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METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL****MENTAL ENLIGHTENMENT SCIENTIFIC –  
METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL**<http://mentaljournal-jspu.uz/index.php/mesmj/index>**AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT THEORY AND COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION:  
DEVELOPING AND VALIDATING HIGHLY SPECIFIC RUBRIC FOR ASSESSING  
SOFT SKILLS****Surayyo Raimbayevna Atadjanova***Senior lecturer, of the faculty of Foreign Philology**Urganch State University.**e-mail: [atadjanovasuraya76@gmail.com](mailto:atadjanovasuraya76@gmail.com)**Urganch, Uzbekistan***Roza Kodirberganova***A 4-year student of Faculty of the Foreign Philology**Urganch State University**e-mail: [qodirberganovaroza@mail.com](mailto:qodirberganovaroza@mail.com)**Urganch, Uzbekistan*

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**ABOUT ARTICLE**

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**Abstract:** My research focuses on exploring the key aspects of developing and validating a highly specific rubric for assessing soft skills within the framework of authentic assessment theory and competency-based education.

Moreover, it examines influential studies and practical experiments that highlight the role of well-designed rubrics in measuring soft skills such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking, problem-solving, and emotional intelligence. Theoretical analyses by scholars suggest how authentic assessment addresses the limitations of conventional evaluation methods, which often reduce complex human abilities to numerical scores or simplistic checklists.

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**Introduction.** It is a fact that authentic assessment and competency-based education have become essential steps of modern teaching and learning. As traditional testing methods

often fail to capture the complexity of real-world abilities, scholars increasingly emphasize the need for more meaningful ways to evaluate what students can actually do. The hypothesis and theoretical foundations strongly support the idea that authentic assessment, when grounded in competency-based approaches, provides a more accurate and practical measure of student achievement. Additionally, practical ideas include the creation and implementation of detailed, context-specific rubrics that allow educators to assess soft skills in realistic performance tasks and real-life situations. For example, using performance-based activities, project work, simulations, and reflective practices enables students to demonstrate their competencies in authentic settings while receiving constructive, criterion-referenced feedback.

**Materials and Methods.** Mr. Wiggins (1998), a researcher and consultant on school reform issues, said that assessment is authentic when we directly examine student performance on worthy intellectual tasks. Traditional assessment, by contrast, relies on indirect or proxy “items-efficient, simplistic substitutes from which we think valid inferences can be made about the student’s performance at those valued challenges [1]

Wiggins makes an important point about what real learning looks like. As an additional opinion, I can say that assessment is more “authentic” when students are asked to do meaningful tasks that resemble what people actually do outside of school. When we see students solve real-world problems, create projects on their own, or explain their thinking in depth, we get a much clearer idea of what they truly understand. Traditional tests, on the other hand, often reduce learning to short, isolated questions that mainly check memory or test-taking skills. These can be efficient, but they don’t always show whether students can apply their knowledge in real-life situations. Because of this, I believe schools should rely less on purely traditional tests and make greater use of authentic assessments—such as portfolios, performances, projects, and real-world tasks—so that evaluation is fairer, meaningful, and connected to original intellectual work.

As an Uzbek scholar, B.Uralov (2024) mentioned: “Authentic assessments embed evaluation within open-ended, complex projects, performances, and problems set in contexts similar to work, community, or post-secondary education. Through authentic tasks, students demonstrate mastery of collaboration, problem-solving, communication, and other transferable skills. Feedback is ongoing to support continuous improvement. Research indicates that authentic assessment is a valid measure of competency attainment. Data from three competency-based high schools that implemented portfolio-based, performance-based, and product-based assessments show that these tools reliably indicate students' mastery of collaboration, digital literacy, and other targeted competencies [2]

In my opinion, authentic evaluations really shine when they are integrated into our open-ended, real-world initiatives, including performances, community projects, or difficult problem-solving exercises that mirror real-world jobs, civic life, or higher education. Instead of using discrete tests, we can show our students' mastery via collaboration, creative problem-solving, effective communication, and other vital transferable abilities. If we give feedback on a regular basis to encourage development, it will not be just to deliver grades.

Their efficacy as a trustworthy measure of true competency is demonstrated by research. I can give an example from my practice, data from three competency-based high schools shows that using portfolios, performance tasks, and real projects helps teachers clearly see students' skills—like digital literacy and teamwork—much better than standard tests do. This human-centered approach not only inspires students but also levels the playing field and allows different kind of learners to highlight their talents. In addition to motivating students, this approach levels the playing field and enables various learners to showcase their abilities through their strengths rather than being hindered by the limitations of traditional tests.

