Taking Assessment to the Program Level

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Today...

1. What is assessment? What is a program?
2. What is a program learning outcome?
3. Make sure students have enough opportunities to achieve each program learning outcome.
4. Why is it a good idea to look at program learning outcomes?
5. Assessing program learning outcomes
6. Organizing and implementing program learning assessments

What is Assessment?

- Deciding what we want our students to learn
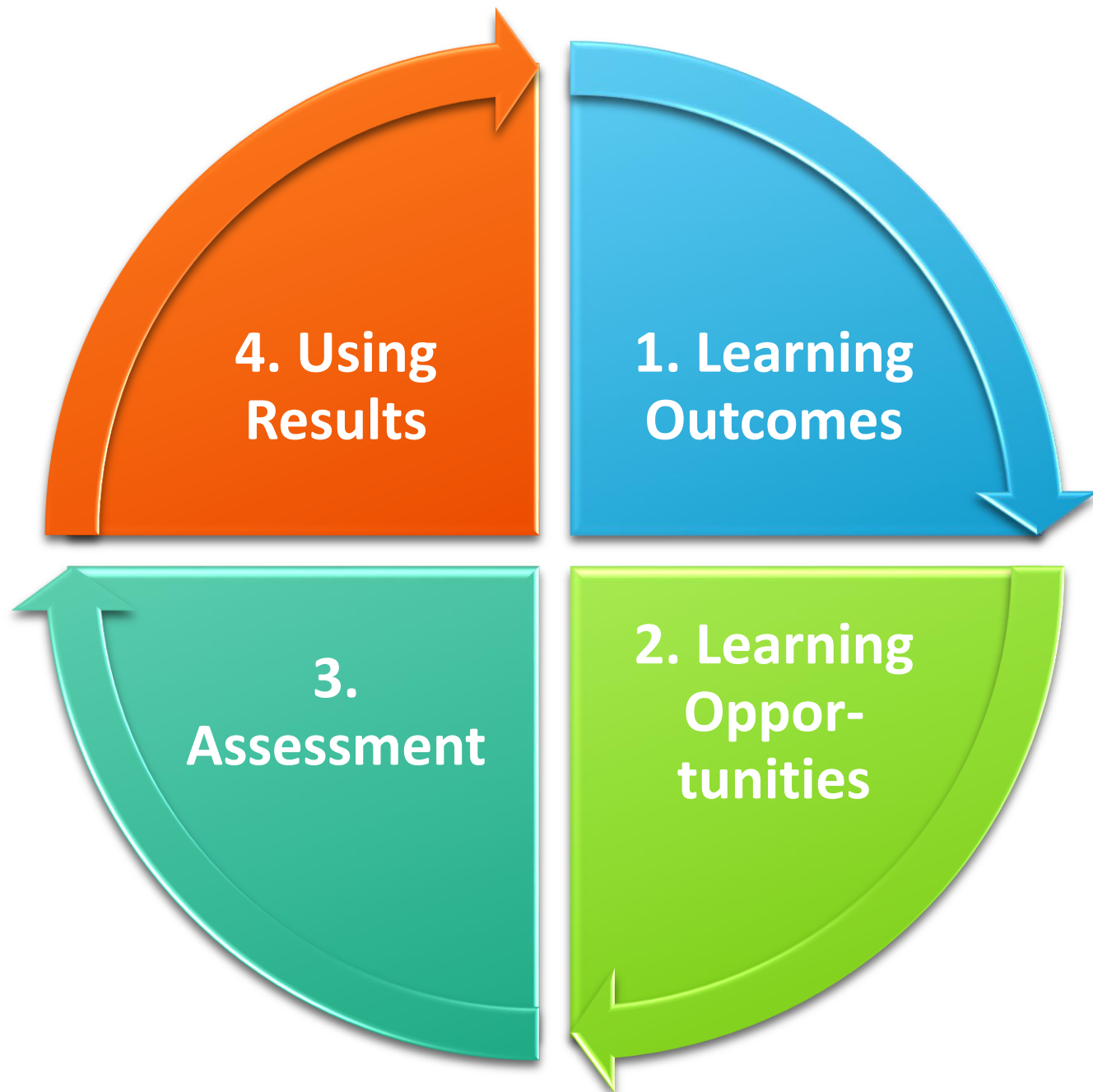
- Making sure they learn it!

