

Grade Smarter, Not Harder:

Using Programmatic Outcomes
to Create Grading Rubrics

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@argella



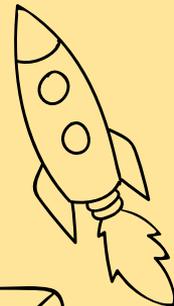
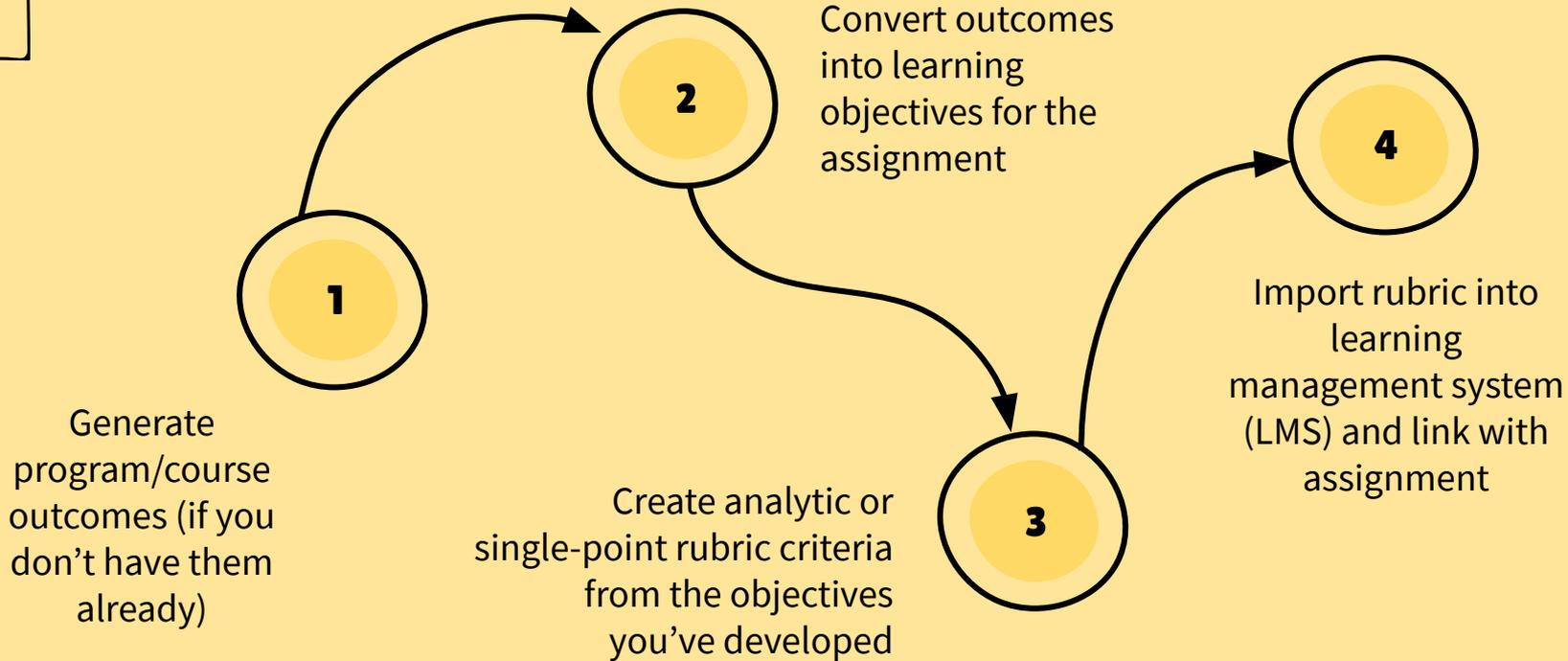
Grading

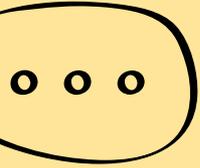
It's the worst, right?

At Purdue, we wanted to cut down on the time spent figuring out what/how to grade for new online writing instructors.

Thanks to Debbie Runshe, Instructional Designer Extraordinaire, for teaching me how to do this!

