



The Role of Authentic Assessment in Improving Learning Outcomes: A Review of Formative and Summative Assessment Practices

Phoebe Kate V. Jacob

Surigao del Norte State University, Surigao City, Philippines

Correspondence: pjacob@ssct.edu.ph

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ABSTRACT: Authentic assessment has emerged as an important educational approach that promoted meaningful learning by engaging students in real-world and performance-based tasks. This study reviewed existing literature on the role of authentic assessment in improving learning outcomes, with emphasis on formative and summative assessment practices. A systematic literature review design was employed using studies retrieved from academic databases such as Google Scholar, ERIC, Scopus, and ScienceDirect. Relevant studies published between 2015 and 2025 were screened and analyzed through thematic analysis. The findings revealed that authentic assessment significantly enhanced students' critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and application of knowledge in real-life contexts. Formative assessment was found to support continuous learning through timely feedback, progress monitoring, and reflective practices, while summative assessment effectively evaluated overall student achievement through performance tasks, project-based activities, and portfolio assessment. The review also highlighted the importance of rubrics and scoring guides in ensuring transparent and consistent evaluation, as well as the value of student-centered evaluation in promoting active participation, self-reflection, and ownership of learning. Overall, the literature suggested that authentic assessment contributed to deeper understanding and improved learning outcomes across educational settings. The study recommended the integration of authentic assessment strategies into classroom instruction and encouraged further research on digital and discipline-based applications of authentic assessment practices.

KEYWORDS: Authentic assessment; formative assessment; summative assessment; learning outcomes; performance assessment; student-centered evaluation.

1. Introduction

Assessment plays a vital role in the teaching and learning process because it measures how well students understand and apply knowledge and skills. Traditionally, assessment has focused on written examinations and standardized tests that primarily evaluate students' ability to recall information. While these methods are useful for measuring basic knowledge, they often fail to capture higher-order thinking skills, creativity, and the practical application of learning in real-life situations [1]. As education continues to evolve, there is increasing

recognition that assessment should not only measure learning but also support and improve it. In response to the limitations of traditional assessment, authentic assessment has emerged as a learner-centered approach that requires students to perform meaningful tasks such as projects, presentations, portfolios, and problem-solving activities. Authentic assessment enables learners to apply knowledge in real-world contexts, thereby promoting deeper understanding and the development of critical skills needed in the 21st century [2]. Studies have shown that authentic assessment increases student engagement, motivation, and active participation in the learning process [3–4].

Assessment practices are commonly categorized into formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment is conducted during the learning process to monitor student progress and provide feedback for improvement, whereas summative assessment evaluates overall learning achievement at the end of instruction [5]. Authentic assessment strengthens both approaches by providing meaningful and contextualized tasks that encourage learners to demonstrate understanding and apply knowledge effectively. Through this integration, assessment becomes more holistic and supportive of student learning outcomes. Globally, educational systems are increasingly adopting learner-centered and competency-based assessment practices to prepare students for complex and dynamic environments. In the Philippines, the K to 12 curriculum emphasizes the use of varied and authentic assessment strategies to promote holistic learning and skills development. However, many schools still rely heavily on traditional assessment methods because of challenges such as limited resources, large class sizes, and insufficient teacher training [6–7]. These challenges highlight the need to further examine the role of authentic assessment in improving learning outcomes.

This study is anchored in the conceptual framework that authentic assessment enhances formative and summative assessment practices, which in turn improve learning outcomes. The framework presents authentic assessment as the central variable influencing students' critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and real-world application of knowledge [8]. It assumes that meaningful and context-based assessment tasks encourage deeper learning and more accurate evaluation of student performance [9]. Figure 1 presents a conceptual model illustrating the impact of authentic assessment on key learning outcomes. The figure shows authentic assessment as the central variable leading to three major outcomes: critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and the real-world application of knowledge. Arrows indicate the direct influence of authentic assessment on each outcome, while interconnected links among the outcomes highlight their complementary nature. The figure emphasizes that authentic assessment supports higher-order learning by engaging students in meaningful and context-based tasks. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the role of authentic assessment in improving learning outcomes and determine how formative and summative assessment practices contribute to students' academic performance and skill development.

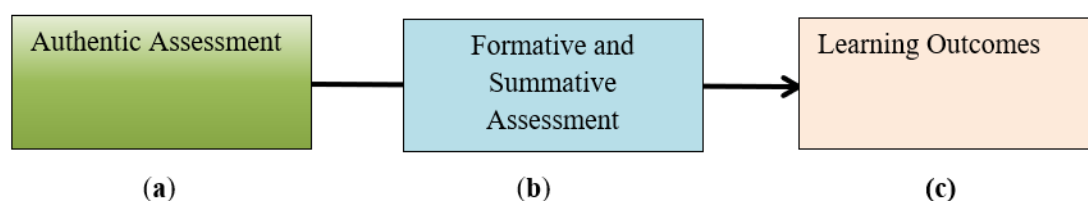


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study; (a) Authentic Assessment; (b) Formative and Summative Assessment; (c) Learning Outcomes.

2. Methods

2.1. Research design.

This study employed a systematic literature review design to examine the role of authentic assessment in improving learning outcomes. The review focused on analyzing and synthesizing existing studies related to formative, summative, and authentic assessment practices to identify patterns, themes, and gaps in the literature.

2.2. Data sources.

Relevant studies were collected from reputable academic databases, including Google Scholar, ERIC, Scopus, and ScienceDirect. These databases were selected to ensure access to peer-reviewed and high-quality publications related to education, assessment, and learning outcomes. The literature search covered studies published from 2015 to 2025 to ensure the inclusion of recent and relevant research on authentic, formative, and summative assessment practices. Database searches and source retrieval were conducted from March to April 2026 to improve the transparency and reproducibility of the review process.

