

AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT FOR COMPETENCE-BASED ENGLISH LITERATURE COURSES

Alejandra Giangiulio Lobo

COLECCIÓN CILAMPA



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Authentic Assessment for Competence-Based English Literature Courses

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PREFACE

As its fourteenth volume, CILAMPA presents a study in which the author examines her experiences selecting and implementing authentic assessment tasks in the literature courses of the Bachelor's program in English teaching at the Universidad Nacional, Costa Rica. The need for authentic assessment in this program emerged from its most recent redesign, when the faculty adopted a competence-based approach. Portions of this study draw from the author's doctoral research, conducted to fulfill graduation requirements for the Doctor of Arts in English Pedagogy with a specialization in Literature at Murray State University, Kentucky, in the United States.

In this work, Alejandra Giangiulio discusses current demands and trends in English teaching and learning that call for higher education institutions to balance content knowledge with the skills necessary to succeed in contemporary professional settings. She situates authentic assessment within this context, providing a detailed review of existing definitions, models, approaches, and frameworks used to select or design authentic assessment tasks and activities. Beyond this theoretical discussion, however, she offers concrete authentic assessment tasks that document and nurture skills that the students will need in their future teaching careers. Going one step further, she shares checklists that can be used for selecting, creating, or even adapting assessment tasks that align with the epistemological orientations of competence-based models.

As part of her critical engagement with her own work, Giangiulio acknowledges the criticism and resistance that competence-based models have received. Rather than invalidating the model, she argues, educators can apply these critiques to refine efforts to center the development of 21st-century skills. She closes her study by discussing the implications she has observed in her classroom regarding the implementation of authentic assessment tasks. This final discussion contributes to ongoing conversations around the use of authentic assessment in higher education settings. This study stands as a practical guide for literature instructors working within competence-based frameworks. Alejandra's candid reflections on her own experiences provide readers with realistic expectations and actionable strategies for implementing authentic assessment in their own classrooms.

CHRISTIAN FALLAS ESCOBAR

June 2026

INTRODUCTION

Implementing authentic assessment tasks in literature courses presents unique challenges, particularly within a competence-based framework like the one recently adopted at the Universidad Nacional (UNA), Costa Rica, by the bachelor's program in English teaching for secondary schools. These challenges emerged from the need to balance disciplinary knowledge with the development of transferable competences, while also rethinking how learning is evaluated in meaningful and contextually relevant ways. In my own reading of existing literature, I found that the discussion of authentic assessment mainly took place within more technical programs or other social sciences, but not in the context of literature. Therefore, this work takes up those challenges across three interconnected parts, combining theoretical foundations, practical applications, and reflective analysis.

In Part I, I explore the shift toward competence-based models in higher education and situate authentic assessment within a broader landscape of theoretical frameworks and educational priorities. This section reviews key perspectives that define both competences and authenticity, highlighting how current educational trends call for closer alignment between what students learn and how they demonstrate that learning. By examining models, approaches, and frameworks created by Gulikers et al. (2004), Vu and Dall'Alba (2014), Ashford-Rowe et al. (2014), Villarroel et al. (2018), and McArthur (2023), I establish the conceptual foundation necessary to understand why assessment must evolve from traditional forms and toward more complex, practice-oriented approaches.

In Part II, I present four authentic assessment tasks grounded in my own teaching experience, illustrating how literary analysis can move beyond content recall toward meaningful, practice-oriented work. These tasks are designed not only to engage students with literary texts but also to position them as active participants in collaborative, analytical, and creative processes. In this way, literature becomes a platform for the development of critical thinking, communication, and professional competencies, while also allowing students to connect textual analysis to broader social, historical, cultural, and educational contexts, thus serving students' present and future roles as educators and social actors.

In Part III, I reflect on these tasks critically using selected frameworks and propose practical checklists to guide the design, evaluation, and refinement

of authentic assessment activities. This reflective component emphasizes the ongoing nature of assessment design and highlights the importance of continuous improvement. By translating theoretical principles into accessible tools in the form of checklists, this section aims to support instructors in making informed, intentional decisions about their assessment practices.

This work is shared with the CILAMPA readership with the hope that it will provide both a reflective lens and practical tools for instructors seeking to bridge theory and practice, and reimagine assessment in literature courses as a space for professional, intellectual, and social growth.

PART I. COMPETENCE-BASED MODELS AND AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT

COMPETENCE-BASED MODELS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

New forces of the postmodern world have created new demands in the field of language teaching and learning at the higher education level (Pérez-Cañado, 2013, p. 1). These new demands unveil the need for higher education institutions to make changes in their language teaching methodology and the evaluation of their language curriculum. Traditional models focused on teaching *about* language, such as grammar rules, vocabulary lists, and isolated exercises, have evolved into skills or *competence*-oriented models that focus on what learners can do with the language in real-world contexts (Griffith & Lim, 2014)¹. In this work, *competence* is understood as the ability to mobilize and apply relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to perform effectively in real-world academic, professional, or social tasks. Competences encompass both general and task-specific capacities, integrating cognitive mastery with contextual awareness (Vitello et al., 2021; Council of Europe, 2021; Griffith & Lim, 2014).

Pérez-Cañado (2013) notes that both Europe and North America have pursued language learning initiatives for different reasons. While Europe engages in language learning initiatives to enhance economic development and competitiveness, North America does it as a response to concerns about a language deficit after 9/11 (p. 2). Despite these differences, both regions share a common vision of successful language teaching and learning in higher education. Universities should not only provide knowledge or content but also help students develop competences that align with societal needs, so that they can thrive as professionals in a globalized world. As a result, traditional, content-based models have been replaced by skill-based or competence-based ones, so students will no longer be just content specialists, but they will also demonstrate the skills, abilities, and attitudes pertinent to their field of study, future jobs, and their personal lives.

1 Griffith & Lim (2014) and other authors cited—García-Chiva, 2024; Pérez-Murray, 2013; and Terrón-López & García-García (2013)—use the term “competency-based.” In this text, however, we have used “competence-based,” following the usage of the Council of Europe (2020) to refer to the diverse competences in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR).

The demands for skill-based models in Costa Rican higher education became evident after 2018 when the National Council of Rectors (Consejo Nacional de Rectores, CONARE in Spanish) presented the Qualifications Framework for Central American Higher Education (Marco de Cualificaciones para la Educación Superior Centroamericana, MCESCA in Spanish) in association with The HICA program (Harmonization and Innovation in Central American Higher Education Curricula: Enhancing and Implementing a Regional Qualifications Framework), the University of Barcelona, the Central American University Council (CSUCA), and the European Union, through the Erasmus Plus program (Garita-González et al., p. 171).

The MCESCA framework serves as a reference tool delineating expected student learning outcomes across educational levels, aimed at standardizing quality and fostering academic recognition and job mobility within and beyond Central America. The development of the MCESCA represents a strategic advancement in regional higher education, facilitating curricular innovation, transparency in academic offerings, and harmonization of educational systems (Solano, 2018). The framework centers on student learning and pedagogical improvement, classifying the learning outcomes and skills under five descriptors:

disciplinary and professional knowledge, application of knowledge, problem-solving and innovation, autonomy with personal, occupational, and social responsibility, communication and interaction across professional, cultural, and social domains. (my trans.)

The MCESCA framework is expected to guide curriculum design and reform, faculty professional development, program evaluation, and cross-border academic recognition. It is also meant to serve as a frame of reference for accreditation bodies in assessing educational quality across the region. Moreover, the MCESCA framework is expected to enhance or aid the definition of curricular policy, the structuring of clearer learning outcomes, the transparency of regional educational systems, the reinforcement of student-centered instruction, the establishment of learning outcome-based indicators that underpin quality improvement efforts, and the integration and internationalization of regional degrees (Solano, 2018).

The implementation of competences in Costa Rican higher education is not limited to the efforts of CONARE with the MCESCA framework but also includes scholars from different public universities of the country who have acknowledged the need to incorporate competences into programs of study and curricular modifications. For instance, Garita-González et al. (2021) recognized the need to develop and strengthen professional competences in traditionally objective-oriented study programs, as seen with that of UNA's Computer Science major, following the evident shift toward soft skills in Costa Rican society and education.

Garita-González and colleagues compared key international benchmarks to establish quality standards for the core elements of a computer science higher education program. Conducted as a qualitative study, the research began in January 2019 and involved a team of 21 university faculty members and researchers. Using the focus group method, three workshops were held with faculty and administrators from UNA's Information Systems program. A major outcome was the development of a consensus-based list of professional competences for a bachelor's degree program structured around a shared core in Computer Science, with a specialization in Information Systems. The study concluded that the proposed program components incorporate internationally recognized technical standards and that the defined graduate profile reflects a balanced integration of general technical skills, specialization-specific competences, and cross-curricular skills.

Likewise, Pierre-Murray (2021) discussed the need for academic programs at the Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR) to explicitly incorporate intercultural competences, so that students can interact in an international, multicultural, and intercultural context and enhance their professional prospects. Her study explored initiatives and policies implemented by the university to advance academic excellence through internationalization. She noted that higher education institutions worldwide have adopted internationalization as a strategic approach for enhancing intercultural competence among students and faculty. Within this context, she continued, it is essential to critically examine the concepts of multiculturalism, interculturality, and culture, and how they are reflected in UCR policies and curricular frameworks. The study concluded that the intercultural communication competence is implicitly embedded within the curricula at UCR, but that more professional development and explicit instruction should be provided to faculty, students and administrative personnel for students to truly achieve this competence.

ADOPTING A COMPETENCE-BASED MODEL IN UNA'S ENGLISH TEACHING PROGRAM

The motivation for this study originated from the redesign of the English Teaching for secondary school program at the Universidad Nacional,² a four-year bachelor's degree that prepares undergraduate students to become English language instructors in high schools, language institutes, or higher education. The program is jointly administered by the Escuela de Literatura y

2 The ELCL also offers a B.A. in English and a B.A. in English teaching for elementary levels. However, these programs have not yet adopted a competence-based model.

Ciencias del Lenguaje (ELCL) and the División de Educología of the Universidad Nacional, as the coursework of the program encompasses language acquisition, linguistics, literature, applied linguistics, and second language teaching. Currently, the program is taught on four UNA campuses: the main campus (Omar Dengo), located in the central region (Heredia province), and the regional campuses of Pérez Zeledón (San José province) and Coto (Puntarenas province)—both in the Brunca region—and the regional campus of Nicoya, located in the Chorotega region (Guanacaste province). The major was also offered on the regional campus of Liberia (part of the Chorotega region, in Guanacaste) up until 2021.

The relevance of the English Teaching program rests in the country's efforts to offer English in the public education system, from kindergarten to high school. Costa Rica's economy relies on the manufacturing, service, and tourism industries, with a high number of foreign companies such as Intel, Dell, HP, Bayer, DHL, IBM, and Amazon operating in Free Trade Zones. Thus, the country's education policymakers and stakeholders recognize the need to train qualified English instructors who can join national efforts to educate Costa Rican citizens who can work in professional English-speaking environments.

UNA's English Teaching major was first offered in 1976. Since then, the program has evolved in response to the needs and trends of language teaching in the country, the region, and the world. The program has been accredited by the national accreditation agency, Sistema Nacional de Acreditación de la Educación Superior (SINAES), since 2006 and was redesigned once in 2013 before the 2023 redesign. Specifically, when the moment came for the latest redesign in 2023, ELCL faculty members decided that the program should adopt an epistemological perspective that adapts to current methodological trends and demands in teacher training around the world—a *competence-based model*.

The ELCL faculty opted for a competence-based model for pedagogical, contextual, and institutional reasons. First, such a model proposes a change away from traditional teaching, where the curriculum is objective-based, focused on content and theory, and where its evaluation measures knowledge. Instead, a competence-based model combines theory and practice through active student learning and allows for a combination of traditional teacher-centered, self-, and peer-assessment. According to Álvarez-Martínez et al. (2023), within a competence-based model, the methodology for every course should be student- and socially-centered, where

the teacher-student relationship is dialogical, promoting respectful discussion, fostering persuasive opinions, leading to democratically constructed consensus, and respecting differing viewpoints. The teacher serves as a role model and communicator, not only of knowledge, but also of experiences, emotions, and values. (my trans., p. 91)

The ELCL acknowledges that stakeholders—e.g., the Ministry of Public Education (Ministerio de Educación Pública), private high schools, language institutes, public and private universities, and transnational companies—demand a series of generic and specific language competences that are relevant not only to the professional field of English teaching but also to students' personal development (Álvarez-Martínez et al., 2023, p. 88). Therefore, the ELCL faculty found a competence-based model to be appropriate for such purposes.

Second, although relatively recent in Latin American countries, the implementation of a competence-based model in higher education significantly strengthens academic systems to mobilize knowledge in real-world contexts for the benefit of the students in their professional life outside of the university. Different studies (e.g., Núñez-Cortés, 2016; Corral-Ruso, 2021; Vásquez-Aguilar et al., 2023; García-Chivita & Gallardo, 2024) have advocated for a shift toward student-centered, integrative, and performance-based learning in Latin American higher education institutions, by adapting international models such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the Tuning Project³ to our realities. These studies also emphasize the centering of the communicative competence with attention to transversal competences such as critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and teamwork. This coincides with global trends promoting the use of real-world scenarios to foster the skills that the students will need in their future occupations.

Álvarez-Martínez et al. (2023) explain that by opting for a competence-based model, the redesigned program aligns with current demands for the improvement of higher education systems:

- a) *Curricular Relevance* aligns learning with social, professional, and organizational challenges, addressing human needs within the framework of sustainable development.
- b) *Quality Management* supports the evaluation of both student performance and the quality of educational offerings, fostering continuous improvement based on learning outcomes.
- c) *International Educational Policy* aligns with global frameworks such as MCESCA and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), and the Sustainable Development Goals proposed by

3 The Tuning Project is a European initiative funded by the European Commission under the Socrates Programme, created in the context of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the Bologna Process, aiming to harmonize degree structures across Europe. Its purpose is to define and develop competencies (generic and specific), learning outcomes, and professional profiles for higher education to ensure comparability and transparency of qualifications across countries. Over time, it expanded globally, with Latin America adopting and adapting its framework to local contexts, highlighting the relevance of competencies for broader social and professional sectors, with emphasis on the communicative competence (Pérez-Cañado, 2013, p. 6; Núñez-Cortés, 2016, pp. 474–475).

UNESCO, consolidating its status as a far-reaching public policy in higher education.

- d) *Academic and Professional Mobility* enables cross-border mobility by integrating credit systems and validating prior learning, strengthening institutional interoperability. (my trans., p. 81)

Third, a competence-based model complies with UNA's *pedagogical model* (2007), which maintains at its core a set of "axiological, anthropological, epistemological, sociopolitical, psychological, didactic, methodological, evaluative and curricular management guidelines" (my trans.; p. 4). UNA's pedagogical model guides all university activities toward the fulfillment of its mission, vision, purposes, and functions. Within this model, UNA conceptualizes pedagogy as a discipline that investigates, informs, and enhances human formation. Accordingly, it is valued as a critical and discursive foundation of education, enabling the systematic evaluation of the quality, relevance, and validity of the institution's formative mission.

