

# National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment

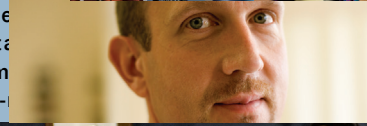
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## All-in-One: Combining Grading, Course, Program, and General Education Outcomes Assessment

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## Executive Summary

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Pressed by the ongoing drive for accountability, most U.S. colleges and universities are conducting some form of student learning outcomes assessment. Yet because their efforts are fragmented, many institutions are stymied in their attempts to fully engage with assessment findings to improve student learning. Facing multiple and competing demands for evidence of student learning, institutions typically have created separate, coexisting assessment practices, handling the assessment of courses, programs, and general education as isolated pieces rather than as interconnected components of the evaluation of students' knowledge and skills. This fragmentation has made it hard to translate assessment findings into meaningful recommendations for faculty and students.

New software solutions, however, have opened up opportunities for comprehensive assessment that covers multiple levels and serves multiple purposes without disconnected processes or duplicated efforts. More centralized and technologically advanced assessment systems can now help institutions with the storage, management, and dissemination of data, while still leaving room for valid assessment rooted in “authentic measures” of student work (Banta, Griffin, Flateby, & Kahn, 2009; Ewell, 2009). Several institutions have begun to incorporate new technology and to create more centralized and interconnected assessment systems. Yet combining the assessment of course, program, and general education into a coordinated, coherent, single process has not been a common approach.

Traditionally, assessment scholars have seen the separation between assessment and grading as a safeguard to ensure objective measurement of student learning. More recently, however, the “firewall” between assessment and grading has been challenged for reasons of efficiency as well as on pedagogical grounds. Connecting assessment and grading can save time and resources by avoiding duplicated efforts (Salisbury, 2012). Moreover, if grades are based on the achievement of learning outcomes, students will be more likely to work on mastering those outcomes (McClendon & Eckert, 2007). While a few institutions have started to experiment with systems that combine outcomes assessment and grading, these initiatives are still in a pilot or early implementation stage.

This paper describes the system developed and implemented by one institution, Prince George's Community College (PGCC), in Largo, Maryland, to integrate assessment of course, program, and general education and to connect outcomes assessment with grading. PGCC's assessment system—called “All-in-One”—allows faculty to capture students' discrete skills by using rubrics to assess and grade key projects across program curricula and then entering the data into a centralized database. All-in-One requires a technology platform that incorporates rubrics for grading student work. It also needs careful, ongoing review of curricula to maintain connections among course, program, and general education learning outcomes. Crucially, faculty collaborate in All-in-One in developing and using common embedded assessments to ensure that all sections of a course are evaluated with a common rubric.

All-in-One returns assessment to its primary goal, namely, improving student learning and faculty teaching. It measures performance at the level of the individual student and, thus, students' skills can be tracked over time and compared simultaneously across courses. Since spring 2012, when it was first fully implemented, All-in-One has collected between 2,500 and 4,000 scored rubrics each semester. All components of the assessment process, including grading and the evaluation of course, program, and general education learning outcomes, are captured in a single assessment system—All-in-One.

# All-in-One: Combining Grading, Course, Program, and General Education Outcomes Assessment

W. Allen Richman & Laura Ariovich

Pressed by the ongoing drive for greater accountability, most U.S. colleges and universities are conducting some form of student learning outcomes assessment. Yet when considering the returns of such widespread efforts in improving student learning, the impact is difficult to gauge (Angelo, 1999, 2002). Many institutions find themselves caught in a reactive mode, merely assessing courses, programs, and general education to report the results to accreditors, without fully engaging with those results in a way that would actually benefit students. Summarizing the findings of NILOA's survey of Chief Academic Officers at regionally accredited undergraduate institutions, Kuh and Ikenberry (2009) confirm that most institutions have gone through the process of defining common learning outcomes for all students, and most have taken steps to assess those outcomes. The institutions' primary purpose for doing so, however, has been to meet accreditation requirements. As the authors point out, "assessing student learning outcomes just to post a score on the institution's website is of little value to campuses, students, parents, or policy makers" (Kuh & Ikenberry 2009, p. 4).

Administrators and faculty do aspire to use assessment results to improve learning, but their best intentions often get thwarted by the fragmentation of assessment efforts. Facing multiple and competing demands for evidence of student learning, institutions typically have created separate, coexisting assessment practices, handling the assessment of courses, programs, and general education as isolated pieces rather than as interconnected components of the evaluation of students' knowledge and skills. This fragmentation has made it hard to translate assessment findings into meaningful recommendations for faculty and students.

New software solutions, however, have opened up opportunities for comprehensive assessment that covers multiple levels and serves multiple purposes without disconnected processes or duplicated efforts. More centralized and technologically advanced assessment systems can now help institutions with the storage, management, and dissemination of data, while still leaving room for valid assessment rooted in "authentic measures" of student work (Banta, Griffin, Flateby, & Kahn, 2009; Ewell, 2009; see also Provezis, 2012). Several institutions have begun to incorporate new technology and to create more centralized, interconnected assessment systems (Hutchings, 2009). Daytona State College, for example, has adopted a learning and assessment management system for tracking course, program, and institutional learning outcomes college wide (Hamby & Saum, 2013). Nevertheless, a systematic approach for combining the assessment of course, program, and general education into a single process is still the exception rather than the rule.

Traditionally, assessment scholars have seen the separation between assessment and grading as a safeguard to ensure objective measurement of student learning. More recently, however, the "firewall" between assessment and grading has been challenged for reasons of efficiency as well as on pedagogical grounds. Connecting assessment and grading can save time and resources by avoiding duplicated efforts (Salisbury, 2012). Moreover, if grades are based on the achievement of learning outcomes, students will be more likely to work on mastering those outcomes

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(McClendon & Eckert, 2007). While a few institutions, such as the California State University, Fresno, have started to experiment with systems that combine outcomes assessment and grading (Bengiamin & Leimer, 2012), these initiatives are still in a pilot or early implementation stage.

This paper describes the system developed and implemented by one institution, Prince George's Community College (PGCC), in Largo, Maryland, to integrate assessment of course, program, and general education and to connect outcomes assessment with grading. PGCC's assessment system—called “All-in-One”—allows faculty to capture students' discrete skills by using rubrics to assess and grade key projects across program curricula and then entering the data into a centralized database.<sup>1</sup> All-in-One requires a technology platform that incorporates rubrics for grading student work. It also needs careful, ongoing review of curricula to maintain connections among course, program, and general education learning outcomes. Crucially, faculty collaborate in All-in-One in developing embedded assessments to ensure that all sections of a course are evaluated with a common rubric.

All-in-One capitalizes on new technology to achieve the large-scale adoption of best assessment practice. Following the principles of best practice, an effective assessment system, first, should demonstrate student achievement of learning outcomes at the course, program, and general education level in a coherent, integrated, and cost-effective structure (Huba & Freed, 2000, p. 82; Walvoord, 2010, p. 26). Second, an effective assessment system should ensure that feedback for faculty and students remains within the teaching context (Banta et al. 2009, p. 17). Third, an effective assessment system should include different ways of measuring the same skill, it should measure the same student on different skills, and it should track the same student on the same skill over time (American Association for Higher Education [1992], second principle). In what follows, we discuss how All-in-One meets these three requirements at PGCC.

### **The All-in-One Process**

Every piece of work a student completes requires the amalgamation of a broad set of knowledge, skills, and values that the student has built over time. Every research paper, for example, requires the student to demonstrate skills in writing, formatting, technology, information literacy, critical thinking, and knowledge of the content. The mastery of a specific skill, furthermore, may be “conditioned” by the acquisition of another skill (Ewell, 2013, p.7). Thus, when faculty assign a grade to a project, they necessarily take into consideration a broad set of student capabilities. However, many faculty neither measure these skills nor provide feedback in a discrete manner. Since grading is generally dissociated from the assessment of learning outcomes, faculty tend to approach grading as an overall evaluation of student work, while providing students with a multitude of comments and feedback in writing. Even faculty using rubrics in their classroom usually do not share the data with students. Thus, faculty are spending a significant amount of time and energy grading student work without reaping all of the potential benefits.