  --Jane Wolfson, Director, Environmental Science & Studies Program, Towson University

What is Teaching?

- Deciding what we want our students to learn

- Making sure they learn it!

--Jane Wolfson, Director, Environmental Science & Studies Program, Towson University
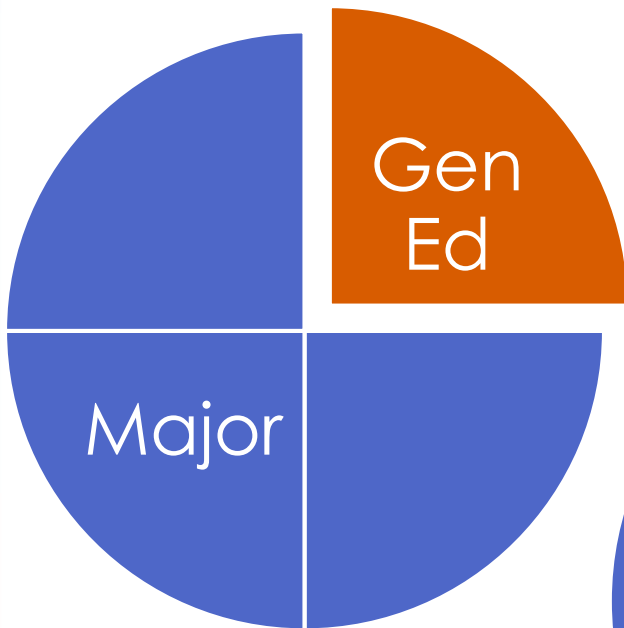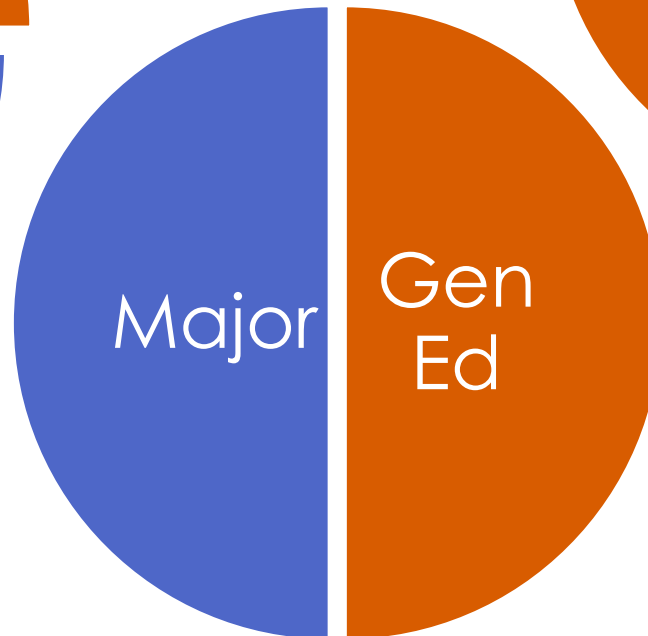
What is a Program? San Francisco Ideas

- An integrated collection of courses designed to achieve particular outcomes

- A group of courses that leads to something tangible for the student like a degree or certificate

- What about courses completed for transfer that lead to no credential?
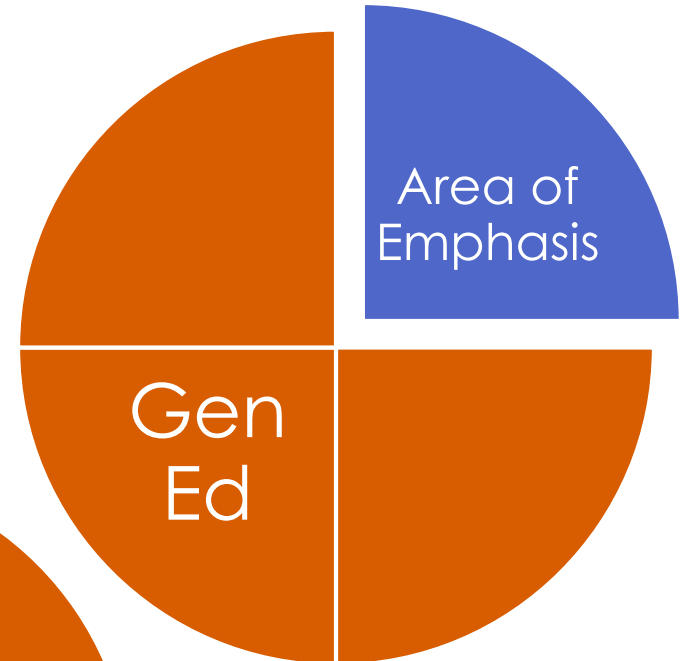
- What about gen ed?

