

TRUE OR FALSE: EXAMS ARE A WASTE OF TIME?

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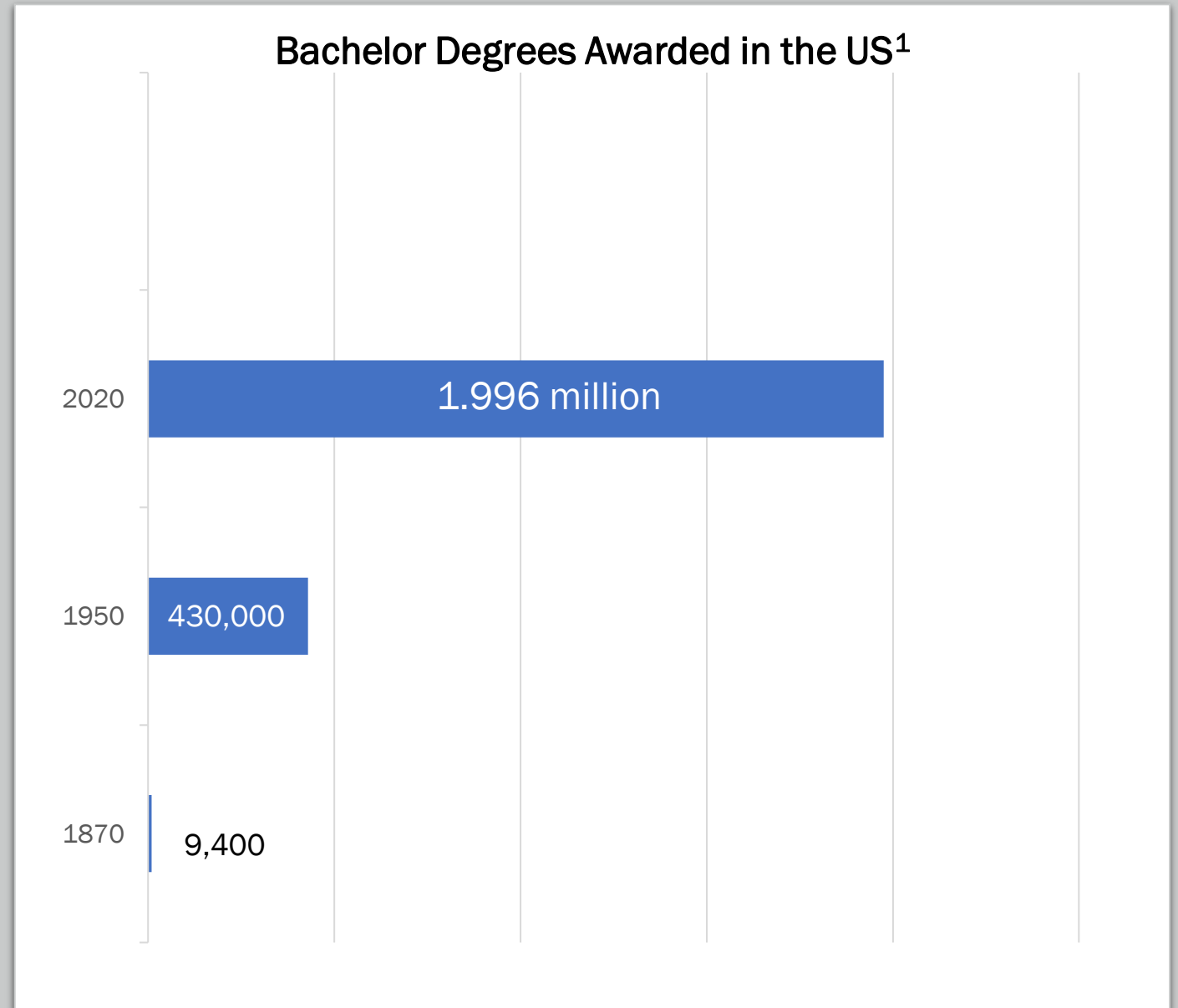


**This presentation will
be divisive for some!**

**We all know that change is
difficult, so this may
cause you to experience some
uncomfortable emotions!!**

Why Do We Rely on Exams?

- Typical reasons are based on efficiency
 - A reluctance to change: CHANGE IS WORK!
 - Growth of education: How to assess a class of 400??



Exams: What Are They Good For?



