

Performance criteria are the expectations given before a performance that define the characteristics that make up a high quality performance so that performers know their target and can meet or exceed expectations.

The 1995 *Teaching Institute Handbook* presented the discipline of Process Education (PE) in terms of its key concepts, context, processes, and tools. Among the list of key concepts, “performance-based learning” was rated even more highly than “knowledge vs. process,” “rate of learning,” or “mentor” (Apple, 1995). Because a performance is by nature a process rather than a product, the concept of performance criteria is distinct from the concept of student learning outcomes which tend to focus on products rather than processes. For this reason, performance criteria differ from the types of criteria often set for product assessments or evaluations; performance criteria set expectations for how the performance itself is carried out rather than for its outcome.

Over the next few years the definition and implications of performance criteria within the context of Process Education expanded, especially with the conception and development of performance measures. The first PE performance measure, a rubric for active listening, emerged as a result of a set of performance criteria developed at Kirkwood Community College. As part of the process of developing this measure, a description of the performance itself was created (Figure 1).

This by-product qualifies as the first set of PE performance criteria and is found in the Kirkwood Community College

Teaching Institute Journal (1997). These performance criteria were then used for the development of the measure. The relationship between performance criteria and performance measures is illustrated in a learning object available at www.pcrest.com/LO/criteria and shown in Figure 2 (Pacific Crest, 2009).

According to Dan Apple, “Participants at faculty development events generally found the use of performance criteria to be helpful as descriptions of the performances they wanted to see from their students. As illuminating as the proffered performance criteria were, it seemed that the actual creation of performance criteria was a challenging task for many faculty.” The *Curriculum Design Handbook* (Apple 1998) offered a methodology to help faculty write performance criteria for their courses.

The targeted performances of students in a course should support the larger goals of a program; to meet that need, the *Program Assessment Institute Handbook* (Apple & Krumsieg, 2001) offered an outline of how to write performance criteria for a program. This scholarship was advanced and formalized for the *Faculty Guidebook* which contains the modules *Writing Performance Criteria for a Course* (Hinton 2007) and *Writing Performance Criteria for a Program* (Nibert 2007). An important complement to this work is the module *Writing Performance Criteria*

Figure 1 Description of Listening (Performance)

Listening is the receiving and decoding of messages from others. Listening includes hearing words and sounds and noticing nonverbal signals to ascertain the meaning that others are trying to convey. It also includes the ability to recall what has been presented. The listener identifies their purpose and tries to understand the sender's purpose. Good listening results in effective feedback to the sender.

Ranked Performance Criteria List

1. Concentration: focusing on the message
2. Comprehension: interpreting meaning accurately
3. Perceptive: understanding sender's nonverbals and hidden meaning
4. Motivation: wanting to learn this new material
5. Background knowledge: relating prior information/theories to this context
6. Classifying: organizing current information into existing framework
7. Targeting: sampling key words and phrases
8. Empathy: willingness to understand underlying issues and others' values
9. Paying attention to details: inventorying important specifics
10. Compare and contrast: using prior knowledge to evaluate and differentiate ideas

Figure 2 Screenshot of the Performance, Criteria, and Measurement Learning Object

