

Balanced Assessment and Teaching Plan

Erika Garcia

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

EDCI 6304: Assessment in Learning

Instructor: Dr. Larmel Madrilejos

July 7, 2026

An Evidence-Based Framework for Teaching Persuasive Writing Through Ethos, Pathos, and Logos

Introduction

Assessment is frequently perceived as the culmination of instruction—a means of assigning grades or evaluating student performance after learning has occurred. Contemporary assessment scholarship, however, positions assessment as a continuous process of collecting, interpreting, and responding to evidence that informs instructional decisions while simultaneously cultivating students' capacity for reflection, self-regulation, and academic agency (Brookhart, 2013; Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth, 2009). Viewed through this intentional lens, meaningful assessment extends far beyond measuring achievement; it becomes the instructional architecture through which teachers design equitable learning experiences, monitor conceptual understanding, and intentionally support students' intellectual growth.

As an English educator, I believe that assessment should function as an extension of evidence based, scalable instruction, and data driven decision making process, rather than its conclusion. Every assessment experience should provide meaningful evidence that enables teachers to refine instruction while empowering students to become increasingly thoughtful readers, analytical writers, and critical consumers of information. Within the secondary English language arts classroom, a balanced assessment framework transforms instruction from a sequence of isolated classroom activities into an integrated system that promotes inquiry, reflection, evidence-based reasoning, and continuous instructional responsiveness. Grounded in De Leon's (2019) *Classroom Assessment Cycle*, this instructional design intentionally integrates *Assessment for Learning*, *Assessment as Learning*, and *Assessment of Learning* as complementary and foundational processes that strengthen both teaching and learning outcomes.

Designed primarily for a ninth-grade English II Pre-AP classroom, this instructional unit engages students in persuasive writing through the purposeful study of Aristotle's rhetorical appeals—ethos, pathos, and logos. Students learn to construct debatable claims, evaluate multiple perspectives, integrate credible evidence, analyze rhetorical effectiveness, and refine their arguments through structured reflection and revision. These learning experiences are intentionally aligned with the English II Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (Texas Education Agency, 2022)

and supported through purposeful integration of digital technologies, including Hypothesis and Google Docs. Rather than serving as instructional enhancements alone, these technologies facilitate collaborative annotation, formative feedback, self-assessment, and the ongoing collection of evidence that informs instructional decision-making (Burns, 2024).

Ultimately, this balanced assessment plan demonstrates how thoughtfully sequenced formative, metacognitive, and summative assessment experiences can cultivate persuasive writing, rhetorical awareness, and disciplinary thinking while reinforcing the broader educational purpose of assessment: empowering students to become reflective, evidence-based communicators and enabling teachers to make informed instructional decisions that promote continuous growth.

Instructional Design Context

Grade Level: 9th Grade

Course: English II Pre-AP

Unit/Topic: Evidence Based Persuasive Writing Framework Through Ethos, Pathos, and Logos

Essential Question: How do writers use claims, evidence, and rhetorical appeals to persuade a specific audience?

Primary Standards: English II TEKS for argument and persuasive writing, including claim development, organization, evidence, audience awareness, revision, and publication

Digital Tool: Hypothesis and Google Docs

Materials Needed: Textbook readings, persuasive mentor texts, additional teacher-selected sources, annotation prompts, digital checklist, reflection prompt, analytic rubric

Bloom's Taxonomy: Analyze, Evaluate, Create

Assessment Philosophy: Assessment is a continuous process for gathering evidence that informs instruction, develops student ownership, and supports reflective learning outcomes.

TEKS Alignment

(TEKS) for reading, writing, response, author's craft, composition, and inquiry. Students analyze the characteristics of argumentative texts, including clear claims, rhetorical appeals, evidence, and audience awareness, and then apply those same features in their own persuasive writing. The unit also supports the recursive writing process of planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing so that students develop writing that is both purposeful and academically rigorous.

The most relevant English II TEKS for this instructional design include analysis of argumentative texts and rhetorical appeals under §110.37(c)(7)(E); analysis of author’s craft, language, and rhetorical devices under §110.37(c)(8); the writing process under §110.37(c)(9); argumentative composition under §110.37(c)(10)(C); and inquiry and source-based support under §110.37(c)(11). These standards support the rigor of the lesson because students must interpret persuasive techniques in mentor texts, evaluate their own rhetorical decisions, and produce a polished argumentative essay that reflects clear organization, relevant evidence, effective appeals, and revision for audience and purpose.