Teachers:

Development of thinking skills, understanding, and knowledge



Students:

To “get a job”



Employers:

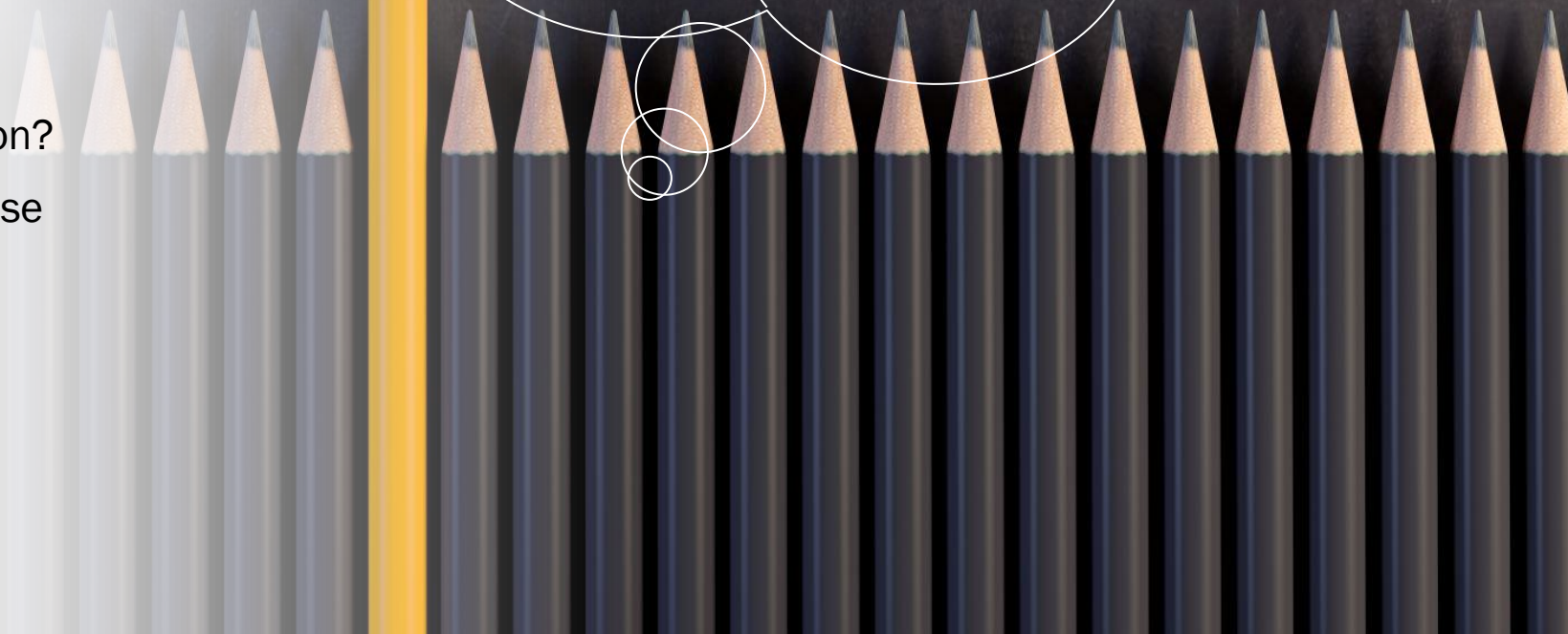
Employees with foundational knowledge and practical skills that make them “job ready”

Reality:

Many assessments concentrate on *knowledge* rather than the student’s *understanding* of that knowledge

Evaluating Their Value

- How many of the average employee takes an exam on a regular basis?
- Exam stress is REAL for some
- Cramming leads to short-term success, long-term forgetfulness
- What about 'soft' skills like critical thinking, teamwork, and negotiation?
- Are we relying on a practice because it's 'always' been done this way?

A row of pencils is shown at the bottom of the slide. Most are dark grey or black, but one pencil in the center is bright yellow. A white thought bubble is drawn around the yellow pencil, containing a quote and attribution.

“Although 99% of professors consider critical thinking an ‘essential’ or ‘very important’ goal of a college education, fewer than 20% of the exam questions actually tested for this skill.”

~Derek Bok²

Former president of Harvard University



What to Do?



Get rid of
exams?




Change the
exams we have?



Somewhere in
the middle?

To Be or Not to Be... Using Exams

There may be some classes
where an exam isn't necessary



What can you do instead?

