Entering Rubrics and Competencies into Desire2Learn – A Step by Step Guide

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Introduction

Identifying and defining competencies and the rubrics that test them are important to any educational system of evaluation. It also enables the institution to test educational goals over a period of time, as well as identify gaps in the educational programs. Competencies also allow individual students to test their strengths and weaknesses. In the United States, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), now requests institutions of Higher Learning to do a self-study during accreditation. The competency structure in the Desire2Learn® eLearning Suite permits an institution to gather and process vital information related to both the individual student and the institution as a whole.

Although the Desire2Learn structure helps gather the information, information is only of use when it is correct. To accomplish this, planning becomes paramount. If the institution takes the time to outline its competencies, learning objectives, rubrics that will evaluate the objectives and the methods of evaluation, the gathering of pertinent data in Desire2Learn becomes a simpler task.

Vocabulary of Terms

Within this document the subsequent terms have the following meaning:

Area or **Department** are interchangeable, defined as one step up from the org unit.
Org Unit refers to a single course (e.g., Statistics).
Instance(s) refer to multiple copies of the same org unit, even if there are slight differences (e.g., a Statistics course in the campus program and a Statistics course in the distance program would make up two instances of the org unit, Statistics).
Sections refer to sections within one instance of an org unit (e.g., Professor X teaches two sections of the same course and they are defined as Sections in the Org Unit).

Determining Level of Input for Competencies and Rubrics

Before entering competencies, determine the level (course, area, department or college) in which competencies and rubrics are to be entered. These levels may vary depending on individual schools and system implementation levels. Use the following as a Rule of Thumb for determining level of placement.

1. If the competencies and rubrics are going to be used in only one instance of one course, place them within that course.
2. If the competencies and rubrics are going to be used by two or more courses in the same area or multiple instances of a course in the same area, create them at the area or department level (e.g., Art, Biology, Business).
3. If the competencies and rubrics are going to be used by more than one course in different areas, create them at a higher level, such as the College level.

Getting Started

Creating everything for a single org unit is done within that org unit. Be aware that only that one instance of the org unit can see the competencies and rubrics. Other instances of the course will not have access to the competencies and rubrics created within a single course. In order to create these competencies and rubrics so they are available to all instances, access to the DOME is required.

Creating Competencies from the Area or Upper levels

1. From your home page, access the DOME through the Admin Tools Widget. If you don't have access to this, contact your Site Administrator who can help you gain access.
2. Click on **Org Unit Editor** and expand the list until you find the Org Unit in which you want to create your competencies.
3. There are two methods of accessing the competencies tool:

METHOD 1:
- Assuming the Org Unit is an Area; note the 4 to 6 digit number next to the name. This is referred to as the "ou" number
- Use this 4 to 6 digit number to replace the "ou" number found in your current URL address and press enter (e.g., http://example.desire2learn.com/d2l/orgTools/outHome.asp?ou=####)
- You will now be inside that Org Unit, and it will look very similar to a course offering
METHOD 2:
- Assuming the org unit is an area in the DOME, click on the Org Unit name
- Under Management Quicklinks, on the right side of the screen click on "Org Unit Homepage"

NOTE: To create competencies and rubrics at the organizational level, add the competencies and rubrics tool to the institutions Home Page and create everything but the activities and method of evaluation there. The method of evaluation and activities must be created and linked at the course level.

NOTE: If you do not have access to the DOME, ask the administrator to create a widget with a quicklink to the org unit homepage needed. Release conditions may prevent certain roles from seeing the widget. Talk to your administrator to determine if access is available to you.

There are two general methods for creating competencies, manually or using the Competency Wizard. The Competency Wizard does not create the rubrics, nor does it attach the competency activity to the method of evaluation, (e.g., Dropbox, quiz, discussion, survey or manual assessment) At the College level, the Wizard is an excellent tool for creating the top levels of the competency but any later changes must be made manually. Also, sub-competencies need to be created manually. The Wizard only helps with simple competencies. Directions for the use of the Wizard are on the last page of this paper.

General Order of Creation

This is a recommended order of creation to use as a guideline. It makes the process linear and easier to understand. Each of these is explained in more detail later in this paper. The explanations use the same numbers as given here.

> 1. Create rubrics. There is no limit to the number of rubrics and they can be as specific or general as needed. Also, multiple rubrics may be used to evaluate one activity.
> 2. Create quiz, discussion, Dropbox, etc. used to evaluate students, hereafter refers to as "method of evaluation." These are created in each individual course or org unit.
> 3. Create the Competency (top level)
>   - Create sub-competencies, if needed.
>   - Link sub-competencies to the overall top competency.
>   - If no sub-competency, link the competency to each Org Unit that uses the competency. If there are sub-competencies then link them rather than the main competency.
> 4. Create Learning Objectives and link them to any sub-competencies.