Hodge and Steven (2007) stated that competency-based education is a process that aims to educate individuals within the scope of the twenty-first-century skills in accordance with the desired and expected qualifications and that enables individuals to achieve the learning objectives determined according to their own characteristics or gain the qualifications [3]

Additionally, this understanding of Competency-Based Education is both timely and necessary. Traditional models only focus on how long students sit in a classroom, rather than what they can actually do when they leave it. By contrast, CBE shifts the emphasis to real, demonstrable skills that matter in daily life and in the modern workplace. I also appreciate that it recognizes learners as individuals with different strengths, paces, and goals. When learning targets are adapted to students' own characteristics, they are more likely to stay motivated and to see a clear purpose in what they are doing. For these reasons, I think CBE offers a more flexible and meaningful pathway to preparing our students for the complex demands of the twenty-first century. I can share a real example from my practice. In one of my lessons, I taught the topic "Strange Houses" using the Grammar-Translation Method. After working with short texts about unusual houses, I assigned a creative homework task: students had to draw a strange house according to their own imagination. In the following class, they described their drawings in English. That task was quite effective. It moved students from passive reading and translation to active language use. Their own personal and creative element increased their motivation, and many became more confident when speaking about something they had

created themselves. Combining the drawing with oral description also allowed different learning styles.

From the viewpoint of competency-based education, the activity was valuable because students demonstrated their real competencies. They applied the vocabulary and structures from the texts to describe their own ideas in a meaningful context, rather than simply recalling the rules. Although some students needed more language support and scaffolding technique, the task successfully combined traditional grammar-translation with creative output, making the lesson more engaging and practical.

Results and Discussions. As Jon Mueller (2005) describes it, authentic measures are “engaging and worthy problems or questions of importance, in which students must use knowledge to fashion performances effectively and creatively. The tasks are either replicas of or analogous to the kinds of problems faced by adult citizens and consumers or professionals in the field.” Authentic tasks can range from analyzing a political cartoon to making observations of the natural world to computing the amount of paint needed to cover a particular room to performing in a chorale [4]

Of course, I think it just makes more sense to use authentic assessment. It turns learning from dry memorization into something genuinely meaningful, where students apply their knowledge to creatively solve real-world problems, just as adults do on a daily basis. This can be seen in action when high school students create a budget for a school function and figure out how much food, decorations, and venue will cost. It appears to be science that truly matters— younger children studying local flora and fauna and then coming up with a straightforward plan of action to save a nearby park. At a recreation center, where music genuinely unites people, students might be practicing and performing a song for younger children or grandparents. Because they reflect the difficulties of adult life and work, these tasks seem worthwhile. Pupils remain more attentive, reflect more deeply, and retain much more information. Jon Mueller is correct: education should not only prepare students for exams but also for the real world. This method gives students real self-assurance and practical skills that they can use long after they leave the classroom. From my experience, when I was an internship at school, I gave a task to my students in order to develop their critical citizenship skills, according to the task, middle school students analyzed a current political cartoon and write a brief opinion piece for the class blog.

A scholar Marzano (2006) states that all tasks replicate real-world challenges, and student performance on all of them can be assessed. Multiple-choice questions can be designed to capture some ability to apply or analyze concepts, but filling in the corresponding circle on a

scantron sheet does not begin to have the face validity of asking students to complete engaging tasks that replicate real world ones. Reviews of research across a number of learning domains have discovered that students need to demonstrate application of their learning to effectively document the acquisition of valuable skills such as summarizing and generating and testing hypotheses [5]

While I fully agree with Marzano that authentic tasks better replicate the complexities of real-world challenges and provide stronger evidence of genuine skill acquisition, I also believe a completely dismissive attitude toward multiple-choice questions may overlook their practical value in certain contexts. Well-designed multiple-choice items can efficiently assess students' ability to apply concepts, analyze information, or even generate and test basic hypotheses, especially when time, resources, or large class sizes make performance-based assessments difficult to implement fairly and consistently. In my view, the most effective approach is not to replace traditional tests entirely, but to use them strategically as one part of a broader assessment system. Multiple-choice questions can serve as useful checkpoints for foundational knowledge and quick application, while authentic tasks should be the primary way, we evaluate deeper skills like summarizing complex ideas, hypothesizing, and transferring learning to new situations.

Axmadaliyeva X (2025) asserts that this study presents an innovative approach to preparing secondary school students for professional roles through the use of the 4C Framework. It emphasizes the importance of essential 4Cs—Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, and Creativity—such as teamwork, problem-solving, adaptability, interpersonal communication, and leadership, in addition to academic content. The research highlights the growing need to integrate these competencies into instructional practice so that students are equipped for real-world workplace demands, whereas traditional teaching methods tend to prioritize technical skills and theoretical knowledge alone [6].