2.3. Inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Table 1 presents the specific criteria used to determine the eligibility of studies included in this review. It clearly defines the scope of the literature by outlining acceptable publication years, language, research focus, and study types. This ensured that only relevant, recent, and high-quality studies were considered, thereby strengthening the validity and reliability of the review.

Table 1. Data inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Publication Year	Studies published from 2015–2025	Studies published before 2015
Language	English	Non-English publications
Study Focus	Authentic, formative, and summative assessment	Unrelated to assessment practices
Study Type	Peer-reviewed journal articles, empirical and review studies	Theses, dissertations, opinion papers
Participants	Students and educators (any level)	Studies not involving educational settings

2.4. Search strategy.

A structured search strategy was employed to identify relevant studies related to authentic assessment and learning outcomes. Key terms used in the search included “authentic assessment,” “formative assessment,” “summative assessment,” “learning outcomes,” and “educational assessment.” Boolean operators such as AND and OR were applied to refine the search and ensure the retrieval of relevant literature. The following keyword combinations were used across databases: (“authentic assessment” AND “learning outcomes”), (“formative assessment” OR “summative assessment”) AND “student performance,” and (“educational assessment” AND “critical thinking” AND “problem-solving”). In some databases, additional filters such as publication year, peer-reviewed status, and education-related subject areas were applied to improve the relevance and quality of the selected studies.

2.5. Study selection and data extraction.

All retrieved articles were screened based on titles and abstracts, followed by a full-text review to determine eligibility. Relevant data were systematically extracted, including authorship, year of publication, research design, sample characteristics, and key findings. Table 2 provides a structured summary of the selected studies included in the review. It allows for easy comparison of key study characteristics, such as research design, sample, and assessment type. This matrix supports transparency in data extraction and facilitates systematic analysis of findings across different studies.

Table 2. Data extraction matrix.

Author(s)	Research Design	Sample/Participants	Educational Setting	Assessment Type	Key Findings
[10]	Literature Review	Various educational studies	Primary and Secondary Education	Formative Assessment	Continuous feedback improves student learning and academic performance.
[11]	Conceptual Study	Not applicable	General Education	Authentic Assessment	Authentic assessment promotes real-world application of knowledge and skills.
[12]	Literature Review	Various educational institutions	K–12 and Higher Education	Performance Assessment	Performance-based assessment enhances critical thinking and deeper learning.
[13]	Meta-analysis	Multiple student populations	General Education	Formative Feedback	Effective feedback significantly improves learning outcomes and student achievement.
[14]	Conceptual Review	Higher education students	Higher Education	Self-Assessment and Feedback	Formative assessment strengthens self-regulated learning and metacognition.
[15]	Research Review	Various student groups	Project-Based Learning Environments	Project-Based Assessment	Project-based evaluation develops problem-solving and collaborative skills.
[16]	Qualitative Study	Classroom learners	Primary and Secondary Education	Rubrics and Scoring Guides	Rubrics improve transparency, student understanding, and quality of work.
[17]	Educational Review	Various classroom settings	General Education	Rubric-Based Assessment	Clear assessment criteria promote fair and reliable evaluation practices.
[18]	Qualitative Review	Student portfolio users	Higher Education	Portfolio Assessment	Portfolios support reflection, self-assessment, and documentation of learning progress.
[19]	Conceptual Study	Student learners	General Education	Student-Centered Evaluation	Self-regulated learning promotes independence and ownership of learning.

2.6. Data analysis.

The selected studies were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, concepts, and relationships related to authentic assessment and learning outcomes. The analysis began with a careful reading and review of each study to familiarize the researcher with the data. Significant statements, findings, and ideas relevant to the research objectives were highlighted and assigned initial codes. After the coding process, similar codes were grouped and categorized into broader themes based on their common meanings and relationships. The themes were then reviewed and refined to ensure consistency and relevance to the objectives of the study. Major categories that emerged from the analysis included the impact of authentic assessment on learning outcomes, the role of formative assessment in improving student learning, and the function of summative assessment in evaluating academic performance. This

process allowed for a systematic interpretation of the findings and facilitated a deeper understanding of how different assessment practices contribute to student learning and skill development.

2.7. Study Selection Process.

Figure 2 illustrates the systematic process used to identify, screen, and select studies for inclusion in the review, following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework. The diagram presents the number of records at each stage: identification, screening, eligibility, and final inclusion. It enhances the transparency of the review process by clearly showing how studies were filtered and selected based on the established criteria.

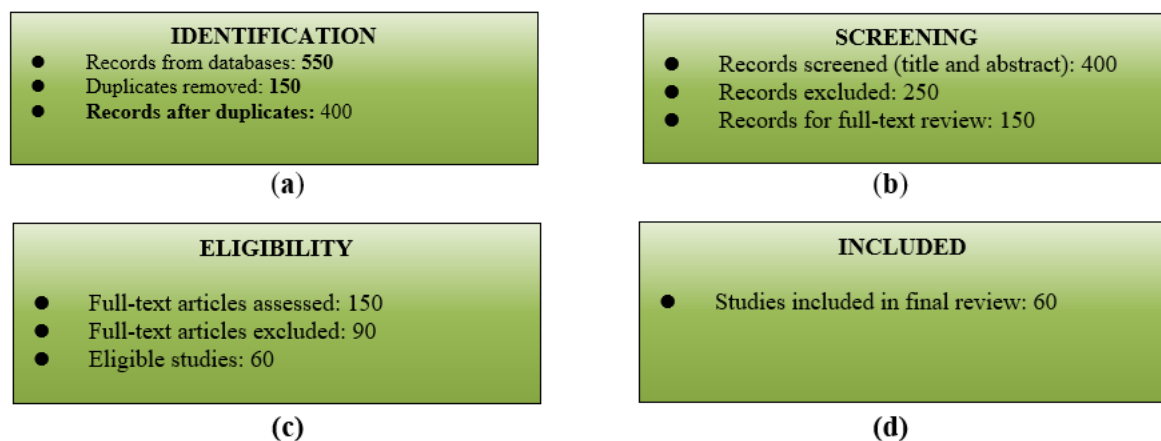


Figure 2. PRISMA flow diagram; (a) Identification; (b) Screening; (c) Eligibility; (d) Included.

