

# Authentic Assessments

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# Agenda

- What is Authentic Assessment?
- Benefits
- Examples from Disciplines
- Considerations
- Planning
- Discussion

# Why we assess

- Help students focus on learning outcomes
- Provide opportunities to identify areas of strength/need for improvement
- Ultimately determine whether students have met the benchmarks for the course
- “Gold standard” assessments are those that not only evaluate student work, but also improve their skills and understanding of course content

# Defining Authentic Assessment

Authentic assessment seeks to test skills and knowledge sets in **realistic situations** that are relevant to **future disciplinary professions**.

- Realistic
- Asks the student to “do” the subject
- Requires judgement and innovation
- Assesses the student’s ability to efficiently and effectively integrate knowledge and skills to negotiate a complex task
- Allows appropriate opportunities to consult resources, practice, receive feedback and refine performances and products.

Added benefit – it’s harder to cheat!

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# Why else might we use authentic assessment?

*Let's think about one of the biggest predictors of student completion and success*

- **Competence:** the student believes they have the ability to complete the task
- **Control:** sees a direct link between action and outcome, and retains autonomy by having some control over whether or how to undertake the task
- **Interest/Value:** has interest in the task or sees the value of completing it
- **Relatedness:** completion of the task brings the student social rewards or approval from a person of social importance to the students

*Sources: Bandura, 1996; Dweck, 2010; Murray, 2011; Pintrich, 2003; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Seifert, 2004*



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# Comparison of Typical and Authentic Assessment

Typical Test	Authentic Tasks	Indicators of Authenticity
Require correct responses	Require a high – quality product or performance and a justification of the solutions to the problems encountered	Correctness is not the only criterion. Students must be able to justify their answers
Must be unknown to the student in advance to be valid	Should be known in advance to the student, as much as possible	The tasks and standards for judgement should be known or predictable

# Comparison of Typical and Authentic Assessment

Typical Test	Authentic Tasks	Indicators of Authenticity
Are disconnected from real-world contexts and constraints	Are tied to real-world contexts and constraints; require the student to "do" the subject	The context and constraints of the task are like those encountered by practitioners in the discipline
Contain items that isolate particular skills or facts	Are integrated challenges in which a range of skills and knowledge must be used in coordination	The task is multifaceted and complex, even if there is a right answer

# Comparison of Typical and Authentic Assessment

Typical Test	Authentic Tasks	Indicators of Authenticity
Include easily scored items	Involve complex tasks; may not have a single correct answer; may not be easily scored	The validity of the assessment is not sacrificed in favor of reliable scoring
Student gets one chance to show their learning	Are iterative: contain recurring tasks	Students may use particular knowledge or skills in several different ways or contexts
Provide a score	Provide usable diagnostic information about students' skills and knowledge	The assessment is designed to improve future performance and students are important consumers of such information

# Examples of authentic assessment



**Nursing** – Provide a case study of a patient and ask students to assess and create a plan of care



**Business** – develop a business/marketing/sales plan for an imaginary or real company in a student's area of interest.



**Computer Science** - Troubleshoot a problematic piece of code; Develop a website/app to solve a particular problem and/or meet a set of criteria.

# Examples of authentic assessment



**Psychology** - Examine/critique a case study from multiple theoretical positions



**Public Affairs or Service Learning Course** – Consider how a community agency might be impacted by a particular challenge (budget cuts, infrastructure, outage, public health crisis, etc.)



**Biology/Chemistry** - Draw a diagram of how a process works, indicating what happens if X occurs



**History** – Engage in a role play of a particular event in history; Describe what might have happened if one element of a historical event had changed.

# Challenges

- Authentic assessment planning is time consuming
  - How will you scaffold the learning outcomes?
  - How will you provide support?
- Authentic tasks take longer for students to complete
- Students might be anxious about their grades
- Online teamwork can be difficult to coordinate

# Planning

1. Identify the learning outcomes: identify “macro” skills
2. Keep relevance and application in mind
3. Define relevant tasks :
  - start by thinking about what professionals in your field do
  - if it’s not directly related to your field, it should require students to apply themselves to relevant and new situations
  - Make relevance to field or student goals explicit

Hint: think about the “verb” of the learning objective and then come up with a scenario

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# Identify Essential Performance Criteria

4. This is like Step 2 of Backwards Design, where you are thinking about the criteria you'll use for evaluation

5. Make a rubric and share it with the students upfront

	(1)	(2)	(3)
• —	≡	✓	≡
• —	≡	≡	✓
• —	≡	✓	≡

# *Must I re-do everything??*



Remember: You can use formative assessments that build toward a summative, authentic assessment

For example, in Physiology, perhaps I want my final authentic assessment to be having students evaluate a case study and provide a treatment plan....

Or perhaps in History I want them to role play a “what-if” event....

You can give low stakes assessments throughout the course that test lower-level Blooms, and then scaffold skills throughout the semester

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# A final thought

Why might I want to keep at least some “inauthentic” assessments?

- Graduate entrance exams
- Professional Graduate entrance exams
- Professional Board exams

It’s “authentic” if it is true to your discipline and/or supports needed skills and abilities of students!

# Resources

Authentic Assessment Toolbox. Retrieved from:

<https://www.ohio.edu/instructional-innovation/CTL/resources/Authentic-Assessment-Toolbox.pdf>

Authentic Assessment. Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning, Indiana University Bloomington. Retrieved from

<https://cctl.indiana.edu/teaching-resources/assessing-student-learning/authentic-assessment/index.html>

Assessment in the Online Classroom Retrieved from: <https://ctl.wiley.com/authentic-assessment-in-the-online-classroom/>

Shank, P. (2009, May). Four typical online learning assessment mistakes. In R. Kelly (Ed.), *Assessing online learning: Strategies, challenges and opportunities* (pp. 4-6). Madison, WI: Magna Publications Inc. Available from <https://www.facultyfocus.com/free-reports/assessing-online-learning-strategies-challenges-and-opportunities/>

University of Florida. (2018). Authentic assessment in online learning. Retrieved from <http://citt.ufl.edu/online-teaching-resources/assessments/authentic-assessment-in-online-learning/>

Authentic Assessment. Retrieved from <https://www.njit.edu/ite/authentic-assessment>

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# Resources

Retrieved from: Faculty Focus: [Facilitating Effective Collaboration in Virtual Student Teams](#)

Retrieved from Faculty Focus: [How to Design Effective Online Group Work Activities](#)