



# HOLY NAMES UNIVERSITY

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CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE  
IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

## Assessment Handbook

*Assessing Student Learning in Degree Programs*

## WRITING AND ASSESSING

### STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR PROGRAMS/DEPARTMENTS/MAJORS

This handbook is designed to assist faculty with the process of developing and/or revising learning outcomes and methods for assessing those outcomes in their degree programs. This handbook begins by providing basic information related to (1) program/department/major-level student learning outcomes; (2) assessing program/department/major-level student learning outcomes; and (3) ways assessment data can or should be used to make improvements to degree programs.

#### **Expected Learning Outcomes for this handbook:**

*After reading and completing this handbook, degree program faculty should be able to:*

- Develop and/or revise the expected student learning outcomes for a degree program;
- Establish benchmarks or thresholds for student performance in relation to those student learning outcomes;
- Select appropriate assessment methods for each student learning outcome;
- Create and/or update an assessment plan that outlines the specific methods that will be used to assess the expected student learning outcomes for a degree program;
- Identify ways that degree programs will use assessment data to make improvements to student learning in that program/department/major;
- Integrate the three phases of assessment (planning, assessing, and improving) into this program/department/major assessment plan; and
- Develop a degree program assessment plan that outlines who will be responsible for assessment activities and when those activities will occur.

## OVERVIEW OF ASSESSMENT

### **What is assessment?**

Assessment tells us what our students are learning and how well they are learning that material. Assessment is an ongoing process in which faculty determine what knowledge and skills students should be learning. Part of the assessment process is to make deliberate, measurable statements about this student learning. These statements are commonly referred to as student learning outcomes.

The assessment process also involves developing and implementing a deliberate plan to determine how students' learning relates to these learning outcomes. A well-developed assessment plan includes a variety of assessment methods for each student learning outcome, careful collection and interpretation of the assessment data gleaned from these methods, and using this information to improve student learning.

### **Why engage in assessment?**

Assessment is all about improving student learning and creating a better educational environment. Assessment is not just about keeping accreditation bodies happy (i.e., WSCUC). Yes, accreditation agencies require schools to engage in assessment activities. However, these accreditation agencies require schools to engage in assessment for the very reason that the schools themselves should want to be involved in assessment; assessment improves student learning. Indeed, assessment benefits everyone. Assessment is a best practice in higher education AND improves our students' learning. Holy Names University engagement in the assessment of student learning outcomes will make us a stronger and better institution.

### **Who is responsible for assessment?**

Assessment is not the sole responsibility of any one faculty member, administrator, or committee. Assessment is the responsibility of the administration, faculty, and staff at Holy Names University. Program/department/major-level assessment is the responsibility of all of the faculty, administrators, and staff.

### **When do we "do" assessment?**

Assessment is an ongoing process, which means that degree programs should be engaged in assessment throughout the academic year. This doesn't mean that faculty need to meet weekly or crunch assessment data daily. When we say assessment is an ongoing process, we mean that in any given academic year, degree programs should be reviewing/revising student learning outcomes statements as needed, collecting and/or analyzing assessment data to make inferences about student learning in relation to each learning outcome, and using that information to make adjustments to the degree program to increase student learning.

## OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT TERMINOLOGY

*This handbook uses some terminology related to student learning outcomes and assessment. A brief glossary of terms has been provided below for reference purposes.*

**Assessment** – the systematic process investigating student learning through gathering, analyzing and using information about student learning outcomes.

**Assessment Method** – this term refers to any technique or activity that is used to investigate *what* students are learning or *how well* they are learning.

**Assessment Plan** – the proposed methods and timeline for assessment-related activities in a given course (*e.g., when are you going to check what/how well the students are learning and how are you going to do that?*).

**Benchmarking** – comparing performance to that of one’s peers. A benchmark can also be thought of as the minimally acceptable level of performance for an educational outcome.

**Course-Level Assessment** – this type of assessment focuses on what students are learning in a certain course within a degree program. Course-level assessment can focus on either a single section of a course or all sections of the same course. Course-level assessment data can be used as one source of information for degree program-level assessment.