5. Return to each course and create the method of evaluation.
6. Link the method of evaluation to both the rubric and learning objective. Be sure to also set the "Achievement Threshold."
7. Test.

FIGURE 1 below shows a competency, learning objectives and corresponding rubrics.

Business Core Goal 2 – The student exhibits the ability to utilize the critical thinking tool, The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking Concepts and Tools, to answer questions, solve problems, make decisions, and continue to grow as a critical thinker.

Learning Objectives:
The Student completing this goal is able to:
1. Identify and explain issues
2. Distinguish among factual, conceptual, and value claims
3. Evaluate assumptions as well as information
4. Evaluate inferences

Rubrics:

Objective	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Identifies and explains issues	Fails to identify, summarize, or explain the main problem or question. Represents the issues inaccurately or inappropriately	Identifies main issues, but does not summarize or explain them clearly or sufficiently	Successfully identifies and summarizes the main issues, but does not explain why/how they are problems or create questions	Clearly identifies and summarizes main issues and successfully explains why/how they are problems
Distinguishes among types of claims	Fails to label correctly any of the factual, conceptual, and value dimensions	Successfully identifies some, but not all of the factual, conceptual, and value aspects of the questions and answers	Successfully separates and labels all factual, conceptual, and value claims	Clearly and accurately labels not only all factual, conceptual, and value claims, but also those implicit in the assumptions and implications of positions and arguments
Evaluates information and assumptions	Is unable to evaluate material or does so superficially. Fails to identify and evaluate any of the important assumptions behind the claims and fails to evaluate its credibility	Evaluates material inconsistently. Identifies some of the most important assumptions, but does not evaluate them for plausibility or clarity	Evaluates material competently. Identifies and evaluates all the important assumptions, but not the ones deeper in the background—the more abstract ones.	Evaluates material with insight. Not only identifies and evaluates all important assumptions, but also some of the more abstract ones.
Evaluates inferences	Fails to identify and explain mistakes in the reasoning of others and fails to avoid them in his/her own reasoning	Successfully identifies and avoids some common mistakes of reasoning but misses less common ones, and does not explain why or how they are mistakes	Identifies and avoids all mistakes of reasoning and explains some of them	Not only identifies and avoids all mistakes of reasoning but gives clear explanations of why they are mistakes

Detail Instruction for Each above Step
1. Create Rubrics
Rubrics are the base of every competency and need to be created first. Rubrics should be created at the higher level and then shared with the lower, although they may be created at the higher level and copied to each lower org unit. If Competencies and Rubrics are not on your NavBar, add them. (Go to Edit Course/NavBars and load the needed links) Once that is done:

- Click on Rubrics in the NavBar.
- Select New.
  - Create a rubric for each learning objective.
  - Enter the rubric name (suggestion: name it the same as the learning objective).
  - Enter the description, if desired. The description is optional.
  - Determine the Rubric Type. "Text and Numeric" allows for a percent to be associated with the levels of achievement.
- Rubrics are scored manually.
- Click the Add Org Units button and add all of the courses that use this rubric.
- Save.
- Now add each rubric level, start from low to high (i.e., poor to excellent, unsatisfactory to outstanding, etc.). Enter a set of rubrics for each learning objective.
- Click Save after each level and continue, adding rubric levels until finished.
- Rubrics can be changed until they are used to evaluate an approved Competency, then they are locked.

2. Create methods of Evaluation

The method of evaluation may be an assignment, a quiz, a grade item, a survey, a discussion item or a manual assessment. The method of evaluation must be entered into each course identified in step 1 above as "Add Org Units."

a. MANUALLY:

Return to the department or college homepage (enter the ou number into the address bar) where the rubrics were created and click on Competencies in the NavBar. Enter information in the standard or advanced view (see settings). Advanced View is recommended.

- Click Create New Competency (this is the top level competency).
  - Under General Information, enter the competency, (e.g., Critical Thinking).

General Information	
Type:	Competency
* Name:	

- Description is optional.
- Leave in draft form.

Status: Draft

- Check "Make competency and its children visible to users" if it is to be seen by students.

☐ Make Competency and its children visible to users

- If this competency has sub-competencies leave the Add Org Units button alone. Only the area should appear. If there are no sub-competencies use this button to add every course that will use this competency.