The pedagogical model encompasses eleven principles and six elements, which should be considered in all UNA activities. The principles of the pedagogical model are:

- a) Respect for diversity in all its forms.
- b) Respect for and commitment to equal opportunities and to building a more just and equitable society.
- c) Education of supportive professionals committed to social well-being.
- d) Flexibility to conceptualize learning as a sociocultural, historical, dynamic, and transformable process, all of which can be possible and can be built in many ways.
- e) Interaction in educational processes where knowledge is permanently discussed and enriched.
- f) Development of an investigative spirit in future professionals.
- g) Creativity that allows for innovation, as well as the usage of different media, strategies, and resources in the pedagogical mediation processes.
- h) Willingness to determine the underlying logical principles in each discipline, which allow for quality professional education.
- i) Evaluation as an integral, permanent, contextualized and proactive process that is agreed upon by instructors and students.
- j) Continuous improvement in the comprehensive education of students and in the academic, administrative and related managerial processes.
- k) Prospective vision that allows for strategic planning to achieve medium and long-term objectives. (my trans.; p. 5)

UNA's pedagogical model shapes curricular decisions to foster the formation of culturally grounded, socially responsible, and academically excellent professionals, who can contribute to local communities and to national development. Alvarez-Martínez et al. (2023) underscore the model's socio-constructivist and constructivist roots (p. 83) which complement the competence model as they both emphasize active learning and the integration of theory

and practice, plus a curricular design that fosters reflective professionals with a value-driven formation aimed toward equity, empathy and respect.

In all, the efforts made to implement a competence-based model in higher education respond to an ever-changing world, as universities and programs aim to provide services that will supplement a student's academic, professional, and interpersonal life. Competences are not and should not be treated as generic checklists to be easily covered, but as methodological constructs that fulfill disciplinary, institutional, and societal needs to transform the learning experience.

AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT IN COMPETENCE-BASED UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS

Adopting a competence-based model entails a fundamental reorientation of assessment practices, moving away from content-centered evaluation toward a focus on skill development. Thus, the newly redesigned UNA program envisions the evaluation of student learning as a process involving both formative and summative activities. This process-oriented view implies that students will be evaluated continuously in each of the theoretical or practical activities, using different forms of authentic assessment (e.g., diagnostic testing, project-based and problem-based evaluations, portfolios, field trip reports, and simulations).

This section presents a chronological and thematic overview of various definitions of authentic assessment and frameworks⁴ for their implementation in higher education. The review is presented in three sections. The first section presents various scholars' evolving understandings of authenticity in connection to assessment and shows different perspectives on what "authenticity" means or what "authentic assessment" includes. The second section discusses scholars' efforts to create frameworks for authentic assessment. Finally, the third section presents the notion of 21st-century skills as the competences required for success during these times of globalization, technological acceleration and complex social challenges.

4 Here the term "framework" is understood as a structured approach or defined set of guidelines that can aid in the creation and evaluation of the authentic assessment practices developed by different scholars throughout time. Not all the authors discussed in this text refer to their ideas as a framework—though some do—but they all propose a set of guiding principles regarding authenticity, as shown below.

THE CHARACTERISTICS AND COMPONENTS OF AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT

Over 25 years ago, Wiggins (1989) reflected on the nature of true tests as a form of authentic assessment, recognizing the importance of setting standards in education, specifically in the kindergarten to 12th-grade levels. In his work, he described and provided examples of the nature of authentic tests. The criteria of authenticity that Wiggins proposed are:

- a) *Structure and logics*: Authentic assessment should be public, have an audience, be completed in a realistic time frame, imply collaboration with others, and involve practice, rehearsal, retaking, and feedback.
- b) *Intellectual design features*: Authentic assessment should be created to point out to students more sophisticated and effective ways to use knowledge. It should be posed as an intellectual challenge, requiring research or the creation of a product. It must involve representative challenges within a discipline. The issue of providing feedback is again addressed.
- c) *Fairness and equity*: Authentic assessment should not rely on right or wrong answers, but on identifying students' strengths, depending on students' learning styles and interests. (pp.90-91)

According to Cumming and Maxwell (1999), Newmann first used the term “authentic” in the context of learning and assessment in 1988, though the term they used was “authentic achievement” which Cumming and Maxwell note that stood for what is now known as “authentic assessment.” In 1992, Newmann and Archbald proposed three characteristics for authentic assessment (or “achievement” to use their own term) as a demonstration of mastery in successful adults: *production of knowledge*, *disciplined inquiry*, and *personal value*. In other words, the main goal for authentic assessment is to demonstrate higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills that are useful to people, not just in learning environments but in real-life scenarios.

In 1999, Cumming and Maxwell explored how other authors interpreted authentic assessment and the relationship between these interpretations and the original focus of authenticity in learning proposed by Newmann and Archbald in 1992. They noted that there are different interpretations of authentic assessment within the educational community. This diversity of interpretations leads to a natural evolution of the term, depending on the use or meaning given by policy-makers, curriculum developers, or practitioners (p. 178). However, Cumming and Maxwell warned that not having a unified definition for the concept can lead to a generalized, confusing usage of the term and related ideas by different stakeholders.

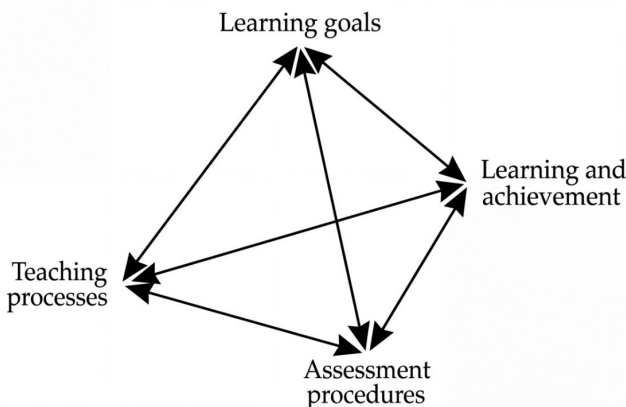
The authors warned against simplified forms of authentic assessment with different pitfalls and do not improve the learning experience. One pitfall is that of camouflaging a traditional assessment task as a real-world situation, such as using names of real people or events of everyday life in exercises that

otherwise do not have any other relation to reality. Another pitfall is that of simulating lifelike activities in the classroom environment when they do not occur there. Ideally, simulations should focus on replicating skills and knowledge needed to complete a task, and not the challenges or standards, which are secondary expectations to meet in real-life situations because the latter change depending on the situation.

Although Cumming and Maxwell do not come up with a framework *per se* to generate or create authentic assessments, they propose a system of interrelationships between four components of authenticity: *learning goals*, *teaching activities*, *learning processes*, and *assessment procedures*. This system functions as a tetrahedron where all four components mentioned above are in dynamic tension or balance. Adjustment of one component requires the sympathetic adjustment of the other three. The tetrahedron can be seen below in Figure 1.

Figure 1.

Cumming and Maxwell's teaching, learning, assessment domains



Note. Tetrahedric system illustrating the interrelationships between learning goals, teaching activities, learning processes, and assessment procedures to explain how an authentic task should be imagined.

The system proposed by Cumming and Maxwell comes from Newman and Archbald's (1992) idea that the focus of assessment ought to be on verifying meaningful learning achievement. They explain that

the focus adopted for assessment has a substantial impact on the instructional process and the realisation of intended learning outcomes through the channelling it encourages of teacher and student effort. That is, assessment signals to teachers and students what is important in learning. Vice versa, assessment tasks need to relate to and take account of actual teaching and learning processes. (p. 179)

In summary, the system serves to identify, consider, and adjust instructional practices with the desired learning goals, including how learning is conceptualized, how teaching processes should be implemented, and how learning outcomes are recognized and assessed.

MODELS, APPROACHES, AND FRAMEWORKS FOR AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT

Building upon existing understandings, other scholars endeavored to create models and frameworks for developing and evaluating authentic assessment practices and tasks. For instance, Gulikers et al. (2004) propose a five-dimensional assessment model focusing on *task*, *physical context*, *social context*, *result*, and *criteria* in the following simplified form:

- a) *Task*: What do you have to do?
 - b) *Physical context*: Where do you have to do it?
 - c) *Social context*: With whom do you have to do it?
 - d) *Result or form*: What has to come out of it? What is the result of your efforts?
 - e) *Criteria*: How does what you have done have to be evaluated or judged?
- (Gulikers et al., p. 77)

The *authentic assessment task* dimension refers to the problem or exercise that will confront students with an activity that happens in their potential professional practice. The task should integrate knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to solve a professional problem, which was already covered by instruction, and therefore, activates prior knowledge.

The *physical (or virtual) context* dimension should reflect, with fidelity, the physical environment, the amount of resources available, and time constraints that students will encounter in a future professional practice activity.

The *social context* dimension points to the social interactions that students will have in real-life scenarios, whether they need to work collaboratively or individually, and whether the type of interaction involves interdependency among peers, accountability, or even competition.

The *assessment result* dimension refers to the output of the authentic task, which should include the following elements: (1) the students demonstrate attainment of a set of skills or competences through the creation of a product or performance of quality, (2) the product or performance is presented to others either in oral or written form, and (3) the product or performance is the result of the completion of multiple indicators of learning outcomes.

Finally, the dimension of *criteria* requires that the aspects assessed in a task be related to real or work-like situations, thus giving the students an opportunity to show the development of competences which will be needed in the future. This dimension also requires that these assessment criteria be com-

municated to students transparently beforehand and then graded or judged on their attainment or completion.

Gulikers et al. (2004) implemented this framework in a qualitative study to explore its level of completeness and to document the participants' perception of the importance of the dimensions. The study took place in a Dutch nursing college, involving both teachers and students in their second and fourth years. The researchers used an electronic group support system for collaborative and individual activities, and participants worked on four cases that had different levels of authenticity based on the five dimensions described above. The results show that when dimensions are rated individually, the most important ones were task, result, and criteria, while the social context was the least important; however, when a case had all the dimensions present, the social context was perceived as the most authentic. The study proved that the five dimensions define authenticity in an adequate manner.

Later, Vu and Dall'Alba (2014) proposed an approach to authentic assessment in higher education, using Heidegger's concepts of being-in-the-world, authenticity, and inauthenticity. This ontological perspective focuses on the nature of being, on who the students are becoming through their education and learning experiences. Thus, authentic assessment, in the terms Vu and Dall'Alba (2014) proposed, encourages students to challenge routine practices, in both what they learn and what they accept as knowledge. This conceptualization of authentic assessment expects students to reflect on what they are becoming, providing moments or spaces of reflection on their learning, in the course of their personal and professional development.

What Vu and Dall'Alba (2024) proposed is more of a reflection practice for academics interested in authentic assessment. Their framework was first published in 2011 and then republished in 2024. As explained above, they base their application of authenticity on Heidegger's philosophy, to advocate authenticity in the quality of the educational process provided by academic programs, and not just on the assessment practices alone. Based on their concept of authenticity, they draw implications for professional education and directions for curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. Vu and Dall'Alba (2024) delineate five implications that their argument on authenticity can have on professional education:

- a) First, stakeholders in professional education should understand that the processes related to the field of study/work represent a medium through which students will establish themselves in the world in a responsible manner. Thus, there should be a change or shift in professional educational practices and policies for this to occur.
- b) Second, critical thinking must be required to evaluate what students learn and the stand they take on relevant topics of study.
- c) Third, collaborative practices with peers, instructors, and others need to be built into assessment or educational activities to form wider views of

students' learning.

- d) Fourth, reflection and introspection should become periodic practices for students to question what kind of professional they are becoming.
- e) Fifth, authenticity involves transference with other fields, programs, personal knowledge, and continuing education, just as becoming an authentic learner involves the continuation of this process beyond culminating a degree (pp. 73-74).

In addition, Vu and Dall'Alba propose guidelines for curricular, pedagogical, and assessment practices drawing from the implications mentioned above. These directions reflect their idea that authenticity should be present not only in the assessment activities but also in the entire educational experience. Their guidelines call for:

- A clear and consistent integral curriculum design, stated in forms that students can understand easily.
- The inclusion of real-world examples of the study field/career as learning opportunities for interaction and work.
- Moments of reflection where students can assess who they are becoming as professionals in their field.
- A pedagogical practice that involves less lecturing and more discussions.
- Flexibility in the completion and outcomes of the discussion of topics.
- The creation of safe teaching and learning spaces for both instructors and students.
- The incorporation of collaboration as a learning opportunity.
- Assessment practices that focus on the process and not solely on the completion of tasks.
- Progressive assessment with continuous feedback and initial low stakes.
- Articulated assessment which incorporates theory, real practical issues of the field, evaluation of outdated ideas, and personal input.

The authors recognize that additional research is necessary to evaluate how their proposal of authentic practices would function in real, professional education programs, as their work remains largely theoretical in nature. They recognize that such authentic implementation can cause social and intellectual challenges for stakeholders, such as resistance from academic staff and even students, but that the benefits would outweigh the resistance.

Perhaps the most straightforward framework to evaluate the authenticity of assessment activities was developed by Ashford-Rowe et al. (2014). They conducted a literature review to identify the principles of authenticity discussed in the existing literature to create a framework for the design and development of more meaningful forms of assessment. Their research also sought to

document the way that students would respond to tasks created following the principles of authentic assessment they found. They devised a five-part route for their study: (1) establishing the critical characteristics of authentic assessment through a literature review, (2) developing a framework based on the characteristics they found, (3) using expert analysis and feedback to improve or enhance the framework, (4) testing the framework by implementing it in a module and gathering student feedback, and (5) creating learning principles as a final product.

The literature review yielded eight critical elements or characteristics considered necessary for authentic assessment. Ashford-Rowe et al. (2014) thus grouped their findings under the following subtitles:

An authentic assessment should be challenging.

The outcome of an authentic assessment should be a performance or product.

Authentic assessment design should ensure the transfer of knowledge.

Metacognition should be a component of authentic assessment.

The importance of a requirement to ensure accuracy in assessment performance.

The role of the assessment environment and the tools used to deliver the assessment task.

The importance of formally designing an opportunity to discuss and provide feedback.

The value of collaboration. (pp. 207-210)

The next phase involved seeking the feedback of thirteen education practitioners in order to turn their draft-framework into an applicable system, which was later revised by three academic and vocational experts in the field of assessment and educational design. As a result, the eight critical elements were turned into critical questions. At this stage, the framework was implemented in the redesign of a module in the Australian army's *Computer-Based Learning Practitioners Course - Evaluating Educational Multimedia*. The critical questions were paired with the course's previous assessment activities, and a more comprehensive description of how and why the assessment was changed. The changes were implemented, and then data were gathered from students to find out whether the authentic assessment characteristics used were more effective than the previous ones.