**Curriculum Map** – a matrix representation of learning outcomes that shows where they are taught within the program/department/major.

**Degree Program/Department/Major Student Learning Outcomes** (often abbreviated as SLOs) – what the program/department/major faculty intend students to be able to know, do, or think upon completion of a degree program.

**Degree Program** – any major course of study that results in a degree from a program, department or major.

**Degree Program-Level Assessment** – the evaluation of degree program-level student learning outcomes. The results of this assessment are used to make informed changes to the program/department/major to improve student learning and success.

**Direct Measures** – processes used to directly evaluate student work. They provide tangible, self-explanatory, and compelling evidence of student learning. Examples include: exam questions, portfolios, performances, projects, reflective essays, computer programs, and observations. These are often referred to as Signature Assignments.

**Embedded Assessment** – in this type of assessment, faculty carefully construct an assignment (with a corresponding scoring rubric) that specifically measures a certain learning outcome.

**Formative Assessment** – assessment that occurs during a learning experience. This type of assessment allows faculty to make adjustments to the learning experience to improve student learning. Examples include midterm exams in the middle of a course, focus groups at the midpoint in a degree program, etc.

**Grading** – grading is a process of evaluating student performance. It can be a basis for assessment if it follows a rubric, which defines different levels of student achievement.

**Indirect Measures** – processes that provide evidence that students are probably attaining learning goals. These require inference between the student’s action and the direct evaluation of that action. Examples include: course grades, student ratings, satisfaction surveys, placement rates, retention and graduation rates, and honors and awards earned by students and alumni.

**Rubric** – a scoring and instruction tool used to assess student performance using a task-specific range or set of criteria. To measure student performance against this pre-determined set of criteria, a rubric contains the essential criteria for the task and levels of performance (i.e., from poor to excellent) for each criterion.

**Signature Assignment** – an assignment or exam that best displays the knowledge or skills essential to the objectives of a course. Other coursework should build toward the completion of the course ‘signature’ assignment. Think of a signature assignment as a milestone in the student’s progress toward fulfilling the program/department/major outcomes. Ideally, signature assignments are the types of works that students and faculty would most like to present to others as evidence of accomplishment.

**Summative Assessment** – assessment that occurs at the end of a learning experience (e.g., a comprehensive exam at the end of a degree program, etc.).

**Uses for Improvement** – this is usually seen as the third stage of the assessment cycle. During the “uses for improvement” stage, faculty compare assessment data to student learning outcomes to investigate student learning in the degree program.

## THE ASSESSMENT CYCLE

The assessment cycle is best conceptualized as an ongoing process that investigates student learning in a degree program. Since assessment is part of making continuing improvements to the quality of learning in a degree program, this assessment cycle should be an ongoing part of program/department/major functioning. Here is a brief summary of the different phases of the assessment cycle:

**PLANNING PHASE** – This is often seen as the beginning phase of assessment. During this phase learning outcomes statements are developed or revised. The planning phase also involves making decisions about the specific assessment-related activities that need to be completed. Establishing timelines and assigning specific personnel to these activities are also common aspects of the planning phase.

During the planning phase for degree program-level assessment, it is important to distinguish between course-level assessment activities and the assessment of the degree program as a whole. Course-level assessment is very specifically and narrowly focused on the knowledge and skills within single courses within a degree program. Degree program-level assessment is much broader than this. Degree program assessment should encompass the knowledge and skills learning in the entire program rather than piecing together examples from different courses. Likewise, it is important to develop unique, broad learning outcomes that represent the entire degree program rather than adopting a few learning outcome statements from different courses.

**ASSESSMENT PHASE** – The assessment phase involves selecting the appropriate assessment method(s) for each student learning outcome, implementing those assessments, and analyzing the assessment data to learn more about student performance in relation to the student learning outcomes.