2.8. Quality Assurance.

To ensure the reliability and credibility of the review, only peer-reviewed studies were included in the analysis. The selected articles were carefully evaluated for relevance, methodological rigor, and alignment with the objectives of the study. In assessing methodological quality, the studies were examined based on criteria such as clarity of research objectives, appropriateness of research design, adequacy of sample selection, validity and reliability of data collection methods, and consistency of data analysis procedures. In addition, potential risk of bias was evaluated by reviewing possible limitations in the studies, including sampling bias, insufficient data collection procedures, lack of transparency in analysis, and unsupported conclusions. Studies with clear methodologies, credible findings, and strong alignment with the research topic were prioritized to ensure the overall quality and trustworthiness of the review findings.

3. Results

3.1. Overview of selected studies.

The analysis of the selected studies reveals clear trends in terms of publication year, geographical distribution, and disciplinary focus. In terms of publication trends, there has been a notable increase in studies on authentic assessment from 2020 to 2023, indicating a growing global interest in learner-centered and performance-based assessment approaches. Earlier

studies were limited in number, but recent years show a steady rise, reflecting the shift toward developing 21st-century skills and adapting to changes in education, particularly during and after the COVID-19 pandemic [20]. Geographically, the literature demonstrates that research on authentic assessment is widely distributed across regions, with a strong concentration in Western countries such as the United States, Australia, and several European nations, followed by increasing contributions from Asian countries [21]. This trend suggests that while authentic assessment originated primarily in Western educational contexts, it is now gaining wider relevance across diverse educational systems and cultural settings. The growing number of studies from developing countries further highlights the adaptability of authentic assessment practices in different learning environments [22].

In terms of disciplinary focus, authentic assessment is widely applied across education, applied sciences, social sciences, STEM, and healthcare disciplines. Most studies are concentrated in education and applied fields where practical application, performance-based learning, and professional competencies are highly emphasized [23]. STEM and healthcare disciplines also demonstrate increasing use of authentic assessment because of the need to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and real-world decision-making skills [24]. In contrast, fewer studies were identified in natural sciences and other theoretical disciplines, suggesting that authentic assessment remains less explored in fields that traditionally rely on standardized and content-based evaluation methods [25-26]. This uneven distribution highlights potential research gaps and indicates the need for further investigation into the application and effectiveness of authentic assessment in underrepresented academic disciplines [27]. Table 3 presents the distribution of the reviewed studies based on publication year and geographical region. It highlights the increasing trend of research on authentic assessment over time, particularly in recent years, as well as its global expansion across different regions. The table also reflects how the focus of research has shifted from initial conceptual discussions to more applied and context-based studies. This distribution supports the growing recognition of authentic assessment as a relevant and adaptable approach in diverse educational systems.

Table 3. Distribution of studies by year and region.

Year of Publication	Frequency (n = 60)	Percentage (%)	Description
2015–2017	10	16.7%	Limited early studies; emerging interest in authentic assessment
2018–2019	13	21.7%	Gradual increase; focus on classroom-based applications
2020–2021	22	36.7%	Significant growth; influenced by the shift to flexible and online learning
2022–2024	15	25.0%	Continued strong interest; emphasis on 21st-century skills and innovation
Geographical Distribution			
North America & Europe	25	41.7%	Early adopters with a strong foundation in assessment research
Asia	18	30.0%	Increasing adoption; focus on educational reform and innovation
Australia & Oceania	10	16.7%	Strong contributions in higher education and performance-based assessment research
Africa & Middle East	7	11.6%	Emerging studies; growing interest in contextual and localized applications

3.2. Theme 1: authentic assessment and learning outcomes.

The reviewed literature consistently shows that authentic assessment has a positive effect on students' learning outcomes, particularly in the development of critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and the ability to apply knowledge in real-world contexts. Authentic assessment

involves tasks that mirror real-life situations, requiring students to analyze, evaluate, and create rather than simply recall information [28–30]. Unlike traditional assessment methods, such as multiple-choice tests and standardized examinations that primarily focus on memorization and single correct answers, authentic assessment emphasizes deeper understanding, performance, and practical application of learning [31]. As a result, learners become more actively engaged in the learning process and are better able to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills [32]. Studies indicate that students exposed to authentic assessment perform better in tasks requiring reasoning, reflection, and analysis, highlighting its effectiveness in promoting critical thinking [33, 34].

In terms of problem-solving, authentic assessment provides learners with opportunities to address complex and open-ended problems that resemble real-world challenges [35]. This approach encourages students to integrate knowledge from different domains, evaluate alternative solutions, and make informed decisions [36]. Compared to traditional assessment, which often measures isolated knowledge through structured and time-limited tests, authentic assessment allows students to explore multiple perspectives and develop creative solutions [37]. Research shows that these experiences strengthen students' independent thinking, adaptability, and practical decision-making skills, which are essential competencies in both academic and professional settings [38, 39]. The flexibility of authentic tasks also supports innovation and collaboration, which are often limited in conventional assessment approaches.