The result of this series of steps was the creation of a refined framework for the development of more meaningful, authentic forms of evaluation. The authors conclude that these critical elements comprise an effective model for the design and assessment of authentic tasks. They proposed the following questions as a guide to examine whether assessment tasks are authentic:

- 1) To what extent does the assessment activity *challenge* the student?
- 2) Is a *performance* or *product* required as a final assessment outcome?
- 3) Does the assessment activity require that *transfer* of learning has occurred, by means of demonstration of skill?

- 4) Does the assessment activity require that *metacognition* is demonstrated?
- 5) Does the assessment require a product or performance that could be recognized as authentic by a client or stakeholder? (*accuracy*)
- 6) Is *fidelity* required in the assessment environment? And the assessment tools (actual or simulated)?⁵
- 7) Does the assessment activity require *discussion* and *feedback*?
- 8) Does the assessment activity require that students *collaborate*? (Ashford-Rowe et al., pp. 219-220)

These questions are easily applicable to forms of evaluation that already exist and should be kept in mind when creating a new form of assessment. In addition, they are more comprehensive and could be perceived as more user-friendly than the ones proposed by Gulikers et al. (2004) because they ask for more details about the evaluation process, though the simplicity of Gulikers et al. (2004) could also be an asset.

This set of critical elements for authentic assessment practices proposed by Ashford-Rowe et al. were tested later by Way et al. (2021) in a study about the design of an online course within a university's learning management system that implemented case-based simulations. Besides their objective to empirically test the authentic assessment framework proposed by Ashford-Rowe et al. (2014), this study aimed to assess whether the simulation implemented correlated with the outcomes and learning responses of students.

The study used a mixed-method approach to explore their hypothesis. The course in question took place in an Australian graduate business administration program related to occupational health and safety management systems. The simulation element dealt with a realistic occupational safety incident and was designed to occur in nine of the twelve weeks of the course. Students had to engage in different materials, resources, and emotional life-like situations, such as phone calls, conversations, and observations, all of which were linked to the incident. The assessment practices of the course were based on that simulation incident, and they were designed to collect evidence about the implementation of skills necessary in real work environments, such as decision-making based on theory, the creation of incident reports, and a presentation of suggestions for change and improvement related to the simulated incident.

The study showed that it is possible to design an online course within a learning management platform that employs mimetic simulations while adopting the critical elements of authentic assessment, for it to have a positive impact on the students' learning outcomes. Seven of the eight critical elements

5 *Fidelity*, in this framework, stands for the use of tools or situations that are true and realistic to the occupation or career.

showed up in the results, collaboration being the one that was not identified by the subjects, though the researchers had foreseen it as the evaluations did not include specific forms of group work as a collaborative practice. Furthermore, the study showed that the critical element of fidelity (adherence to reality) of the assessment tools can be broken down into sections such as the depth and detail of the case simulation resources, the emotional content in the simulation, the temporality aspects of the simulation, and the unpredictable nature of real-life scenarios that can be mimicked in the simulation.

As a result of this study, the researchers found a conceptual overlap between some of the critical elements, which calls for further research. On one hand, the authors discussed the overlap between the element of challenge with fidelity, which means that the subjects pointed out how real-world simulations (fidelity) were challenging for them. On the other hand, the second overlap involved the element of metacognition with fidelity, as subjects recognized that real-life simulation activities (fidelity) enabled them to reflect and observe (metacognition) without real-life consequences. Overall, the study concluded that the critical elements of authentic assessment can be included in the design of online mimetic simulations to create a “challenging and real-world learning experience” (Way et al., p. 32).

Villarroel et al. (2018) conducted a systematic literature review on authentic assessment. The authors identified the thirteen most frequent characteristics related to authentic assessment and the three dimensions that comprise them. The thirteen characteristics are: problems contextualized to everyday life, relevance beyond the classroom, authentic performance, competence for work performance, tasks similar to the real/working world, practical value, higher order thought, ability to solve problems, ability to make decisions, feedback, collaboration, formative sense, and assessment criteria known a priori. The authors concluded that these thirteen features can be synthesized into three dimensions that make an assessment authentic: *realism*, *cognitive challenge*, and *evaluative judgement*. With this information, the authors devised the following four-step model:

Step 1: Consider the future workplace context, taking into account the graduation profile and job requirements.

Step 2: Design the authentic assessment, including rich context (realistic and problematizing questionings), making the task worthwhile or purposeful within the field of study and work, and requiring higher-order skills.

Step 3: Learn and apply standards for judgment, using clear criteria and rubrics, sharing the information beforehand with students, and including forms of self and peer assessment.

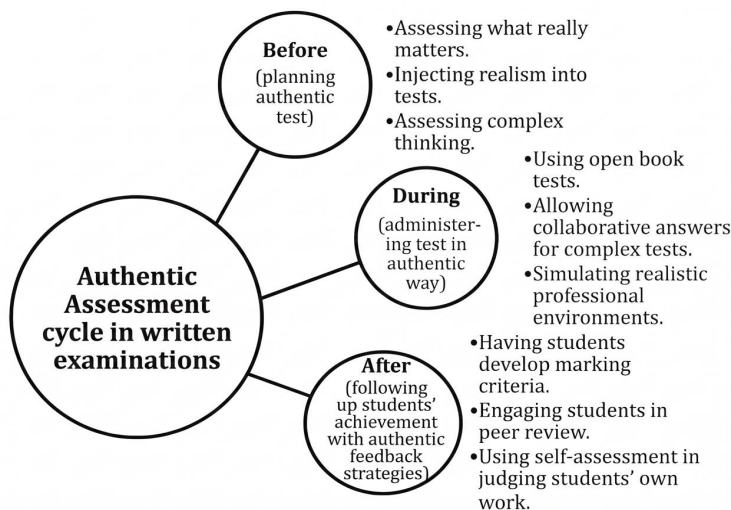
Step 4: Give feedback in formative, summative, and sustainable forms. (pp. 846-850)

The model helps those instructors who want to move from traditional assessment practices that lean toward memorization or lower-order thinking skills to more comprehensive and complex assessment practices that would prepare students better for the real world.

The findings proposed by Villarroel et al. (2018) were put into practice two years later when the authors applied the principles to a testing environment, specifically to the creation of written tests. In the Villarroel et al. (2020) study, each of the three dimensions (realism, cognitive challenge, and evaluative judgment) was mapped against the phases of assessment, which they showed in Figure 2.

Figure 2.

Villarroel et al.'s phases and elements of the implementation of authentic assessment in written exams



Note: Position of authentic assessment dimensions in the creation of a written evaluation

They concluded that higher education needs to assess critical, higher-order competences in realistic and contextualized forms, so that students become better professionals.

The most recent framework to evaluate how authentic assessment is used in higher education was proposed by McArthur (2023), in which she questions the philosophical underpinning of authenticity in the concept of authentic assessment. She uses Adorno's theory—presented in *The Jargon of Authenticity* (1962) and *Negative Dialectics* (1973)—to explain what “authentic” means and proposes three principles to re-think authentic assessment from a more social lens. Most notably, McArthur questions Vu and Dall’Alba’s ontological conceptualization of authenticity using Heidegger’s ideas.

McArthur contrasts Heidegger's view of authenticity, which focuses on the self, with Adorno's ideas of authenticity as he sees interrelationships with the self and society. In this way, authentic assessment should have a central social concern and should not be grounded solely in the world of work or just the professional skills developed in an evaluative activity. The three key principles proposed by McArthur (pp. 93-97) to provide this social component to authentic assessment are:

- 1) From the real world/world of work to society: Assessment tasks should be situated in the social world and issues of social justice. The real world is not out there to be experienced once students find a job. Students should apply what they learn to the professional and social roles they will hold, as members of society.
- 2) From task performance to why they value the task: Students should reflect on why the task they are completing matters in their social environment, proving empathy or care for others.
- 3) From the status quo of the real world/world of work to transforming society: Authentic assessment should be a tool for students to contribute to society and find their place in it. It should be viewed as a way in which students' work can help change society. (pp. 93-97)

These principles provide guidance on how to modify or adapt assessments, serving as a reflection exercise for the instructor while creating the assessment task. McArthur's principles align with UNA's Pedagogical Model. Specifically, the principles related to educating socially responsible individuals who should respect diversity, equal opportunities, and justice align with McArthur's proposal of authentic assessment in higher education, where the tasks are meaningful to the student in more ways than just to apply a skill that will be used later in a work environment. Her principles plead for a type of assessment that nurtures students' existence and well-being as a form of growth. McArthur implies that such a type of assessment must challenge students to incorporate into their professional lives matters that will have an impact on their community.

THE CEFR AND THE TUNING PROJECT AS COMPETENCE FRAMEWORKS

In Europe, universities draw from two main authoritative sources for the identification of competences for higher education: the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the Tuning Project, both of which were both considered in the redesign process of UNA's English Teaching program.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is a standardized guideline developed by the Council of Europe between 1986 and 1989 as part of the *Language Learning for European Citizenship* project.

Officially adopted in 2001, the CEFR provides a comprehensive framework for describing, teaching, and assessing language proficiency across Europe and beyond, in Asia, Latin America, North America, and the Middle East by universities, ministries of education, and international testing organizations such as Cambridge English and IELTS. Its primary purpose is to establish a transparent, comparable system for evaluating linguistic competence, thereby facilitating mobility, academic recognition, and professional opportunities. The CEFR defines six proficiency levels (from A1 to C2), which serve as reference points for curriculum design, assessment, and certification. More broadly, it aims to promote effective communication, intercultural understanding, and the harmonization of language education policies across diverse contexts. It is common in the language education field to find textbooks, curricula, and exams worldwide which often align their proficiency descriptors with CEFR standards, making it a global benchmark rather than a purely European one.

The CEFR distinguishes between general competences and communicative language competences. On one hand, the general competences encompass four interrelated dimensions: knowledge (*savoir*), denoting information such as concepts or content acquired through experience and formal learning; skills and know-how (*savoir-faire*), which refers to the procedures and techniques required to perform different tasks; existential competence (*savoir-être*), concerning attitudes toward oneself and the social environment; and ability to learn (*savoir apprendre*) or the disposition for autonomous lifelong learning or finding the ways to learn. On the other hand, there are three communicative language competences: *linguistic* competence, which covers lexical, phonological, and syntactic knowledge; *sociolinguistic* competence, which addresses the sociocultural conditions of language; and *pragmatic* competence, which involves the mastery of discourse, cohesion, and coherence in communication. Together, these competences form a comprehensive system for assessing and developing language ability across cognitive, interpersonal and functional dimensions.

The Tuning Project is an international higher education initiative that originated in Europe in 2000 as part of efforts to harmonize academic structures within the Bologna Process. Conceived and coordinated by two European universities—the University of Deusto (Bilbao, Spain) and the University of Groningen (The Netherlands)—it seeks to identify and define learning outcomes and competences that students should acquire in specific disciplines, thereby fostering comparability and transparency across institutions and countries. Its central purpose is to provide a common language for discussing curriculum design, teaching, learning, and assessment, while respecting cultural and disciplinary diversity. The project emphasizes student-centered, competence-based education and encourages collaboration among academics worldwide to align educational frameworks with societal and labor market needs. In this way, the Tuning Project contributes to the development of glob-

ally recognized standards that enhance mobility, employability, and the overall quality of higher education.

The Tuning Project distinguishes between generic competences and specific competences. The generic competences include *instrumental competences*, which encompass cognitive, methodological, technological, and linguistic abilities that support a student's fundamental development within a learning environment; *interpersonal competences*, which comprise individual aptitudes and social skills necessary for effective interaction; and *systemic competences*, which involve the capacity to learn, solve problems, and make decisions. The specific competences include *disciplinary knowledge*, understood as the theoretical content applied to a particular thematic area; *academic competences*, defined as the abilities required for success within a concrete field of study; and *professional competences*, which denote the practical know-how associated with a specific professional domain. Together, these two competence categories provide a structured framework for curriculum design, learning outcomes, and the alignment of higher education with labor market and societal needs.

Pérez-Cañado (2013, p. 5) argues that competences as conceptualized by the CEFR and the Tuning Project should exhibit four interrelated characteristics: 1) the manner in which an activity or learning process occurs determines the trajectory of change and evolution of the competence; 2) the emergence of new contexts, challenges, or occupational applications shapes how competences expand or become delimited, with lifelong learning remaining central to this dynamic; 3) competences must be transferable and demonstrable through concrete products or actions; and 4) competences should be grounded in real-life experience within specific fields and tasks, which anchors their relevance and applicability.

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY SKILLS AS A FRAMEWORK

Another way to frame competences more commonly used in the United States and Australia is with the term 21st-century skills. This notion emerged at the turn of the millennium as educators, policymakers, and industry leaders sought to redefine the competencies required for success in an era shaped by globalization, technological acceleration, and complex social challenges. The term was first popularized by the Partnership for 21st-Century Skills (P21) in 2002, a U.S.-based coalition that included the U.S. Department of Education, major corporations such as Apple, AOL, Microsoft, Cisco, and SAP,⁶ as

6 SAP is a German-founded business management software company. The original German company name is Systemanalyse Programmentwicklung, which translates to System Analysis Program Development.

well as educational organizations such as the National Education Association (Partnership for 21st-Century Skills, 2002). This framework emphasized critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, and digital literacy as essential complements to traditional academic knowledge. Building on this foundation, the Assessment and Teaching of 21st-Century Skills (ATC21S) initiative (Kozma & Roth, 2012, v-viii), launched in 2009 by Cisco, Intel, and Microsoft in collaboration with UNESCO, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the University of Melbourne, expanded the framework by underscoring the urgent need for assessment reform. As information and communication technologies transformed how individuals live, work, and interact, these projects highlighted the inadequacy of conventional schooling and standardized testing, which remained focused on rote memorization and individual performance. Instead, 21st-century skills were conceived as a holistic set of competences enabling learners to address global issues such as poverty, climate change, and technological disruption through flexible problem-solving, collaborative innovation, and lifelong learning. The purpose of articulating these skills was not merely to enhance employability in knowledge-based economies but to cultivate active, responsible, and creative citizenship, thus aligning educational practice with the demands of contemporary society for a more sustainable global development.

Binkley et al. (2012) acknowledge that as the world, economies, work, and technologies change, so do the necessary skills to be successful in such a world. This group of authors is composed of higher education scholars from the University of Luxembourg, University of Oslo, University of California, and members of educational research and development organizations such as World Class Arena Limited (United Kingdom) and WestEd (United States). Their 21st-century skills framework is based on research where they compared curriculum and assessment frameworks for 21st-century skills from different parts of the world that were available at the time of their study. The sources presented a mixture of country or regional endeavors from the European Union, United States, Japan, Australia, Scotland, England, and Northern Ireland, and organizational ventures such as the OECD, and the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE).

They identified ten skills for the 21st century and grouped into four sections: *Ways of Thinking*, which encompass creativity, innovation, critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, and learning to learn (metacognition); *Ways of Working*, which include communication and collaboration; *Tools for Working*, comprising information literacy and ICT literacy; and *Living in the World*, which covers local and global citizenship, life and career competences, and personal and social responsibility, including cultural competence and awareness.