**ACTION PHASE** – This phase is what assessment is all about. During this phase, faculty reflect upon the information gathered during the planning and assessment phases and determine what changes are needed to increase student learning in the degree program. The action phase also involves the implementation of those changes. Finally, during the action phase faculty may also identify problems with the assessment methods. As such, the action phase also involves making adjustments to assessment methodology.

# **PLANNING PHASE**

## **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

### **Student Learning Outcome (definition)**

A student learning outcome is a formal statement of what students are expected to learn in a degree program. Student learning outcomes refer to specific knowledge, practical skills, areas of professional development, attitudes, higher-order thinking skills, etc. that faculty members expect students to develop, learn, or master during a degree program.

*Simply stated, student learning outcome statements describe:*

- What faculty members want students to know at the end of the degree program, AND
- What faculty members want students to be able to do at the end of the degree program.

### **Learning outcomes have three major characteristics:**

1. They specify learning that is ***observable***
2. They specify learning that is ***measurable***
3. They specify learning that is completed by the ***students/learners*** (rather than the faculty members)

Student learning outcome statements should possess all three of these characteristics so that they can be assessed effectively.

## WRITING EFFECTIVE LEARNING OUTCOME STATEMENTS

### Selection of Action Words for Learning Outcome Statements

When stating student learning outcomes, it is important to use verbs that describe exactly what the learner(s) will be able to *know* or *do* upon completion of the degree program.

### **Examples of good action verbs to include in student learning outcome statements:**

*Compile, identify, create, plan, revise, analyze, design, select, utilize, apply, demonstrate, prepare, use, compute, discuss, explain, predict, assess, compare, rate, critique, outline, or evaluate*

There are some verbs that are unclear in the context of a student learning outcome statement (e.g., *know, be aware of, appreciate, learn, understand, comprehend, become familiar with*). These words are often vague, have multiple interpretations, or are simply not measurable. As such, it is best to avoid using these terms when creating student learning outcome statements.

For example, please look at the following learning outcomes statements:

- *Upon completion of the degree students should understand basic human development theory.*
- *Graduates of the degree program should appreciate music from other cultures.*

Both of these learning outcomes are stated in a manner that will make them difficult to assess. Consider the following:

- How do you observe someone “understanding” a theory or “appreciating” other cultures?
- How easy will it be to measure “understanding” or “appreciation”?

### **These student learning outcomes are more effectively stated the following way:**

- *Upon completion of the degree students should be able to summarize the major theories of human development.*
- *Graduates of the degree program should be able to compare and contrast the characteristics of music from other cultures.*



## **INCORPORATING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS INTO STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES STATEMENTS**

Many degree programs want to incorporate words that reflect critical or higher-order thinking into their learning outcomes statements. Bloom (1956) developed a taxonomy outlining the different types of thinking skills people use in the learning process. Bloom argued that people use different levels of thinking skills to process different types of information and situations. Some of these are basic cognitive skills (such as memorization) while others are complex skills (such as creating new ways to apply information). These skills are often referred to as critical thinking skills or higher-order thinking skills.

Bloom proposed the following taxonomy of thinking skills. All levels of Bloom's taxonomy of thinking skills can be incorporated into student learning outcome statements.

### ***Definitions of the different levels of thinking skills in Bloom's taxonomy***

1. **Knowledge** – recalling relevant terminology, specific facts, or different procedures related to information and/or course topics. At this level, a student can remember something, but may not really understand it.
2. **Comprehension** – the ability to grasp the meaning of information (facts, definitions, concepts, etc.) that has been presented.
3. **Application** – being able to use previously learned information in different situations or in problem solving.
4. **Analysis** – the ability to break information down into its component parts. Analysis also refers to the process of examining information in order to make conclusions regarding cause and effect, interpreting motives, making inferences, or finding evidence to support statements/arguments.
5. **Synthesis** – being able to judge the value of information and/or sources of information based on personal values or opinions.
6. **Evaluation** – the ability to make and defend judgments based on internal evidence or external criteria. The ability to uniquely apply prior knowledge and/or skills to produce new and original thoughts, ideas, processes, etc. At this level, students are involved in evaluating/creating their own thoughts and ideas.

