

# Making the Most of the VALUE Rubrics:

—  
Interpretation, Application, & Meaningful Assessment

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# Discussion Overview:

1. Approach
2. Interpretation
3. Application

**Approach:**  
**The Tool Has to Match the Question**



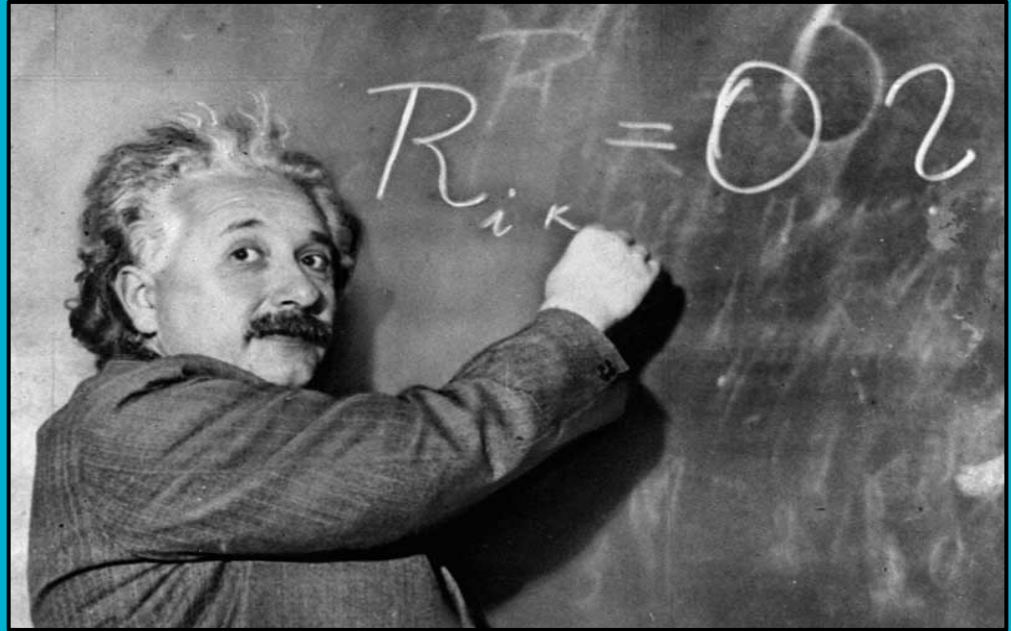
How should students be different by the time they leave from when they entered?

# The Value of a Liberal Education

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- Definition: A philosophy of learning; empowers & prepares individuals to deal with complexity, diversity, & change.
- Broad knowledge + in-depth study
- To encourage a sense of social responsibility, strong & transferable intellectual and practical skills & a demonstrated ability to apply knowledge.

*“Knowledge is nothing without imagination”*



# AAC&U's Essential Learning Outcomes

## **Goal: Knowledge of Human Cultures & Physical & Natural Worlds**

- Content areas

## **Goal: Intellectual & Practical Skills**

- Inquiry & Analysis
- Critical & Creative Thinking
  - Written & Oral Comm.
    - Reading
  - Quantitative Literacy
  - Information Literacy
- Teamwork & Problem-solving

## **Goal: Personal & Soc. Responsibility**

- Civic Knowledge
- Intercultural Knowledge
  - Ethical Reasoning
  - Lifelong Learning

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## **Goal: Integrative & Applied Learning**



## General Education Core:

- Ability to read effectively
- Ability to write coherently
- Ability to communicate orally
- Ability to analyze, discuss, and use quantitative information
- Ability to use information technologies



- Critical Thinking
- Global and Cultural Awareness
  - Information Literacy
  - Oral Communication
- Written Communication
- Quantitative Literacy



# GOOD ASSESSMENT → GOOD QUESTIONS + TRANSPARENCY (OF GOALS, FINDINGS, & ACTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT)

“I don’t know too many jobs that the job is being well-rounded. You know, it’s not like you’re going to work at ‘Well-Rounded, Inc’ or something.”