Examples

Career AS

AA/AS

AA & AS in Liberal Studies

A Program is More than a Collection of Courses

- *The institution's degrees and programs follow practices… including appropriate… depth… course sequencing… and synthesis of learning.*
  - *ACCJC*

- *Gen ed outcomes should be "practiced extensively, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance."*
  - *AAC&U*

Two Years of 100-Level Courses is Not an Associate Degree

- A degree program has
  - *Coherence*
  - *Depth*
  - *Synthesis*

What is a Program Learning Outcome?

- The BIG things you want students to get out of a program

- Developed throughout the program, in multiple courses

- Not one faculty member's sole responsibility

What Are the "Big Things" Students Need to Learn?

Attitudes, Values, Dispositions, & Habits of Mind

"Soft" Transferrable Skills

"Hard" Career Skills

Knowledge & Understanding

What "Soft Skills" Do Employers Need?

- Teamwork and collaboration skills
- Articulating ideas clearly and effectively
- Real-world problem solving
- Evaluating information and conclusions
- Flexibility and adaptability to change
- Creativity and innovation
- Working with people from diverse cultural backgrounds
- Ethical judgment
- Understanding numbers and statistics

What "Soft Skills" Do Employers Need?

- Teamwork and collaboration skills
- **Articulating ideas clearly and effectively**
- **Real-world problem solving**
- **Evaluating information and conclusions**
- Flexibility and adaptability to change
- Creativity and innovation
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Course learning outcomes help students achieve program learning outcomes.

Program

Articulate one's progress & development as a practitioner in the discipline.

Course

Reflect on one's strengths and areas for improvement as a practitioner of the skills developed in this course.

Program

Articulate ideas clearly & effectively.

Course

Organize research material.

Use a variety of visual tools to present information.

Present a clear argument supported by compelling evidence.

Institutional

Apply critical thinking, problem-solving, and research skills.
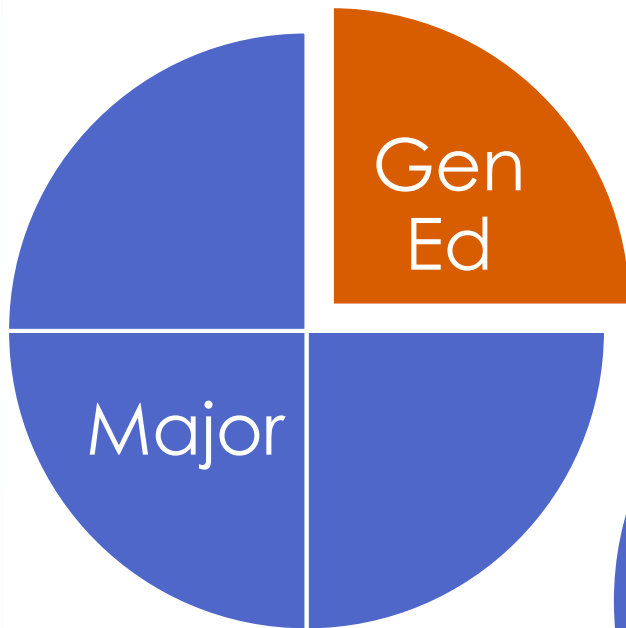
Program

Use research methods in the discipline.

Course

Interpret statistical tests of research data.

What about Gen Ed?