With All-in-One at PGCC, rubrics developed by faculty are used to evaluate students' performance on different skills and to provide the faculty member and the student with clear feedback on individual strengths and weaknesses.

*All-in-One capitalizes on new technology to achieve the large-scale adoption of best assessment practice.*

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.pgcc.edu/About\\_PGCC/opair/Assessment\\_Data.aspx](http://www.pgcc.edu/About_PGCC/opair/Assessment_Data.aspx)



By putting the rubric data into an electronic storage system, the faculty member can quickly obtain aggregate performance results on the rubric for his or her course and, thus, easily observe strengths and weaknesses on discrete knowledge, skills, and values for all students in the class. From there, the aggregation possibilities expand, with deans and chairs being able to track the performance of all students within a course, program, or department.

All-in-One allows faculty to measure students' discrete skills by creating and using rubrics to grade key projects across program curricula and then entering the data into a centralized database. Measuring students' discrete skills at PGCC began by identifying high-enrollment courses and general education courses as well as by working with departments to identify additional courses in which students can best demonstrate achievement of the program's specific outcomes (e.g., capstones and other courses in the major).

### **Finding and creating interconnections**

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The All-in-One approach works only when there are clear, tight connections of learning outcomes across the curriculum. Every course learning outcome must be examined in the context of the programs it serves to ensure that the learning outcomes of the course are indeed leading to the program outcomes. PGCC faculty spent a long time working to connect course learning outcomes to program outcomes and to integrate general education skills throughout the curriculum. The end product has been a preferred sequence of courses for every program, identifying the preferred courses for general education and the order in which the student should take his or her major-specific courses. While not required, the preferred course sequence identifies courses that build skills for later courses so that the learning outcomes of each course create a scaffold of experiences for students culminating in the program's learning outcomes.

While every course identified as general education must address general education learning outcomes, these outcomes are also addressed throughout all other courses. As such, not only in general education courses but in other courses as well, students are honing their understanding of general education learning outcomes. Indeed, we want students to further develop their writing, critical thinking, and other general education skills within their discipline. In every course a student takes, therefore, the student should demonstrate some further development of these general education learning outcomes. According to this philosophy, every course learning outcome at the institution should lead to outcomes at another level: to the learning outcomes of the next course in the sequence of courses, to the program learning outcomes, or to a general education learning outcome. Through these interconnections, collecting data on a single course learning outcome not only provides data about that course outcome but also builds information about the general education and program learning outcomes. This web of curriculum interconnections, represented in the assessment database, allows for the aggregation of skills across the curriculum.

### **Identifying key assignments**

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At the course level, creating the interconnections begins with the identification of key assignments. As Ewell (2013) emphasized when discussing the Degree Qualifications Profile competencies, "The primary vehicle or mechanism for determining whether or not students have mastered the competency, therefore, is a course assignment of some kind" (p. 13). At PGCC, if possible, the identified assignment is used to demonstrate all course outcomes. If covering all learning outcomes in a single assignment is not possible, students are evaluated with two or three assignments (e.g., a midterm project and a final project).

*The All-in-One approach works only when there are clear, tight connections of learning outcomes across the curriculum.*

These assignments are designed as culminating demonstrations of the knowledge, skills, and values that the student is expected to gain from the course. Because faculty who teach the course collaborate to create the assignment(s) and the rubric(s) to assess student work, they retain control in identifying the best assignment and how to evaluate it.

Once the assignment is identified, all sections of a course administer the same assignment. For example, if faculty identify a research paper as the best way to demonstrate the course learning outcomes, then students in all sections of that course complete a research paper. Within each section, faculty have some range of variation in their assignment. For the research paper, for instance, faculty can select specific topics or mold the research paper to fit their individual style of instruction and content focus. However, all assignments are graded using the same rubric designed by faculty and built in the assessment database. In some cases, faculty may choose to administer a common multiple choice exam across course sections rather than a common assignment evaluated with a rubric. However, the preferred approach at PGCC has been authentic assessment of student work through rubrics and, hence, that is the primary focus of this paper.

*The preferred approach at PGCC has been authentic assessment of student work through rubrics.*

### Using rubrics for grading and assessment

Faculty design each rubric with the aid of a template in the software package (see Table 1). Using this template, they identify a set of assignment domains and performance levels, typically five, ranging from “Excellent” to “Unsatisfactory.” In addition, they assign a point value to each cell of the rubric for grading. Faculty complete the template in a Word document and then the assessment staff uploads the rubric to the assessment database. In this way, faculty determine what goes into the rubric and how student work is evaluated.

	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	Unsatisfactory	Course Outcomes
Domain						
Intro Paragraph	Points: 8	Points: 7;6	Points: 5;4;3	Points: 2	Points: 1;0	1
	Descriptions are entered here					
Content A	Points: 10;11;9	Points: 8;7	Points: 6	Points: 5;4;3	Points: 2;1;0	3

Table 1: Example Rubric in Development

Faculty give the assignment and instructions to their students and then evaluate the students’ work using the rubric. For every student, the rubric is completed online by selecting the points the student earns in each domain. As an example, Table 1 shows that “Intro paragraph” can receive from 0 to 8 points based on the student’s performance. To decide how many points to assign, faculty first use the description given in the rubric for each cell (e.g., average). The description in this cell identifies the specific characteristics of an “average” introductory paragraph. To maximize the flexibility of grading, faculty can then decide, within “average,” whether the student’s introductory paragraph is worth 5 points, 4 points, or 3 points based on the quality of the paragraph elements present (Table 1). In this way, faculty do not get “boxed-in” by the five categories of the rubric. Instead, they can use the rubric to guide the grading process but still grade on a continuum. As the faculty member

moves through the rubric assigning points, the software calculates a sum of the scores and a percentage (points obtained over points possible). Either of these can be used as the final grade for the student, depending on whether the faculty member is using a point-based or a percentage-based grading method.

Once the semester is over and all faculty members have graded their students' work, the rubrics are used in a slightly different manner. For assessment purposes, we are not interested in the number of points each student received but instead in the performance level (e.g., "Excellent," "Good," "Average," etc.) that students achieved on the rubric for each domain. The focus of the assessment analysis is on the percentage of students who fall within each performance level. In general, students who fall within the "Excellent," "Good," and "Average" levels are considered to be meeting the expectations for the defined skill (e.g., writing), while students scoring within the below average and unsatisfactory levels are considered to be falling behind the performance expectations for that skill.

In the All-in-One database, each domain or row of the rubric is connected to a course learning outcome, and that course outcome, in turn, is connected to other learning outcomes, e.g., program and general education outcomes. Figure 1 displays how the rubric feeds data into specific knowledge, skills, and values.

Data from each rubric feed into the course outcomes and are then connected to program and/or general education skills. Furthermore, since the same rubric is used across all sections of the same course, the end result is performance data on the skills demonstrated in the assignment for a large sample of students. Thus, from a single assignment, faculty have graded the students while course learning outcomes have been assessed, and data have been collected on both program and general education learning outcomes.

