learners' learning—so every learner has a chance to succeed. This doesn't mean 'traditional tests' have no place in the classroom. They do. But they're just one tool in our assessment toolkit, not the only one.

What follows are ideas that I use with my (primary/secondary/level, etc) learners to assess them.

Board Games

We can wrap up a unit by asking learners to design their own board games around the topics they've just learned. My top time-saving tip is to search online for 'board game template.

Quizzes

Quick quizzes can be used for low-stakes formative assessment, pre-test practice, or even as a way for students to track their own progress.

Escape Rooms

Turn assessment into an adventure. Learners are "locked" in a space (real or digital) and solve puzzles based on the unit's content to "escape."

Mini PechaKucha Presentations

A dynamic format for presentations: 10 slides × 15 seconds each (2.5 minutes total). Keeps presentations concise, engaging, and learner-focused.

Drama

Drama-based assessment allows students to demonstrate knowledge through role-play, skits, or performances—showcasing creativity and authentic communication skills. Watch recordings of past webinars that talk about drama and stories here:

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/news-and-events/webinars/webinars-teachers/stories-classroom-mini-event>

Podcasts

A podcast is a recorded audio program that learners can create and share with a real audience. Use the recorder on a mobile phone to make a simple podcast.

Projects

Project-Based Learning (PBL) puts a meaningful question or challenge at the centre. Projects integrate multiple skills and provide a holistic, authentic way to assess understanding. Read more about this here: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/community/magazine/how-can-i-empower-learners-through-project-based-learning-approach>

A recording of Paula's webinar can be watched here: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/news-and-events/webinars/webinars-teachers/inclusive-assessment-webinars>

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