

# Value-Added Assessment of General Education Outcomes

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I. **This session addresses the process of developing and refining a college-wide assessment system to measure learning outcomes tied to an institution's mission statement.** This developmental process included:

- examination of the mission statement for desired learning outcomes
- identification of the value being added to the students during their college experience
- determination of what meaningful evidence to collect to measure the desired value-added learning outcomes
- description of a mechanism for collecting the evidence and providing useful feedback for enhanced student achievement
- analysis of findings for areas of weakness and how these elements can be remediated

We developed a first year/senior faculty assessment to measure students' achievement in critical reading, analytical reasoning, persuasive communication, and personal growth and citizenship both upon entering and exiting the college. The revision process in order to better assess the college-wide goal of preparing liberally educated individuals is the focus of this discussion.

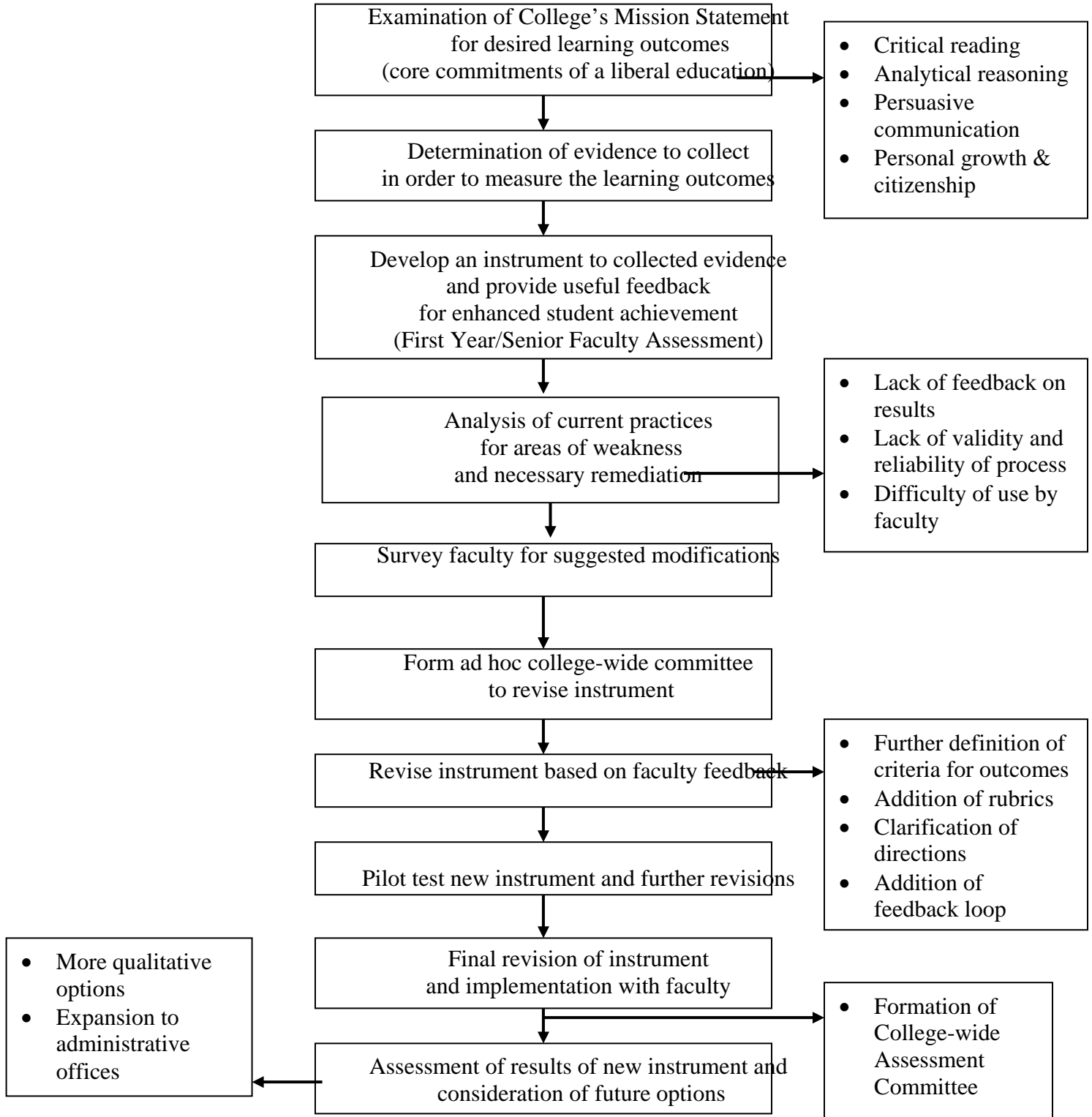
II. **The assessment of student learning outcomes begins with educational values, and is not an end in itself but a vehicle for educational improvement.** While similar core learning outcomes may be agreed upon across different types of institutions, each college/university can apply the developmental system explained in this session's case study example to create its own value-added assessment system. Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that the institution has agreed upon to promote change and achieve its stated goals. Faculty and administration already on every campus have the skills to address this form of systematic inquiry that will result in benefit to the college/university.

