

Supporting Authentic Assessment

Through peer-mentorship within a CoP

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Intro & Aims

In 2021, TU Dublin Learning, Teaching & Assessment (LTA) initiated a 'twin-track' approach to supporting and promoting the development of authentic assessment practices across the university, comprising:

- A funded 'Scholars and Supporters' peer-mentorship scheme ('Operation Authentic Assessment Transformation')
- The establishment of an institutional Authentic Assessment Community of Practice (CoP)

These two initiatives aimed to:

- Encourage and support staff to design and implement authentic assessments
- Facilitate the exchange of assessment ideas and innovative practices
- Co-create a TU Dublin 'Authentic Assessment' Framework with associated resources & case studies

Authentic Assessment

Authentic assessment refers to any activity that assesses learners' practical application of their competencies in exemplary tasks and scenarios that prepare them for the challenges they may encounter in real-world settings. Authentic Assessments (Rule, 2006) involve:

- real-world problems that mimic the work of professionals
- open-ended inquiry, thinking skills, and metacognition
- Discourse and social learning in a community of learners
- Student choice in defining problems and selecting the path to their solution

Communities of Practice

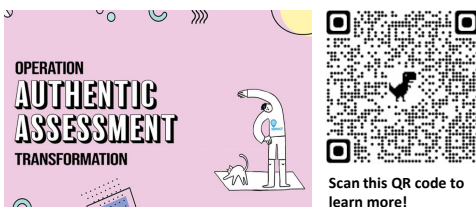
Communities of Practice (CoPs) are naturally forming or planned groups of individuals who come together through a shared passion or goal and learn collectively by reciprocating knowledge and experiences (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

CoPs can provide a catalyst for collegial learning and represent a sustainable model for academic development for often time-constrained academic staff.

Scholars & Supporters Scheme

'Operation Authentic Assessment Transformation' provided opportunities for eight TU Dublin lecturers to undertake a funded assessment re-design as a 'scholar' guided by one of three experienced academic mentors (their 'supporter').

- Each scholar developed an assessment redesign, ready to be implemented in a specific module (with progress tracked through a series of reflective blog posts and work-in-progress presentations).



Assessment Redesigns

In its first outing, eight lecturers – from diverse disciplinary backgrounds – participated in operation authentic assessment transformation. Examples of assessments included:

- Marketing students using audio for oral reflection and feedback in placement and work-based modules
- Social care students working together to prepare needs analyses based on scenarios present in fiction films.
- A live project in which learners collaboratively develop a marketing communications plan based on a real client brief
- Students fabricating prototype products using 3D printing, and using instructor and peer feedback to iterate their designs

Authentic Assessment Scholars & Supporters Scheme



Scan this QR code to learn more about our eight participating authentic assessment scholars.

Authentic Assessment CoP

TU Dublin's Authentic Assessment CoP provides a space for fostering ideas, relationships, and academic development amongst our community of staff who teach. So far, the CoP has facilitated:

- Two masterclasses
- Eleven practice exchanges
- Two funded redesign schemes
- The ongoing development of our 'Authentic Assessment Framework'

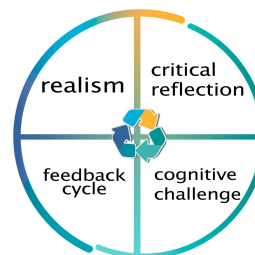


Authentic Assessment Framework

The Authentic Assessment Framework emergent from this initiative was informed by research literature, refined through a CoP consultation process and is structured under four Dimensions:

- Dimension 1: Realism
- Dimension 2: Cognitive Challenge
- Dimension 3: Critical Reflection
- Dimension 4: Feedback cycles

The framework is not intended to be prescriptive, linear blueprint but a set of common dimensions to be used as a general guide for assessment (re)design.



View the current iteration of the framework here.

Future Work

In 2023, the CoP's ongoing work will include:

- Coordinating the QQI-funded 'Prof-Assess' project, involving lecturers, learners & professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs)
- Facilitating a new ePortfolio tool evaluation for TU Dublin's city campus VLE
- Further developing our Authentic Assessment Framework