

Is this assessment authentic enough?

Introduction

A key concern with most academic institutions is employability of its graduates (Osborne, Dunne & Farrand, 2013). Therefore, there has been a certain amount of literature in terms of aligning and bridging the gap between academic assessment and practical work skills (Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2004; Wilson, 2012).

An authentic assessment as defined by Gulikers, Bastiaens and Kirschner (2004, p. 69), is “an assessment requiring students to use the same competencies, or combinations of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, that they need to apply in (.....) professional life”. It is believed that if an assessment is changed to something that mirrors what occurs in the practical world, then this would greatly assist the skills as well as the employability of a graduate.

This session presents an example of an exercise that has been carried out for several years in an undergraduate class, and which combines elements of presentation, critical analysis, recommendations, and a format which has been employed in consultancy settings.

Theoretical foundation/Teaching Implications:

Berger and Wild (2017) identify that perspective employers prize critical reasoning skills and therefore authentic assessment improves graduate employability rates. They believe there is a direct and positive correlation between exposure to authentic assessment techniques and improved academic performance.

Manville, Donald and Eves (2022) were certain that authentic assessment increased employability of university business school students. They identify that employers had tended to criticise the quality of graduates entering the labour market because they cannot plan or think strategically, cope with uncertainty or work under pressure. (Deng, 2021; James and Casidy, 2018).

Sokhanvar, Salehi and Sokhanvar (2021) did a systematic review of literature which identified that authentic assessment can play a role in improving the learning experience through enhancing engagement in learning and improving satisfaction.

Gulikers, Bastiaens and Kirschner (2006) pointed out that authentic assessment is well established in fields such as nursing and apprenticeships, but it is only in very early stages in business schools.

Ashford-Rowe, Herrington and Brown (2014), as well as Schultz, Young, Gunning and Harvey (2022) identify that critical elements need to include the following:

- Assessments which inspire the application of relevant knowledge and skills
- Assessments that motivate students to become problem solvers
- Assessments that connect learning to real life.

Furthermore, assessment is effective when students see the task or activity as plausible, meaningful and relevant.

Learning Objectives

By attending the session, participants will be introduced to an exercise which can be used in courses, both graduate and undergraduate.

Exercise overview

The session begins briefly with an overview of authentic assessment and how it is being integrated more in various courses.

An assessment will be presented which incorporates elements of consultancy presentations and identifies critical thinking as a key component in making recommendations for organisations with which students are familiar. Some students have used their assignments which focus on their organisations to obtain promotions in those organisations.

The presenter will outline the instructions to students, and then have participants work in small groups to come up with topics that they may consider using in the assessments in their institutions.

These will be identified and presented to the whole group, and then finish with a question-and-answer session.

Session Description

Timeline	Activity
0-10	Overview of authentic assessment and its impact on course assessment
10-20	Outline of structure of assessment and instructions to students
20-30	One example as presented to students for guidance
30-45	Participants come up with some realistic topics that can be covered in future assignments.
45-55	The presenter summarizes the results.
55-60	Q&A time

Suggested timing is 1 hour

Materials will be supplied.

There is no maximum for the class size

A computer with internet access is required.

References

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