

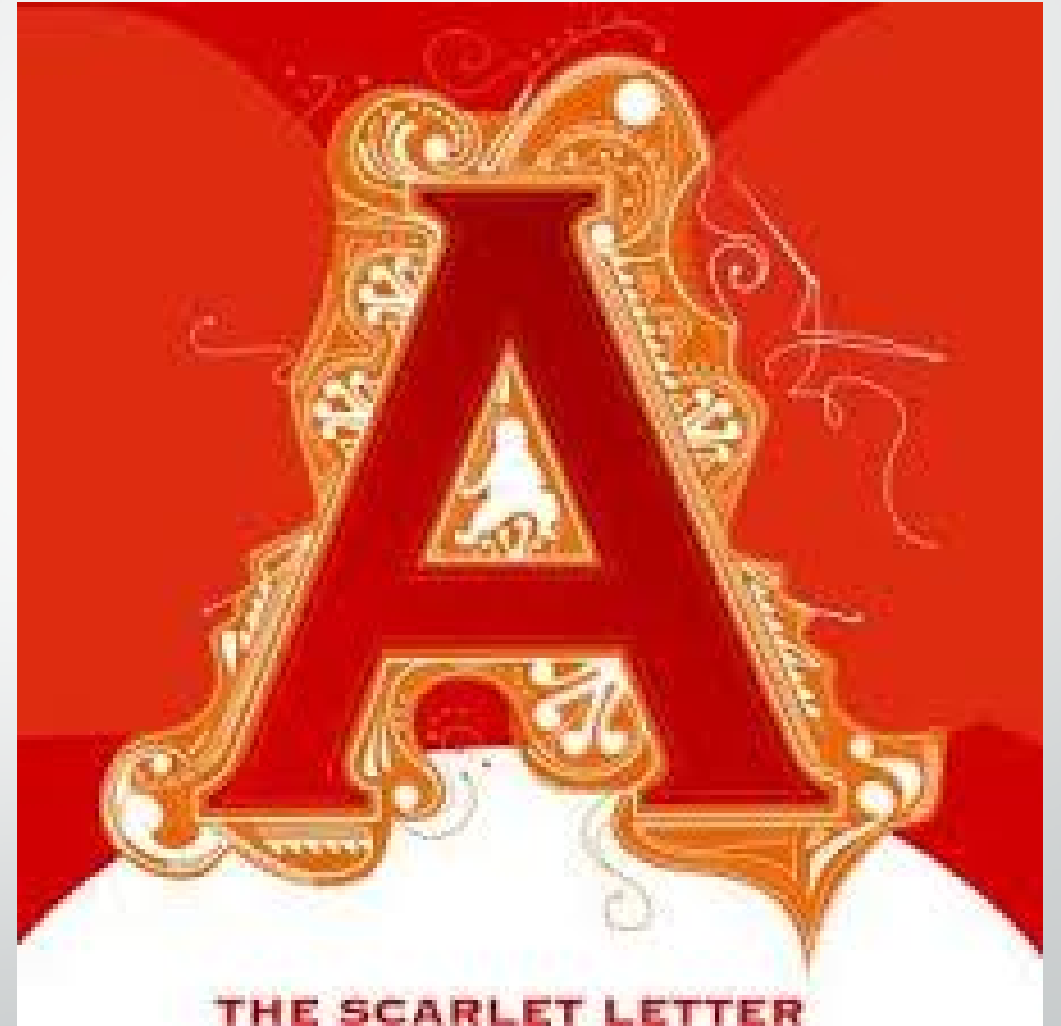
Learning Outcomes Assessment

Mission, Outcomes & Bloom's Taxonomy, and Designing Projects

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Our Scarlet Letter

Let's talk about why we don't like the "A" word:



Why We Don't Like the "A" Word

Accountability

- VU is accountable to the HLC to complete programmatic assessment for the purposes of accreditation.
- Administrators are under pressure from external forces to provide evidence that students are learning.
- Faculty often view assessment as a burden and serving the sole purpose of accountability without a clear connection to what happens in the classroom.
- Faculty often perceive outcomes assessment as "mechanistic", "standardization", and even "reductionist" as a means to measure the learning in their classrooms—"What I teach can't be reduced to just *numbers and percentages*."
- Faculty often report that assessment reports are a means by which we make them tell us "What *you* want to hear . . ." again, for the purpose of accountability.

