“Not Using ‘Rubrics’ to Assess Institutional Learning Outcomes”

Bob McLoughlin & Jerry Kobylski
Office of Institutional Effectiveness,
United States Military Academy, West Point
Vision: West Point is the world’s preeminent leader development institution.

Our mission is to educate, train, and inspire the Corps of Cadets so that each graduate is a commissioned leader of character, committed to the values of Duty, Honor, Country and prepared for a career of professional excellence and service to the Nation as an officer in the United States Army.
• Approximately **4,400 Cadets** from 55 U.S. states and territories and up to 60 international cadets

• Graduates (~1,000 per class) earn a bachelor of science degree and commission as **Second Lieutenants in the U.S. Army**

• As a minimum, **graduates serve five years** on active duty and three years in a reserve status

• 47-month leader development experience focused on four pillars:
  – Academic
  – Physical
  – Military
  – Character

• Based on the foundation and culture of ‘character’...

...and on the ideals of

*Duty, Honor and Country*
## Commitment to Character and Excellence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Imperative 1: Develop Leaders of Character</th>
<th>Strategic Imperative 2: Foster Relevance and Preeminence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Goals</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upon commissioning West Point graduates:</td>
<td>- Build and sustain diverse and effective teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Live honorably</td>
<td>- Develop and provide intellectual capacity</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Lead honorably</td>
<td>- Promote staff and faculty excellence</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Demonstrate excellence</td>
<td>- Practice effective stewardship</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Instill and foster a culture of excellence and winning</td>
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</table>
1. Live honorably by:
   a. Taking morally and ethically appropriate actions regardless of personal consequences
   b. Exhibiting empathy and respect towards all individuals
   c. Acting with the proper decorum in all environments

2. Lead honorably by:
   a. Anticipating and solving complex problems
   b. Influencing others to achieve the mission in accordance with the Army values
   c. Including and developing others
   d. Enforcing standards

3. Demonstrate excellence by:
   a. Pursuing and demonstrating intellectual, military, and physical expertise
   b. Making sound and timely decisions
   c. Communicating and interacting effectively
   d. Seeking and reflecting on feedback
Agenda

• Why “Not Using Rubrics” – our challenge
• Alternate Assessment Framework
  o Application of Framework at USMA
  o Exercises
• References
1. Participants will be able to apply a simple methodology for implementing an effective process for assessing institutional learning (or general education) outcomes, an approach different from applying rubrics to evidence.

2. Participants will practice the above methodology with sample data.
Our Challenge: Annual Data Considered

- Program assessments (academic, military, physical, and character)
- Completed forms of faculty counseling cadets
- Surveys - >1300 questions
  - First Class
  - Fourth Class
  - Superintendent’s Honor Review Committee
  - Class Characteristics Survey
  - Department of Physical Education Faculty
  - Club and Corps Squad Culture
  - EverFi (Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention) - 2018
  - Military Summer Training
  - NSSE and FSSE (every three years)
  - Project Arete
  - New instructor (after leaving company command)
  - Basic Officer Leader Course
  - Army War College
  - US Army Training and Doctrine Command survey
  - Defense Equal Opportunity Climate (DEOCS)
  - Service Academy Gender Relations

Stakeholders:
- USMA “Owns”
- Externally Managed
- External Stakeholders: USMA “Owns”
- Dept. of Army Directed
Previous Assessments

- AWC
- BOLC
- Service Academy Gender Relations (SAGR)
- Character Development Survey (CDS)
- Corps Honor Survey
- PDRs
- Staff & Faculty Honor Survey

> 1300 Indicators

Challenges:
- Significant amount of time
- Incomplete analysis
- “Teams” making major decisions on data analysis
- Reliable (consistent) and valid analysis
Strictly speaking, a rubric is not evidence but rather a framework for interpreting information (Kuh et al., 2015, p37)

Annual Assessment Data
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10 Steps at West Point

Practical Participatory Evaluation (P-PE) Framework

1. Map the Data/Evidence to Institutional Learning Outcomes
2. Assemble Teams
3. Filter data and identify specific attributes for the review
4. Pull data and discuss
5. SWOT Analysis
6. Compare feedback from Program and deep dive data
7. Present analysis to and gather feedback (committee)
8. Write up, share, and archive AY outcome analysis, reports, and data
9. Present recommendations and gather feedback
10. Assess progress
Step 1: Map Survey Questions to ILOs

### USMA WPLDS
Indirect Data Outcome Mapping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WPLDS Outcome</th>
<th>Survey Questions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Blank)</td>
<td>Please rate the amount you developed in the following areas as a result of your participation in your AIAD: Language/Cultural immersion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please rate the amount you developed in the following areas as a result of your participation in your AIAD: Leadership/Service.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please rate the importance of what you learned in your AIAD for your development in the following areas: Office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How important is it to you that your institution increase its emphasis on each of the following: Students spend significant amounts of time studying on academic work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please rate the importance of what you learned in your AIAD for your development in the following areas: Academics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please rate the importance of what you learned in your AIAD for your development in the following areas: Leadership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please rate the importance of what you learned in your AIAD for your development in the following areas: Army.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>To what extent do you structure your selected course section so that students learn and develop in the following areas: Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>To what extent do you structure your selected course section so that students learn and develop in the following areas: Analyzing numerical and statistical information.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>To what extent do you structure your selected course section so that students learn and develop in the following areas: Being an informed and active citizen.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To what extent do you structure your selected course section so that students learn and develop in the following areas: Developing or clarifying a personal code of values and ethics.</td>
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<td>To what extent do you structure your selected course section so that students learn and develop in the following areas: Solving complex real-world problems.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>To what extent do you structure your selected course section so that students learn and develop in the following areas: Speaking clearly and effectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To what extent do you structure your selected course section so that students learn and develop in the following areas: Under pressure, the ability to accurately apply statistical and critical analysis.</td>
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</table>
Step 2: Assemble Teams