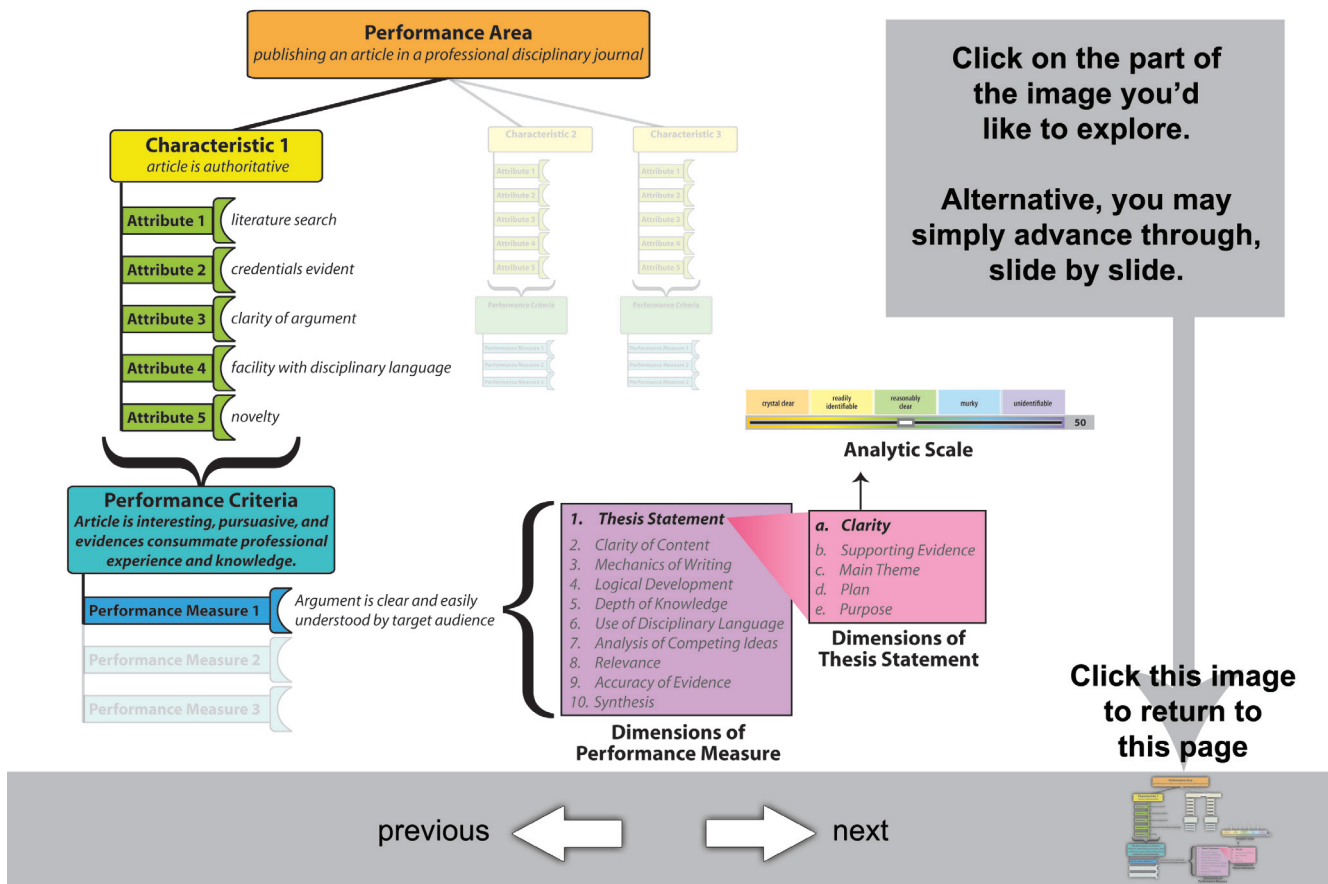


Figure 3 Method for Developing Performance Criteria for Individuals and Groups

1. Identify key stakeholders for the performance.
2. Describe the performance expected by all stakeholders, including the performer(s).
3. Brainstorm to get a list of areas of quality that can be observed within the expected performance.
4. Minimize redundancy and overlap among the areas of quality.
5. Select and describe critical areas of quality that most contribute to the desired performance.
6. Articulate connections among aspects within each area of quality in terms of how they work together to produce the desired outcomes.
7. Develop clear statements of performance by synthesizing the relationships among aspects within each area of quality.
8. Sequence the statements to form a logical set.

for *Individuals and Teams* (Utschig, 2007; see Figure 3), which led to the publication of sets of performance criteria for individuals in a variety of roles: learning to learn camp facilitator, district superintendent, college president, developmental educator, online educator, and transformational leader in education (Pacific Crest, 2015). Building upon this, the Performance Measures Institute and Workshop offers an activity to help faculty become proficient at drafting performance criteria. This activity uses the Methodology for Developing

Performance Criteria shown in Figure 3, as well as the Writing and Analyzing Performance Criteria Forms, shown in Figure 4.

A recent discovery about the process of writing performance criteria is that using a table to organize information before writing the criteria can make the process clearer and limit the possibility of overlap between characteristics. In Table 1, for example, characteristics representing areas of quality in the performance are represented as labels for each column, and the attributes which contribute to each

Figure 4 Writing and Analyzing Performance Criteria Forms

Writing and Analyzing Performance Criteria Form	
Team Outcome: _____	
Characteristic 1:	Characteristic 3:
Attribute 1:	Attribute 1:
Attribute 2:	Attribute 2:
Attribute 3:	Attribute 3:
Attribute 4:	Attribute 4:
Performance criteria 1:	Performance criteria 3:
Potential performance measures for the performance criteria (how is performance measured against the criteria?)	Potential performance measures for the performance criteria (how is performance measured against the criteria?)
Characteristic 2:	Notes:
Attribute 1:	
Attribute 2:	
Attribute 3:	
Attribute 4:	
Performance criteria 2:	
Potential performance measures for the performance criteria (how is performance measured against the criteria?)	

Table 1 Characteristics and Attributes for a Sample Performance of “Publishing an Article in a Professional Disciplinary Journal” (see also Figure 2)

	CHARACTERISTIC 1 <i>Article is authoritative</i>	CHARACTERISTIC 2 <i>Article meets technical requirements</i>
Characteristics of the Performance: →	Literature search conducted	Appropriate length
↑ Attributes of each characteristic	Credentials evident	Citations and references included
	Clarity of argument	End notes used and numbered as required
	Facility with disciplinary language	Tables and figures meet publication standards

characteristic are listed in the cells for each column. An attribute can only be attached to a single characteristic (i.e. appears in only one column), thus making the performance criteria mutually exclusive and orthogonal.

There are many aspects of creating and using performance criteria that are worthy of further research and scholarship; chief among them, the resistance of so many to establish and use clear performance criteria. This resistance is

seen at the classroom level (with respect to student performance), at the department level (by tenure and promotion committees), and at the program or college level (in dealing with accreditation organizations and issues). In each case, clear performance criteria tend to clarify expectations and empower performers (students, faculty, schools) with information critical to performing successfully.

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