

Authentic Assessment in Kurikulum Merdeka: Benefits, Challenges, and Implementation Strategies

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Abstrak: Asesmen autentik berperan penting dalam meningkatkan relevansi dan efektivitas pendidikan, khususnya dalam kerangka Kurikulum Merdeka. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengeksplorasi manfaat, tantangan, dan strategi implementasi asesmen autentik di sekolah-sekolah Indonesia. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui tinjauan literatur sistematis, data dikumpulkan dari artikel ilmiah, buku akademik, dan dokumen resmi yang relevan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa asesmen autentik meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa, motivasi, keterampilan abad ke-21, dan menyediakan umpan balik untuk perbaikan berkelanjutan. Tantangan utama meliputi kebutuhan waktu dan sumber daya yang besar, konsistensi standar penilaian, dan minimnya pelatihan guru. Strategi yang diusulkan meliputi program pengembangan profesional, alokasi sumber daya, dan penyusunan panduan yang komprehensif. Temuan ini menyoroti pentingnya sistem pendukung untuk memastikan integrasi asesmen autentik yang efektif dan mendukung tujuan Kurikulum Merdeka dalam mempersiapkan siswa menghadapi tantangan dunia nyata.

Kata Kunci: Asesmen Autentik, Kurikulum Merdeka, Keterampilan Abad 21, Pelatihan Guru, Tantangan Pendidikan

Abstract: Authentic assessment plays a crucial role in enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of education, particularly within the framework of Kurikulum Merdeka. This study aims to explore the benefits, challenges, and implementation strategies of authentic assessment in Indonesian schools. Using a qualitative approach through a systematic literature review, data were collected from scholarly articles, academic books, and official documents. The findings reveal that authentic assessment enhances student engagement, motivation, 21st-century skills, and provides actionable feedback for continuous improvement. Key challenges include significant time and resource requirements, maintaining consistent assessment standards, and the lack of teacher training. Proposed strategies include professional development programs, resource allocation, and the development of comprehensive guidelines. These findings highlight the importance of support systems to ensure the effective integration of authentic assessment, aligning with Kurikulum Merdeka's goal of preparing students for real-world challenges.

Keywords: Authentic Assessment, Kurikulum Merdeka, 21st-century Skills, Teacher Training, Education Challenges

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INTRODUCTION

Assessment in education plays a critical role in determining students' learning success and the quality of their educational experiences (Brookhart, 2013). Traditional assessments, such as multiple-choice tests and written exams, often focus on measuring students' memorization skills, neglecting their ability to understand and apply knowledge in real-world contexts (Muller, 2018). Consequently, many students perceive school learning as irrelevant to their daily lives, leading to decreased motivation and engagement (Achmad et al., 2022). In contrast, authentic assessment has become increasingly

significant in the 21st century, emphasizing tasks related to real-world situations that measure students' abilities in more meaningful and practical contexts (Anderson, 2021). These tasks, which often include projects, simulations, presentations, and problem-based assignments, require students to engage in critical thinking, creativity, and effective communication (Darling-Hammond et al., 2014). Recent studies, such as those by Sahlan et al. (2023) and Ayuni et al. (2022), demonstrate that authentic assessment not only enhances students' engagement but also supports the development of 21st-century skills, making it a critical component of modern education.

According to Anderson (2021), authentic assessment includes tasks related to the real world to show a more meaningful application of knowledge and skills. With authentic assessment, students are faced with concepts and facts and the ability to apply knowledge in relevant contexts. As the needs of the world of work develop and the demands of 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, and collaboration, authentic assessment becomes increasingly relevant. Wiggins (2014) revealed that authentic assessment is designed to demonstrate what students can do with knowledge, not just know it abstractly. In other words, authentic assessment can develop and measure students' skills in a holistic and applicable manner so that it is important for their future careers. Implementing authentic assessment in the curriculum has several significant benefits. Firstly, authentic assessment in Kurikulum Merdeka can measure students' real abilities. (Wiggins, 1993) states that authentic assessment provides an accurate reflection of students' abilities so that they can measure how well they apply knowledge in real-world scenarios. The second is increasing learning motivation; Gulikers (2004) states that students will feel more involved and motivated when they know the assessment is based on real-world applications. Third is an authentic assessment that helps develop 21st-century skills (Darling-Hammond, 2014). Finally, feedback is more valuable because it is more detailed and can be followed up to provide clear guidance for improving it (Brown, 2005).

However, implementing authentic assessment within Kurikulum Merdeka presents challenges, including the extensive time and resources needed for planning and evaluation, as noted by Muller (2018) and Brookhart (2013). The lack of standardized assessment criteria further complicates its implementation, as teachers struggle to align tasks with national standards, according to Gulikers et al. (2004) and Rosidah et al. (2021). Additionally, limited teacher training remains a significant barrier; Darling-Hammond (2010) emphasizes the need for professional development to equip educators with the skills required for authentic assessment, while Ayuni, Purba, and Akhyaruddin (2022) observed challenges in integrating assessment into teaching practices. Without adequate training and resources, as highlighted by Sahlan et al. (2023), teachers may revert to traditional methods, reducing the potential of authentic assessment to enhance educational outcomes.

