

Closing the Assessment Loop in
the Social Sciences and Arts &
Letters:
Design, Implementation, Analysis
& Reporting

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Session Objectives

- Clarifying learning v. program outcomes
- The Assessment Cycle
- How to establish an assessment timeline
- Methods for assessing program completers; Emphasis: Rubrics
- Addressing your questions and needs

Introductions. . .

Distinguishing Types of Outcomes . . .

*Student Learning Outcomes v. Program Outcomes

*Student Learning Outcomes describe what *students* are expected to *demonstrate* in terms of skills, knowledge, and attitudes upon completion of a program (or sequence).

*Program Outcomes describe specific programmatic, operational and administrative objectives that the department intends to accomplish. Programs are assessed on a regular cycle appropriate for operations and implementation of initiatives.

Which ones are Learning Outcomes????

1. The program will offer opportunities for students to master integrated use of information technology.
2. Students who participate in critical writing seminars will write two essays on critical thinking skills.
3. Students can explain exceptionality in learning disabilities including visual and perception disabilities.
4. Students will engage in a formalized language/cultural studies program.

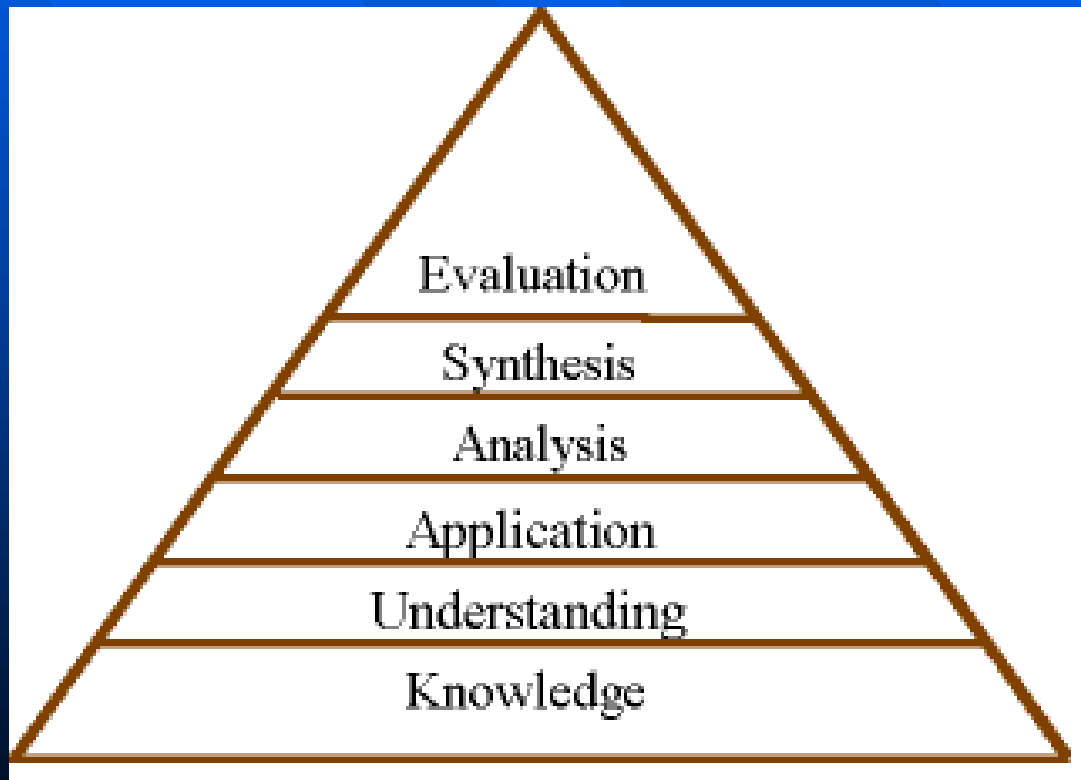
Writing Student Learning Outcomes

*Focus on student behavior, skills developed, and measurable skills (rather than on program intent).

*Use simple, specific action verbs (e.g., list, explain, compare, construct, apply) – Bloom’s Taxonomy. The CCSN Faculty Guide to Program Assessment employs Bloom.

*Have a sense of what success “looks like.”

Bloom's Taxonomy



Examples of Student Learning Outcomes Using Bloom

Students will be able to (a) analyze different international perspectives, (b) evaluate how these perspectives relate, and (c) defend the conclusions they make about international relations.

Students will be able to describe the psychology of aggression and hostility towards out-groups, including ethnic, cultural, and religious groups.

