Answering Constructed Response Questions:

Preparing students for the Georgia Milestones Assessment System
Your Presenter is..

Dawn Bennett, Ed.S., NBCT

- Program Specialist, West Central GLRS
- Former Title I Needs Improvement School Improvement Specialist, West Ga. RESA
- Former administrator
- Former curriculum specialist
- Former K-5 teacher
Learning Targets:

• I can explain the importance of teaching students how to answer constructed response questions.

• I can define constructed response questions and the types of constructed response questions.

• I can explain the components of exemplary constructed response questions.

• I can explain specific strategies to use in the classroom to teach students how to answer constructed response questions.

• I can score a constructed response question using a rubric and give feedback.
Why do I need to teach my students how to answer CRQ’s?

• Federal requirements for Race to the Top states (by 2014-2015 school year): High quality assessments
• Consolidate ELA, Reading, Writing into a single measure
• Increase rigor to align with college and career expectations
• Consistent alignment with external measures

Georgia Department of Education
HOW DO WE MEASURE UP?

Achievement of Georgia Students in Mathematics 2013

NAEP – Grade 8: 29% at/above proficient
CRCT – Grade 8: 83% met/exceeded

Coordinate Algebra EOCT: 37% met/exceeded
SAT – Class of 2013: 42% college ready benchmark*
ACT – Class of 2013: 38% college ready benchmark**

2012

PSAT – sophomores: 35% on track to be CCR

*Georgia Department of Education
## Overall ELA Phase II Pilot Summary Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Number and Percent of Students Achieving Each Score Point</th>
<th>Total Student N/%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>1107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>906</td>
<td>1145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>839</td>
<td>948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>1467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>1002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1116</td>
<td>1534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 - 10</td>
<td>1262</td>
<td>1816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 12</td>
<td>739</td>
<td>1389</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Overall Mathematics Phase II Pilot Summary Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Number and Percent of Students Achieving Each Score Point</th>
<th>Total Student N / %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1378</td>
<td>1152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42.57%</td>
<td>35.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1323</td>
<td>1264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43.81%</td>
<td>41.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1351</td>
<td>1049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47.07%</td>
<td>36.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1579</td>
<td>1171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47.73%</td>
<td>35.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1602</td>
<td>856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>57.52%</td>
<td>30.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1529</td>
<td>1049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43.66%</td>
<td>29.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 - 12</td>
<td>2570</td>
<td>1435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>58.60%</td>
<td>32.72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why do you think students do so poorly on constructed response questions?

Discuss with a partner........
Some of the reasons kids do poorly on CRQ’s...

- Many students don’t answer the question.
- Some responses are very shallow and need more details.
- Some students get off topic.
- Spelling and handwriting may impact scores.
- Students don’t understand what the question is asking.
- Instead of writing about what the passage was about, students write about what they know about the topic.
- Students don’t think about their audience.
Definition

Constructed response is a general term for items that require the student to generate a response as opposed to selecting a response. **Constructed response** items require more elaborate answers and explanations of reasoning. They allow for multiple correct answers and/or varying methods of arriving at the correct answer.

Examples of skills required on constructed response tasks include, but are not limited to:

- **English Language Arts**
  - Utilize close analytic reading
  - Compare and contrast ideas and themes
  - Synthesize ideas and concepts across a single or multiple texts
- **Mathematics**
  - Apply mathematical procedures and skills to real world problems
  - Express mathematical reasoning by showing work or explaining an answer
Georgia Milestones: Unique Features

Item Types

- **Selected-Response** [aka, multiple-choice]
  - all content areas
  - evidence-based selected response in ELA

- **Constructed-Response**
  - ELA and mathematics

- **Extended-Response**
  - ELA and mathematics

- **Technology Enhanced**
  - to begin in 2016-2017

constructed response is a general term for assessment items that require the student to generate a response as opposed to selecting a response. Extended-response items require more elaborate answers and explanations of reasoning. They allow for multiple correct answers and/or varying methods of arriving at the correct answer. Writing prompts and performance tasks are examples of extended-response items.
Georgia Milestones

General Test Parameters: ELA

Criterion-Referenced
Total Number of Items: 44 / Total Number of Points: 55

Breakdown by Item Type:
- 40 Selected Response (worth 1 point each; 10 of which are aligned NRT)
- 2 Constructed Response (2 points each)
- 1 Constructed Response (worth 4 points)
- 1 Extended Response (worth 7 points)

Norm-Referenced
- Total Number of Items: 20 (10 of which contribute to CR score)

Embedded Field Test
- Total field test items: 6

Georgia Department of Education

Total number of items taken by each student: 60
Georgia Milestones
Writing at Every Grade

– All students will encounter a constructed-response item allowing for narrative prose, in response to text, within first or second section of the test.

