

Graduate Outcomes Assessment

A “Make it and Take it” Workshop

Presented by the CHFA SOA Committee
November 13, 2006

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Oklahoma State University. This workshop is based
on a model presented by OSU at the Higher
Learning Commission Meeting, April, 2006.*

Session goals

- To introduce key principles and processes of graduate level assessment.
- To share a strategy for faculty engagement with graduate assessment.
- To enable participants to create a structurally sound framework for graduate SOA that they can embellish later in conversation with program colleagues.

Getting Started: CHFA SOA Best Practices

- Assessment is integrated seamlessly with the Dean's Annual Report, the Curricular Process, and Academic Program Review.

CHFA SOA Process

- Assessment looks at programs rather than at individual courses.
- The number of learning goals and outcomes is small.

More Best Practices:

- Graduate-level assessment most often uses actual student work: sample papers/creative work; comprehensive exams; theses/research papers.
- Students know program goals and outcomes.
- Assessment is a faculty-driven, collective practice.

The #1 Best Practice:

“Don’t ask if you don’t want to know.”

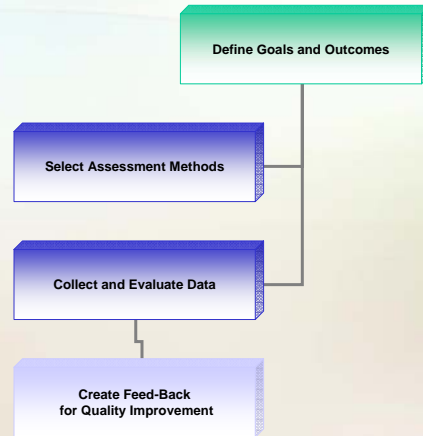
If you have no interest in your graduate students’ oral communication skills, DON’T make “excellent oral communication skills” a learning goal. Focus on graduate learning goals in which program faculty are deeply invested.

Graduate Assessment Basics:

- **Why?** To enhance student learning and development.
- **What?** The process of systematically collecting and using information to increase students’ learning and improve the program.
- **When?** Ongoing. Not just when reports are due.
- **How?** Collect student work and use rubrics (lists of criteria) to evaluate the achievement of learning outcomes.
- **Who?** Data are aggregated, yielding information about a group of students. Data are anonymous (student and faculty names are removed).

Assessment Elements

A Four-Step Process



Outcomes: The Driving Questions

- What do we want our master's students to learn before they graduate?
- What skills and knowledge will they be able to demonstrate at the conclusion of their master's program?

Examples of Outcomes

- Oral Communication Skills
- Written Communication Skills
 - for Researchers/scholars
 - for Professionals
- Research/Creative Skills

Small Group Work

- Brainstorm response to driving questions by individually generating a list of 3-5 learning goals.
- Share with your group.
- Solicit critiques and modify your goals.
- Share two goals with the larger group.

Measuring Goals (Outcomes) with Driving Questions:

- How will we know the level of graduate student learning has been achieved?
- How will students demonstrate knowledge/skill acquisition?

Example: Oral Communication

- Logical flow of thought
- Appropriate use of vocabulary
- Appropriate eye contact
- Presence, comfort level
- Use of pauses and silence
- Use of time

Small Group Work

- Respond to driving questions by individually generating a list of 3-5 outcomes for one of your goals.

Example: Three criteria for graduate level research/creative skills are....

- Share with your group.
- Solicit critiques and modify your outcomes.
- Share outcomes for one goal with the larger group.

Small Groups: Refine One Outcome.

- You wrote:

“Students will gather factual information and apply it to a given problem in a manner that is relevant, clear, comprehensive, and conscious of possible bias in the information selected.”

- This outcome refined:

“Students will be able to apply factual information to a problem.”

- What do we do with the leftovers?

Use your leftovers at Spring “make it and take it” rubrics workshop:

Outcome: Application of factual information to a problem.

Element	Undeveloped	Developing	Established	Exemplary
Relevant				
Clear				
Comprehensive				
Conscious of possible bias				

–Practice refining one of your outcomes. Shorten it and identify potential criteria for a rubric.

Artifact Selection for SOA

- Looking at one of your goals/outcomes, identify two program activities in which students would acquire this knowledge or practice these skills.

(These could be course assignments or a program requirement such as a comprehensive exam.)

- Share your artifact list with your group and then with the large group.

The Next Steps:

1. Back at your department, work with your SOA team and other interested faculty to fill in and refine the SOA framework you have built today.
2. Achieve consensus on 3-5 program goals.
3. Select 3-5 outcomes for each goal.

More Steps:

1. Identify locations in the program for artifact selection for goals/outcomes.
2. Create a process for collecting artifacts. (e.g., faculty and/or students submit essays; exams, etc.)
3. Start collecting artifacts.

Question: What Will We Do With What We collect?

Answer: At the Spring semester “CHFA SOA Make It and Take It Workshop,” you will learn how to make rubrics to analyze your artifacts. You will be able to use the rubrics to determine how well your graduate students are achieving program learning goals.

What Else Will We Do With SOA?

- Every fall, CHFA graduate programs will evaluate the SOA results:
 - Analyzed data will be presented.
 - Program changes in response to the findings will be discussed as well as when/how to implement those program changes.
 - Recommendations (if any) to change learning goals and/or outcomes will be offered.
 - Improvements in the process (e.g., gather different artifacts) will be suggested.

Example: Oral Communication

An analysis of oral presentations given by graduate students indicates that a majority score low on the oral communication rubric. In response, at their Fall SOA discussion, graduate faculty could decide to implement some of the following:

- Require that international students earn a score of 20 on the TOEFL speaking subscale.
- Re-sequence existing coursework to facilitate a developmental approach to oral communication skills.
- Add an oral presentation assignment in the Graduate Seminar.
- Offer a research symposium at which graduate students critique others' oral presentations of their research.
- Ask Communication Studies faculty to offer a workshop on strategies they could pursue in order to enhance their graduate students' oral communications skills.

We Need Help:

- Your CHFA SOA Committee Representative will be happy to assist you.
- The CHFA SOA Website offers helpful information. Address:

<http://fp.uni.edu/chfasoa/>