

# An Introduction to Assessment of Student Learning and Development

A Baruch College Learning Collaborative Workshop

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# Building the Learning Collaborative at Baruch College: Introductions

## Key takeaways

- Assessment is all effort to understand whether, and how well, we are doing what we claim to be doing.
- There are many approaches to assessment; it is best to have a holistic approach that incorporates multiple methods
- Assessment needs to be meaningful
  - Do not assess everything you do (you can't, and it's not helpful)
  - Meaning is co-created by stakeholders, so disseminate, discuss, reflect, and refine with others
- Assessment needs to be manageable
  - Pick one or two learning goals to assess each semester
  - Set a schedule that allows you to eventually assess all of your highest priority outcomes over no more than a three-year cycle
- We are building a community of practice around assessment. There are people and resources to support your work.

## What is teaching?

“Teaching is the art of changing the brain . . . creating the conditions that lead to change in a learner’s brain.”

Zull, J. (2002). *The art of changing the brain: Enriching the practice of teaching by exploring the biology of learning*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.

"Teaching is an art, but improving teaching is a science."

Gail Mellow, president of LaGuardia Community College, in an interview with Goldie Blumenstyk of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, published on March 4, 2019, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/Begin-to-Take-Teaching/245819>

**What is assessment of learning and development  
and who is responsible?**

## What is assessment?

- Assessment of student learning is "deciding what we want our students to learn and making sure they learn it." Assessment of student learning, according to Suskie, has three fundamental traits:
  - (1) It provides evidence of how well students are achieving key learning goals.
  - (2) The quality of that evidence is good enough that faculty and staff can use it to inform important decisions, especially regarding helping students learn.
  - (3) Evidence is used not only to assess the achievement of individual students but also to reflect on what faculty and staff are doing, and, if warranted, change what is being done

Suskie, L. *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*, (2018) Third edition. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. (p. 8.)

Suskie, L. Course vs. program vs. gen-ed assessment Blog post. September 28, 2013

<https://www.lindasuskie.com/apps/blog/show/33287598-course-vs-program-vs-gen-ed-assessment>

## Who is responsible for assessment?

- Assessment of student learning “in the classroom,” meaning courses taught as part of degree-awarding curricular program, is the responsibility of the faculty of Baruch College. Specifically, the Governance Charter of Baruch College states that

**[t]he School Faculties shall be responsible for and conduct all educational affairs including but not limited to affairs customarily conducted by an academic faculty: including the formulation of School policies relating to curriculum and degree requirements; academic credits; the granting of degrees; student admission and retention standards; and the academic status, role, obligations, and freedoms of the School Faculty.**

- Faculty are supported by a School-wide assessment manager, as well as department assessment coordinators.