The International Labor Organization (ILO, 2021) has played an important role in defining 21st-century skills by revising their original fifty-four core

skills published in 2013. The ILO's rationale to update its framework responded to the inclusion of other age groups besides the youth and the inclusion of skills that evidenced the global change in terms of digitalization, green economies, and demographic changes. Thus, the 2021 publication *Global Framework on Core Skills for Life and Work in the 21st Century* took into consideration global drivers or situations that bring about transformation or change in life and the world of work to present a framework that provided terminology, taxonomy and definitions for 21st-century skills.

According to the ILO, the global drivers that have changed or can change the skill set necessary for work and life are technological innovation, globalization of production and trade, transition to a sustainable environment, demographic change, and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (ILO, 2021, pp. 9-16). In addition, the organization analyzed the characteristics and limitations of different institutionally (OECD, UNESCO, UNICEF) and nationally (Australia, Chile, India, United States) stated frameworks for soft skills⁷, to create a framework for 21st-century skills. The ILO's analysis showed that frameworks analyzed have two shared goals as they all seek to raise awareness of the importance of core skills among their beneficiaries, and they guide the type of soft skills necessary for the future. Regarding the limitations found on the frameworks studied, the ILO found that there are different definitions, categories and terminologies to refer to soft skills, not all age groups are taken into account, often focusing only on the young and leaving the older age groups and disadvantaged groups out, and that the impact of changing the world is not evident in all frameworks.

The ILO framework for 21st-century skills comprises four interrelated categories: *social and emotional skills*, which include communication, collaboration and teamwork, conflict resolution and negotiation, and emotional intelligence; *cognitive and metacognitive skills*, encompassing foundational literacies, analytical and critical thinking, creative and innovative thinking, strategic thinking, problem solving and decision making, self-reflection and learning to learn, information collection, organization and analysis, planning and organizing, and career management; *basic digital skills*, referring to the use of fundamental hardware and software and safe operation in online environments; and *basic skills for green jobs*, which cover environmental awareness, waste reduction and management, and energy and water efficiency. Collectively, these categories articulate a comprehensive set of competences that equip individuals to job markets, technological environments, and sustainability challenges.

7 The ILO uses the term *core skills* in their publication when referencing what is known as *soft skills*.

Another comprehensive study of 21st-century skills was presented by Chen (2023), after completing a systematic literature review from six databases of 471 sources published between 2000 and 2017. The sources had to review or cite a framework about 21st-century skills. There were three screening processes, which yielded 21 sources to be analyzed. The study found that there are seven domains or categories that encompass the different forms in which 21st-century skills are described in the literature. The domains are: *physical well-being*, which encompasses health and bodily capacities that support learning and work; *foundational literacies and skills*, including digital, visual, and language literacies that underpin information access and communication; *individual productivity*, referring to abilities to access resources, use tools, manage and apply information, solve problems, and engage in self-development, reflection, and metacognition; *relation with others*, which covers collaboration and flexibility in interpersonal contexts; *social-emotional well-being*, involving social awareness and the capacity to form and maintain constructive relationships; *ethics, morals, and citizenship*, which address normative reasoning and civic engagement; and *lifelong learning*, denoting the disposition and strategies for continuous learning across the lifespan (pp. 282-287).

Together, these domains offer an integrated framework for characterizing the diverse competencies emphasized in contemporary educational and workforce discussions. When seen as a whole, they are associated with qualities that are essential for an individual's living, thinking, and working life, be it independently or in collaboration with others. This aspect coincides with the frameworks proposed by the University of Melbourne and the ILO.

PART II. SAMPLE AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT TASKS

In this section, four authentic assessment tasks are showcased, namely: the Literature Circle or Book Club, the Mock Trial, the Field Report Multimodal Composition, and the Teaching a Literature Class Presentation. These tasks, except for the Field Report Multimodal Composition, have been implemented in my personal teaching practice since 2023. The initial idea of the Field Trip Report was obtained from a colleague during a workshop on authentic assessment at the end of 2024, and the Multimodal Composition aspect was included when I implemented this task in 2025.

The purpose of this section is to provide ideas of authentic assessment tasks that can be implemented in literature courses or other courses that use literary texts such as oral and written expression courses. All four tasks or assignments are presented following the same format. Each starts with an overview of the task, followed by a description of possible learning outcomes, the nature of the task, and the student guidelines or instructions. Each one also includes a section where student needs are anticipated and another section where I share my personal experience with its implementation.

THE LITERATURE CIRCLE OR BOOK CLUB

A. OVERVIEW OF THE TASK

- *Assignment:* A literary circle or book club is a task for which students read a novel and discuss it in small groups. In the circle or club, each student has a role or task to accomplish for each discussion session. The roles alternate between the group members. These roles are explained in section C.
- *Courses:* This task can be used in any introduction to literature or oral communication or culture courses that use literary texts for discussion.
- *Literature:* The task requires the selection of novels or long non-fiction texts.
- *Time:* For the completion of the task, the students need between 4 to 6 class sessions of 2 hours each, depending on the length of the text.

B. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learners will be able to:

- Apply literary elements to the interpretation of literary texts.

- Carry out organized discussions about literary texts.
- Reflect on the reading process and the collaborative work conducted in their group.

C. EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENT

Literature circles are small, peer-led discussion groups in which students read and respond to a common text, typically assuming rotating roles that structure participation and deepen engagement. Although literature circles are commonly used in elementary and high school levels, they can be implemented in higher education courses to cover basic elements of fiction and dive into a more critical or multidisciplinary analysis. The level of complexity is dictated by the learning outcomes of the course and the contents or thematic units to be covered.

Traditionally, some of the roles used in Literature Circles in high school contexts might include the following, although not necessarily all at the same time: Discussion Director (develops open-ended questions to guide discussion), Summarizer (prepares a concise summary of the assigned reading), Connector (makes connections between the text and personal experiences, other texts, or world events), Vocabulary Enricher/Word Wizard (identifies and explains key or challenging words), Illustrator (creates visual representations of scenes or concepts), Literary Luminary/Passage Master (highlights significant passages for analysis), Investigator/Researcher (provides background information on the text's context), and Travel Tracer (tracks shifts in setting, time, and character movement). These roles show an array of the possibilities that can be modified to serve the purpose and levels of difficulty in higher education courses

For an Introduction to Literature course, the roles and their tasks might be:

- *Director*: Organizes the order or the group discussion, prepares a few essential or general questions for the group that encompass the material to be read during that session; keeps the group on task and focused, and provides feedback to the other group members based on their performance.
- *Reporter*: Summarizes the reading, compiles a list of topics or main events, and predicts what will happen next.
- *Questioner*: Creates different forms of reading comprehension questions based on the text, like multiple choice, true/false, short answer, open-ended question, etc., along with the answer key.

- *Detective or Sleuth*: Focuses on a few literary elements (characters, point of view, setting, symbolism, theme, suspense, foreshadowing, tone and mood) to analyze the text or make inferences about the meaning of selected elements.
- *Researcher*: Chooses an issue from the reading and then researches about it to bring at least one source to the discussion with its proper MLA or APA reference format.
- *Critic*: Analyzes the text by applying a literary approach such as historical, biographical, feminist, new historicism, mythological or archetypal, moral-philosophical, etc., depending on what is being studied in the course.

The roles of Researcher and Critic can be used at the discretion of the course instructor. The Critic would be a suitable role for an Introduction to Literature course, and the Researcher would be a suitable role for an oral communication, culture, or writing course. The role of the Detective does not need to focus only on literary elements, but the task can call for detection of what the instructor or class deems important, such as types of discourse, arguments, theories, etc., which widens the scope of the activity to non-fiction.

The number of students per group should coincide with the number of roles so each student has a role for each discussion session. For smaller groups, a student would have two roles assigned for a session, and this would rotate each session. It is not recommended to have groups with more students than the number of roles to avoid having two students doing the same task, unless a comparison of content and views is intentional. See Figure 3 for an example cover of the material to be used in the Literature Circle or Book Club with instructions, and the space for team members to keep track of the roles and pages to cover per class session.

The completion of the Literature Circle or Book Club can be the summative assessment in itself, or students can be required to complete something else. A way to use this activity as the summative assessment task is to require students to hand in the notes or handouts for their roles. Other forms of summative assessment can include a reflective or argumentative essay, a book report, an oral presentation, a debate, etc. An integral aspect of the assessment is to include self and/or peer evaluation to assess students' performance, responsibility, and contribution to the discussion during the sessions (see Appendix A).

Figure 3.

Book Club cover with instructions, schedule, and role and reading tracker.

Book Club

Introduction to Literature

Novel: *The Outsiders*

Name: _____

Role and Reading Tracker:

- This package includes 1 worksheet for each of the 5 roles in the book club. Print and bring the package to class. No digital versions.
- Use the table to know which chapters must be read for each session.
- In your team, decide which role each team member will be in charge of on that given day. The roles are: Director, Questioner, Examiner, Sleuth, and Reporter.
- Be responsible for your Book Club package and hand in the completed set of worksheets on June 12.

Session	Chapters to Read	Book Club Role
May 29	1-2	
June 3	3-5	
June 5	6-7	
June 10	8-10	
June 12	11-12	

D. GUIDELINES

The following is an example of a possible or generic set of guidelines for a Literature Circle or Book Club task.

For the Book Club, you will be working in teams of 5 students to read the novel [*insert title*] by [*insert author*]. The purpose of a book club is to discuss a literary text as a group, to develop ideas and enhance your understanding of a novel in a collaborative manner.

Each team member will have a role and an assigned task for each class session. The roles will rotate from person to person each class session. The reading will take place during independent study time (at home), but the Book Club discussion will occur in the classroom. Ideally, each team is made up of 5 students because there are 5 roles, so if a group is made up of less than 5 students, one or two members will have to play 2 roles each session.

For each session, each member of the team must have read the chapters or pages assigned and completed the worksheet they were in charge of according to the session's role. The roles are: Director, Reporter, Questioner, Detective and Critic. The novel will be read in the span of 5 sessions. If a team member is absent during a session, he or she must send a photo of the completed worksheet to the group, so the other team members can see their work. On the last session, each team will:

- compile all the worksheets in a folder or package that will be handed in to the professor; and
- complete the peer-evaluation of the team members according to their performance, responsibility, and contribution to the Book Club.

E. ANTICIPATING STUDENTS' NEEDS

This task requires no technology when done in person, but it can also work well in virtual synchronous environments. If students have never done a literature circle or book club activity before, they might not understand the dynamics right away, so it is beneficial to spend some time explaining how the activity goes before the first discussion session. Once the task is taking place, the instructor should navigate through the groups to listen to the conversation, answer students' questions about the roles or the reading, observe the interaction of the group members, and motivate the group to be mindful of the discussion and the work that they are doing collaboratively.

F. PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

I have been implementing the Literature Circle or Book Club since 2023 in non-literature courses such as Culture II and Academic Reading, and it has become a staple assessment task in all my Introduction to Literature courses. The students have shown a positive attitude toward this task because they are reading a longer literary text, such as a novel, for 5 sessions, and because every time they have to prepare a role, it is different, so they do not get bored doing the same task for each session. The variety of points of view generate lively conversations among them (which sometimes do not occur in whole-class discussions) because the person is not in the "spotlight" and the discussions take place among close friends or classmates they trust. I have noticed that the Director's role is quite important as it sets the pace and tone of the group's discussions. In terms of the peer-evaluation, I always remind students that they should grade their group members in an honest manner and according to the dynamics shown during the activity. Most of the time, I have seen perfect grades in the

peer-evaluation, which are of course to be expected, but I have also seen students who are more aware of a classmate's lack of preparation or poor contribution.

THE MOCK TRIAL

A. OVERVIEW OF THE TASK

- *Assignment*: A mock trial is a structured, role-based simulation of an American courtroom trial, in which students use textual evidence to construct arguments, interrogate motivations, or explore multiple perspectives, using a literary text as source material for the case.
- *Courses*: This task can be used in introduction to Literature or other advanced Literature courses, as well as oral communication and composition courses that focus on argumentation.
- *Literature*: The task requires literary texts with characters, themes or authors that can be put “on trial.”
- *Time*: Around 2 or 3 two-hour class sessions are needed for the students to plan, organize their ideas and rehearse the trial, plus 1 two-hour class session for the trial itself.

B. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learners will be able to:

- practice close reading of a literary text to deepen literary analysis and find evidence.
- develop their argumentative and persuasive skills to construct logical evidence-based arguments and persuasive statements.
- enhance their listening and speaking skills during the mock trial.
- foster empathy and diverse perspectives.
- promote collaboration and teamwork.

C. EXPLANATION OF THE ASSIGNMENT

Mock trials have become a dynamic and transformative pedagogical tool in literature courses as they engage students in experiential learning that bridges literary analysis, argumentation, and civic understanding. Mock trials invite students to interrogate the actions, motivations, and ethical dilemmas of literary characters, authors, or even abstract concepts in literary texts, all within the structured

framework of a courtroom simulation.

Initially, the case is derived from a novel, play, short story, or poem, focusing on a character's actions, a thematic issue or moral/ethical dilemma that occurs in the literary text (See Appendix B). Students take on courtroom roles as prosecution attorneys, defense attorneys, and jury members, with the instructor acting as the judge. The prosecution is in charge of creating arguments against the chosen character, theme or dilemma, while the defense presents arguments on behalf of the accused character, theme, or dilemma. The jury evaluates the arguments made by both sides by creating a rubric and delivers a verdict. The prosecution and defense teams need to be equal in number, with equal chances of providing an opening statement, claims, rebuttals or counterarguments, and a closing statement. The jury can be larger than the other teams if need be. Large groups can be broken down into two different trials, or other roles can be added, such as those of witnesses and news reporters, although their tasks should match the learning outcomes stated for the Mock Trial.

First, the instructor introduces the concept of a mock trial to the students, roles and their tasks, along with the learning outcomes, and the connection of the trial to the selected literary text. Thus, when students read the literary text, they must annotate or keep track of the evidence, as they will need this information for the preparation of the trial. The students should have an idea of what the case will be without spoiling the plot of the text and the reading experience. The next step is to assign roles or instruct students to select the role they want to perform.

Allocating in-class time for team collaboration is essential for students to engage meaningfully in the task. These planning sessions also provide opportunities for instructors to reinforce argumentative techniques or address challenges in integrating textual evidence. The goals for each planning session should be clear to students. The first planning session can be used for the prosecution and defense teams to come up with a strategy for their arguments and possible rebuttals, while the jury team can work on developing their rubric. During the second planning session, the prosecution and defense team members can work individually or together to refine their argumentative statements, and the jury members can complete their own for/against arguments, brainstorming possible arguments to be brought up during the trial, which will be evaluated at the end of the task by the instructor. The instructor should guide the students' work and

provide targeted feedback. Time permitting, a third planning session can be considered so the students have time to practice their roles and arguments with their teams. After the planning days, there should be a digital or physical document for each team that evidences their work, which can also be graded at the end of the task.

