

Authenticity: It's Not Just a Fairy Tale (Extended Version)

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Time Frame 2-3 hours

Essential Question(s)

- How does authentic teaching enhance student learning?
- Why is creating authentic lessons important for student achievement?

Summary

This professional development session focuses on the components of authentic learning. The session is designed to have a minimum of eight participants. Participants will connect the components of authentic learning to a Rumpelstiltskin lesson and explore ways to make their own lessons more authentic through the use of the Authenticity Learning and Teaching Rubric.

Learning Goals

- Participants will be able to identify the four components of authenticity.
- Participants will be able to identify instructional strategies that support authentic instruction.

Attachments

- Authentic Lesson Reflection Tool—Authenticty It's Not Just a Fairy Tale.pdf
- Authenticity Framework Reading—Authenticty It's Not Just a Fairy Tale.pdf
- Claim, Evidence, Reasoning (CER)—Authenticity Its Not Just a Fairy Tale.docx
- Claim, Evidence, Reasoning (CER)—Authenticity Its Not Just a Fairy Tale.pdf
- Court Cards—Authenticty It's Not Just a Fairy Tale.pdf
- Instructional Strategy Note Sheet—Authenticty It's Not Just a Fairy Tale.docx
- Instructional Strategy Note Sheet—Authenticty It's Not Just a Fairy Tale.pdf
- Presentation Slides—Authenticity It's Not Just a Fairy Tale.pptx
- Rumpelstiltskin Story—Authenticty Its Not Just a Fairy Tale.docx
- Rumpelstiltskin Story—Authenticty Its Not Just a Fairy Tale.pdf

Materials

- Presentation Slides (attached)
- Instructional Strategy Note Sheet (attached; one per participant; may be printed front/back)
- Court Cards (attached; cut out enough to be evenly distributed among participants)
- Rumpelstiltskin Story (attached)
- Authenticity Framework Reading (attached)
- Claim, Evidence, Reasoning (CER) document (attached; one per group)
- Authentic Lesson Reflection Tool (attached)
- Sticky notes
- Pens/pencils
- Chart tablet paper
- Markers
- Access to Google Slides, PowerPoint, etc. for an optional activity

Engage

Presenter's Note: Preparation

Print and prepare all attached handouts and materials before the presentation. The following should be available on the table at the beginning of the session: a Claim, Evidence, and Reasoning (CER) document (one per table), an Instructional Strategy Note Sheet (one copy per participant), sticky notes, pens/pencils, and blank paper. The Instructional Strategy Note Sheet should be printed front/back. Pass out the other documents as needed, according to the prompts below. Additionally, use the attached Court Cards document to print and cut out a number of cards that can be evenly distributed based on the number of participants. For example, if you have eight participants, print and cut out two of each card since there are four types of cards.

As participants enter the professional development session, hand out one of the Court Cards, face down, to each. Tell them to sit wherever they would like and keep this card until the end of the session.

Presenter's Note: Grouping Strategy

Passing out cards accomplishes two goals. It's a great way to pique the curiosity of participants and gain their interest. It is also a quick and efficient grouping strategy and will be used twice for that purpose in this session. This strategy can be used in the classroom with students as well.

Begin with the attached **Presentation Slides** and introduce yourself to the participants. Let them know that they will be learning about authenticity and its importance in teaching.

Presenter's Note: Time Considerations

The following segment is a precursor to the Cognitive Comics strategy that will be used in the Evaluate portion of the session. To include this strategy successfully, make sure you have a full three hours. If you are running late or anticipate being short on time, consider using an alternative strategy as described in the note below.

Go to **slide 3**. Ask participants to think about their most meaningful learning experience and to draw a representation of this experience on half of a folded sheet of paper. The emphasis should be on representing the idea, not necessarily an exact depiction of the event. For example, a participant whose most meaningful learning experience came during a trip to an aquarium might draw a jellyfish. After completion, have participants set aside their drawings. (This drawing will be revisited later in the session to complete the Cognitive Comics activity.)