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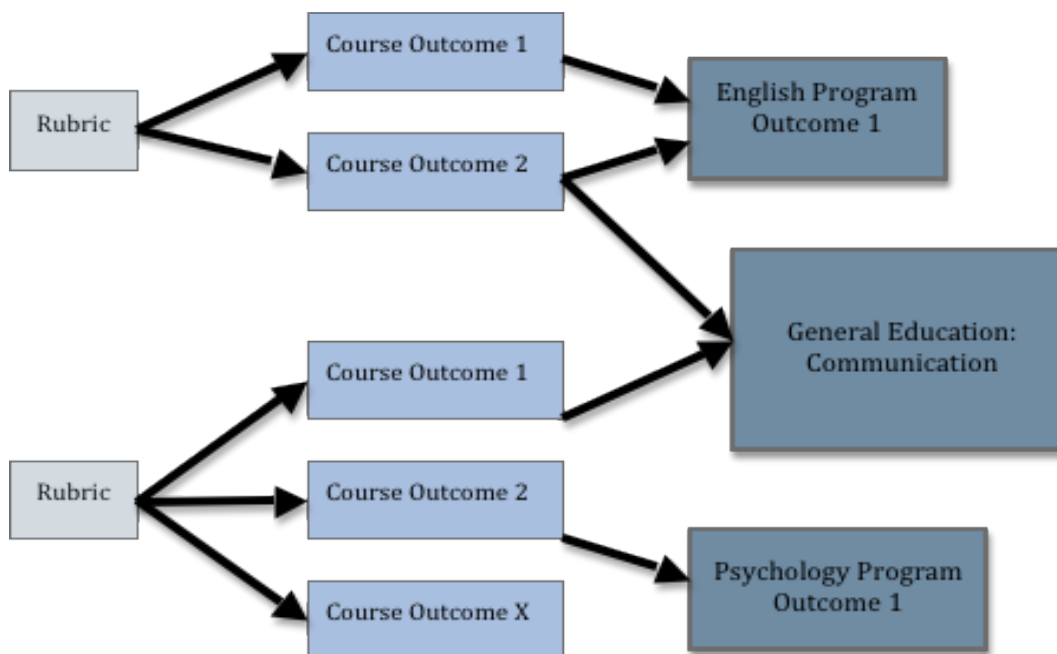


Figure 1: Example of Interconnections between Rubrics and Learning Outcomes



## **Inherently connected to the curriculum**

Because the All-in-One approach relies on tight connections among desired learning outcomes across the curriculum, it is imperative that courses and programs be examined holistically to ensure that the knowledge and skills obtained in a 100-level course are the knowledge and skills necessary to be ready for the 200-level courses. Furthermore, it must be ensured that the courses students take lead directly toward the attainment of the program's learning outcomes and the general education learning outcomes. The All-in-One approach is inherently and deeply connected to the curriculum; it works only when connections across the curriculum are clearly defined. Indeed, when implemented, All-in-One provides data on whether courses are sufficiently interconnected to foster student achievement of the program and general education learning outcomes. Achieving this level of interconnectedness takes time, and it is not a "once-and-done" activity. The PGCC faculty worked very hard to establish an initial set of interconnections, but a number of changes have been made since then and evidence-based changes continue to be made.

As such, this assessment process is not simply about achieving an end-goal. It is also about undertaking the journey. The alignment of courses, programs, and general education learning outcomes is continuously being refined through the assessment process. As faculty collaborate to create assignments and rubrics, they engage in conversations about their courses and the connections from assignment to course, program, and general education learning outcomes. In a cycle of continuous engagement, faculty regularly discuss the purpose of their courses and the role of their assignments in building the skills necessary for the next course. While the benefits of such collaboration are not easily quantified, the collaborative process clearly makes assessment meaningful for faculty and improves their understanding of how their courses and assignments fit into the whole curriculum. One of the adjustments required in the implementation process has been allowing opportunities for departments and faculty to grow at their own pace. As faculty learn more about the assessment model and assessment in general, their efforts will produce better assignments, tighter alignments between the curriculum and expected learning outcomes, and a stronger curriculum, leading to increased student learning and success.

## **Efficient use of resources**

As noted above, the knowledge, skills, and values that students gain at the course, program, and general education levels are all interconnected. At the level of the individual student, learning occurs as a holistic process in which different sets of skills may be acquired concurrently over an extended period of time. Furthermore, all artifacts produced by a student represent multiple skills and knowledge working in concert. Managing the measurement of these abilities through separate processes, therefore, does not make sense. Rather than running three separate measurement systems at the institution, All-in-One reduces the workload by operating within the existing workflow. In the most basic form of All-in-One, faculty grade student work and, at the same time, enter data on discrete student skills into an electronic platform. These data, based on evaluations of students' culminating assignments, are all that is needed to provide information on course, program, and general education learning across the institution. This means there is no need for other processes that re-evaluate student work through the lens of program learning outcomes and even a third time through the lens of general education learning outcomes. All of the necessary data are produced by a process in which faculty are already engaged throughout the semester: the evaluation of student work.

*All-in-One provides data on whether courses are sufficiently interconnected to foster student achievement of the program and general education learning outcomes.*

## Faculty involvement and support

Because All-in-One is tightly coupled with promising pedagogical practices, its implementation requires good curricular design, marked by a logical progression in the acquisition of knowledge and skills as called for in the Degree Qualifications Profile (Ewell, 2013; Lumina Foundation, 2011). Thus, faculty conversations center on the “purpose” of their courses, not just on how to assess them. The process becomes more meaningful to faculty, as a result, because it focuses equally on learning in the classroom and measuring that learning.

Furthermore, the success of the All-in-One assessment process depends on faculty participation and control. Faculty need to engage in the assessment process and, at PGCC, they create all course, program, and general education learning outcomes. They also identify the alignments from course learning outcomes to program and general education learning outcomes. In addition, they select the courses to be assessed, create the assignments for the assessment process, and design the rubrics to evaluate the assignments. Thus, the locus of control resides squarely with faculty, and this helps generate faculty support for the process.

In the All-in-One approach, faculty are more likely to support assessment because they decide the criteria for assessing students’ skills, not just at the course level but also at the program and general education level. For example, faculty who teach Psychology at PGCC are expected to evaluate general education skills, including student writing. To this end, Psychology faculty created a rubric reflecting their own criteria for what constitutes good writing, rather than using a general, all-purpose writing rubric. This approach is attractive to faculty because it is not driven by a vague, universal “gold standard” of writing but, instead, it involves a grassroots discussion about discipline-specific conventions and expectations about writing and the challenges students face when moving from one writing environment to another.

The high level of faculty involvement in All-in-One also entails a significant amount of work. At PGCC, we continue to refine our system to provide adequate support to faculty participants. The current structure involves three faculty members from each department, collectively identified as the Departmental Assessment Team (DAT). These faculty members are responsible for shepherding the assessment process within their department and are the first point of contact for questions about assessment. Each academic division has two DAT members who serve as the divisional representatives to the institution-wide Assessment Committee. This offers a second line of support, with faculty in the same larger disciplinary area (e.g., STEM) who can assist other DAT members and also keep their division apprised of changes in procedures.

The current All-in-One structure also includes two faculty members called “Assessment Coaches,” who receive release time. Providing a third level of support, each Assessment Coach is responsible for up to three academic divisions. The Assessment Coaches are more seasoned assessors who help with everything from improving the wording of a learning outcome to fine-tuning rubrics and using the assessment software. Finally, overseeing the entire process is an administrator, the Director of Outcomes Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness. While these layers of support require a significant number of individuals, it is important to remember that All-in-One addresses all the outcomes assessment requirements for the entire institution and that the same group of individuals is also charged with continually reviewing the curriculum to ensure its alignment with expected learning outcomes.

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## Consistent feedback for students and faculty

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In the All-in-One approach, faculty feedback to students includes the same data collected in evaluating the student's performance in the course, program, and general education learning outcomes. In other assessment models, in contrast, samples of student work commonly are selected and re-assessed with a different measurement instrument and often by different faculty at a different time. Thus, there is no connection between the feedback received by the student in the course and the evaluation of the student's progress toward the learning outcomes. The problem with such assessment methodologies is that they are so far removed from the classroom they have little benefit for current students. When different faculty evaluate assignments with a different assessment tool after the end of the semester, the assessment does not allow for intervention or engagement with students currently enrolled, faculty do not learn better grading techniques, and students do not receive improved, real-time feedback.

Unlike other assessment models, the All-in-One approach requires participation of the faculty at large in every stage of the assessment process. As explained above, faculty build the instruments, discuss the learning outcomes, define the connections between their courses and other courses, and draw the links from course outcomes to program and general education outcomes. Furthermore, faculty are engaged in examining the assessment data. All-in-One data are more meaningful to faculty because these data directly reflect what they do in the classroom and their own students' performance. Finally, All-in-One helps develop faculty's assessment expertise as they work on improving their assessment instruments and their classroom teaching based on the data they helped generate.