Considering the above background, this paper explores the importance of authentic assessment in Kurikulum Merdeka and the benefits and challenges related to authentic assessment. To begin with, researchers explore it in more depth, and it is hoped that this paper can provide useful guidance for teachers in improving the quality of learning and student learning outcomes.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a systematic literature review to explore the benefits, challenges, and implementation strategies of authentic assessment within the framework of Kurikulum Merdeka. Data were collected from various sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, research findings, and official documents relevant to the research topic. The inclusion criteria focused on materials published within the last ten years (2014–2024) that discuss authentic assessment or its application in Indonesian education. Articles that lacked full-text access, were irrelevant to educational assessment, or were published before 2014 (unless foundational to the theoretical framework) were excluded.

The data collection process utilized electronic databases such as Scopus, Google Scholar, and other academic repositories. Keywords such as “authentic assessment,” “educational reform,” “Kurikulum Merdeka,” and “21st-century skills” guided the search for relevant literature. Selected materials were reviewed and organized into a thematic matrix to identify patterns and trends in the data.

Data analysis employed a descriptive approach, categorizing findings into three main themes: the benefits, challenges, and implementation strategies of authentic assessment. These themes were synthesized to provide practical insights and actionable recommendations for educators and policymakers. The findings aim to enhance the integration of authentic assessment in daily teaching practices and support the broader goals of Kurikulum Merdeka in preparing students for real-world challenges.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Authentic Assessment in Learning

Authentic assessment is a learning activity that refers to “real” world activities or learning that are linked to everyday life. This learning requires several approaches to solving a problem. In other words, authentic assessment is an activity that monitors and measures students’ abilities to solve a problem in a real-world context. Authentic assessment is divided into three types: performance assessment, portfolio assessment, and student self-assessment. Performance assessment is developed to demonstrate students’ skills and knowledge in various real situations or specific contexts. Meanwhile, a portfolio assessment is an assessment that includes assessing performance or work results so that these activities can be appreciated by providing value. Self-assessment is an assessment to reflect and think about themselves.

Zaim (2013) states that there are four general principles in authentic assessment, namely (1) the assessment process is not separated from the learning process (a part of, not apart from instruction), (2) assessment must be linked to daily life or real-world problems, (3) assessment must use various criteria and methods that are by the essential characteristics of the learning experience, and finally (4) assessment must be holistic covering all aspects of learning objectives (cognitive, effective and motor sensors). In short, authentic assessment has the principle that the assessment process is linked to real-world problems, uses learning experience essential criteria, and is holistic.

Regarding authentic assessment in learning, especially in the language section, there is research conducted by Ayuni, Purba, and Akhyaruddin (2022), namely regarding the application of authentic assessment in anecdote writing material in grade 10 high school. This research explains the application of authentic assessment through activities: 1) planning the application of authentic assessment, 2) application of authentic assessment in the classroom, and 3) Evaluation of its application. This research also describes the obstacles that occur when implementing authentic assessment. In preparing performance assessments, teachers must follow the guidelines in the RPP by the Minister of Education and Culture regarding simplifying RPP components. This policy aims to make teachers focus on student assessment and evaluation activities.

One application is through authentic assignments in student textbooks that are relevant to Basic Competencies (KD) in Indonesian language subjects. The results of the analysis show that language learning needs can be implemented with authentic assignments in students' textbooks, which is demonstrated by: 1) teachers can describe the use of authentic assessments in textbooks that suit students' learning needs, 2) teachers can classify the types of authentic assessments used to teach language skills, 3) teachers can classify types of authentic assessment based on three assessment domains. 4) the teacher can explain how authentic textbook assessments are relevant to language learning needs by KTSP 2006 and K13.

The following is an example of an assessment instrument that can be a reference for educators:

Table 1: Example of an assessment instrument

No	Instrument	Description
1	Rubric	It is a systematic and structured assessment that can help teachers assess and evaluate student performance. By setting clear and graded assessment criteria or dimensions, rubrics help teachers focus more on the competencies students must master, provide constructive feedback, and improve student performance.
2	Check list	List of information, data, characteristics, characteristics/elements aimed at.
3	Anecdotal notes	Notes on observation results that focus on outstanding student performance or behavior, accompanied by the background of the incident and the results of analysis of observations made by the teacher.
4	Progress graph	Infographics that describe the increase/development of student learning.

