Designing Multi-Domain Assessment Tasks

Purpose:
To take the second step in a three-step process of creating multi-domain assessment tasks: designing the assessment task itself.

Process for Creating Multi-Domain Assessment Tasks

This activity is the second in the process of creating multi-domain assessment tasks to assess students’ achievement against the Standards. The first activity in this sequence (Activity 2-3) helped you to use the Standards to develop the driving learning goals for the assessment task. A wide variety of assessment tasks will be needed to assess students’ achievement against the Standards. Some of these should assess across domains and enable students to work at different levels. Useful tasks for this are often open-entry, open-ended, authentic or productive (see Activity 2-1B) with a focus on deep understanding of big ideas. These multi-domain assessment tasks are themselves vehicles for powerful learning. This activity helps you to design such a multi-domain, multi level task consistent with the goals you developed in Activity 2-3. These special tasks are major pieces of work for students that you might use occasionally, perhaps once a term. Because this is a complex and substantial task type, requiring considerable time investment from students, it is important to spend enough time to get it as right as you can, before giving it to your students. Many of your assessment activities may well be of more familiar and simpler types. They are also an important part of assessment OF learning, but they are not the focus of this activity. The third activity in the series (Activity 2-5) assists you in creating the rubrics for judging the quality of the students’ performance on the multi-domain assessment tasks you design. (Activity 2-4B will help you improve the quality of conventional written tests and quizzes.)

What you need:
- teams of teachers who are planning a unit of work together, based around big ideas from the Victorian Essential Learning Standards
- your learning goals for this multi-domain assessment task developed in Activity 2-3
- a copy of pages 1 to 4 (back-to-back & stapled) for each teacher
- a copy of pages 5 & 6 (enlarged 140% to A3 size) for each planning group
- several sheets of blank A3 paper for each planning group.

Step 1:
- READ pages 3 and 4, the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about how to design multi-domain assessment tasks. Use those ideas to help you through this activity.

Step 2:
- WRITE your learning goals in the first column on page 5: “Planning a Multi-Domain Assessment Task”. CHECK: Are they genuinely multi-domain goals? Are they clear?
Step 3:
• DEVELOP the key criteria that will be used to judge the quality of student achievement of these goals. In one sense we are now working backwards. We know where we want the students to be (achieving the goals) and now we need to translate this into criteria that can be used to judge the quality of their performances, their understandings or their achievements.
• In developing the criteria, you need to ask: "what am I looking for?" Although there are two rows for each learning goal in the Table on page 5, there is no correct number of criteria per goal. Some may have one, others three.
• It may take you some time to reach agreement on clear criteria. Although you will write the task between Step 4 and Step 6, in reality we often have an idea of a task in mind and this helps us think about the criteria. We often move back and forward between writing the task and the criteria, refining each.
• RECORD your criteria in the middle column on page 5.

Step 4:
• BRAINSTORM how students might show you that they can meet the criteria. What will they need to be able to do, say, write, make? See Activity 2-2A (Traffic Lighting Learning Evidence). Could you use those ideas about ways of seeking evidence of learning?
• COMPLETE the final column on page 5: “Evidence of Learning” by selecting from your brainstorm, ways that students might show you that they can meet the Standards at particular (or various) levels.

Step 5:
• USE the “Multi-Domain Assessment Flowchart” (page 6) to map the pathway that students will take in completing the assessment task. (You may give it to them.)
• First FILL IN the description at the top (i.e. what you will tell the students they are to do). COMPLETE the flowchart by asking: “What exactly do students have to do in order to show evidence of their learning?” You could USE THE CONVENTIONS of:
  - a dotted box for those steps that need to be taken along the way
  - thinking clouds for tips and reminders for students (and for yourself)
  (There isn’t a right number of steps or clouds to complete - use whatever is needed.)
  - a solid box to describe to students exactly what will be assessed (or judged).