(Adapted from information from Ball State University accessed at  
<http://web.bsu.edu/IRAA/AA/WB/chapter2.htm>)

***NOTE: Since degree program-level student learning outcomes represent the knowledge and skills that we hope graduates possess, it is likely that at least some of a degree program's outcomes will reflect what is called "higher-order thinking skills" rather than more basic learning. The Application, Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation levels of Bloom's taxonomy are usually considered to reflect higher-order thinking skills.***

## LIST OF ACTION VERBS RELATED TO CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

Here is a list of action words that can be used when creating the student learning outcomes related to critical thinking skills in the degree program.

KNOWLEDGE	COMPREHENSION	APPLICATION	ANALYSIS	SYNTHESIS	EVALUATION
Count	Associate	Add	Analyze	Categorize	Appraise
Define	Compute	Apply	Arrange	Combine	Assess
Describe	Convert	Calculate	Breakdown	Compile	Compare
Draw	Defend	Change	Combine	Compose	Conclude
Identify	Discuss	Classify	Design	Create	Contrast
Label	Distinguish	Complete	Detect	Drive	Criticize
List	Estimate	Compute	Develop	Design	Critique
Match	Explain	Demonstrate	Diagram	Devise	Determine
Name	Extend	Discover	Differentiate	Explain	Grade
Order	Extrapolate	Divide	Discriminate	Generate	Interpret
Outline	Generalize	Examine	Illustrate	Group	Judge
Point	Give examples	Graph	Infer	Integrate	Justify
Quote	Infer	Interpolate	Outline	Modify	Measure
Read	Paraphrase	Manipulate	Point out	Order	Rank
Recall	Predict	Modify	Relate	Organize	Rate
Recite	Rewrite	Operate	Select	Plan	Support
Recognize	Summarize	Prepare	Separate	Prescribe	Test
Record		Produce	Subdivide	Propose	
Repeat		Show	Utilize	Rearrange	
Reproduce		Solve		Reconstruct	
Select		Subtract		Relate	
State		Translate		Reorganize	
Write		Use		Revise	
				Summarize	
				Transform	
				Specify	

## KEEP IT SIMPLE

It is usually best to keep degree program outcome statements as simple as possible. Overly specific and complex learning outcomes statements can be very difficult to assess because degree programs need to gather assessment data for each type of knowledge or skill that is named in a program/department/major-level student learning outcome.

## SAMPLE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME STATEMENTS

The following is a list of some of the common areas for degree program/department/major-level student learning outcomes. These examples are meant to serve as ideas of what well-stated and measurable student learning outcomes might look like.

**Students completing a (bachelors or masters) degree in \_\_\_\_\_ should be able to:**

- Demonstrate knowledge of the fundamental concepts of the discipline
- Utilize skills related to the discipline
- Communicate effectively in the methods related to the discipline (Oral Communication and Written Communication\*)
- Conduct sound research using discipline-appropriate methodologies (Critical Thinking, Information Literacy, and Quantitative Reasoning\*)
- Generate solutions to problems that may arise in the discipline (Critical Thinking\*)
- Other areas as appropriate

***\*WSCUC Core Competencies – Written Communication, Oral Communication, Critical Thinking, Information Literacy, and Quantitative Reasoning***

## BENCHMARKS

Benchmarks state the level of performance that is expected of students. Each benchmark can be thought of as the minimally acceptable level of performance for an educational outcome. Degree programs should develop a benchmark for each student learning outcome for their program/department/major.

### **There are two general types of benchmarks:**

The first type of benchmark compares students to other groups or populations. This type of benchmark is typically used when there is an established assessment instrument that is used in a field. This assessment instrument is often regionally or nationally developed and used at other institutions or agencies (e.g., the bar exam for attorneys) or when professional licensure is required for the field.

*Graduating seniors from the Nursing program will score at or above the*

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The second type compares student performance on a given student learning outcome to a specific performance level. In this type of benchmark, degree programs typically select a percentage of their students who should exhibit competent performance for student learning outcomes.