Presenter's Note: Alternative Strategy for Shorter Time Frames

If you have determined that you will not have time to use the Cognitive Comics strategy, you may elect to use a quicker strategy, such as a modified version of Preflections, in the following way: Ask participants to think about their most meaningful learning experience. Ask them to write as many adjectives as they can think of about the experience. For example, a participant whose most meaningful learning experience was a field trip to an aquarium might write, "fun," "exciting," "new," "thought-provoking," and others. After completion, have participants set aside their lists of adjectives to revisit later in the session.

Transition to **slide 4** to share the guiding question with participants. Inform them that several new instructional strategies will be introduced to them throughout the session. These strategies are tools used to support and guide higher-order thinking in an authentic way. Make sure each participant has a copy of the attached **Instructional Strategy Note Sheet** and encourage participants to use it to jot down their ideas for personalizing a strategy to be used as an instructional tool in their classrooms. Before breaks and after the strategies have been modeled, the presentation will allow time for participants to reflect on how to use these strategies.

Go to **slide 5** to highlight the session objectives briefly. This will provide a roadmap of where you will go together during the session and will let participants know what to expect from the session.

Transition to **slide 6** and use the Fold the Line strategy to pair participants based on their prior knowledge of the Rumpelstiltskin story. Ask participants to line up according to how well they could retell the story of Rumpelstiltskin, from 1 (not very well) to 10 (could retell the whole story and portray the characters).

Next, fold the line to form pairs of participants. Have a participant at one end of the line walk over to the other end. Participants should follow the leader so that, when they stop, each participant is across from a partner with a number different from their own. For example, a participant at 10 walks to the other end of the line and is across from a participant at 1; they will be partners. However, participants at 5 may end up partnering with another 5.

Go to **slide 7**. Using the Paired Verbal Fluency strategy, each pair should take turns discussing the story, tapping into past knowledge and collaborating to make connections about the details of the story. Ask for a pair of participants to tell the story together. Allow the volunteers to share what they know.

Explore

Transition to **slide 8** and pass out copies of the attached **Rumpelstiltskin Story** to participants. Ask participants to take a couple minutes to read this version of Rumpelstiltskin at their tables silently.

After everyone has finished reading, ask for volunteers to summarize or clarify any previous misconceptions. Then, say: *When you entered this session, you were handed a playing card. Use that playing card to identify the character you are going to be for the next activity.*

Go to **slide 9**. Once participants have identified their characters, explain to them that the justice system has finally caught up with these reprehensible characters, and charges have been filed against them. In groups, they are going to defend each character against the charges.

Go to **slide 10** and have participants move to sit with the other participants who have the same card/character. Ask participants to read through and take note of the charges that have been brought against their character.

Transition to **slide 11** and introduce the CUS and Discuss strategy. Ask participants to examine the Rumpelstiltskin story again. This time, they will circle any mention of their character, underline any actions taken by their character, and star any emotions or important adjectives.

Go to **slide 12** and read the example of the Claim, Evidence, Reasoning (CER) strategy. With the character information gleaned from the reading, groups will use this strategy to formulate an argument in their character's defense. Participants should use the attached **Claim, Evidence, Reasoning (CER)** handout as their guide in arguing their client's innocence. Transition to **slide 13** for instructions on organizing the defense teams and presenting arguments.

After 20 minutes, or when everyone is finished, go to **slide 14** and announce: *All rise. The Honorable Judge is in session. Which group would like to quickly present its argument first?* Ask for a group to volunteer. Then, ask the question: *Does the text-based evidence support the innocence of the character?*

Allow each group to argue the innocence of their client/character using the text as evidence to support their claim and reasoning. After each group's argument, allow the rest of the participants to give a "thumbs up" or a "thumbs down" to indicate whether the character is innocent or not. For large groups, you can appoint a judge from the audience to perform this task. Continue in this manner until each character is found innocent or guilty.

Emphasize to participants that the subject of the lesson, the Rumpelstiltskin story, was not significant or the point of the lesson. Instead, the goal was for participants to construct a logical and supported argument based on textual evidence.