Measuring Completers and Using Data:

The Assessment Cycle

Assessment Cycle

Learning Outcome



Criteria For Success

Use of Results

Assessment Method

Assess Completers/
Review Results



Criteria for Success

*Describe what you will consider “success” when looking at the data you have collected.

*Related to assessment method

Defining Assessment Methods . . .

*Assessment methods refer to the process and tools employed to gather data to determine the extent to which the outcomes are achieved.

*Qualitative, quantitative, direct, and indirect methods

*Triangulate!!--Use a variety of methods to learn more about your population

Assessment Methods – Direct Methods

- *Locally developed tests
- *Course-embedded assessment
- *Comprehensive exams
- *Capstone projects
- *Certification exams, licensure exams
- *Portfolio evaluation
- *Internship evaluation
- *External examiners/peer review
- *Grading with rubrics

Assessment Methods – Indirect Methods

- *Use of services
- *Program participation
- *Satisfaction surveys (e.g., exit surveys, employer survey, alumni survey)
- *Timelines and budgets
- *Certificates of completion
- *Graduation/retention rates
- *Job placement
- *Peer institutions benchmarking
- *Reflective journals
- *National rankings

Criteria for Success--examples

1. Criterion: External reviewers' evaluations indicate that 80 percent of students' capstone design projects achieve "competent" ratings on all eight evaluative criteria. Direct Method: Scoring rubric
2. Criterion: At least 80% of majors surveyed will indicate growth in awareness of diversity and global issues in the department survey. Indirect Method: Department survey

The Assessment Challenge:

Establishing and Adhering to a
Timeline for Assessment

Critical Questions for Closing the Loop:

- When and with what frequency should we assess completers?
- When and how should we review our data?
- How should it be compiled/summarized?
- What about identifying action steps?
- To whom should this be reported?
- When do I follow up on action steps?

Timing is Everything!

- Assess at completion time: for sequence or at appropriate program completion point
- Assess as close to completion as possible
- Consider pre/post evaluation
- Frequency: *at least* with each class of completers, if that's unreasonable, set a reasonable schedule (e.g. every April)

When to Review Data

- Review as soon as possible following evaluation to permit reflection, creation of action steps, implementation of change mechanisms for next term, program, etc.
- Work as a team: in Department, with Dean, with Office of Institutional Research and Planning, with external partners
- Set deadlines for review!

Compiling Results

- Use Assessment Report provided by CCSN's Office of Institutional Research and Planning as guide
- Executive Summaries are helpful and create historic paper trail
- Keep it short, include key data highlights and action steps
- Set deadlines for completion, dissemination!

What about those Action Steps!?

- Results suggest action steps
- Identify 2-3 steps
- Set reasonable, measurable goals (use core performance elements as guide)
- Create a working group to manage
- Set deadlines (short-mid-final & review)

Who Needs to See Results? Or. . . Who are your Stakeholders?

- Your Department (including students!)
- Your Dean
- Office of Institutional Research
- Appropriate Administrators
- External Reporting Bodies
- Everyone? Post it on your website. . .
- Other?

When Do I Review Progress?

- Per your timeline: short-mid-final
- Minimally, annually
 - Identify **SUCCESSSES** and report them
 - Target new goals

Key Steps:

- Establish a timeline that works for you
- File documents/disseminate results regularly
- Seek assistance as needed
- Use assessment as incentive for growth and positive change
- Close the Loop!: Review action steps for implementation, effectiveness, revision.

Are you Ready for Spring Assessment?

- Review your assessment plan
- Identify objectives
- Identify criteria and methods
- Prep instrument(s)/method
- Schedule data collection
- Collect data
- Review data and summarize results/action steps
- Disseminate results, set action steps in motion

Special Emphasis: Rubrics

Design, Implementation, Use

What are Rubrics?

- A rubric is a set of criteria and a scoring scale that is used to assess and evaluate students' work. Often, rubrics identify levels or ranks with criteria indicated for each level. [In Bresciani, et al, *Assessing Student Learning and Development*, 2004]
- Rubrics expand criteria by defining, in detail, levels of achievement and characteristics of that level of achievement (“good”, plus, what good “looks like”)

Why use Rubrics?

