

The Eight Critical Elements of Authentic Assessment

The eight critical elements of an authentic assessment by Ashford-Rowe (2014) serve as a helpful framework for designing and facilitating authentic assessment in the college classroom. According to the Eight Critical Elements, authentic assessments should:

1. Be challenging
2. Culminate in a performance or product
3. Be transferable to new contexts
4. Include metacognition and reflection
5. Accurately replicate workplace application
6. Use tools (language, graphics, or topics) authentic to 'real world' context
7. Create opportunities for feedback
8. Invite collaboration

Examples of Authentic Assessment

The following examples reflect authentic assessments which directly mimic the 'real world' and reflect activities students may engage in during their careers, making them more relevant, applicable, and engaging.

1. Occupational therapy undergraduates created an information sheet about a disease to disseminate to and inform other healthcare professionals, followed by a reflection task (Colthorpe et al., 2021).
2. An online case simulation in an undergraduate business program mimicked a manager responding to a real work situation (Way et al., 2021). It included 12 weeks of lecture and reading, three assessment tasks and activities such as Board Reports that a character in the simulation requested, and finally, materials included video and audio vignettes of events and stakeholder positions/attitudes, organizational datasets, strategy documents, witness statements, audit reports, and so on (Way et al., 2021).
3. A "dream study" in which doctoral students designed the research study that they would most like to explore if there were no limitations on time, resources, or funding (D. Lackey, personal communication, October 23, 2023).
4. In order to build music analysis skills, students in an undergraduate Music Appreciation class reviewed two albums of their choice. In order to exercise musical analysis in more than one genre, one must be inside the student's musical taste and one outside. The analysis can be presented in essay, infographic, or video format (A. Prince, personal communication, October 24, 2023).

Ashford-Rowe, K., Herrington, J., & Brown, C. (2013). Establishing the critical elements that determine authentic assessment. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 39(2), 205–222. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2013.819566>