*70% of graduating seniors will be able to articulate their personal philosophy of \_\_\_\_\_.*

### **Selecting the numerical “threshold” of acceptable performance:**

When determining the “threshold” for each degree program/department/major-level student learning outcome, faculty should discuss what number reflects the best threshold of performance for that learning outcome. Although this is not an absolute rule, benchmarks are frequently set at a level that correlates to average performance, which is acceptable performance to graduate for most degree programs. Of course, this number may be different based on the type of degree program (e.g., highly specialized or graduate programs).

Faculty do not always need to select a number reflective of average performance for their benchmarks. Sometimes, faculty choose to use existing data as a baseline benchmark against which to compare future performance. They might also use data from a similar degree program as a benchmark threshold. In this case, this similar degree program is often chosen because it is exemplary and its data are used as a target to strive for, rather than as a baseline. These options are also viable options for establishing benchmark thresholds.

Whichever process degree program faculty use to set benchmark thresholds, it is important to choose a number that is meaningful in the context of the degree program and its learning outcomes.

## **TIPS FOR DEVELOPING DEGREE-LEVEL STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES STATEMENTS**

- Limit the total number of student learning outcomes to 5 – 8 statements for the entire degree program
- Make sure that each learning outcome statement is measurable
- Focus on overarching or general knowledge and/or skills gained from the entire degree program rather than focusing on what happens in any one individual course
- Create statements that are student-centered rather than faculty-centered (e.g., “upon completion of this program students should be able to list the names of the 50 states” versus “one objective of this program is to teach the names of the 50 states”)
- Incorporate or reflect the institutional and program/department/major missions and purposes as appropriate
- Incorporate various ways for students to show success (outlining, describing, modeling, depicting, etc.) rather than using a single statement such as “at the end of the degree program, students will know \_\_\_\_\_” as the stem for each expected outcome statement
- Incorporate WSCUC Core Competencies (Written and Oral Communication, Critical Thinking, Information Literacy, and Quantitative Reasoning) into the student learning outcomes
- Make certain the student learning outcomes are in alignment with the HNU Institutional Learning Outcomes (Learn, Apply, Lead, Grow)

# **ASSESSMENT PHASE**

## **BRIEF OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM/DEPARTMENT/MAJOR-LEVEL ASSESSMENT**

Assessment involves the systematic collection, review, and use of evidence or information related to student learning. Assessment helps faculty and academic chairs understand how well students are mastering the most important knowledge and skills in the degree program.

In other words, assessment is the process of investigating:

- 1) *what* students are learning, and
- 2) *how well* they are learning it in relation to the stated *student learning outcomes* for the degree program.

## **TIPS FOR DEVELOPING ASSESSMENT PLANS**

- Each student learning outcome should have at least one assessment strategy (although more than one is often preferable since more instruments increase the reliability of your findings)
- Incorporate a variety of assessment methods into your assessment plan
- Identify the target population (e.g., all seniors, graduating seniors, alumni, faculty, etc.) for each assessment activity
- Be sure to establish timelines for gathering and analyzing program assessment data on a regular basis (at least once per academic year)
- Remember that if you decide to collect data from graduating seniors, it is best to collect data as close to graduation as possible (fall and spring)
- It is also helpful to assign specific personnel for these tasks

## SELECTION OF ASSESSMENT METHODS

It is important that *at least* one appropriate assessment method is selected for each student learning outcome. Generally speaking, there are two types of assessment methods. **Direct assessment methods** are measures of student learning that require students to display their actual knowledge and skills (rather than report what they *think* their knowledge and skills are). Because direct assessment taps into students' actual learning (rather than perceptions of learning) it is often seen as the preferred type of assessment. As such, faculty should look at incorporating some direct assessment methods into their assessment plans. In contrast, **indirect assessment methods** ask students to reflect on their learning rather than to actually demonstrate it. Indirect assessment methods can often provide very useful information regarding student learning.