## Robust data set

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The data generated by All-in-One can be examined at multiple levels: at the section level, the course level, and across the curriculum. At the section level, faculty can see the mean, median, and mode for the points representing proficiencies their own students have demonstrated through completed assignments. In addition, they can produce reports showing the count and percentage of students scoring in each domain and at every performance level on the rubric. Data can also be examined at the course level; data from multiple sections of the same course can be aggregated into a single report. These data focus on the count and percentage of students scoring within each performance level. With these aggregate data, a dean or a chair can see the percentage of students who score "Average" or "Above average" and compare it to the percentage of students who score "Below average" or "Unsatisfactory."

The final level of analysis aggregates performance data across the curriculum by specific skills. In these reports, a single skill (e.g., writing) is selected and all rubric domains (rows) measuring this skill within a chosen timeframe will be pulled. These data primarily focus on the percentage of students at each performance level. Additionally, these reports show the number of assessments as well as the number of domains that measured writing. Finally, it is possible to see the number of individual students measured as well as the number of individuals measured more than once.

An additional type of report that will be available is a record of individual student performance, showing each individual's performance on specific skills (e.g., writing skill is "Excellent" and critical thinking is "Average"). Although not yet created, this type of report is likely to be a powerful tool for future analyses as well as a useful device to inform students about their progress in the development and mastery of specific skills. In sum, All-in-One is capable

*At PGCC, we continue to refine our system to provide adequate support to faculty participants.*

of generating a robust data set, one in which data can be examined at different levels of aggregation, overcoming critical deficits commonly found in other assessment models.

### **Same student, multiple measures**

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A major deficit in most assessment systems is the use of a single measurement point for program or general education learning outcomes. Without going into a long discussion of learning and measurement, we briefly note that it is well established that no single measurement of any skill is ever adequate. Indeed, what offers the best measure of a general skill, like writing, is to measure the same individual multiple times with different instruments. Thus, by measuring a student's writing in her English courses, psychology course, and major courses, we are more likely to attain an accurate evaluation of her writing abilities.

Moreover, we can observe the reliability of measurements across multiple faculty members and across multiple types of writing. Thus, for example, the focus on MLA writing style in this student's English courses could mean that she is ill prepared for the more technical APA style required in her psychology course. In a case like this, All-in-One is sensitive enough to detect the discrepancies between the two courses. With other measurement systems, an institution may declare their students strong writers based on their performance in English courses alone, missing the fact that the same students are not strong writers within their discipline. Neither group of faculty is incorrect in their evaluation of the student, but the style of writing expected varies from one discipline to another. What matters most is how identifying and addressing these discrepancies might contribute to strengthening students' ability to make progress and complete a degree. The data created by All-in-One allow for a more fine-grained evaluation of student performance and a deeper understanding of student learning across the curriculum. All-in-One data are sensitive to gaps between what is expected of students and what has been taught in prior coursework. The clear expectation here is that through removal or amelioration of these gaps we can have a strong impact on student graduation and success.

### **Skill development**

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Another common deficit in many other assessment systems is that when students are not meeting performance expectations, going back and identifying the root causes of poor performance is very difficult. Thus, assessment systems that establish single points of measurement to evaluate the achievement of specific performance criteria without tracking skill development over time do not provide much data on how to intervene or where student performance started to falter. All-in-One is used to measure all sections of a course periodically and, thus, the history of knowledge and skill development for large numbers of students becomes part of the All-in-One data set. Therefore, it is possible to look at students who progress from 100- to 200-level coursework and beyond to ascertain where performance began to falter. This type of analysis makes it possible to identify the significance of learning certain skills early and the impact of specific skill gaps on later course performance. The hope is that these developmental trajectory data will provide significant insight into the skill deficits that impede student performance in the classroom and inform strategies to increase student retention, progress, and graduation.

*All-in-One is capable of generating a robust data set, one in which data can be examined at different levels of aggregation, overcoming critical deficits commonly found in other assessment models.*

## Implementation issues and lessons learned

In creating All-in-One, PGCC has remained committed to the overall theory of assessment behind the model. However, putting theory into practice has meant a range of adjustments and lessons learned along the way. For All-in-One to work, everyone must participate. This assessment model is based on connections from course learning outcomes to program and general education learning outcomes; thus, the data on program and general education outcomes are collected at the course level. If certain departments or divisions opt out of the process, then the institution will not have a complete picture of student learning. The model requires strong administrative support to ensure that all divisions and departments are actively engaged in the assessment process. This is true of any assessment process, but because what we are doing entails such a strong degree of integration, we continue to revisit and refine our strategies at PGCC for college-wide involvement. With each passing year, the assessment process becomes better understood and more automatic for faculty, but the model still necessitates the presence of individuals dedicated to moving assessment forward.

Another lesson learned has to do with developing the faculty's assessment expertise. As at most institutions, the faculty at PGCC are strong content experts, but they have a broad range of understandings of teaching, learning, and assessment. Since All-in-One relies heavily on faculty to create assessments and make connections between assessments and learning outcomes, a large percentage of PGCC faculty are now regularly engaged in the assessment process. Although the first rounds of assessments have had some obvious shortcomings, the assessment materials keep improving each term. As more faculty members understand the process and the connections between assessments and curriculum, the questions get better for the Assessment Coaches, DAT, and division representatives who support them. The lesson learned is to begin moving forward with the model without dwelling too much on the overall accuracy of the assessment instruments. Professional development for All-in-One implementation needs to be ongoing, while faculty are participating in assessment. While frustrating for some, having faculty actually do it has proven the best means of strengthening their assessment expertise.

The most important lesson learned from implementing All-in-One at PGCC is that the first step is the hardest. Before All-in-One, PGCC did not have a comprehensive assessment process and, therefore, not all the faculty were involved in assessment. Thus, prior to the implementation of All-in-One, a range of reasons were given as to why it wouldn't work, why it wasn't meaningful, or why it was too much of a burden. However, once departments began to engage in the process, most became more open to the new approach. For PGCC, completing the entire All-in-One process for a four-year cycle amounts to all 20 departments on campus collecting data from two to four courses each semester. As part of this work, all departments have to create a new assignment for most courses assessed as well as a new rubric for assessing the assignment. When the four-year schedule of courses to be assessed repeats, the burden on faculty is less because faculty do not have to start from scratch to identify an assignment and create a rubric. Although there is still some resistance at PGCC to the assessment process, each new semester has shown broader acceptance, greater interest in the assessment data, improved assessments and curricula, and—most important of all—improvements in student performance.

*The data created by All-in-One allow for a more fine-grained evaluation of student performance and a deeper understanding of student learning across the curriculum.*



## Conclusion

The objective at the heart of every institution's mission statement is student success. To achieve this mission, institutions need to develop methods to ascertain not only if students are learning but also how they are developing their skills over time. In the current accountability climate in higher education, moreover, institutions need to develop significantly more advanced means of evaluating and tracking student progress and success. Additionally challenging, they must do all this without overwhelming the institution's faculty or staff.

The All-in-One assessment approach responds to these needs. It tightly connects curriculum with assessment and integrates the measurement of course, program, and general education learning into a single process. Moreover, because it accomplishes this through faculty grading papers in their own courses, it is significantly more streamlined than alternative approaches that assess small numbers of students through a disconnected set of measures.

The outcomes from using All-in-One are multilayered. First, because it is so intricately interwoven with the curriculum, faculty have to regularly examine how a course fits into the program and how the culminating assessment for the course directly demonstrates student knowledge and skills. Second, All-in-One ensures direct correlation between faculty feedback to students via grading and the evaluation of students' capabilities via the assessment process. As a result, faculty become more knowledgeable about assessment, their pedagogy and assessment instruments improve, and the overall assessment process becomes more effective. Finally, the All-in-One methodology creates a robust data set that is potentially one of the richest repositories of data collected on students. These data are invaluable to the institution, as they demonstrate the value added of each course assessed, they identify "holes" in student learning that can be quickly filled through changes in the classroom, and they track skill development over time so that later student struggles can be minimized by improving coursework earlier in the student's curriculum.