Career AS

Gen Ed

Major

AA/AS

Major

Gen Ed

AA & AS in Liberal Studies

Area of Emphasis
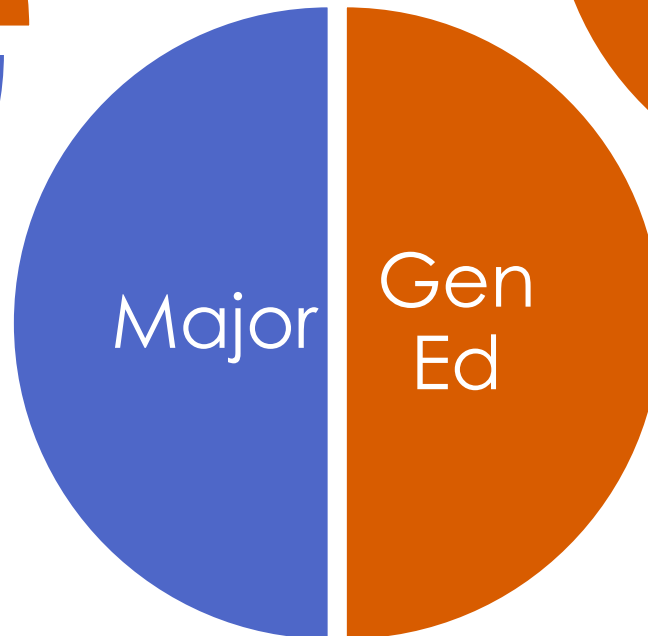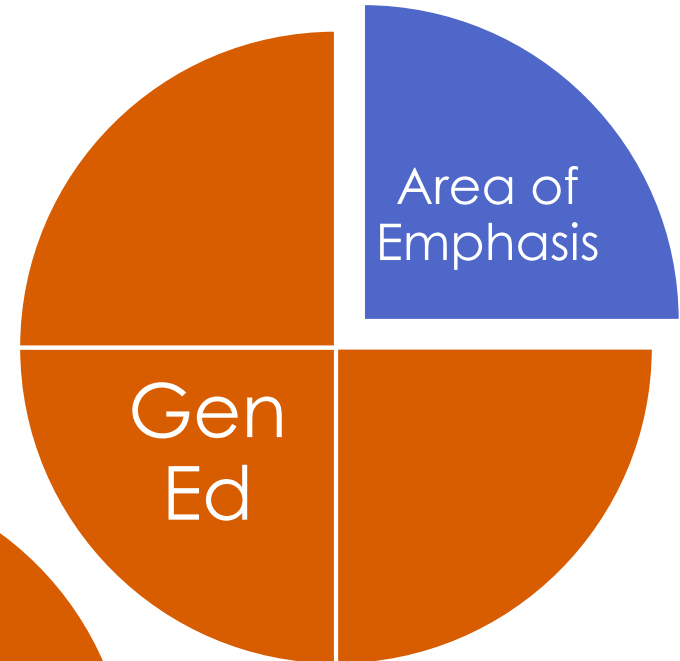
Gen Ed

Gen Ed Curricula Help Students...

- Develop "soft" transferrable skills

- Develop attitudes, values, dispositions, & habits of mind.

- Apply these skills & traits in a variety of disciplines.

Connecting ILOs and GELOs

- **Core GELOs** expected of **all** students
  - *Including those in career programs*
  - *Including ACCJC expectations*
- Faculty may agree some GELOs should ***also*** be addressed in **all** programs
  - *= **ILOs** – addressed in gen ed **and all programs***
- **Additional GELOs** in transfer AA/AS
  - *Broader and/or deeper learning*
- **Area of emphasis PLOs**
  - *Deeper learning*

Transfer AA/AS Programs
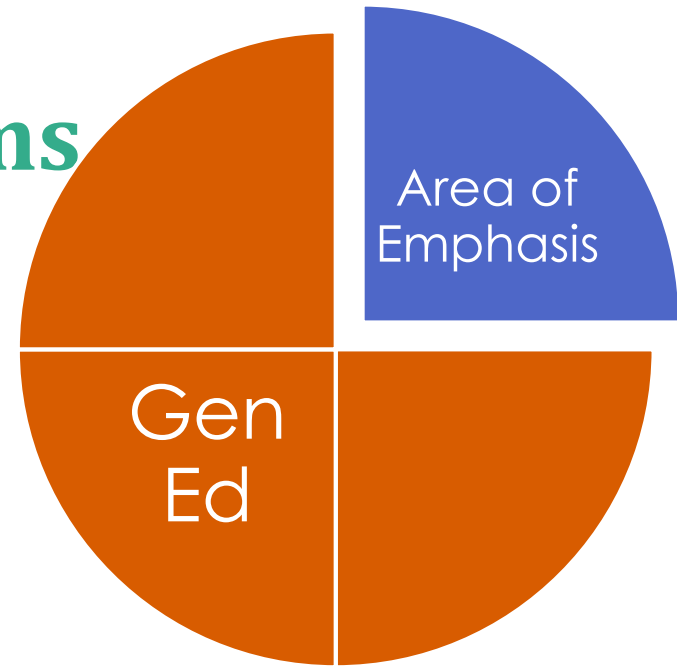
- Gen ed learning outcomes
- Area of emphasis learning outcomes
  - *Beyond gen ed learning outcomes*
    - Higher achievement of some gen ed outcomes
    - Additional outcomes
- Prepare students for junior-level coursework
- Not 2 years of 100-level courses!