Source: *Assessment and Learning Guidelines by Kemendikbudristek, 2022*

Assessment instruments can be developed based on assessment techniques carried out by teachers according to their needs. Below are examples of customizable scoring techniques:

Table 2: Assessment techniques in learning

No	Technique	Description
1	Observation	This assessment uses regular observations of student behavior. Observations can be focused on one individual or all students and can be carried out in the context of tasks or daily routine behavior. This is done to learn more about student

		performance development and to provide more accurate and relevant feedback to support student learning.
2	Performance	Assessment in which students are asked to demonstrate or apply their learning outcomes in various contexts according to established criteria such as practice, producing products, creating projects, or creating portfolios. Aims to assess students' ability to use their knowledge in real situations.
3	Project	Assessment, which includes planning, implementation and reporting within a certain time.
4	Written test	Tests presented in written form (questions and answers) are useful for measuring or obtaining information about students' abilities. Written tests can be in essays, descriptions, multiple choice, and other written tests.
5	Oral test	Provide questions that students must answer orally and can be given classically during the learning process.
6	Assignment	Providing assignments to students to measure knowledge and facilitate students in increasing their knowledge.
7	Portfolio	A collection of documents from assessments, works and awards in a particular field to reflect developments over a certain period. Portfolios do not only show the final results but also the learning and growth process experienced by students.

Source: Assessment and Learning Guidelines by Kemendikbudristek, 2022

Benefits of Authentic Assessment

Authentic assessment provides significant benefits to the Kurikulum Merdeka. Darling-Hammond (2014) states that authentic assessment offers experiences relevant to students' everyday contexts, helping them understand the relevance of their learning. Similarly, Ayuni, Purba, and Akhyaruddin (2022) found that authentic assessment in teaching anecdotal writing to Grade 10 students increased classroom engagement and provided deeper insights into their critical thinking skills. A study by Achmad (2022) in elementary schools showed that project-based tasks, such as simple experiments in science subjects, not only improved contextual understanding but also enhanced students' collaboration and communication skills. Sahlan (2023) further revealed that students involved in authentic assessment-based projects demonstrated greater enthusiasm, especially when tasks reflected real-life challenges, such as solving environmental problems.

Moreover, authentic assessment plays a crucial role in developing 21st-century skills. Darwin (2023) noted that project-based authentic assessments significantly enhanced students' creativity, particularly through tasks that encouraged them to solve complex problems. For instance, designing eco-friendly applications in information technology classes helped students grasp the importance of innovation in daily life. Feedback provided through authentic assessment is also highly valuable. Brown (2005) found that students who received detailed feedback on group projects showed significant improvement in subsequent tasks. In the context of Kurikulum Merdeka, Rosidah (2021) discovered that teachers who provided evidence-based feedback helped students better understand their weaknesses and make immediate corrections to improve their performance.

Challenges of Authentic Assessment

However, the implementation of authentic assessment is not without challenges. Muller (2018) identified one of the main obstacles as the substantial time and resources required to design and evaluate complex tasks. A case study in a secondary school showed that teachers spent an average of 8–9 hours per week solely on assessments. This workload poses significant challenges, particularly for schools with limited teaching staff (Rosidah et al., 2021; Darling-Hammond, 2010). Maintaining consistency in standards is another challenge for authentic assessment. Gulikers (2004) noted that variability in rubric implementation often leads to inconsistencies in evaluation results. In Indonesia, a study by Rosidah (2021) found that the lack of teacher training in using and implementing authentic assessment rubrics caused significant differences in evaluation results between classes. Teacher training has become an urgent need to support the implementation of authentic assessment. Darling-Hammond (2010) emphasized that many teachers are unfamiliar with this method and require further mentoring to integrate it into their daily teaching practices effectively.

CONCLUSION

Authentic assessment offers a transformative approach to evaluating students' abilities within the context of Kurikulum Merdeka. By emphasizing real-world tasks and practical applications, authentic assessment bridges the gap between theoretical learning and practical skills, making education more relevant to students' daily lives. The findings of this study highlight several key benefits of authentic assessment, including its ability to measure real-world competencies, enhance student engagement and motivation, develop 21st-century skills such as critical thinking and creativity, and provide valuable and actionable feedback for continuous improvement or follow-up plans. However, the implementation of authentic assessment also faces significant challenges. The substantial time and resources required for planning and evaluation, maintaining consistency in assessment standards, and the urgent need for teacher training are major obstacles faced by educators. These challenges underscore the necessity for support systems such as resource allocation and professional development programs to ensure the successful integration of authentic assessment into daily teaching practices.

In conclusion, while authentic assessment presents some challenges, its potential to improve educational outcomes and equip students with essential skills for the modern world cannot be overlooked. Overcoming these challenges through collaborative efforts between educators, policymakers, and institutions is crucial. With proper support and implementation, authentic assessment can help enhance the quality of education, aligning with Kurikulum Merdeka's goals to prepare students for success in the real world.

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