Furthermore, authentic assessment strengthens students' ability to apply knowledge in real-world situations. Through performance-based activities such as projects, case studies, portfolios, and simulations, learners are able to connect theoretical concepts to practical applications [40]. In contrast, traditional assessments frequently emphasize short-term retention of information rather than meaningful application and transfer of learning. Authentic assessment therefore promotes deeper understanding, long-term knowledge retention, and increased relevance of learning experiences [41–42]. Evidence suggests that students who participate in authentic assessment are more likely to retain knowledge and successfully apply it in unfamiliar or real-life contexts, demonstrating its significant contribution to improving overall learning outcomes [43–44].

The literature suggests that while traditional assessment remains useful for measuring foundational knowledge and academic achievement, authentic assessment provides a more comprehensive evaluation of student learning by focusing on higher-order thinking, practical skills, and meaningful application of knowledge. This comparison highlights the growing importance of authentic assessment in creating more effective, learner-centered, and competency-based educational practices.

Figure 3 illustrates the relationship between authentic assessment and key learning outcomes. The figure highlights how authentic assessment contributes to the development of critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and real-world application of knowledge. It further emphasizes that, compared to traditional assessment methods, authentic assessment promotes deeper, more meaningful, and transferable learning experiences through context-based and performance-oriented tasks.

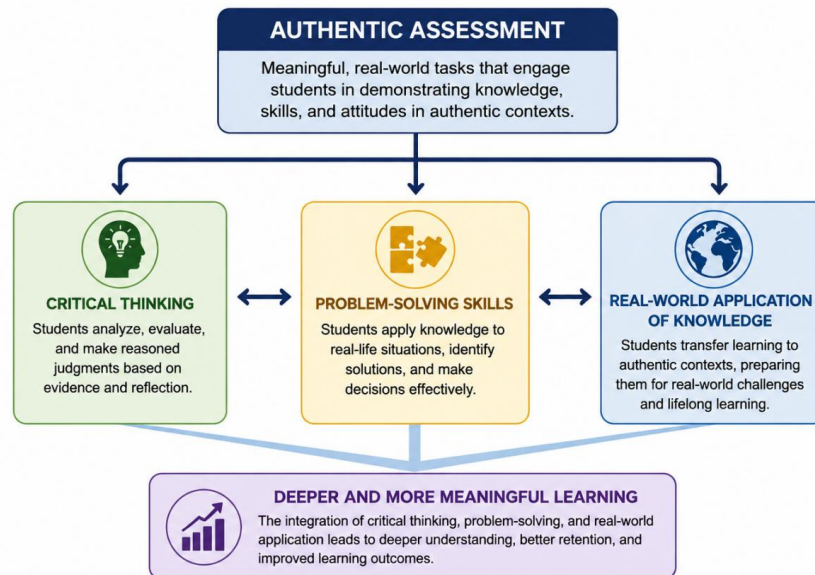


Figure 3. Effects of authentic assessment on learning outcomes.

3.3. Theme 2: role of formative assessment in authentic learning.

Formative assessment plays a significant role in authentic learning because it provides continuous opportunities for students to improve their understanding and performance throughout the learning process [45]. Unlike traditional assessment approaches that focus mainly on final outcomes, formative assessment emphasizes ongoing evaluation and feedback that guide students toward achieving learning objectives [46]. According to John Hattie [47], formative assessment becomes effective when evidence of student learning is used to adjust teaching strategies and support learners in addressing areas of difficulty. Within authentic learning environments, formative assessment encourages active participation, reflection, and meaningful engagement with real-world tasks [48]. One of the most important functions of formative assessment is the provision of continuous feedback. Feedback allows students to recognize their strengths and identify aspects of their performance that require improvement [49]. Effective feedback is timely, specific, and constructive, enabling learners to refine their understanding and enhance their skills during the learning process rather than after instruction has ended [50]. David Nicol and John Timperley [51] emphasized that feedback has a strong influence on student achievement because it helps learners understand learning goals and the steps necessary to achieve them. In authentic assessment settings, feedback often occurs through teacher comments, peer discussions, collaborative activities, and reflective exercises, all of which contribute to deeper learning experiences.

A practical example of formative assessment in the classroom can be observed in project-based learning activities. For instance, students working on a science investigation project may first submit a research proposal, receive teacher and peer feedback, revise their work, and later present their final output [52]. During each stage, the teacher monitors progress through observation, questioning, group discussions, and rubric-based feedback. This process allows students to improve their understanding and performance continuously rather than being evaluated only at the end of the activity. Such classroom practices demonstrate how formative assessment supports authentic learning by encouraging revision, reflection, collaboration, and application of knowledge in meaningful contexts [53]. Formative assessment also plays an

important role in monitoring student progress. Through continuous observation and evaluation, teachers are able to determine whether students are achieving intended learning outcomes and identify misconceptions or learning gaps early in the instructional process [54]. Monitoring progress enables educators to modify instructional strategies according to students' needs and provide additional support when necessary. According to Rick Stiggins [55], formative assessment promotes learning success because it helps both teachers and students track progress toward learning goals. In authentic learning environments, monitoring student progress often involves evaluating students' performance in projects, portfolios, presentations, and other performance-based tasks that reflect real-world applications of knowledge and skills [56].

Another essential contribution of formative assessment is its ability to support deep learning. Authentic learning emphasizes understanding, application, and critical thinking rather than simple memorization of facts [57]. Formative assessment encourages students to engage in reflection, analysis, and self-regulation, which are necessary for developing higher-order thinking skills. Through meaningful tasks and continuous feedback, students become more aware of their learning processes and are encouraged to take responsibility for their own improvement. David Nicol [51] explained that formative assessment enhances self-regulated learning because it allows students to evaluate their own progress and identify strategies for improvement. Consequently, formative assessment strengthens authentic learning by fostering critical reflection, independent thinking, and long-term understanding. Several formative assessment strategies are commonly integrated into authentic assessment practices, including peer assessment and self-assessment. Peer assessment involves students evaluating each other's work using established criteria or rubrics [58]. This strategy encourages collaboration, communication, and critical reflection because students analyze the strengths and weaknesses of their peers' performance. Research has shown that peer assessment improves analytical thinking and enhances students' understanding of quality work standards [7]. On the other hand, self-assessment allows students to evaluate their own learning and performance. Through self-assessment, learners become more aware of their strengths, weaknesses, and learning strategies, thereby promoting metacognitive development and independent learning. These strategies align closely with authentic assessment because they actively involve students in the evaluation process and encourage meaningful engagement with learning tasks.