*Student (Wisconsin)*

“Tell me why this is important or at least tell me what your end goal is. ‘When you learn this, you’re going to become [a] better adult because blah-blah-blah.’ Tell me why this matters.”

*Student (Wisconsin)*



# The tool has to match the question:

*Does students' demonstrated learning improve over time?*



Demonstrated  
Competence

Across  
Multiple  
Dimensions



Over Time

Transparency

# Why are Rubrics Increasingly Being Used for Institutional-Level Assessment of Student Learning?

- Assessment of students' demonstrated performance & capacity for improvement
- Faculty-owned & institutionally shared
- Can be used for students' self-assessment of learning
- Increase transparency of what matters to institutions for student learning

# Interpretation: Understanding a “Meta” Rubric

# Available VALUE Rubrics

<https://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics>



## Campus Developed Rubrics:

- Work Ethic (Chatt State)
- Scientific Literacy (Tidewater CC)
- Personal Development (Tidewater CC)
- Pluralism (Elon University & Wofford College)

## Goal: Knowledge Areas

- *No Rubrics for content areas*

## Goal: Intellectual & Practical Skills

- Inquiry & Analysis
- Critical & Creative Thinking
  - Written & Oral Comm.
    - Reading
  - Quantitative Literacy
  - Information Literacy
- Teamwork & Problem-solving

## Goal: Personal & Soc. Responsibility

- Civic Knowledge
- Intercultural Knowledge
  - Ethical Reasoning
  - Lifelong Learning
  - Global Learning

## Goal: Integrative & Applied Learning

- Integrative and Applied Learning

# INTEGRATIVE LEARNING VALUE RUBRIC

for more information, please contact [valua@aacu.org](mailto:valua@aacu.org)



The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The core expectations articulated in all 15 of the VALUE rubrics can and should be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can be shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success.

## Definition

Integrative learning is an understanding and a disposition that a student builds across the curriculum and co-curriculum, from making simple connections among ideas and experiences to synthesizing and transferring learning to new, complex situations within and beyond the campus.

## Framing Language

Fostering students' abilities to integrate learning—across courses, over time, and between campus and community life—is one of the most important goals and challenges for higher education. Initially, students connect previous learning to new classroom learning. Later, significant knowledge within individual disciplines serves as the foundation, but integrative learning goes beyond academic boundaries. Indeed, integrative experiences often occur as learners address real-world problems, unscripted and sufficiently broad, to require multiple areas of knowledge and multiple modes of inquiry, offering multiple solutions and benefiting from multiple perspectives. Integrative learning also involves internal changes in the learner. These internal changes, which indicate growth as a confident, lifelong learner, include the ability to adapt one's intellectual skills, to contribute in a wide variety of situations, and to understand and develop individual purpose, values and ethics. Developing students' capacities for integrative learning is central to personal success, social responsibility, and civic engagement in today's global society. Students face a rapidly changing and increasingly connected world where integrative learning becomes not just a benefit...but a necessity.

Because integrative learning is about making connections, this learning may not be as evident in traditional academic artifacts, such as research papers and academic projects unless the student, for example, is prompted to draw implications for practice. These connections often surface, however, in reflective work, self-assessment, or creative endeavors of all kinds. Integrative assignments foster learning between courses or by connecting courses to experientially-based work. Work samples or collections of work that include such artifacts give evidence of integrative learning. Faculty are encouraged to look for evidence that the student connects the learning gained in classroom study to learning gained in real life situations that are related to other learning experiences, extra-curricular activities, or work. Through integrative learning, students pull together their study experience inside and outside of the formal classroom; thus, artificial barriers between formal study and informal or tacit learning become permeable. Integrative learning, whatever the context or source, builds upon connecting how theory in practice toward a deepened understanding.

