General Education Forum

Thomas Nelson Community College
October 3, 2014
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Association of American Colleges and Universities
What is Happening Nationally?
It Takes More Than A Major:

Employer Priorities for College Learning and Student Success

Key findings from survey among 318 employers
Conducted January 9 – 13, 2013
for

Association of American Colleges and Universities
Key Findings

◆ **Innovation is a priority** for employers, and they report that the challenges their employees face today are more complex and require a broader skill set than in the past.

◆ Employers recognize **capacities that cut across majors** as critical to a candidate’s potential for career success, and they view these skills as **more important than a student’s choice of undergraduate major**.

◆ Employers recognize the **importance of a liberal education** and the liberal arts. The majority agree that having both field-specific knowledge and skills and a broad range of skills and knowledge is most important for long-term career success.

◆ Employers endorse education practices that involve students in active, effortful work and the **application of skills**.

◆ Employers express **interest in e-portfolios** and **partnerships** with colleges to ensure college graduates’ successful transition to the workplace.
Figure 3: Index of Changing Work Tasks in the U.S. Economy 1960-2009

Index Value: 1960 = 50

- Working with New Information
- Solving Unstructured Problems
- Routine Manual Tasks
- Non-Routine Manual Tasks
- Routine Cognitive Tasks

What does a Liberal Education Pay?: Salary by Skill Demand (Quintiles)

Source: Georgetown Center for Education and the Workforce (Anthony Carnavale)
It’s More than the First Job
The **Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index** defines this as people liking what they do each day and being motivated to achieve their goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose Well-Being, by College Major</th>
<th>% Thriving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>All college graduates %</strong></td>
<td>2000-2014 college graduates %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social sciences/Education</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sciences/Engineering</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and humanities</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Feb. 4-March 7, 2014, Gallup-Purdue Index
How do we help students “see” Learning?
High-Impact Practices

★ First-Year Seminars and Experiences
★ Common Intellectual Experiences
★ Learning Communities
★ Writing-Intensive Courses
★ Collaborative Assignments and Projects
★ Undergraduate Research
★ Diversity/Global Learning
★ Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
★ Internships
★ Capstone Courses and Projects
★ ePortfolios
ePortfolios

Catalyst for Learning
LaGuardia College (CUNY)

http://c2l.mcnrc.org/
What is the cumulative impact of participation in HIPs experiences on learning outcomes?

![Bar chart comparing learning outcomes across different HIP participation levels.](chart.png)
Average Difference in Learning Outcomes from Participating in HIPs vs Non-participation

Avg Gain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Avg Gain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Com</td>
<td>+7.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serv Learn.</td>
<td>+8.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Abl</td>
<td>+4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship</td>
<td>+5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St/Fac Res</td>
<td>+8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capstone</td>
<td>+6.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Impact of Educationally Purposeful Practices on the PROBABILITY OF RETURNING for Second Year of College by Race

Impact of Educationally Purposeful Practices on First Academic Year GPA by Race/Ethnicity

TWO ISSUES WITH HIPs: ACCESS AND QUALITY

% of All Students in High Impact Practices

- LCS (FY): 17%
- SL (FY): 36%
- SL (SR): 46%
- St/Fac.Res(SR): 19%
- SR Cap.: 32%
- Intern.(SR): 53%
- StudyAbr(SR): 14%
High Impact Practices & The Quality Control Issue

“...there is growing evidence that – when done well – some programs and activities appear to engage participants at levels that elevate their performance across multiple engagement and desired outcomes measures...” – George Kuh

Significant amount of time on task
Significant engagement with peers, faculty, educational professionals
Frequent feedback
Engagement with difference
Engage higher order thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation, application)

Source: Alex McCormick, NSSE Director, Center for Postsecondary Research, Indiana University
Finding Common Ground with General Education

Pierce College
And
CSU - Northridge
Five General Education PATHs

Aesthetics and Culture
Global Studies
Health and Wellness
Social Justice
Sustainability
Assessing Student Learning: Steps to an Assessment Plan

Step 1. Design measurable statements of Path learning outcomes:
   What should students be able to do?
   What are observable indicators of achievement?
   At what cognitive level?

