

Authentic Assessment

Measuring What Matters



**BAKERSFIELD
COLLEGE**

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"Assessment", or "assessment"?

Assessment:

Measuring and reporting student performance on specific Learning Outcomes:
SLO / PLO / ILO
GELO

assessment

Assessment

assessment:

Measuring student mastery of any/all course material.

What is Authentic Assessment?

Common Definitions

- “Authentic assessment is designed to provide students with opportunities to demonstrate what they can do in a situation that requires the application and production of knowledge, rather than mere recognition or reproduction of correct answers.”
Darling-Hammond, et al. (1995)
- “Authenticity is defined as assessment that is real in terms of processes and products, assessment conditions or the presented context, and true to life beyond school, curriculum and classroom practice or learning and instruction.”
Palm (2008)
- "student activities that replicate real-world performances as closely as possible"
Svinicki (2004)
- "Assessment is authentic when we directly examine student performance on worthy intellectual tasks."
Wiggins (1990)

What is Authentic Assessment?

Critical Components

- Authentic assessments require students to be effective performers with acquired knowledge.
- Authentic assessments attend to whether the student can craft polished, thorough and justifiable answers, performances or products.
- Authentic assessments mimic the "messiness" of real work.
- Authentic assessments allow students opportunities to connect new learning to their existing knowledge structures.

Benefits of Authentic Assessment

- Escalates Critical Thinking (Bloom)
- Improves Attachment to Existing Knowledge Structures (Piaget, Vygotsky)
- Makes Learning Relevant and Generalizable (Wiggins)
- Improves Student Engagement and Motivation (Lombardi, 2007; Deci & Ryan, 1985)

Criticisms of Authentic Assessment

- AA is resource-intensive
- AA is not scalable
- AA is not "standardized" and therefore isn't "fair"
- AA is impossible to grade objectively

Examples of Authentic Assessment Activities

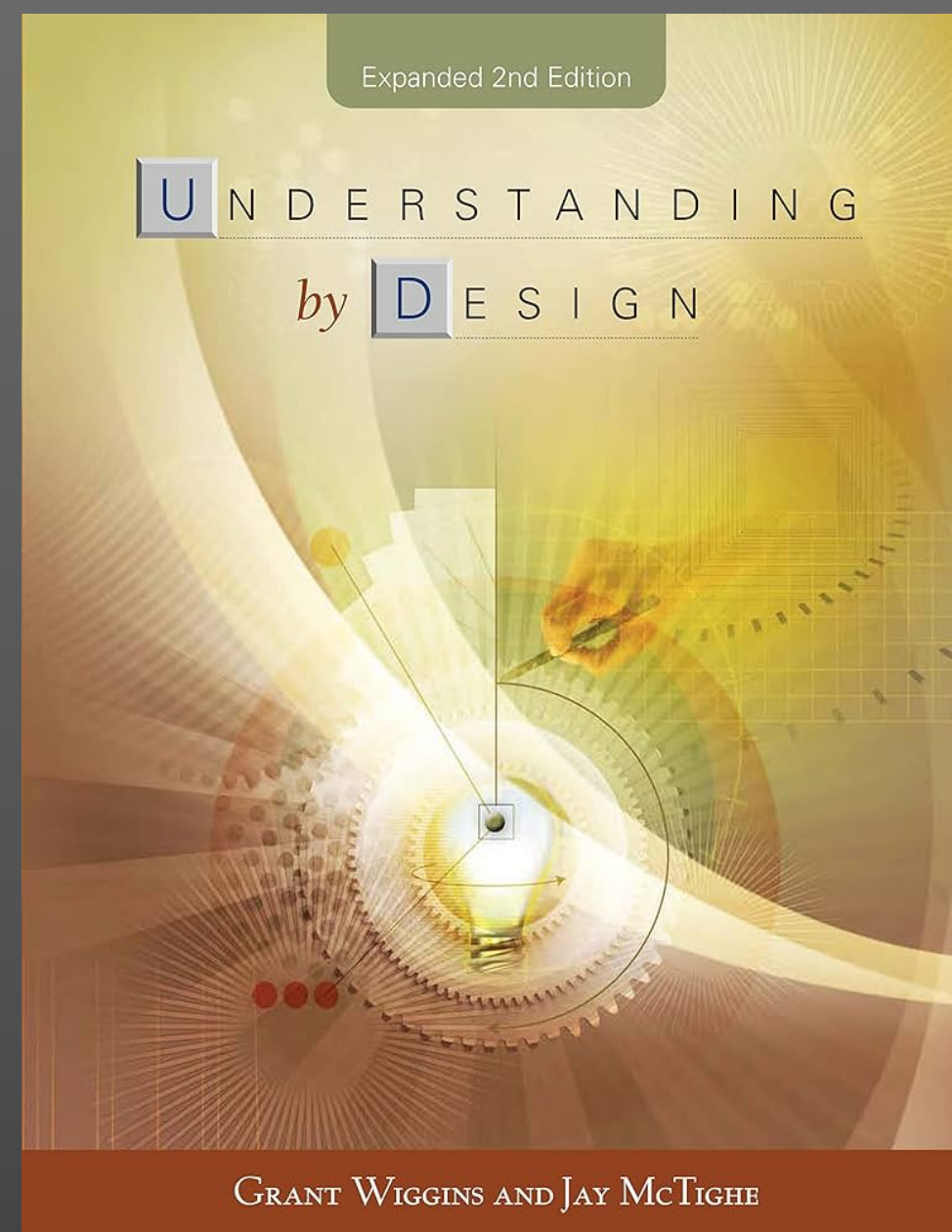
1. Pitch a startup idea to local entrepreneurs.
2. Conduct a market analysis for a local business.
3. Design and teach a lesson plan to peers.
4. Create a curriculum unit aligned with standards.
5. Develop a functional mobile app for a real need.
6. Redesign a nonprofit's website for usability.
7. Build and test a prototype for a mechanical system.
8. Propose a solution to a local infrastructure problem.
9. Research biodiversity in a local ecosystem.
10. Develop a campus sustainability proposal.

