

Five Dimensions of Authentic Assessment

Authentic Assessment

Authentic assessment measures student ability to apply knowledge and skills in meaningful, realistic contexts. It evaluates both the quality of what students do and the thinking behind it, ensuring that the task and evaluation criteria demand the same level of intellectual engagement.

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Five Dimensions of Authentic Assessment (cont.)

The **task** dimension of authentic assessment refers to the extent to which an assessment activity reflects the kind of problems and work performed in real professional practice. An authentic task requires students to integrate knowledge, skills, and attitudes as professionals do, and mirrors the complexity, decision-making, and responsibility (ownership) of the corresponding real-world task. Crucially, the task must be perceived by students as representative, meaningful, and relevant - clearly connected to real-world situations or transferable professional practices.

Physical Context refers to how closely the assessment environment mirrors the real-world conditions under which knowledge and skills are actually used. This includes the setting (environment or simulation), the tools and resources available (notes, technology, equipment, relevant and irrelevant information), and the time constraints under which the task is performed.

Social Context refers to how closely the assessment reflects the social processes through which knowledge and skills are used in real-world practice. This includes whether tasks are completed collaboratively or individually, and how interaction, interdependence, accountability, or competition function within the activity. An assessment is socially authentic when the way learner's work, with or alongside others, mirrors the social demands of the equivalent real-life situation, rather than assuming collaboration by default.

The **Assessment Result Or Form** describes the evidence students produce - realistic products or performances, often across multiple tasks - that demonstrate competence and can be explained, justified, or defended to others. This is the evidence of their thinking and learning. Assessment result or form is characterized by four elements:

- a) A quality product or performance that mimics real life
- b) A demonstration that indicates the students' competency
- c) A full array of tasks and multiple indicators (not just one task or test)
- d) Student should present or defend their work to others in oral or written form

Criteria & Standards are characteristics and levels of performance expected from students. Explicit and transparent criteria are stated for the student and relevant to the real world. This dimension informs and is informed by the other dimensions.

References

Gulikers, J. T. M., Bastiaens, T. J., & Kirschner, P. A. (2004). A five-dimensional Framework for Authentic Assessment. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 52(3), 67–86. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf02504676>
