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A survey of standardized testing and authentic assessment in residential psychiatric facility schools

Brooke Lee Harrower

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Brooke Lee Harrower entitled "A survey of standardized testing and authentic assessment in residential psychiatric facility schools." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Education.

Michael Hannum, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Colleen P. Gilrane, Sky W. Huck

Accepted for the Council:

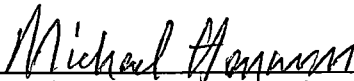
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Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

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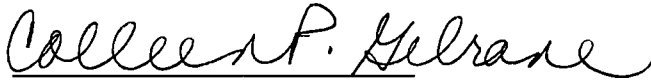
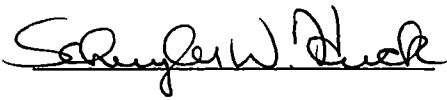
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Brooke Lee Harrower entitled "A Survey of Standardized Testing and Authentic Assessment in Residential Psychiatric Facility Schools." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Education.




Dr. Michael Hannum, Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance.

Accepted for the Council:



Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of The Graduate School

A SURVEY OF STANDARDIZED TESTING AND AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT IN
RESIDENTIAL PSYCHIATRIC FACILITY SCHOOLS

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Science
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Brooke Lee Harrower
May 1999

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the students of Haslam Academy,

past, present, and future.

Thanks for allowing me to be a part of your educational

process.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to my family in the Western North Carolina Mountains. You all established in me a belief of the importance of education, not just for me, but for those I serve. I have been blessed by being raised in a family with generations of educators. Particular thanks to Mom and Dad for not only the monetary support, but the moral support as well. Thanks to Kasey and Richie for the use of their resources in the closing weeks of this study. To my Aunt Mary Sue, thanks for your unconditional love.

Colleen Gilrane, thanks for cheering me on as I dealt with my failures early in graduate school, and throughout the thesis process. Sky Huck, thanks for encouraging me by providing the environment for authentic learning. Dr. Michael Hannum, thanks for your persistence and excitement. All three are educators in every sense of the word. As well, thanks to Dr. Judy Boser for her consultation on the development of my survey instrument.

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Child and Family Tennessee, particularly, Haslam Center staff, has been invaluable throughout my four years of graduate school. I am grateful for the resources, flexibility, and the chance you all took in August of 1993, when you hired me. Child and Family Tennessee allowed me to use their equipment and materials for this study. As well, thanks to the faculty and staff who were patient and ever supportive.

Lastly, but not least, thanks to those anonymous folks, who have served as my support and existence over the past four years. Without each of you, this journey would not have been possible.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of standardized tests and authentic assessment in residential psychiatric facility schools. One hundred residential psychiatric facility in-house schools in thirty-eight states received a survey concerning the school's demographics and opinions on educational testing and assessment. Based upon the information received by the 41% of returned surveys, the answers to the research questions are as follows:

- 1) Authentic assessment is being used by 54% of the responding residential psychiatric facility schools.
- 2) Based upon the opinions expressed by the survey responses, less than twenty-five percent of those responding perceive student opportunities being prohibited by standardized tests as the students transition into a public school.
- 3) According to the responses gathered by this survey, educators are interested in authentic assessment. Yet, educators express concerns about authentic assessment and their lack of knowledge and understanding of its application.

This survey proved both hypotheses to be not true. Those responding to the survey do not display a majority being anti-standardized test. Also, the survey demonstrated a lack of understanding and preference of authentic assessment in residential psychiatric facilities by the educational directors and/or principals. Future studies and collaborative efforts between interested schools and educators is recommended for the benefit of schools and the students whom they serve.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Context	1
Purpose of Study	3
Statement of Problem	3
Rationale for the Study	3
Research Questions	5
Definition of Terms	6
Limitations of Study	6
II. LITERATURE REVIEW	7
History of Assessment and Testing	7
Standardized Achievement Testing	8
Authentic Assessment	10
Educational Assessment in Residential Psychiatric Facilities	13
III. METHODOLOGY	15
Participants	15
Survey Instrument	17
Procedure	17
IV. RESULTS	19
V. DISCUSSION	30
BIBLIOGRAPHY	34
APPENDICES	36
VITA	46

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
I	Congressmen and Congresswomen Contacted	16
II	Number and Percent of Responses to Questions	20
III	Participation in State Standardized Testing	23
IV	Total Number of Students and Special Education Students	23
V	Reponses to Section B of Survey	25, 26
VI	Percent of Special Education Enrollment and Use of Authentic Assessment	28

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE		PAGE
I	Grade Levels of Responding Schools	22
II	Authentic Assessment Used by One or More Teachers	24

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Context

The typical student admitted to a residential psychiatric facility arrives with the bags of clothes they have collected on their journey, paperwork missing key information, and emotions ranging from relief to anger. In addition to the issues of adolescence, the residential psychiatric student often has an intense history of abuse, both as recipient and perpetrator. The average description of a student in a residential psychiatric facility is bleak to the average lay person.

As an accredited, state approved, education institution, the school within the facility must begin the process of educating the broken student. To most psychiatric students, school represents failure and punishment, rather than learning and rewards. To the educational staff in the residential school, the task of instilling success where failure has prevailed, and knowledge where simple survival was required, is both challenging and rewarding.

As with all education, residential psychiatric education must be accountable globally, and to their students individually. Most state education boards require that schools demonstrate accountability by using standardized achievement and competency tests to measure student success. Some educators, however, have found authentic assessments to be a positive alternative to the century old achievement and competency

failure. Research shows that authentic assessment may actually be a better assessment alternative for students who suffer from an emotional disturbance.

The value of using authentic assessment as a measuring tool for student success can best be explored in a psychiatric facility. Three questions need exploring: 1) Is authentic assessment being used in residential psychiatric schools, 2) Are standardized tests prohibiting these students from future opportunities as they transition into public schools, and 3) Can both forms of assessment serve a joint purpose in educating the residential psychiatric student? These questions serve as the focus of this study.

Educators have debated the use of standardized achievement tests for many years. Historically, assessment meant unfair results for the culturally disadvantaged, such as the poor, non-white, and the non-English speakers. For most of the 20th century, education has been held accountable through standardized achievement and intelligence tests. A significant percentage of students have been labeled, tracked, and otherwise identified as being below average or low functioning as a result of these tests. Experience shows the typical residential psychiatric student scores in the below average range on these tests.

