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Developing Rubrics for Assessment in Non-Degree Granting Academic Programs

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Developing Rubrics for Assessment in Non-Degree Granting Academic Programs



Program & Grant Purpose

While assessment rubrics are available in many academic areas, they traditionally apply only to the degree-granting components in higher education. A collaborative effort among selected units of the Center for Academic Success Programs (CASP) is being undertaken to develop rubrics for use in assessment throughout the Academic Resource Center, Intellectual Skills Development Program, and Office of Transfer Student Services - three non-degree granting academic programs. Using the Association of American Colleges and Universities' (AAC&U) VALUE rubric as a model - both for style and mode of development, these three programs are working in partnership to develop and test rubrics which can then be adapted to other non-degree granting academic programs within the Center for Academic Success Programs and across the University.



The purpose of this grant is to support the design and analysis of the assessment component of the program. Specifically, the funding fostered:

- Purpose I:** The design and test of the rubrics for assessing student learning in non-degree granting units
- Purpose II:** The implementation of the assessment rubrics developed through Purpose I and
- Purpose III:** The expansion of the program to other programs within the University.

Grant Objectives

The 2012-13 assessment grant funding has aided in working toward the following objectives:

•**Objective 1:** Establish rubrics to be used to assess student learning from participation in non-degree granting academic programs

Objective 2: Test the validity of the rubrics by bringing professional staff and faculty into focus groups to use the proposed rubrics in trial settings

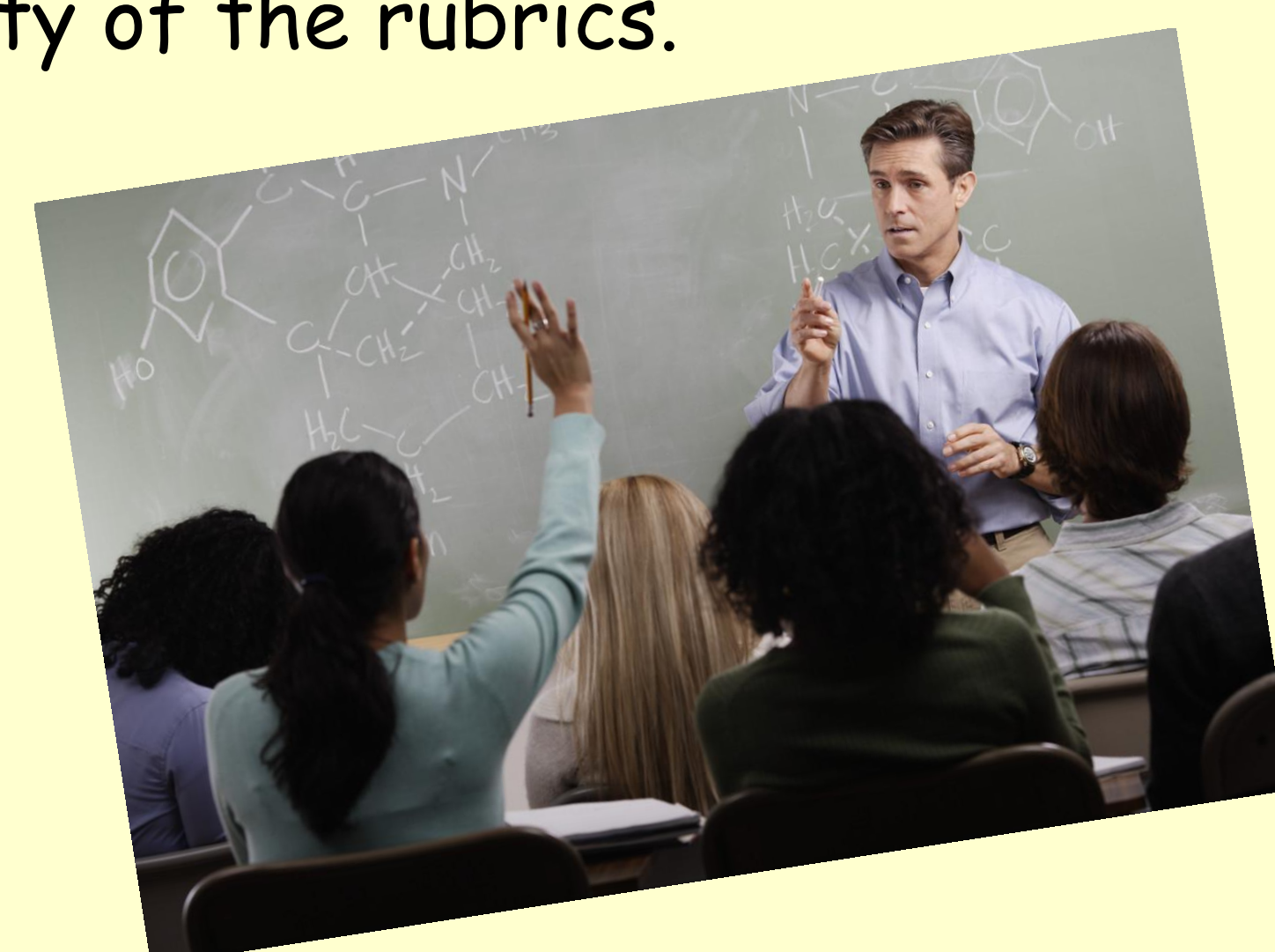
Objective 3: Revise the rubrics as deemed appropriate after the testing in Objective 2 and

