Authenticity, It's Not Just a Fairy Tale

Lindsay Hawkins, Lindsay Williams
Published by K20 Center

Time Frame 50-60 session(s)

Essential Question(s)

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

Summary

This professional development focuses on the components of authentic learning. Participants will connect the components of authentic learning to a Rumpelstiltskin lesson.

Learning Goals

- Participants will be able to identify how instructional strategies support authentic instruction.
Attachments

- Authenticity Framework Reading.pdf
- Authenticity Slide Show-Short Version.pptx
- Claim, Evidence, Reasoning (CER).pdf
- Court_Cards.pdf
- Instructional Strategy Note Sheet.pdf
- Rumpelstiltskin story.pdf

Materials

- Court Cards, cut out enough to be evenly distributed among the participants
- Rumpelstiltskin story
- Authenticity Framework Reading and Learning document
- Claim, Evidence, and Reasoning (CER) document (one copy per group)
- Instructional Strategy Note Sheet (may be printed front/back)
- Sticky notes
- Pens/pencils
- Chart tablet
- Paper
- Markers
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 is a great way to begin piquing the curiosity of participants and gaining 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 Authenticity slide show and introduce yourself to the participants. Let them know that they will be learning about authenticity and its importance in teaching.

Transition to slide number three ("Blast from the Past!"). Guide 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-providing," and others. After completion, have participants set aside their lists of adjectives to revisit later in the session.

Inform participants 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. Encourage participants to use their "Instructional Strategy Note Sheet" to jot down ideas for how they would personalize a strategy to be a tool in a specific class or lesson. Before breaks and after the strategies have been modeled, the presentation will allow time to reflect on using these strategies.

Reveal the Session Objectives on slide five. Briefly highlight the objectives for the session. This will provide a roadmap of where you will go together during the session and will let participants know what to expect from this professional development.
Pass out copies of the Rumpelstiltskin Story handout to participants and then transition to slide six ("The Story"). Tell the participants, "Take about two minutes to read the version of Rumpelstiltskin at your table silently." Then say, "When you walked into today's session, you were handed a playing card. Use that playing card to identify the character you are going to be during the next activity." Change to slide seven ("Playing Cards").

Once participants have identified their characters, explain to them that the justice system has finally caught up with these reprehensible characters. Charges have been filed against their character and in groups they are going to defend each character against the charges. Have participants now move to sit with the other participants who have the same card/character. Change to slide eight ("The Imaginary People's Court"). Instruct participants to read through the charges that have been brought against their character.

Transition to slide nine and introduce the CUS and Discuss strategy. Tell the participants to examine the Rumpelstiltskin story handout 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.

Move to slide ten ("CER Example"). Explain how a Claim, Evidence, and Reasoning strategy is used following this example. With the information about their character gleaned from the reading, groups will use a Claim, Evidence, and Reasoning (CER) strategy to formulate an argument in their character's defense. Participants should use the CER as their guide for the argument of their client's innocence. Transition to slide eleven ("Pair Square Legal Team") for instructions on organizing the defense teams and presenting arguments.

After 20 minutes, or when everyone is finished, move to slide twelve ("Hear Ye! Hear Ye!") 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.

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" of whether the character is innocent or not. For large groups, you can also appoint a judge from the audience to perform this task. Continue in this manner until each character is found innocent or guilty.

Highlight to the participants that the subject of the lesson, the Rumpelstiltskin story, was not significant or the point of the lesson. Rather, 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.

---

Transition to slide thirteen ("Beyond Rumpelstiltskin"). 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.

Have participants find the Instructional Strategy Note Sheet at their table. Explain that they have now used two instructional strategies. Ask them to spend a few moments reflecting on how each strategy was used and how they might incorporate each strategy into their own classrooms. Allow time for participants to share ideas for use of the strategies in their classrooms.

https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/professional-learning/8?rev=629
Explain

Transition to slide 15 ("Authentic Teaching"). Explain that an authentic lesson begins with accessing student prior knowledge. The authentic lesson then builds upon the concepts shown on the slide: Construction of Knowledge, Disciplined Inquiry, Real World Connections, and Student-Centered Learning.

Assign participants that were previously grouped, 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.

Pass out copies of the Authenticity Framework reading. Instruct participants that they will use a 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 section ie: Construction of Knowledge, Disciplined Inquiry, etc., according to their assignment. 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 a Why-Lighting strategy to identify key ideas in the text. When everyone is finished, have the groups take a few minutes to discuss the reading with each other, including which information they highlighted as important and why.

Pass out chart tablet paper and markers to each group. Transition to slide 17 ("Represent"). Instruct participants to work within their groups to construct a summary sentence, a Tweet Up, and a visual representation of their authenticity component. For example, the group representing Construction of Knowledge might state as a summary of their section that when students construct their own knowledge, it sparks new ideas. They might also draw a light bulb turning on to represent new ideas being formed and create a hashtag of #knowledgeispower. Allow time for each group to share their representation of the reading.
Extend

Pass out copies of the Authenticity Lesson Reflection Tool handout and change to the slide with that title (slide 19). Tell 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 during the reading. Using the reflection tool as a guide, they are to discuss with their group whether the Rumpelstiltskin lesson incorporated this element. Encourage groups to identify where they observed this authenticity element in the lesson and 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.

**Presenter's Note: Possible Responses**

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

Take a moment to wrap up the conversation and redirect participants' attention back to the Instructional Strategy Note Sheet. Remind participants to reflect on the instructional strategies presented today using the Instructional Strategies Note Sheets. They may note how each strategy supports authentic instruction. These will be a great reference tool when they are back in the classroom planning lessons.
Evaluate

Move to the slide, "3,2,1... Go!" Use the instructional strategy 3-2-1 to wrap up the session and evaluate the participants learning. Instruct participants to get three sticky notes. On the first sticky note they will write three things that make a lesson authentic. The second sticky note they will write two authentic things they plan on implementing into this week's lessons. The third sticky note, write one question they still have about authenticity or authentic lessons.
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, articulate 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 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

- 3-2-1 Instructional Strategy: K20 Center. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f507c1b8
- JigSaw Instructional Strategy: K20 Center. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f507c1b8