Presenter's Note: Defending Statements

It is important to stress that this activity uses text-based evidence as proof. When students present arguments or write papers, it is important that they know how to defend their answers and statements using evidence, rather than relying on "I heard" or "I think" statements.

Technology Option

If time allows and/or technology is available, you may have groups create a three-slide presentation using PowerPoint or Google Slides to organize their information and defense after filling out the CER document. The first slide would be a title slide of the CLAIM, the second slide would present textual EVIDENCE, and the third would be the group's REASONING. This activity adds about 20-30 minutes to the session time frame. However, even if you don't use this activity in this session, participants could have their students use this technology option to present their CER.

Transition to **slide 15**. Reiterate that this was a lesson designed to help students think critically and to construct a logical and supported argument based on a guiding question.

Go to **slide 16** and and have participants look at the Instructional Strategy Note Sheet. Explain that they have used five strategies at this point. Ask them to spend a few moments writing and reflecting on how each strategy was used and how they might incorporate each strategy into their own lessons. Allow time for participants to share their ideas for how they might use these strategies in their classrooms.

Explain

Transition to **slide 17**. Explain that an authentic lesson begins with students' accessing prior knowledge. The authentic lesson then builds on the concepts shown on the slide: Construction of Knowledge, Disciplined Inquiry, Real-World Connections, and Student-Centered Learning.

Within their previous groups, assign participants to one of the four components of the authenticity framework (see below).

- Construction of Knowledge = Kings.
- Disciplined Inquiry = Queens.
- Real-World Connections = Jacks.
- Student-Centered Learning = Jokers.

Go to **slide 18** and pass out copies of the attached **Authenticity Framework Reading**. Have participants use the Jigsaw strategy to divide the reading into parts, according to their assignment (above). All participants should read the introduction. After that, participants will read their assigned section. Allow a few minutes for each person in the group to read their section of the handout.

While reading through the introduction and their section, participants should use the Why-Lighting strategy to highlight and annotate key ideas in the text. When everyone is finished, have participants take a few minutes to discuss the reading with their group members, including what information they highlighted and why it's important.

Go to **slide 19** and pass out chart tablet paper and markers to each group. Ask participants to work in their groups to construct a summary sentence, a social media post using the GramIt strategy, which includes a visual representation of their authenticity component.

For example, the group representing Construction of Knowledge might summarize that section as follows: When students construct their own knowledge, it sparks new ideas. They also might draw a light bulb turning on to represent new ideas being formed and create a social media post with the hashtag #knowledgeispower.

Allow time for each group to share their representations of the reading.

Take a moment to wrap up the conversation and bring participants' attention back to the Instructional Strategy Note Sheet. Go to **slide 20** and explain that they have used three more strategies at this point. Ask them to spend a few moments writing and reflecting on how each strategy was used and how they might incorporate each strategy into their own lessons. They should also note how each strategy supports authentic instruction. This will be a great reference tool for planning lessons once they are back in the classroom.

Allow time for participants to share their ideas for how they might use these strategies in their classrooms.

Extend

Transition to **slide 21** and pass out copies of the attached **Authentic Lesson Reflection Tool**. Inform groups that they will use this reflection tool to identify and reflect on the elements of authenticity that they observed in the Rumpelstiltskin lesson.

Assign groups to the same authenticity component that they previously read about. Using the reflection tool as a guide, participants are to discuss with their groups whether the Rumpelstiltskin lesson incorporated that element of authenticity.

Encourage groups to identify where they observed this element of authenticity in the lesson and how it might be improved. *Where was the lesson strong in terms of this element? Where was it lacking?* Allow groups to share out their responses to the whole group.

Ask participants: *How can you envision using authenticity in your own classroom instruction?* Allow small groups to discuss among themselves for a minute and then share out some of their ideas with the whole group.

Possible Responses

- “Pose a question before the content/subject material is taught.”
- “Allow students to activate their prior knowledge.”
- “Use students’ prior knowledge to help them make connections to new content.”
- "Make the lesson relevant to the world outside the school by using social issues to stimulate conversation."