Objective 4: Implement the use of rubrics throughout these programs.



Date Collection

When the focus groups complete the rubrics, an Excel spreadsheet is maintained to record the ratings, allowing us to compare validity and reliability of the rubrics.



Sample Rubrics

Below are samples of the rubrics being developed:

Critical Thinking Rubric			
Definition: <i>Comprehensively examine ideas, issues, etc. before accepting or disregarding; using the evaluation of the information to formulate an opinion or draw a conclusion.</i>			
	Minimal (Knowledge) = 1	Proficient (Application) = 2	Exemplary (Evaluation) = 3
Explanation of Issues	Able to state the issue under consideration, but provides no further information for clarification	Able to describe the issue under consideration in such a way so that others may understand with uncertainties being explored	Able to consider and articulate differing perspectives on the issue under consideration, describing processes, procedures, components, etc. in such a way that others are able to effectively draw their own conclusions
Information Use	Information is gathered without an examination of the validity of the source; viewpoints are accepted as fact	Quality of the source is accepted after minimal evaluation; begins to question the viewpoints before accepting them	Careful evaluation of the source is completed; viewpoints are thoroughly questioned before accepting
Influences	Demonstrates an awareness of assumptions	Identifies contexts related to position; aware of self-assumptions	Evaluates context regarding the position taken; analyzes assumptions of self and others
Conclusions or Opinions Drawn	Conclusion may or may not be tied to the information used; simplistic wrap up	Conclusion is logically connected to the information, including differing viewpoints	Conclusions and opinions are logical with evidence presented in a logical manner

The rubrics under development focus on:

1. Critical thinking
2. Reading skills
3. Written communication
4. Quantification skills
5. Problems solving
6. Campus awareness and resources
7. Degree awareness

Written Communication Rubric			
Definition: <i>Developing and expressing ideas through differing written expressions (e.g., traditional, online, data, images)</i>			
	Minimal (Knowledge) = 1	Proficient (Application) = 2	Exemplary (Evaluation) = 3
Purpose	Shows minimal understanding of audience and purpose	Shows awareness and consideration of audience and purpose of the writing	Shows a complete understanding of audience and purpose throughout the written piece
Content	Reflects simple idea development	Uses relevant content to develop and explore ideas	Uses relevant and compelling content to develop and explore ideas, drawing the readers to the conclusion drawn
Sources	Some use of sources support the concepts presented	Uses credible and relevant sources to support ideas	Uses strong, credible, scholarly sources to develop and support ideas
Rhetoric and Mechanics	Errors in usage inhibit clear meaning in the writing	Communicates in straightforward language with few errors so that meaning is conveyed	Communicates in a skillful language that is virtually free from error



Status

- 1) We've looked at samples of rubrics used in degree-granting areas.
- 2) We are still in the writing stage of the rubrics.
- 3) We will soon be working to develop the video-taped components to use for testing the rubrics on focus groups.
- 4) Then we will be conducting focus groups of professional staff and faculty.
- 5) Following comparison and analysis of the ratings using the rubrics as well as comments received from the focus groups, the rubrics will be revised and retested, if necessary.



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