



Toolkit

The Nuts and Bolts Newsletter from

ASSESSMENT

SERVICES

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What's a Rubric?

Ok, so we hear the word "rubric" every time we talk about assessment - and every time we read something about assessment. So what is it, and what does it do?

A rubric is an articulated plan for the evaluation of a specific learning objectives - put more simply, a rubric provides a set of performance levels by which we can evaluate achievement of any given topic.

Why use a rubric? It's a win-win situation. A well

designed rubric can make your life easier - as well as clarifying your expectations in regard to student performance on



"..A rubric, by any other name, still smells as sweet..."

any given student learning objective.

How about an example? Stated learning objective: "The student will produce a portfolio containing work (authentic artifacts) that demonstrates overall mastery of the use of widgets (the subject area)." To measure the students' ability to meet this learning objective, clear expectations of "mastery" must be articulated. Here is a possible way to design a rubric for this learning objective:

	Exceptional	Adequate	Inadequate
Widgits	Clear command of the use of widgits as a key element in all artifacts included in the portfolio. Multiple uses of widgits as an integral feature of work. Demonstrated application of excellent technique.	Acceptable utilization of widgits predominates the artifacts included in the portfolio. Use of widgits to create overall design is present. Technique is appropriate for level of included work.	Widgits are not a key feature of the portfolio. Simplistic, one-dimensional work is primary method of expression. Lack of technique exhibited in selected artifacts.

The idea then, is to articulate clearly expectations - this is how you *and your students* will know when they can do

what they have been taught to do.

Curious? Intrigued?
Ready to try your hand?
Check out this site for

those who have already designed some workable rubrics in many subject areas....

["The Rubric Builder"](#)

We'd like to hear from you!

What features of *Toolkit* do you find most helpful? What would you like to see?

Submit your [feedback](#) or [assessment story](#) to Craig Barnard, Assessment Coordinator

Beyond Confusion: An Assessment Glossary

This feature is the fourth in a series designed to clarify common assessment terminology.

Qualitative Assessment —

Collects data that does not lend itself to quantitative methods but rather to interpretive criteria.

Quantitative Assessment —

Collects data that can be analyzed using quantitative methods.

Direct Assessment —

Gathers evidence, based on student performance, which demonstrates the learning itself. Can be value added,

related to standards, qualitative or quantitative, embedded or not, using local or external criteria.

Examples: most classroom testing for grades is direct assessment (in this instance within the confines of a course), as is the evaluation of a research paper in terms of the discriminating use of sources. The latter example could assess learning accomplished within a single course or, if part of a senior requirement, could also assess cumulative learning.

Indirect Assessment —

Gathers reflection about the

learning or secondary evidence of its existence. Example: a student survey about whether a course or program helped develop a greater sensitivity to issues of diversity.

— Dr. Andrea Leskes,
Vice President for
Education and Quality
Initiatives of the
Association of American
Colleges and Universities.

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Did you know...

News from the 2001 Alumni Survey of Baccalaureate Graduates

*Ninety-five percent of
NIU graduates believe
they received their
baccalaureate degree
in a timely manner.*

- ◆ 91% of our baccalaureate graduates **would recommend NIU** to their friends and family
- ◆ the *average* baccalaureate graduate reported salary (one year after graduation) was **\$33,207**
- ◆ graduates overwhelmingly (92%!) have a high opinion of their bachelor's degree major
- ◆ in regard to the general education skills they learned at NIU, our graduates indicated that they were **pleased with their skill levels** in the areas of:
 - Critical thinking (81%)
 - Defining and solving problems (86%)
 - Thinking analytically – making logical inferences, and reaching correct conclusions (80%)
 - Speaking effectively (77%)
 - Writing effectively (78%)
- Using computers (79%)
- Getting along with people of **diverse backgrounds** and cultures (75%)
- ◆ according to 95% of NIU baccalaureate graduates, they received their degree in a reasonable amount of time
- ◆ most (78%) of NIU graduates report that their current job is **directly related** to their bachelor's degree major
- ◆ 88% of baccalaureate graduates feel that their NIU degrees prepared them well for their job
- ◆ when asked about their plans regarding continuing their education, 80% of baccalaureate graduates are pursuing a master's degree
- ◆ 92% consider their college years as **time well spent**