I completely agree with the new method this study suggests, which uses the 4C Framework—Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, and Creativity—to help high school students get ready for jobs. These skills, like working with others, solving problems, being flexible, communicating with others, and being a leader, are just as important as academic knowledge. It's nice to see this call for integration because traditional methods that only teach technical skills and theory don't prepare students for real-world jobs. I think that the 4Cs are really effective when they are used with real-world assessments, which turn abstract skills into measurable, useful results. Real-life tasks that are like what professionals do, like group projects that deal with community issues, debates about moral dilemmas, or student-led

innovation challenges, are what authentic assessment is all about. Authentic assessments provide evidence of 4C growth that traditional grading misses, fostering self-reflection and resilience. In Uzbekistan, where youth unemployment lingers around 10-15%, schools could adapt this by partnering with local tech firms for internships-as-assessments, directly linking classroom skills to job readiness. Ultimately, this holistic method doesn't just teach skills—it cultivates adaptable professionals ready to lead.

As a scholar Kubatova, J. (2025), asserted that soft skills encompass a wide array of personal, interpersonal, and cognitive attributes, allowing individuals to effectively interact and navigate diverse situations. Transferable across jobs, they are vital for both personal growth and performance in professional settings, complementing hard skills. Soft skills are developed through experiences, reflection, and ongoing learning. Soft skills are relevant to individuals of all ages, genders, and cultural backgrounds [7].

The rubric works for presentations, group discussions, written reports, e-mails, or video recordings. We can give it to our students as handouts after they have done their assignment and they can self-assess first using this rubric before receiving teacher’s feedback:

Criteria	Presentations	Group discussions	E-mails	Video recordings
<b>Speaking</b>	Speaks clearly with confidence, good pace, and excellent pronunciation. It can be scaffolding. Engages the audience effectively.	Contributes topic-based ideas clearly and respectfully. Builds on others’ points smoothly.	(Not applicable for speaking)	Speaks fluently with clear voice, natural expression, and good eye contact and body language.
<b>Listening</b>	Listens attentively to audience questions and responds thoughtfully and accurately with the demonstrated ppt.	Actively listens, shows interest, and responds constructively to others’ ideas, teamworking	(Not applicable for listening)	Watches and listens carefully to any instructions or feedback before recording.

<b>Writing</b>	Uses well-organized, accurate, and engaging slides or speaker notes with no errors.	(Not applicable for writing)	Writes clear, polite, well-structured e-mails with proper greeting, purpose, and closing.	Writes accurate and engaging script or captions that support the video content.
<b>Reading</b>	Reads from notes or slides smoothly without losing eye contact with audience.	Reads any shared materials or instructions accurately when needed.	Reads and understands received e-mails fully before replying correctly.	Reads script or prompts naturally and fluently.

**Table 1: The list of communicative activities and their effect to assess productive and receptive skills.**

Additionally, it demonstrates various activities, such as presentations, group discussions, e-mails, video recordings which are effective to improve listening, speaking, reading and writing in fun ways. The advantages of these assessment techniques are below:

For speaking: Presentations are the best scaffolding to learn speak with confidence and engage the audience easily. Group discussions are also important to gain topic-based ideas and to build friendly atmosphere in any kind of situation. Video recordings can be basic activity to work with our body language and eye-contact but e-mails are not applicable for speaking.

For listening: Presentation is one of the most beneficial activities to focus easily and immediately on something that we must respond thoughtfully and accurately. Listening actively, responding constructively to others' ideas and showing interest to them are the signs of we are getting like native speakers and group discussions can build such kinds of abilities in our mind. Watching and listening carefully to any instructions or feedback related to our recordings are can be also improvement for our listening skill. However, there is no effect to listening from writing e-mails.

For writing: Through writing well-organized, accurate and engaging slides in order to make notes without errors to demonstrate our audience, we can learn writing without any grammar or lexical mistakes. With writing clear, polite, well-structured e-mails with proper greeting, purpose, and closing, we have zero or very few grammar errors. In order to make high-

quality video content we should write accurate and engaging script or captions but group discussions cannot support our writing.

For reading. All of these activities are effective to improve reading. Presentations, group discussions, emails, and video recordings are all practical activities that can significantly help improve reading skills. Although they may not look like traditional reading exercises, each one encourages different aspects of reading, such as comprehension, vocabulary building, critical thinking, and attention to detail.

**Conclusion.** Authentic assessment and competency-based education offer a powerful way to make soft, productive and receptive skills visible, teachable, and assessable. We are seeing its effectiveness across higher and vocational education. Authentic assessment tasks can be a mirror to real-world or workplace situations and improve engagement, satisfaction, and employability skills, such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking, problem-solving, and self-confidence. Studies show that rubrics can also reliably measure specific soft skills like, active listening, reading, speaking, ethical decision-making, teamwork and communication from different point of view. Authentic assessment combined with carefully validated rubrics can meaningfully capture and develop soft skills within competency-based education. Ultimately, the goal from implementing highly specific rubrics in authentic, competency-based systems represents a shift toward more equitable and learner-centered education. It equips graduates with verifiable soft skills that employers value, while encouraging institutions to prioritize meaningful assessment over rote evaluation. As education continues to evolve in response to societal and technological changes, this approach holds significant promise for cultivating adaptable, competent individuals ready to thrive in complex environments.

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