Step 6:
CREATE an engaging draft version of your assessment task that could be distributed to students (on paper or via the intra-net). You could use Clip-Art, presentation software, etc. to create this student version of your assessment task.

Step 7:
KEEP your assessment task flowchart and the draft format for students for Activity 2-5 where you will work on creating a rubric to accompany it.
Designing Multi-Domain Assessment Tasks
Frequently Asked Questions

1. What sort of tasks are multi-domain assessment tasks?
These tasks are often “performance” assessment and/or “portfolio” assessment tasks. They may also be problem-based learning tasks or involve the production of an exhibition or community event.

a) In performance assessment students either do something in front of an audience (often the whole class, but sometimes just the teacher) or make a product (such as a piece of artwork, a device that solves a problem, a working model, etc). There are, of course, examples where both occur, such as when a student, or group of students, creates an original piece of music, or a poem, and also performs it for the class and the teacher. In the process of preparing for the performance, or producing the product, students engage in intellectual challenges, learn to work in new ways, perhaps using skills and tools (such as aspects of ICT) that are new to them.

b) In portfolio assessment, students make selections of their work over a period of time to demonstrate their learning of particular aspects that are the focus of the work. They are not collections of everything the student has done, but selections. Portfolios are usually required to match the parameters that the teacher has prescribed, such as: at least two pieces that show progression or improvement over time; at least one piece of … There are some situations where the portfolio is also an example of performance assessment, such as when students select a set of writing tasks or artwork, that demonstrate their skills across a range of styles.

2. What distinguishing features do these multi-domain tasks have?

a) These tasks incorporate Standards from more than one domain.
They require the demonstration of the achievement of specific and important learning goals constructed from the Standards across a range of domains. For example students may be working towards Standards drawn from the History domain, the Personal Learning domain, the ICT domain and the Thinking Processes domain. In order for you, the teacher, to be clear what the task is about, and for students to know where they are headed, the learning goals must be clear. This was the point of completing step 1 in Activity 2-3. These tasks are focussed around Standards and are not "busy-work" projects.

b) These tasks are both open-entry and open-ended.
Open-entry assessment tasks can be commenced at several different levels, making them appropriate for the intended range of students. They may encompass not only a range of levels of capabilities, but also learning preferences, interests and prior learning experiences.

Open-ended assessment tasks do not have a single right answer at the end. There may be many ways that the task can be successfully completed and the alternative pathways within them offer some decisions for students to make about directions, options, perspectives, presentation modes and so on.

c) These tasks are vehicles for learning.
Through undertaking these multi-domain assessment tasks students will learn important processes, skills, and/or conceptual ideas. These tasks are backbones that carry units of work. Intellectual challenges are built into the task for students at a range of levels, and students are able to demonstrate that they are achieving new levels of performance through undertaking the task. The tasks actually requires the performance of standards to be completed successfully. There is scope within the overall parameters of the task for individual students to produce work at different levels.

d) These tasks are authentic and/or productive tasks.
That means the tasks: are relevant and integrative (i.e. connected to students’ worlds and other parts of the curriculum); have intellectual challenge; require deep understanding of important ideas; are problem-based; enable capability-building; provide space for student ownership and decision-making; and respect difference (see the Professional Reading for Module 1 and Activity 2-1B).

For example, the learning goals for one task include standards from the Design, Creativity and Technology domain, the Communication domain and from Mathematics (the measurement, chance and data dimension). The task involves using skills to design a solution to a problem that one or more local people have. This will involve seeking out people to find a solution for and finding out their needs. It may be, for example, that an elderly relative needs a tool to pick up something from the floor when it is dropped because they cannot bend anymore. The task then involves developing a technical solution, building a scale model, communicating the ideas with their intended user and then refining it to create an actual product for the person to use.

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3. How do we actually design these tasks?
The process is an iterative one. That means that there is some “to-ing and fro-ing” between the steps. The steps look linear, but you move backwards and forwards between them as you refine the task.