Like all assessment processes, All-in-One must overcome the "Do-we-really-have-to-do-this?" mindset. It is by no means the silver bullet leading all faculty to embrace assessment while solving every assessment problem. Once faculty begin to engage in it, however, All-in-One seems to make sense to most of them and, indeed, most faculty find it useful. They also find it highly efficient because, rather than calling for their involvement with a range of duplicate measurement methods, All-in-One has them use a single measure to gather evidence of course, program, and general education learning. Finally, because the assessment of general education skills has direct and real connections to the skills that faculty address and evaluate in the classroom, faculty and administrators can better understand the data and identify means to improve student performance.

Since its inaugural semester of full implementation, in Spring 2012, All-in-One has collected 2,500 to 4,000 scored rubrics each semester at Prince George's Community College. Every term, the data set grows more robust, as more individual students are assessed more than once in different courses and at different times in their academic career. The entirety of this process, from early performance to later performance, and the evaluation of individual course, program, and general education learning outcomes are captured in a single assessment system, All-in-One.

*The All-in-One methodology creates a robust data set that is potentially one of the richest repositories of data collected on students.*

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# Appendix A

Combining Grading, Course, Program, and General Education Assessment  
Example Rubric: RAD 1540, Clinical Radiography II  
By Angela Anderson and Jo Beth Linzy

## *The assignment*

The Radiography Program is based on a competency-based education plan. Students are required to complete courses in a prescribed order; each course provides a building block for subsequent courses. RAD 1540, Clinical Radiography II, is in the second semester of the program curriculum. It is the second of five clinical education courses in the curriculum. In order to successfully complete each clinical education course, students are required to achieve and maintain clinical competency on a set number of radiographic examinations. Each radiographic examination consists of multiple radiographic projections.

The “Category Competency Evaluation” is considered to be the final examination for RAD 1540. This assessment ensures retention of knowledge and clinical skills. The clinical instructor randomly picks 5 radiographic projections, corresponding to competencies completed during the semester, for each student to simulate. Students must perform each projection with a minimum score of 90%. Scores below the minimum acceptable percentage disqualify corresponding competency evaluations. Students must have a minimum overall grade of 90% on this evaluation to pass the course.

## *About the students*

The students in this course are in their second semester of the Radiography Program. Although this is technically the second clinical course in the curriculum, it is the first clinical course where they spend two days a week for the entire semester in the hospital setting interacting directly with patients. Prior to program admission, they have completed the pre-requisite general education courses of English Composition I, Finite Mathematics, and two semesters of Anatomy and Physiology. Many have also completed the three additional general education courses in the program curriculum: English Composition II, Speech, and General Psychology. Students are admitted in the program in cohorts. Since they see each other every day in class for four semesters, they tend to form very strong bonds with each other and the program faculty. This bond provides the students with a very strong support system that enables them to help each other succeed in this rigorous program of study. Many of the students remain in contact with each other and the program faculty after graduating.

## *Faculty feedback about the assessment*

When institutional assessment started at Prince George’s Community College, the Radiography Program Faculty felt relatively comfortable with the process. Teaching in a JRCERT accredited program, the faculty were familiar with program outcome assessment. They had been using rubrics to assess students in clinical education courses for many years. Still, when the first clinical course was scheduled to be assessed as part of the program’s four-year assessment plan, they realized that they still had a lot to learn.

The rubric has evolved since originally designed. In the spring of 2013, when the course came up for assessment, it was determined that the scoring criteria on the original rubric were too subjective. The rubric is now designed to be very succinct in the criteria needed to produce an optimal, diagnostic radiograph, providing faculty with a more objective assessment tool. The rubric ascertains minute errors so that students can tweak their skills in a simulation mode to reinforce their learning. Since students do not know ahead of time what projections they will be asked to simulate, there is no preparation per se. This challenges students to be prepared to do any of the projections in a particular exam and encourages them to maintain their competency skills.

The biggest challenge in redesigning the rubric was conforming to the college’s template and explaining the program’s grading policies to members of the assessment committee. The grading scales used in the Allied Health and Nursing Programs are higher than in other disciplines. The lowest overall percentage grade a student may receive and be assigned a grade of “C” in

the Radiography Program is 75%. In addition, the required passing grade on specific clinical assessments, such as the “Clinical Competency Evaluation” is typically in the 90-100% range. This assessment is weighted higher because of the critical nature radiographs play in diagnosing disease processes. An average radiographic image may be classified as diagnostic, but it may be lacking pertinent information which a physician may need to make an accurate diagnosis.

The rubric is helpful for the instructor as well as the student. It provides feedback on student performance that prompts dialog between faculty and students about obtaining an optimum radiograph and whether there needs to be remedial instruction on a particular projection/exam. Students do not know in advance which projections they will be asked to simulate. The student must maintain competency on all the examinations covered since the beginning of their education, ensuring that they possess the skills required to graduate from the program and enter the workforce as a competent, entry-level practitioner. Compiled data from the assessment are reviewed by the faculty and used to assess the program’s student learning outcomes and develop an action plan that becomes part of the program’s assessment plan.

*The rubric*

	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	Unsatisfactory	Course Outcomes	Core Competencies
	Clinical performance is safe and adequately demonstrates application of the processes appropriate to an entry-level radiographer.	Clinical performance is safe and adequately demonstrates application of the processes appropriate to an entry-level radiographer.	Clinical performance is minimally safe with inconsistent application of the processes appropriate to an entry-level radiographer.	Clinical performance demonstrates inadequate knowledge, skills and/or abilities needed by an entry-level radiographer.	Clinical performance is unsafe and inadequately demonstrates knowledge, skills and/or abilities needed by an entry-level radiographer.		
Domain							
1. Patient Instructions 1-5 Pts.	Points: 5 Patient instructions were clear, concise and accurate.	Points: 4 Patient instructions were accurate, but not quite clear; able to answer patient questions. Pt. could not understand breathing inst. due to student explanation.	Points: 3 Patient instructions were accurate, but not clear and concise; able to answer most patient questions. Pt. did not hear breathing inst. due to student’s voice not loud enough.	Points: 2 Patient instructions were not quite accurate or not clear and concise; difficulty answering patient questions. Pt. was totally unaware of breathing instructions.	Points: 1, 0 Instructions were not accurate; no instructions provided.	2. Display a professional demeanor  5. Communicate effectively, using proper medical terminology when necessary	Communication
2. Proper marker placement 0 or 5 Pts.	Points: 5 Anatomical markers were placed correctly.	N/A	N/A	N/A	Points: 0 Anatomical markers were not used or placement was inaccurate.	1. Perform radiographic examinations of the chest, abdomen, upper and lower extremities  6. Demonstrate proper use of radiation protection devices	Critical Reasoning