Both direct and indirect assessment methods can provide useful insight into students' experiences and learning. Direct and indirect assessments each have unique advantages and disadvantages in terms of the type of data and information they can provide. As such, many faculty choose to incorporate both types of assessment into an assessment plan.

### Examples of Direct Assessment Methods:

- Comprehensive exams
- Embedded assignments (projects, papers, presentations, performances, etc.)
- Signature assignments
- Internal/external juried review of performances and exhibitions
- Internship and/or clinical evaluations
- Locally developed exams
- Portfolio evaluation
- Pre and posttests
- Regionally or nationally developed tests/exams (for example, certification exams, licensure exams, etc.)
- Senior thesis, capstone, or major project

### Examples of Indirect Assessment Methods:

- Exit interviews
- Focus groups
- Job/graduate school placement statistics
- Graduation and retention rates
- Surveys sent to students, faculty, alumni, employers, etc. that assess perceptions of the program/ department/major.

## **ANALYZING ASSESSMENT DATA**

It is recommended that degree programs incorporate the analysis of all assessment data as a regular part of program/department/major functioning. The data gathered for each student learning outcome should be analyzed and evaluated either on a semester or annual basis.

**Analysis of assessment data should help programs/departments/majors identify the following:**

- What students are learning in relation to each student learning outcome
- How well students are learning the material that relates to those outcomes
- How well the selected assessment method(s) measure each student learning outcome
- Areas for more focused assessment
- Ways that learning outcomes may need to be revised
- Areas that may need to be investigated in the next phase of assessment – the Improving Phase



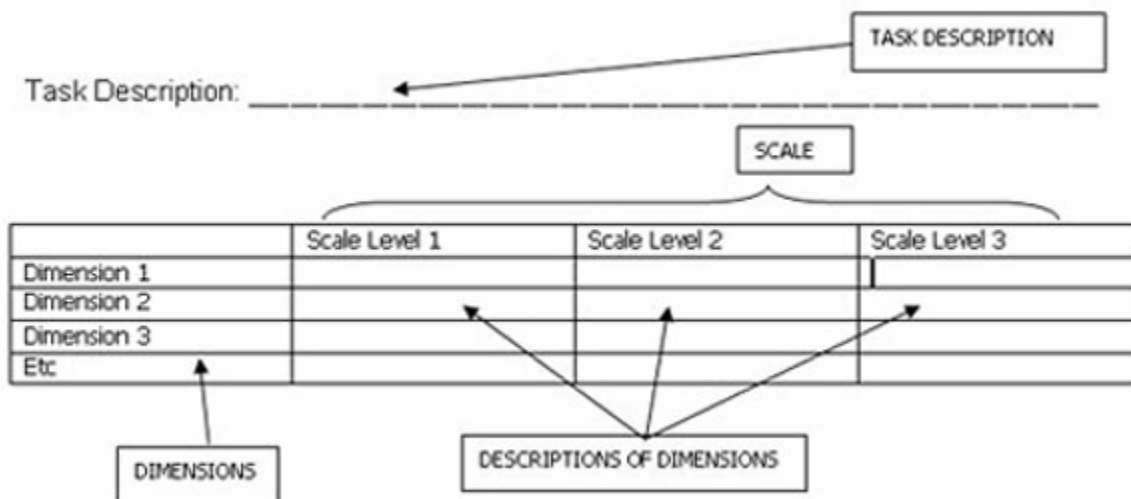
## USING RUBRICS FOR DIRECT ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT WORK

### What is a rubric?

A *rubric* is a scoring tool that lays out the specific expectations for an assignment. Rubrics divide an assignment into its component parts and provide a detailed description of what constitutes acceptable or unacceptable levels of performance for each of those parts.