Assignments to foster such connections and understanding could include, for example, composition papers that focus on topics from biology, economics, or history; mathematics assignments that apply mathematical tools to important issues and require written analysis to explain the implications and limitations of the mathematical treatment; or art history presentations that demonstrate aesthetic connections between selected paintings and novels. In this regard, some majors (e.g., interdisciplinary majors or problem-based field studies) seem to inherently evoke characteristics of integrative learning and result in work samples or collections of work that significantly demonstrate this outcome. However, fields of study that require accumulation of extensive and high-consensus content knowledge (such as accounting, engineering, astronomy) also involve the kinds of complex and integrative constructions (e.g., ethical dilemmas and social consciousness) that seem to be highlighted so extensively in self-reflection in arts and humanities, but they may be embedded in individual performances and less evident. The key in the development of such work samples or collections of work will be in designing structures that include artifacts and reflective writing or feedback that support students' examination of their learning and give evidence that, as graduates, they will extend their integrative abilities into the challenges of personal, professional, and civic life.

## Glossary

*The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.*

- ① Academic knowledge: Disciplinary learning; learning from academic study, texts, etc.
- ① Content: The information conveyed in the work samples or collections of work.
- ① Contexts: Actual or simulated situations in which a student demonstrates learning outcomes. New and challenging contexts encourage students to stretch beyond their current frames of reference.
- ① Co-curriculum: A parallel component of the academic curriculum that is in addition to formal classroom (student government, community service, residence hall activities, student organizations, etc.).
- ① Experience: Learning that takes place in a setting outside of the formal classroom, such as workplace, service learning site, internship site or another.
- ① Form: The external frameworks in which information and evidence are presented, ranging from choices for particular work sample or collection of works (such as a research paper, PowerPoint, video recording, etc.) to choices in make-up of the eportfolio.
- ① Performance: A dynamic and sustained act that brings together knowing and doing (creating a painting, solving an experimental design problem, developing a public relations strategy for a business, etc.); performance makes learning observable.
- ① Reflection: A meta-cognitive act of examining a performance in order to explore its significance and consequences.
- ① Self Assessment: Describing, interpreting, and judging a performance based on stated or implied expectations followed by planning for further learning.



# Criteria/Dimensions

## INTEGRATIVE LEARNING VALUE RUBRIC

for more information, please contact [ivalue@aacu.org](mailto:ivalue@aacu.org)



### Definition

Integrative learning is a learning and a disposition that a student builds across the curriculum and cocurriculum, from within and beyond the campus.

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does

# Performance Levels

	4 Capstone	3 Milestones	2	1 Benchmark
<b>Connections to Experience</b> <i>Connects relevant life experience and academic knowledge</i>	Meaningfully synthesizes connections among experiences outside of the formal classroom (including life experiences and academic experiences such as internships and travel abroad) to <b>deepen understanding</b> of fields of study and to broaden own points of view.	Effectively <b>selects and develops</b> examples of life experiences, drawn from a variety of contexts (e.g., family life, artistic participation, civic involvement, work experience), to <b>illuminate</b> concepts/theories/frameworks of fields of study.	<b>Compares</b> life experiences and academic knowledge to infer differences, as well as similarities, and <b>acknowledge perspectives</b> other than own.	<b>Identifies</b> connections between life experiences and those academic texts and ideas <b>perceived as similar and related</b> to own interests.
<b>Connections to Discipline</b> <i>Sees (makes) connections across disciplines, perspectives</i>	Independently creates wholes out of multiple parts (synthesizes) or draws conclusions by combining examples, facts, or theories from more than one field of study or perspective.	Independently connects examples, facts, or theories from more than one field of study or perspective.	When prompted, connects examples, facts, or theories from more than one field of study or perspective.	When prompted, presents examples, facts, or theories from more than one field of study or perspective.
<b>Transfer</b> <i>Adapts and applies skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations</i>	Adapts and applies, independently, skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations to <b>solve difficult problems or explore complex issues in original ways.</b>	Adapts and applies skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations to <b>solve problems or explore issues.</b>	Uses skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation in a new situation to <b>contribute to understanding of problems or issues.</b>	Uses, in a basic way, skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation in a <b>new situation.</b>
<b>Integrated Communication</b>	Fulfills the assignment(s) by choosing a format, language, or mode (or other visual representation) in which to communicate that is <b>meaningful</b> , making clear the interdependence of language: meaning, thought, and expression.	Fulfills the assignment(s) by choosing a format, language, or mode (or other visual representation) in which to communicate that is <b>meaningful</b> , making clear the interdependence of language: meaning, thought, and expression.	Fulfills the assignment(s) by choosing a format, language, or graph (or other visual representation) that <b>connects in a basic way</b> what is being communicated (content) with how it is said (form).	Fulfills the assignment(s) (i.e. to produce an essay, a poster, a video, a PowerPoint presentation, etc.) in an <b>appropriate form.</b>
<b>Reflection and Self-Assessment</b> <i>Demonstrates a developing sense of self as a learner, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts (may be evident in self-assessment, reflective, or creative work)</i>	Envisions a future self (and makes plans that build on past experiences) that have occurred in multiple and diverse contexts.	Envisions a future self (and makes plans that build on past experiences) that have occurred in multiple and diverse contexts.	Articulates strengths and challenges within specific performances or events) to <b>increase effectiveness</b> in different contexts (through increased self-awareness).	Describes own performances with general descriptors of success and failure.

