

# Assessment Authenticity: Bridging the Gap Between Academia and the Workplace for Diverse Learners – Evolution and Examples

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Innovative approaches to assessment design are an important aspect of this educational era. The new paradigm emphasizes a major consideration which is the validity of assessment tasks in adequately representing the intended learning outcomes. There is a quest for contextuality, hence the limitations of traditional assessments to align to relevant contexts in the wake of rapid technological progress. Considering this, authentic assessments have emerged as a workable alternative by offering a more holistic evaluation of learners' practical skills. This chapter explores the idea of authenticity and demonstrates how more authentic assessment methods have replaced conventional classroom techniques. It enlightens readers on their different forms and how they are currently being embraced by educators*

*to support real-world learning opportunities that close the knowledge gap between academia and employability. This chapter also highlights the motivational benefits of authentic assessments that enhance the professional and employability skills of learners and points out some challenges.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Demands, across the globe, from government authorities and business executives for a more skilled workforce in the professional setting have led to transformations in higher education. They increasingly emphasise how higher education institutions' mission is to develop their graduates' employability. Hence, academic institutions need to develop learners' skills and prepare them for changing ways and types of work based on capabilities required by graduate employers (Ashford-Rowe, 2014; Rowe & Zegwaard, 2017; Ajjawi et al., 2018). One way to address this concern is by bridging theory and practice through assessment, in particular, the authentic assessment approach which will equip the learners with the skills and abilities required of them in their professional spheres.

Assessment is one of the most important aspects of education, which has an impact on all partnerships and stakeholders in the educational community, including learners, parents, instructors, administrators, guardians, and policymakers (Dietal *et al.*, 1991; Saher et al., 2022). According to Saher et al. (2022), assessment is any method adopted to measure and appraise the knowledge and skills of learners and is essential for determining the efficacy of a given technique as well as the product of the learning process. Karim et al. (2018) state that the success of learning ultimately depends on how accurate and effective the assessment is. An assessment is essential for gauging the efficiency and effectiveness of learning and teaching in the field of education. When characterising assessments, traditional and authentic are the two primary subgroups that are employed. The term 'authentic' in connection with learning and assessment was first introduced by Archbald & Newmann (1988). With this allusion, they also meant to refer to authentic achievement where they strongly emphasized the production of knowledge, and deep understanding rather than mere response to the work of others, or simple awareness (Newmann & Archbald 1992). Its objective is to assess learners' application of skills and knowledge to real-world situations.

For several years, conventional techniques including quizzes, and other standardised forms of examinations have been widely adopted. These traditional assessments frequently fell short of fully capturing students' performance and failed to evaluate the entire spectrum of critical learner outcomes (Osman, 2023). The evolving nature of education coupled with the opportunities and challenges brought

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