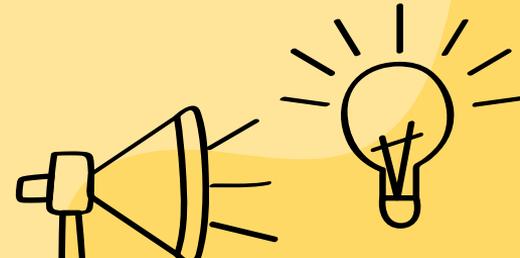
Process





CCCC says:

“As with all teaching and learning, the foundation for teaching writing digitally must be university, college, department, program, and course learning goals or outcomes. These outcomes should reflect current knowledge in the field... as well as the needs of students, who will be expected to write for a variety of purposes in the academic, professional, civic, and personal arenas of life. Once programs and faculty have established learning outcomes, they then can make thoughtful decisions about curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment.”



What are Learning Outcomes (LOs)?

Course-level goals that explain what you want students to do (or know, value, perform, etc.) by the end of the semester. They should be measurable, clear, and explicit.





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Why are LOs important? They...

- Communicate course priorities to students
- Define an end-goal for the course
- Guide the creation of metrics to ascertain student learning

Sample FYW Learning Outcomes



01

Rhetoric

Demonstrate rhetorical awareness of diverse audiences, situations, and contexts



02

Technology

Engage multiple digital technologies to compose for different purposes

03

Research

Perform research and evaluate sources to support claims

04

Critical Thinking

Critically think about writing and rhetoric through reading, analysis, and reflection

Improving LOs

A process (verb) + information (articles, books, data, evidence, other inputs, etc.) + why (“in order to”)

Vague LO

By the end of the course, students will be able to *understand* team writing principles.

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Vague LO

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Specific LO

By the end of this course, you will be able to *apply* team writing principles, such as

- Team charters
- SMART goals
- Project management software

To *collaborate with colleagues* on research, composition, design, and project management.

Using Learning Outcomes (LOs) to Build Learning Objectives (OBJs)

Program Learning Outcome (LO)

Adapt written genre conventions and expectations to both technical and non-technical audiences with changing organizational needs



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Program Learning Outcome (LO)

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Project Learning Objective (OBJ)

1. *Recognize* conventions of professional correspondence, differentiating between formats (e.g., letters, emails, memos)
2. *Compose* correspondence responding to a specific rhetorical situation
3. *Explain* sentence- and structure-level choices in correspondence documents

Sample Assignment + Objectives

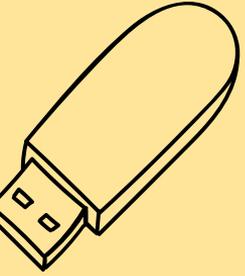
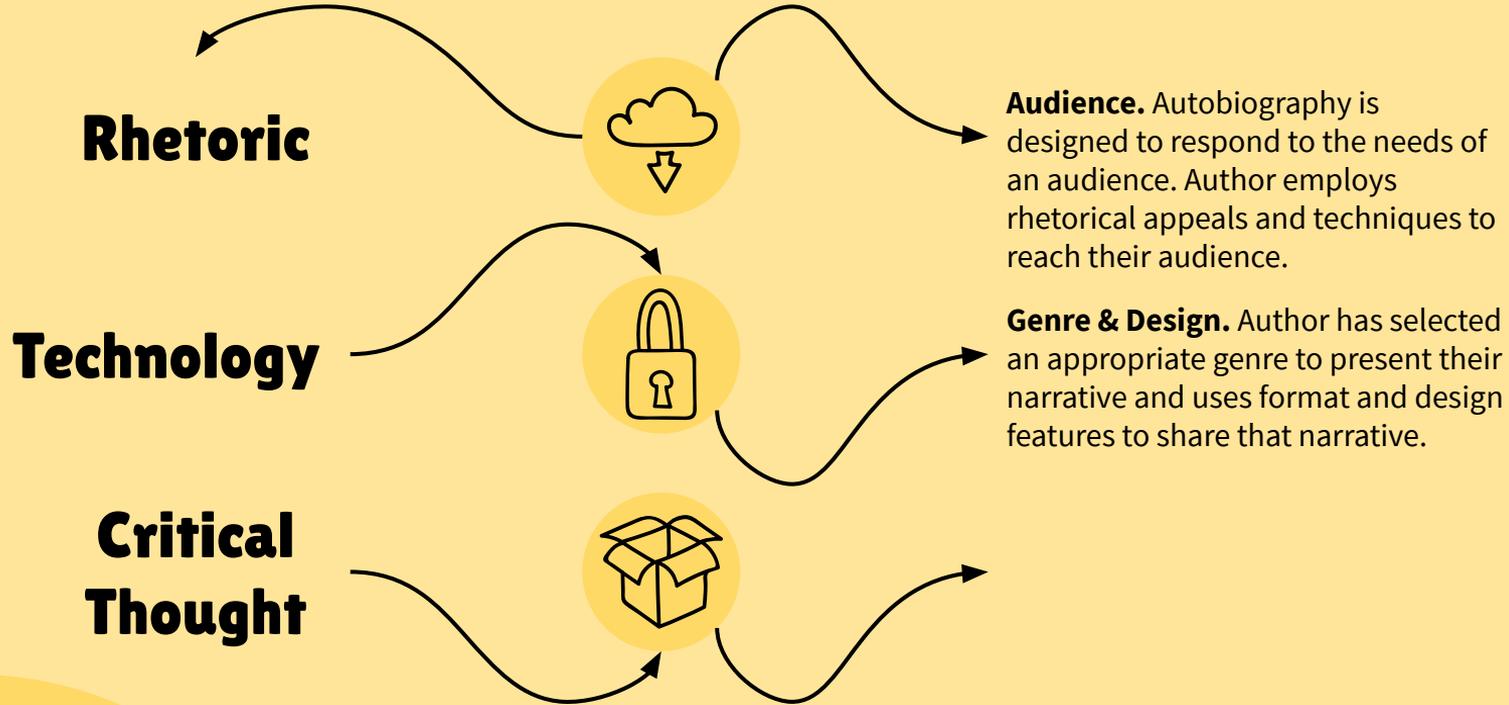


