



Developing Shared Assessment Criteria

Julie Johnson

Department Chair, Child, Youth and Family Studies

Jessica Jonson

Director of Institutional Assessment

Jeremy Penn

PEARL Assessment Associate

UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Lincoln

Higher Learning Commission Expectations

How do you evaluate and improve the effectiveness of your efforts to assess and improve student learning? (HLC, 2007)



Why evaluate the effectiveness of assessment?

- Ensure assessment informs improvement
- “The bottom line [in successful assessment] is that assessment information must be applied systematically toward improvements if it is to have a lasting impact on the institution” *(Banta, Lund, Black, & Oblander, 1996)*



Why improve the effectiveness of assessment?

- Model the use of data in improvement
- Cannot immediately expect high level of assessment practice in all departments
 - The power of small, continuous improvements



Gasoline prices

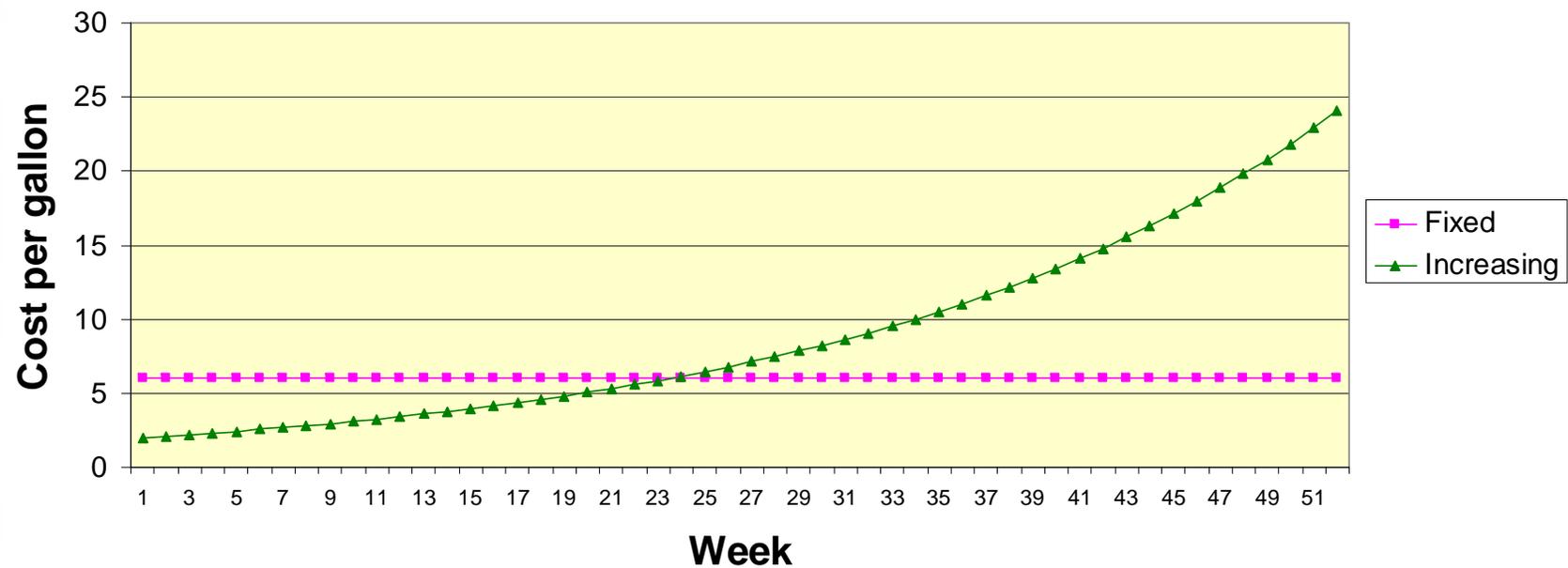
- Would you rather:
 - Pay \$6.00 per gallon
 - Pay \$2.00 per gallon with a 5% weekly increase?



Spindletop Hill, Texas
(1901)



Fixed vs. Continuous Improvement



Presentation Purpose

- Share a structure and process UNL uses to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of program assessment
- Faculty perspective on that process



PEARL: Program Excellence through Assessment, Research and Learning

- Partnership with Colorado State University
- On-line assessment software designed for program improvement
- Collaboration, sharing and feedback among peers
- Academic and non-academic units
- Involvement of faculty members throughout process

<http://www.unl.edu/ous/pearl/indepth.shtml>



Start next cycle

Identify learning outcomes and assessments

October 3, 2008

Structure:

- Faculty in leadership role
- Continuous on-line dialogue
- Foster engagement

Receive feedback and improve assessment plans

September 11, 2009

Receive feedback and implement plan

November 3, 2008

Use assessment data to make improvements

May - September, 2009

<http://www.unl.edu/ous/pearl/indepth.shtml>



Peer Review Process

- 15 trained faculty members
- Work in small, cross-disciplinary teams
- Provide feedback using shared criteria as described in the PEARL rubric