Performance Descriptors

# Frequently Asked Questions

*Do the performance levels correspond with letter grades?*

**No.**

- Do the performance levels correspond to year in school?
  - **No. Learning is not linear.**
- How can faculty from score assignments from different disciplines?
  - **Focus on the broad skill & trans-disciplinary criteria. Assume content is correct.**
- Can rubrics be used by two-year institutions?
  - **Yes, adjust expectations for benchmarks and progress.**
- Can rubrics be used for course-level assessment?
  - **Yes, with modification to include content areas.**

**Application:  
Results, Lessons Learned, Professional  
Development**



# What does rubric data look like at the institutional level?

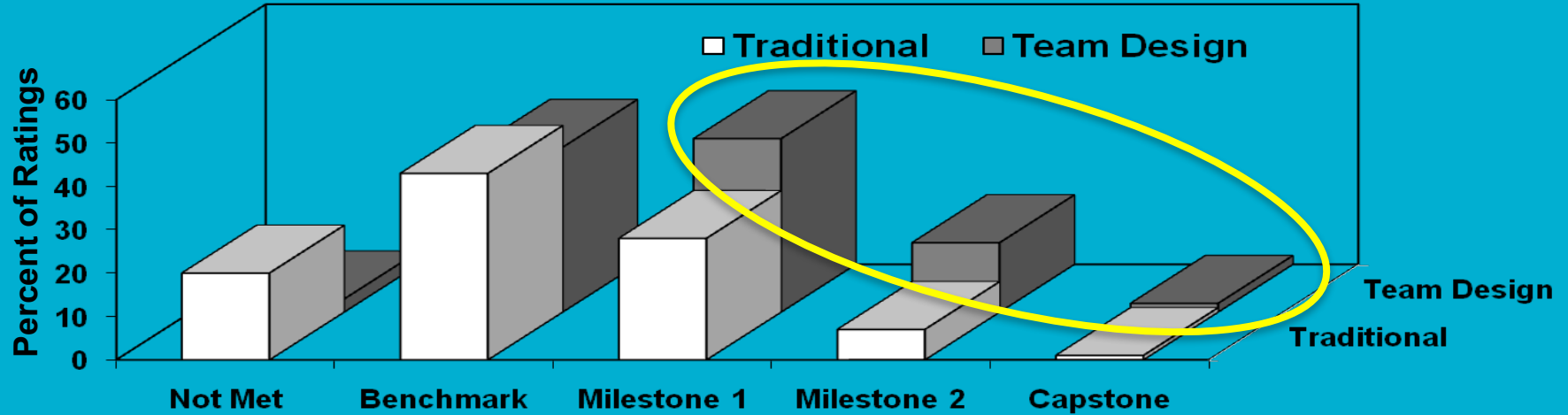
*From: UNC-Wilmington, Critical Thinking Rubric*