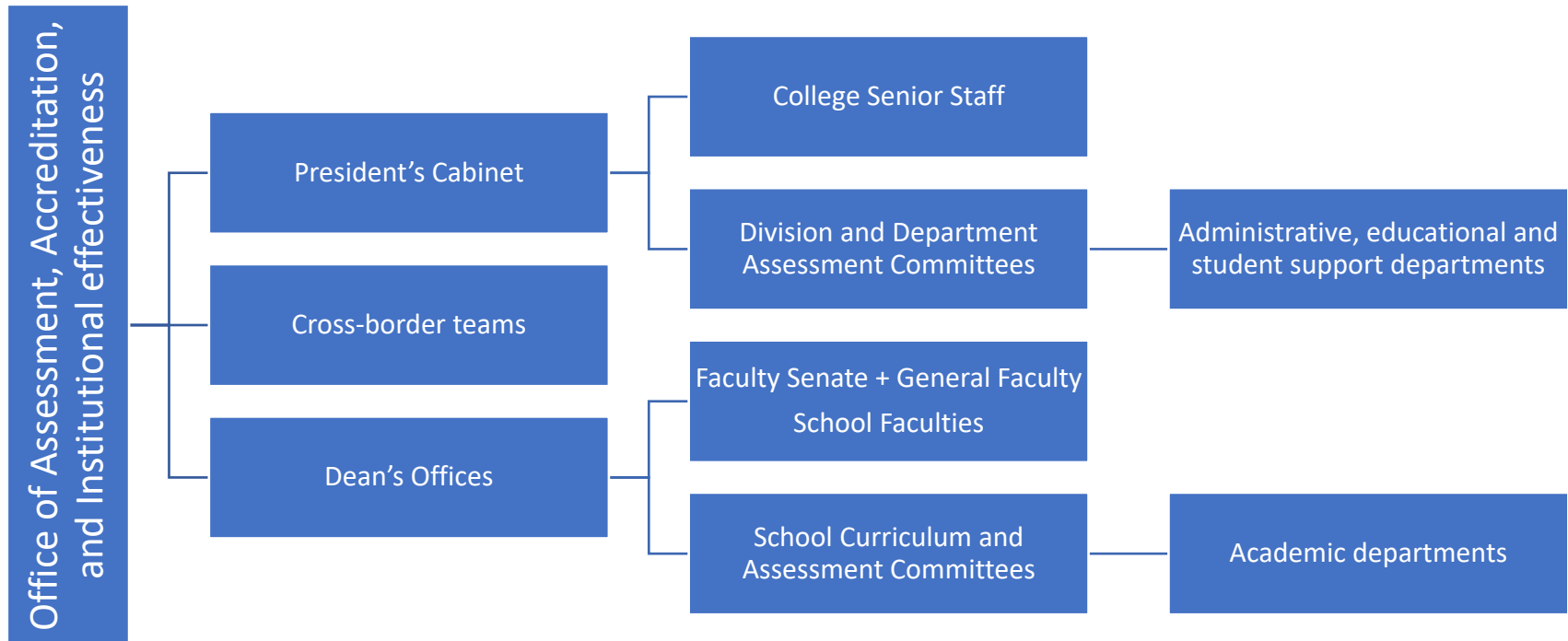
## Who is responsible for assessment?

- Student learning and development takes place in myriad ways “outside the classroom.” The Middle States Commission refers to non-academic units as Administrative and Educational and Student Support (AES) units.
- In these instances, assessment of AES units is the responsibility of the Vice Presidents.
- All administrative units must be assessed. Assessment of student learning and development (as opposed to other types of assessment) are the responsibility of the three student-facing divisions at Baruch College: Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Enrollment Management & Strategic Academic Initiatives, and is done by members of their staff in collaboration with the Office of Assessment, Accreditation, and Institutional Effectiveness.






## Assessment infrastructure at Baruch College



## What informs assessment at Baruch College?

## Multiple accountability frameworks

Government	Accreditation agencies	CUNY	Baruch College
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• U. S. Department of Education</li> <li>• New York State Education Department</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) – Baruch College</li> <li>• Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) – Zicklin</li> <li>• Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA) - Marxer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance</li> <li>• Connected CUNY Framework</li> <li>• Performance Management Process (PMP)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance</li> <li>• School and Division strategic plans</li> <li>• Faculty-designed curricula and learning goals</li> <li>• Learning, development, service and operational goals set by AES units</li> </ul> 

## Middle States Standards for Accreditation

- Standard I: Mission and Goals
- Standard II: Ethics and Integrity
- Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience
- Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience
- Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment
- Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement
- Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration

## Baruch College Strategic Plan 2018-2023: GOALS

- **Goal 1:** Uphold the College's long-standing commitments to excellent and effective teaching and learning.
- **Goal 2:** Create a vision for, and initiatives and policies to support, outstanding scholarship, research, and discovery.
- **Goal 3:** Regularly review and renew the curriculum to ensure students are prepared to engage the challenges and opportunities of a changing world.
- **Goal 4:** Increase students' engagement, academic momentum, degree completion, and post-graduation success.
- **Goal 5:** Elevate and embed the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and cultural competency throughout the College.
- **Goal 6:** Enhance faculty and staff satisfaction and engagement.