Table 4 presents common formative assessment strategies used in authentic learning environments. The table describes how peer assessment and self-assessment contribute to critical reflection, metacognition, and self-regulated learning while also providing practical classroom applications for each strategy. These examples demonstrate how formative assessment supports continuous improvement, active student participation, and meaningful engagement in the learning process.

Table 4. Formative assessment strategies in authentic assessment.

Strategy	Description	Practical Classroom Example	Impact on Learning
Peer Assessment	Students evaluate each other's work using established criteria or rubrics	Students review their classmates' research presentations and provide feedback on content accuracy, organization, and delivery using a scoring rubric	Improves critical reflection, communication skills, and collaborative learning
Self-Assessment	Students assess their own performance and learning progress	Students complete a reflective journal or checklist after finishing a project to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement	Encourages metacognition, self-regulated learning, and personal responsibility for learning

3.4. Theme 3: role of summative assessment in authentic assessment.

Summative assessment plays an essential role in authentic assessment because it evaluates the extent to which students have achieved the intended learning outcomes at the end of an instructional period. Unlike formative assessment, which focuses on continuous improvement during learning, summative assessment emphasizes the demonstration of knowledge, skills, and competencies after instruction has been completed. In authentic learning environments, summative assessment goes beyond traditional written examinations by requiring students to perform meaningful tasks that reflect real-world applications of learning. According to Grant Wiggins [2], authentic summative assessment measures students' ability to apply knowledge in practical contexts rather than simply recalling information. This approach provides a more comprehensive evaluation of student learning because it assesses both conceptual understanding and practical performance.

One common form of summative assessment in authentic learning is the use of culminating performance tasks. These tasks require students to demonstrate mastery of competencies through activities that simulate real-life situations and professional practices. Culminating performance tasks often involve problem-solving, decision-making, critical thinking, and collaboration, allowing students to integrate knowledge and skills acquired throughout the learning process [59]. Examples include conducting scientific investigations, presenting research findings, performing artistic demonstrations, or developing solutions to community-based issues. According to Linda Darling-Hammond et al. [3], performance-based assessments provide richer evidence of learning because they evaluate students' ability to transfer knowledge to authentic situations. Through these tasks, educators are able to assess not only what students know but also how effectively they can apply their learning in meaningful contexts.

Project-based evaluation is another important summative assessment strategy used in authentic assessment. This method requires students to complete complex and extended tasks that involve inquiry, collaboration, creativity, and critical analysis. Project-based assessments encourage learners to investigate real-world problems, gather information, and present solutions using various forms of communication [60]. Such assessments promote deeper understanding because students actively engage in the learning process and apply interdisciplinary knowledge to practical situations. John Thomas [8] explained that project-based learning and assessment improve student motivation and higher-order thinking skills by encouraging learners to construct knowledge through authentic experiences. As a summative tool, project-based evaluation allows educators to assess students' ability to synthesize information, communicate ideas effectively, and demonstrate long-term understanding of concepts.

Portfolio assessment is also widely recognized as an effective summative assessment method within authentic learning environments. A portfolio is a purposeful collection of student work that demonstrates progress, achievement, and reflection over time. Portfolios may include written outputs, research papers, artwork, projects, performance records, reflective journals, and other forms of evidence that showcase students' learning experiences. According to Helen Barrett [9], portfolio assessment supports authentic learning because it documents both the process and outcomes of learning while encouraging student reflection and self-evaluation. Unlike one-time examinations, portfolios provide a more holistic view of student

performance by capturing growth, creativity, and the development of competencies across different learning activities.

Authentic summative assessment methods are valuable because they align assessment practices with real-world expectations and meaningful learning experiences. Through performance tasks, project-based evaluations, and portfolio assessments, students are encouraged to demonstrate not only academic knowledge but also critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and problem-solving skills. These approaches provide educators with more comprehensive evidence of student achievement and contribute to the development of lifelong learning competencies. Consequently, summative assessment within authentic assessment frameworks supports educational practices that emphasize meaningful application of learning rather than simple memorization of content. Table 5 summarizes major summative assessment methods commonly used in authentic assessment. The table outlines different approaches such as performance tasks, project-based evaluation, and portfolio assessment, including their descriptions, practical examples, and the main skills assessed in each method. These summative approaches demonstrate how authentic assessment evaluates not only students' content knowledge but also essential 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity, and self-reflection through meaningful and real-world learning tasks.

Table 5. Summative authentic assessment methods.

Method	Description	Example	Main Skills Assessed
Performance Tasks	Real-life application activities requiring demonstration of skills and knowledge	Science experiment	Critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and practical application of knowledge
Project-Based Evaluation	Extended inquiry and problem-solving activities that require investigation and collaboration	Community research project	Collaboration, research skills, creativity, critical thinking, and decision-making
Portfolio Assessment	Compilation of student work demonstrating progress, achievement, and reflection over time	Writing portfolio	Communication, self-reflection, organization, creativity, and continuous improvement

3.5. Theme 4: performance assessment in authentic learning.

Performance assessment has become an important component of authentic learning because it allows students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills through meaningful and practical tasks. Unlike traditional assessments that primarily measure memorization and recall, performance assessment focuses on students' ability to apply what they have learned in realistic situations. According to Grant Wiggins [2], performance assessment requires learners to actively construct responses, perform tasks, and apply knowledge in contexts that reflect real-world challenges. This approach provides educators with deeper insights into students' understanding, competencies, and ability to transfer learning beyond the classroom.