Evaluate

Transition to **slide 22**. Ask participants to find the drawing of their most meaningful learning experience from the beginning of the session. Introduce the Cognitive Comics strategy by asking participants to draw their own "authentic classroom" on the other half of that page.

Emphasize that the point of this activity is to portray a space that represents how the components of authenticity might look in a classroom. Remind participants that only the quality of the response is being evaluated, not the quality of the artwork.

After giving participants time to complete their drawings, have participants compare their new creations with the learning experience drawings they created earlier. Ask them to evaluate if there are commonalities between their most meaningful learning experiences and their authentic classrooms. *What conclusions can we make about the types of environments that support authentic learning?*

Presenter's Note: Alternative Strategy Follow-up Activity

If you opted for the shorter strategy in the Engage section, follow up now by continuing the Preflections strategy. Ask participants to find the list of adjectives describing their most meaningful learning experience from the beginning of the session. Now, ask participants to use adjectives to describe their own authentic classrooms on the other half of that page. After giving them time to identify their adjectives, ask participants to compare the two sets of words. *Were any of the same or similar words used to describe both your most meaningful learning experience and your authentic classroom? What conclusions can we make about the types of environments that support authentic learning?*

Possible Responses

- Community
- Safe spaces
- Relationships
- Opportunities/protected time to talk
- Validation of ideas and choices
- Norms and expectations
- Interesting curriculum

Transition to **slide 23**. Introduce the Think-Pair-Share strategy by asking participants to think about the following question on their own: *How does teaching authentically lead to deeper learning?* Next, have participants pair up to discuss their answers to this question: *How does teaching authentically prepare students for postsecondary opportunities?*

Finally, ask participants to consider this question: *How do you envision yourself using authenticity in your classroom instruction?* Allow participants to discuss within their groups, and then offer an opportunity to share out.

Presenter's Note: Questions and Reflection Time

If time allows at the end of the session, participants can share out their questions about authenticity in teaching and lessons. This sharing time provides an opportunity for you to clear up any misunderstandings or misconceptions. It also provides an opportunity for participants to reflect on their learning.

Follow-up Activities

On **slide 24**, show participants the K20 LEARN site to provide them with examples of authentic lessons that they can use in their classrooms.

Research Rationale

Authenticity can be implemented in all content areas and all grade levels. Authentic teaching has four components: construction of knowledge, disciplined inquiry, value beyond school, and student-centered learning. These four components are created and apparent through authentic tasks. Authentic tasks defined by Herrington, J., et al (2014), are ill-defined, requiring students to define the tasks and subtasks needed to complete the activity. They are investigated by students over a sustained period of time. Tasks can be applied to different subject and content areas and lead with opened-ended outcomes. These tasks are seamlessly integrated with assessment and create accomplished products valuable in the student's own right. They allow for competing solutions and a diversity of outcomes.

Authentic lessons allow opportunities for collaboration, which leads to the exploration of multiple perspectives and various points of views to be heard during a lesson. By forming collaborative groups, students are able to construct knowledge. Through the use of essential, open-ended questions, teachers provide the opportunity for students to reflect and articulate their thoughts and the processes of their learning. "Authentic learning environments need to provide collaborative learning where, for example, more able partners can assist with scaffolding and coaching, and where teachers provide appropriate learning support" (Herrington, J., 2014; e.g., Collins et al., 1989; Greenfield, 1984).

Herrington, J. et al., describes the four components in an authentic lesson as follows: 1) Students should seek to solve a real-life problem to which they would attach emotional commitment as well as a cognitive interest; 2) The problem should be sufficiently open-ended so that there are a variety of strategies for its solution; 3) The problem-solving strategies and "solutions" developed should encourage students to change their actions, beliefs, or attitudes; and 4) The problem should have a real audience beyond the classroom. Authentic tasks are more worthy of the investment of time and effort in higher education than de-contextualized exercises and tasks (Herrington & Herrington, 2006).

Resources

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- Herrington, A., & Herrington, J. (2006). Authentic learning environments in higher education. Hershey, PA: Information Science Publishing.
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