A. **What do you identify as your own individually designed student learning goals based on their institution's own educational values, as articulated in its mission statement?**

B. **What instruments do you currently use to assess the value added by general education?**

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## LAKE FOREST COLLEGE, LAKE FOREST, IL

### FACULTY ASSESSMENT OF FIRST YEAR/SENIOR STUDENT LEARNING

#### Statement of Purpose

As part of the College's plan for assessing student learning, we need to evaluate how successfully our students are achieving the goals the College sets for them. Moreover, our accrediting body, the North Central Association, has mandated the College to assess how well it is achieving its goals for student learning. The College's Mission Statement defines our core institutional goals with respect to the education of our students:

*We encourage students to read critically, reason analytically, communicate persuasively, and, above all, to think for themselves...*

*Lake Forest College celebrates the personal growth that accompanies the quest for excellence. We...prepare our students to become responsible citizens of the global community.*

How closely does aspiration match reality? How well, in fact, do our students learn the skills of critical reading, analytical reasoning, and persuasive communication? To what extent do our students achieve personal growth and learn to become responsible citizens in our courses?

A major component in measuring our students' progress over their four years at Lake Forest College is the attached assessment form. This form is in its second generation for assessing growth in student learning between the first year and the senior year, and reflects modifications suggested by faculty members to make the process both easier and more valid. This form is approved for this use by both the Academic Resources and Review Committee and the First Year Studies Committee. Thus, we ask that you complete one form for each student in your First Year Studies or Senior Studies class/thesis. A summary of the results will be shared with all faculty members.

#### Guidelines:

1. The instrument asks you to rate each student on four core institutional goals, and provide an overall assessment of each student with respect to each outcome on a scale from 5 (highest) to 1 (lowest), with a mid-point of 3. Each goal also has specific sub-sections for which you are asked to rate each student on the 1-5 scale. To the extent possible, do NOT compare each student to others in the course, but rather evaluate the student according to an ideal of each measure based on the range of all students you have taught - first year students through seniors. The goal is to allow all faculty members to measure by the same standard each time the student is assessed, so please consider our expectations for a graduate of Lake Forest College.
2. If there are some questions that you cannot answer based on your course, please circle "N.A."
3. Please add your own comments, if desired, in the spaces provided at the end of each section.
4. Please return the completed forms en masse to the Dean of the Faculty Office by the date indicated on the cover letter. Since these forms will be used only for institutional assessment purposes, they will be held in confidence by the DOF Office and will not be seen by students (unless the instructor chooses otherwise). The forms will be stored separately from course evaluations and faculty members' individual files. These forms will play no role in the faculty evaluation process.

We recognize that this necessary activity requires a significant amount of your time. We thank you for your cooperation and efforts.