Dimension	% of students who scored 2 or higher	% of students who scored 3 or higher
Explanation of Issues	68.3	35.5
Interpreting & Analysis	65.0	28.2
Influence of Context and Assumptions	48.8	21.2
Student's position	54.5	24.0
Conclusions and related outcomes	47.7	17.0

# University of Kansas

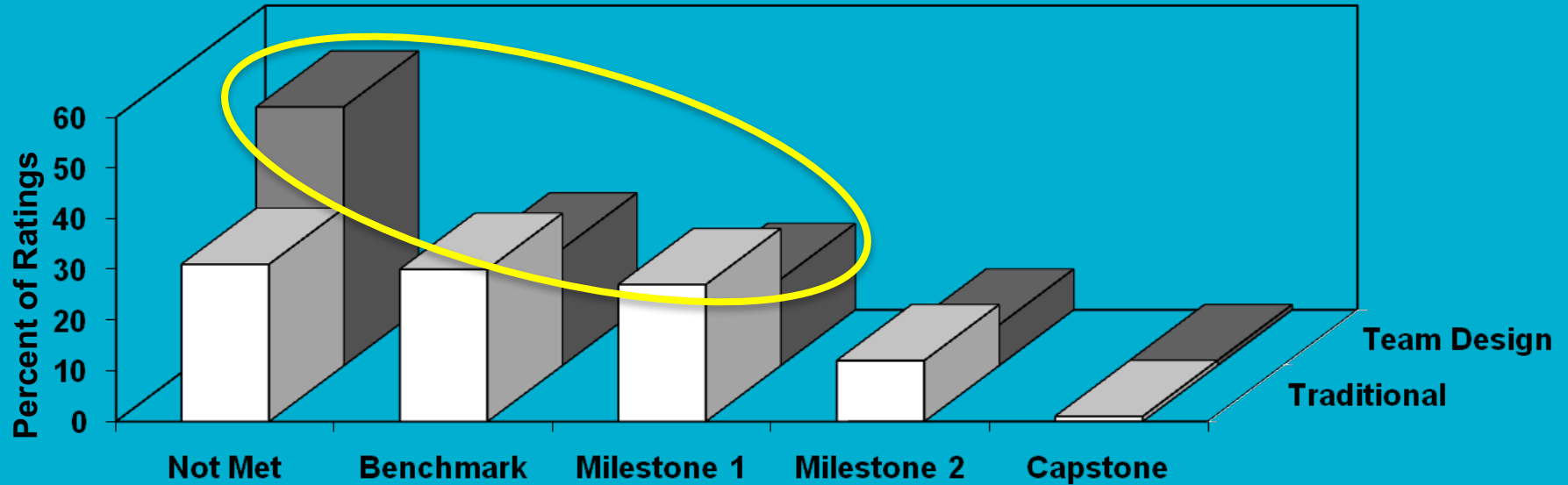
## Critical Thinking: Issues, Analysis, and Conclusions