1. Teams were constituted of evaluators embedded with:
   a. Institutional key stakeholders
   b. Faculty, staff, and Cadets throughout our directorates

2. Teams interacted in a partnership in discussing ILO assessments
ILO: Communicate and interact effectively.

AY 17

Arete: 11-12,85-90,120,130, 141,161, 165-166
BOLC: 16-17
Corps Squad/Club Squad Culture:11a
DEOCS: 25, 91, 95, 96
DEOCS: 128b, 128f
First Class - Version A: 20-25, 35
Fourth Class : 20-24
FSSE: 8a, 8c, 8d, 22a, 29a
New Faculty: 23, 24
NSSE: 3a,3c,3d,1a,1i,1f,1h,5b,5c,17a,17b,5d,5e,1e,5a
1. Select questions that would provide supporting data for communicate and interact effectively.

2. Review highlighted behaviors and select questions for further study

- I am open to competing ideas.
- I am good at mediating controversial topics.
- When trying to convince others to accomplish my goals as a leader I tailor my message to: as many people as I can.
- a wide array of individuals.
- only those that share my beliefs.
- only those that also have the same values I do.
- individuals with the important skillsets.
- people who will get things done.
- I like to give the orders in interpersonal situations.
- I never hesitate to publicly express an unpopular opinion.
- I tend to keep my feelings to myself.
- I tend to share my feelings.
- I hate it when people ask me to talk about my feelings.
- USMA graduates demonstrate the ability to: Clearly communicate orally.
- b. I asked the person who appeared to be a risk if they needed help.
- f. I told someone in a position of authority about the situation.
- I am confident in my ability to develop an informed understanding of the communications of others.
- effectively convey meaningful information to diverse audiences using appropriate forms and media.
- communicate in a foreign language.
- develop an informed understanding of the communications of others.
- effectively convey meaningful information to diverse audiences using appropriate forms of media.
- engage in collaborative learning experiences.
- develop an informed understanding of the communications of others.
- effectively convey meaningful information to diverse audiences using appropriate forms and media.
Step 3: What we selected

ILO: Communicate and interact effectively.

<table>
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<th>Criteria</th>
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Step 4: Compile Data

Table 4. O3c: Communicating and interacting effectively (Demonstrating Excellence)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>%Top</th>
<th>% +</th>
<th>%-</th>
<th>%Bottom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arete-11</td>
<td>I am open to competing ideas.</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>1012</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>.680</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>87.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>0.6</td>
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Sample Size

1 Strongly Disagree – 5 Strongly Agree

1 & 2s

4 & 5s

5s

1s
Step 5: SWOT Analysis - Exercise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circle one bullet here</th>
<th>AND one here</th>
<th>• Strength</th>
<th>• Weakness</th>
<th>• Opportunity</th>
<th>• Threat</th>
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Adapted from Swiss & Bishop, Spring 2018 MSCHE Workshop - “Using a Balance Scorecard Approach to Strategic Planning”, Westmorland Community College

What strengths and weaknesses does the data highlight?

What opportunities are present that will lead us toward achieving our assessed outcome?

What threats may endanger achieving our assessed outcome?
Step 6 - Assessment Criteria

- **Level (Target) Good news:**
  - SWOT comments
  - Program ratings - “Meets standard +” and higher
  - $< 2\%$ most undesirable response
  - $> 85\%$ desirable (Survey Responses)

- **Level (Target) Concerns:**
  - SWOT comments
  - Program ratings - “Below standard” and lower
  - $> 7.5\%$ most undesirable (Survey Responses)
  - $> 15\%$ undesirable response (does not include neutral)

- **Trends Considered**
In summary, cadets show a strong ability for oration and media-centric briefing skills; however, cadets need improvement with written communication.

- **(Outcome)** Cadets show strong oration and presentation skills, as evidenced by performance during their senior capstone projects and faculty surveys.

- **(Academic Program)** several indicators support a need for improvement in cadet writing

- **(SWOT)** Many faculty state that time constraints hinder the development of critical reading. The development of writing skills, well-known as a time-intensive process, may suffer from the same time constraints. The addition of a bi-weekly study day may provide some relief from this constraint.

- **(Military Program)** Assessment of communication skills by Cadre during AY 17 summer training, Officers and NCOs graded cadets as slightly above average (B letter grade) in several indicators such as “Communicating effectively”
Session Outcomes…

Benefits of Framework:
1. More stakeholder involvement in decision making
2. Improved shared understanding
3. Better analysis of data
4. Minimized committee work, while improving staff work.

Disadvantages: time – organizing data; developing processes; collection of input


Questions

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