On the day of the trial, the instructor keeps the agenda on track. The basic structure of the trial starts with opening statements and claims from both prosecution and defense, followed by a short break for these two teams to prepare their counter-arguments or rebuttals, and then by the closing statements. There is another break for the jury to deliberate with their rubric, and then the trial resumes with the verdict. See Figure 4 for an example of a Mock Trial structure or order of events. As with any collaborative activity, students should reflect about the process and complete a self or peer evaluation. The instructor decides whether the teams are evaluated as a group performance or individually as each student presents their argument or work.

Figure 4.

Mock Trial example of agenda or order of events

MOCK TRIAL STRUCTURE	
PROSECUTION	Opening statement
DEFENSE	Opening statement
PROSECUTION	Claims 1, 2
DEFENSE	Claims 1, 2
RECESS	Time to adjust rebuttals
PROSECUTION	Rebuttal 1
DEFENSE	Rebuttal 1
PROSECUTION	Rebuttal 2
DEFENSE	Rebuttal 2
PROSECUTION	Closing statement
DEFENSE	Closing statement
JURY	Deliberation Defense & Prosecution complete peer-evaluation at this time.
JURY	Delivery of verdict (Head Juror)
JUDGE	Sentencing (if guilty)
JURY	Jury members complete peer-evaluation at this time.

D. GUIDELINES

The following is an example of a possible or generic set of guidelines for a Mock Trial task.

For the Mock Trial you will be working in one of 3 teams as we put on trial the case of The People vs. *[insert the character/issue/dilemma]*. The objective of this activity is to construct logical, evidence-based arguments based on the literary analysis of *[insert the literary text]*. The three teams are:

- *Prosecution*: You represent the authority conducting the legal proceedings against someone in respect of a criminal charge. This team is made up of 6 students.
- *Defense*: You represent the legal professionals who defend someone accused of committing a crime. This team is made up of 6 students.
- *The Jury*: You represent the body of people sworn to give a verdict in a legal case on the basis of evidence submitted to them in court. This team is made up of *[insert the remaining number of students]*.

Each team has specific tasks to complete in order to be prepared for the trial on *[insert date]*. There are *[insert number]* of class sessions for the planning and preparation for the trial.

The Prosecution and Defense teams' tasks:

- Appoint one student to create and deliver an opening statement: an initial speech made by each side in a trial, summarizing the main points or arguments of the case they will make for the jury.
- Select two students to create and deliver two arguments based on textual evidence.
- Select two students to create and deliver two rebuttal arguments, which are the counter-arguments to disprove the evidence presented by the opposing team.
- Choose one student to create and deliver the closing statement, which is the final opportunity to persuade the jury to favor their side.
- Every member of the team must upload their part to the Google Drive folder for grading.

The Jury's tasks:

- Work together to create a rubric to be used during the trial to evaluate the arguments and evidence presented by the prosecution and defense. This rubric will guide your verdict after listening to the other teams.
- Become thoroughly informed about the facts of the case. To

prepare for the trial, each student member of the jury will individually complete the document with the for/against arguments to brainstorm whether the accused is innocent or guilty.

- Pay attention to the arguments and evidence presented during the trial, take notes, and then deliberate as the jury to provide the verdict.
- Upload both the rubric and the individual for/against documents to the Google Drive folder for grading.

At the end of the activity, all students must complete the peer-evaluation, which evaluates the team members' performance, responsibility, and contribution to the Mock Trial.

E. ANTICIPATING STUDENTS' NEEDS

Since the Costa Rican court setting and protocol is different from the American one, it might be necessary to start explaining the difference between them before the planning sessions start. As mentioned in the explanation of the task, the planning sessions can include short workshops to refresh some concepts about creating strong arguments, inserting evidence, and formulating a concise closure. The instructor should state goals for the planning days, so teams are accountable for the time in class and the product of their work, and should check whether those goals are being met.

F. PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

When I implemented this task during the first semester of 2026, I realized that the students would need clear examples of how their arguments and counterarguments should be developed. For this purpose I decided to use a short story we had already read. Previously, we had read Richard Connell's "The Most Dangerous Game," which is about an American hunter, Sanger Rainsford, who is trapped on an island where a man, General Zaroff, is hunting humans for sport. Zaroff invites him to his game, but Rainsford finds it morally incorrect, so he becomes the prey. In his quest to survive, Rainsford ends up committing murder. This was a good story to exemplify how to build the Prosecution and Defense cases, and to review argumentative and persuasive writing skills because it deals with a moral dilemma similar to that of the literary text that we were working on for the Mock Trial. Thus, I created examples of opening statements, arguments and counter arguments, and closing statements for both the Prosecution and the Defense based on "The Most Dangerous Game."

In addition to this type of short instruction and review, I found that

some students needed more guidance in looking for motives for a character's actions and choices, so I kept visiting the groups to provide feedback and to discuss, in small groups, the events that may have led that character to commit murder.

I shared the resource that included the exemplary material that I had created for “The Most Dangerous Game” and some basic information about creating rubrics. The students were taking the Evaluation course in the pedagogic component of the major, so they were already familiar with rubrics. I provided feedback on their work, sharing my insights as an instructor and questioning their logic in the rubric creation process to cause them to reflect on their rubric's strengths and areas for improvement.

THE FIELD TRIP REPORT - MULTIMODAL COMPOSITION

A. OVERVIEW

- *Assignment*: This assignment aims to update a traditional written field trip report with multimodality, or the integration of two or more modes of communication, in order to connect an English language literary text with not only its own historical or cultural background but also with Costa Rica's.
- *Courses*: This task can be used in advanced literature courses that include the study of historical and cultural contexts of the literary texts studied or a culture course that uses a literary text to exemplify social, historical or cultural elements.
- *Literature*: Any literary text with a cultural or historical context that can be expanded on with a field trip in Costa Rica.
- *Time*: The number of class sessions necessary for the study and analysis of the literary text plus the time allotted to the field trip, which can be a half-day trip, one-day trip, or two-day trip depending on the activities planned.

B. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learners will be able to:

- foster cultural and historical awareness with the visit to historical landmarks, museums, and cultural sites.
- deepen the understanding of theoretical knowledge with practical experience.
- develop critical thinking and reflective skills by juxtaposing

literary texts with real-world situations or environments.

- practice transferable communication skills.
- expand digital competences in multimedia tools and platforms.

C. EXPLANATION OF THE ASSIGNMENT

Field trips have long been recognized as a vital component of educational practice, offering students opportunities to engage with real-world environments and experiences that extend beyond the traditional classroom. While field trips are commonly associated with science, history, and geography, their application in literature education is both rich and multifaceted because they can bridge the gap between textual analysis and lived experience, deepening students' understanding of literary works, cultural contexts, and historical backgrounds, plus enhancing engagement with literary texts that could be perceived as "old" or "boring." Although Costa Rica has no American or British literary landmarks, the literary texts studied in any English literature course can be seen with a cultural and historical perspective in juxtaposition with Costa Rican literary texts, our history, and culture. The idea is not to study literature as an isolated phenomenon far from the students' realities, but to view it as an expression of ideas and cultural movements that transcend physical country borders and that can be relatable to their country. Besides exploring cultural and historical backgrounds that Costa Rica has in common with the United States and Great Britain, students can interact with experts and practitioners who share knowledge the instructor of the course might not have. The instructor is knowledgeable on the literary text but might not be versed on the historical or cultural aspects of the topic; this can be supplemented by historians, sociologists, anthropologists, and other experts. Finally, the interdisciplinary connections made with fields of study different from literature or language acquisition, such as local and foreign history, economy, politics, and architecture will enrich the students' intellectual horizons.

The assessment of a field trip can be carried out in various ways, but the idea is to step away from the traditional written report. This leads to the proposal to turn it into a multimodal assignment. A multimodal composition is the practice of integrating two or more modes of communication—linguistic, visual, aural, spatial, and gestural. See Appendix C for examples of students' multimodal compositions for a field trip report during the second semester of 2025) This way, the students can go beyond the traditional essay or report, and

express their ideas by creating video essays (see Figure C1), interactive presentations, podcasts, websites (see Figure C2), infographics, and other forms of media-rich projects such as flipbooks and social media profiles (see Figures C3 and C4), which reflect contemporary communication practices and digital competences. Appendix D is a resource that can be given to students to better understand what a multimodal composition looks like and help them decide what type of report they want to create.

The guidelines presented in subsection D below can be used for a course that includes the Victorian period and turn of the century literature. The project described below involves a Victorian play: Oscar Wilde's (2008) *Lady Windermere's Fan*, which documents the strict gender structures imposed on women of the era due to the patriarchal system of the time. A Costa Rican literary work that also deals with this topic is the play *Magdalena* by Ricardo Fernández Guardia. The field trip involves the guided educational visit to the 19th-century exhibition at the National Museum, with a guided tour, and then a guided walking tour of Barrio Otoya and Barrio Amón, in San José, with several examples of Victorian architectural buildings, or a guided visit of Costa Rica's National Theater.

A field trip idea involving American literary texts or essays from the 1850s can connect the historical context of the filibuster invasion to Central America between 1855-1857 and the Manifest Destiny ideology with a visit to Costa Rica's National Museum in downtown San José or the Santa Rosa Casona museum in Guanacaste. The reading of Quince Duncan's (2024) stories written in English can lead to a field trip to different parts of Limón province, such as Cahuita or downtown Limón, to study the cultural and historical background of the Afro-Caribbean migrations and the development of Costa Rican ethnic identity.

D. GUIDELINES

The following guidelines were created for the Victorian Literature course, which was part of the previous English Teaching Program. The objective of this assignment is to compare and contrast the British Victorian Era with Costa Rican 19th century in the form of a multimodal composition.

What is a multimodal composition?

Literally, "multimodal" means more than one mode. For your purposes, that means the process of changing the form of an idea

you would have written in a traditional essay. Check out ideas and resources at the bottom of this page.

Instructions:

- Instead of writing a comparison and contrast essay in a traditional academic format (such as an essay in a Word document), you will create a multimodal composition that uses at least 2 different modes (written language, spoken language, music, images, and/or gestures). Please be mindful that content is more important than form, but the medium in which you present your ideas is still relevant. Recommendation: take photos (when allowed) and videos during the field trip so that you can later use them for your composition.
- Compare and/or contrast what you know about the Victorian Era with the information gathered from *Magdalena* by Ricardo Fernandez Guardia (video, 2023), the visit to the National Museum, and the walking tour of Victorian architecture in San José.
- Your composition must have an organized structure such as the Point-Evidence-Explanation-Link format:
 - Point: Either in written or spoken language, your composition must have a point or clear argument (think of it as the thesis statement or topic sentence).
 - Evidence: Refer to a specific literary text that we have read in class and the information from the video/field trip as evidence to prove your point. You can quote directly from the text or reference the evidence in a general manner but be clear about what you are referring to.
 - Explanation: Analyze how your evidence supports your point. Use your own words to provide interrelationships between the evidence and your opinion.
 - Link or conclusion: Provide a final thought that wraps up your ideas.
- Length:
 - Most written creations: 500 words minimum – 600 words maximum.
 - Most spoken creations: 4 minutes minimum – 5 minutes maximum.
- To hand in your multimodal composition, go to TEAMS and find your subgroup (the class will be subdivided into smaller groups). Upload your composition in your subgroup.
- In your subgroup, listen/watch/read the compositions of 3 classmates and provide them with some feedback (insight

into their composition, how they delivered the message, the quality of their work, choices made, etc.) by replying to their post. Remember, you have all read the same texts and went on the field trip together, so you can share your views on your classmate's composition.

E. ANTICIPATING STUDENTS' NEEDS

The biggest obstacle to solve for a successful field trip is to enable every student to participate, considering that these types of activities include costs that some students cannot afford. With this in mind, it is better to plan the field trip toward the end of the semester, so students have plenty of time to save money or come up with activities that can help them raise the money, such as raffles, bakery sales, etc. There should be an alternative for those students who will not be able to participate in the field trip portion of the project, so instructors need to consider other resources such as videos, interviews and virtual tours as part of the content that can be used in those cases.

Students might also be hesitant when confronted with the term "multimodal composition" and the idea of creating a project that requires them to use different forms of communication, so further explanations should be discussed in class. It is useful to provide links to explanations found on the Internet, project ideas, and useful digital tools and resources (as in Appendix C) and to share examples of projects done by previous students.

F. PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

I have been implementing this task since the first semester of 2025 in the Victorian Literature course for both the bachelor's program in English and the former English Teaching program as a way to prepare for when the newly redesigned English Teaching program opens the British Literature and Culture course. For some students, this has been quite a memorable experience during the course because we get out of the traditional classroom environment and experience history and culture in the field, which for this case is in downtown San José. For some students, it is the first time they visit a museum in all their lives or as an adult.

The museum visit is a good starting point for the field trip because the museum curator points out specific artifacts and data that will be of help for them to complete their report, and then the walking tour provides historical and architectural evidence for it too. I have used the same tour company for this segment of the field trip, and the tour guides they have sent us are knowledgeable and friendly, but each

has their own style. One guide gave us plenty of details about political and social gossip from the 1800s, while another quizzed us to see whether we were paying attention, and gave us candy as rewards. Amid the different ways the tour was given, they kept my students engaged.

TEACHING A LITERATURE CLASS SIMULATION

A. OVERVIEW OF THE TASK

- *Assignment*: A teaching simulation in literature courses is an instructional strategy in which student-teachers engage in structured, scenario-based reenactments of classroom situations, literary contexts, or interpretive dilemmas, using their classmates as learners.
- *Courses*: This assessment can be used in advanced Literature courses as a way for students to prepare for their professional practice during their senior year while at the same time honing in on their literary analysis skills.
- *Literature*: Any of the literary texts used in the Literature course.
- *Time*: Between 60 and 90 minutes of a class session for each group presentation/simulation.

B. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learners will be able to:

- Practice lesson planning and instructional delivery.
- Implement classroom management strategies.
- Create formative assessment activities.
- Connect literary texts with contextual and theoretical analysis.
- Work collaboratively to develop a successful lesson.
- Build professional confidence before entering a real classroom.

C. EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENT

In UNA's English Teaching program, the students do their professional practicum (field experience) during the first semester of their senior year (fourth year). Previously, they have conducted observations and engaged in short teaching field experiences in other courses of the pedagogic component of the program. Yet, the more spaces we create for them to develop their classroom management and

instructional delivery skills, the better prepared they will be for the real classroom setting. The literature courses can be a safe but also challenging space for them to develop these skills while also applying critical thinking to the connection between literary texts, social and historical contexts, and literary theory, which is key to the study of literature at the higher education level. With these types of simulations, the literary analysis experience moves from a passive reading activity to an experiential, active learning one.

Depending on the size of the group, this form of evaluation can be done in small teams, with each team in charge of teaching the literary text assigned for that day to the rest of the group. Since the literature courses are for the study of literature and not about the teaching of said literature, the focus of the simulation should be on the literary analysis done by the students, and not on the lesson planning or mediation, though these should be evaluated as well. The instructor should consider the learning outcomes of the course and the desired competences to be developed, along with the literary texts and theoretical approaches studied in the course when creating with the guidelines of the presentation or simulation. My proposed guidelines call for a group presentation (simulation) made up of four segments described below. See also Figure C5 (Appendix C) for screenshots from a student presentation.