## Integration of assessment with mission and goals

### In the classroom

- When faculty engage in development of learning goals and assessment of student learning, the assessment process
  - Reflects the vision, mission, and goals of Baruch College
  - Reflects the values of each academic discipline
  - Reflects the learning goals of each school and department
  - Helps faculty reflect on and refine their approach to teaching
  - Helps departments reflect on and refine their curricula in a systematic way

## Integration of assessment with mission and goals

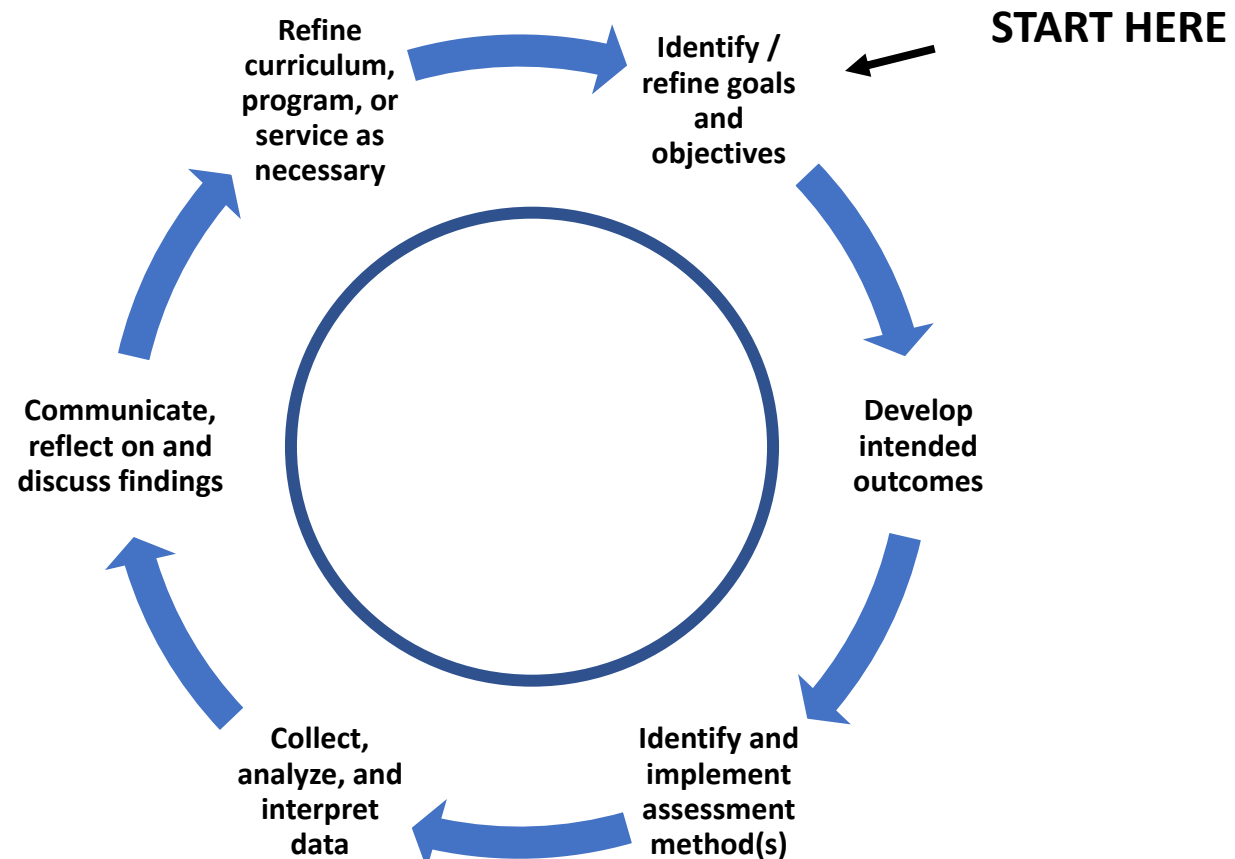
### Outside the classroom

- When administrators in AES units engage in development of learning goals and assessment of student learning, the assessment process
  - Reflects the vision, mission, and goals of Baruch College
  - Reflects the values of the division and department
  - Reflects the goals of each department
  - Helps administrators reflect on and refine their approach to teaching, training, and support
  - Helps departments reflect on and refine their programs and services in a systematic way

What is does the process of assessment look like?



