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Foreword

The Educational Resources Information Center Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education (ERIC/ACVE) is 1 of 16 clearinghouses in a national information system that is funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), U.S. Department of Education. This paper was developed to fulfill one of the functions of the clearinghouse—interpreting the literature in the ERIC database. This paper should be of interest to vocational education teachers, researchers, and graduate students.

ERIC/ACVE would like to thank the authors for their work in the preparation of this paper.

Rodney L. Custer is Department Chairperson, Department of Industrial Technology, Illinois State University. He previously taught at the University of Missouri-Columbia. He was the editor of the Journal of Industrial Teacher Education from 1996-1998. He is the recipient of the 1999 Outstanding Teacher Educator Award, Council on Technology Teacher Education; the designation as Distinguished Technology Educator, International Technology Education Association; and the Council on Technology Teacher Education’s Silvius/Wolansky Outstanding Manuscript Award for authoring the Performance Standards Handbook.

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Executive Summary

As educational approaches turned from behaviorist to cognitive, educators have focused on embedding instruction in real-world contexts that engage students in knowledge construction. Appropriate measures of real-world learning include authentic assessments in which students apply skills and knowledge to solving authentic problems. This monograph addresses different aspects of authentic assessment related to its use in vocational education.

Following an overview and definitions of terms by Rodney L. Custer, John W. Schell discusses the theoretical foundations of authentic assessment, reviewing psychological, cognitive, and sociological views of learning. He provides an extended example of an authentic assessment practice that connects authentic teaching, learning, and assessment with learning theory.

Next, Brian McAlister’s literature review explores the questions of the inherent value of authentic assessment and its effectiveness in promoting learning. He presents the claims made on its behalf and the research evidence related to those claims. John Scott then details authentic assessment strategies and tools, including those that students can use to assess their own learning.

In the concluding chapter, Marie Hoepfl discusses federal and state initiatives for using authentic assessment, presenting the issues, obstacles, and challenges surrounding its use on a large scale.

Information on the topics in this monograph may be found in the ERIC database using the following descriptors: *Constructivism (Learning), Educational Assessment, *Evaluation Methods, *Learning Theories, Self Evaluation (Individuals), *Student Evaluation, Vocational Education, and the identifier *Authentic Assessment. Asterisks indicate terms that are particularly relevant.