**Authentic Assessment**

Authentic assessments ask students to demonstrate competency through the completion of tasks that most mirror the world beyond the classroom. They often focus on messy, complex real-world situations and their accompanying constraints. Thus, we are moving students toward applying content, not just remembering and understanding.

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| Traditional Tasks | Authentic Tasks | Indicators of Authenticity |
| Require correct responses | Require a high-quality product or performance, and a justification of the solutions to 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 students as much as possible | The tasks and standards for judgment should be known or predictable. |
| 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. |
| Include easily scored items | Involve complex tasks that for which there may be no right answer, and that may not be easily scored | The validity of the assessment is not sacrificed in favor of reliable scoring. |
| Are “one shot”; students get 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. |

**Questions to Consider:**

* What do students need to be able to doas they transition from students to professionals?
* How can you shift a traditional assessment to an authentic assessment?
* What criteria will you use for an authentic assessment?
* How does an authentic assessment fit into your course design?
* How does an authentic assessment fit into your program design?

**Reference:**

Wiggins, G. (1998). Educative assessment: Designing assessments to inform and improve student performance. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.