- You begin with developing some learning goals that can be set within a particular context (as you did in Activity 2-3).
- From the learning goals and context you develop a tentative idea of what the task might be about.
- Looking closely at the learning goals, you establish the broad criteria of what successful achievement of these might look like. You ask: “what will the students have to do to convince me they have achieved these goals?” or “what am I looking for?”
- You then brainstorm the sorts of activities that students might be able to do to demonstrate evidence of their learning (as you looked at in Activity 2- 2A Traffic Lighting).
- You revisit your learning goals and criteria and the context you have chosen to set the learning within, and try to develop a task that allows students scope for decisions, thinking and so on.
- Sometimes the idea for the task will come quickly and simply need refining and clarifying. At other times you and your colleagues might toss a lot of ideas around until the right idea for the task emerges. There are no simple rules, algorithms or recipes for producing ideas for good tasks. Teachers are creative thinkers and together they come up with great ideas.
- Next you need to go through a process of “spelling out” the task. What exactly do the students have to do? We suggest a flow chart approach to help you work through the steps that the students will have to take. What are the essential steps? What ideas should be kept in mind? What exactly will be judged at the end of the task? (This is for “assessment OF learning” purposes.)
- Then you prepare a draft of what you will give to (or tell) students. It may include some of the flowchart aspects, but it will probably look more creative and engaging for students. You need to spark their interest, after all.
- Finally, before the work is given to students, you will generate the exact criteria and the levels of performance within them, that you will give to students to indicate how their work will be judged. This is what you will do in Activity 2-5. You then refine your draft task to include the criteria and the rubric.

4. How can we check that we have designed a quality multi-domain task?
Use these student and teacher questions to check your task.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Questions</th>
<th>Teacher Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the context interesting to me?</td>
<td>Is the context (event, theme, problem or big idea ) relevant to students’ lives and/or other parts of the curriculum?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is this all about?</td>
<td>Which learning goals and standards are driving the task? Can students generate their own learning goals within the task?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you mean?</td>
<td>Is it clear and unambiguously expressed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will I learn anything new?</td>
<td>Does the task challenge all students in their learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And can I get away with skimpy work?</td>
<td>Is deep understanding required?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will I be able to do it?</td>
<td>Is it open-entry and open-ended?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is this important?</td>
<td>Does the task involve big ideas that matter?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What exactly do I need to do along the way?</td>
<td>What processes and steps do students need to undertake?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When do I have to do each bit by?</td>
<td>What is the timeline (both interim &amp; final dates)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do I have to hand in, or show you?</td>
<td>What, exactly, will I make judgements on (product, performance, portfolio, etc)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much do I have to do?</td>
<td>What is the length, extent, size or scope of the final work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What choices do I have?</td>
<td>What options and negotiable parts are there?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will you decide if it’s all there and how good it is?</td>
<td>What criteria (and rubric) will I use to make my judgements on students’ work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it fair for me?</td>
<td>Can students with different starting points, learning preferences, language backgrounds and sex, do the task well?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much does it count?</td>
<td>What is the weighting of each component, and the whole task, in the overall semester assessment?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Planning a Multi-Domain Assessment Task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task/Unit:</th>
<th>Teacher(s):</th>
<th>Class:</th>
<th>Level(s):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Learning Goals for Students

(that are assessable in this assessment task)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(What we are looking for in judging the quality of student work?)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Evidence of Learning: |
| (How can students show us that they deeply understand this work?) |

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Activity 2-4A Designing Multi-Domain Assessment Tasks

Multi-Domain Assessment Flowchart

Task/Unit: ................................................................. Teacher(s): ........ Class: ...... Level(s): ........

Assessment description (what you will tell the students their task is)

Add your instructions for the first step in here

Add step 2 here

Add step 3 here

Add here exactly what will be assessed or judged …

Add reminders and things to think about here …

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