Authentic Assessment –
*Workshop*

Professor Kevin Ashford-Rowe
This workshop is intended to provide a consideration of the role and value of ‘authenticity’ as a factor in the design and development of authentic activities. It will provide some context on the purpose and importance of ‘authenticity’ as a component of a 21st century student learning experience and then, using the presenter’s own research, seek provide some structured mechanisms by which the relative degree of authenticity within an assessment task might be overtly considered.
Context

• Time of major transformation and change

• Exist within a Global Economy
  – Increased international competition
  – Rate of technology uptake and transformation
  – eLearning now becoming mLearning..!
Context continues...

Background
- Economic history perspective
  - Agrarian to Industrial Age (the move from the Cottage industry to the factory)
  - Industrial to Information Age (the move out of the factory to the open network)
    - Industrial Age education for Industrial Age students
    - Information Age education for Information Age students
- University education increasingly about developing 21\textsuperscript{st} Century professionals who can access and navigate the information mountain and use valid, reliable often ‘just in time’ information to inform processes and decision making
- Learning and teaching activities and environments need to support increasingly collaborative activity in a team based project group approach
  - Where spaces need to be
    - Agile
    - Flexible
Context contd.

• Reported change in the student experience:
  – Students (school leavers and mature aged) reporting that:
    • Your teachers don’t use enough technology in their teaching and, when they do, they don’t use it well enough!
  – Changes in the way children educated in schools
    • K-12 – Situated and authentic learning experiences, more constructivist approach
Authentic Learning and Assessment
Innovation vs. Hygiene

• From the student’s perspective
  – It’s about their learning experience
    • How and when it is measured
    • How closely does it resemble practice

• From the teacher’s perspective
  – It’s about meeting the expectations of the student
    • What do you want from me?
    • What do you need from me?

• From the University’s perspective
  – It’s about providing students with a consistent and quality assured and increasingly a situated and authentic learning and teaching experience
    • Consistent with the experience that they receive in other areas of their life
    • Consistent with the ways in which they have been taught to learn
    • At least consistent with the experience competitors are providing
      – (traditional and non traditional/local, national & global)
And, remember this!

Nothing that we do to, or for, our students is more important than our assessment of their work and the feedback we give them on it. The results of our assessment influence our students for the rest of their lives and careers...

– fine if we get it right, but unthinkable if we get it wrong.

Race, Brown and Smith (2005), 500 Tips on Assessment

JISC - Effective Assessment in a Digital Age (2010)
Why the move to authentic learning and assessment?
An employer speaks:
Let’s bring classrooms into the 21st century

We need to tear down an education system designed for the 19th century – and replace it with one that’s suited for the 21st.

Rupert Murdoch's Keynote Address to the Foundation for Excellence in Education Summit on October 14, 2011 in San Francisco, California.
Rupert Murdoch: Let’s bring classrooms into the 21st century

You don’t get change by plugging in computers to schools designed for the industrial age. You get it by deploying technology that re-writes the rules of the game by centering learning around the learner.
What are we teaching?

Aligning design with Bloom's upper levels encourages higher-order thinking that is one of the essential skills for the 21st Century learner.
Where do we teach it?
The physical learning and teaching environment

Maslow’s Hierarchy of human need
So what is authentic assessment?
Focusing on assessment

*The design of educative assessment tasks could be considered to be the most important element of tertiary teaching*

(Angelo, 1999)
Thus ...

It’s the task that matters most!
For a fair selection everybody has to take the same exam: please climb that tree.
Why authenticity in assessment?

For me this means...
“Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid”

Albert Einstein
Context factors

Assessment is most likely to be authentic if it satisfies the following:

• Requires fidelity of the task to the conditions under which the performance would normally occur

• Requires connectedness and transfer to the world beyond the classroom
Student factors: *think Bloom!*

- Requires **problem solving skills** and **higher order thinking**
- Requires **production of knowledge** rather than reproduction
- Requires significant student time and effort in **collaboration** with others
- Is characterised by substantive **conversation**
- Requires students to be effective **performers with acquired knowledge**, and to craft polished, **performances or products**
Task factors: *think student!*

- Stimulates a **wide range of active responses**

- Involves complex, **ill structured challenges** that require judgment, multiple steps, and a full array of tasks

- Requires the assessment to be seamlessly **integrated** with the activity
Indicators

• Provides **multiple indicators** of learning

• Achieves validity and reliability with **appropriate criteria for scoring varied products**
What are the 8 Critical *Elements* of authentic assessment?

- An authentic assessment should be challenging
- The outcome of an authentic assessment should be in the form of a performance or product (outcome)
- Authentic assessment design should ensure transfer of knowledge
- Metacognition as a component of authentic assessment
What are the 8 Critical Elements of authentic assessment? (Contd)

• The importance of a requirement to ensure accuracy in assessment performance
• The role of the assessment environment and the tools used to deliver the assessment task
• The importance of formally designing in an opportunity to discuss and provide feedback
• The value of collaboration
• The ‘elements’ as ‘questions’
  – Why?
  – How?
  – What do they look like?
What are the 8 Critical Questions of authentic assessment?

Thus, the refined eight key question become:

• To what extent does the assessment activity *challenge* the student?
• Is a *performance, or product*, required as a final assessment outcome?
• Does the assessment activity require that *transfer* of learning has occurred, by means of demonstration of skill?
• Does the assessment activity require that *metacognition* is demonstrated?
What are the 8 Critical Questions of authentic assessment? (contd.)

• Does the assessment require a product or performance that could be recognised as authentic by a client or stakeholder? (accuracy)
• Is fidelity required in the assessment environment? And the assessment tools (actual or simulated)?
• Does the assessment activity require discussion and feedback?
• Does the assessment activity require that students collaborate?
Group Activity 1

Review the 8 Critical Questions

• **Step 1:** Individually reflect upon and review the eight Critical Questions

• **Step 2:** In pairs discuss your comments and views from Step 1

• **Step 3:** In Groups rank the 8 Critical Questions in order of importance

• **Step 4:** Each Group reports back on the outcomes of Step 3
The 8 Critical Questions of authentic assessment

• To what extent does the assessment activity challenge the student?

• Is a performance, or product, required as a final assessment outcome?

• Does the assessment activity require that transfer of learning has occurred, by means of demonstration of skill?

• Does the assessment activity require that metacognition is demonstrated?

• Does the assessment require a product or performance that could be recognised as authentic by a client or stakeholder? (accuracy)

• Is fidelity required in the assessment environment? And the assessment tools (actual or simulated)?

• Does the assessment activity require discussion and feedback?

• Does the assessment activity require that students collaborate?
Group Activity 2

Applying the elements

- **Step 1:** In small Groups (4-8) apply the 8 questions to a learning outcome of your choice
- **Step 2:** Each Group presents and describes assessment activity that they have designed
- **Step 3:** Facilitated discussion on the presentations
- **Step 4:** Conclusion and wrap up!
The 8 Critical Questions of authentic assessment

- To what extent does the assessment activity 
  *challenge* the student?

- Is a *performance, or product*, required as a final assessment outcome?

- Does the assessment activity require that 
  *transfer* of learning has occurred, by means of demonstration of skill?

- Does the assessment activity require that 
  *metacognition* is demonstrated?

- Does the assessment require a product or performance that could be recognised as authentic by a client or stakeholder? (accuracy)

- Is fidelity required in the assessment environment? And the assessment tools (actual or simulated)?

- Does the assessment activity require discussion and feedback?

- Does the assessment activity require that students collaborate?
Conclusion and wrap up!