Why We Should Embrace Assessment

("Let's Do Assessment as if Learning Matters the Most")

- Assessing learning outcomes means that we must collectively articulate what we want students to learn, which means understanding what we collectively value and consider to be "learning" in our courses.
- Undertaking collective, summative assessment of the institution forces us to consider how we can improve our teaching and student (and our own!) learning and promotes faculty involvement and collaboration across the institution.
- It provides teachers with the opportunity to experiment with curriculum, processes, and tools in a more systematic way.
- It asks us to recognize that "learning is directly, though not exclusively, related to the quality of teaching. Therefore, one of the most promising ways to improve learning is to improve teaching" (Angelo and Cross, "Classroom Assessment Techniques" 7).
- Because if faculty don't "own" the assessment of our learning outcomes, we open the door for those external forces to impose upon us their vision of assessment—which likely means a more rigid standardization of the curriculum and even imposing standardized testing.

How We're Improving the Assessment Process:

- Using a rubric and checklist, the Assessment Committee will provide quantitative and qualitative feedback to faculty, and a summative assessment report will be created for chairs, deans, and the administration. The report will be given to the board during their February retreat. Your liaison has the rubric and the checklist.
- Inviting the faculty responsible for assessment to sit-in on assessment committee meetings.
- Allowing those plans that meet the benchmark for clarity, focus, completion, and timeliness to skip the second-year revision process—a “leap” year.
- To allow everyone the opportunity for a “leap” year, each program may choose any one of the following options (not necessary for projects in year one):
 - Keep the plan's timeline and develop new projects in the upcoming year one of a new cycle (best for projects in their third year).
 - Restart the clock at year one for projects that merit continuation with some refinements (may not be ideal for third-year projects).
 - Add an extra year to the cycle to synch up with the rest of the plan in year one, thus allowing the third-year to be the “leap” year (best for projects in their second-year).
 - Programs should decide which option is best for their plan by the due date for the draft submission of part I: September 18th.