- A warm-up activity to activate previous knowledge about the topic to be presented, or to motivate classmates to participate.
- An input or demonstrative section where student-teachers teach a selected element or issue of the reading assigned for the day. Depending on the focus of the course, this can be some sort of theoretical analysis, a historical/social contextual analysis, or any other form of analysis of the reading.
- A practice segment made by a formative assessment activity. Here the student-teachers assess their classmates' understanding of (who will act as students) what they taught in the previous segment. This segment can be done in different ways, as the instructor decides whether they want the student-teachers to practice creating specific activities such as critical thinking or higher-cognitive activities, reading comprehension, oral/written production activities, vocabulary, and grammar activities, for example, or whether student-teachers can choose what they want to evaluate.
- A closing segment to wrap up the lesson for the day.

D. GUIDELINES

The following is an example of a possible set of guidelines for a group simulation of literature lesson. The course where these instructions were created used the Cultural Studies and mythological approaches for the analysis of the novel The House on Mango Street, thus these approaches are included in the guidelines.

- The objective of the task is to design and implement a literature lesson based on the assigned reading of the day. Each group will be in charge of teaching a 60 to 90-minute lesson to their classmates on the assigned reading on the day of the presentation. The content of the lesson must include the following segments:
 - *Warm-up:* Apply an activity to motivate your classmates and activate previous knowledge about *The House on Mango Street* or introduce the topic to them.
 - *Input and Demonstration:* Choose a specific topic/story/element from the reading for the day to develop into an explanatory lesson for your classmates. You must do at least one of the following: Analyze the text (a section or the entire text) from a mythological perspective; or analyze the text (a section or the entire text) from a cultural studies perspective.
 - *Analysis:* The analysis made must be explicit, explained using the terminology or concepts from the approach(es) chosen. Be mindful that some texts work better with a specific approach, so you can choose to work only on one if you prefer. Check the course's specific objectives to connect your input/demonstration/analysis activity to them.
 - *Practice:* After the lecture or presentation, the group must implement a practice segment or set of activities for the rest of the students to be part of. Design and implement a formative learning activity based on the information presented, in which all students participate and check their understanding. The presenters must move past "recalling" information and aim for higher thinking order skills as well such as analysis of a character, evaluation of a situation from the novel, or the creation of a product (written or oral) that shows critical thinking.
 - *Closing:* End with a reflection that summarizes the lesson's main points and wraps up learning.

- Be aware of the time you have to implement your lesson. Bring all the materials necessary (paper, markers, handouts, etc.). Participation of group members must be equal. Each student will receive the same grade.

E. ANTICIPATING STUDENTS' NEEDS

Students might find it challenging to teach about a literary text if this is something they have never done before, so the instructor should showcase good teaching practices in the class sessions before the simulations start. In this way, students have good examples of ways in which literature is studied and practice is implemented.

F. PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

I have been doing some version of this assessment task since 2022 for my English Teaching students in the United States Literature and Culture course, the Multiethnic Literature course, and the Victorian Literature course of the old program. My interest in including this type of evaluation started when I asked a group whether they would feel prepared to teach something related to literature if they were required to do so in a future job. They all said “no,” so that was enough to convince me to shift the traditional content presentations that I had been including in my syllabus to a task that covered content with a more didactic approach. My first version required the students to present and then provide a study guide to their classmates, the second version asked for a practice section after the presentation part, and I have been refining the task ever since. While the outcome is mostly positive, I feel that students need to loosen up more, though there are always exceptional groups. Lately, the warm-up sections have been very engaging, which tells me that they are well prepared in that area. The content part still requires work, as I have noticed that they aim to be very academic, provide a huge amount of information, and forget to interact more with their classmates. The practice section is also very creative, although I once had a group a few years ago that favored role plays, probably because they thought it was a fun way to have their classmates participate, but it did not evidence much planning or creativity at times. That is why I now ask for an activity that requires higher order thinking skills, so the practice section also aligns with authentic assessment and competence-based learning. I also provide general feedback after each presentation, not to point out errors or mishaps, but to let the presenting group and future groups know what they can do to improve.

PART III. REFLECTING ON THE AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT TASKS

DISCUSSION

The discussion of the activities/tasks described here is divided into two sections. First, their alignment with authentic assessment frameworks is discussed. Then, this part is closed by providing checklists to select activities/tasks that contain elements of authentic assessment and/or align with authentic assessment frameworks.

ALIGNMENT OF ACTIVITIES WITH AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORKS

The *Literature Circle*, *Mock Trial*, *Multimodal Field Trip Report*, and *Teaching Simulation* all go beyond traditional content recall such as reading comprehension quizzes, book reports, and essays that can be executed with the help of artificial intelligence, to demand the integration of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in complex, collaborative tasks. These activities require students to produce a tangible performance or product, whether it is a group discussion guided by a handout, an argument based on literary text evidence, a multimodal artifact, or a simulated lesson and accompanying formative task. These examples of authentic assessment demonstrate competence in ways aligned with real world expectations for English teachers. Moreover, these tasks include peer interaction and collaboration as a central component, which mirroring the future interpersonal demands of professional and academic environments of English teachers. The inclusion of rubrics, peer evaluation forms, and reflective questions further ensures the fairness of the evaluative process, and focuses on metacognitive engagement, enabling students to critically assess both their learning processes and outcomes. In this sense, all the activities feature the multidimensional nature of authentic assessment.

More specifically, these authentic assessment activities can be understood through the theoretical lenses outlined in Part I, which provide structured frameworks for evaluating the authenticity of educational practices. Scholars such as Gulikers et al. (2004), Ashford-Rowe et al. (2014), and McArthur (2023) emphasize that authentic assessment is not merely the replication of real-world scenarios but the integration of *learning goals*, *teaching processes*, and *evaluative criteria* into coherent tasks that foster *transferable competences*. The previous section demonstrated that by situating student work within realistic contexts, demanding collaborative engagement, and requiring

tangible products or performances, the activities in Part II embody elements of authentic assessment. Going a step further, this subsection examines the tasks' alignment with authentic assessment frameworks to show how theory informs them.

The authentic assessment tasks/activities are examined using the following frameworks: Gulikers et al. (2004), Ashford-Rowe et al. (2014), and McArthur (2023). The framework provided by Villarroel et al. (2020) will not be used for this analysis because it was specifically created for written examinations, which is a format different from that of the projects or activities shown in Part II, but it is important to keep this framework in mind to plan or evaluate the authenticity of written tests. Likewise, the Vu & Dall'Alba (2024) framework is not used to evaluate the assessment tasks because it focuses on the choices that should be made in higher education models and curricular design to accomplish authenticity.

GULIKERS ET AL.'S FIVE-DIMENSIONAL FRAMEWORK

Gulikers et al. (2004) presented a five-dimensional framework with the elements that should be taken into account in authentic assessment: a *task* resembling what students will do in the real world, a *physical or virtual context* resembling that of their professional practice, a *social context* similar to that which they will be part of in the real world, the *result* of attaining skills, learning outcomes and creation of product/performance, and the *criteria* that will assess the skills attained. Table 1 shows how each of the authentic assessment dimensions and elements is met or not in every task proposed. The authentic assessment tasks presented above align with Gulikers et al.'s framework as follows in a number of ways.

The *Literature Circle* task has students do literary analysis and discuss their findings which are actions they will perform as future teachers as a task; the physical context is the classroom setting and the social context is the collaborative work with a group of peers. The Literature Circle or Book Club enables students to practice sustained, extensive, and intensive reading. The roles used in the discussion mirror professional literary talks, as they hone in on different forms of analysis, which they will conduct as future instructors. The students focus on their analytical skills, as they work collaboratively in the discussion of the literary text. They do not just present the task assigned but interact and create knowledge as a team. The discussions are monitored by the instructor, and then assessed with a rubric and a peer-evaluation. In addition, the product or performance is not a report or presentation, but rather the handouts used during the group discussions document the work that was completed.

Table 1.

Authentic Assessment tasks from the perspective of the framework in Gulikers et al. (2004)

Authentic Assessment Dimensions/Elements	Literature Circle	Mock Trial	Field Trip Multimodal Report	Teaching Simulation
Task resembles activity done in professional practice	✓	✓	✓	✓
Physical context resembles professional practice environment	✓	✗	✓	✓
Social context demands collaboration and interaction	✓	✓	✓	✓
Task requires creation of a product or performance	✗	✓	✓	✓
Task includes demonstration of future competences/ involves clear assessment criteria	✓	✓	✓	✓

The *Mock Trial* task expects students to use textual evidence to construct arguments and counterarguments, all pertinent functions of an English teacher. The physical context is not necessarily one that resembles their professional practice environment, though the task takes place in the classroom setting. The result offers both a performance and a product to be evaluated, as the arguments are not only recorded in a shared file but also expressed during the trial section of the activity, and the jury creates a rubric to evaluate the arguments exposed. Without collaboration, this activity cannot be completed successfully, thus the feedback from the instructor is quite necessary to improve the experience and product as students work on the task. Furthermore, the peer-evaluation promotes teamwork as part of the learning process.

The *Field Trip Multimodal Report* task expects students to merge literary text analysis with cultural and historical contexts, which is an important skill for teachers as they analyze a text or interact with other experts, working either individually or in small groups like it is done in academic research. When the assessment task is done collaboratively, the students can maximize their resources (photos, videos, and notes taken during the field trip), delegate tasks according to their strengths (writing skills for the script, oral production for recordings, technological skills for integration of content), and create a polished final product that integrates their points of view. This type of task generates rich and creative artifacts such as videos, infographics, social media campaigns, websites, flipbooks and podcasts that can be shared within the

group or with other audiences. This product is later graded by the instructor using a rubric.

Finally, the *Teaching Simulation* of a literature class lets students practice lesson planning, mediation, and evaluation in a way that replicates the real classroom experience. Students work collaboratively to develop pedagogic skills and literary analysis skills in their performance as teachers in a classroom setting with their classmates as students. This performance is graded by the instructor using a rubric.

ASHFORD-ROWE ET AL.'S EIGHT CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Ashford-Rowe et al. (2014) proposed eight critical questions that can guide the design and development of authentic activities that cover the following elements of a real workplace environment: challenge, performance or product, transfer of knowledge, metacognition, accuracy, fidelity, discussion, and collaboration. Table 2 displays how each critical question is answered for each of the proposed assessment tasks.

In the case of the Ashford-Rowe et al. framework, the questions can be answered by the instructor except for the first one about the level of challenge an authentic activity has. Whether an assessment task is challenging to all students or not is a subjective matter since the instructor plans but the students execute the task. Therefore, it is the students who can attest the level of challenge posed by the task. Each of the tasks presented here aims to evaluate different competences, ideally planned to pose a challenge to students, but unless a post-task survey is given for students to answer, it is difficult to provide a specific answer. The other questions can be answered by the instructor.

When the Ashford-Rowe et al. framework is paired with the Gulikers et al.'s, it is noticeable that they share the elements of requiring a performance or product, fidelity, accuracy, and collaboration, to use Ashford-Rowe et al.'s terminology. Thus, these four assessment activities will not be analyzed *again* on those terms to avoid repetition. Rather, the analysis below will focus on the elements of transferability, metacognition, and discussion or feedback.

In the *Literature Circle*, there is transferability since students show that they are applying previous knowledge and theoretical concepts related to reading comprehension as they perform each role. The metacognition element is embedded in the role of the director, and in the peer-evaluation, given that students monitor their own reading progress, responsibility, and communication competences as they address the novel and their roles with their teammates. Finally, the criteria of discussion or feedback is intrinsic to the task because students have to discuss among their group and give feedback to their teammates. Plus, the instructor should sit with each team and listen to their conversations in case there is a need for guidance.

Table 2.*Authentic Assessment tasks in Ashford-Rowe et al.'s (2014) framework*

Critical Question	Literature Circle	Mock Trial	Field Trip Multimodal Report	Teaching Simulation
To what extent does the assessment activity <i>challenge</i> the student?	NA	NA	NA	NA
Is a <i>performance</i> or <i>product</i> required as a final assessment outcome?	X	✓	✓	✓
Does the assessment activity require that <i>transfer</i> of learning has occurred, by means of demonstration of skill?	✓	✓	✓	✓
Does the assessment activity require that <i>metacognition</i> is demonstrated?	✓	✓	X	X
Does the assessment require a product or performance that could be recognized as authentic by a client or stakeholder? (<i>accuracy</i>)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Is <i>fidelity</i> required in the assessment environment? And the assessment tools (actual or simulated)?	✓	✓	✓	✓
Does the assessment activity require <i>discussion</i> and <i>feedback</i> ?	✓	✓	✓	✓
Is a <i>performance</i> or <i>product</i> required as a final assessment outcome?	✓	✓	✓	✓
Does the assessment activity require that students <i>collaborate</i> ?	✓	✓	✓	✓

In the *Mock Trial* students demonstrate and practice previous competencies acquired in other courses—e.g., argumentation, paragraph writing, and rubric creation—thus complying with the criteria of transferability. Self and peer-evaluation enable the students to reflect on their performance and learning during the task (metacognition). In terms of discussion and feedback, for this task to be successful, students must work together and help each other build solid arguments, rebuttals, and create a rubric to evaluate this work.

The *Field Trip Multimodal Report* requires students to incorporate previous and new knowledge from different fields outside of literature such as history, architecture, sociology, etc. as they research historical information and interact with anthropologists, museum guides, and other field experts. Also, the product of this task is a multimodal composition, meaning that students

do not just stick to written text, but add other modes (gestural, sonic, visual) and formats (videos, recordings, collages, interactive texts, podcasts, social media), so the transferability of ICT competences or skills is varied in scope. There is no metacognitive or reflective element attached to this assessment task with a grade value, but one can be added if an instructor deems it necessary in the form of a questionnaire that addresses how the student was able to complete the task, how they learned to use new technology, how they developed or expressed creativity, what challenges or obstacles they encountered, and what pleasant or rewarding outcomes they experienced while completing the task. Finally, students share their creations with their classmates. Part of the evaluation is to watch and comment on the videos or products created so that their classmates receive feedback not only from the instructor but from their peers.

The *Teaching Simulation* allows students to demonstrate competences and skills developed through their literature and pedagogical coursework, thereby serving as preparation for both their teaching practicum and the professional demands of real-world educational contexts. As with the previous task, the guidelines for this task do not include a metacognitive section, but it can be included. However, reflection is also done informally after a simulation is completed to highlight positive aspects and other elements that can be improved not only for the students in charge of the simulation but for the whole class. The summative feedback provided by the instructor is essential and should go beyond the scores in a rubric. It should include more specific comments and annotations that students can internalize and incorporate to future teaching moments.

McARTHUR'S FRAMEWORK

The final framework to be used to prove the authenticity of the assessment tasks proposed in Part II is McArthur's (2023). As seen before in Part I, this framework proposes three principles that revolve around the social well-being and growth of students, and not just on the acquisition of a competence and the training for the real world in terms of labor only. Table 3 indicates whether McArthur's principles coincide with the proposed tasks.