Make Competency Available To

☑ Current Org Unit: **Business**

Add Org Units

- If there are sub-competencies click on New Competency and enter each sub-competency.
  - Sub-competencies must be linked to Org Units (courses).

The following steps are only necessary if you are using sub-competencies.
- After the sub-competencies are entered go to "Competency Home" and change the setting to standard View.
  - Click Manage Competencies.
  - Click on one of the sub-competencies.
  - Click Competency Structure.
  - Click Add a parent to this Competency/Existing Competency.
  - Add the top-level competency.
  - Save.
- This is somewhat of a "bottom-up" approach. You can also click on the competency and add a "child". Either method works.
  - Repeat until all sub-competencies have the top competency as a parent.

- To check this, click Settings and return to Advanced View. In the left column click on the plus sign in front of "By Hierarchy".
- Click on the plus sign in front of the top competency and any other plus signs to check the hierarchy.

b. USING THE COMPETENCY WIZARD

The Competency Wizard is available in the Standard View of the Competency Tool only. It walks through creating a simple competency with learning objectives and activities. To make changes later, use the manual method.

- Click Competency Wizard.
- Give the competency a name.
- Fill out the relevant options.
- Click Next.
- Enter the first Learning Objective and complete the form.
- Add more Learning Objectives by clicking "+Add Learning Objectives" near the bottom of the page.
- Click Next.
- Add Activities.
- Click Next.
- You will see the structure created; if correct, click Create.

4. Create Learning Objectives

- Now enter the Learning Objectives.
- Click New/Create New Learning Objective.
- Enter the name of the Learning Objective (suggestion: use the same name as the rubric name).

General Information	
Type:	Learning Objective
* Name:	

- Description is optional.
- Enforce Evaluation Method: recommend "No" as faculty change their mind. If "Yes" is chosen and the faculty member changes their mind about evaluation method, the Learning Objective has to be deleted and recreated.

- Ready for Evaluation: recommend "Yes". (if not, it will have to be changed before testing).
- If there is only one Learning Objective, click Save. If more than one, click Save and New. When all have been entered click Save and return to Competency Home.
- Click on each Learning Objective and then click on each Learning Objective Structure. Add the parent competency.
- In Settings return to the Advanced View (if you are not already there) and expand the tree structure.

5. Create Activities

Assuming the structure is correct, add the activities at the course level offering and connect them to their Learning Objective(s) and rubric(s). Activities are created at the org unit or course level. See below for Manual Assessment Activities.

Desire2Learn Assessment Activities: (Quiz, Survey, Dropbox, Discussion, and Grade Item).

- From the course level, select the method of evaluation created in Step 2 above.
- Select the pencil to edit the item.
- Select the Activities Tab.
- Click on Add Activity.

- Give the Activity a Name (Suggestion: same as the rubrics).

* Name:	⊙
Associated Learning Objectives:	Add
Evaluation Type:	Rubric
Rubric:	#2 Distinguishes Types of Claims ▼ [Create Rubric]
Achievement Threshold:	Excellent ▼ [View Rubric Levels] ⊙
	Manually Evaluate

- Click Add to link the Learning Objectives. A popup box will open and show the Learning Objectives that were created. If the Learning Objective does not show, go back to the Area level and check to be sure you have connected the org units correctly in the competency.

Click on a Learning Objective to select it as a Parent

Search For: [   ] Search

☐

	Name
☐	#2 Evaluation of Inferences
☐	#2 Evaluation of Information and Assumptions
☐	#2 Distinguishes Types of Claims
☐	#2 Identifies and Explains Issues
☐	#3 Working with Others
☐	#3 Focus on the Task
☐	#3 Attitude
☐	#3 Contributions

- Drop down the Select Rubric arrow and check the rubric to which this activity is linked. Create an activity for each rubric.
- Select the Achievement Level.
- Select Save and New to enter another Activity or Save to end.

- Again, check the hierarchy to make sure all are linked correctly. Every Learning Object must have an Activity.

MANUAL ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES:
These must be created within each individual course that will use them.
- Click on Competencies.
- Click on New.
- Select Manual Assessment Activity. The main difference here is that the Evaluation Method says "Manual Assessment" not a specific tool in the Learning Environment.
- Give the Activity a Name (Suggestion: same as the rubrics).
- Leave "Select Existing Item" alone as it will default correctly.
- Drop down the Select Rubric arrow and select the rubric to which this activity is linked.
- Select the Achievement Level.
- Select Save and New to enter another Activity or Save to end.