Step 2. Illuminate alignment between curriculum and each outcome

Step 3. Design or identify meaningful, embedded ways of gathering evidence

Step 4. Design rubric for the outcome within the Path

Step 5. Implement rubric and gather evidence
Pierce’s Approach: Step 1

Rather than create PATHs SLOs, Pierce decided to use existing course SLOs. Courses have been assessed, course-by-course, and from the GE program lens, since 2012.
Pierce’s Approach to Course Mapping

Faculty map one or more course SLO to one or more CSUN PATH SLO:

**GIS/Geog. 31: Introduction to GIS**

Relevant Path SLOs:
Students will demonstrate knowledge of key concepts related to the study of sustainability, including planetary carrying capacity, climate change, and ecological footprint.

Students will be able to explain how sustainability relates to their lives and their values, and how their actions impact issues of sustainability at the individual, and at local, regional, and global levels.

**Course SLOs:**
Describe the fundamentals of cartographic design, including the use of appropriate coordinate systems, projection, scale and geographically referenced data.

Compare/contrast vector and raster data models to determine which is best suited to a particular GIS application.
The VALUE Rubrics
(Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education)

Frequently asked questions about development, interpretation and use of rubrics on campuses
How were the VALUE Rubrics Developed?

- Created with funding from FIPSE & State Farm
- In response to Spellings Commission report on need for greater accountability in higher educ.
- AAC&U guided development of 16 rubric teams
  - Consisting of faculty (primarily), student affairs, institutional researchers, national scholars
  - Inter-disciplinary, inter-institutional
- Each rubric underwent 3 rounds of testing on campuses with samples of student work, feedback went back to teams for revision
- Intended to be modified
How Many People Have Accessed the Rubrics?

Number of Viewers Over Time

- 2819 on 6/1/2010
- 6051 on 12/31/2010
- 9272 on 6/1/2011
- 13440 on 12/31/2011
- 17455 on 6/1/2012
- 22429 on 12/31/2012
- 26274 on 6/1/2013
- 32729 on 1/4/2014
What Types of Institutions are Accessing the Rubrics?

Representation also includes:
- All US states and territories
- Higher education consortia
- International institutions
- K-12 schools and systems

Also: The Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) approved use of rubrics for campus reporting in 2011
Why are Rubrics Increasingly Being Used for Institutional-Level Assessment of Student Learning?

- Assessment of students’ demonstrated performance & capacity for improvement
- Faculty-owned & institutionally shared
- Used for students’ self-assessment of learning
- Increase transparency of what matters to institutions for student learning
What are the Existing VALUE Rubrics? (www.aacu.org/value)

- **Knowledge of Human Cultures & the Physical & Natural Worlds**
  - Content Areas → No Rubrics

- **Intellectual and Practical Skills**
  - Inquiry & Analysis
  - Critical Thinking
  - Creative Thinking
  - Written Communication
  - Oral Communication
  - Reading
  - Quantitative Literacy
  - Information Literacy
  - Teamwork
  - Problem-solving

- **Personal & Social Responsibility**
  - Civic Knowledge & Engagement
  - Intercultural Knowledge & Competence
  - Ethical Reasoning
  - Foundations & Skills for Lifelong Learning
  - Global Learning

- **Integrative & Applied Learning**
  - Integrative & Applied Learning
What are the main components of the rubrics?

**Integrative Learning VALUE Rubric**

The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The core expectations articulated in all 15 of the VALUE rubrics can and should be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can be shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success.

**Definition**

Integrative learning is an understanding and a disposition that a student builds across the curriculum and co-curriculum, from making simple connections among ideas and experiences to synthesizing and transferring learning to new complex situations within and beyond the campus.