The entire educational system continues to debate the issue of assessment. This study narrows the focus to the residential psychiatric facility's means of educational assessment. The questions encompass how to assess students for long-term success, while upholding the rules and regulations of state and federal laws and regulations. In

addition, the role of authentic assessment in the residential psychiatric school is investigated.

Purpose of Study

In order to address the questions posed in the introduction, I will review the history of educational assessment, recent theoretical and practical opinions, and survey principals and educational directors currently serving in residential psychiatric schools. In addition, this study evaluates the current opinions of practicing educators concerning authentic assessment and its role in residential psychiatric facility schools.

Statement of Problem

Much information exists about the issue of educational assessment. Little to no research focuses on educational assessment in residential psychiatric facilities. Following the review of literature, little to no information describes education in general at residential psychiatric facility schools, much less successful means of educationally assessing such students. As residential school leaders attempt to gain guidance for the exceptional population, resources need to be located or formed.

Rationale for the Study

As a teacher in a residential psychiatric facility, administrator for the residential psychiatric facility school's standardized state achievement and competency tests, and an underachiever on standardized tests, this researcher began to investigate testing and assessment in general, and more specifically in residential psychiatric facility schools,

specifically. Much literature exists about assessment and testing, as well as justifications for the use of one form over another. Yet, little to no literature discusses the residential school, and assessment in such an institution. With the absence of such literature, this researcher began the task of compiling information for herself, her students, her school, and similar schools.

As Chapter 2 illustrates, numerous resources address assessment and testing in education. This research serves as a foundation for this study. Standardized tests serve a role(s) in the education system. Both those inside and outside the education system use these tests and their results appropriately and inappropriately. The inappropriate use causes difficulties for many. In addition, authentic assessment has a role(s) in the education system. Due to a brief history, authentic assessment is acceptable to many in theory, but difficult in application. The definition of authentic assessment itself is difficult to classify.

In order to gather information concerning current utilization of standardized tests and authentic assessment in residential psychiatric facilities, a survey has been utilized. The survey has two sections, refer to Appendix F for an example. Section A contains nine questions concerning demographics. Section B contains ten statements for the questionee to rate. The first five questions refer to standardized tests, the latter five to authentic assessment.

The hypotheses of this study are:

- 1) the majority of educators studied at residential psychiatric facilities are anti-standardized tests
- 2) the majority of educators at residential psychiatric facilities are familiar with and prefer authentic assessment

The method used to determine the validity of the two hypotheses was the survey. The nineteen-question survey was sent to one hundred residential psychiatric facility schools in thirty-eight states. A preliminary postcard, Appendix D was sent to alert schools of the upcoming survey. Three weeks was the allotted time given to complete and return the survey.

Research Questions

The research questions evolved from the historical and current literature about assessment. The questions became less anti-standardized testing or anti-authentic assessment, as the realization of appropriate utilization of both, result in effective measures. The three research questions are the following: Is authentic assessment being used in residential psychiatric schools? Are standardized tests prohibiting these students from future opportunities as they transition into public school? How do educators feel about authentic assessment?

Definition of Terms

Assessment – Any systematic basis for making inferences about characteristics of people, usually based on various sources of evidence; the global process of synthesizing information about individuals in order to understand and describe them better.

Authentic assessment - Refers to assessment tasks that evoke demonstrations of knowledge and skills in ways that they are applied in the “real world”.

Evaluation – Judgement regarding the quality, value, or worth of a response, product, or performance based upon established criteria.

Standardized assessment – An assessment that uses a set of consistent procedures for constructing, administering, and scoring.

Test – A set of questions or situations designed to elicit responses that permit an inference about what a student knows or can do.

Limitations of Study

The limitations of this study rest mostly in the lack of specific information addressing educational assessment in a residential psychiatric facility. As those who work in such a facility, many educational and psychological professionals are unsure how to address the questions, problems, and daily educational issues found at a residential psychiatric facility school.

This researcher had difficulty locating one feasible source for the names and addresses of facilities. Much time was spent searching through various small resources, rather than a couple of major sources of information.

CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW

Much literature exists concerning educational assessment. For this study the four areas of the literature review are a) history of assessment and testing, b) standardized achievement tests, c) authentic assessment, and d) educational assessment in residential psychiatric facilities. The literature review includes books, periodicals, and the Internet.

History of Assessment and Testing

A brief background review of the assessment and testing history allows the researcher to better understand the novelty of authentic assessment.

Resnick and Resnick (1985) describe the early uses of standardized test in the following excerpt from their article, *Standards, Curriculum, and Performance: A*

Historical and Comparative Perspective:

Standardized tests in various school subjects were introduced into American schools in the period 1880 – 1920 when booming enrollments, large school-building programs, and the cult of efficiency in industry combined to encourage the schools to justify their performance in quantitative ways to local taxpayers. Short-answer and multiple choice tests were viewed as cost-efficient and objective measures in which there might be some public confidence, (pg. 11).

Resnick and Resnick (1985) “argue that the roots of educational testing in the United States lie in efforts to gauge that success of the schools in their various functions more than in efforts to monitor the performance of individual students. This emphasis, together with the American preference for objective scoring, has led to a choice of testing

instruments and procedures not optimally suited to motivating and guiding individual study,” (pg.11).

The change in assessment and evaluation, according to Dochy and McDowell (1997) over the past twenty-years parallels societal developments. Assessment is perceived as “a tool for learning . . . Whereas in the past, we have seen assessment only as a means to determine measures and thus certification, there is now a realisation that the potential benefits of assessing are much wider and impinge on in all stages of the learning process,” (pg. 279).

In the same article, Dochy and McDowell connect behaviors and assessment. “Students find newer forms of assessment intrinsically interesting and motivating. They (the students) remain aware of the need to achieve high grades, but tend not to focus exclusively upon achieving them . . . Research shows here that alternative assessment methods are less threatening to most students than traditional tests,” (pg. 291 – 292).

