

Authentic Task Design

Here is an authentic task design framework used by many university faculty, including Marilyn Lombardi who teaches at Duke University.

1. **Real-world Relevance:** The tasks assigned match the real-world tasks of professionals in the students' field.
2. **Ill-defined problems:** Tasks cannot be completed by the application of an existing solution. Authentic activities are relatively undefined and open to multiple approaches. Students must define the tasks and identify sub-tasks required to complete the work themselves.
3. **Sustained Investigation:** Problems cannot be solved or projects completed in a matter of minutes or even hours. Authentic activities are complex, multi-part, and require the investment of quality efforts and significant amounts of time for success.
4. **Multiple Sources/Perspectives:** Students must seek out resources and relevant materials for themselves. The instructor may provide scaffolding in the form of some guided research, but the bulk of the research is decided upon and performed by the students.
5. **Collaboration:** Authentic activities require the student to work as part of a team. Real-world problems are almost never solved by one person working alone.
6. **Reflection:** Real-world activities enable learners to make choices and reflect on their learning as individuals and/or as a group.
7. **Interdisciplinary Perspective:** Authentic activities are rarely confined to a single area or domain. They require students to think beyond a single, narrow specialization.
8. **Integrated Perspective:** Authentic activities are not one-off summative assessments; they require an integrated approach. Tasks and facts are woven into the major project in a way that reflects how evaluation is performed in the real-world.
9. **Finished Products:** Authentic assessments are not fragments of a never-completed whole or isolated academic exercises, they culminate in a complete product or artifact.
10. **Multiple Interpretations and Outcomes:** Authentic assessments do not yield a single correct answer reached by applying a formula or set of rules. Rather, they allow students to choose their own interpretation of the problem and direct the outcome based on their own research and vision.