

**Charting Your Learning-
Centered Course:
*Course Design Emphasizing
Outcomes***

**Carole Huston
Marcelle Darby**

Chart Your Course



Objective: to assist faculty with planning and implementing a learning-centered course, with an eye towards assessment.

Presentation Learning Outcomes:

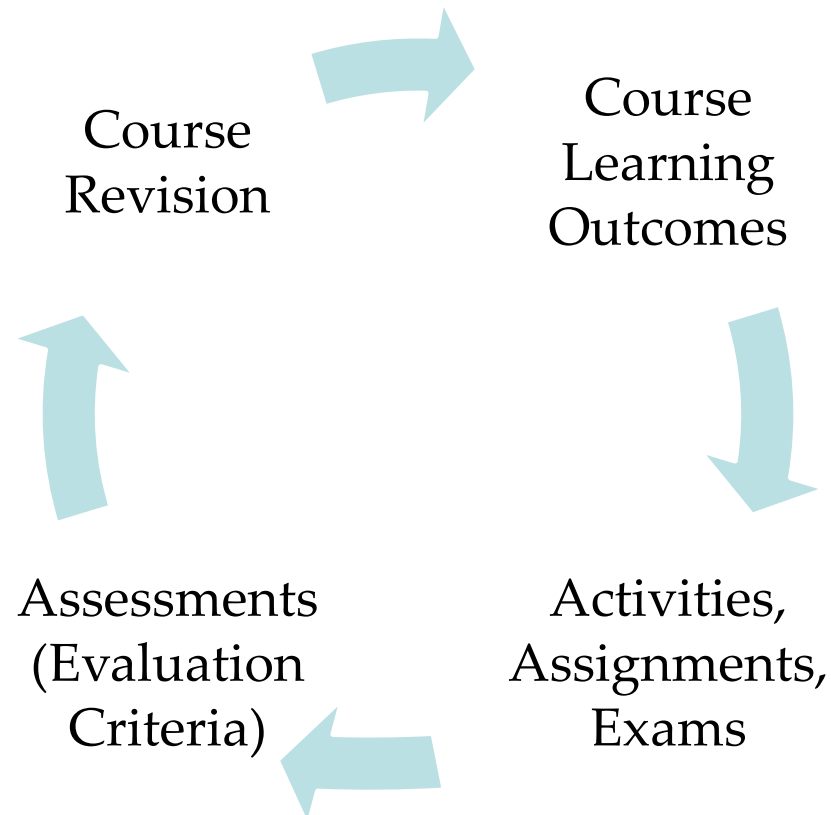
- Identify the basics of syllabus construction
- Distinguish outcomes from objectives (goals, etc.)
- Write course learning outcomes
- Align course learning outcomes with planned curricular activities/plan curricular activities that align with course learning outcomes
- Identify outcome evaluation criteria for curricular activities

Constructing a well-designed and clear syllabus



- Contact information
 - Course description
 - Course learning outcomes
 - Textbooks, readings, and other materials
 - Overall structure of the course
 - Course requirements
 - Course policies
 - Assessment and grading practices
 - Course outline/schedule
- (See template guidelines in syllabus handout)

Course Design: A Cyclical Process



Course Alignment: Connecting 3 Elements



Three simple questions:

1. What do you want student to learn by taking your course? (outcomes)
2. What activities and assignments do you have them do so that they can achieve the course outcomes? (student work or assignments)
3. How will you evaluate whether they've achieved your outcomes? (your evaluation criteria or assessment)

Did you know?



Our regional accreditors (WASC) now **require faculty to include course learning outcomes on their syllabi.**

So what's a learning outcome?

Clarification of Terms



Basic Terminology:

- **Outcomes:** faculty expectations for what they want students to learn by the end of a course or program. Often outcomes begin with the phrase “Students will be able to...” but they need not. **Ex. Students will write in a clear and cogent arguments in their term papers.**
- **Course objectives:** traditional focus on what the course covers or what the faculty intends to accomplish. **Ex. This class provides an overview of the methods typically found throughout the discipline’s research literature.**
- Be careful: there are many terms used interchangeably with “outcomes,” such “objectives,” and “goals.”

Outcome characteristics



Useful outcomes:

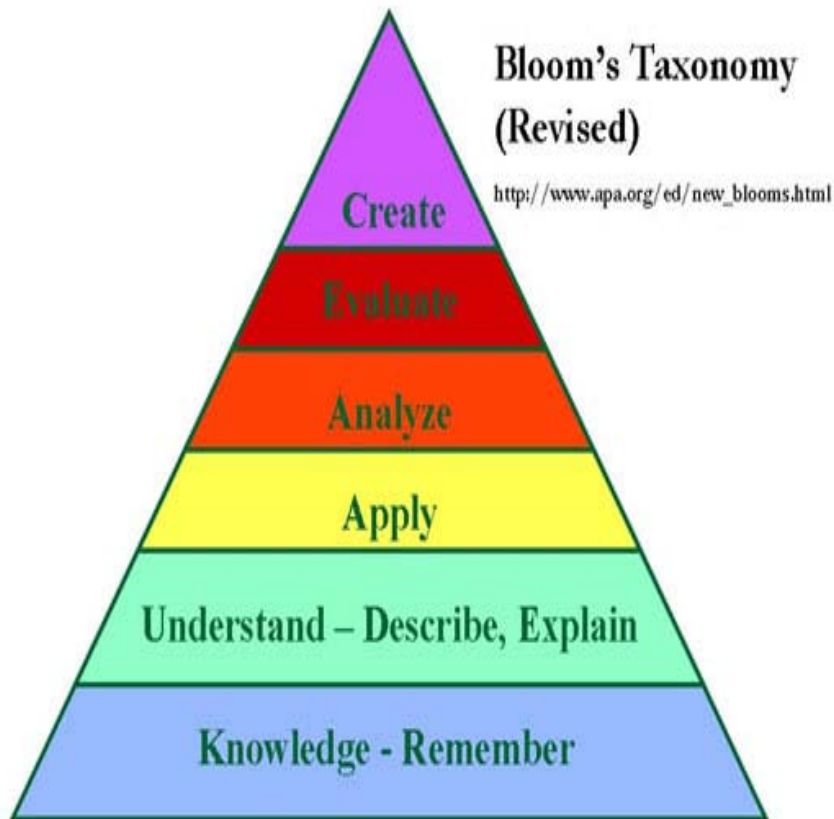
1. Student-focused.
2. Manageable in number.
3. Measurable.
4. Focused on learning that endures.
5. Aligned with program-level outcomes.
6. Aligned with discipline expectations for knowledge and learning.

Types of Outcomes



- **Knowledge outcomes:**
Ex: You will be able to identify and explain major social identity theories.
- **Skills outcomes: cognitive, interactive, creativity:**
Ex: You will be able to construct and orally present a persuasive and well-organized thesis addressing a major issue in the field.
- **Attitudes outcomes:**
Ex: You will be able to evaluate and reasonably defend your position relative to assumptions and implications of different ethical concepts and perspectives.

Learning Outcomes Are Developmental: Action Verbs



Based on an APA adaptation of Anderson, L.W. & Krathwohl, D.R. (Eds.) (2001)

- 6. Create:** assemble, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, invent
- 5. Evaluate:** appraise, argue, defend, judge, select, support, value, evaluate
- 4. Analyze:** appraise, compare, contrast, criticize, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test
- 3. Apply:** choose, demonstrate, dramatize, employ, illustrate, interpret, operate, schedule, sketch, solve, use, write
- 2. Understand:** classify, describe, discuss, explain, identify, locate, recognize, report, select, translate, paraphrase
- 1. Remembering:** define, duplicate, list, memorize, recall, repeat, reproduce, state

Course Alignment: Connecting 3 Elements



Three simple questions:

1. What do you want student to learn by taking your course? (outcomes)

2. What activities and assignments do you have them do so that they can achieve the course outcomes? (student work or assignments)

3. How will you evaluate whether they've achieved your outcomes? (your evaluation criteria or assessment)

Outcome and Student Work Examples



- **Biology Outcome:** synthesize a cogent argument in the language of science
- **Biology Assignment:** lab reports written in style of scientific journal
- **Ethics Outcome:** identify and analyze real world ethical problems or dilemmas and identify those affected by the dilemma.
- **Ethics Assignment:** essay assignment which demonstrates analysis of a real world problem and its consequences for various groups of people.

Course Alignment: Connecting 3 Elements



Three simple questions:

1. What do you want student to learn by taking your course? (outcomes)
2. What activities and assignments do you have them do so that they can achieve the course outcomes? (student work or assignments)
3. How will you evaluate whether they've achieved your outcomes? (your evaluation criteria or assessment)

Outcome Evaluation Criteria: Key Characteristics



- **Valid:** are criteria directly related to course outcome?
- **Reliable:** can they be applied consistently?
- **Flexible:** do they capture the different levels of student performance?
- **Fair:** reduces instructor bias generally

Example



- **Outcome:** Evaluate media messages (secondary sources and advertising) for the validity of their claims based on evidence criteria, criteria for valid hypothesis-testing, and general acceptance in the scientific community.
- **Assignment:** Read the attached article regarding global warming. Summarize the major claims, and identify the supporting evidence for each. If sufficient evidence is not provided for a claim, state what additional evidence you would need to evaluate it. Finally, evaluate the validity of this article based on the evidence as well as your knowledge of the subject and your knowledge of what constitutes sciences.

Course Disconnects



- **Problems between outcomes and assignments**
- **Problems between assignments and evaluation criteria**
- **Problems between evaluation criteria and outcomes**

Chart Your Course



Objective: to assist faculty with planning and implementing a learning-centered course, with an eye towards assessment.

Presentation Learning Outcomes:

- Identify the basics of syllabus construction
- Distinguish outcomes from objectives (goals, etc.)
- Write course learning outcomes
- Align course learning outcomes with planned curricular activities/plan curricular activities that align with course learning outcomes
- Identify outcome evaluation criteria for curricular activities