– Within the writing section of the test, students will read a pair of passages and complete a series of “warm-up” items:
  o 3 selected-response items asking about the salient features of each passage and comparing/contrasting between the two passages
  o 1 constructed-response item requiring linking the two passages
  o 1 writing prompt in which students must cite evidence to support their conclusions, claims, etc.

Warning: Students who simply rewrite excerpts from the passage(s) to illustrate their point(s) will not receive favorable scores.

Genres
Writing prompts will be informative/explanatory or opinion/argumentative depending on the grade level. Students could encounter either genre.
Georgia Milestones

**General Test Parameters: Mathematics**

**Criterion-Referenced**
- Total Number of Items: 53 / Total Number of Points: 58

**Breakdown by Item Type:**
- 50 Selected Response (worth 1 point each; 10 of which are aligned NRT)
- 2 Constructed Response (worth 2 points each)
- 1 Constructed Response (worth 4 points)

**Norm-Referenced**
- Total Number of Items: 20 (10 of which contribute to CR score)

**Embedded Field Test**
- Total field test items: 10

Georgia Department of Education

Total number of items taken by each student: 73
What’s in a Prompt?

• **Background information**
  “Birds’ babies hatch from eggs. Birds have wings, but not all adult birds fly. They live all over the world, even in Antarctica.”

• **Petitions**
  “**Explain** how birds protect themselves.”

• **Questions**
  “What is migration?”

*Better Answers: Written Performance That Looks Good and Sounds Smart*, Ardith Davis Cole
Academic Vocabulary

- Traits (most students below grade 7 struggle with this word)
  - Qualities
  - Evidence
  - Sequence
  - Stanza
  - Line
  - Infer
  - Point of View
  - Support
  - Simile
  - Metaphor
  - Figurative language
Strategies for Answering CRQ

• RACE

• ACE (math)
RACE steps for answering CRQ

- **R**eword/restate the question
- **P**rovide an **A**nswer
- **C**ite using evidence from text
- **E**xplain how the evidence supports your answer
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minimally 1</th>
<th>Partially 2</th>
<th>Completely 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Restates question</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Develops a broad</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Answer</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cites using details</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Draws conclusion</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stays on topic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writes neatly</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uses proper</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conventions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What about MATH?

A ready know (highlight key terms, identify what you already know)

C ompute your work (show your work, label, draw a model)

E xplain in writing how you got your answer (step by step details, mathematical terminology used- how and why?)
Jennifer wants to take piano lessons that cost $15 each. She plans to take 10 lessons, for which she has $85 saved. How much more money does she need in order to pay for the lessons?

- **A** $15 for each lesson
  
  10 lessons
  
  $85 saved

- **C**
  
  15
  
  x10
  
  -85
  
  150 for 10 lessons
  
  $65 more money needed

- **E**
  First I identified the problem and wrote down the needed information. Then I multiplied the cost for each lesson by the number of lessons that she plans to take and got a product of $150. Next I subtracted the amount of money that she saved from the total cost of the lessons and got a difference of $65. **She needs $65 more in order to pay for the lessons**
How do you score?

- Select one person at your table to read the fable and the prompt.
- Read the student response.
- Score using your rubric. Discuss the feedback you would give this student.
- Be prepared to share.
Ideas for Teaching

• Have your students answer your EQ as their exit ticket.
• Add constructed response questions to each test or quiz you give.
• What other key words (Tier 2 or Tier 3 vocabulary) are important to teach?
• How do you know that your students fully understand the vocabulary?
• Teach students not to skip these questions!
More Ideas....... 

• In math, practice using Exemplars using the gradual release model. Model, guided practice, and independent.
• Let your students struggle!!
• Begin with simple questions.
• Require students to answer questions (orally and written) in complete sentences.
• Ask WHY questions
• Look at sample questions
Where can I find sample questions?

- New York
- North Carolina
- Louisiana
- Oregon
- Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium
- PARCC
- Kentucky
- Formative Item Bank
- NAEP
- Eliciting Evidence of Student Learning
- West Georgia RESA Monthly Webinars
Excellent Resources for CRQ...

- [http://writingfix.com/RICA/constructed_response.htm](http://writingfix.com/RICA/constructed_response.htm)
- *Tests that Teach, by Karen Tankersley*
- *Better Answers, by Ardith Cole*
Possible Follow-Up Sessions

- Academic vocabulary
- Informational texts, paired passages
- Developing your own constructed response questions
- Scoring constructed response answers
- Lesson plan application
- Modeling
- Observations and feedback
Thank You!

Dawn Bennett
West Central GLRS
dbennett@garesa.org
678-621-3410