Digital Autobiography

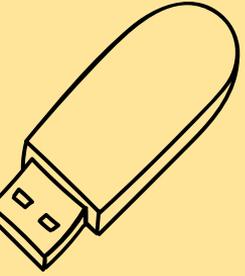
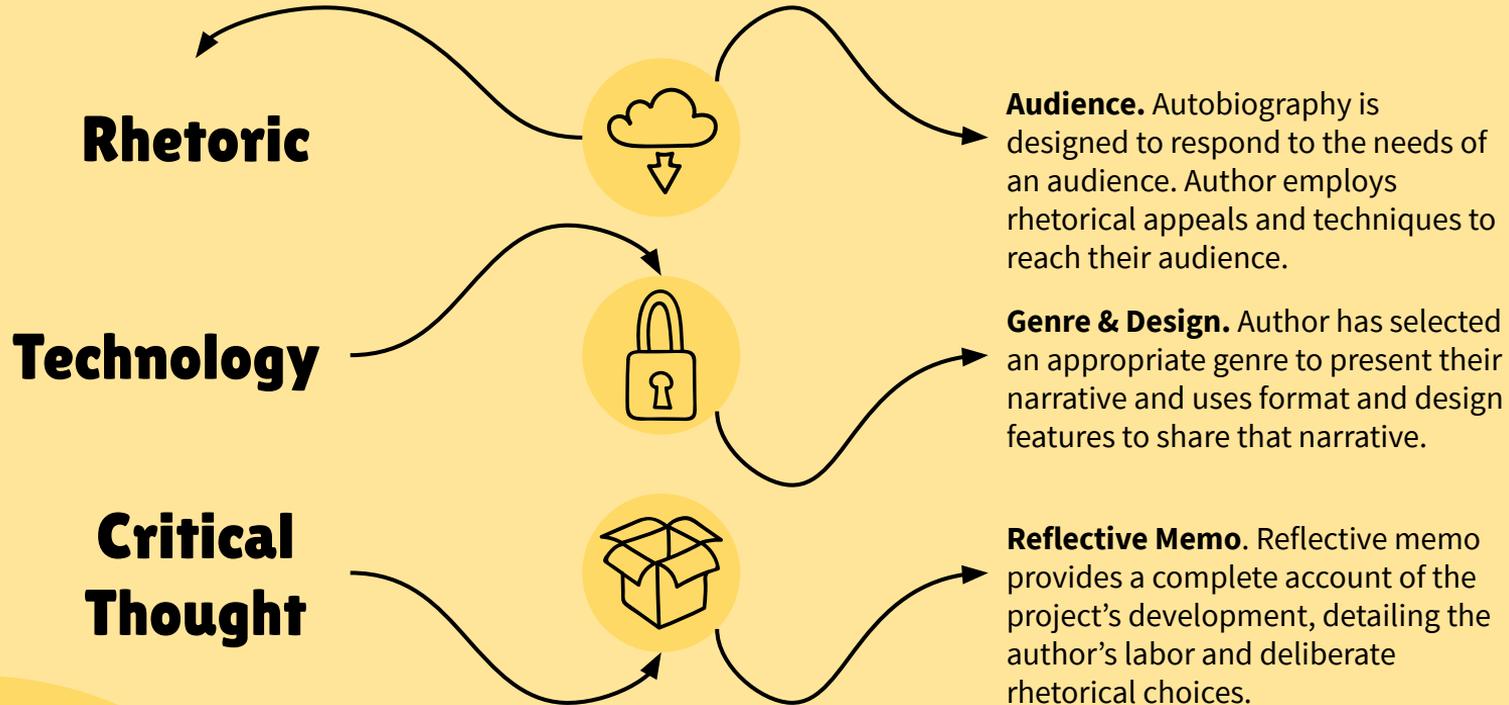
Students will...

