Authentic Summative Assessment

Summative Assessment evaluates students' abilities as they are about to complete a course (or at the end of a unit). We expect summative results to indicate more complete mastery of learning outcomes than formative assessment. In many cases summative learning is assessed through tests of knowledge that focus on memorization and information recall.

Authentic Assessment requires application of course knowledge to a new situation. These types of assessment focus on complex, real-world situations that require a student to think about application of knowledge and skills in society rather than just in the classroom. According to Wiggins (1998), an assignment is authentic if it:

- is realistic.
- requires judgment and innovation.
- asks the student to "do" the subject.
- replicates or simulates the contexts in which adults are "tested" in the workplace or in civic or personal life.
- assesses the student's ability to efficiently and effectively use a repertoire of knowledge and skills to negotiate a complex task.
- allows appropriate opportunities to rehearse, practice, consult resources, and get feedback on and refine performances and products.

Benefits of Authentic Assessment

Because authentic assessment asks students to apply knowledge they are typically more interesting and thus more motivating for students. When students' work benefits real people or organizations, for instance, it often stimulates students to hold themselves more accountable, produce higher quality work, and make connections between course content and the real-world. Authentic assessments are also typically a better measure of student learning, especially for higher-order thinking skills. They also eliminate any concerns about academic dishonesty since the student is producing original work, usually in parts.

How Do You Create Authentic Assessments?

Dr. Jon Mueller created the Authentic Assessment Toolbox. He developed four steps for creating an authentic assessment:

1. Identify your standards (learning outcomes) for your students – what should they know or be able to do?
2. Develop a task your students can perform that indicates they have met that standard.

3. Identify the characteristics of good performance of that task; this is the criteria that indicates they have performed well (i.e. met the standard).
4. Create a rubric indicating level of student performance.

For details about the process you can visit the [Authentic Assessment Toolbox](#).

Examples of Authentic Assessments

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
Psychology	Examine/critique a case study from multiple theoretical positions
Public Affairs or Service-Learning Courses	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.