The Assessment Plan

Part I

The Mission

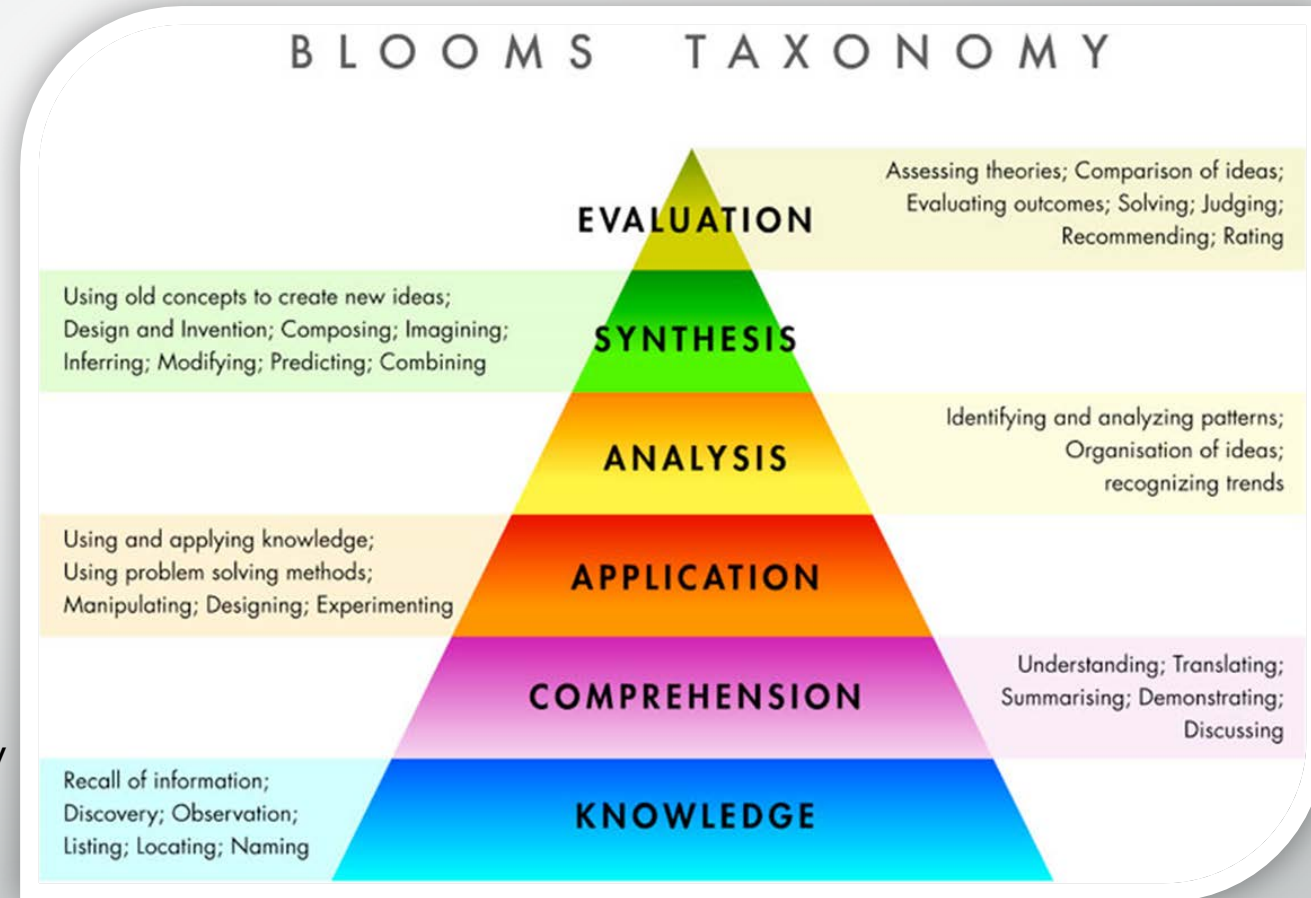
A 2-3 sentence statement that states the following:

- an explanation of the program's purpose and goals in the form of "The mission of the Vincennes University _____ program is to . . ."
- a statement that describes what graduates of the program will be prepared to do
- a statement that generally describes how the program will accomplish its goals

The first step of the assessment plan represents the coordination between the stated mission and learning goals with our plans to investigate student learning.

Learning Outcomes

- A plan should have 4-6 (and maybe a few more) learning outcomes.
- Each should reflect the highest level of learning students will achieve *by the completion of the program*.
- The outcomes should reflect the range of learning that will occur throughout the program.
- Each outcome will begin with a verb that corresponds to Benjamin Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Domains:



Orders of Thinking Skills (via Bloom's Taxonomy)

| Lower order thinking skills | | | Higher order thinking skills | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|---|
| remember | understand | apply | analyze | evaluate | create |
| <u>Key words</u> Define, label, name, recall, duplicate, spell, list, select, recognize, identify, retrieve <i>Ex: Can you recall...?</i> | <u>Key words</u> Interpret, clarify, paraphrase, exemplify, illustrate, classify, categorize <i>Ex: How would you rephrase the meaning...?</i> | <u>Key words</u> Demonstrate, apply, illustrate, utilize, model, build <i>Ex: What ideas apply..?</i> | <u>Key words</u> Categorize, dissect, discover, inspect, contrast, conclusion, examine, survey <i>Ex: What conclusions can you draw...?</i> | <u>Key words</u> Validate, opinion, support, judge, decide, compare, appraise, value <i>Ex: Are there any errors...?</i> | <u>Key words</u> Compose, develop, hypothesize, invent, organize, produce, propose, design <i>Ex: How would you solve the following...?</i> |

Success Standards

-Design with Analysis in Mind-

Generalized

"Students will . . ."