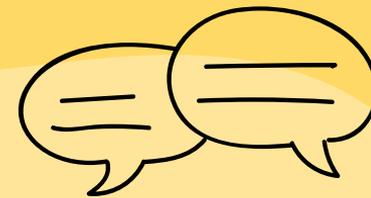
- Tell a story about their experiences with technology
- Reflect upon how digital tools or spaces have affected them as a person
- Select a mode (print essay, multimedia narrative, audio essay, digital video) to present their message
- Write a project evaluation memo explaining their goals and choices for the project

Rubric Criteria Generation



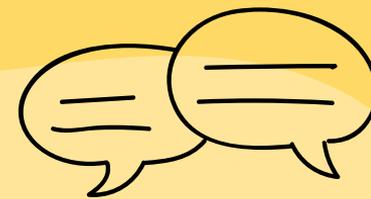
Rubric Criteria Generation





Sample Rubric

	Developing (0–4)	Accomplished (5–7)	Exemplary (8–10)
Audience	The autobiography is not designed to respond to the needs of a particular audience. The author does not appear to have made choices related to their intended reader.	The autobiography is designed to respond to the needs of an audience, but that audience may be vague or general. The author has made some choices related to their intended reader.	The autobiography is designed to respond to the needs of a particular audience. The author has made many choices related to their intended reader.
Genre & Design	The writer has selected a genre that does not complement the content of their digital autobiography, or fails to convey the information compellingly. Little or no attention has been paid to user-centered design principles.	The writer has selected an appropriate genre to present their digital autobiography. Some attention has been paid to user-centered design principles.	The writer has selected an appropriate genre to present their digital autobiography, and has utilized user-centered design principles in service of this genre.
Reflective Memo	The reflective memo does not account for the project’s development or help guide the reader in understanding how it was created, and which choices the writer made throughout the writing process.	The reflective memo partially accounts for the project’s development, but may be missing information on the writing process or the writer’s choices. More information may be necessary to provide a complete guide to understanding how the composition was created.	The reflective memo thoroughly accounts for the development of the project throughout the writing process, as well as the writer’s deliberate rhetorical choices. It provides a complete guide to understanding how the composition was created, and which actors contributed to it.



Sample Rubric

You can create single-point rubrics based on program outcomes too, if those are more your style!

Audience

Developing (0–4)

The autobiography is not designed to respond to the needs of a particular audience. The author does not appear to have made choices related to their intended reader.

Accomplished (5–7)

The autobiography is designed to respond to the needs of an audience, but that audience may be vague or general. The author has made some choices related to their intended reader.

Exemplary (8–10)

The autobiography is designed to respond to the needs of a particular audience. The author has made many choices related to their intended reader.

Genre & Design

The writer has selected a genre that does not complement the content of their digital autobiography, or fails to convey the information compellingly. Little or no attention has been paid to user-centered design principles.

The writer has selected an appropriate genre to present their digital autobiography. Some attention has been paid to user-centered design principles.

The writer has selected an appropriate genre to present their digital autobiography, and has utilized user-centered design principles in service of this genre.