## Assessment cycle



Baker, G. R., Jankowski, N. A., Provezis, S., & Kinzie, J. (2012). Using assessment results: Promising practices of institutions that do it well. National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment. Retrieved from [http://learningoutcomesassessment.org/documents/CrossCase\\_FINAL.pdf](http://learningoutcomesassessment.org/documents/CrossCase_FINAL.pdf)

Palomba, C. A., & Banta, T. W. (2014). Assessment essentials: Planning, implementing, and improving assessment in higher education. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

## Developing learning or development goals

- Best practices recommend defining four to six outcomes for both courses and academic programs.
- Consider the following questions:
  - What are the essential things that students must know and be able to do by the end of your academic program?
  - What measure will give the best evidence that a student is attaining an outcome? Will the measure also indicate the degree to which the outcomes are attained?
  - From whom will assessment evidence be gathered? From all students or only some?
  - At what frequency will assessment measures be administered? Who will review and report on the evidence gathered through the assessment measures?

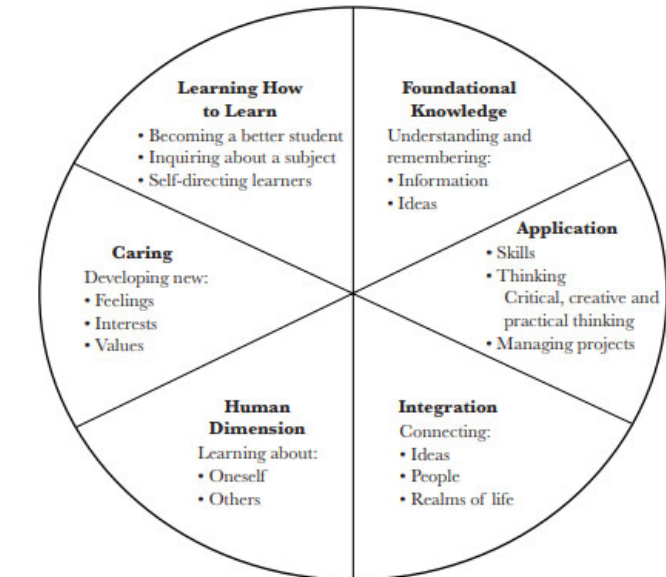
## Taxonomies can be useful

- Bloom's taxonomy (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2000)
  - Cognitive
    - Remember
    - Understand
    - Apply
    - Analyze
    - Evaluate
    - Create
  - Affective
  - Psychomotor

## Taxonomies can be useful

- Taxonomy of significant learning (Fink, 2013)
  - Foundational knowledge
  - Application
  - Integration
  - Human dimension
  - Caring
  - Learning how to learn

FIGURE 2.1. TAXONOMY OF SIGNIFICANT LEARNING.



## Identify intended outcomes

- Best practices recommend defining four to six outcomes for both courses and academic programs.
- Consider the following questions:
  - What are the essential things that students must know and be able to do by the end of your academic program?
  - What measure will give the best evidence that a student is attaining an outcome? Will the measure also indicate the degree to which the outcomes are attained?
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## Commonly accepted learning outcomes The AAC&U VALUE project

- **Intellectual and Practical Skills**
- [Information literacy](#)
- [Teamwork](#)
- [Foundations and skills for lifelong learning](#)
- [Inquiry and analysis](#)
- [Problem solving](#)
- [Global learning](#)
- [Critical thinking](#)
- **Personal and Social Responsibility**
- **Integrative and Applied Learning**
- [Creative thinking](#)
- [Civic engagement—local and global](#)
- [Integrative learning](#)
- [Written communication](#)
- [Intercultural knowledge and competence](#)
- [Oral communication](#)
- [Ethical reasoning](#)
- [Reading](#)
- [Quantitative literacy](#)