Standardized Achievement Testing

The March 1999 Educational Leadership edition focuses on Using Standards and Assessments. Titles of articles include *Why Standardized Tests Don't Measure Educational Quality* by W. James Popham. Popham (1999) describes the misunderstanding and inappropriate uses of standardized tests. Educational Leadership editor Marge Scherer states, “a big concern today is whether tests really matter in the

long run, that is, do they contribute to a child's education – teach something beyond how to take a test?" (pg. 5).

Standardized testing often is perceived as the only means to determine a student's progress. In the book, Authentic Assessment: A Guide to Implementation, Fischer and King (1995) describe the 1990s as a decade during which testing has been closely studied to determine if education can expand to assessment and testing other than the traditional forms of testing. Fischer and King (1995) describe the difference between testing and assessment in the following excerpt: "Until recently, 'testing' referred to any form of measurement that yielded clear, consistent, meaningful data about a person's knowledge, aptitudes, intelligence, or any other mental traits," (pg. 2). This perception of testing perceives only right and wrong answers, and not the process by which the answers and solutions are determined. According to Fischer and King (1995), only in recent years has assessment been a term used to explain the appraisal of students. "Standardized testing is useful when used appropriately. Clearly, however, other forms of assessment are necessary in an era when knowing how to make sense of information is at least as important as being able to recall facts," (pg. 6).

Sarouphim (1999) states that, "presently, the field of intelligence assessment seems to be witnessing a paradigm shift, as evidenced by recent definitions of giftedness, the emergence of nontraditional theories of intelligence, and the rise of alternative assessment," (pg. 151). Sarouphim studied the assessment of multiple intelligences.

Authentic Assessment

The focus of this study is the use of authentic assessment. Therefore, a thorough review of authentic assessment literature is necessary.

Grant Wiggins, who is currently president and director of programs for the Center on Learning, Assessment, and School Structure (CLASS), numerous articles and books, describes authentic assessment. Wiggins (1998), in his latest book, Educative Assessment: Designing Assessments to Inform and Improve Student Performance, distinguishes between assessment and test in the following citation:

. . . the aim of assessment is primarily to *educate and improve* student performance, not merely to *audit*. I use the terms *auditing* and *audit test* to describe checking up on activities after they are over, as accountants audit a business's books to check that all financial records match over a fiscal year . . . we focus on teaching students to pass simplistic, often multiple-choice tests composed of "items" that neither assess what we value nor provide useful feedback about how to teach and how to learn, (pg. 7).

In *The Case for Authentic Assessment*, Wiggins (1990) states that "assessment is authentic when we directly examine student performance on worthy intellectual tasks," (pg. 1). Wiggins continues by stating that authentic assessment allows for the ambiguities of the real world problems and solutions that adults encounter daily, in contrast to the right and wrong answers found on standardized tests. He contends that the content of tests is not the problem, standardized testing is devastating to the education process when both teachers and students come to believe that whether an answer is right or wrong is more important than the process.

Other educators also distinguish between assessment and testing. Fischer and King (1995) describe assessment as connecting student performance by knowledge and skills, whereas the traditional tests often require the one-task paper and pencil task, (pg. 2). According to Darling-Hammond, Aness, and Falk (1995) in Authentic Assessment in Action, “most currently used American tests do not tap many of the skills and abilities that students need to develop in order to be successful in later life and schooling,” (pg. 4). Sandra Kerka states that, “Assessments are authentic when they have meaning in themselves – when the learning they measure has value beyond classroom and is meaningful to the learner,” (pg. 1).

Joseph Walter’s (1992) document, *Application in Multiple Intelligences: Research in Alternative Assessment*, defines intelligence “in the traditional view – one held by many psychologists – intelligence is a human trait that varies from one individual to the next such that the individual with a great deal of this trait (the more intelligent individual) is more adept at solving problems and fashioning products,” (pg. 2). Walter proceeds in explaining that the above intelligence is determined by the use of a test with a large set of problems that people must solve. The psychologists then “predict which individuals will be most likely to solve any problem accurately and insightfully,” (pg. 2). Walter argues that a difficulty arises, when the traditional view of intelligence is applied to human behavior in the world, those who have “particular talents and proclivities do not

‘test well’ on our measures of intelligence,” (pg. 2). His argument continues with the definition of the following problem:

We recognize ‘intelligence’ as an important construct in understanding how humans learn and solve problems, but the traditional view of intelligence and the tests that have been designed to appraise it are too limited in scope . . . What we are left looking for, then, is a theory of intelligence that can reflect the complexity of skills and performances that humans exhibit in the world. (pg. 3).

Howard Gardner (1993) in his book, Multiple Intelligences, defines intelligence, “as the ability to solve problems, or to fashion products, that are valued in one or more cultural or community settings,” (pg.7). This definition responds to the narrowness of the traditional definition, and leads to an explanation of a theory to solve Walter’s problem, the theory of multiple intelligences. Gardner’s theory, as he explains,

This is my theory of multiple intelligence in capsule form. In my view, the purpose of school should be to develop intelligences and to help people reach vocation and avocational goals that are appropriate to their particular spectrum of intelligences. People who are helped to do so, I believe, feel more engaged and competent, and therefore more inclined to serve the society in a constructive way, (pg. 9).

Robert Glaser (1991) endorses Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences in his article, *Toward New Models for Assessment*, stating, “The modes of assessment that Gardner is examining enable students to experience a motivating sense of involvement in working with their teachers and others to display the link to instruction,” (pg. 476).

Kathy Checkley interviewed Gardner in *Educational Leadership*, September

1997. Gardner responds to the following questions:

Checkley: People often say that what they remember most about school are those learning experiences that were linked to real life. How does the theory of multiple intelligences help connect learning to the world outside the classroom?

Gardner: So when a school values multiple intelligences, the relationship to what's valued in the world is patent. If you cannot easily relate this activity to something that's valued in the world, the school has probably lost the core idea of multiple intelligences, which is that these intelligences evolved to help people do things that matter in the real world. School matters, but only insofar as it yields something that can be used once students leave school.

Checkley: How can teachers be guided by multiple intelligences when creating assessment tools?

