

Characteristics of Authentic Assessments

Wiggins, Grant. (2013). 27 Characteristics of Authentic Assessment [Blog Post]. Retrieved from <https://www.teachthought.com/pedagogy/27-characteristics-of-authentic-assessment/>

STRUCTURE & LOGISTICS

- Are more appropriately public; involve an audience, panel, etc.
- Do not rely on unrealistic and arbitrary time constraints
- Offer known, not secret, questions or tasks.
- Are not one-shot – more like portfolios or a season of games
- Involve some collaboration with others
- Recur – and are worth retaking
- Make feedback to students so central that school structures and policies are modified to support them

FAIRNESS

- Identify (perhaps hidden) strengths [not just reveal deficits]
- Strike a balance between honoring achievement while mindful of fortunate prior experience or training [that can make the assessment invalid]
- Minimize needless, unfair, and demoralizing comparisons of students to one another
- Allow appropriate room for student styles and interests [– some element of choice]
- Can be attempted by all students via available scaffolding or prompting as needed [with such prompting reflected in the ultimate scoring]
- Have perceived value to the students being assessed.

INTELLECTUAL DESIGN FEATURES

- Are “essential” – not contrived or arbitrary just to shake out a grade
- Are enabling, pointing the student toward more sophisticated and important use of skills and knowledge
- Are contextualized and complex, not atomized into isolated objectives
- Involve the students’ own research
- Assess student habits and repertoires, not mere recall or plug-in.
- Are representative challenges of a field or subject
- Are engaging and educational
- Involve somewhat ambiguous (ill-structures) tasks or problems

GRADING

- Involve criteria that assess essentials, not merely what is easily scores
- Are not graded on a curve, but in reference to legitimate performance standards or benchmarks
- Involve transparent, de-mystified expectations
- Make self-assessment part of the assessment
- Use a multi-faceted analytic trait scoring system instead of one holistic or aggregate grade
- Reflect coherent and stable school standards