Examples of Authentic Assessment Activities

11. Analyze and diagnose simulated patient cases.
12. Create a public health education campaign.
13. Conduct a community needs assessment.
14. Advocate for policy changes affecting vulnerable groups.
15. Design a behavioral intervention strategy.
16. Administer and analyze cognitive tests.
17. Present a multimedia literary analysis project.
18. Curate a virtual or physical museum exhibit.
19. Debate global issues in a Model UN simulation.
20. Write a policy brief for a government official.

Creating Authentic Assessment Activities

Two Great Resources



Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2005).
Understanding by design (Expanded 2nd ed.). ASCD.

Creating Authentic Assessment Activities

Two Great Resources

The screenshot shows the 'Authentic Assessment Toolbox' website. The main title is 'Authentic Assessment Toolbox' with a subtitle 'created by Jon Mueller'. There are three navigation links: 'What is Authentic Assessment?', 'Why Do It?', and 'How Do You Do It?'. The left sidebar contains a menu with links to 'Home', 'Standards', 'Tasks', 'Rubrics', 'Portfolios', 'Examples', 'Workshops', and 'Glossary'. The main content area is titled 'How Do You Create Authentic Assessments?'. It defines 'Authentic Assessment' as 'Students are asked to perform real-world tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills'. The text explains that one can use 'authentic tasks', 'standards', or 'criteria' and provides a link to a 'glossary'. It then lists 'Questions to Ask' with the first question: '1) What should students know and be able to do? This list of knowledge and skills becomes your . . .'. Below this is the word 'STANDARDS' with a green arrow pointing down to the second question: '2) What indicates students have met these standards? To determine if students have met these standards, you will design or select relevant . . .'. A small green square is visible on the right side of the page.

Mueller, J. (n.d.). How Do You Create Authentic Assessments? Authentic Assessment Toolbox. Retrieved January 12, 2025, from <https://jonfmueller.com/toolbox/howdoyoudoit.htm>

Backward Design Framework (UBD)

Step 1: Identify Desired Results

- **Clarify the learning goals:** Determine the key knowledge, skills, and understandings students should acquire.
- **Focus on big ideas and enduring understandings** that have lasting value beyond the classroom.
- **Define essential questions** that stimulate inquiry and provoke deeper thinking.

Backward Design Framework (UBD)

Step 2: Determine Acceptable Evidence

- Decide how students will **demonstrate their understanding** of the learning problem.
- **Develop authentic assessments** that align with the desired results, ensuring students apply their knowledge in meaningful ways.
- **Identify criteria for success** using rubrics or performance standards.

Backward Design Framework (UBD)

Step 3: Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction

- Design **activities and lessons that guide students** toward achieving the desired results.
- Ensure that tasks provide **opportunities** for:
 - **Engagement:** Capture student interest and connect to real-world problems.
 - **Exploration:** Encourage inquiry, analysis, and problem-solving.
 - **Application:** Allow students to practice and apply their learning in context.

Backward Design Framework (UBD)

Step 4: Frame the Learning Problem

- Create a scenario or task that **situates the learning in a realistic or meaningful context**.
- Make the problem **open-ended** enough to encourage critical thinking and creativity, yet **focused** enough to align with the learning goals.
- Ensure the problem **connects to the essential questions** and big ideas of the unit.

Backward Design Framework (UBD)

Step 5: Scaffold the Learning Process

- Provide **supports, resources, and guidance** to help students work through the problem.
- **Break the problem into manageable steps** or stages, gradually **reducing support** as students gain independence.

Backward Design Framework (UBD)

Step 6: Encourage Reflection and Revision

- Incorporate **opportunities for students to reflect** on their progress and refine their solutions or understanding.
- Use **formative feedback** to guide students toward deeper learning and improvement.

Backward Design Framework (UBD)

Step 7: Align with Transfer Goals

- Ensure the learning problem **promotes transferable skills and knowledge** that students can apply in new situations.
- Design tasks that encourage students to **make connections across disciplines** or to **real-world contexts**.

Overwhelmed?

Here are a few ways to think about this:

- Start small.
- Think about the rhythm of your class.
- Think about your favorite part.
- Think about "formative" *and* "summative"
- Spread it out.
- Think about groups, peer review, self-assessment.

Authentic Assessment + Bill's Bonus Points for Leveling Up AA

- **Is it Creative?** (Piaget, Vygotsky, Papert)
- **Is it Personal?** (Piaget, Vygotsky)
- **Is it Social?** (Vygotsky, Wenger)
- **Is it Metacognitive?** (Kolb, Flavell, Bloom's Revised)
- **Is it Iterative?** (Kolb, Seely Brown)

One More Pro Tip

Brainstorm with
ChatGPT

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