

## Using Assessment to Improve General Education - Takeaways

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VALUE initiative – Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education

Launched in 2007, campus-based

Authentic assessment of student work

Privileges role/importance of FACULTY as authors of assignments and arbiters of quality

A philosophy of assessment of curricular and co-curricular experiences, but should be used to look at growth and development of student learning over time.

Multistate collaborative. Both two and four year institutions. Sampling student work across campuses – uploading to system. Then blind calibrated by AACU and evaluated by faculty – not evaluating their own institutions. VALUE page on website has all this information.

Focused on demonstration of what students can do, proficiency levels. Faculty owned, institutionally shared, including with students.

Faculty developed the rubrics. Elements:

- Criteria, core elements.
- Descriptions of levels, milestones (1-4), Benchmark to Capstone. You can score 0 (undemonstrated).
- Performance descriptors – qualitative language, emphasis on what they are doing, not what's missing. Research says focuses on what they are doing so that you can build from it.

Looking at students across time, from beginning levels throughout learning experience.

MSC Pilot data.

Maryland is not currently a participatory state. Now looking at scale, reliability. Give institutions a chance to look at themselves. Not a one-size-fits-all, nor intended to be.

From the floor:

Q: College Park is using VALUE rubrics. They are getting faculty on board. Using rubrics to engage faculty and get courses aligns with expectations. Is anyone using these rubrics to map student growth?

A: Development teams asked to think about rubrics over the arc of the career. Don't think about benchmark as "college ready," but as students new to institution. Capstone for senior-level. Some test institutions used portfolios, so were able to look across the student's career (Spelman, writing). Also looking at all levels of students – but sometimes students level intro courses to the end of their career. If you can look at what seniors do compared to freshman, you would hope that seniors would do more substantive work (4 compared to 2). Some campuses are doing that, asking seniors to demonstrate higher order skills.

Q. CP is linking these more to categories (like oral communication). A rubric aligns with that. Want to push the course to get students to the highest level. Not all students will do that, of course. Pushing curriculum from benchmark to the highest level.

A. That will be a hard lift to expect that from one course. Do you have enough time and room for students to develop from benchmark to the Capstone level? VALUE doesn't expect all students to get to Capstone level. If highest level is what you expect from a graduating senior, you are unlikely to get that in a freshman course. Learning can't just be done in one course, one department.

Q. Can faculty use these rubrics to assess both the students and program?

A. These rubrics can be translated into grading rubrics, taken down to the course level. They're not developed for that, but some institutions do. See examples on website.

Q. UB assessing ethical reasoning as GE learning goal, using VALUE rubric. Nice mix of lower and upper division courses. Results were disappointing in the amount of insight brought. Lower division artifacts got lower scores, and upper divisions got 2s and 3s. No surprise, right? Should we accept that as affirming program? A lot of work for unsurprising results.

A. Yes, assessment is not always about what we're doing wrong! Four is aspirational for many students. Yet you need to assess. Usefulness that some institutions can see where they need to focus attention. Nothing wrong with nice scores that are appropriate to student levels. Confirms that you're doing what's right. External validation, useful for accreditors (which don't want grades).

AACU needs help and feedback to continue improving rubrics. Some have even done cost analyses (it's not more expensive).

Q. Talk about calibrating sessions

A. Set of steps have been developed to walk people through the process of looking at student work. Go over rubric, then add in one piece of student work for discussion on why scores were given. You can change score based on conversation. Several iterations. Improves interrater reliability, 80% agreement or higher. The larger project is to improve that. Testing an online tool this year.

Q. Do you have a sample of student work that has been calibrated already for institutions to use?

A. AACU originally was going to do that, but campuses hadn't gotten student permission to use their work; now working on getting permissions for that. Want to look at reliability and validity before just posting.

Q. How have institutions worked with faculty to get them involved and how has that been used in their professional advancement.

A. Engage faculty in development of rubric. Dynamic Criterion Mapping – what is important to students – see what is important to faculty, and then map those outcomes onto the VALUE rubric. Others use norming and calibration in rubric development.

Takeaways:

The importance of using across programs – evaluating across courses to see where the best learning is taking place – the collaboration piece. Engage all faculty in looking at common elements across programs. FSU talks about looking at CAEP accreditation expectations in College of Ed, but looking outside at other colleges to see how to use best practices within the College.

It's a lot of work!

It's OK to get positive results and celebrate them.

You can adapt the rubrics to course level and then normalize so you're not doing double duty. This is a faculty incentive to make it manageable: Class to department to across Gen Ed.

Appreciation for evidence-informed decision making in the classroom. Getting faculty involved in the process to understand how student learning progresses and how that could change day to day what they do in the classroom.

Rubrics built to be generic and broad, customizable to campuses, even to individual courses.