Assessment Purpose	Learning Objective	Assessment Description	Why It Fits This Purpose
Assessment For Learning	By the end of the Week 1 Hypothesis annotation activity, the learner will be able to identify and explain a writer’s central claim, supporting evidence, intended audience, and use of ethos, pathos, and logos in a persuasive mentor text, demonstrating this understanding through collaborative digital annotations, guided discussion, and a brief quickwrite.	During Week 1 of the unit, students read a short persuasive mentor text connected to an adolescent-relevant issue such as school uniforms, social media policies, or community service requirements. Using Hypothesis, students annotate the text by identifying the central claim, relevant evidence, intended audience, and examples of ethos, pathos, and logos. Students then participate in guided small-group discussion and complete a brief digital quickwrite explaining which rhetorical appeal they found most effective and why. The teacher reviews annotations and quickwrites in real time to determine whether students can distinguish among rhetorical appeals, recognize credible evidence, and explain how persuasion works in context. Task: diagnostic annotation, guided discussion, and short	This objective fits assessment for learning because it occurs early in the instructional sequence and is designed to generate diagnostic evidence about students’ emerging understanding of persuasive writing. The annotations, discussion, and quickwrite reveal what students already understand about claims, evidence, audience, and rhetorical appeals, as well as where misconceptions still exist. Because this evidence is used to adjust instruction immediately, such as reteaching distinctions among appeals or modeling stronger analysis, the assessment functions formatively and directly supports learning while it is still in progress.

		written response. Materials: mentor text, Hypothesis, discussion prompts, and quickwrite prompt. Timing: this assessment is implemented at the beginning of the unit before students begin drafting their own persuasive writing so the evidence can guide immediate instructional decisions. Aligned TEKS: §110.37(c)(7)(E), §110.37(c)(8), and related response and comprehension strands.	
Assessment As Learning	By the end of the Week 2 self-assessment and reflection activity, the learner will be able to evaluate the effectiveness of their own claim, evidence, organization, and use of ethos, pathos, and logos in a persuasive draft by completing a checklist, highlighting rhetorical moves in Google Docs, and writing a reflection that identifies strengths, weaknesses, and specific revision goals.	During Week 2 of the unit, after students have analyzed mentor texts and completed an initial persuasive paragraph or draft essay in Google Docs, they use a teacher-created digital checklist to assess whether their writing includes a debatable claim, relevant evidence, logical organization, audience awareness, and purposeful use of ethos, pathos, and logos. Students then write a brief reflection identifying one rhetorical strength, one weakness in their argument, and one specific revision move they will make to improve the draft. The teacher conducts brief writing conferences using the self-assessment to guide questions, clarify misunderstandings, and support revision planning. Task: self-assessment, written reflection, and revision planning. Materials: draft essay, Google Docs, digital checklist, reflection prompt, and conferencing notes. Timing: this	This objective fits assessment as learning because it places students in the role of reflective evaluators of their own persuasive writing. Rather than simply receiving teacher feedback, students apply criteria to their own work, identify strengths and gaps, and make purposeful decisions about revision. The task is explicitly metacognitive, and its timing allows students to use assessment information to improve their work before it is graded. In this way, the assessment helps students develop ownership of persuasive writing quality while deepening their understanding of how rhetorical choices shape audience response.

		assessment is implemented in the middle of the unit after the first draft and before revision workshops so that students can act on the feedback they generate for themselves. Aligned TEKS: §110.37(c)(9), §110.37(c)(10)(C), and related author's craft and response strands.	
Assessment of Learning	By the end of the Week 3 summative writing task, the learner will be able to construct a coherent persuasive essay that presents a clear, arguable claim, develops logically organized and sufficiently supported evidence, and employs effective ethos, pathos, and logos for an identified audience, as demonstrated by performance on an analytic rubric.	During Week 3 of the unit, students compose and submit a polished persuasive essay through Google Docs or Brightspace. The final essay must include a clear and arguable claim, relevant and sufficient evidence, logical organization, deliberate audience awareness, and strategic use of ethos, pathos, and logos. When appropriate to the writing task, students also integrate quotations, paraphrased evidence, or data from approved sources to strengthen their arguments. The teacher evaluates the essay using an analytic rubric that measures claim quality, evidence integration, rhetorical appeals, organization, audience awareness, style, and conventions. Task: summative polished essay and rubric-scored performance. Materials: writing prompt, rubric, mentor texts, approved sources, digital drafting platform, and submission tool. Timing: this assessment is implemented during the final phase of the unit after annotation, self-assessment, teacher conferencing, and revision have occurred. Aligned	This <i>objective</i> fits assessment of learning because it serves as the culminating, summative demonstration of what students can do independently at the end of the unit. The essay requires students to synthesize their understanding of claims, evidence, rhetoric, audience, and revision into one sustained piece of writing. The analytic rubric provides a clear record of student performance aligned to the objective and documents the extent to which students can apply persuasive writing skills after formative assessment and revision have taken place.