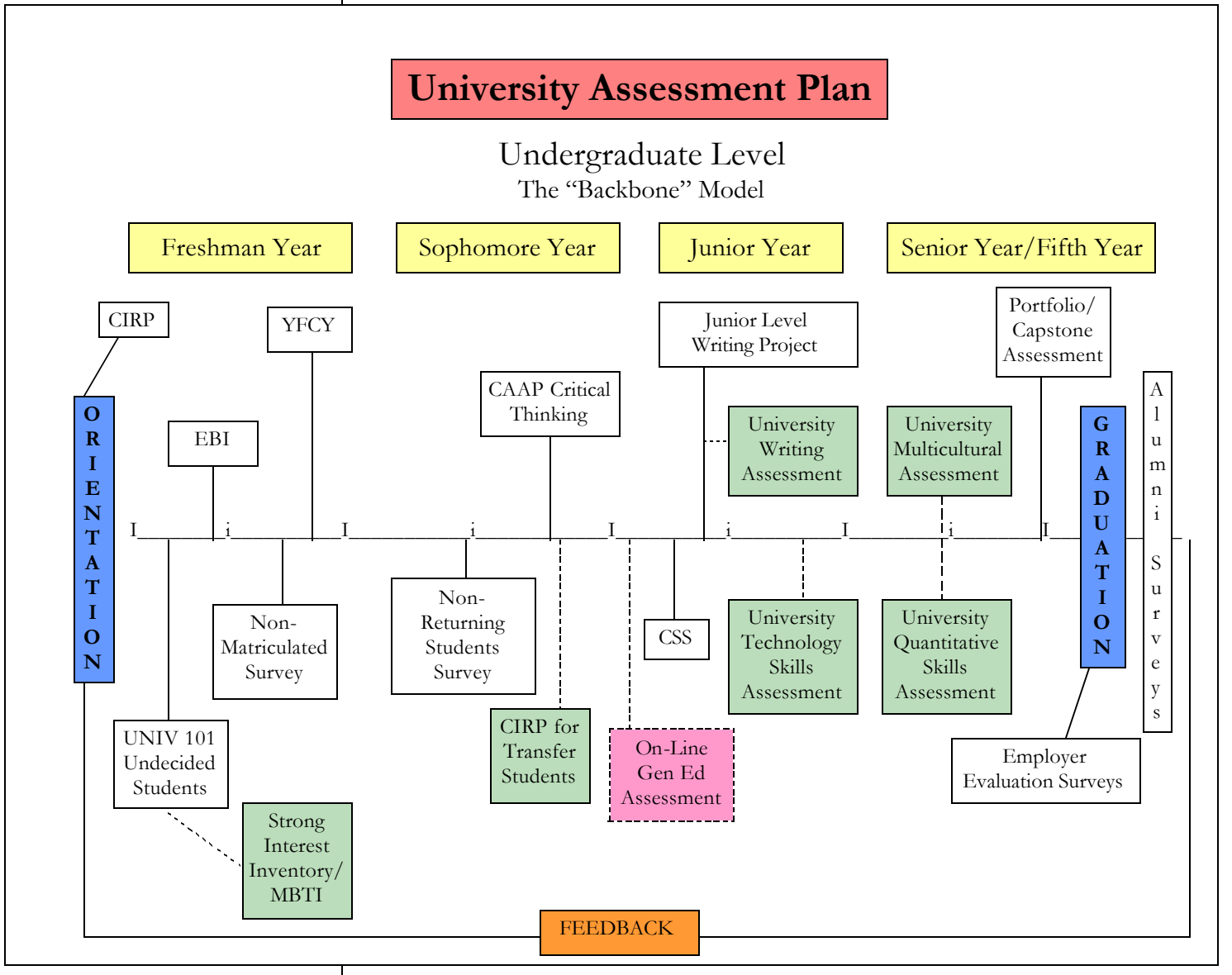
Learn more by contacting [Assessment Services!](#)

University Assessment Plan Graphic Up for Discussion

At the first University Assessment Panel meeting of the year (scheduled for October 3), the University Assessment Plan – Undergraduate Level “Backbone Model” will be presented for discussion. The plan, developed over a number of years by members of the UAP, Assessment Services, and the Provost’s

Office, reached its current iteration through much discussion and the perceived need for a cohesive assessment plan that includes the central, university-wide assessment initiatives currently in operation, as well as proposed initiatives in the areas of general education, technology skills assessment, multicultural assessment, and

quantitative skills assessment. The end goal of this kind of plan is to present a “snapshot” of the NIU student body, incorporating available information and proposed information (as available) into a format that can be reviewed and assessed, and *acted upon*. The graphic below depicts the proposed plan:



Assessment Presentations Accepted for Conferences

NIU is proud that a number of presentations have been accepted for inclusion in the Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis (IUPUI) 2003

Assessment Institute.

Scheduled for

November 2-4, the

conference is

designed to aid

practitioners and

scholars in the

pursuit of

excellence in the

assessment

process.

Originally

started in 1992,

the Midwest

conference has

grown to pull attendees

from all over the

Midwest to participate

in a straight-forward,

no-nonsense, practical

format that encourages

interaction and the

trading of “workable”

assessment plans and

associated research.

Presenters and topics

include:

J. Daniel House and

Craig A. Barnard; *An*

Assessment of Factors

Associated with Student

Matriculation and College

Choice

Ken Elliott; *Preparing*

Assessors of Multi-Section

Courses to Consistently

Apply Learning Outcomes

Assessment Rubrics to

Student Work

J. Daniel House and

Shevawn Eaton; *A*

CHANCE to Succeed: A

Comprehensive

Assessment of Special

Admission and

Developmental Education

In the spring of 2004, a

number of Northern

presenters have been

honored with

presentation

acceptances at the 6th

annual Pacific

AssessNet International

Conference. Participants

in this conference come

from across the world

to learn practical

assessment practices.

Those presenting

include:

Sally Wakefield and

Craig A. Barnard; *Serving*

Two Masters: External

(AACSB-International)

and Internal (The

University) Agents for

Assurance of Learning

J. Daniel House, Beiling

Xiao, and Craig A.

Barnard; *Longitudinal*

Assessment of Factors

Influencing Student

Matriculation

Congratulations to all!



Dan House and Shevawn Eaton are pleased that their presentation was accepted.



The [Office of Assessment Services](#) assists NIU academic

programs, learning centers and student services units in

developing their assessment plans. Its mission statement focuses on

excellence and continuous quality improvement.

Toolkit is brought to you by the Office of Assessment Services:

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