- Gauge student progress toward program and institutional learning outcomes
- Gauge student achievement of program and institutional learning outcomes by completion
- Norm faculty and cocurricular specialists' expectations
- Inform students of expectations
- Help students see their own improvement
- Make rankings, ratings and grades more meaningful

Learning Outcomes and Method

- Program completers will distinguish among the fields of psychology, sociology, and anthropology, including theoretical perspectives, methodology, and levels of analysis.
- Essay Questions at Exit

Steps to Building a Rubric

- 1. Preliminary Decisions
- 2. Look for Examples
- 3. Refine and Consolidate
- 4. Define the Dimensions
- 5. Develop a Continuum (Analytic Scale, Holistic Scale)
- 6. Evaluate and Test

Steps 1&2. Preliminary Decisions

Dimensions of Performance

- What will you look for in the “Best” answer?
- What do you look for in grading similar assignments?
- What elements of this performance do you emphasize when you teach?
- These are decisions best made with your colleagues
- Historical Knowledge
- Contemporary Events
- Facts and Concepts
- Relationships within and across disciplines
- Significant Personalities
- Consequences
- Alternative Interpretations
- Critical Thinking

Steps 1&2. Look for Examples

- Look at Student Work to See if you have omitted any important dimensions.
- Ask Yourself:
- What are the Attributes of a Quality Performance?
- By what Qualities will I know whether students have produced an Excellent Response?
- What do I expect if this task is done excellently? Acceptably? Poorly?

Steps 3&4. Consolidate and Define

- Cluster Similarities into a few Categories
 - Alternative Interpretations and Critical Thinking
 - Historical Knowledge and Facts/Concepts
 - Significant Personalities and Contemporary Events
- No Right Number of Dimensions
- Must Relate to Learning Outcomes

Steps 3&4. Define and Describe

- Describe what Each Dimension Encompasses
 - What do I mean by Contemporary Knowledge?
 - What theoretical perspectives? Nominalism? Realism? Logical Positivism? Empiricism? Conflict? Consensus? Neo-Marxian?
 - What issues?
 - Who are significant personalities? Durkheim? Amand de Bazard? Ibn Kaldhn?

Steps 3&4. Define and Describe

- Describe in words a response that is Outstanding
 - For each Dimension, What Characterizes the Best Possible Response?
 - For each Dimension, What Characterizes the Worst Possible response?

These Descriptions serve as the highest and lowest points on your rating scale.

Rubric Components: #1

- Criteria Descriptors identify the traits expected in a project, performance, or text; Identify the ways of thinking, knowing, or behaving represented in that production (e.g. creativity, analysis, synthesis) or textual characteristics (e.g. coherence, clarity, precision)

Rubric Components #2

- Performance Descriptors demonstrate how well students execute each criterion or trait along an achievement continuum. . .a.k.a. score levels. The continuum describes representative ways students perform or execute each criterion reflecting mastery levels, and is expressed numerically (1-5) or verbally (excellent, good, etc.)

Step 5. Scales

- Values on which to rate each item
 - How many points should a rating scale have?
 - Numeric Scales
 - Descriptive Scales
 - Holistic and Annotated Holistic

Scales, continued.. .

■ Numeric

- Quantify Results
- Easy to Interpret
- Anchors the end points
- Longer scales: Harder to get agreement
- Shorter scales: Difficult to identify small differences

■ Descriptive

- Scales with labeled points
Emerging, Developing, Achieving
Novice, apprentice, proficient, distinguished

Scales, continued. . .

■ Analytic

- Rubrics with multiple scales within a dimension

Focus: Very Poor 2,3,4 Very Good

Support: VP.....VG

Organization: VP.....VG

Several Scores

average, weighted average?

Scales, continued. . .

- Holistic/Annotated Holistic
 - Single score
 - Presence or absence Checklist
 - More Efficient
 - Less Useful
 - Holistic with notes and examples supporting raters' decision

A Few Rubric Samples:

*freshman year portfolio review

*interior design studio final project
criteria

Tools to Aid Rubric Design

- *worksheet: determining assessment criteria
- *worksheet: designing a composite rubric

Evaluating Your Rubric

- Does the rubric relate to the outcomes?
- Does the rubric cover important dimensions?
- Are the scales well-defined?
- Can the rubric be applied consistently by different scorers?
- Can the rubric be understood by students and parents?

Ensuring Inter-Rater Reliability

- Norm your rubric, pilot and refine before use
 - Raters score work independently, discuss as collective identifying patterns of consistency and inconsistency
 - Discuss and reconcile inconsistent responses
 - Repeat process until consistency is achieved
 - Norming takes time!
- Continue to refine instrument and norm raters over time and across student populations to ensure consistent application

Questions?