		TEKS: §110.37(c)(7)(E), §110.37(c)(9), §110.37(c)(10)(C), and §110.37(c)(11).	
--	--	---	--

Reflective Analysis

Designing this balanced assessment plan around persuasive writing and rhetorical appeals fundamentally expanded my understanding of assessment as more than a mechanism for measuring student performance; it challenged me to view assessment as the instructional architecture that shapes how students learn to think, reason, and communicate. Throughout my experience teaching English, I have discovered that many students arrive in the classroom with deeply held opinions about school, society, and the issues influencing their daily lives. However, possessing an opinion is not synonymous with constructing a persuasive argument. Students frequently struggle to transform personal beliefs into coherent, evidence-based claims that demonstrate logical reasoning, rhetorical awareness, and thoughtful consideration of the audience. This realization prompted me to reconsider not only *what* I assess, but *when*, *why*, and *how* I gather evidence of student thinking throughout the learning process.

Developing this assessment plan required me to think far more intentionally about the sequence of instructional supports necessary to move students beyond identifying rhetorical appeals toward critically analyzing how authors strategically employ ethos, pathos, and logos to construct persuasive arguments. Rather than viewing persuasive writing as a single culminating performance, I began to conceptualize it as a developmental process in which students progressively construct disciplinary thinking through carefully designed opportunities to analyze mentor texts, engage in collaborative discourse, reflect on their reasoning, and refine their own writing through purposeful revision. This planning process reinforced my belief that assessment should not function as a terminal judgment of student achievement but as a continuous source of evidence that informs instructional decisions while simultaneously cultivating students' intellectual independence and confidence as writers.

Perhaps the most significant professional insight I gained from this project was a redefinition of instructional rigor. Prior to this experience, I often associated rigor primarily with the sophistication of the final persuasive essay because it represented the most visible demonstration of student learning. Designing a balanced assessment system challenged that assumption. I now recognize that genuine rigor resides equally within the formative and metacognitive experiences that precede the final product. When students annotate mentor texts, identify rhetorical strategies, evaluate the quality of their own reasoning against explicit success criteria, engage in meaningful peer dialogue, and revise their work based on evidence and feedback, they are participating in intellectually demanding practices that develop analytical thinking long before the final assessment occurs. Consequently, I have come to view rigor not as the complexity of a single assignment but as the intentional progression of cognitive demands that gradually empower students to become increasingly independent thinkers and communicators.

The most intellectually challenging aspect of this planning process was maintaining clear conceptual distinctions among Assessment for Learning, Assessment as Learning, and Assessment of Learning while ensuring that the instructional sequence remained cohesive rather than fragmented. Initially, I found myself gravitating toward designing engaging classroom activities without fully considering the unique evidence each assessment should generate or the instructional decisions that evidence would ultimately inform. This experience compelled me to shift my planning process from asking, *"What activity should students complete next?"* to asking, *"What evidence of student thinking do I need at this point in the learning process, and how will that evidence influence my next instructional decision?"* That seemingly subtle change profoundly transformed my understanding of assessment literacy because it positioned assessment as the foundation of instructional decision-making rather than as a conclusion to instruction.

Ultimately, this experience strengthened my evolving philosophy that effective assessment is an act of instructional leadership. Balanced assessment is not simply about categorizing activities into formative, metacognitive, or summative experiences; rather, it is about intentionally designing an integrated system in which every assessment generates meaningful evidence that advances both student learning and teacher decision-making. As I continue developing as an English educator, aspiring instructional coach, and future educational leader, I hope to design learning environments in which assessment empowers students to become reflective, evidence-based communicators while simultaneously equipping teachers with the information necessary to provide equitable,

responsive, and intellectually rigorous instruction. More importantly, this project reaffirmed my conviction that assessment, when thoughtfully designed, becomes one of the most powerful instruments through which educators cultivate critical inquiry, academic agency, and lifelong learning.

Supporting Artifacts:

1. [Student Self Assessment & Rubric](#)
2. [Persuasive Rubric](#)
3. [Formative and Summative Rubric](#)

References

- Armstrong, P. (2010). *Bloom's taxonomy*. Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching.
<https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/>
- Brookhart, S. M. (2013). *How to create and use rubrics for formative assessment and grading*. ASCD.
- Burns, M. (2024). *EdTech essentials: 12 strategies for every classroom in the age of AI* (2nd ed.). ASCD/ISTE.
- De Leon, L. (2019). *Classroom assessment cycle graphic* [Instructor-created resource].
- Madrilejos, L. (2026). *EDCI 6304 assessment in learning syllabus* [Course syllabus]. The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.
- Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth. (2009). *Rethinking classroom assessment with purpose in mind: Assessment for learning, assessment as learning, assessment of learning*. Manitoba Education.
- Texas Education Agency. (2020). *Chapter 110. Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for English Language Arts and Reading, Subchapter C, High School*.

[https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/laws-and-rules/sboe-rules-tac/sboe-tac-currently-in-effect/ch110c.p](https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/laws-and-rules/sboe-rules-tac/sboe-tac-currently-in-effect/ch110c.pdf)
[df](#)