Gardner: We need to develop assessments that are much more representative of what human beings are going to have to do to survive in this society. For example, I value literacy, but my measure of literacy should not be whether you can answer a multiple-choice questions that asks you to select the best meaning of a paragraph. Instead, I'd rather have you read the paragraph and list four questions you have about the paragraph and figure out how you would answer those question . . . The current emphasis on performance assessment is well supported by the theory of multiple intelligences. Indeed, you could not really be an advocate of multiple intelligences if you didn't have some dissatisfaction with the current testing because it's so focused on short-answer, linguistic, or logical kinds of items.
(pg. 4 – 5).

Educational Assessment in Residential Psychiatric Facilities

A brief literature review about educational assessment in residential psychiatric treatment programs is necessary.

Johnson, Rasbury, and Siegel (1997) address residential treatment briefly. They describe the history of residential treatment. As well, they briefly note that the educational component of residential treatment is often perceived as key to the successful treatment of an adolescent. Educational assessment remains absent in their brief reference to educational services in residential treatment, (pg. 331).

Lyman and Campbell (1996) describe the correlation between special education and serving children and adolescents with psychological problems. They note the importance of the in-house school, yet, do not mention educational assessment, (pg. 41).

CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY

Chapter Three addresses the methodology used in this study. An explanation of the participants, materials, and procedure composes this chapter.

Participants

Determining the participants of the study was difficult due to not being able to locate one resource for a list of residential psychiatric schools. In the early stages of research, much time was spent locating similar schools. Letters were sent to thirteen Senators and House of Representatives soliciting their help in this venture. As well, the opinions of elected officials concerning standardized tests and authentic assessment was sought. The congressmen and congresswomen contacted and the status of their responses is illustrated in Table I. Replies were received from three of the thirteen legislators, Senator Frist, Tennessee, Senator Helms, North Carolina, and Representative Duncan, Tennessee. Senator Frist and Helms response letters may be found in Appendices B and C. Senator Frist's response did contain thoughtful observations about authentic assessment.

The American Association of Children's Residential Centers (AACRC) was contacted for information. The membership directory for this association served as the majority of schools contacted. The Directory of Residential Facilities for Emotionally Handicapped Children and Youth was also reviewed for additional schools. Contact was also made with the Tennessee Department of Children Services (DCS). A list of the schools, which serve their children and youth in state custody, served as the remaining

Table I. Congressmen and Congresswomen Contacted for Information.

Senator/Representative Name	State Represented	Responded to letter inquiry
Representative John Duncan	Tennessee	Yes
Senator Fred Thompson	Tennessee	No
Senator Bill Frist	Tennessee	Yes
Representative Zach Wamp	Tennessee	No
Representative Bobby Etheridge	North Carolina	No
Representative Cass Ballenger	North Carolina	No
Representative Charles Taylor	North Carolina	No
Senator Jesse Helms	North Carolina	Yes
Senator Lauch Faircloth	North Carolina	No
Representative Patrick Kennedy	Rhode Island	No
Senator Edward Kennedy	Massachusetts	No
Senator Dianne Feinstein	California	No
Senator Barbara Boxer	California	No

schools. The result of contacting the previously mentioned agencies was the identification of one hundred residential schools.

The criterion established for selecting participating facilities was (1) private facilities, (2) non-profit, and (3) accepts state custody clients. These characteristics match that where the researcher is employed, Haslam Center. Obviously, the researcher was interested in collecting information that would be programmatically useful to her own school.

Survey Instrument

The survey instrument (see Appendix F) contains two sections. The first section, Section A, found on the front page of the survey, demographic questions, such as total number of students at the school. In Section A, the researcher identified questions focusing on establishing background information about the school's population and perceptions and practices concerning standardized tests and authentic assessment.

The second section, Section B, solicits the opinions of the principals and educational directors completing the survey. The first five statements deal with standardized testing, with the latter five addressing authentic assessment. A rating index, Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree, provides the means to place numerical values to the responses, thus allowing for statistical analysis.

Procedure

Having identified one hundred perspective participating schools and developed the survey instrument; the following steps describe the survey distribution process.

- 1) On February 18, 1999, ninety-three postcards were mailed to alert schools of upcoming survey. The postcard appears in Appendix D. This method was used to increase response-rate.

- 2) March 1, 1999, one hundred surveys were mailed from Knoxville, Tennessee.

letter of explanation, self-addressed stamped envelope, and the surveys were mailed together.

3) As surveys were received, each one was stamped with "Received (date)", given a number and responses recorded by survey number in the computer program, *Excel*.

CHAPTER IV RESULTS

One hundred surveys were mailed to thirty-eight states with a three-week response time.

Given a return rate of 41% (41 out of 100), the researcher does not consider the sample to be representative of the target population. The researcher is not sure that the forty-one schools who returned the survey are representative. In addition, the difficulty in locating a central resource to determine similar schools, the returned surveys may not be representative. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no plausible reason exists to say that the results would be different with a higher response rate. Deducing that those responding are more knowledgeable and interested in testing and assessment, the responses may represent a better understanding of authentic assessment.

The results of the study will focus on the 41% of surveys returned. Due to the interest of the researcher in those returned, and the belief that further investigation may be needed, statistical analysis is conducted on the 41% of surveys returned.

Table II represents the response rate to Section A questions one through eight. Questions one, two, five, and six, have a one hundred percent response rate. The first question asking about authentic assessment has a 90% response, with the next authentic assessment question receiving a 66% response.

Table II. Number and Percent of Responses to Questions by 41 Responding Schools

QUESTION	NUMBER RESPONDING TO QUESTION	PERCENT RESPONDING TO QUESTION
1. State accredited / approved	41	100%
2. Participation in standardized testing	41	100%
3. Number tested during last test administration	33	80%
4. Of those tested, number which passed	30	73%
5. Grade levels served by school	41	100%
6. Average number of total students	40	100%
7. Total number of special education students	37	90%
8. Authentic assessment used by one or more teachers	27	66%
9. If answered "yes" to #8, percentage of teachers	27	66%

Of the forty-one responding schools, 85% are state approved or accredited schools. Figure I illustrates the grade levels served by these responding schools. The highest percentage of schools, 24%, serve grades K – 12. Eight variances of grade levels are served by 2% each.

