Introduction

The Authentic Assessment Project focuses on a secondary English curriculum for Lincoln-Way North High School. Throughout this semester, I have developed a comprehensive assessment plan for this course, including clear, measurable standards, tasks, criteria that must be met and rubrics to evaluate those criteria.

The English II College Prep curriculum covers a variety of different materials throughout the year. The novel, There Are No Children Here, by Alex Kotlowitz, is a relatively new addition to Lincoln-Way High School. This book can be found on the enrichment list and is one of many options each teacher has for sophomores.

There Are No Children Here covers a variety of different of themes and concepts to give students a realistic look into the lives of two young boys who grew up rather quickly in urban Chicago. It is my goal for students to apply their knowledge of literary terms in order to rationalize the purpose for writing a non-fiction piece as well as understand theme by studying character development. The unit was composed around some guiding questions I want students to think about. Those included "how does literature influence a student's awareness of social inequality?" and "how can we understand an author's purpose for writing a novel?"

I have organized this project into distinct parts so one can easily navigate through it. First, I identify and list the course standards. You will discover content, process and value standards for this unit that capture meaningful learning. With these standards, students can demonstrate the knowledge they will acquire. I created a matrix so one can see how these

standards are met throughout the unit. Several of my tasks meet multiple standards for the wide range of learners in the classroom. After that, I also included the Illinois state standards this unit will meet.

Once I had my standards identified and correctly stated, I was able to focus on developing specific tasks. These tasks are aligned with more than one standard, engage the students in various activities and assessments, vary in design, are meaningful and will allow students to reveal their knowledge. My tasks include traditional assessments like quizzes and tests that have multiple choice, true/false and matching question. This will determine if they have a basic understanding of items discussed in class or read; the students will have to recall or recognize facts and ideas from activities or readings. I also include authentic assessments such as large and small group discussions, projects, speeches, and posters as opportunities to offer direct evidence that the student can critique and analyze the non-fiction piece. The authentic assessments will reveal significant application of knowledge in a variety of meaningful ways.

Following my task list is my criteria for There Are No Children Here. I needed to decide how I would measure if the students did a good job on a particular task and whether or not they have met the standard. I have both individual and group tasks for the class to complete. The tasks address all standards and allow students to exhibit independent work as well as collaborative work.

For each task, I tried to limit the number of criteria and are written in terms of behavior by the student. Each criterion is related to that particular task and can be observed in a measurable way. I added a disclaimer at the bottom of my criteria page because since it

is an English class, mechanical and spelling expectations are made clear and need to be correct for every assignment or project done for this class. My criteria focus on the essential elements of the task, what I want most for the students to take from it.

Finally, you will see all of my rubrics for this unit. I used holistic and analytic rubrics for this unit. Authentic tasks are measured by the criteria so student's performance is measured by determining the degree he/she completed the task. For each rubric, I included which standards the task met, criteria and a grading scale. For each criterion, I listed the requirements a student must minimally meet in order to achieve a passing grade. I believe rubrics are very helpful in guiding the student so he/she understands the teacher's expectations and receives better feedback. I did have a few tasks that are traditional (tests, quizzes) and those do not require a rubric since those will be percentage based grades.

This concludes my introduction to the Assessment Project. I hope you can easily navigate your way through the non-fiction unit for a sophomore level English class.