# Alternative Assessments

## What are Alternative Assessments?

Alternative assessment, also known as authentic assessment, is a more holistic assessment than traditional assessment such as quizzes, tests, exams. It measures applied proficiency more than knowledge to determine what students can do (or cannot do) rather than what they do or do not know. They are “designed so that the content of the assessment matches the content of the instruction” ([Edutopia](https://www.edutopia.org/assessment-guide-description)).

## Why Use Them?

* Test and quizzes (especially those with objective questions) often assess lower level learning such as knowledge and comprehension on Bloom’s taxonomy. Alternative assessment can reach those higher levels such as application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.
* Test questions, particularly from publisher test banks, can misalign with learning outcomes if not carefully curated.
* Overuse of high-stakes testing can promote cheating. Alternative assessments can require more original and authentic performance with less chance of cheating.
* Alternative assessment provide more variety!
* Think of your own most meaningful, valuable, and memorable learning experience. Was the experience engaging and the effect long-lasting? Was it an exam? Probably not.

## What Makes an Assessment Alternative?

* Authentic: can relate to real life application or experience
* Embeds experiences into assignment
* Diagnostic feedback and practice opportunities
* Includes some reflective component
* Often stimulates creativity and innovation
* Produces a product (deliverable) or a performance to be assessed
* Includes judgement or evaluation

## Examples of Alternative Assessments:

*Note: Brackets indicate tools to use. Moodle tools include: Assignment, Forum, Quiz, Lesson, Wiki, Glossary, Questionnaire, Choice (poll), and Book. Zoom can also be used in many instance for either synchronous and asynchronous activities.*

* Case studies [Assignment, Forum, Zoom]
* Role playing (crime scene, lawsuit, historical figures) [Forum, Zoom]
* Simulations (accounting practices, trainee for lab assistant/team) [Assignment, Lesson, Book]
* Letter to Editor or Opinion Piece [Assignment]
* Write a how-to manual (lab procedures) [Assignment, Book, Wiki]
* Diary entry for real life of fictitious character [Assignment, Forum, Wiki, Glossary]
* Journals for reflection, documenting field experiences (Assignment, Wiki, external blog tools)
* Write obituary for an artist, musician, actor [Assignment]
* Executive summary or policy memo [Assignment, Book]
* Purposeful reading reflection (include reflective questions to make real-life connections) [Assignment, Forum, Quiz]
* Study Guides [Lesson, Quiz]
* Pick Your Adventure or “What if” Scenarios [Lesson]
* Annotated bibliography [Assignment, Wiki, Glossary]
* Produce a Public Service Announcement (PSA) [audio recording or link via an Assignment, Forum, Zoom]
* Debates (board meeting, town hall meeting) [Forum, Zoom]
* Recorded Presentations (elevator pitch, ad campaign, entrepreneurship challenge)[Assignment, Forum, Zoom]
* Digital Story (family story/history)[Audacity, Adobe Audition, Garage Band, any voice recorder that save as MP3 file, Assignment, Forum, Zoom]
* Podcast (studio interview, NPR-like Tiny Desk Concerts, StoryCorps) [Audacity, Adobe Audition, Garage Band, Assignment, Forum, Zoom]
* Interview practitioners in the field [Assignment, Forum, Zoom]
* Write or broadcast a news story of a current or historical even [Audacity, Adobe Audition, Garage Band, Assignment, Forum, Zoom]
* Students teach a chapter/topic/concept [Assignment, Zoom]
* Build a glossary (terminology, historic events, historic figure bios, shared resources) [Glossary, Forum, Wiki]
* Have students contribute questions for exams (and include answer key or model responses)
* Design or take a poll or survey [Choice, Questionnaire, Quiz]
* Complete an application for a job, scholarship, or grant [Questionnaire, Quiz]
* Portfolio of work (demonstrates progress/growth over time) [Assignment, Book]
* Analytic charts/data sets/graphs (explain data, Excel) [Assignment, Excel]
* Concept or cognitive maps, flow charts, diagrams (explain process, work flow) [MS Word/Publisher, Assignment]
* Venn diagram, timelines, pro/con lists [MS Word/Publisher]
* Flyers, posters, brochures [MS Word/Publisher, Assignment]
* Infographics [Piktochart, Canva, Adobe products]
* Artist showcase (share artwork, photos) [Lightbox Gallery, can vote on submissions using Choice or Questionnaire]
* Website (promote a product or service, links to resources) [Wordpress, Adobe Spark]

## How to Plan and Implement

* Practice developmental opportunities for students to apply knowledge and practice skills needed throughout the course.
* Provide students control over choices of both format and tools to use.
* Practice transparency in teaching and learning (TILT) by stating learning outcomes, providing rationale for the assignment and the value to the student.
* Provide technical supports with tutorials, links to downloads, contact information to help desks, and alternative formats and options to complete the assignment/assessment.
* Provide examples/models so students can see expectations of final product.
* Feedback is critical and should be comprehensive and meaningful. Use of rubrics (available to students in advance) provide specific levels of expectations and aide in giving uniform, detailed feedback.
* Consider including peer feedback (a.k.a., active assessment) to augment instructor assessment and involve students in the evaluation process.

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