**LAKE FOREST COLLEGE, LAKE FOREST, IL  
FIRST YEAR/SENIOR FACULTY ASSESSMENT**

**LABEL GOES HERE** **STUDENT GRADE IN THE COURSE** \_\_\_\_\_

**1. CRITICAL READING**

*Mission Statement goal:* “Encourage students to read critically.”

*Expected Outcome:* Lake Forest students, using criteria they can define and justify, are able to evaluate a wide variety of written texts.

Please rate the student on the following criteria relating to **critical reading**. For each criterion, please circle the appropriate number.

**A. Student is able to summarize the principal idea(s) of readings used in this course.**

Target Performance: Student insightfully summarizes and interprets the principal ideas, and shows advanced knowledge and deep understanding of the content of course readings

Rating	Level	Criteria
5	Very high ability	Exceptionally insightful, advanced understanding of course readings
4	Good ability	Generally accurate, good understanding of course readings
3	Intermediate ability	Adequate summaries, interpretations, understanding of course readings
2	Beginning ability	Has difficulty interpreting , shows beginning understanding of course readings
1	Very poor ability	Fails to summarize, interpret or understand course readings
N/A	Not applicable	

**B. Student is able to identify the underlying assumptions and value judgments of course readings.**

Target Performance: Student clearly and insightfully identifies the underlying assumptions and value judgments, identifies all relevant issues, and draws warranted conclusions from a variety of course readings.

Rating	Level	Criteria
5	Very high ability	Insightfully identifies assumptions and draws clear, warranted conclusions
4	Good ability	Accurately identifies most assumptions and draws clear conclusions
3	Intermediate ability	Adequately identifies some assumptions and draws conclusions
2	Beginning ability	Has difficulty identifying assumptions and draws only partial conclusions
1	Very poor ability	Fails to identify assumptions and draws unwarranted conclusions
N/A	Not applicable	

**C. Student is able to evaluate the merit of course readings based on critical and analytical criteria (including, where appropriate, criteria derived from scientific and/or quantitative reasoning).**

Target Performance: Student clearly shows sophisticated ability to evaluate the merits of course readings based on critical and analytical criteria that go beyond the minimum requirements.

Rating	Level	Criteria
5	Very high ability	Sophisticated evaluation of merits of readings going beyond minimum requirements
4	Good ability	Good evaluation of merits of readings
3	Intermediate ability	Some evaluation of merits of readings
2	Beginning ability	Has difficulty evaluating merits of readings
1	Very poor ability	Fails to evaluate merits of readings
N/A	Not applicable	

**Overall, student is able to read critically.**

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_ N.A.  
 Extremely poorly                      Neither poorly nor well                      Extremely well

**Comments:**

## 2. ANALYTICAL REASONING

*Mission Statement goal:* “Encourage students to reason analytically.”

*Expected Outcome:* Lake Forest students are able to use appropriate logic, evidence, and argument in addressing intellectual problems.

Please rate the student on the following criteria relating to **analytical reasoning**. For each criterion, please circle the appropriate number.

### A. The student is able to develop and evaluate a claim, argument, or hypothesis.

Target Performance: Student insightfully organizes own ideas and data using the methodologies of the course, provides specific, original, logical, and well reasoned support for a position, and shows advanced ability to evaluate a claim, argument, or hypothesis.

Rating	Level	Criteria
5	Very high ability	Insightfully organizes own ideas; advanced ability to evaluate an argument
4	Good ability	Accurately organizes own ideas; good ability to evaluate an argument
3	Intermediate ability	Adequately organizes ideas; intermediate ability to evaluate an argument
2	Beginning ability	Has difficulty organizing ideas; beginning ability to evaluate an argument
1	Very poor ability	Fails to organize ideas; inadequate ability to evaluate an argument
N/A	Not applicable	

### B. The student extends ideas developed in the course.

Target Performance: Student clearly and insightfully extends ideas developed in the course into a wide variety of new situations involving intellectual problems, and takes a risk to produce own original and creative work by connecting with newly discovered understandings.

