

Glossary of Student Learning Assessment Terminology at NJCU

Term	Meaning
Analytical Scoring	For rubrics: Process in which student work is scored on multiple criteria or dimensions. Each criterion is scored separately. See Holistic Scoring for alternative method.
Anchor	For rubrics: A product or performance that exemplifies a specific performance level on the scoring scale. Also called: <i>Exemplar</i>
Artifact	A student product or performance that is used as evidence for assessment. Artifacts include papers, exams, projects, presentations, activities, etc.
Assessment	Systematic and ongoing process designed to understand and improve student learning.
Assessment Cycle	The steps of the assessment process that are repeated continuously. The steps are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Articulate desired outcomes ○ Gather evidence related to the outcomes ○ Use results to improve outcomes
Assessment Plan	Term referring to the first two aspects of the assessment cycle: desired outcomes and the type of evidence that is used. Assessment plans can be for courses or programs.
Benchmark	A standard of performance or desired level of competency. For instance, a score of “competent” on a rubric, a score of 3 out of 4 on a practicum performance, 85% correct on a test, etc.
Bloom’s Taxonomy, Cognitive Domain	A classification system that describes increasing levels of complexity/sophistication for cognitive processes. In assessment, Bloom’s Taxonomy provides guidance for writing learning outcomes. The original version of the taxonomy is: knowledge (lowest level), comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation (highest level). The revised version uses the terms (also in increasing order): remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, creating.
Calibration	For rubrics: Process to establish consistency in use of rubrics. Calibration sessions involve discussion and practice among raters. Raters develop a collective understanding of criteria and performance levels by iteratively scoring sample products individually and discussing differences. Also called: <i>Rater Calibration</i>
Checklist	List of characteristics or behaviors that is used to guide scoring of student work/performance.
Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs)	Simple methods for formative assessment in a classroom. The techniques provide feedback on student learning and the success of instructional methods. Examples of CATs include: one minute paper, muddiest point, and directed paraphrasing.
Closing the loop	Derived from the notion of the assessment cycle. Closing the loop refers to using assessment results to improve student learning – through changes in curriculum, instruction, or the like.
Course-Level Assessment	Involves assessing learning outcomes for a particular course. Data are typically collected within the course and actions taken are typically course-specific.

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Criteria Also called: <i>Dimensions, Performance Criteria, Traits</i>	For rubrics: The attributes, characteristics, aspects, or elements on which student performance is evaluated. Criteria are the focus areas for assessment.
Curriculum Map	Table or matrix listing outcomes in rows and program courses in columns. The mapping process involves denoting in what courses the outcomes are addressed. Analysis of the maps can reveal areas for improvement such as an outcome that is not addressed in any course, or a course that does not address any of the outcomes.
Dimensions	See Criteria
Direct Assessment	Utilizes data or evidence of actual student work or behavior. Direct assessment measures include student products and performances such as papers, recitals, observations of internship work, and tests.
e-portfolio	A portfolio that is stored electronically.
Embedded Assessment	Assessment in which measures are embedded or included in regular coursework. Embedded assessment uses key or signature assignments.
Exemplar	See Anchor
Formative Assessment	Assessment done during (rather than at the end of) a topic, course, or program. The purpose is to provide feedback and an opportunity for improvement. Compare to summative assessment .
Goal	Some institutions make a distinction between learning goal and learning outcome. Others – like NJCU – use them interchangeably. See Outcome
Holistic Scoring	For rubrics: Process in which student work is scored based on the product or performance as a whole. This results in a single score. See Analytical Scoring for alternative method.
Indirect Assessment	Utilizes data or evidence of factors related to student learning, but that are not evidence of actual student learning. Indirect assessment measures include student ratings of their engagement, class attendance, and student self-assessments. Indirect assessment results can provide valuable contextual information for interpreting results of direct assessment.
Key Assignment Also called: <i>Signature Assignment</i>	Assignments that are embedded in a course and used for both determining student grades and for course or program assessment. These assignments align with a specific outcome and provide evidence of student achievement on said outcome.
Learning Outcome	See Outcome
Outcome Also called: <i>Learning Outcome</i>	Results of learning described in observable, measureable terms related to the skills, knowledge, abilities, attitudes, or dispositions students will demonstrate.
Performance Criteria	See Criteria
Performance Level	For rubrics: A specific point on the scoring scale in the rubric.
Portfolio	A purposeful collection of student work collected over time. Portfolios are used to show growth and achievement relative to specific learning outcomes.

Term	Meaning
Performance Target	See Target
Program-Level Assessment	Involves assessing learning outcomes for a program. Data can be collected within a course or courses, but the focus of analysis and actions consider the program as a whole. Data are often collected at multiple time points throughout the program curriculum.
Rater Calibration	See Calibration
Rating Scale	See Scoring Scale
Reliability	Consistency, such as consistently measuring skill, knowledge, or performance.
Rubric	A scoring guide that describes expectations for a product or performance. Rubrics clearly describe criteria and performance levels for products or performances. Rubrics are used to communicate expectations to students and to facilitate objective and consistent scoring.
Scoring Scale	For rubrics: The continuum used to rate performance quality. A scale has a specific number of performance levels.
<i>Also called: Rating Scale</i>	
Signature Assignment	See Key Assignment
Summative Assessment	Assessment performed near the end of a topic, course, or program. The purpose is to provide information on final achievement. Compare to formative assessment .
Target	For program-level assessment, the target is the percent of students that meet or exceed the benchmark. For instance, a target may be 90% of students achieve the benchmark of “competent” based on the rubric used to assess performance on the embedded assignment.
<i>Also called: Performance Target</i>	
Traits	See Criteria
Validity	Accuracy, such as accurately measuring what one intends to measure.
Value Added Assessment	Assessment that demonstrates growth through a course or program. The purpose is to characterize the value that the course/program adds to students’ knowledge and abilities. An example of a value added assessment is a pre-post test.

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