ONLINE LEARNING and TECHNOLOGY

Standard 31

Authentic Activities and Assessments

Overview

"Course provides activities that emulate real world applications of the discipline, such as experiential learning, case studies, and problem-based activities."

Courses should have practical value for learners. Relevance of curriculum increases engagement and motivation of adult learners. When the adult learner can apply a learning activity to practical value beyond the duration of the course, relevance is established between the stated learning objective, the learning activity, and the assessment of that activity.

Practices

1. **Utilize real-world and authentic activities**: experiential learning, case studies, and problem-based activities are designed to immerse learners in real world scenarios, with the goal of having learners build on their existing knowledge and skills to analyze specific problems and find solutions. Authentic learning activities contextualized to real-world applications:
    a. **Promote critical thinking:** for example, case studies present real-world scenarios that require students to evaluate complex information, weigh alternatives, and determine solutions. This process develops vital critical analysis and higher order thinking skills.
    b. **Emphasize problem-solving:** students take on the role of a decision-maker and problem solver as they determine the best courses of action in challenging contexts with constraints and limitations of a given scenario.
    c. **Promote theory in practice application:** students see how conceptual knowledge from lectures and textbooks applies in authentic situations, solidifying theoretical learning and knowledge application.

Examples

Example 1

A jigsaw activity can promote theory to practice application. It can be done in-person and online (consider leveraging Blackboard discussion board forums or Blackboard groups feature).

1. Break students into small groups of 4-5. Assign each group a different case study related to concepts covered in the course. Give them time to read and analyze their case study, discussing the key issues, problems, and potential solutions.
2. Re-mix the groups so that there is now one student from each original case study group. Have students take turns summarizing their case and facilitating a discussion on how the theories and concepts from class can be applied to understand and solve the issues highlighted in the different cases.
3. Bring the class back together for a wrap-up discussion about what they have learned regarding connecting theory to practice through the analysis of diverse real-world examples. Highlight connections made across the different cases.
4. Case studies often have an extension activity. Have students reflect on the application of the discussion to the real-world scenarios. Ask them to highlight various perspectives they gained from their peers that they themselves have not considered.

More examples of collaborative and active learning strategies include:

Role play	Jigsaw	Collaborative note taking
Case study/problem-solving	Fishbowl	Word clouds
Group paper	Think-Pair-Share	Storytelling
Group presentation	Debate	Prototyping
Discussions	Peer Review	Study Guide/exam prep
Small group discussions	Brainstorming	Ranking
Gallery walk	Concept mapping	Town Hall
Diagramming	Posters	Teaching
Polling	Ad/PSA Campaign	Muddiest Poin

Additional Resources

- OSCQR Standard 31
- Authentic Assessment from Indiana University
- Active Learning Kit from CCRI

This standard aligns with the following federal guidelines:



This standard can support **regular and substantive interaction or RSI** in your course when learning activities are structured to center feedback and instructor-to-learner interactions. The role of the instructor in the course is of an active and involved facilitator who guides learners through the authentic scenarios and shares her subject matter expertise to facilitate learning.



Visit https://www.ccri.edu/onlinefaculty to learn more about OSCQR rubric and sign up to participate in a course review.