Reflective Memo

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Import into the LMS and go grade!



✓ Saved

Criteria	Proficient 10 points	Competent 7 points	Novice 4 points	Criterion Score
Audience & Scenario Add Feedback	The audience(s) for the documentation is apparent and well-established. The instructions are written and designed appropriately for their audience(s). ✓	The audience(s) for the documentation is relatively clear. The instructions are largely appropriate for their audience(s), though a choice or two (either visual or textual) may not quite correspond with the intended users.	There is not a clear audience for the documentation. The instructions are neither written nor designed appropriately for their audience(s).	9 / 10*
Purpose & Outcomes Add Feedback	The documentation is created functionally; it works toward a clear task and purpose, and each choice (visual, textual, etc.) is made in service of that goal. The task is discrete and narrow. ✓	The documentation could be functional, but needs a bit of fine-tuning to work toward the user's goal and task. The task is generally discrete and narrow.	The documentation is not created functionally; the instructions do not have a clear purpose, and the choices of the author (visual, textual, etc.) are not made in service of a definite goal or task. The task that the author has selected may be too broad or ambiguous to document successfully.	8 / 10*
Style Add Feedback	The documentation is written in an engaging style that is appropriate for its audience(s). The tone is well-considered. The author has used plain language to communicate instructions.	The documentation is written in a style that's somewhat appropriate for its audience(s), though the tone could use some finessing. The author has generally used plain language to communicate instructions.	The documentation is not written in an engaging style, or the tone is not appropriate for the audience(s). The author has not used plain language to communicate instructions; there may be too much jargon, or the tone may be too formal or colloquial. ✓	4 / 10
Introduction & Staging Add Feedback	The instructions clearly introduce the task or process to be completed, giving a goal and prerequisites to completing the task successfully.	The instructions provide an introduction, but they either do not fully introduce the task or are missing a goal/prerequisites to completing the task successfully. ✓	No introduction is provided for the instructions, or the introduction is lacking both a goal and preparation for the reader to complete the task.	7 / 10
Steps & Process Add Feedback	The author has provided steps to the reader that are presented in a logical order. These steps are given through clear imperative verbal phrases, and provide feedback or examples. Only one action is provided per step, and the steps are easy for the reader to follow.	The author has provided steps to the reader that may be presented in a logical order, given through clear imperative verbal phrases, and/or providing feedback or examples—though one of these criteria may be lacking. A step or two may have multiple actions embedded in it, but generally the instructions are easy for the reader to follow. ✓	The steps that the author has provided are not organized sequentially or separated by numbers. The verbal phrases used are unclear or not imperative. Neither feedback nor examples are given. Steps have multiple actions embedded in them, and the documentation is difficult for the reader to follow.	7 / 10
Warnings & Explanation Add Feedback	Appropriate and timely alerts are given for problems that may arise for the user. These alerts are both visually distinctive and give ample explanation of how to avoid and/or solve the problem. ✓	Alerts are given for problems that may arise for the user. Alerts may benefit from ore visual distinction (to differentiate them from other steps), or additional information of how to avoid and/or solve the problem.	Appropriate and timely alerts are not given for problems that may arise for the user. Alerts are neither visually distinctive, nor do they give explanation of how to avoid and/or solve the problem.	10 / 10

[Close](#)

Benefits of this Approach

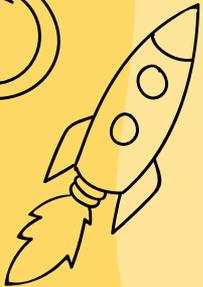
It follows instructional design and online course development best practices!

Labor

Helps take the burden of course prep off of new and vulnerable OWIs (grad students, contingent faculty, etc.)

Standardization

Ensures consistency in outcomes grading, and learner user experience (LUX) across sections



Benefits of this Approach

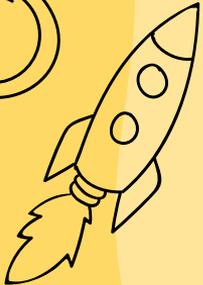
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Assessment

Pre-determined criteria and ready-made rubrics for programmatic assessment initiatives

Scalability

Able to customize for individual courses or build for entire programs (ENGL 106-DIST has served 3000+ students since 2017)





Thanks for listening!

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