

Classroom Teacher Assessment Handbook

Your Learning Goals for your Class

Whether you are starting from scratch with a new course or revising a course that you have taught millions of times, it's great to think about your learning goals! At Hendrix, when we use the term "learning goals" we are talking about what we want students to take away from our class. Don't make this too difficult! Imagine that you are trying to explain to a student or a colleague what students will get from taking your class. Your goals will include content-related objectives as well as skills-related objectives. Then distill each one into a concise learning goal. Once you have that learning goal, think about whether it is "SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound."

A general format for writing learning goals is: *At the end of this course/program, student will be able to [action verb] + [something]*. When looking for action verbs, we recommend considering the words on Bloom's Taxonomy. There are examples available in [Appendix 1](#).

Keep in mind that your goals should be comprehensible for your students – simple and straightforward is best!

Content-related goal example: At the end of this course, students will be able to identify the key terminology and themes of [my course topic].

Skills-related goal example: At the end of this course, students will be able to distill [information about my course topic] in order to support arguments in response to [questions in my field].

Your Learning Goals for a Module/Topic/Theme/Chapter

In order to be sure that your students achieve your goals, you need to think about how those goals relate to your course content. Whether you divide your course into modules based on the topic or theme you are addressing or by chapter in your accompanying textbook, you should think about where in your curriculum you are addressing each of your goals.

Once you have successfully mapped your course learning goals to your course material, if you are interested in advancing your assessment practices, you might consider developing unit goals for each section of your course. The benefit of doing this is both transparency for students and developing more precise tools for gauging student learning (e.g. exams, papers, rubrics, etc.). Goals at this level will be much more specific and targeted than your overarching course learning goals.

Examples: For a content-based goal, if your course goal is that students will identify key themes about the history of your course topic, your unit goal would focus on students identifying key themes about a specific historical event related to that topic.

For a skills-based goal, if your course goal is related to mathematical problem solving, a unit goal might be: At the conclusion of chapter/unit/module 5, students will be able to recall [a specific] formula, make the calculation, and interpret the solution as it applies to [course topic].

Your Learning Goals for an Assignment

Ideally, your assignments should be related to your goals! If you have an assignment that is not related to your course learning goals, you should revise the assignment or the goals so that they match up. Assignments are great ways to assess student progress towards and completion of the learning goals of the course. Assignment learning goals can help students realize the value and purpose of an activity or piece of graded work. This can have many benefits, including minimizing the incentives to cheat.

Examples:

A simple way to do this is to list the course learning goals relevant to your assignment at the top of the assignment handout.

For a content-based goal in a course with this course learning goal: At the end of this course, students will be able to identify the key terminology and themes of [my course topic], your assignment might ask students to read a text and write an explanation of the content based on their understanding. The learning goal for that assignment would be to identify and explain the specific terminology and themes in that text.

For a unit skills-related goal such as students will be able to recall [a specific] formula, make the calculation, and interpret the solution as it applies to [course topic], your assignment might ask students to perform this task. The learning goal for that assignment would be identical to the unit learning goal.

The exercise in [Appendix 2](#) can help guide you through the process of creating links between assignments and learning goals.

Relationship between Course Goals and Learning Domains, Department Goals, Vision for Student Learning Goals, and Career Competencies

In addition to thinking about the links between your course learning goals and the units and assignments in your class, we also want to think about the links between your course learning goals and the wider goals of your department and a Hendrix degree. So far, we've been thinking about goals on a microlevel, but those microlevel goals should also build towards macrolevel goals such as those at the level of the Collegiate Center or a Major or Minor Program.

Many courses, particularly at the 100- and 200-level are not simply serving your individual goals, but also fulfilling the students' general education requirements (our Collegiate Center). These may be Learning Domains, Capacities, or Odyssey Credit. In thinking about your goals for your students, then, you should also be thinking about the goals of the requirements that they

fulfill by taking your course. While you don't need to copy and paste the language of the Learning Domains, it is helpful for you to have a clear sense of which goals relate to which Collegiate Center goal, and it's also useful to communicate that to students.

For example, one of the Quantitative Skills Capacity Goals is: "Upon successful completion of the requirements for the Quantitative Skills Capacity, students will be capable of interpreting quantitative ideas graphically, symbolically/algebraically, and/or numerically." A course that has a QS coding might include the goal: "Upon successful completion of this course, students will acquire strengthened problem solving and graphing skills and develop an understanding of how mathematical models can apply to human behavior." If your learning goals do not speak to the goals of the Collegiate Center requirement that applies to your course, you should consider changing your course goals or removing the code.

In addition to Collegiate Center requirements, many of our courses contribute towards the student's major requirements. Again, it is not necessary to copy and paste the language of your major's learning goals, but it is helpful for you to understand the relationship between your course goals and the goals of your major.

Finally, all of the courses that a student takes at Hendrix should contribute towards the overarching goals of the college enshrined in the [Vision for Student Learning](#) and the [Career Competencies](#). Reviewing these goals at the beginning of the semester can help you set your intentions and focus your work with students.

