

Authentic Instruction In a Nutshell

The current system of education cries out for more authenticity, that is, more resemblance to the realities of the world beyond the classroom.

- William Blank

What we want for and from students:

(from "The Education by Design Classroom Model",
<http://www.antiochne.edu/academics/ed/edbebd.html>, 1/10/99.)

Our classrooms should be designed to develop individuals who demonstrate that they :

- have a meaningful base of essential knowledge
- possess skills that are critical to the needs of the times
- are responsible and invested owners of life-long learning
- are reflectively self-directed with a strong work ethic
- have a well-developed internal model of quality work
- are trustworthy, have integrity and are of ethical character
- seek to optimize work through collaboration
- are responsible and active members of communities.

The five standards of Authentic Instruction

(from "Promising Practices For Connecting High School To The Real World", Blank & Harwell, 1997, University of South Florida.)

"Broadly viewed, authentic instruction is any instructional strategy, model or technique that involves students in learning something that is useful or important beyond the school setting and the engages them in a manner that helps them construct new knowledge or develop deep understandings or insights."

- Blank

Authentic instruction classes have these commonalties:

- Involve Higher Order Thinking
 - Students manipulate information and ideas in order to synthesize, generalize, or hypothesize.
- Depth of Knowledge
 - Students gain deep understanding of significant concepts and central ideas.
- Connectedness to the World Beyond the Classroom
 - Work involves connections to the larger social context of students' lives.
- Substantive Conversation
 - Instruction often leads to non-planned discussion about fundamental, core elements of the material.
- Social Support for Student Achievement
 - The classroom has a high level of expectation and the social support that encourages risk taking and mutual respect.

Authentic or real world performance

+ Rigorous, disciplined investigation

---> Deep understanding and rich lasting learning