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

## Transferrable skills valued by employers

- Teamwork and collaboration
- Communication
- Real-world problem-solving
- Critical thinking and analysis
- Professionalism
- Working with people from diverse cultural backgrounds
- Flexibility and adaptability to change
- Creativity and innovation
- Ethical judgment
- Quantitative and technology skills

## Identify measures: Direct and indirect measures of assessment

- Direct measures of learning

With regard to student learning, a direct measure is when students have completed some work or product that demonstrates they have achieved the learning outcome, such as a capstone paper, an exam, an oral presentation, or a performance.

- Indirect measures of learning

With regard to student learning, an indirect measure is when proxy measure is used, such as participation in a learning activity, students' opinions about what was learned, student satisfaction, student self-report of skill level.



## Direct measures of assessment

- Assessment of an artifact of student work (i.e. a final paper, an oral presentation, etc.) using a rubric
- Examinations
- Direct observation of field work, internship, performance, service learning, or clinical experience, with notes recorded systematically
- Evaluation of capstone experiences, senior theses, exhibitions, portfolios, performances, research projects, presentations, dissertations, or oral defenses
- Scores and pass rates on appropriate licensure/certification exams (e.g., Praxis, NCLEX, CPA exam) or other published tests
- Employer and internship supervisor ratings of student skills
- Score gains between entry and exit on published or local tests or writing sample

## Indirect measures of assessment

- Course/Assignment grades
- Registration or course enrollment information
- Length of time to degree
- Number of student hours spent at activities relating to course
- Placement rates of graduates into appropriate career positions and starting salaries
- Focus Group/Exit Interviews with students, faculty/staff
- Alumni, employer, and student surveys (including satisfaction surveys)
- Quality/reputation of graduate and four-year programs into which alumni are accepted

## What is a rubric?

- rubric
- [noun](#)
- ru·bric | \ 'rū-brik , - ,brik\
- Definition of rubric
- 1 a : an authoritative rule especially : a rule for conduct of a liturgical service
- b : (1) : [NAME](#), [TITLE](#) specifically : the title of a statute
- (2) : something under which a thing is classed : [CATEGORY](#)  
the sensations falling under the general rubric, "pressure"— F. A. Geldard
- c : an explanatory or introductory commentary : [GLOSS](#)  
specifically : an editorial interpolation
- 2 : a heading of a part of a book or manuscript done or underlined in a color (such as red) different from the rest
- 3 : an established rule, tradition, or custom
- 4 : **a guide listing specific criteria for grading or scoring academic papers, projects, or tests**

## How do we use a rubric?

- When using a rubric for program assessment purposes, faculty members apply the rubric to a piece of student work (e.g., reports, oral presentations, design projects).
- To produce dependable scores, each faculty member needs to interpret the rubric in the same way.
- The process of training faculty members to apply the rubric is called "norming." Norming is a way to calibrate the faculty members so that scores are accurate and consistent across the faculty.

Now what?

## Beginning or continuing your assessment journey

- Take a deep breath
- Commit to continuing to learn about assessment
- Read and learn more with your Baruch colleagues by accessing the Baruch College Learning Collaborative site at <https://www.baruch.cuny.edu/confluence/display/OAAIE/Office+of+Assessment%2C+Accreditation%2C+and+Institutional+Effectiveness+Learning+Collaborative>
- Call or email me for a consultation meeting.

## Thank you!

- Thank you for participating in this workshop!
- You will receive a follow-up survey evaluating this workshop, as well as an email with additional resources
- Keep in touch. Let me know
  - How you are applying what you learned and discussed here today
  - What additional workshop topics are of interest to you
  - How I can continue to support you, your School, Division, or Department

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