

# Learning Teaching & Assessment Resources

## Authentic Assessment Exemplar:

Assessment Title	Building a shelter to sleep out overnight as an authentic assessment in architectural technology,
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Module Title that Assessment Delivered on	Technical Design Studio (TECH1106, TU831)
Primary Student Cohort (Year on Programme / FT or PT or Both / UG or PG or AP)	

### Overview of Assessment (Max 100 words)

This assessment required students to design and make a simple shelter to house their group overnight at Grangegorman campus. This was done in conjunction with the national Shine A Light Night Sleepout charity to raise funds for homelessness. Unlike the broader initiative where people sleepout in back gardens or schools, the students were given a set number of parts and tools and left to determine whether they could create a small piece of architecture that could survive out in the elements. The final structure would need to withstand climatic conditions excluding water, allowing a minimum light level, and maintain an internal temperature of 20 degrees Celsius.

### What Change was Made to Assessment to Enhance its Authenticity? (Max 100 words)

You are probably very familiar with the typical architectural or construction drawing. Within architectural education and practice, orthographic projection, the plan, section, and elevation, and 3D axonometric versions of these, are ubiquitous. They are the visual language we use to explore and communicate design solutions. Even with powerful digital tools available to us, we defer back to “ortho” for the final product of architecture; the drawing. However, the drawing is not architecture. The drawing is not construction. The drawing is passive and silent, and does not test or verify our ideas adequately. The drawing is an abstraction. From a pedagogical perspective, this is exacerbated. I have seen students struggle with this visual language, even in higher years of our programmes. The assessment of the quality of drawing, or the design solution it conveys, is done via a form of “connoisseurship” feedback model where the student produces work, submits it, and waits for either formative or summative feedback from the educator. This form of feedback is not a true measure of the quality of the proposed design solution, and is very slow as a feedback mechanism. Nor does it support independent iterative testing and exploration of better and multiple solutions by the learner.

### What was the Impact on Student Engagement / Performance? (Max 100 words)

In response to these perceived shortcomings, I set about devising a series of teaching exercises (projects) that flipped the typical approach of drawing first and making or testing second. In the main new exercise described here, we found that students first tried to understand the components and tools and then used drawing only to explore aspects of the design which were not expedient to test “for real”. Typically this occurs the other way around in architectural teaching. They also used the drawings to explain their ideas to each other. The result was a subtle but deep set of lessons about communication, testing, collaboration, and decision making that would be very difficult to achieve via abstract drawing exercises. Furthermore, the students raised over €4,300 for the local community.

### One Thing you would do Differently Next Time (Max 50 words)

The exercise exceeded all our expectations in terms of engagement, the quality of the final output from each group, and their reflections on their experiences. The only things I would do differently are more specific organisational issues, such as focusing more on a trial run of the erection process, handling waterproofing more carefully with the groups, and potentially turning the project into a school-wide multi-programme initiative.

### Authenticity Indicators

