

Suffolk University Assurance of Learning

Richard Beinecke, Professor and Chair
Suffolk University Institute for Public Service

Why We Do It?

- What are students actually learning?
- How can we as faculty improve this experience, our course content and program?
- IPS - a department of the Sawyer Business School:
Follow AACSB but not accredited by it
- NASPAA: Reaccredited 2013

What we are supposed to do

The outcomes assessment process should include:

1. Definition of student learning goals and objectives
2. Alignment of curricula with the adopted goals
3. Identification of instruments and measures to assess learning
4. Collection, analyzing, and dissemination of assessment information
5. Use assessment information for **continuous improvement** including documentation that the assessment process is being carried out in a systematic, ongoing basis. (AACSB Assessment Resource Center, 2007)

How we do it

1. Design learning goals
2. Create rubrics to score the learning goals
3. Create Assessment Tools to collect data
4. Score the rubric
5. Close the loop and evaluate the data
6. Action plans

Learning Goals
Public Service Leadership
Analytical Reasoning
Resource Allocation
Ethical Approaches to Public
Management
Written & Oral Communication



Which course tests the learning
goal?

PAD 718 & 890

Rubric
Standards for testing learning
goals

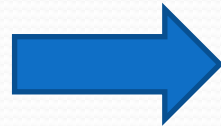


A communications rubric

Creates a well-developed topic &
conclusion

Grade 3-2-1

Create Assessment tool



Design: essay exam; multiple
choice exam; case study or
similar tool

No group projects

Data collection
At least twice in a 5 year cycle
but do it more often!



“Close the loop”

Analyze the data and implement
action items

Methods

- Written: Professor assessment of case study paper in 718
- Oral: Professor assessment of class assessment of oral presentation in 718
- Others: Test given in Capstone course, PAD 890
- Done at least once per year in all sections of 718 and 890 that semester

PAD 718 Written Assignment

PAD 718 AOL Written Communications Assignment

Leader Case (6-8 double spaced or equivalent pages. 30% of grade including 10% presentation). Due December 5

This paper is intended to apply the class readings and discussions to a leadership case of the student's choosing.

You may write about any leader of your choosing as long as you address his or her actions in a given specific historical situation and as long as the leader has not been a case thoroughly described in one of the books. The paper should include the following two components; points will be deducted if either is not fully covered:

- A description of the situation necessitating the leader's action, the situation, and the outcome.
- Application of the class and reading theory to the case including the leader's use of leadership skills and the theory on the process of achieving success.

This is a research paper, including appropriate cited references used to build the historical case and the biography of your chosen leader. With this in mind, the leadership situation has to be one which is *documented*, not a situation at work or from one's personal life

Be prepared to present and discuss your leader and your paper in one of the last two classes and be graded on it by your colleagues.

This assignment will be used to provide confidential data for the Written and Verbal Communication Assurance of Learning (AOL), an assessment required by our accrediting bodies to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching in our department.

Written Communications Rubric

Performance Criteria	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
1. Creates a well-developed topic & conclusion	Little or no ability to create a well-developed topic and conclusion 1	Demonstrates the ability to create a well-developed topic and conclusion 2	Demonstrates an advanced ability to create a well-developed topic and conclusion 3
2. Demonstrates a logical & well organized paper	Little or no ability to create a logical & well organized paper 1	Demonstrates the ability to create a logical & well organized paper 2	Demonstrates an advanced ability to create a logical & well organized paper 3
3. Thoroughly describes the leader, their situation, and then critically analyses the effectiveness of the leader	Leader and situation not described well and/or not critically analyzed 1	Leader and situation described well and critically analyzed 2	Leader and situation described very well and leader effectiveness exceptionally well critically analyzed 3
4. Applies the class theory, readings, and discussions to the case	Does not apply the class theory, readings, and discussion to the case 1	Applies the class theory, readings, and discussions to the case 2	Very effectively applies the class theory, readings, and discussions to the case 3
5. Formats the paper in a manner that is appropriate and user friendly	Paper is poorly formatted 1	Paper is appropriately formatted 2	Paper is very well formatted 3
6. Documents points & appropriately uses references	Poorly documents points and/or does not appropriately use references 1	Documents points and appropriately uses references 2	Very effectively documents points and appropriately uses references 3
7. Demonstrates ability to use appropriate language, sentence structure, spelling & grammar	Little or no ability to use appropriate language, sentence structure, spelling & grammar 1	Demonstrates the ability to use appropriate language, spelling, sentence structure & grammar 2	Demonstrates an advanced ability to use appropriate language, spelling, sentence structure & grammar 3

Scoring

Class grading or group projects cannot be used

Use points system from the rubric

- Performance benchmark: 80% meet or exceed
- If the benchmark is not met, then an Action Item is required at the department level. May be
- Refinement of assessment tools and/or
- Some action or innovation to be undertaken by the department and faculty to improve student learning

Follow Up Process

- Data analyzed, shared with Department and SBS AOL Coordinator
- Action items determined by Department
- Department action
- Summary Report with Results and Actions (Handout)
- Three year calendar
- Annual report for all departments by AOL Coordinator

AOL Coordinator and Site Visit Reviewers Have

- Assessment tools answered by the students (copies of all tests and papers saved by AOL Coordinator)
- Graded rubrics
- Reports
- Electronic format is ok.

Keys to Success!!

- All members of IPS involved at every step of the development and implementation process – full Department support of the process
- Regular discussion at Department meetings
- Designated IPS AOL Coordinator working closely with Department Chair and SBS AOL Coordinator
- Real response to action items
- Multi-year process and experience