E-portfolio

Creation of something
(website, song,
research paper)

Collaboration with
others

Somewhere in the Middle

- Implement a large-scale, semester-long project
- Lower point percentage for exams



Five Ways to Improve Your Assessments³

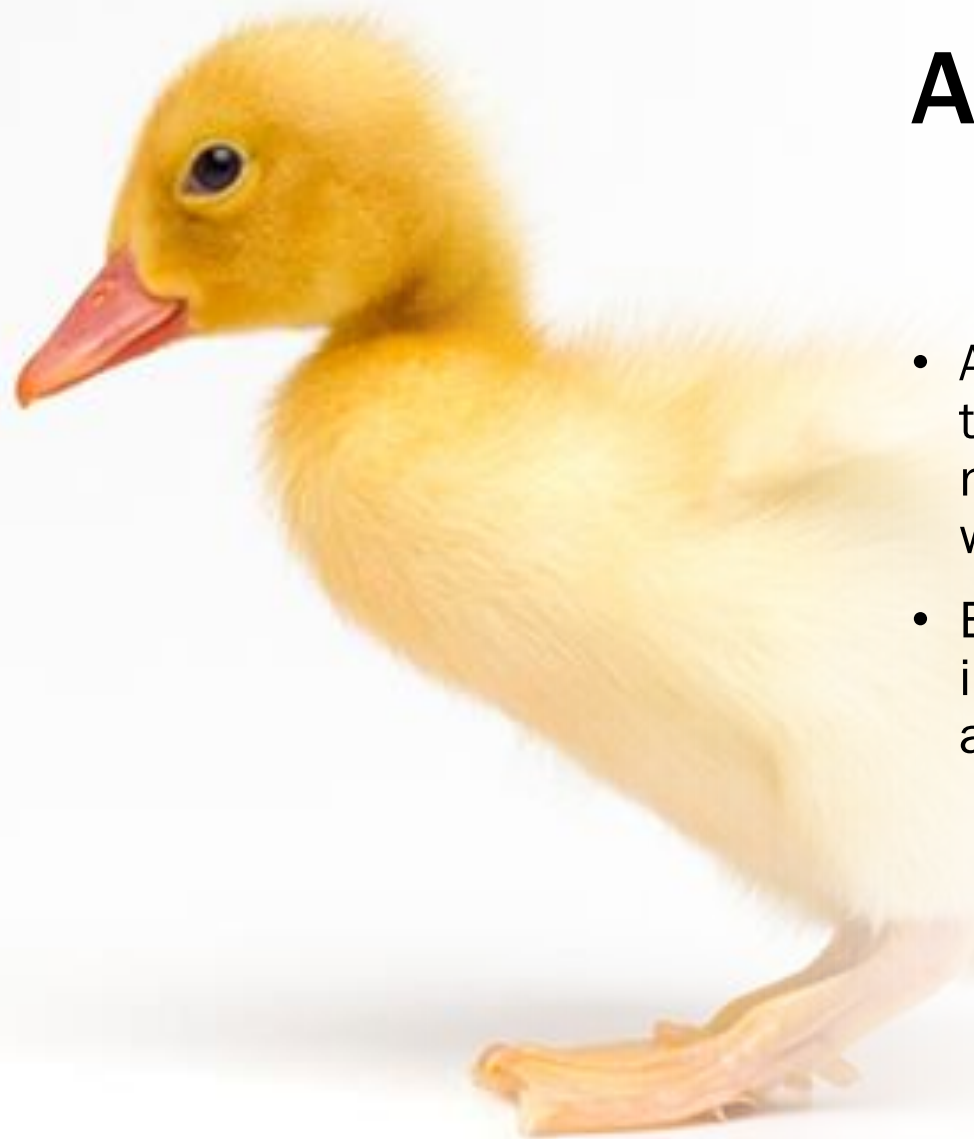
Authentic: Preparing the learner for what they are going to do next

Accessible: Designed throughout to be usable by everyone to the greatest possible extent

Appropriately Automated: Easing teachers' grading and feedback workload

Continuous: Rich in practice opportunities and reflecting the fact that students today need to be capable of lifelong learning

Secure: Ensuring that the right student is taking the right assessment and that the work they are submitting is their own



Authentic

- Allow the learner to express themselves in ways which feel natural and prepares them for what they are going to do next
- Encourages the learner to integrate knowledge and skills and act on knowledge