	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	Unsatisfactory	Course Outcomes	Core Competencies
3. Radiation Protection 0 or 5 Pts.	Points: 5 The patient was shielded correctly.	N/A	N/A	N/A	Points: 1, 0 No shielding was used or the shielding placement was not correct.	1. Perform radiographic examinations of the chest, abdomen, upper and lower extremities  6. Demonstrate proper use of radiation protection devices	Ethics
4. Positioning aids / accessories 1-5 Pts.	Points: 5 Appropriate positioning aids/accessories were used correctly.	Points: 4 Didn't use one necessary positioning aid that was required.	Points: 3 Didn't use two positioning aids that were required.	Points: 2 Student attempted to use the aids but they didn't stay in place as needed.	Points: 1, 0 Positioning aids/accessories were not used correctly or not used.	1. Perform radiographic examinations of the chest, abdomen, upper and lower extremities  7. Utilize radiographic equipment and accessories	Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning
5. Part Position 0-10 Pts.	Points: 10, 9 No errors in part position; resulting image would be optimal.	Points: 8 One minor error in part positioning; resulting image would be optimal/diagnostic.	Points: 7.5 Two errors in part positioning; resulting image would be diagnostic.	Points: 6 Three or more errors in part positioning; resulting image would be borderline diagnostic.	Points: 4, 2, 0 Positioning is not appropriate; resulting image would be non-diagnostic.	1. Perform radiographic examinations of the chest, abdomen, upper and lower extremities  6. Demonstrate proper use of radiation protection devices	Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning
6. SID/Angle 0-10 Pts.	Points: 10, 9 The correct SID and angle was used.	Points: 8 The correct SID and angle was used; within 1-2" of correct SID and 1-2 degrees of the angle.	Points: 7.5 The correct SID and angle was used; within 3-4" of correct SID and 3-5 degrees of the angle.	Points: 6 SID was off by 5-6 inches and angle was more than 10 degrees off.	Points: 4, 2, 0 SID and angle were incorrect by being off over 6" on SID and 15 degrees on angle.	1. Perform radiographic examinations of the chest, abdomen, upper and lower extremities  6. Demonstrate proper use of radiation protection devices	Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning
7. Central Ray 0-10 Pts.	Points: 10, 9 The central ray was directed to the correct location with consideration given to body habitus.	Points: 8 The central ray was slightly off by 1-2 cm; consideration given to body habitus.	Points: 7.5 The central ray was off by 2-3 cm; no consideration of body habitus.	Points: 6 The central ray was off by more than 3cm; no consideration of body habitus.	Points: 4, 2, 0 The central ray location was not appropriate; no consideration of body habitus.	1. Perform radiographic examinations of the chest, abdomen, upper and lower extremities  6. Demonstrate proper use of radiation protection devices	Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning



	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	Unsatisfactory	Course Outcomes	Core Competencies
8. Alignment 0-10 Pts.	Points: 10, 9 The part/CR/IR alignment was accurate; resulting image would be optimal.	Points: 8 There were minor errors in the part/CR/IR alignment; off by ¼-1/2" resulting image would be optimal/diagnostic.	Points: 7.5 Errors in part/CR/IR alignment; resulting image would be diagnostic. Off by ½-¾".	Points: 6 Major errors in part/CR/IR alignment; resulting image would be borderline diagnostic. Off by 1 inch.	Points: 4, 2, 0 Major errors in part/CR/IR alignment; resulting image would be non-diagnostic. Off by more than 1 inch.	1. Perform radiographic examinations of the chest, abdomen, upper and lower extremities  6. Demonstrate proper use of radiation protection devices	Critical Reasoning
9. Image Receptor 0-10 Pts.	Points: 10, 9 The ideal image receptor size was used.	Points: 8 The image receptor chosen was acceptable but should have used a smaller/larger cassette for optimal image.	Points: 7.5 The image receptor chosen was incorrect, but the final image was diagnostic.	Points: 6 The image receptor chosen was not correct and the final image was not diagnostic.	Points: 4, 2, 0 The image receptor chosen was inappropriate and the student did not know which size to use. Had to have instructor intervene.	1. Perform radiographic examinations of the chest, abdomen, upper and lower extremities  6. Demonstrate proper use of radiation protection devices	Critical Reasoning
10. Collimation 0-10 Pts.	Points: 10, 9 The maximum amount of collimation was used.	Points: 8 Collimation was good, but field size could have been restricted slightly further. (¼-1/2 cm more on all 4 sides)	Points: 7.5 Collimation was acceptable, but field size could have been restricted further. (¾-1 cm more on all 4 sides)	Points: 6 Some evidence of collimation; not sufficient. Could have done more than 1-2 cm on all four sides.	Points: 4, 2, 0 Little or no evidence of collimation.	1. Perform radiographic examinations of the chest, abdomen, upper and lower extremities  6. Demonstrate proper use of radiation protection devices	Critical Reasoning  Ethics
11. Anatomy 0-10 Pts.	Points: 10, 9 9-10 anatomical parts identified. Correct exposure factors used; "S" number within ideal range.	Points: 8 8 anatomical parts identified. Correct exposure factors used; "S" number within acceptable range. Off by 5-10%.	Points: 7.5 6-7 anatomical parts identified. Correct exposure factors used; "S" number within acceptable range, but improvement is needed. Off by 10-25%.	Points: 6 5 anatomical parts identified. Incorrect exposure factors used, "S" number outside of acceptable range. Off by 30-50%.	Points: 4, 2, 0 Less than 5 anatomical parts identified. Incorrect exposure factors used; "S" number grossly outside of acceptable range. Off by more than 50%.	3. Select radiographic exposure factors  4. Critique radiographic images for positioning and image quality	Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning

## Appendix B

Combining Grading, Course, Program, and General Education Assessment  
Example Rubric: English 2140 African American Literature  
By Anne Showalter

### *The assignment*

To maintain classroom autonomy, the faculty assess English 2140 through either a course-embedded analytical research paper or a final essay exam encompassing all course learning outcomes. The paper requires students to conduct research and analyze various historical periods, themes, and/or literary devices in relation to cultural moments in African American literature. Students are expected to apply at least one critical lens to read and analyze a text. A common rubric (see below) is used to evaluate the paper.

### *For students*

Students are provided with the following instructions:

1. Compare and contrast the interracial relationships or encounters in at least two of the following texts:
  - Butler's *Kindred*
  - Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*
  - Baraka's *Dutchman*
  - Morrison's "Recitatif"
  - a. What are these relationships/encounters characterized by? Fear? Understanding? Sympathy? Love? Hatred? A combination of several of the above? Use specific examples from the texts and be sure to discuss how they speak to the social and cultural climate of their times.
2. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. has repeatedly declared that "if there are 40 million black Americans, then there are 40 million ways to be black." Explain the ways in which Gates' statement is in line with the trends in African American Literature since 1975. Then consider how leaders of the Black Arts Movement might respond to this statement.
  - a. In your response, be sure to speak to how the cultural climates of the Black Arts Movement and Literature since 1975, respectively, might influence the ways in which the movement/time period frames black identity and representation.
3. In this course, we have examined African American literature from the early 1900s to present. Imagine that you have been asked to teach a one-day workshop on this period of African American literature to a group of local middle school students. Due to the format of the workshop, you are told that you need to cover exactly three literary works. In a response of at least three paragraphs, identify which three literary works from our course you would teach the students and why. In justifying your selections – in answering the "why" – please include the following for each work that you have selected:
  - a. the work's title and author
  - b. a brief explanation of the work's literary movement/tradition/time period (no more than three sentences)
  - c. a specific reason or specific reasons why you consider this work particularly worthy of inclusion in the workshop
  - d. a specific Discussion Question on the work that you would pose to the students *Note: A Discussion Question, as the name implies, is an open-ended question that merits a conversation/debate and does not have a "correct" or easily identifiable answer*
  - e. what you hope the students would take away from the work

### *About the students*

The students who take this course have completed Composition I and Composition II as these are pre-requisites for all 2000-level literature. Consequently, most students are nearing the end of their associate's degree when they register for the course. On more than one occasion, students have shared with me that EGL 2140 is the last class they need to take before graduation/transfer. Because of the pre-requisites, the very earliest a student could take the course would be in their third semester. Most of the students who take EGL-2140 are non-majors, though there may be a few majors in any given class. It is not unusual for students to come into the class having taken an African American Studies or history course.

### *Faculty feedback about the assessment*

Overall, I've been pleased with the assignment. I think, with the combination of the three very different types of questions, the assignment is an effective barometer of how successfully the student has grasped the major concepts of the course.