Inter-rater reliability =  $>.8$



# University of Kansas

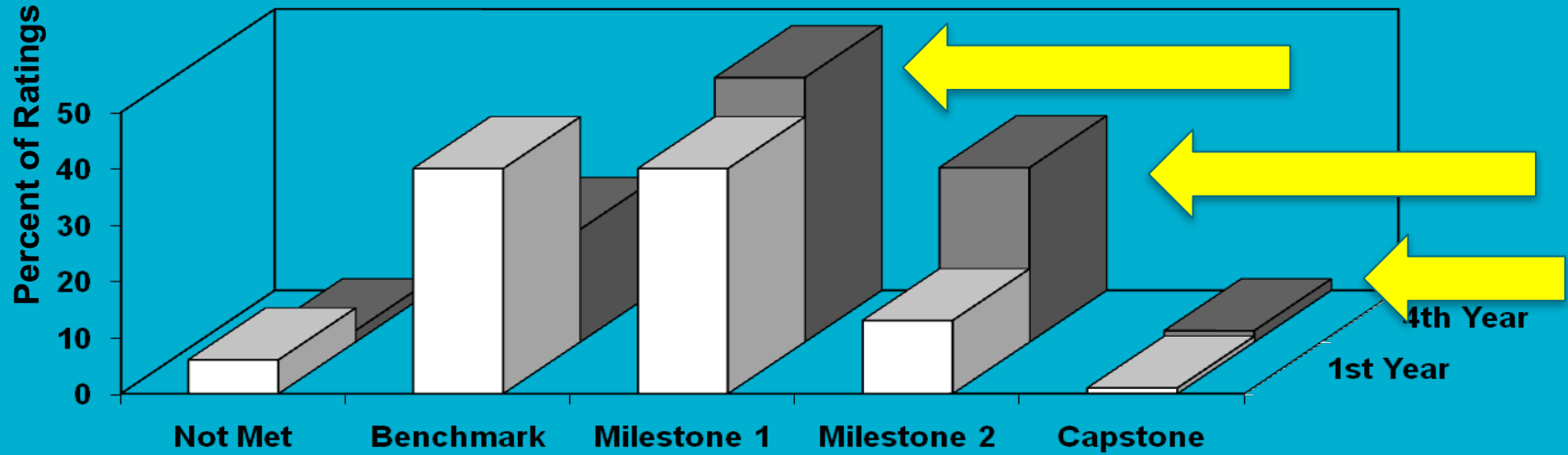
## Critical Thinking: Evaluation of Sources and Evidence