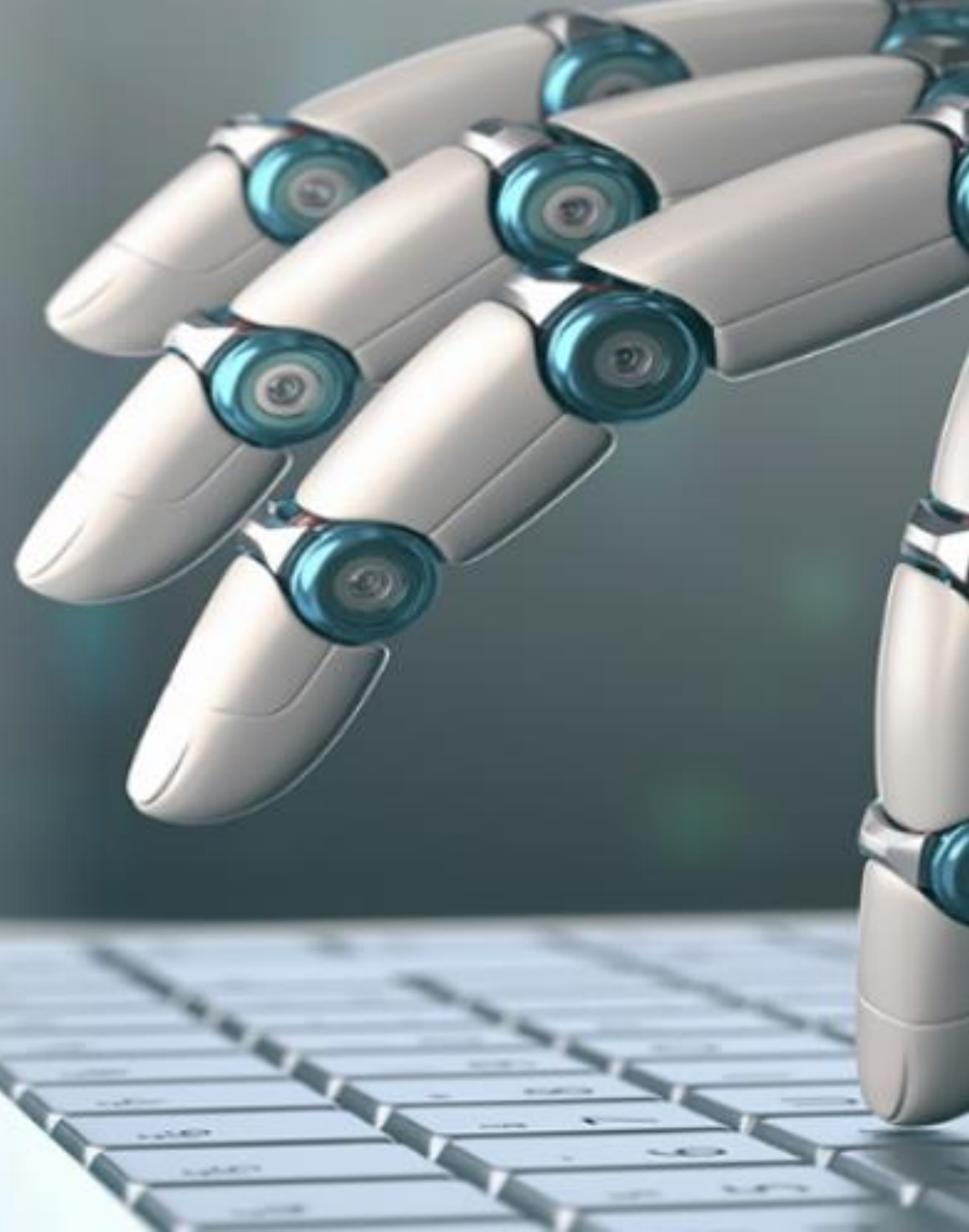


Accessible

- Must be viewed in the very broadest sense and designed into assessment practice from the outset
- Many of us are still taking a non-accessible assessment and providing adaptations to meet the needs of students with specific disabilities
- A well-designed assessment benefits **all** students by allowing them to produce their best work while minimizing workarounds and adaptations

Appropriately Automated

- Designing, grading, and providing feedback all take up a large amount of time for teachers
- Technology can help by automating some aspects of assessment
- Concerns:
 - Extent to which technology might reduce student/instructor interaction
 - What extent human judgement could or should be replaced entirely



Continuous

- Students today do not absorb a body of subject knowledge that serves them for life
- It may be more effective to assess continually throughout the course instead of through a final exam
 - Be prepared to experience a small increase in workload in order to transition to a continual assessment focused approach
 - May be hindered by the procedural systems that institutions are working within





Secure

- Universities need to ensure that:
 - **Right** student is taking the **right** assessment
 - Work they are submitting is their **own**
 - Abides by the rules of the assessment
- Technology can help to ensure exams are secure
 - Also a need to monitor how new technology is being used to break assessment rules
- Academic integrity is at the heart of this issue

The Bottom Line

A 3D rendering of a puzzle with one red piece standing out among many white pieces. The red piece is in the center-right of the frame, and the white pieces are arranged around it, some of which are slightly offset, suggesting a missing or misplaced piece. The lighting is soft, creating subtle shadows and highlights on the pieces.

- Assessment *is* crucial to the educational process, but it must be done properly
- It drives improvement, shapes learner behavior, and provides accountability to employers and others
- We need to look at ways to make assessment smarter, faster, fairer and more effective

Contact and Sources

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Sources

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