### *The rubric*

	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	Unsatisfactory	Course Outcomes	Core Competencies	
Domain								
Constructs and interprets connections between African-American texts, writers, literary movements, and time periods	Points: 4 Thorough and direct connections between the text and the cultural movement, theme, form, and/or period are logically supported.	Points: 3.5 Accurate but indirect connections between text and cultural movement, theme, form, and/or period are logically made, though support may be thin in some places.	Points: 3 Limited yet logical connections between the text and the cultural movement, theme, form, and/or period are made.	Points: 2 Illogical connections between the text and the cultural movement, theme, form, and/or period are made.	Points: 1 Illogical and false connections between the text and the cultural movement, theme, form, and/or period are made.	1. Construct and interpret the relationship between 20th century African-American writers and 18th and 19th century writers.  2. Explain how the social and intellectual climate has influenced the themes of recent African-American literature.	Communication  Critical Reasoning  Culture	
Demonstrates an understanding of how the social and intellectual climates of the 1920s to the present have influenced the African-American literary movement	Points: 4 Thorough understanding of the literary movement or theme and its significance are demonstrated through multiple, significant examples.	Points: 3.5 Thorough understanding of the literary movement or theme and its significance are demonstrated through one significant example.	Points: 3 Accurate understanding of the literary movement or theme and its significance are demonstrated; one or more examples are offered, although the significance may be thin.	Points: 2 Limited understanding of the literary movement or theme and its significance are demonstrated; an example is offered but is irrelevant or mischaracterized.	Points: 1 No understanding of the literary movement or theme or its significance is demonstrated; no examples are offered.	2. Explain how the social and intellectual climate has influenced the themes of recent African-American literature.	Communication  Critical Reasoning  Culture	

	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	Unsatisfactory	Course Outcomes	Core Competencies
Understands and evaluates rhetorical techniques and movement-based critical terminology	Points: 4	Points: 3.5	Points: 3	Points: 2	Points: 1	3. Apply literary and critical terminology and concepts, demonstrating their use in understanding and appreciating African-American literature.	Communication Critical Reasoning Culture
	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of rhetorical techniques and critical terminology based on examples given.	Demonstrates accurate understanding of rhetorical techniques and critical terminology based on examples given.	Demonstrates limited yet accurate knowledge of rhetorical techniques and critical terminology based on examples given.	Demonstrates limited and inaccurate knowledge of rhetorical techniques and critical terminology based on examples given.	No references to rhetorical techniques and critical terminology.		
Identifies, synthesizes, and critiques varied texts and literary movements within analysis-driven language	Points: 4	Points: 3.5	Points: 3	Points: 2	Points: 1	4. Write analysis-driven essays that critique varied texts, and a research-style paper that utilizes additional documented sources.	Communication Critical Reasoning Culture Information Literacy Ethics
	Demonstrates a thorough analysis that identifies, synthesizes, and critiques the discussed literary movements and utilizes logical support.	Demonstrates an accurate analysis that identifies, synthesizes, and critiques the discussed literary movements, though support may be thin in some places.	Demonstrates a limited yet logical analysis that identifies, synthesizes, and critiques the discussed literary movements; little support is provided.	Demonstrates a limited analysis that illogically identifies, synthesizes, and critiques the discussed literary movements; no support is provided.	Demonstrates an analysis that fails to identify, synthesize, and critique the discussed literary movements.		
Utilizes documented sources responsibly through quotations, summaries, and paraphrases	Points: 4	Points: 3.5	Points: 3	Points: 2	Points: 1	4. Write analysis-driven essays that critique varied texts, and a research-style paper that utilizes additional documented sources.	Communication Critical Reasoning Culture Information Literacy Ethics
	Thoroughly incorporates documented sources through responsible use of quotations, summaries, and paraphrases.	Accurately incorporates documented sources through responsible use of quotations, summaries, and paraphrases, despite minor errors in execution.	Incorporates documented sources through use of quotations, summaries, and paraphrases, though there are some errors in approach and execution.	Incorporates documented sources through inaccurate use of quotations, summaries, and paraphrases.	Irresponsibly quotes, summarizes, and/or paraphrases.		
Totals	20=100%	17.5=87.5%	15=75%	10=50%	5=25%		

## Appendix C

Combining Grading, Course, Program, and General Education Assessment  
Example Rubric: Art 1010, Introduction to Art  
By Sarah Wegner, Ken Conley, and John Anderson

### *The assignment*

This assignment is a paper based on direct observation of a work of art in a museum or art gallery. The paper is assigned in the latter half of the semester. Students are required to turn in a rough draft for feedback before the final version of the paper is due. The instructions take the student step by step through the points they need to cover. Below is a summary of the instructions.

### *For students*

Through direct observation of a master work of art, write a paper that addresses the following:

1. The first paragraph should introduce the work of art and state the thesis of the paper.
2. The second paragraph should identify the media, technique and style of the work and briefly explain the historical and cultural context in which the work was created.
3. The third paragraph should provide a detailed description of the work of art.
4. The following paragraphs should identify the elements of art and the principles of design and analyze how they are used in the work.
5. Following the analysis of formal issues, discuss the pictorial content (meaning) of the work.
6. The final paragraph should summarize the main points of the paper and explain how these points have proven or modified the thesis statement given in the first paragraph.

If outside sources are used, appropriate citation and bibliographical references must be included. The instructor will make the student aware of these requirements and how to cite them.

The paper should be no fewer than 3 and no greater than 5 pages in length. The format should be: 12 pt font, double spaced, 1" margins. A color reproduction, on a separate page, must accompany the paper and must be identified according to the standards of the instructor.

### *About the students*

This course fulfills a Humanities credit for non-art majors. Students can take this course at any point in their program. Most students taking the course have had little or no exposure to the visual arts. They are faced with learning an entirely new vocabulary and ways of seeing and interpreting visual information. Many students come to this course with low reading and writing proficiency. The museum paper is often the first college-level writing assignment required of these students. Additionally, many students lack solid time management strategies. They do not know when or how to take notes in a lecture class and are shy about asking questions and engaging in the course. As a result, students have difficulty learning the vocabulary of art, reading and comprehending textbook material and assignment directions, and clearly articulating, verbally or in writing, what they observe in a work of art.



### *Faculty feedback about the assessment*

Faculty agree that the museum paper is the most difficult assignment for students in Introduction to Art. This paper has always been part of the course. However, when it was included in the assessment plan, the museum paper became much more structured. Faculty are now required to use the same assignment prompt and grading rubric. With the new assessment format, the first semester's results were very disappointing. Students demonstrated an inability to structure their paper, address the required points in coherent paragraphs, and draw conclusions based on their observations.

The results of the museum paper assessment for the following semester showed a significant improvement. Instructors found that requiring rough drafts, offering detailed feedback on the rough drafts, and familiarizing students with the step-by-step directions and the grading rubric when the paper was assigned resulted in greater overall success. The most significant factor in increasing student success was the amount of time faculty spent helping the students articulate their ideas on their rough drafts. Faculty also started providing students with strong examples of museum papers in order to deepen their understanding of what was expected.

Faculty also helped students build their writing skills throughout the semester by giving essay questions on tests. Midway through the semester, students were required to create and analyze artwork of their own making. This creative and analytical process increased students' understanding of the artistic process and helped them relate the vocabulary and concepts of art to personal experience. Faculty found that, for some students, engagement in the course and ability to articulate their observations improved with this creative, hands-on project.

One aspect that remains puzzling is the small but significant number of students who disregard the directions for the paper. In spite of faculty feedback on the rough draft, some students turned in a final paper that did not address most or all of the required points. Helping these students remains a challenge. One-on-one conferences with these students to go over their rough drafts and requiring a second rough draft are possible solutions being explored.