One significant feature of performance assessment is the demonstration of skills. Through authentic tasks, students are given opportunities to exhibit practical abilities, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. Performance assessment often involves activities such as oral presentations, laboratory experiments, simulations, role-playing, and research projects that require students to demonstrate mastery through action and performance. According to Linda Darling-Hammond [3], performance assessments enable educators to evaluate complex skills that cannot be adequately measured through standardized tests alone.

By engaging in authentic activities, students develop competencies that are essential for academic success and future professional practice.

Another important aspect of performance assessment is its emphasis on real-world problem solving. Authentic learning environments encourage students to engage with real-life issues and apply their knowledge to situations that mirror challenges encountered outside the classroom. Through performance-based tasks, learners are required to analyze problems, make decisions, generate solutions, and justify their reasoning using evidence and critical reflection. This process promotes higher-order thinking skills and meaningful engagement with learning. John Dewey emphasized that meaningful education occurs when learners interact with real experiences that encourage inquiry and problem solving. In this context, performance assessment strengthens authentic learning by connecting academic content with practical and socially relevant experiences.

Performance assessment also promotes the application of knowledge across various contexts and disciplines. Rather than focusing solely on theoretical understanding, authentic performance tasks require students to transfer learning to new and unfamiliar situations. This application of knowledge helps learners develop deeper conceptual understanding and the ability to integrate ideas across disciplines. According to Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins, authentic performance assessments encourage students to demonstrate understanding by using knowledge meaningfully instead of simply recalling isolated facts. As students apply concepts to practical tasks, they become more engaged in the learning process and develop greater confidence in their abilities.

Despite its advantages, the implementation of performance-based assessment also presents several challenges for teachers, particularly in large classes and online learning environments. In large classrooms, teachers often struggle with the time and effort required to evaluate individual student performance using detailed rubrics and scoring guides. Providing timely and personalized feedback becomes difficult when managing a high number of learners, which may affect the consistency and effectiveness of assessment practices. Additionally, monitoring active participation, collaboration, and authentic engagement in group tasks can be challenging in overcrowded classrooms.

The transition to online and flexible learning environments has introduced additional difficulties in implementing authentic performance assessment. Teachers may encounter challenges related to limited access to technology, unstable internet connectivity, and difficulties in verifying the authenticity of students' work. Online settings may also reduce opportunities for direct observation of student performance, making it harder to assess practical skills, communication, and collaboration effectively. Furthermore, some educators may lack sufficient training in designing digital performance tasks and using online assessment tools. These challenges highlight the need for institutional support, professional development, and appropriate technological resources to ensure the effective implementation of authentic performance assessment in both face-to-face and virtual learning environments.

Moreover, performance assessment supports student-centered learning because it actively involves learners in meaningful tasks that encourage reflection, creativity, and independent thinking. Students become active participants in the learning process rather than passive recipients of information. Authentic performance tasks often require collaboration, inquiry, and communication, which contribute to the development of lifelong learning skills. Consequently, performance assessment has been widely recognized as an effective strategy for

improving student engagement, critical thinking, and overall learning outcomes in contemporary educational settings. Figure 4 presents the process of authentic performance assessment, beginning with authentic tasks that require meaningful student engagement. The framework demonstrates how student performance is evaluated using rubrics and scoring guides, which then lead to the assessment of learning outcomes. The figure highlights the systematic relationship between authentic tasks, evaluation tools, and performance-based learning while also emphasizing the importance of effective implementation strategies in diverse classroom and online learning contexts.

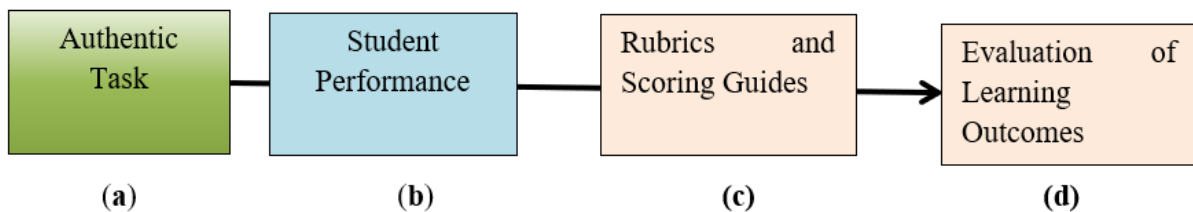


Figure 4. Framework on authentic performance assessment.

3.6. Theme 5: rubrics and scoring guides in authentic assessment.

Rubrics and scoring guides are essential components of authentic assessment because they provide clear standards for evaluating student performance in meaningful and performance-based tasks. In authentic learning environments, students are often assessed through projects, presentations, portfolios, demonstrations, and real-world problem-solving activities that require complex evaluation procedures. Unlike traditional objective tests that rely on fixed answers, authentic assessments involve subjective judgment, making rubrics important tools for ensuring consistency, fairness, and clarity in the evaluation process. According to Heidi Goodrich Andrade [10], rubrics are scoring tools that describe the specific criteria and levels of performance expected from students, thereby helping both teachers and learners understand assessment expectations.