The *Literature Circle* does not comply much with the socially-oriented principles proposed by McArthur because it mainly focuses on discussion, collaboration and the application of previous and new knowledge. Because any novel may be selected for this task, the extent and nature of its social dimension are shaped by the activities and roles students assume during the discussion, as well as by the plot developments and conflicts examined as part of the literary analysis. A redeeming aspect of this task is that it provides students with a safe and guided space in which to engage with peers in discussions of sensitive issues that may emerge in the selected novel, such as

racism, social class disparities, and trauma, among others. Though students might not reflect on the social value of discussing a novel with others, or they might not be transforming society with this task, the exercise can expose them to relevant social and cultural issues in the real world, plant ideas for critical thinking and change within their lives.

Table 3.

Authentic Assessment tasks from the perspective of the McArthur (2023) framework

Principle:	Literature Circle	Mock Trial	Field Trip Multimodal Report	Teaching Simulation
From the real world/world of work to society.	✓	✓	✓	✓
From task performance to why they value the task.	✗	✗	✗	✗
From the status quo of the real world/ world of work to transforming society.	✗	✓	✓	✓

The *Mock Trial* complies with the two principles as its objective is to argue a case for and against a controversial issue found in a literary text. Most likely, the issue might be related to social justice, though that depends on the choice of the literary text. Yet, the competences that are exercised and implemented are rooted in the growth of students as actors in the real world: they commit to a cause, they tie evidence to arguments, they show empathy, and they learn to listen to both sides of a case in order to reach a verdict. As noted previously, there is no reflective exercise planned in the guidelines presented here, but that can be added to the task by including a section that requires students to empathize with the character being accused or with the victim, or the impact of the jury's choice.

The *Field Trip Multimodal Report* also complies with two principles of authentic assessment according to McArthur when the literary approaches used for the analysis and application in a literary text also coincide with a social issue. The knowledge gained from museum visits, expert information, and research expands the students' content learning into a social and cultural experience that goes further than academic knowledge only. Plus, the critical thinking competence that students exercise in the production of the report shows connections between a foreign literary text and an issue of Costa Rican society that they probably would not have thought about otherwise. Similarly, the reflective aspect is not a separate element of the task, but rather implied in the creation of the report. The reflection aspect can be more explicitly ex-

pressed in the guidelines by requiring students to include a reflection on lessons learned about our country and society and their place in them.

The *Teaching Simulation* coincides with the same two principles as the two previous tasks as it prepares students for not only the real world of teaching, but also the social justice aspects that they can include in their professional practice. In doing so, they are not just focusing on the teaching of basic literary elements but on other fundamental aspects that can enhance the understanding and analysis of a literary text, which can train them to become more socially and culturally critical instructors. As with the previous tasks, although there is no explicit reflective section in this assignment that asks students to consider why this task matters in their social environment, it can be included as part of the evaluation by requiring the students to write a paragraph about their teaching philosophy or about what they learned when they used literary approaches to teach a lesson.

MY OWN PERSONAL CHECKLISTS

Part I of this work showed there are various models, frameworks, and approaches for the selection of desirable 21st-century skills, or the broad set of knowledge, work habits and other competences that have been deemed essential for success in different North American and European work and educational organizations. In doing this research, I realized I needed an easy yet comprehensive means to evaluate the assessment activities that I wanted to implement in my instructional practice as a professor of literature courses. For this purpose, I selected three frameworks whose elements and principles I adapted into a set of questions to use as checklists to assess an evaluation task's degree of authenticity. By using these checklists, I can make changes, modifications, and reflect on what I wanted my students to accomplish. I selected the following three frameworks because each provides a valuable angle from which I could evaluate an assessment activity or task. Ashford-Rowe et al. (2014) came up with a comprehensive⁸ set of eight critical elements that can be used to identify whether an assessment activity is *authentic*. McArthur (2023) addressed authenticity from a *social transformation perspective*. Binkley et al. (2012) identified the *soft skills* for students to develop in order to be successful in life and work.

When these three frameworks are compared side by side, one can see they have elements in common, namely metacognition and reflection and profes-

8 The analysis conducted above showed that there is an overlap of authentic elements between Gulikers et al. (2004) and Ashford-Rowe et al. (2014); because the second one is more extensive, I decided to use it in my projects.

sional responsibility, with collaboration and teamwork as a common element in Ashford-Rowe et al. and Binkley et al. Thus, the creation of a single set of questions that encompasses all three frameworks is possible, but it can become rather cumbersome, so the checklists can be used individually or as different stages of reflection. I decided to turn each of these frameworks into a checklist (Tables 4, 5, and 6), following a similar style to that of Ashford-Rowe et al., for ease of user. The users will decide whether they want to apply a checklist that focuses on authenticity from a textbook point of view, from a social perspective, or from a soft skills standpoint, or use them one after another to consider different angles of instruction and authenticity for a more rounded form of evaluation.

Table 4.

Authentic assessment checklist adapted from Ashford-Rowe et al. (2014)

Does the assessment activity or task...	Yes	No
...represent a learning challenge to students?		
...require the creation of a product of a performance?		
...show that students are using and applying previously acquired knowledge, competences/skills, or theoretical concepts?		
...require metacognition, reflection and self-monitoring?		
...require a product or performance that could be recognized as an accurate practice of an English teacher by an employer?		
...use tools or situations that are true to the occupation of an English teacher?		
...require discussion and feedback?		
...require that students collaborate in groups?		

Engaging with these checklists should not lead to eliminating a task altogether from a syllabus if it does not comply with all or most of the framework's elements or criteria of authenticity. Instead, when used in advance or after an activity is completed, these checklists help fine tune not only the tasks themselves but also the instructional strategies that help prepare students for them. They contribute to the creation of rubrics, the type or frequency of feedback required, the inclusion of reflection and metacognitive exercises, among others. For example, the analysis done in the Discussion section showed that while the evaluation activities described here complied with most criteria, the authentic element of reflection and metacognition as seen by Ashford-Rowe et al. (2014) was not part of two activities. When the element of reflection was evaluated via McArthur's (2023) framework, I found that it was not present in all activities because the element called for a social consideration of the reasons why the task was relevant beyond students' individuality and their

work-related future. Rather, McArthur's element focuses on the social importance of what is being accomplished by executing the task. After completing this type of exercise, I can consider changes or modifications for a next iteration of the task.

Table 5.

Authentic assessment checklist adapted from McArthur (2023)

Is the assessment activity or task...	Yes	No
...situated in or connected to students' present and future role in society?		
...prompting students to reflect on why the task matters in their social environment?		
...introducing social change or fostering transforming action in students?		

Table 6.

Twenty-first century skills checklist adapted from Binkley et al. (2012)

When students work on the activity, will they use or practice...	Yes	No
...creativity and innovation?		
...critical thinking, problem solving or decision making?		
...metacognition?		
...communication?		
...collaboration or teamwork?		
...information and/or ICT literacies?		
...personal, social, and professional responsibilities?		

Overall, this process confirmed for me that authenticity in evaluation is not a fixed attribute but a reflective and iterative practice. Using these checklists allows me to move deliberately between theory and instruction, making my methodological and assessment choices more transparent, intentional, and responsive to students' learning experiences and social contexts. Rather than selecting a single framework of authentic assessment, this approach invites continuous professional judgment. As a form of action research, it can be used to refine tasks constantly so they better align with institutional and disciplinary goals, professional realities, and the broader purposes of education.

IMPLICATIONS

As part of the final reflections on the implementation of authentic assessment tasks in a competence-based higher education program, it must be ac-

knowledge that this model and the frameworks provided are not a cure-all or ultimate improvement for traditional systems, teaching methodologies, and forms of evaluation. In fact, there is resistance and critique around the use of competence-based models in higher education. This resistance or critique often revolves around conceptual, curricular and assessment concerns, which are discussed below. Notwithstanding these three concerns, it is important to note that they serve a purpose: they highlight conceptual and practice risks that can occur, therefore clarifying the conditions under which the competence-based approach must be educationally meaningful and coherent.

Conceptually, the notion of competence is frequently treated as a common-sense term that everyone in academia seems to have a definition for, but the literature shows it has multiple, competing meanings. This can lead to inconsistent interpretations across institutions, programs of study and instructors, making coherent curricular design and evaluation difficult or conflicting. If the concept of competence is not clearly defined, the measurable aspect of this paradigm could put critical and valuable education at risk of becoming just indicators and metrics or quantifiable data.

At the *curricular* level, the content seen as what is taught, what is valued, and who benefits from it also poses a concern. Disciplinary knowledge can be weakened when competences are reduced to a list of performances that need to be evidenced at the end of a course. This treatment of the curriculum can also lead to the fragmentation of the learning process when the teaching and learning experience is turned into smaller chunks or units to serve a checklist of subcompetences to accomplish, damaging the transferability, critique, and development of wider disciplinary and theoretical knowledge. Another crucial curricular concern of competence-based models is seen in the reduction of learning to employability only, which can result in the elimination of humanistic and social justice values fostering balanced and socially critical students. A final curricular concern is centered around the borrowing of educational policies in higher education environments across the world, leading to mixed results as the economic, cultural and social contexts are different from one country to another. It is essential to reflect on whether an educational practice should be implemented *as is* in a country or region with specific cultural, social and economic standards, and used in a country with dissimilar characteristics. Thus, it is necessary to have a thorough understanding of a country's educational and work policies, cultural practices, and social and job necessities in order to incorporate a model that was successful somewhere else.

The *assessment* concerns deal with how the learning is judged in terms of fairness, reliability, and workload. First, and related to the conceptual issues presented above, assessment trustworthiness and consistency become harder when competences require judgment across various types of evidence or complex performances. If there is lack of clarity on the concepts of fairness, reliability, and workload among instructors, it can lead to inconsistent and un-

fair grading of the same competence. Also, even well-intended transparency such as explicit criteria, rubrics, and extensive feedback can encourage instrumental criteria compliance, where students focus more on meeting checklists rather than engaging deeply with learning, content or purpose of the competence being developed. Finally, authentic assessment forms of evaluation often require a heavier workload or substantial time for planning, task design, rubric calibration among instructors, feedback cycles and moderation.

While these critiques evidence real conceptual and practical risks, they do not invalidate competence-based approaches to education or authentic assessment. They rather give way or clarify the conditions under which competences can be meaningful and effective. In my own experience, implementing the competence-based approach and authentic assessment in literature courses or courses that use literary texts have positive implications, as discussed below.

First, they make the learning visible as action and not as content recall. Tasks such as the Literature Circle, Mock Trial, Multimodal Field Trip Report, and Teaching Simulation demonstrate that competences are being met through realistic, discipline-related practices such as sustained reading and literary interpretation, evidence-based argumentation, contextual inquiry, multimodal communication, and teaching mediation. These activities shift evaluation toward the future of what English teachers will do with literary texts within social and cultural contexts in professional settings. This way both theory and practice support curricular disciplinary knowledge in a concrete way, preparing students to accomplish the competences necessary to be language instructors prepared to address literary texts in their educational practice.

A second positive implication of implementing authentic assessment is the promotion of higher order thinking and transfer of knowledge. The tasks presented here require close reading, synthesis of literary and other contextual information, construction of arguments and counterarguments, evaluative judgement, and lesson design. Therefore, there is a push to move beyond the lower cognitive levels of remembering and understanding toward analysis, interpretation, and decision making, while transferring knowledge from literary texts, cultural and social contexts, and pedagogy into possible teaching scenarios and professional formats.

A third positive implication of authentic assessment practices is that they support collaboration and professional identity formation. The activities described here depend on teamwork and role distribution, actions which mirror the teaching practice. It is through authentic assessment tasks that students can learn to negotiate meaning, share responsibility and build the confidence they will need on the job as instructors. The type of discussions that these activities engage are academic, structured and mostly done in smaller groups, which can increase participation and produce rich content as no student is not in the spotlight.

A fourth positive implication in implementing authentic assessment is the strengthening of fairness and transparency when the criteria or guidelines for a task include clear, explicit instructions, rubrics, and there is ongoing instructor guidance and companionship during in-class discussions. Plus, the peer-evaluation in tasks such as the Literature Circle and Mock Trial highlights student responsibility and contribution with the task and the literary text. Thus, student expectations are clear and the continuous support fosters improvement, as evaluation moves away from the isolated grading of a task.

Finally, a major positive implication is that authentic assessment tasks such as those discussed here exemplify how there is an alignment between literature learning, competences, and social and cultural responsibility. This can be done when the tasks intentionally connect with social justice and cultural issues. The Mock Trial not only focuses on argumentation through textual analysis, but it puts ethical dilemmas in the foreground, and the Multimodal Field Trip Report connects literary contexts with Costa Rican history and culture. Beyond forming students only for work-related competences, authentic assessment supports students' growth as reflective professionals and active members of society.

Overall, this study suggests that authentic assessment can make a competence-based approach more educationally meaningful in courses that use literary texts as support or as the main content of study, provided the approach is implemented with clear definitions, disciplinary grounding, careful and reflective assessment design, and a socially conscious perspective. Just as the Universidad Nacional's Pedagogical Model (2007) provides the outline of the instruction that should occur at a macro level, a competence-based approach in the English Teaching program provides a methodological and assessment template to follow.

As noted earlier, rapid changes in the world have modified the ways universities see instruction. At present, higher education needs to guide students to develop key skills in the classroom for their future employability (Terón-López & García-García, 2013, pp. 151-152), but that does not mean instruction should focus only on the skills necessary to complete a task in a future job. As Pérez-Cañado (2013) explains, competences involve knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values necessary to perform successfully in an academic, professional, and social environment (p. 4).

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Literature Circle Peer Evaluation

Name: _____

Please evaluate your team members using the guidelines in the chart below:

	3 pts	2 pts	1 pt	0 pts
Task completion and responsibility	This person always delivered complete worksheets, and was always responsible for his/her share of the work.	This person sometimes delivered complete worksheets, and was sometimes responsible for his/her share of the work.	This person rarely delivered complete worksheets, and was rarely responsible for his/her share of work.	This person did not complete any assigned worksheet.
Quality of work	This person worked hard on the assigned worksheets to produce high-quality work.	This person made some effort to produce acceptable work on the assigned worksheets.	This person made little effort and produced below average work on the assigned worksheets.	This person did not put any effort or work into the assigned worksheets.
Contribution to discussion	This person always listened to, shared with, and contributed to the discussion of the book helpfully and respectfully.	This person often listened to, shared with, and contributed to the discussion of the book helpfully and respectfully.	This person rarely listened to, shared with, or contributed to the discussion of the book. Sometimes this person was not helpful or respectful.	This person was not cooperative and never contributed to the discussion of the book; was not helpful or respectful.

Using the above guidelines, write the name of your group members below, and rate them from 3 to 0 pts. Each person's points will be averaged by the instructor to provide the grade and the percentage.

