**Focus Question:**

How is “productive assessment” like “authentic assessment” and how does it differ?

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**Productive Assessment and Performance**

The following are extracts from the book:


“We believe that in order to make a positive difference in the lives of young people, teachers need to share (with each other and with students and their communities) a common understanding of the types of student performances they are working towards … Our primary concern is to contribute to such dialogue by describing what makes a difference and suggesting how to make a difference in schools. The classroom practices we describe are our contribution to the former, and our description of alignment of these practices with performances is our case for the latter. Alignment is underpinned by context and a recognition that schools are located in places where people live. Schools that make a difference matter in these peoples’ lives because they enrich and resource them, and they connect with their concerns and hopes. Alignment, then, is about teachers’ pedagogies and assessment practices mediating the achievement of valued performances in the classroom …

The key to alignment is not so much sequence as linkage - that there are explicit and coherent links between pedagogies, assessment practices and student performances, all of which should be intimately linked to the specific purposes and goals of schooling. We add the term ‘productive’ to signal in a clear and precise way those forms that make a difference and that, to the best of our knowledge, work in classrooms. *Productive pedagogies* and *productive assessment* practices make a difference to educational outcomes. Such practices in all classrooms will contribute to more socially just outcomes from schooling - the difference …” (p. 2-3)

“For students to demonstrate productive performance there needs to be a move away from traditional forms of testing and measurement. This move entails assessment processes and practices that enable students to demonstrate a richness of outcomes, rather than a limited set of knowledges.” (p. 88)

The rich outcomes include academic ones but also personal, practical and social outcomes.

“The term ‘productive’ was adopted in preference to the US term of ‘authentic’, as an indication that there was not a ‘true’ or ‘real’ form of performance, pedagogy or assessment.” (p. 21).

The productive assessment framework has four dimensions and sub-elements within them.

1. “Intellectual quality
   We support the view that all students should be given tasks that require them to demonstrate high-quality academic outcomes … This is a form of social justice premised on the assumption that all students have a right to learn, a right to the equitable distribution of educational resources and a right to experience quality teaching. The items that make up the dimension of intellectual quality within the productive assessment framework are detailed below.” (p. 90)

   “… consider the following questions …

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• **Higher-order thinking** - To what extent does the assessment task expect students to engage in higher-order thinking?
• **Problematic knowledge (consideration of alternative knowledges)** - To what extent does success in this task require consideration of alternative solutions, strategies, perspectives or points of view?
• **Problematic knowledges (construction of knowledge)** - To what degree are students expected to demonstrate knowledge as constructed?

[Constructed means “producing, rather than simply reproducing, meaning and knowledge” p. 18]
• **Depth of knowledge (disciplinary content)** - To what extent does the assessment task require students to demonstrate understanding of ideas, theories or perspectives central to an academic or professional discipline?
• **Depth of knowledge (disciplinary processes)** - To what extent does the task lead students to use methods of inquiry, research, communication and discourse characteristic of an academic or professional discipline?
• **Elaborate communication** - To what extent is elaborate communication expected?” (p. 92-3).

i.e. The “assessment task expects that students will respond ... with a coherent communication of ideas, concepts, arguments and/or explanations ... [This] can occur through a variety of media. What is important is that this form of communication is expected to be rich in detail, qualifications and argument” (p. 92).

2. “**Connectedness:**
• **Integrated school knowledge** - To what degree is school knowledge integrated across subject boundaries?
• **Connectedness: link to background knowledge** - To what extent does the assessment task draw on students’ background knowledge?
• **Connectedness: problem linked to world beyond classroom** - To what extent is the assessment task connected to competencies beyond the classroom?
• **Connectedness: audience beyond school** - To what extent does the assessment task expect students to address an audience beyond the classroom?
• **Problem-based tasks** - To what extent is the assessment task based on solving a specific problem(s)” (p. 98)

3. “**Supportive classroom environment:**
• **Student direction of assessment task** - To what degree do students determine the assessment task?
• **Explicit quality performance criteria** - To what degree are criteria for what counts as a high-quality student performance made explicit?” (p. 103)

4. “**Working with and valuing difference:**
• **Cultural knowledges are valued** - To what extent are non-dominant cultural knowledges valued?
• **Group identities** - To what degree does the assessment item support the production and positive recognition of difference and group identities?
• **Active citizenship** - To what degree is the practice of active citizenship encouraged in the assessment item?” (p. 110)

“The notion of productive performance is based on the premise that if particular intellectual and social outcomes are valued as goals of schooling, these should be evident in classroom practices, in terms of both pedagogies and assessment.” (p. 141-2)

**Reflection Question:**

How do my assessment practices measure up against these questions?