### What are the parts of a rubric? Rubrics are composed of four basic parts:

- A task description (the assignment)
- A scale of some sort (levels of achievement, possibly in the form of grades). Scales typically range from 3 to 5 levels.
- The dimensions of the assignment (a breakdown of the skills/knowledge involved in the assignment)
- Descriptions of what constitutes each level of performance (specific feedback)



### Rubrics:

- Can be used to classify virtually any product or behavior, such as essays, research reports, portfolios, works of art, recitals, oral presentations, performances, and group activities
- Can be used to provide formative feedback to students, to grade students, and to assess programs
- Can be used for program assessment in a number of ways:
  - Faculty can use rubrics in classes and aggregate the data across sections
  - Faculty can independently assess student products and then aggregate results
  - Faculty can participate in group readings in which they review student products together and discuss what they have found

## **Why use Rubrics?**

- Rubrics provide timely feedback – grading can be done more quickly  
Since students often make similar mistakes on assignments, incorporating predictable notes into the “descriptions of dimensions” portion of a rubric can simplify grading into circling or checking off all comments that apply to each specific student.
- Rubrics prepare students to use detailed feedback  
In the rubric, the highest level descriptions of the dimensions are the highest level of achievement possible, whereas the remaining levels, circled or checked off, are typed versions of the notes/comments an instructor regularly writes on student work explaining how and where the student failed to meet that highest level. Thus, in using a rubric the student obtains details on how and where the assignment did or did not achieve its goal, and even suggestions (in the form of the higher level descriptions) as to how the student might have been done better.
- Rubrics encourage critical thinking  
Because of the rubric format, students may notice for themselves the patterns of recurring problems or ongoing improvement in their work.
- Rubrics facilitate communication with others  
Faculty, counselors/tutors, colleagues, etc. can benefit from the information contained in a rubric; i.e., it provides information to help all involved in a student’s learning process.
- Rubrics help faculty refine their teaching skills  
Rubrics showing a student’s continuing improvement or weaknesses over time, or rubrics showing student development over time, can provide a clearer view of teaching blind spots, omissions, and strengths.
- Rubrics help level the playing field  
To aid first-generation or non-native speakers of English, rubrics can act as a translation device to help students understand what teachers are talking about.

## **How can Rubrics be used to assess program/department/major learning goals?**

- Embedded course assignments – program/department/major assessment which are embedded into course assignments can be scored using a rubric
- Capstone experiences – theses, oral defenses, exhibitions, presentations, etc. – can be scored using a rubric to provide evidence of the overall effectiveness of a program/department/major
- Field experiences – internships, practicum, etc. – supervisor’s ratings of the student’s performance can be evidence of the overall success of a program
- Employer feedback – feedback from the employers of alumni can provide information on how well a program/department/major is achieving its learning goals
- Student self-assessments – indirect measures of student learning
- Portfolios – rubrics can be a useful way to evaluate portfolios

# **ACTION PHASE**

## **IMPROVING PHASE**

A significant amount of time can be spent in developing student learning outcomes and gathering data, and occasionally people stop there. It is important to “close the loop” and make sure that assessment data for each student learning outcome is reviewed and used to make improvements to degree programs that will increase the quality of students experiences and learning. In fact, many assessment experts consider this phase to be the most important part of assessment.

Two days are built into the schedule at HNU the week after Commencement for programs/ departments/majors to work on their program review documents. This is a time for faculty to discuss the student learning outcomes and assessment plan. Faculty are to focus on the student learning outcomes, assessment data, and improvements that can be made. It is not necessary to postpone these work days until the assessment plan and data are “perfect”. Assessment is a work in progress, and any meeting held should be beneficial.

### **Some possible topics for the program review days include:**

- Share assessment data analysis results with program/department/major faculty and staff
- Discuss these assessment results as they relate to each student learning outcome
- Review assessment results to determine programmatic strengths and areas for improvement
- Decide if different assessment methods are needed in order to obtain more targeted information
- Determine how assessment results can be used to make improvements to the program/ department /major (e.g., changes to the curriculum, provide professional development for teaching personnel in certain areas, etc.)
- Develop an action plan to implement these improvements
- Specific strategies regarding the implementation of the action plan
- Review what needs to be done as the assessment cycle heads back to the Planning Phase (e.g., do student learning outcomes need to be revised?, are different assessment methods necessary?, etc.)