One important role of rubrics in authentic assessment is promoting standardized evaluation. Because authentic tasks often involve multiple dimensions of learning, rubrics help establish uniform standards that guide teachers in assessing student performance objectively. Through clearly defined criteria and performance indicators, rubrics reduce inconsistencies in grading and ensure that all students are evaluated according to the same expectations. Susan M. Brookhart [11] emphasized that well-designed rubrics improve the reliability and validity of assessment because they provide structured guidelines for evaluating complex student outputs. In this way, rubrics contribute to more accurate and equitable assessment practices in educational settings.

Rubrics also support transparent grading by making assessment expectations visible and understandable to students before they complete learning tasks. Transparency in grading helps learners recognize the qualities of effective performance and understand how their work will be evaluated. This clarity reduces confusion and anxiety while encouraging students to focus on achieving specific learning goals. According to Andrade [10], students who are provided with rubrics demonstrate greater awareness of academic expectations and are more likely to produce higher-quality work. Transparent grading also strengthens trust between teachers and students because assessment decisions are based on clearly communicated standards rather than subjective judgment alone.

Another important contribution of rubrics and scoring guides is the improvement of feedback. Effective rubrics provide detailed descriptions of performance levels that help teachers deliver specific and constructive feedback to students. Instead of receiving only numerical scores or general comments, students are able to identify their strengths, weaknesses, and areas that require improvement. This type of feedback encourages reflection and supports continuous learning. Nicol and Timperley [51] explained that effective feedback significantly influences student achievement because it guides learners toward improved performance. In authentic assessment, rubrics facilitate meaningful feedback by linking evaluation directly to learning objectives and performance expectations.

Furthermore, rubrics promote student engagement and self-regulated learning by involving learners in the assessment process. When students understand assessment criteria, they become more capable of evaluating their own work and monitoring their progress. This encourages self-assessment, critical reflection, and responsibility for learning. Rubrics also support peer assessment activities by providing students with structured guidelines for evaluating the work of others [6]. Consequently, rubrics and scoring guides not only enhance the quality of assessment but also contribute to deeper learning and the development of critical thinking skills in authentic educational environments.

Table 6 presents the essential components of effective rubrics used in authentic assessment. It outlines the criteria, performance levels, descriptors, scoring scales, and feedback indicators that contribute to fair, transparent, and consistent evaluation. The inclusion of sample rubric criteria and scoring descriptors further illustrates how rubrics are practically applied in assessing student performance and aligning assessment practices with intended learning outcomes.

Table 6. Components of effective rubrics.

Component	Description	Purpose in Authentic Assessment	Example	Sample Rubric Criterion / Scoring Descriptor
Criteria	Specific skills, knowledge, or competencies to be assessed	Ensures that assessment aligns with learning objectives and expected outcomes	Critical thinking, communication skills, accuracy of content	<i>Criterion:</i> “Ability to analyze and justify solutions using evidence”
Performance Levels	Different levels of achievement or quality of performance	Distinguishes varying degrees of student mastery and performance	Excellent, Proficient, Developing, Beginning	<i>Excellent:</i> Demonstrates complete understanding with insightful analysis and minimal errors
Descriptors	Detailed explanations of the characteristics of each performance level	Provides clear standards and guides both grading and feedback	“Demonstrates thorough analysis with clear supporting evidence”	<i>Developing:</i> Provides partial explanation but lacks sufficient supporting evidence
Scoring Scale	Numerical or qualitative values assigned to performance levels	Promotes consistency and fairness in grading	1–4 scale or percentage ratings	<i>4 = Advanced Performance; 3 = Satisfactory; 2 = Basic; 1 = Needs Improvement</i>
Feedback Indicators	Specific comments or areas for improvement linked to criteria	Supports student reflection and continuous learning	Suggestions for improving organization or clarity	<i>Feedback:</i> “Strengthen your conclusion by adding more supporting details and examples.”
Alignment with Objectives	Connection between rubric criteria and intended learning outcomes	Ensures validity and relevance of assessment practices	Alignment with cognitive, affective, or psychomotor outcomes	<i>Objective Alignment:</i> “Students will demonstrate critical thinking through evidence-based problem solving.”

3.7. Theme 6: student-centered evaluation.

Student-centered evaluation has become an important component of authentic assessment because it emphasizes the active participation of learners in the assessment process. Unlike

traditional teacher-centered approaches in which students are passive recipients of evaluation, student-centered evaluation encourages learners to become actively involved in assessing their own learning, reflecting on their progress, and taking responsibility for their academic development. This approach aligns with contemporary educational practices that promote meaningful learning experiences, critical thinking, learner autonomy, and the development of essential 21st-century skills. According to Lev Vygotsky [23], learning becomes more meaningful when students actively engage in social interaction, reflection, and collaborative processes that support knowledge construction. Through student-centered evaluation, assessment becomes a participatory process that enhances both learning and personal growth.

One important aspect of student-centered evaluation is active student involvement. Authentic assessment encourages students to participate in various assessment activities such as peer evaluation, collaborative tasks, classroom discussions, digital presentations, and performance-based assessments. Active involvement allows learners to become more engaged in the learning process because they are given opportunities to demonstrate understanding, contribute ideas, and evaluate performance using established criteria. According to John Dewey [12], education should involve meaningful experiences that encourage learners to actively interact with their environment. In authentic learning settings, active student participation develops important 21st-century skills such as communication, collaboration, creativity, and problem-solving. For example, group projects and peer assessment activities enhance teamwork and interpersonal communication, while multimedia presentations and online discussions strengthen digital literacy and technological competence.

Self-reflection is another essential element of student-centered evaluation. Reflection enables students to examine their learning experiences, recognize strengths and weaknesses, and identify strategies for improvement. Through reflective practices such as journals, learning logs, e-portfolios, and self-assessment activities, learners become more aware of their thought processes and academic progress. Donald Schön [14] emphasized that reflective practice allows individuals to critically analyze their actions and continuously improve their performance. In educational settings, self-reflection supports metacognitive development by encouraging students to think critically about how they learn and how they can enhance their understanding. At the same time, digital reflection tools and online portfolios help learners develop digital literacy skills that are increasingly important in modern educational and professional environments.