Why Are You Here?

- What do you need to learn in this workshop?

- Why?

- What do you want to be prepared to do when you get back to your office?

- How do you want to use what you'll learn when you get back to your office?

San Francisco Ideas

- Plan how to assess program learning outcomes.

- Create a sense of urgency and meaning/value in assessing program learning outcomes.

- Learn how our programs impact graduates' performance on the job.

- Develop plans on how and when to assess program learning outcomes.

- Plan professional development for faculty on how to assess

Good Learning Goals State **Outcomes**

- What students should be able to do **AFTER** they pass a course or graduate

- *Appropriately cite sources.*
- *Connect areas or topics of study within their major to the study of related disciplines.*

Good Learning Goals are **Clear**

- Students understand them.
- Colleagues understand them.
- No fuzzy terms!

- *Make appropriate interpretations of numerical and graphical information.*
- *Maintain a self-regulating process of inquiry.*

Good Learning Goals are Observable

- Action words
- If you can see it, you can assess it.

- *Critically evaluate information sources.*
- *Commit to the highest standards of social responsibility.*

Good Learning Goals Focus on **Skills** More than Knowledge & Understanding

- *Articulate a question and identify potential sources of information to answer the question.*

- *Demonstrate an understanding of the importance and limits of the subject in the contemporary world.*

Good Learning Goals are Relevant

- Meet **important** student & employer needs 5-10 years from now
  - *Teamwork and collaboration skills*
  - *Articulating ideas clearly and effectively*
  - *Real-world problem solving*
  - *Evaluating information and conclusions*
  - *Flexibility and adaptability to change*
  - *Creativity and innovation*
  - *Working with people from diverse cultural backgrounds*
  - *Ethical judgment*
  - *Understanding numbers and statistics*

Good Learning Goals are
Rigorous Yet Realistic

- *Provide compelling rationales for why assumptions are important.*

- *Respond constructively to questions or conflicts that arise between cultures or between diverse groups within our society.*

Time to Talk!

- Calada College is developing a certificate program in Intercultural Studies.

- *Purpose:* Prepare students to work with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

- Identify 1-3 potential learning outcomes for the program.
  - *Outcomes*
  - *Clear*
  - *Observable*
  - *Skills*
  - *Relevant*
  - *Rigorous yet realistic*

San Francisco Ideas

- Employ problem solving skills to resolve conflicts in groups with diverse views.

- Gather and synthesize information about a new culture for use in real-world situations.

- Communicate effective to a variety of colleagues that is respectful and sensitive to cultural differences.

- Apply models of cross-cultural competence.

Time to Think!

- Draft up to 3 program learning outcomes for one of the programs you brought with you.
  - *Outcomes*
  - *Clear*
  - *Observable*
  - *Skills*
  - *Relevant*
  - *Rigorous yet realistic*
- If you have time, get feedback from a tablemate.

Make Sure Students Have Sufficient Opportunity to Achieve Each Program Learning Outcome

- A collection of courses is not a program.

- If you're not teaching it,
- or students don't have an opportunity to learn it,
- there's no point in assessing it.

Program Capstone Requirement

- Students integrate and synthesize what they've learned throughout the program.
  - *Projects*
  - *Performances*
  - *Internships/field experiences*
  - *Portfolios*

Foundation and Cornerstone Courses

- What every student needs to learn in order to succeed in the program

What about All-Elective Programs or Areas of Emphasis?