Eighty percent of those responding participate in state standardized testing. Table III illustrates the number of students tested and those who passed one or more sections. The range of students tested is 1 – 90. The mean of the number of students tested is 26. The number of students passing one or more test sections ranges from 0 – 62, with a mean of 18.

Table IV demonstrates the total number of students in schools surveyed, as well as the number of those totals, which is special education certified. The number of students within responding schools ranges from 8 – 200, with a mean of 81. The number of those students who are certified special education ranges from 2 – 190, with a mean of 56.

Authentic assessment responses appear in Figure II. Fifty-four percent of the thirty-seven schools responding utilize authentic assessment by one or more teachers, 37% do not use authentic assessment, and the remaining 10% left the question blank. The average percentage of the faculty in the fifty-four percent schools using authentic assessment is 66%.

Grade Levels of Responding Schools

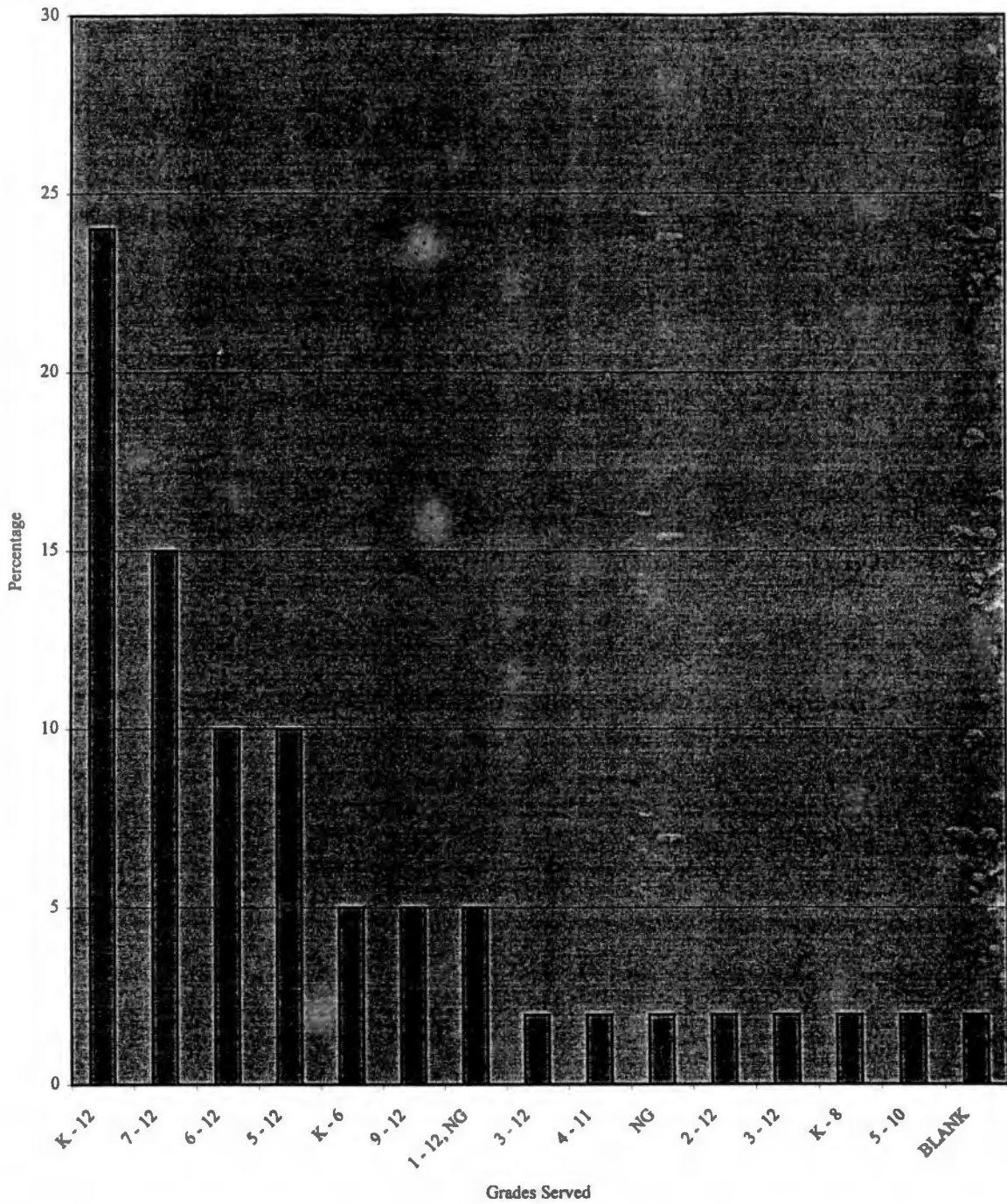


Figure 1. Grade Levels of Responding Schools

NUMBER	SURVEY QUESTION	RANGE	MEAN
3	NUMBER OF STUDENTS TESTED	1 - 90	26
4	OF THOSE TESTED, PASSED ONE OR MORE SECTIONS	0 - 62	18

TABLE III. Participation in State Standardized Testing

NUMBER	SURVEY QUESTION	RANGE	MEAN
6	AVERAGE TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS	8 - 200	81
7	AVERAGE NUMBER OF TOTAL WHICH ARE SPECIAL EDUCATION	2 - 190	56

TABLE IV. Total Number of Students and Special Education Students

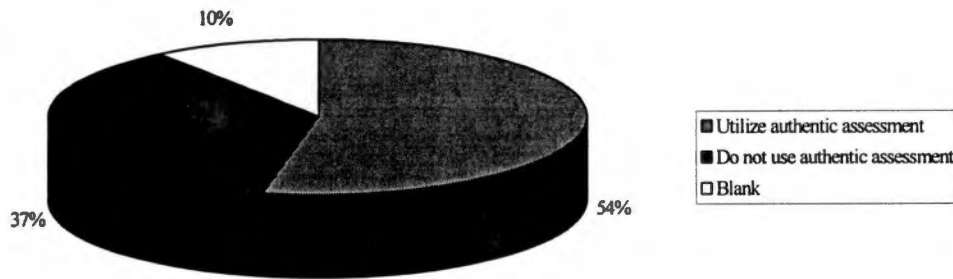


Figure II. Authentic Assessment Used by One or More Teachers

Table V represents the number and percentage of responses by the forty-one responding schools. The highest percentage responded agree to each question. The largest percentage of agree responses, 54%, was for question number one, “The use of standardized test data serves as an important baseline at my residential psychiatric facility school.” The highest number of strongly agree responses, 22%, was on question number eight, “Authentic assessment allows for individualization of curriculum by learner and teacher.” The largest number of strongly disagree responses, 10%, was for question number three, “Standardized tests are helpful in educationally placing and diagnosing students upon admission to a residential psychiatric facility school.”

