

Adapting to the New Core Assessment without Losing Your Sanity

Keep it minimally invasive.

Consider using assessments, assignments, projects already being collected and evaluated.

Embrace efficiency.

It's okay to assess all four core objectives with one instrument if the nature of the assignment permits it. Also, remember that only two core objectives are assessed at a time (after Spring), so it is feasible and might be wise to cover the four objectives with 2 tasks instead of 1. For instance, Communication and Critical Thinking are both assessed on the same years in every core section, so an assignment that enables you to assess both of those objectives at once kills two of the four birds you're aiming for. If your other two objectives are, say, Teamwork and Personal Responsibility, you could have a second assignment that addresses those two objectives at the same time. Again, though, if you can think of a way to cover all four with a single instrument, that is fine, too! Just remember that each objective you align with the assignment will require four indicators (criteria) from the associated rubric, so an assignment that aligns with four objectives would require *sixteen* indicators. It is difficult, though possible, to come up with an assignment rich enough to enable evaluation of so many features.

Invent minimally.

The more that is new, the more there is to go wrong, so it may be better to tweak something that already exists than to create a new assignment from scratch. Among the better options for programs or departments to think about are any assignments common to all sections of a particular course or assignments that exist in multiple levels of a course sequence.

Identify appropriate criteria.

For each objective pick the four indicators (i.e., criteria, or rows) from each applicable rubric that best capture what students should be able to do. *You do not need to evaluate every indicator on the rubric, just four from each one you're filling out.*

Use the feedback and customization options.

If the rubrics' indicators don't cover your needs, suggest tweaks or alternative descriptors that might help you assess better. The rubrics include links to a Google Doc where you can suggest edits. If you have trouble finding four indicators that match what your students are doing, pick the three closest candidates, and then use the blank option at the bottom of the rubric to write-in one.

Remember that all modes lead to Rome.

It may look like any artifact needs to be written, but we can assess team oral presentations, debates, dialogues, negotiations, simulations, discussion board threads, wikis, even exams involving multiple short written responses (say, one per indicator).

Don't limit your thinking.

Reading comprehension is part of Communication. A student's understanding of key terms, allusions, jargon of a field contributes to communication skill and can be assessed in relatively straightforward ways. A student's ability to convey fairly multiple perspectives on a subject is a Teamwork skill, as is listening. Academic integrity is part of Personal Responsibility, as is keeping one's commitments to a team project.