

Solving the Assessment Puzzle
by Carolyn Coil and Dodie Merritt

This book may be a very good resource for teachers of gifted and talented students. It begins with first-rate explanations of assessments and why we must assess the students. The characteristics of traditional and alternative assessments are defined with both the advantages and the disadvantages of each. The book addresses creating and scoring assessments for both the gifted and regular classrooms using both traditional tests and authentic assessments.

There are many tools to improve traditional assessments and to create authentic assessments. Included in the authentic assessments are the portfolio and student-lead parent conferences. If you have been reluctant to try either of these types of assessments this book will help. The book not only shows you how to create rubrics but contains many teacher created rubrics that cover a wide variety of topics from elementary to high school. These rubrics can be used just as they are or you may want to modify them for a particular class. Compacting is introduced and defined as a way to address the needs of students who show mastery in a subject or topic. This is a valuable tool in differentiating the classroom.

The book's discussion on standardized tests is aimed at getting an understanding of the necessity of the tests. Steps in teaching test taking strategies are aimed at helping students to become better test takers.

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