NOTE: Evaluating a Manual Assessment Activity:
These can be accessed either individually by student, by activity, or multiple students can be given an achievement level at one time. Enter the course offering.
- Click on Competencies.
- Click on the Manual Assessment Activity.
- Click on Activity Results.
- Place a check mark in front of the student(s) to be assessed.
- Click on the pencil.
- In the pop-up, choose a rubric level per student and leave feedback or choose "Set all Rubrics Levels to" in order to assign all selected students that achievement level.

6. Return to each Competency
Return to each Competency and set the competencies from the draft state to Approved.
NOTE: Changes cannot be made while a Competency is set to Approved. It must be reset to draft in order to make changes. The other option is to leave it as draft all the time.

7. Test

8. Adding Courses to Competencies
Periodically, new copies of courses that already have competencies need to be added. Build the course in the normal way and then:

- In the new copy of the course be sure to add the competency evaluation method.
- In rubrics, add the course as an Org Unit to each rubric.
- Find the Competency or Competencies that list the courses Org Units and add this course.
- Test.

Checking your Work

One of the best ways to determine if all of the links are correct is to check your Competency Tree. Go to the Competency page and click on Settings. Select Advanced Settings and then expand the tree on your left. It should look something like this tree.
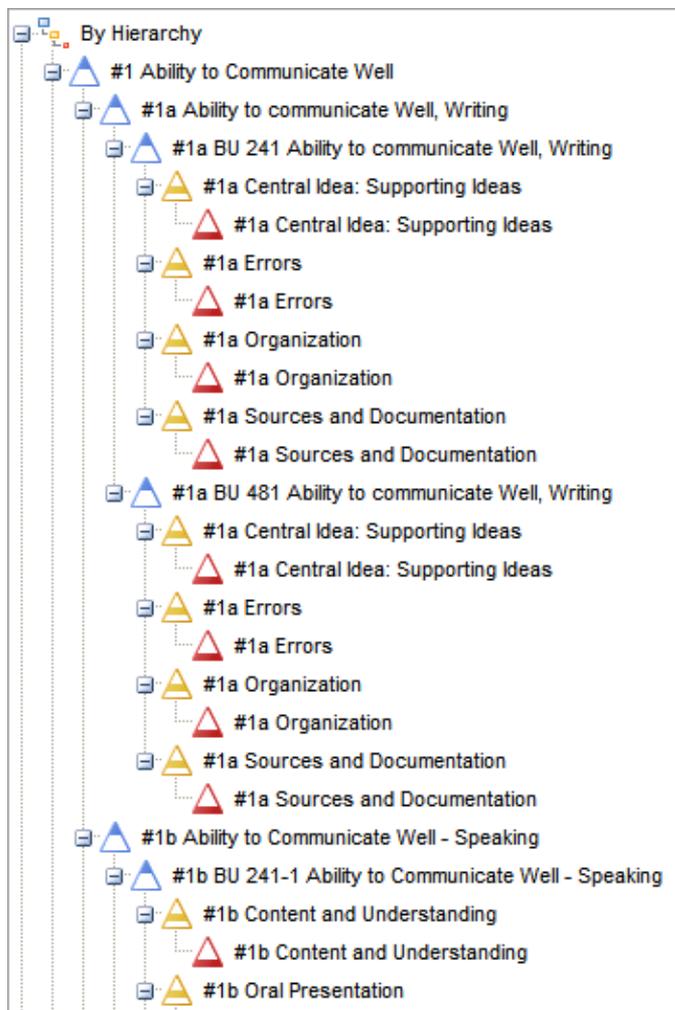
The Competency tree helps the developer picture all of the relationships that are established and serves as a reminder of these relationships when future changes are needed.

Conclusion

Once designed, the Desire2Learn Competencies and rubrics solution will empower your organization to take your institutional and program assessment to the next level by using a comprehensive and flexible suite of tracking and reporting tools. This will enable your institution to make informed decisions that will continually improve the overall effectiveness of the teaching and learning at your institution.

About Desire2Learn

Desire2Learn comprises Desire2Learn Incorporated and its subsidiaries. Desire2Learn is a world-leading provider of enterprise eLearning solutions that enable institutions and other organizations to create teaching and learning environments that reflect their vision, values, goals, pedagogical approaches and branding. Founded in 1999, Desire2Learn has offices and personnel located in North America, the U.K. and Australia. Desire2Learn supports more than five million learners worldwide and clients include higher education, K-12, as well as associations, government and other leading organizations.

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