

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT AS VIABLE SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

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The educational paradigm in the United States continues to rely heavily upon compartmentalized, standardized traditional assessment techniques to provide summative measurement of student achievement. This study explored the viability of authentic assessment as a summative measure of student achievement by investigating the perspectives students, parents, educators, and policy makers have regarding assessment. Through the use of researcher-created surveys and publicly available student testing data, this quantitative-qualitative study found students' assessment preference, the level of understanding parents have regarding the assessment process, and obstacles to implementing authentic assessment. A chi-square analysis found variables in survey results to be based on participant responses, and not from chance. Furthermore, the specific research questions comparing authentically assessed students to their peers' performance on standardized tests were answered. A 2-tailed *t*-test emboldens the study's

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findings that students regularly assessed by authentic assessment do not differ significantly from their peers. The study supports the use of authentic assessment as viable summative evaluation of student achievement while challenging the ongoing practice of placing inequitable importance on the outcome of traditional, norm-referenced, high-stakes assessment.