Assessment of Learning Goals (It's Not Just Grades!)

In order to answer the question "how do you know that students are learning?" you can't simply rely on the fact that they have received a passing grade in the course. As we know, course grades are made up of a number of different assignments and activities required of students, each of which may contribute to a different set of learning goals. To know whether they are learning what you want them to learn, you need to think about each of your learning goals and where in the course they are addressed. In addition, it is not enough to see student progress yourself. We also want to know whether students recognize their own progress.

In assessment language, we call these forms of assessment **direct** (your markers of student progress) and **indirect** (students' perception of their own progress). Ideally, every class will include at least one form of direct assessment and at least one form of indirect assessment for each of your learning goals. If your assignments are clearly linked to your learning goals, it should be straightforward to develop your direct assessment by adding a rubric for recording student performance on a paper, exam question, or other assignment. For your indirect assessment, you can create a survey or include questions about whether the student feels that they have achieved each learning goal on your end-of-semester course feedback forms.

Appendix 1: Bloom's Taxonomy

Remembering	Understanding	Applying	Analyzing	Evaluating	Creating
Define	Explain	Solve	Analyze	Criticize	Design
Identify	Describe	Apply	Compare	Evaluate	Compose
Describe	Interpret	Illustrate	Classify	Order	Create
Label	Paraphrase	Modify	Contrast	Appraise	Plan
List	Summarize	Use	Distill	Judge	Formulate
Name	Classify	Calculate	Distinguish	Support	Invent
State	Compare	Change	Infer	Decide	Hypothesize
Match	Discuss	Demonstrate	Separate	Discriminate	Write
Select	Distinguish	Experiment	Categorize	Recommend	Compile
Locate	Predict	Relate	Differentiate	Assess	Construct
Memorize	Associate	Complete	Discriminate	Convince	Develop
Quote	Convert	Construct	Divide	Defend	Integrate
Recall	Demonstrate	Dramatize	Order	Find errors	Modify
Reproduce	Estimate	Interpret	Subdivide	Measure	Organize
Tabulate	Express	Manipulate	Survey	Grade	Prepare
Tell	Indicate	Paint	Advertise	Rank	Produce
Copy	Infer	Prepare	Conclude	Score	Rearrange
Duplicate	Relate	Produce	Correlate	Select	Rewrite
Enumerate	Restate	Report	Deduce	Test	Adapt
Omit	Select	Teach	Devise	Argue	Arrange
Recite	Translate	Act	Diagram	Conclude	Assemble
Record	Cite	Administer	Dissect	Consider	Collaborate
Repeat	Generalize	Articulate	Estimate	Critique	Devise
Retell	Give examples	Chart	Illustrate	Debate	Express
	Group	Collect	Organize	Distinguish	Facilitate
	Illustrate	Compute	Outline	Editorialize	Make
	Order	Determine	Plan	Justify	Negotiate
	Report	Develop	Question	Persuade	Originate
	Represent	Employ	test	Rate	Propose
	Rewrite	Explain		Weigh	Reorganize
	Show	Interview		Validate	Simulate
	Trace	List			Structure
	Transform	Operate			
		Practice			
		Predict			
		Simulate			

Appendix 2: Three-Column Grid Tool

Sample Template for Three-Column Learning Goal/Activity/Assessment Alignment

Learning Goal: <i>What do I want students to learn?</i>	Teaching/Learning Activity: <i>What will the instructor need to do and/or the student need to experience to achieve the learning goal?</i>	Formative/Summative Feedback and Assessment: <i>How will students/instructor know whether this goal is being accomplished?</i>
1)		
2)		
3)		

Example of a Three-Column Learning Goal/Activity/Assessment Alignment

Learning Goal: <i>What do I want students to learn?</i>	Teaching/Learning Activity: <i>What will the instructor need to do and/or the student need to experience to achieve the learning goal?</i>	Formative/Summative Feedback and Assessment: <i>How will students/instructor know whether this goal is being accomplished?</i>
Develop analytical and critical reading skills.	Professor: model textual analysis in lecture. Students: practice textual analysis in class discussions, small groups and large. Practice textual analysis in written work.	In-class discussion and written work will demonstrate an understanding of the texts. All class assignments will build towards this goal, with short, formative assessments early in the course (response papers) followed by longer and more complex assignments weighted more heavily (essays and papers).
Be able to locate labor market data that speaks to a particular question or topic, effectively present this data, identify important trends and/or changes, and explain likely causes for these changes/trends.	Professor: present data in multiple ways and discuss the differences. Students: practice identifying important trends and changes in class discussion.	Students practice these skills on homework assignments. A summative paper asks students to demonstrate all of these skills. Students receive formative feedback at several stages of the final project throughout the semester.
Demonstrate the ability to graph a linear equation and apply it to real-world scenarios.	Professor: explains the model and reminds students of the mechanics of graphing equations. Students: work problems in class and as homework.	Students do self-assessments in class and receive feedback. Homework assignments ask students to practice these skills on a small scale and receive feedback. Students demonstrate their skills on exams.