TABLE V. Responses to Standardized Testing and Authentic Assessment Survey.

QUESTION	SA	A	N	D	SD	NO ANSWER
<i>Standardized Testing</i>						
1. The use of standardized test data serves as an important baseline at my residential psychiatric facility schools.	6	22	1	7	3	2
	15%	54%	2%	17%	7%	5%
2. Standardized tests are effective instruments in comparing our students with similar populations.	4	15	8	9	2	3
	10%	37%	20%	22%	5%	7%
3. Standardized tests are helpful in educationally placing and diagnosing students upon admission to a residential psychiatric facility school.	6	21	2	6	4	2
	15%	51%	5%	15%	10%	5%
4. Standardized tests provide public schools evidence of student performance when they transition from a residential school to a less restrictive environment.	6	19	4	6	2	3
	15%	46%	10%	15%	5%	7%
5. Standardized tests are misused and misunderstood, but not bad if used appropriately.	6	22	7	4	0	2
	15%	54%	17%	10%	0%	5%

QUESTION	SA	S	N	D	SD	NO ANSWER
<i>Authentic Assessment</i>						
6. Authentic assessment accurately reflects a student's success in a residential psychiatric treatment facility school.	6	13	12	3	0	6
	15%	32%	29%	7%	0%	15%
7. Authentic assessment connects education and therapy effectively in a residential psychiatric facility.	4	15	12	4	0	5
	10%	37%	29%	10%	0%	12%
8. Authentic assessment allows for individualization of curriculum by learner and teacher.	9	21	4	1	0	5
	22%	51%	10%	2%	0%	12%
9. Authentic assessment demonstrates the process of learning rather than a destination.	6	20	8	0	0	6
	15%	49%	20%	0%	0%	15%
10. Authentic assessment is misunderstood, yet important if used appropriately.	8	19	7	1	0	5
	20%	46%	17%	2%	0%	12%
*One school responded <i>Not Applicable</i> to questions 6 - 10						
STRONGLY AGREE	SA					
AGREE	A					
NEUTRAL	N					
DISAGREE	D					
STRONGLY DISAGREE	SD					

Table VI lists each responding school, the percent of special education students in the corresponding school, and whether authentic assessment is used. By using the information on this table, the schools were listed from highest percentage of special education population to lowest percentage of special education population. The median of the percentages is 70%. The two schools with this percentage were discarded for statistical analysis. The twenty schools with 82% and greater special education population were named the High Group. Schools with 67% special education population and less were called the Low Group. Fourteen of the forty-one schools have a 100% special education population. This is 34% of the responding schools.

In the statistical analysis of whether schools with a higher special education population are more likely to use authentic assessment a Chi-square test was used. The Chi Square test calculated value equaled .614, $p = .43$. No significant statistical difference was found. Based on this data, authentic assessment cannot be statistically linked to a school's special education population.

T-tests were conducted on four questions on the Section B by using the High and Low Groups responses. Question B1 asks, "The use of standardized test data serves as an important baseline at my residential psychiatric facility school." The mean response for the High Group is 3.68. The Low Group's mean is 3.29. With a t-value equaling .948, with 34 df, and a $p > .05$, no significant statistical difference exists between the two group responses on question B1.

SCHOOL		PERCENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS	ARE YOU USING AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT?
1		100%	NO
2		22%	YES
3		20%	YES
4		50%	YES
5		30%	NO
6		100%	YES
7		100%	NO
8		42%	NO
9		100%	NO
10		55%	NO
11		25%	YES
12		100%	NO
13		70%	YES
14		88%	YES
15		67%	NO RESPONSE
16		70%	NO
17		20%	YES
18		91%	YES
19		49%	YES
20		50%	NO RESPONSE
21		34%	YES
22		13%	NO RESPONSE
23		100%	NO RESPONSE
24		82%	YES
25		6%	NO
26		100%	YES
27		50%	YES
28		91%	YES
29		100%	NO
30		100%	YES
31		NO RESPONSE	NO
32		91%	YES
33		100%	NO
34		38%	NO
35		100%	YES
36		90%	YES
37		17%	NO
38		100%	NO
39		100%	YES
40		100%	YES
41		56%	YES

TABLE VI. Percentage of Special Education Enrollment and Use of Authentic Assessment

Question B4 states, "Standardized tests provide public schools evidence of students performance when they transition from a residential school to a less restrictive environment." The mean response for the High Group is 4.05. The mean response for the Low Group is 3.06. The t-value equals 2.91, 33 df, and $p < .05$. A significant statistical difference exists in question B4 between the two groups.

Question B6 declares, "Authentic assessments accurately reflect a student's success in a residential psychiatric treatment facility school." The mean response for the High Group is 3.84, with the Low Group mean 3.31. The t-value of question B6 equals 1.69, 30 df, and $p > .05$. No significant statistical difference exists between the two groups in this question.

Question B8 states, "Authentic assessment allows for individualization of curriculum by learner and teacher." High Group mean equates to 4.16, Low Group mean equals 3.93. The t-value is .92 with 31 df, $p > .05$. There is no significant statistical difference between the two groups in question B8.

CHAPTER V DISCUSSION

Education in residential psychiatric treatment facilities poses numerous questions. This study attempts to address the dilemma of standardized testing versus authentic assessment in such schools. A review of the literature demonstrates the enormity of the issue. Yet, little to no information specifically concerning the issue was located.

Based on the knowledge and experience of this researcher, authentic assessment meets the demands and objectives of residential treatment programs more effectively than standardized tests. Standardized tests fulfill state and federal requirements. In addition, standardized tests are vague and provide untrustworthy background information on the student.