### *The rubric*

	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	Unsatisfactory	Course Outcomes	Core Competencies	
Domain								
Plagiarized: if paper contains plagiarized material, it will receive a score of "0" points							Ethics	
Domain A: Introductory paragraph identifies the artwork (title, artist, date, medium, country of origin) and gives a thesis statement	10 Artwork is fully identified. Thesis statement is present and relates to the content of the paper. Thesis statement exceeds scope of course requirements.	8 Artwork is fully identified. Thesis statement present and relates to the content of the paper.	7 Artwork fully identified. Thesis statement is present but may not fully relate to the content of the paper.	6 Artwork incompletely identified and/or thesis statement attempted but does not relate to the content of the paper.	5, 3, 0 Artwork not identified or incompletely identified and/or no thesis statement.	1. Use art terminology... 4. Observe a masterwork of visual art...	Communication Information Literacy	

	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	Unsatisfactory	Course Outcomes	Core Competencies
Domain B Identify the prevailing media, technique, and style demonstrated in the work. Give a brief description of the historical and cultural context in which the work was created.	10	8	7	6	5, 3, 0	1 Use art terminology...  2. Describe the present and historical roles of the visual arts.	Communication  Information Literacy  Culture
	Media, technique and style demonstrated in the work are identified. 2 or more statements about the historical and cultural context are made and related to the work of art.	Media, technique and style demonstrated in the work are identified. 1 statement about historical and cultural context is made and related to the work.	Media, technique and style demonstrated in the work are identified. 1 statement about historical and cultural context is made but statement may or may not be directly related to the artwork.	Two out of the three prevailing aspects (media, technique, and style) demonstrated in the work are identified. No statements about historical and cultural context.	Media, technique and style not identified (or) one of the prevailing aspects but not all 3 are identified.  Historical and cultural context not mentioned.		
Domain C Describe what is depicted in the artwork.	10	8	7	6	5, 3, 0	1. Use art terminology...  4. Observe a masterwork of visual art...	Communication  Information Literacy
	5 or more descriptive statements. No interpretation.	4 descriptive statements. No interpretation.	3 descriptive statements are present. No interpretation.	2 general descriptive statements: "There is a cow." "There is a blue line." Some interpretation, such as "the girl is sad," may be present.	No descriptive statements. (Or) interpretation in place of description is given, "The work shows Aphrodite's love for Adonis."		
Domain D Identify the Elements of Art: line, shape, color, texture, value, and space present and analyze how they are used in the work.	20, 18	17, 16	15, 14	13, 12	10, 5, 0	1. Use art terminology...  4. Observe a masterwork of visual art...	Communication  Information Literacy  Critical Reasoning  Culture
	More than 5 elements of Art are addressed and analyzed correctly. Each statement is defended by one or more examples within the context of the artwork.	4 or 5 elements of Art addressed and analyzed correctly. Each statement is defended by one example within the context of the artwork.	3 elements of Art are addressed; the analysis is correct. Each statement is defended by one example within the context of the artwork.	2 or 3 elements of Art discussed, analysis is incomplete or analysis is incorrect in some areas. Few or no examples from the work are used to support statements.	Fewer than 2 elements of Art are mentioned. No attempt at analysis or incorrect analysis. Few or no examples from the work used to support statements.		
Domain E. Identify the Principles of Design: Unity, variety, emphasis, proportion/ scale, balance, and movement present and analyze how they are used in the work.	20, 18	17, 16	15, 14	13, 12	10, 5, 0	1. Use art terminology...  4. Observe a masterwork of visual art...	Communication  Information Literacy  Critical Reasoning  Culture
	More than 5 Principles of Design are identified and correctly analyzed. Each statement is defended by one or more examples within the context of the artwork.	5 Principles of Design are identified and their use is correctly analyzed. Each statement is defended by one example within the context of the artwork.	4 Principles of Design are identified. Analysis of their use is correct. Each statement is defended by one example within the context of the artwork.	3 Principles of Design are identified. Analysis of their use is incomplete or parts are incorrect. Few or no examples from the work are used to support the statements.	Fewer than 3 Principles of Design are mentioned. No attempt at analysis or incorrect analysis. (Or) no attempt to identify and analyze the Principles of Design.		

	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	Unsatisfactory	Course Outcomes	Core Competencies
Domain F Discuss the pictorial content of the work.	10 Content is identified and analyzed in 3 or more statements. At least one example used to defend each statement.  Statements exceed the requirements of the writing assignment.	8 Content is identified and analyzed in 2 statements. At least one example used to defend each statement.	7 Content is identified and analyzed in 1 statement. At least one example used to defend the statement.	6 Content is mentioned in 1 or more statements but no examples offered to support statements.	5, 3, 0 Content is either never mentioned or statements about content are attempted but do not make sense. No examples are offered to support statements.	1. Use art terminology...  4. Observe a masterwork of visual art...	Communication  Critical Reasoning  Culture
Domain G Conclusion paragraph	10 Conclusion is present and relates to the thesis. 4 or more main points of the paper are summarized. Exceeds the scope of course requirements.	8 Conclusion is present and relates to the thesis. 3 main points of the paper are summarized.	7 Conclusion is present and relates to the thesis. 2 main points are summarized.	6 Conclusion mostly restates opening paragraph.	5, 3, 0 No conclusion, the paper just ends.	4. Observe a masterwork of visual art...	Communication  Critical Reasoning
Domain H The paper as a whole: Use of vocabulary words introduced in Art 1010	5 15 or more art vocabulary words used with understanding of their meaning.	4 11 to 14 art vocabulary words used with understanding of their meaning.	3 7 to 10 art vocabulary words are used with understanding of their meaning.	2 4 to 6 art vocabulary words are used with little understanding of their meaning.	1, 0 Fewer than 4 Art vocabulary words are used with little or no understanding of their meaning.	1. Use art terminology...	Communication
Domain I The paper as a whole: Grammar, spelling, sentence structure, documentation of sources (if applicable) using standard required by instructor, color reproductions of artwork provided using standard required by instructor, length and format of paper	5 Rules of grammar, usage, and punctuation are followed; spelling is correct. Language is clear and precise. Documentation of sources present (if necessary) using the standard required by instructor. Color reproductions provided using standard required by instructor. Paper meets specified length and format requirements.	4 Rules of grammar, usage, and punctuation are followed; spelling is correct. Language is clear. Documentation of sources present (if applicable) using the standard required by instructor. Color reproductions provided using standard required by instructor. Paper meets specified length and format requirements.	3 Paper contains few grammatical, punctuation and spelling errors. Language lacks clarity or includes the use of some jargon or conversational tone. Documentation of sources present (if applicable) using the standard required by instructor. Color reproductions provided. Paper meets specified length and format requirements.	2 Paper contains numerous grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors. Language uses jargon or conversational tone. And/or sources documented (if applicable) but standard required by instructor is not used. And/or paper does not meet specified length and/or format requirements. And/or color reproductions not provided.	1, 0 Student was unable to demonstrate enough knowledge to receive credit for the assignment. Sources not properly documented (if applicable). Paper does not meet specified length and/or format requirement. Color reproductions not provided.	1. Use art terminology...  4. Observe a masterwork of visual art...	Communication

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### NILOA Mission

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NILOA's primary objective is to discover and disseminate ways that academic programs and institutions can productively use assessment data internally to inform and strengthen undergraduate education, and externally to communicate with policy makers, families and other stakeholders.

### NILOA Occasional Paper Series

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NILOA Occasional Papers are commissioned to examine contemporary issues that will inform the academic community of the current state-of-the art of assessing learning outcomes in American higher education. The authors are asked to write for a general audience in order to provide comprehensive, accurate information about how institutions and other organizations can become more proficient at assessing and reporting student learning outcomes for the purposes of improving student learning and responsibly fulfilling expectations for transparency and accountability to policy makers and other external audiences.

Comments and questions about this paper should be sent to [niloa@education.illinois.edu](mailto:niloa@education.illinois.edu).

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## About NILOA

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- The National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) was established in December 2008.
- NILOA is co-located at the University of Illinois and Indiana University.
- The NILOA website contains free assessment resources and can be found at <http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/>.
- The NILOA research team has scanned institutional websites, surveyed chief academic officers, and commissioned a series of occasional papers.
- One of the co-principal NILOA investigators, George Kuh, founded the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE).
- The other co-principal investigator for NILOA, Stanley Ikenberry, was president of the University of Illinois from 1979 to 1995 and of the American Council of Education from 1996 to 2001.
- Peter Ewell joined NILOA as a senior scholar in November 2009.

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