- A collection of courses is not a program.
- Individually designed programs or areas of emphasis
  - *Student and advisor*
    - identify program learning outcomes
    - identify courses to achieve those outcomes

Time to Work!

- Intercultural Studies breakout
  - *Questions 1 and 2*

Time to Think!

- Your program curriculum map
  - *Questions 5*

Course Curriculum Mapping
Students learn what they're graded on.

This is what you'll learn to do.	This is how you'll learn it.	This is how you'll show me that you've learned it.
1.		
2.		
3.		

This is what you'll learn to do.	And this will help you learn how to…	This is how you'll learn it.	This is how you'll show me that you've learned it.
1.	*[PLO/GELO]*		
2.			
3.			

Looking at Learning Outcomes from a Program Perspective

- All 7 regional accreditors require
  - *Articulation of program learning outcomes*
  - *Program curricular coherence*
  - *Assessment of program learning outcomes*
  - *Appropriate rigor in learning standards*
- **Why?**
- **Why is this a good idea?**

Los Angeles Ideas

- Gives you a bigger picture across courses – identify patterns
- Professionalizing what we do – making sure we give students the optimal education to be successful in their field
- Be clear to students what they will get out of it
  - *Explains to students the value of what they're learning*
- Assure quality – moves colleges away from reputation as measure
- Opportunity for faculty to own and control what they do

Assessing Program Learning Outcomes:
Start at the End
and Work Backwards.

Achievement of Program Learning Outcomes

- Capstone requirements
- Ersatz or quasi-capstones

- Students demonstrate achievement of multiple program learning outcomes.
  - *Projects*
  - *Presentations*
  - *Performances*
  - *Internships/field experiences*
  - *Portfolios*

Progress Toward Achievement of Program Learning Outcomes

- "Foundation" required courses

- "Cornerstone" required courses

- *Course* capstones demonstrate progress toward program learning outcomes

  - *Projects*

  - *Presentations*

  - *Performances*

  - *Final exams*

What about All-Elective Programs or Areas of Emphasis?

- A collection of courses is not a program.
- Individually designed programs or areas of emphasis
  - *Student and advisor*
    - identify program learning outcomes
    - Identify courses to achieve those outcomes
  - ***Student documents achievement of outcomes through a portfolio.***

Sources of Program Learning Information

Learning Outcome	Sources of Information	How They're Assessed
Knowledge & conceptual understanding	Multiple choice tests	Item scores, mapped back to test blueprints
Thinking & performance skills	Papers, projects, performances, essays, etc.	Rubrics
Attitudes, values, habits of mind	Reflective writing	Qualitative analysis
Thinking & perf. skills, attitudes, values, habits of mind	Portfolios	Rubrics and reflective writing

Assessing Program Outcomes vs. Course Outcomes

Course Outcomes

- Use course-embedded assessments
- Every course
- Focus on course-specific outcomes
- Used by faculty teaching the course

Program Outcomes

- Use course-embedded assessments
- Only key courses
- Focus on broad program outcomes
- Used by **all** program faculty addressing the outcome

Rubrics for Program Learning Outcomes

- Use course rubrics as resources.

- Create a "developmental" rubric showing progress over the program.

  - *Start by defining capstone standards.*

  - *Then work down.*

- Update course rubrics for capstones and foundation courses, if needed.

What is an Appropriate Standard?

- Passing work (C? C-? D?)

- You would not be embarrassed that this student passed the course or graduated.

- The student is doing well enough to succeed in later studies or career.

Time to Talk!

- Complete part of the developmental rubric template for the Intercultural Studies certificate.

- "Proposes realistic solutions to intercultural interaction challenges"