This study utilized a survey to gather information about testing and assessment in other residential psychiatric facility schools. One hundred schools in thirty-eight states received a survey. Forty-one percent of schools responded. The results illustrate that no significant statistical difference exists between schools with high and low special education populations.

Comments on the survey (refer to Appendix G), as well as phone conversations, lead this researcher to believe that an issue worthy of further investigation exists. Similar problems and concerns appear in the surveys as well as the researcher's own experience.

Based upon the information received by the 41% of returned surveys, the answers to the research questions are as follows:

- 1) Authentic assessment is being used by 54% of the responding residential psychiatric facility schools.
- 2) Based upon the opinions expressed by the survey responses, less than twenty-five percent of those responding perceive student opportunities being prohibited by standardized tests as the students transition into a public school.
- 3) According to the responses gathered by this survey, educators are interested in authentic assessment. Yet, educators express concerns about authentic assessment and their lack of knowledge and understanding of its application.

This survey proved both hypotheses to be not true. Those responding to the survey do not display a majority being anti-standardized test. Also, the survey demonstrated a lack of understanding and preference of authentic assessment in residential psychiatric facilities by the educational directors and/or principals. The lack of understanding could have a correlation to the lack of preference.

During the time of this study, journals and books appeared within the education field addressing authentic assessment and multiple intelligences. A lack of information continues in the realm of residential psychiatric facility education. How can educators best prepare the residential psychiatric facility student transitioning into society? How does the faculty in such schools work in conjunction with clinical teams and state and federal laws? These questions, among others, remain.

The answers to the research questions and the application of the research findings to the hypotheses lead this researcher to believe that this is the beginning of much needed research in residential psychiatric facility educational services, particularly authentic assessment. Future studies and collaborative efforts between interested schools and educators is recommended for the benefit of schools and the students whom they serve.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

August 3, 1998

Representative Patrick Kennedy
312 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-3901

Dear Representative Kennedy:

I am principal of Haslam Center, a residential psychiatric facility for adolescents, in Knoxville, Tennessee. We have a state accredited on-site school where we provide education for the approximately eighty children and youth ranging in ages, currently, from ten to eighteen years old. I served as a teacher for four and a half years at Haslam, dually serving as assistant principal for over two of those years. In March, I was promoted to principal of the school.

In addition to my full-time job, I am pursuing a master's degree in Special Education from The University of Tennessee at Knoxville. My thesis is a study of authentic assessment in residential psychiatric facilities' in-house schools. I am having difficulty obtaining information about such schools. Please send me any information you and your staff may have about such schools not only in Tennessee, but also throughout the United States. I am very interested in discovering how other principals and their staff assess their student's daily and over the long term. I am also interested in your views on the use of authentic assessment and standardized tests in not only public schools, but specifically with students who are functioning considerably below grade level, possess enormous anxiety towards school and tests, and rebel against authority.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Brooke L. Harrower

Appendix B

BILL FRIST
TENNESSEE

COMMITTEES.
Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Budget
Labor and Human Resources
Small Business
Foreign Relations

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4205

September 11, 1998

Ms. Brooke L. Harrower
2104 Silverbrook Drive
Knoxville, Tennessee 37923-1388

Dear Ms. Harrower:

Thank you for contacting me regarding residential psychiatric facilities' in-house schools. It is an honor to serve you in the Senate and a privilege to respond to your concerns.

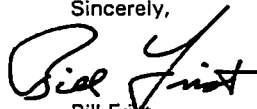
I appreciate your taking the time to share with me the good work you participate in at the Haslam Center in Knoxville. At your request, my staff contacted the Senate Library in order to obtain additional information on residential psychiatric facilities' in-house schools. I am enclosing information which I hope you will find helpful.

In response to your inquiry about my views on the authentic assessment of standardized tests, I understand that these tests may be beneficial in determining students' overall achievement. However, I do not believe that scores should be viewed as the determining factor in assessing an individual's knowledge or aptitude to succeed. Many other issues--including the individual's attitude toward tests--also play a role in a student's performance on standardized tests, and scores should be viewed with this idea in mind.

Again, thank you for taking the time to contact me. I hope that you will continue to share your thoughts and concerns with me throughout my tenure in the Senate. Please let me know whenever I may be of service.

With warm regards, I am

Sincerely,



Bill Frist
United States Senator

WHF\kh

Appendix C

JESSE HELMS
NORTH CAROLINA

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3301

August 20, 1998

Mr. Brooke L. Harrower
2104 Silver Brook Drive
Knoxville, Tennessee 37923

Dear Mr. Harrower:

I appreciate the confidence you have placed in me with your problem.

However, it is a time honored tradition and courtesy for Senators to refer all casework to home state Senators.

Therefore, I have forwarded your letter to Senator Fred Thompson. I'm sure you will be hearing from them soon.

In any event, I do appreciate your contacting me.

Sincerely,



JESSE HELMS:ltt/v

Appendix D

HASLAM ACADEMY

*A study for our schools,
and by our schools, be a
part. We have much to
learn from each other.*

Brooke Harrower, Principal
3006 Lake Brook Blvd.
Knoxville, TN 37909
Phone: 423-558-6361
Fax: 423-588-4384
E-mail: bharrower@child-family.org

*Educating the whole student
within a treatment facility*

**AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT
STANDARDIZED
ACHIEVEMENT TESTS**

In a week, you will be receiving a short survey about authentic assessment and standardized testing in residential schools.

Please fill it out and return in the self-addressed, stamped envelope.

*A program of
Child and Family, Inc.*

Appendix E



Haslam Academy
A Program of Child & Family Inc.

Home of the Eagles
3006 Lake Brook Blvd.
Knoxville, Tennessee 37909
(423) 588-4368
Fax (423) 588-4384

Brooke Harrower
Principal

Kim Simpson
Vice Principal

March 1, 1999

Dear Fellow Educator:

Enclosed you will find a brief survey, which has been sent to one hundred schools such as yours, in thirty-eight states. I would appreciate your participation in this research project. I want your opinion regarding the usefulness of standardized testing and authentic assessment measures.

As principal of an accredited, in-house school located at a residential psychiatric facility for children and youth, I have become concerned and interested in the methods of educational assessment. As a graduate student at The University of Tennessee at Knoxville, I have incorporated my interest of assessment and testing into my master's thesis. I hope to answer questions about assessment in residential psychiatric facility schools.