Classmate's Name	Task Completion and Responsibility	Quality of Work	Contribution to Discussion	Total Points
	3 – 2 – 1 – 0	3 – 2 – 1 – 0	3 – 2 – 1 – 0	
	3 – 2 – 1 – 0	3 – 2 – 1 – 0	3 – 2 – 1 – 0	
	3 – 2 – 1 – 0	3 – 2 – 1 – 0	3 – 2 – 1 – 0	
	3 – 2 – 1 – 0	3 – 2 – 1 – 0	3 – 2 – 1 – 0	

Appendix B. Possible Classic Literary Texts for a Mock Trial⁹

Short stories:

- “The Black Cat,” “The Tell-Tale Heart” or “The Cast of Amontillado,” by Edgar Allan Poe (2000)
- “Lamb to the Slaughter,” by Roald Dahl (2013)
- “The Most Dangerous Game,” by Richard Connell (2014)

Novels:

- *The Outsiders*, by S. E. Hinton (2012)
- *Frankenstein*, by Mary Shelley (1993)
- *The Great Gatsby*, by F. Scott Fitzgerald (2021)
- *The Lord of the Flies*, by William Golding (2006)

Plays:

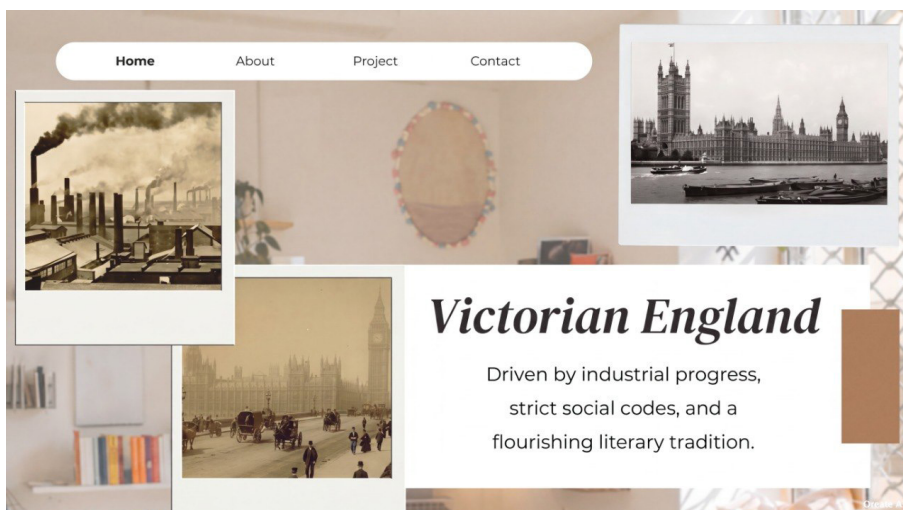
- *Hamlet, Macbeth, or Romeo and Juliet*, by William Shakespeare (2011)
- *Trifles*, by Susan Glaspell (2018)
- *The Crucible*, by Arthur Miller (2003)

⁹ In all cases, the year indicated belongs to the version recommended rather than to that of the original publication.

Appendix C. Students' Multimodal Composition

Below are examples of students' multimodal compositions of different types from a field trip report during the second semester of 2025.¹⁰

Figure C1. *Video essays by Amanda Brenes Fonseca and by Amanda Coto Acuña and María José Suarez Navarro (next page).*



¹⁰ All of the examples in this appendix have been reproduced here with the respective students' consent.

Gender Roles

England



Men dominated the public and professional spheres.

Women focused on taking care of the house and raising children.

Women's rights and freedom were very limited.

My Last Duchess by Robert Browning: a wife was seen as her husband's property.

Feminist movements began to challenge these norms later in the era.

Figure C2. Website by Erni Santana Ramirez.

[Home](#)
[Social Structure](#)
[Cultural Aspects](#)
[Global Influence](#)
[Reflections](#)
[Book Now](#)

A Tale of Two Eras

England



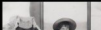
Working Class

This class included **men, women, and even children** who faced poverty and unsafe working conditions. **Men and children** mostly worked in the mines up to 16 hours a day, whereas **women** performed roles as domestic servants, dressmakers, or charwomen.



Middle Class

Society was divided into **two levels**: the **upper-middle class** (rich businessmen) and the **lower-middle class** (clerk, teachers, and shopkeepers), often with at least one servant.



Upper Class

BUILT WITH JIMDO

[Home](#)
[Social Structure](#)
[Cultural Aspects](#)
[Global Influence](#)
[Reflections](#)
[Book Now](#)

A Tale of Two Eras

Costa Rica



Working Class

The **Working Class** included Mestizos and laborers who sustained the coffee and tobacco plantations, as depicted in the Costa Rican play "Magdalena". Similarly, in the same play, you can see servants who remind us of Victorian England.



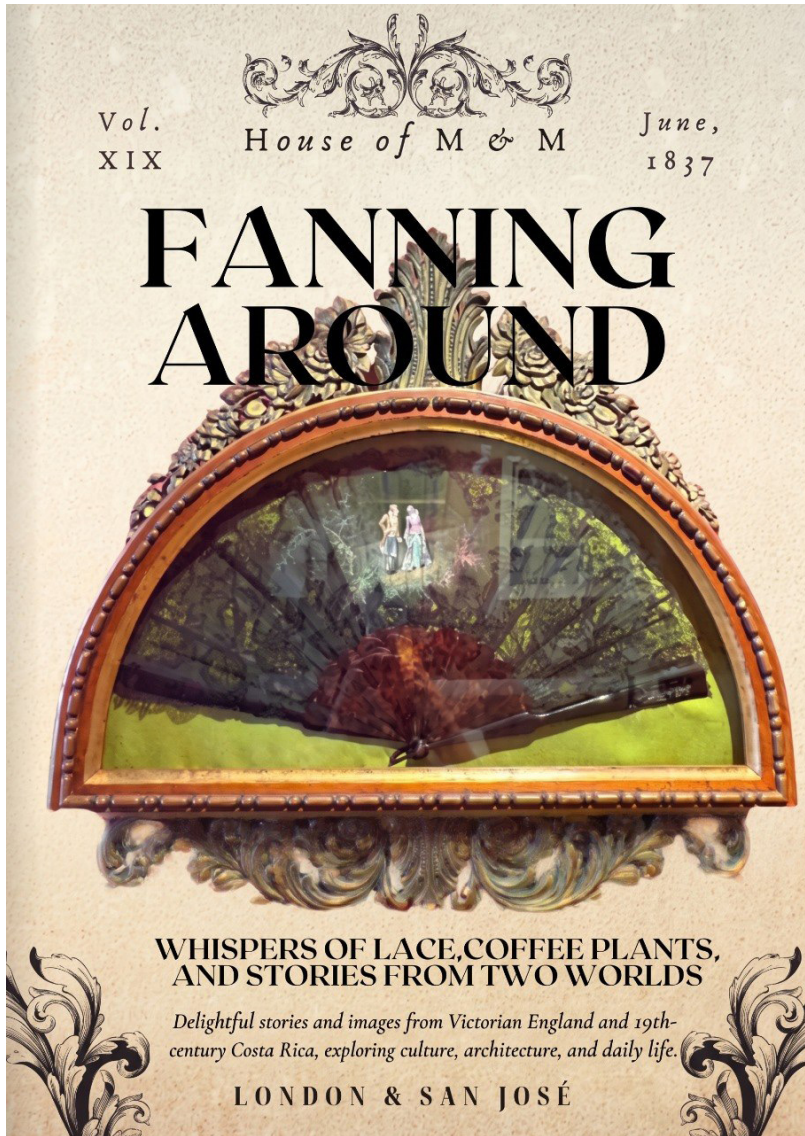
Upper Class

The **Upper Class** consisted of wealthy landowners, coffee and tobacco barons, and European immigrants who held economic and political power. Essentially this group had more opportunities to get a high-quality education, yet women were still undermined, just like in England.

BUILT WITH JIMDO

Figure C3. Flipbooks by Maria Fernanda Vega Alfaro and Bryan Vindas Díaz and Mariana de la O González and Mariela Esquivel Sánchez (following pages).





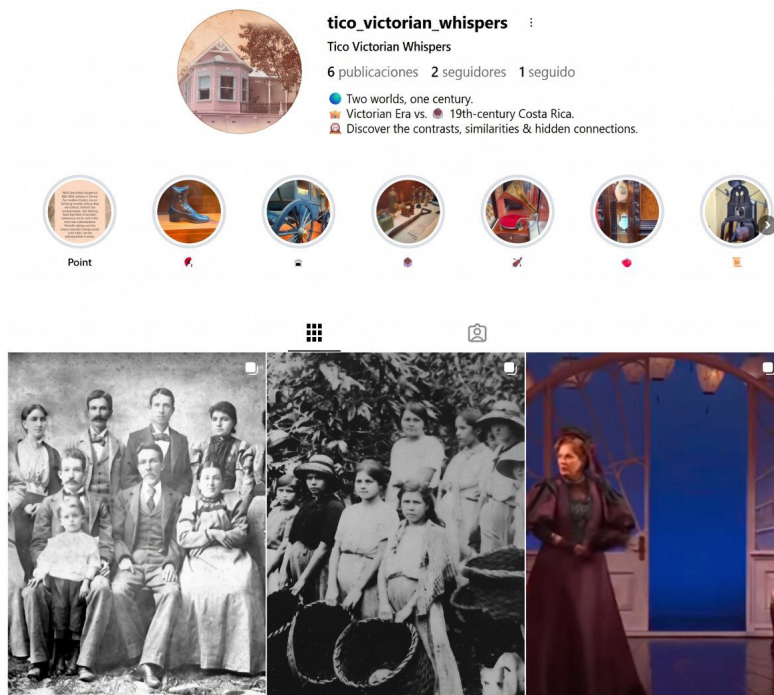


Figure C5. *Teaching simulation presentation on The House of Mango Street by Arianna Sevilla Prudente, Carlos Torres Ortégón, Catherine Solano Aguilar, Keitty Chavarria García, and Keilyn Viquez Jiménez.*

A Smart Cookie

Cultural Analysis Approach

By Carlos Torres, Arianna Sevilla, Keitty Chavarria, Catherine Solano and Keylin Viquez



Conflicts and Resolutions

The primary conflict is the struggle between the individual's potential and the social barriers of poverty.

"You want to know why I quit school? Because I didn't have nice clothes. No clothes, but I had brains." (Lines 16–17)

Another conflict is how Esperanza's mother projects her lost ambitions onto Esperanza, demanding she "study hard" to avoid becoming another "Madame Butterfly."

"I could've been somebody, you know? Esperanza, you go to school. Study hard. That Madame Butterfly was a fool." (Lines 11–12)



Practice

- Make groups of 3-4 people.
- What characterizes a functional adult? What do you expect from one?
- How would you raise a child so they become a functional adult? Think of a plan to achieve this.
- Turn that plan into a cooking recipe.



Beyond the Crumbs

Create a "Social Media Profile" for your cookie by answering the following questions:

1. **Status:** is your cookie "somebody" or "nobody"?
2. **Feeling or personal background:** What do you perceive, think, or feel about your cookie?
3. **The Conflict:** What is keeping your cookie from being eaten or appreciated?
4. **The Hidden Talent:** What can your cookie do that no one sees?



Cultural assumptions

Woman's life is limited by her circumstances: moving, poverty, and lack of education
Education is the main path to success and independence.

The mother mother this idea when she tells Esperanza to "go to school" and "study hard."

Gender expectations

The examples of the comadres suggest a cultural belief that women depend on men and suffer when some relationships lies.



Cultural practices

- **Domestic roles:**
Traditional craftsmanship
metes modern prevodon
- **Community ties**
close female social networks
- **Artistic expression at home**
Singing opera, while cooking, drawing, evens
- **Use of public resources**
Borrowing records from the library



Recipe: Functional Adult Cookies

Prep time: 18+ years
Cook time: Ongoing
Servings: 1 independent human (results may vary)

Ingredients

- 2 cups of unconditional love
- 1 cup of consistent boundaries
- 3 tbsp punarice (etfll often)
- 1/2 cup of discipline (not punishment)
- 1 cup of cooke leasning
- 2 tsp accountgunters
- 1 tbsp accountability
- A pinch of humor
- A handful of real-life consequences
- 1 large scoop of good role modeling

Appendix D. Multimodal Composition

What is Multimodality?

Multimodality happens when creators engage themselves and their audience in more than one mode of communication. A Multimodal Composition is the practice of creating a text that communicates a message by intentionally combining two or more modes of communication, such as words, images, sounds, and gestures.

Potential Ideas and Tools

Potential ideas (These are only ideas; you can choose others!)

- Text-based document augmented or enhanced with visual and auditory elements
- Video, narrated presentation
- Story combining picture, video, music, narration, or alphabetic text
- Collage combining one or more media
- Ignite or PechaKucha presentation (fast-paced presentations made of 20 slides, which automatically advance every 15 or 20 seconds depending on the style)
- Poster or infographic
- Comic/graphic novel style story
- Social media campaign mockup
- Website
- Blog
- Podcast

Potential digital tools and resources (You may be familiar with considerably more resources than the ones on this list; these are a few with which I am the most familiar.)

- PowerPoint
- Google Slides
- Canva
- Genially
- Screenpal
- Prezi
- Audacity (audio-editing freeware)
- Youtube
- Storybird (no image uploads in basic-free plan)

***Cilampa** (segunda serie) es la colección de cuadernillos temáticos y de divulgación científica de la Escuela de Literatura y Ciencias del Lenguaje; tiene como propósitos mayores, primero, la edición, digital e impresa, de obras de referencia y demostrada solvencia académica; segundo, la creación de una interesante oferta de materiales didácticos. Se trata de publicaciones breves, no superiores a ochenta páginas, destinadas a dar cuenta del desarrollo de las distintas áreas de conocimiento inscritas en el seno de la Escuela de Literatura y Ciencias del Lenguaje; publicaciones cuidadosas en el desarrollo del contenido técnico, concebidas mediante líneas editoriales específicas, escritas en un estilo llano y explicativo, de naturaleza monográfica o miscelánea, diseñadas con esmero y editadas en arreglo con los modernos preceptos editoriales.*

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Impreso en Heredia

In response to the growing emphasis given to competence-based approaches in higher education, the author offers concrete examples of how to integrate authentic assessment into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) literature courses within teacher education programs. Her work presents the concept of authentic competence-based assessment and applies it to a variety of classroom-tested assessment options that can also be used in EFL oral expression, reading, and culture courses. This practical guidance is backed by rigorous analysis showing how these assessment tasks align with authentic assessment principles, thus positioning them as valuable pedagogical resources for advancing competence-based curricula.

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Alejandra Giangiulio Lobo has taught English literature at the School of Literature and Language Sciences (Escuela de Literatura y Ciencias del Lenguaje, ELCL) at the Universidad Nacional since 2013. She holds a B.A. in English and an M.A. in English Literature from the University of Costa Rica. She also has a D.A. (Doctor of Arts) in English Pedagogy with an Emphasis in Literature from Murray State University (Kentucky). She teaches in all three of the ELCL's English B.A. programs and its M.A. in Applied Linguistics. Her academic interests include literature pedagogy, assessment, young adult literature, the Gothic and the EcoGothic.