Rating	Level	Criteria
5	Very high ability	Insightfully extends course ideas into new situations; connects to new understandings
4	Good ability	Accurately extends course ideas into new situations; connects to prior knowledge
3	Intermediate ability	Attempts to extend course ideas into some new situations, without connections
2	Beginning ability	Has difficulty extending course ideas into new situations
1	Very poor ability	Fails to extend course ideas to new situations
N/A	Not applicable	

### C. The student extracts meaning from primary source material.

Target Performance: Student clearly shows sophisticated understanding of primary source material (including raw data), and can analyze the material with critical reasoning that shows a high degree of insight.

Rating	Level	Criteria
5	Very high ability	Sophisticated understanding with high degree of insight
4	Good ability	Clear understanding with good degree of insight
3	Intermediate ability	Some understanding with sufficient degree of insight
2	Beginning ability	Has difficulty understanding, and lacks sufficient insight
1	Very poor ability	Fails to understand with any degree of insight
N/A	Not applicable	

**Overall, student is able to reason analytically.**

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5  
 Extremely                      Neither poorly                      Extremely  
 poorly                              nor well                              well

**Comments:**

### 3. PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION

*Mission Statement goal:* “Encourage students to communicate persuasively.”

*Expected Outcome:* Lake Forest students can contribute to intellectual interchange in both writing and speaking. They

can write cogently and logically. They can also speak in an articulate, organized manner and engage others through class presentations and intellectual discussion.

Please rate the student on the following criteria relating to **persuasive communication**. For each criterion, please circle the appropriate number.

#### A. The student writes using standard English grammar, syntax, and punctuation.

Target Performance: Student writes clearly, economically, cogently, and logically, and shows advanced ability to use correct language mechanics, that avoids slang or clichés, with no errors in standard English grammar, syntax, and punctuation.

Rating	Level	Criteria
5	Very high ability	Writes cogently and logically; shows advanced ability to use correct mechanics
4	Good ability	Writes accurately; shows good ability to use correct mechanics
3	Intermediate ability	Writes adequately; shows intermediate ability to use correct mechanics
2	Beginning ability	Has difficulty writing clearly; shows beginning ability to use correct mechanics
1	Very poor ability	Fails to write adequately; shows no ability to use correct mechanics
N/A	Not applicable	

#### B. The student writes to present and develop a clear thesis.

Target Performance: Student clearly and insightfully writes an original paper that raises a significant problem, with a clearly isolated and stated thesis, all points well supported by thoughtful, critical, specific, and convincing response based on his/her own thinking.

Rating	Level	Criteria
5	Very high ability	Insightfully raises a significant problem with clear thesis; all points well supported
4	Good ability	Accurately raises a relevant problem, with clear thesis; most points supported
3	Intermediate ability	Adequately raises a problem with vague thesis; points minimally supported
2	Beginning ability	Has difficulty raising a problem, stating a thesis, or providing support
1	Very poor ability	Fails to raise a relevant problem; lacks a thesis; points not supported
N/A	Not applicable	

#### C. The student prepares and delivers a presentation in class.

Target Performance: Student prepares and delivers an insightful, organized, engaging, and substantive presentation for the class that demonstrates strong ability to express him/herself clearly with evidence to support a position and answers to objection from the audience.

Rating	Level	Criteria
5	Very high ability	Insightful, organized, substantive presentation that demonstrates strong ability to express self clearly
4	Good ability	Engaging and substantive presentation that demonstrates good ability to express self clearly
3	Intermediate ability	Adequate presentation that demonstrates some ability to express self clearly
2	Beginning ability	Has difficulty making a presentation; demonstrates only minimal ability to express self clearly
1	Very poor ability	Fails to make a presentation; does not express self clearly
N/A	Not applicable	