Please complete the enclosed survey and return to me in the self-addressed stamped envelope by March 22, 1999. You will receive an executive summary upon the completion of my project.

I look forward to your responses. If you have any questions, please contact me by phone at (423) 558-6361, or via e-mail, bharrower@child-family.org.

Sincerely,

Appendix F

**SURVEY OF AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT AND STANDARDIZED TESTING AT RESIDENTIAL
PSYCHIATRIC SCHOOLS**

Section A

Please complete the following information to assist in understanding your school and put your answers in Section B into perspective.

1. Is your school state accredited? _____ Yes _____ No
2. Does your school participate in state standardized achievement testing?
_____ Yes _____ No
3. If yes, approximately how many students were tested during the last test administration?

4. Of those tested, how many passed one or more sections/subtests?

5. What grade levels does your school serve?

6. What is the average total number of students at your school at a given time

7. What is the average number of special education certified students during the same given time as
question 6?

8. Is authentic assessment used by one or more teachers in your school?
_____ Yes _____ No
9. If yes, approximately what percentage of your teachers use authentic assessment?

Please complete Section B on the back of this page. Return this survey in the enclosed self-addressed stamp envelope by March 22, 1999. Include any additional information you are willing to share with this researcher; such as pamphlets about your facility and school.

Return address:
Brooke Harrower
3006 Lake Brook Blvd.
Knoxville, TN 37909

Section B

Rating index to use in expressing your opinions on the following statements:

SA Strongly Agree A Agree N Neutral D Disagree SD Strongly Disagree

For the purpose of this study the following definitions apply:

Standardized testing – an assessment that uses a set of consistent procedures for constructing, administering, and scoring.
Authentic assessment - assessment tasks that evoke demonstrations of knowledge and skills in ways that they are applied the “real world”.

Definitions taken from Assessing Learning in the Classroom by Jay McTighe and Steven Ferrara, NEA, 1998.

Circle selection

Standardized Testing

- | | | | | | |
|--|----|---|---|---|----|
| 1. The use of standardized test data serves as an important baseline at my residential psychiatric facility schools. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 2. Standardized tests are effective instruments in comparing our students with similar populations. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 3. Standardized tests are helpful in educationally placing and diagnosing students upon admission to a residential psychiatric facility school. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 4. Standardized tests provide public schools evidence of student performance when they transition from a residential school to a less restrictive environment. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 5. Standardized tests are misused and misunderstood, but not bad if used appropriately. | SA | A | N | D | SD |

Authentic Assessment

- | | | | | | |
|---|----|---|---|---|----|
| 6. Authentic assessments accurately reflect a student's success in a residential psychiatric treatment facility school. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 7. Authentic assessment connects education and therapy effectively in a residential psychiatric facility. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 8. Authentic assessment allows for individualization of curriculum by learner and teacher. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 9. Authentic assessment demonstrates the process of learning rather than a destination. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 10. Authentic assessment is misunderstood, yet important if used appropriately. | SA | A | N | D | SD |

Please include any additional comments.

Appendix G

Comments on Surveys

"1 – 10 do not apply to our facility, so I cannot even answer, because there is no correlation." #1

"As with any assessment there are pros and cons. It is a philosophical, managerial, and regulatory decision as to what assessment to use." #2

"You need to define 'authentic' as you intend it. I assume you mean tests generated by school personnel." #3

"I believe it is very difficult for us to provide anything that demonstrates/reflects the 'real world' in our school because it is more restrictive than any other setting they might be in." #10

"Although I agree that authentic assessment is important, it makes it difficult for children to participate in standardized testing if they have no experience with it." #12

"Hence my change in #9 on previous page. I was not familiar with the term, but I am familiar with the concept." #17

"Standardized tests are like anything else; they can be manipulated. (B8, Authentic assessment allows for individualization of curriculum by learner and teacher . . . If time is available; if staff is available." #21

In reference to question A8, "Is authentic assessment used by one or more teachers in your school?": "It is used by personnel before placement at our facility." #29

"Good luck with your project." #30

"An excellent research topic; there is very little information, re: student outcomes for EH students. Also, New York is increasingly requiring standardized tests for all." #31

"Most of our teachers are very young and their skill at using authentic assessment is weak – the reality is - our students go back to public school and like it or not/agree or disagree they the skills to cope with standardized tests! Unfortunately, New York State is limiting alternative testing variances." #32

"We use both kinds of assessments. Standardized help school districts to interpret performance levels. Authentic provides enhancement of information, picks up on creative talent, (and) is positive reinforcement for (the) child." #36

"I have no knowledge of or experience with authentic assessment." #37

“The IEP is a more helpful instrument for determining academic progress and needs when transitioning students.” #40

No application
#1

No understanding
#37

Relevant topic for their school
#31, 36

Authentic assessment not realistic
#10, 12, 32, 40

VITA

Brooke Harrower was born in Asheville, North Carolina, on December 10, 1970. She was raised north of Asheville, in Weaverville. Her education background was formed in the Buncombe County School System, a 1989 graduate of North Buncombe High School. In this same year she entered Appalachian State University, in Boone, North Carolina, as an education major. She graduated from this institution of higher learning in May of 1993 with a Bachelor of Science in History/Secondary Education. Her four years in Boone included various volunteer and leadership positions in the area of education, particularly serving at-risk students.

Ms. Harrower accepted a teaching job at Haslam Center, a residential psychiatric facility for adolescents, a program of Child and Family, Inc, in August of 1993. In the spring of 1995, she entered The University of Tennessee at Knoxville, having decided to pursue a Master's Degree in Education. While continuing to teach at Haslam Center, she received her endorsement in Special Education through the state of Tennessee in 1995. In January of 1996 she became Assistant Principal/Teacher at Haslam Center. In July of 1997 she accepted the responsibility of Assistant Program Director of the day treatment program, in addition to serving as Assistant Principal/Teacher of Haslam Center which included the day treatment program. From March 1998 to the present, Ms. Harrower has served as principal of Haslam Center; the school is named Haslam Academy. She received her Master of Science in Education, May 1999.