Student-centered evaluation also promotes ownership of learning. When students actively participate in evaluating their performance and setting learning goals, they develop a stronger sense of responsibility and accountability for their education. Ownership of learning encourages learners to become independent, motivated, and self-directed individuals who are capable of monitoring their progress and making informed decisions about their learning strategies. According to Barry Zimmerman [16], self-regulated learners are more likely to achieve academic success because they actively manage their motivation, behavior, and learning processes. Authentic assessment practices such as self-assessment, peer feedback, collaborative projects, and digital learning tasks strengthen learner ownership while simultaneously developing creativity, adaptability, and communication skills.

Furthermore, student-centered evaluation contributes significantly to the development of lifelong learning and 21st-century competencies. By encouraging reflection, independence, collaboration, and active participation, this approach helps learners develop critical thinking,

decision-making, creativity, communication, and self-management skills that extend beyond the classroom. Students become more confident in expressing ideas, solving problems, working collaboratively, and using digital tools effectively, which are essential competencies in both academic and professional settings. Consequently, student-centered evaluation supports authentic learning by transforming assessment into a collaborative, technology-supported, and meaningful process that empowers students to become active participants in their educational journey. Table 7 summarizes the major components of student-centered evaluation in authentic learning environments. The table explains how active student involvement, self-reflection, ownership of learning, peer assessment, self-assessment, and goal setting contribute to learner engagement and academic development. It further highlights the expected student outcomes and competencies developed through these approaches, including communication, collaboration, critical thinking, self-regulation, problem-solving, and learner autonomy, which are essential skills for lifelong learning and 21st-century education.

Table 7. Key components of student-centered evaluation.

Component	Description	Role in Authentic Assessment	Impact on Learning	Expected Student Outcomes / Competencies
Active Student Involvement	Students participate directly in assessment activities and learning tasks	Encourages engagement and collaboration in meaningful learning experiences	Enhances participation, communication, and critical thinking	Improved collaboration, active participation, communication skills, and problem-solving abilities
Self-Reflection	Students evaluate their own learning experiences and performance	Promotes awareness of strengths, weaknesses, and learning strategies	Develops metacognitive and reflective thinking skills	Increased self-awareness, critical reflection, and independent learning
Ownership of Learning	Students take responsibility for achieving learning goals and monitoring progress	Encourages independence and accountability in learning	Increases motivation and self-directed learning	Stronger responsibility, decision-making skills, and learner autonomy
Peer Assessment	Students provide feedback and evaluate each other's work	Supports collaborative learning and critical evaluation skills	Improves analytical thinking and interpersonal skills	Enhanced teamwork, communication, constructive feedback, and social interaction skills
Self-Assessment	Students assess their own performance using established criteria	Encourages continuous improvement and self-monitoring	Strengthens self-regulation and confidence	Improved self-regulation, confidence, and ability to identify areas for improvement
Goal Setting	Students establish academic goals and identify strategies for improvement	Aligns learning activities with personal and academic objectives	Promotes persistence and academic achievement	Development of goal-oriented behavior, motivation, persistence, and strategic planning skills

4. Conclusions

The reviewed literature revealed that authentic assessment plays a significant role in improving students' learning outcomes by promoting meaningful, learner-centered, and real-world learning experiences. Unlike traditional assessment methods that primarily focus on memorization and recall, authentic assessment encourages students to apply knowledge, demonstrate skills, and engage in higher-order thinking tasks that reflect real-life situations. The findings showed that authentic assessment contributes to the development of critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, communication, collaboration, creativity, and self-directed learning, which are essential competencies in 21st-century education. The review also highlighted the important roles of formative and summative assessment in supporting authentic learning. Formative assessment enhances learning through continuous feedback, monitoring of student progress, reflection, and opportunities for improvement throughout the instructional

process. Summative assessment, on the other hand, evaluates overall student achievement and mastery of competencies through meaningful performance-based tasks such as projects, portfolios, presentations, and real-world applications. The findings further emphasized that performance assessment strengthens students' ability to transfer knowledge across contexts and disciplines while promoting active engagement in learning. In addition, rubrics and scoring guides were identified as essential tools for ensuring fair, transparent, and consistent evaluation practices in authentic assessment. Student-centered evaluation practices such as peer assessment, self-assessment, reflection, and goal setting were also found to encourage greater learner participation, ownership of learning, and metacognitive development. These approaches help students become more independent, reflective, and responsible learners capable of evaluating and improving their own performance. Despite the advantages of authentic assessment, the literature also identified challenges in implementation, particularly in large classes and online learning environments. Teachers often experience difficulties related to time constraints, workload, limited resources, assessment consistency, and the use of digital technologies for performance-based evaluation. These challenges indicate the need for adequate institutional support, professional development opportunities, and access to appropriate instructional and technological resources. The findings suggest that educators should integrate authentic assessment strategies into classroom instruction to promote deeper and more meaningful learning experiences. The use of rubrics, formative feedback, and student-centered evaluation practices can support continuous improvement and enhance student engagement and academic performance. Furthermore, future research may further explore the effectiveness of authentic assessment across different disciplines, educational levels, and digital learning environments to strengthen its implementation in contemporary education.

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Author Contribution

The author takes full responsibility for all aspects of this study to ensure transparency and accountability. This includes the conceptualization of the research topic, development of the methodology, collection and organization of data, analysis and interpretation of findings, preparation and revision of the manuscript, and overall supervision of the research process. The author also managed the resources necessary for the completion of the study.

Competing Interest

The author declares that there are no competing interests associated with this study.

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