**Framing Language**

Fostering students’ abilities to integrate learning—across courses, over time, and between campus and community life—is one of the most important goals and challenges for higher education. Initially, students connect previous learning to new classroom learning. Later, significant knowledge within individual disciplines serves as the foundation, but integrative learning goes beyond academic boundaries. Indeed, integrative experiences often occur as learners address real-world problems, unscripted and sufficiently broad, to require multiple areas of knowledge and multiple modes of inquiry, offering multiple solutions and benefiting from multiple perspectives. Integrative learning also involves internal changes in the learner. These internal changes, which include growth as a confident, lifelong learner, include the ability to adapt one’s intellectual skills, to contribute in a wide variety of situations, and to understand and develop individual purpose, values and ethics. Developing students’ capacities for integrative learning is central to personal success, social responsibility, and civic engagement in today’s global society. Students face a rapidly changing and increasingly connected world where integrative learning becomes not just a benefit...but a necessity.

Because integrative learning is about making connections, this learning may not be as evident in traditional academic artifacts such as research papers and academic projects unless the student, for example, is prompted to draw implications for practice. These connections often surface, however, in reflective work, self-assessment, or creative endeavors of all kinds. Integrative assessments foster learning between courses or by connecting courses to experiential basis work. Work samples or collections of work that include such artifacts give evidence of integrative learning. Faculty are encouraged to look for evidence that the student connects the learning gained in classroom study to learning gained in real life situations that are related to other learning experiences, extra-curricular activities, or work. Through integrative learning, students pull together their entire experience inside and outside of the formal classroom; thus, artificial barriers between formal study and informal or tacit learning become permeable. Integrative learning, whatever the context or source, builds upon connecting both theory and practice toward a deepened understanding.

Assignments to foster such connections and understanding could include, for example, composition papers that focus on topics from biology, economics, or history; mathematics assignments that apply mathematical tools to important issues and require written analysis to explain the implications and limitations of the mathematical treatment; or art history presentations that demonstrate aesthetic connections between selected paintings and novels. In this regard, some majors (e.g., interdisciplinary majors or problem-based field studies) seem to inherently evoke characteristics of integrative learning and result in work samples or collections of work that significantly demonstrate this outcome. However, fields of study that require accumulation of extensive and high consensus content knowledge (such as accounting, engineering, or chemistry) also involve the kinds of complex and integrative constructions (e.g., ethical dilemmas and social consciousness) that seem to be highlighted so extensively in self-reflection in arts and humanities, but they may be embedded in individual performances and less evident. The key in the development of such work samples or collections of work will be in designing structures that include artifacts and reflective writing or feedback that support students’ examination of their learning and give evidence that, as graduates, they will extend their integrative abilities into the challenges of personal, professional, and civic life.

**Glossary**

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

- **Academic knowledge**: Disciplinary learning, learning from academic study texts, etc.
- **Content**: The information conveyed in the work samples or collections of work.
- **Context**: Actual or simulated situations in which a student demonstrates learning outcomes. New and challenging contexts encourage students to stretch beyond their current frames of reference.
- **Co-curriculum**: A parallel component of the academic curriculum that is in addition to formal classroom (student government, community service, residence hall activities, student organizations, etc.).
- **Experience**: Learning that takes place in a setting outside of the formal classroom, such as workplace, service learning site, internship site or another.
- **Form**: The external frameworks in which information and evidence are presented, ranging from choice for particular work sample or collection of works (such as a research paper, PowerPoint, video recording, etc.) to choices in make-up of the portfolio.
- **Performance**: A dynamic and sustained act that brings together knowing and doing (creating a painting, solving an experimental design problem, developing a public relations strategy, etc.); performance makes learning observable.
- **Reflection**: A meta-cognitive act of examining a performance in order to explore its significance and consequences.
- **Self-Assessment**: Describing, interpreting, and judging a performance based on stated or implied expectations followed by planning for further learning.
# The Anatomy of a VALUE Rubric

## Criteria

**Criteria:**
- **Connections to Experience:** Connects relevant experiences and academic knowledge.
- **Connections to Discipline:** Sees (makes) connections across disciplines, perspectives.
- **Transfer:** Adapts and applies skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations.
- **Integrated Communication:** Adapts and applies skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations.
- **Reflection and Self-Assessment:** Demonstrates a developing sense of self as a learner, builds on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.