# University of Kansas

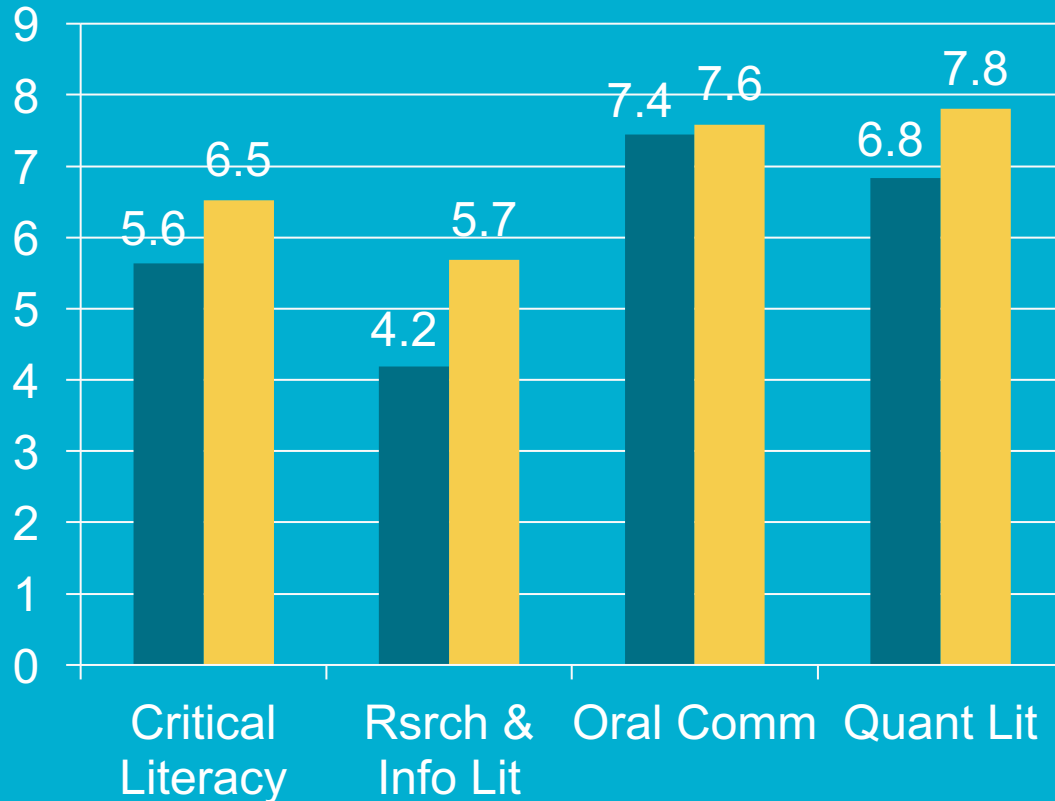
“VALUE added” for 4 years - writing

■ 1st Year     ■ 4th Year



# LaGuardia Community College

■ Lower Credit   ■ Higher Credit



Critical Literacy (CT, Rdg, Writing): 1,072 samples = gain of 0.88 bet. lower & higher credit students.

Research & Info. Literacy: 318 samples = gain of 1.49.

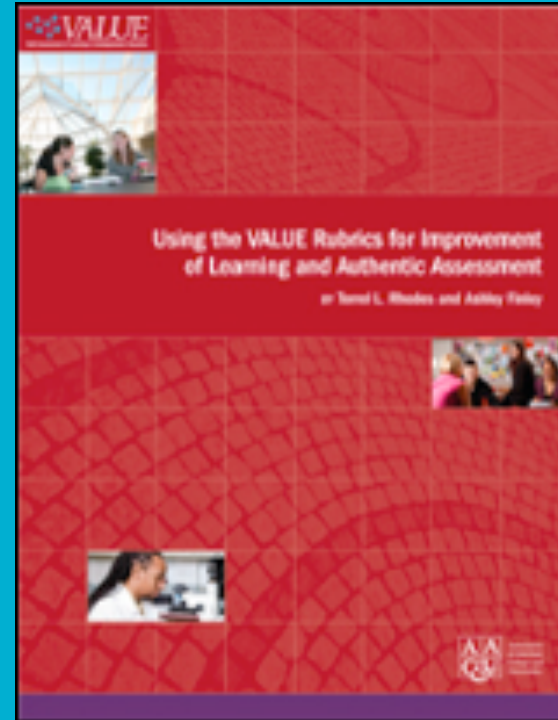
Oral Communication: 875 samples = gain of 0.14. 39% of samples not related to rubric.

Quantitative Literacy: 322 samples = gain of 0.97.

*Source: Middle States Accreditation Report*

# Examples of how campuses have used rubrics to improve learning

- *Using the VALUE Rubrics for Improvement of Learning and Authentic Assessment (2013)*
- Frequently asked questions
- Reliability, validity, and rubric modification
- 12 Case Studies  
(<https://www.aacu.org/value/casestudies>)



# Connecting Rubrics with Professional Development

- Calibration (norming) sessions
  - Assignment design workshops
  - Rubric modification workshops, specifically for adaptation of rubrics for program- or course-level assessment
  - Data-centered events focused on interpretation of institutional data, celebration of success and opportunity to gather recommendations for improvement
    - See, for example, SUNY-Geneseo's "Assesstivus"
-

A black and white photograph of a classroom. In the foreground, several students are seen from behind, sitting at desks. Their arms are raised high, indicating they want to ask a question or make a comment. The background shows a chalkboard filled with faint, illegible writing. The overall atmosphere is one of active participation in a lesson.

Questions?

Comments?



# Resources

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- Me: [ashley.finley@dominican.edu](mailto:ashley.finley@dominican.edu)
- VALUE Rubrics: <http://www.aacu.org/value/>
- VALUE Case Studies: <https://www.aacu.org/value/casestudies>
- Additional Campus Examples: <http://www.aacu.org/peerreview/pr-fa11wi12/>
- National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) Assignment Library: <http://www.assignmentlibrary.org/>
- Multi-State Collaborative Project: <http://www.sheeo.org/projects/msc-multi-state-collaborative-advance-learning-outcomes-assessment>