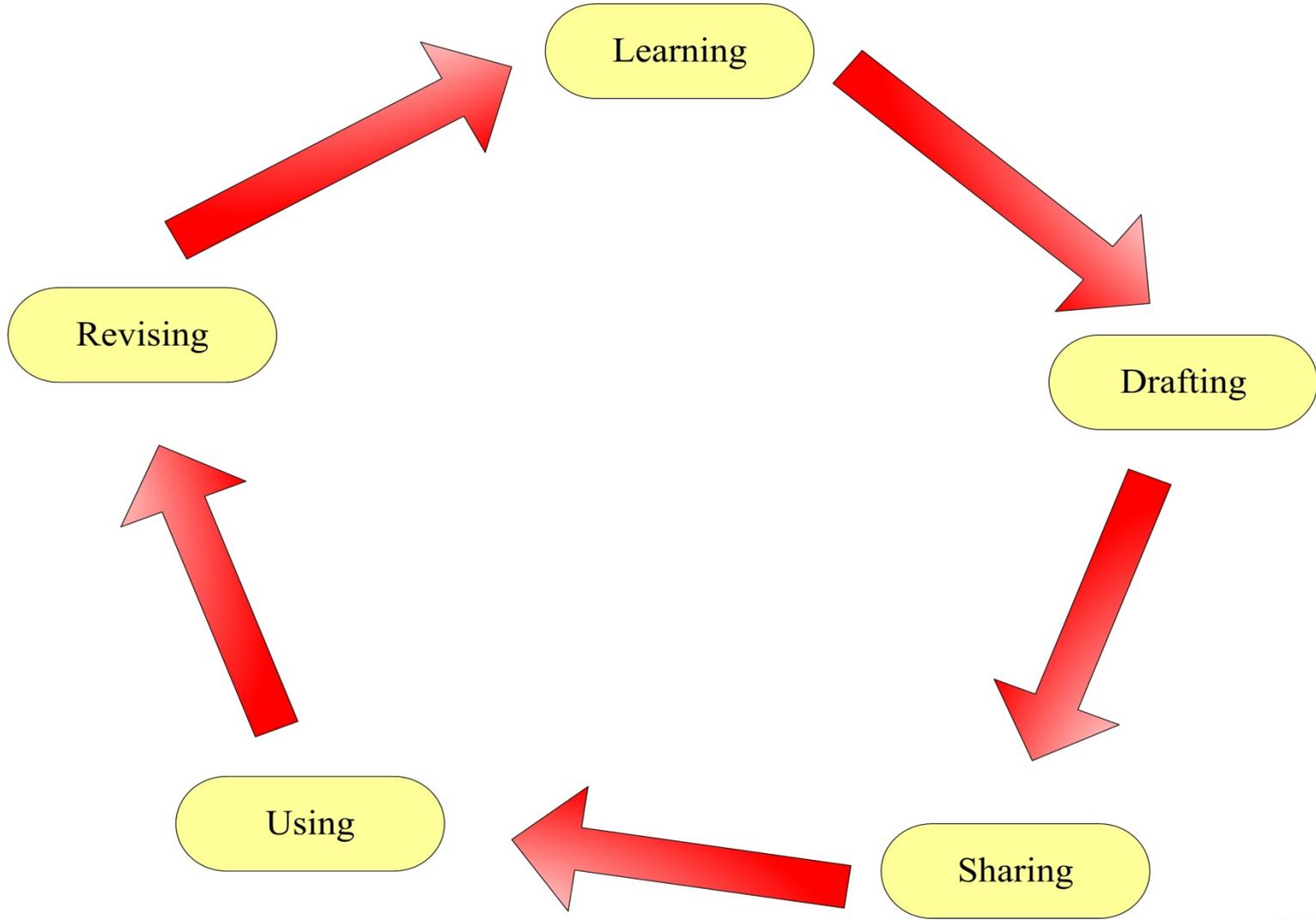


Process – Shared Criteria

Developing Shared Criteria
provides...

- Education
- Credibility





Process – Shared Criteria

First Developmental Step (creating)

1. Scholarly work and accreditation expectations
2. Developmental and coherent
3. Planning and execution

Second Developmental Step (revising)

Application & consensus

Third Developmental Step (sustaining)

Re-application prior to initiation of each cycle



Rubric Questions for Learning Outcome

Does the outcome clearly state what students will know and/or understand when they complete their program?

Does the outcome consistently use active verbs to clearly state what the student will be able to do with their knowledge or understanding?

Does the rationale for the outcome describe why it is important for graduates in the discipline?

Does the outcome connect with the mission and goals of the department, college and institution?

Does the outcome identify learning that can reasonably be observed and measured at the completion of the program?



Faculty Perspective

Julie Johnson, Ph.D.

Faculty and Chair

Child, Youth and Family Studies



Peer Reviewer Role

- Each reviewer had unique contributions to make in development process. Peer reviewers shared their knowledge of assessment concepts with each other.
- Professional development
- Fostered buy-in into assessment process



Rubric Development Process

- Trial use of rubric on sample assessment plans
 - Teamwork
 - Consistent ratings
 - Improved rubric



Using the Rubric

- Peer Reviewer
 - Providing feedback with consistency
 - Provided positive language to use in providing feedback
 - Highlights important shared characteristics
- Program Leader
 - Guide to develop assessment plan
 - Better understanding of feedback



Importance of Rubric and Process to Programs

- Provides a way to begin and continue the conversation
- Particularly useful for faculty with little knowledge of assessment
- Common language
- Succinct, concrete tool to see how to move a program forward in small and significant steps
- Encourages faculty involvement
- Leads to program critique and improvement



Recommendations

- Start small and be willing to accept small, incremental changes
- Spend time on developing the rubric and becoming comfortable with the language and concepts
- Continue the conversation throughout the year



Benefits of using Shared Criteria and Peer Review

- Provided common language and assessment structure
- Faculty members do not have to be “assessment experts” to engage in assessment
- Developed expertise and enhanced buy-in



Audience Discussion

How often should the shared criteria be revisited for revision?

To what degree should the shared criteria be allowed to vary across participating units (e.g., ABET criteria)?

What are other strategies for encouraging improvement of assessment practices?

PEARL website: <http://www.unl.edu/ous/pearl/pearl.shtml>

PEARL rubric: <http://www.unl.edu/ous/pearl/PEARLRubric2007.pdf>





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