## Levels

**Levels:**
- **Capstone:** Meaningfully synthesizes connections among experiences outside of the formal classroom (including life experiences and academic experiences such as internships and travel abroad) to deepen understanding of fields of study and to broaden own points of view.
- **Milestones:** Effectively selects and develops examples of life experiences, drawn from a variety of contexts (e.g., family life, artistic participation, civic involvement, work experience), to illuminate concepts, theories, frameworks in fields of study.
- **Benchmark:** Compares life experiences and academic knowledge, identifies connections between life experiences and those academic texts and ideas perceived as similar and related to own interests.

## Performance Descriptors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Capstone</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Connections to Experience</strong></td>
<td>Meaningfully synthesizes connections among experiences outside of the formal classroom (including life experiences and academic experiences such as internships and travel abroad) to deepen understanding of fields of study and to broaden own points of view.</td>
<td>Effectively selects and develops examples of life experiences, drawn from a variety of contexts (e.g., family life, artistic participation, civic involvement, work experience), to illuminate concepts, theories, frameworks in fields of study.</td>
<td>Compares life experiences and academic knowledge, identifies connections between life experiences and those academic texts and ideas perceived as similar and related to own interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Connections to Discipline</strong></td>
<td>Independently creates wholes out of multiple parts (synthesizes) or draws conclusions by combining examples, facts, or theories from more than one field of study or perspective.</td>
<td>Independently connects examples, facts, or theories from more than one field of study or perspective.</td>
<td>When prompted, connects examples, facts, or theories from more than one field of study or perspective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transfer</strong></td>
<td>Adapts and applies, independently, skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations.</td>
<td>Adapts and applies skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to solve difficult problems or explore complex issues in original ways.</td>
<td>Uses skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to contribute to understanding of problems or issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integrated Communication</strong></td>
<td>Completes the assignment(s) by choosing a format, language, or graph (or other visual representation) in ways that enhance meaning, making the audience and audience interdependent, group and meaning, the message expression.</td>
<td>Completes the assignment(s) by choosing a format, language, or graph (or other visual representation) in ways that connect content and form, demonstrating awareness of purpose and audience.</td>
<td>Completes the assignment(s) by choosing a format, language, or graph (or other visual representation) in ways that are consistent with expectations and audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflection and Self-Assessment</strong></td>
<td>Evaluates the self and possibly makes performance on past experiences.</td>
<td>Evaluates changes in own learning over time, recognizing complex contextual factors (e.g., works with ambiguity and makes decisions, considers own biases).</td>
<td>Articulates strengths and challenges (within specific performances or events) to increase effectiveness in different contexts (through increased self-awareness).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benchmark</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Frequently Asked Questions about Interpretation & Application of Rubrics:

Do the performance levels correspond to year in school? **(no)**
What about to letter grades? **(no)**
Can an assignment be scored by someone whose area of expertise is not the same as the content covered in the assignment? **(yes)**
  
  “I’m a philosophy professor so how can I score a paper from a biology class?”
Can the rubrics be used by two year institutions? **(yes)**
Can the rubrics be used for graduate programs? **(yes)**
Can VALUE rubrics be used for course-level assessment? **(yes, with modification or adaptation to include content areas)**
Is giving students a rubric the same as giving them the answer? (No. Here’s why...)

Most people consider baking a skill. If a novice baker is given a recipe and a picture, can he/she recreate the dish?

Chances are what is created will look more like this...but over time will get better with practice.
How can rubrics be used for faculty development?

- Calibration (norming) sessions
- Assignment design workshops
- Rubric modification workshops, specifically for adaptation of rubrics for program-level or course-level assessment
- Data-centered events framed around interpretation of institutional data, celebration of areas of success and opportunity to gather recommendations for improvement
Changing Nature of the Degree

FROM

• Credits tied to seat time
• Major and GE
• Grades
• Knowledge Transmission
• Limited Access to Engaged Learning

TO

• Competency or proficiency
• Entire educational pathway
• Demonstrated through actual work over time
• Meaning-making, sense-making
• High Impact Practices for all, everywhere
Follow-up?

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