  - *Define the capstone standard.*

  - *Define the foundation standard.*

Organizing and Implementing Program Learning Assessments
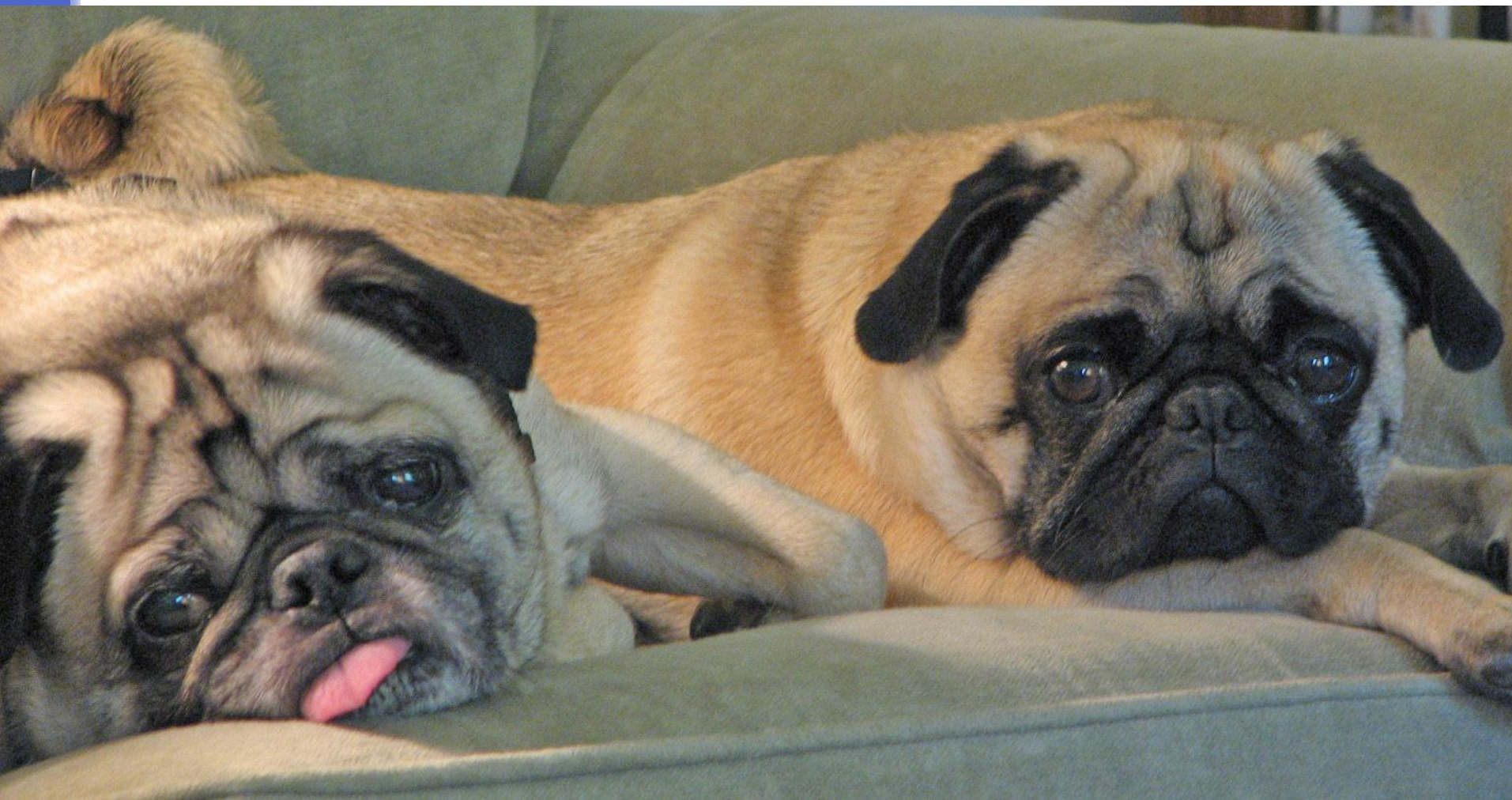
Look for the biggest return on investment.

High enrollment gen ed courses

Program capstones and cornerstones

Quick & easy assessment tools

Limit the number of program outcomes.

Focus on the forest, not the trees.

The fewer the goals, the less assessment work.

There's a limit to how much students can learn well.

What do student most need to learn?

Keep your curricula lean.

**Use models & ideas
from community colleges
in other regions.**

Name a faculty assessment coordinator for each program.

Time to Reflect!

- For one of the programs you brought with you,

    - *Complete the "Rubric for Evaluating a Program's Learning Assessment Processes."*

- *Complete "Rubric for Evaluating a College's Program Learning Assessment Processes."*

- *Complete "Reflections on Assessing Program Learning Outcomes."*

Time to Talk!

1. **Why** is there foot-dragging on assessment?
2. How might you address that "root cause"?

Time to Reflect Again!