- "score 80% or higher on the exam"
- "score 'Acceptable' on the project"
- "score at least 25 out of 30 on the rubric"
- "score 'Proficient' in each criterion of the rubric"
- "successfully complete the checklist"
- "demonstrate a level of 'Competency'"

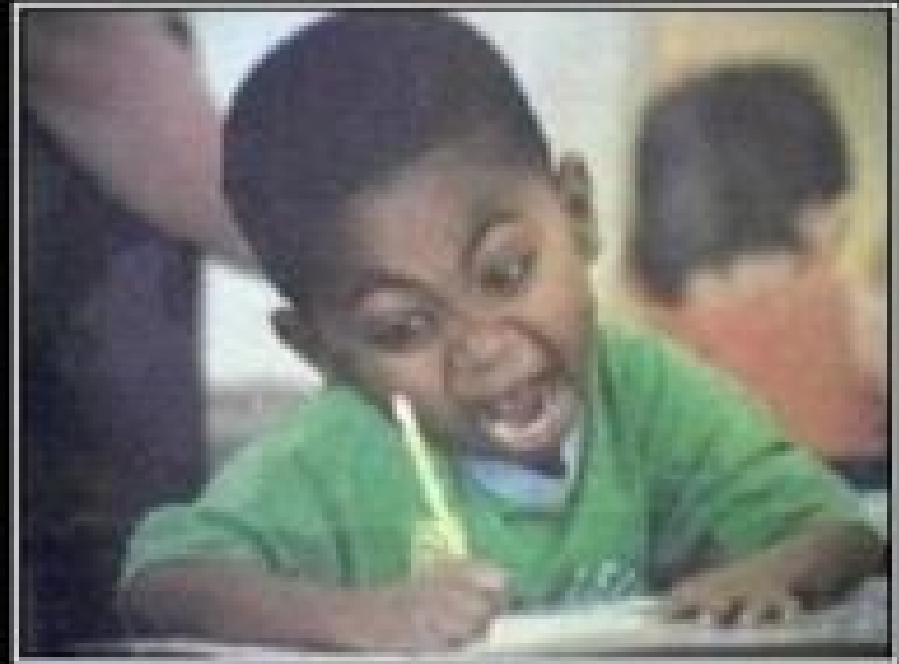
Analysis-Oriented

"___% of students will . . ."

- "score at least 'Acceptable' (a score of 3) on each criterion of the rubric"
- "score at least 'Proficient' in X, Y, and Z areas of the rubric and 'Advanced' in areas A, B, and C"
- "score 60% or higher on the pre-test and 80% or higher on the post-test"
- "successfully complete the checklist in a) no more than two attempts; b) a specified amount of time; c) after a 'stressor' is introduced; and/or d) its entirety with mapped skills"
- "demonstrate a level of 'Competency' by scoring at least a 5 in each dimension . . ."

Mapping Helps to Analyze

- Identify the knowledge/learning required for each question (or section of questions) on the exam similar to the way a rubric identifies criteria of a project or essay.
- Observe any patterns in the results of the exams that are suggestive of students' strengths or weaknesses.
- It isn't always about X% will achieve a score of Y—where does the learning seem to be occurring (or not)?
- These observations will be invaluable when you analyze the results.



**Last five minutes
Of exam**

Developing Plans

- Two learning outcomes are assessed in each 3-year cycle of the plan.
- Two complementary plans assess each outcome, thus:
 $2 \text{ outcomes} \times 2 \text{ projects each} = 4 \text{ projects total}$
- Both projects for an outcome should be complimentary—providing information that can be used in conjunction to examine student learning.
- *At least* one project for each outcome should gather quantitative data—a direct assessment that provides measurements of student learning—e.g. test scores, rubric scores, or checklist criteria and quantities.
- One project for each outcome *may* be an indirect measure—e.g. a survey, reflection, response, or some other tool that asks for student feedback about their learning and the activity.

For More Info . . .

- Visit the website of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness at improve.vinu.edu for additional materials related to assessment from past workshops.
- Request a workshop! Visit the website—go to the “Workshop” tab—click the “Request Workshop” link.
- Call the Office of Institutional Effectiveness at (812)-888-4275 or the Interim Director of Assessment at (812)-888-5369.
- Many texts concerning assessment are available in the Center for Teaching and Learning, LRC 208. I recommend *Classroom Assessment Techniques* by Thomas A. Angelo and K. Patricia Cross for anyone interested in formative assessment techniques for classroom use.