Assessment Dictionary

Academic Program – Major or program of study.

Actionable Results – Consistent feedback that provide concrete feedback.

Alignment – Refers to matching with established outcomes. This can be in the context of an assignment having alignment, a syllabus having alignment, or a rubric having alignment with identified outcomes.

Assessment – A process designed to systematically measure the achievement of learning outcomes/ goals among students, programs, or other entities to verify student accomplishments and improve programs.

Assessment Plan – Identifying what, when, and how a goal, standard, or desired outcome is being measured. Also called curriculum map.

Assessment Tools - An instrument that allows an instructor to measure how well students have performed on a specific task. This can be a scale rating, a rubric, check list etc. that can be used to provide meaningful feedback to a student.

Authentic Assessment – Uses real world activities. Connection of learning with practical experience.

Benchmark – Comparing results with a standard or external factor.

Bloom's Taxonomy – Common reference for *Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Objectives*. Originated by Benjamin Bloom in the 1950's. Describes several categories of learning that build depending on the difficulty of what is being demonstrated.

Close the Loop – Comparison of assessment data with expectations. An examination of set goals and outcomes, assessment results, including recommendations for changes and implementation.

Competencies – The consistent demonstration of knowledge or skills in multiple context. An attitude or behavior.

Course-level Assessment – Assessments within a specific course to validate or provide feedback to improve learning.

Criteria (parts of the rubric) – The key elements of a rubric that describe the product that is being evaluated.

Criteria (Scoring Criteria) - The components of rubrics used to evaluate skill development, specifically the instruments that collect data about the skills described in the outcome.

Curriculum Map – Used to demonstrate the assessment plan for a particular area of study. An overview of all of the courses and the outcomes. Identifies the intersection of the course skills with the outcomes.

Direct Assessment or measurement – Evidence of students' knowledge and abilities over a period of time through work demonstrating the proficiency. It is a display of knowledge and skills in response to an assignment.

Distribution – Related to a statistical data set. A listing or function showing the intervals of the data and how often.

Embedded Assessment – Completed as part of course work. Generally graded work. All or some parts can be used to assess program learning outcomes.

Engagement – Active involvement in the process.

First-year experience programs – Designed to help retain students through focusing on development of engagement, academic skills, and awareness of campus support services.

Formative Assessment – Refers to the gathering of information about student learning throughout the course or program of study. An assessment to provide feedback to improve what is being assessed. Checking work along the way, not final.

Gateway Course – A course that blocks the progress of a student until they are able to successfully demonstrate an understanding of the material. Pre-requisite knowledge for later learning.

General Education – The courses that are required by all students at an institution.

Goal – An overarching principle that guides decision making. A general statement about knowledge, skills or experiences expected of those that complete a particular program of study. Broad.

Grading – The sum total of experience on an assignment or course.

Holistic – One global judgement. Overall.

Indicators – The descriptive parts that describe the ability of the work being assessed. The indicators will describe the difference between exceeds and meet expectations and meets expectations and does not meet expectations. The descriptions in the indicators are scaled by the language. The language should provide clear indication how something is being evaluated and what is the expectation for success.

Indirect Assessment – The instructor needs to make inferences about the student learning. Used to support direct measures of assessment. Generally, surveys, program or event evaluations, or satisfaction surveys.

Institutional Effectiveness – How well an institution is performing against set goals or outcomes, mission or vision.

Inter-rater Reliability – How well two or more assessors agree when scoring subjective work against a tool like a rubric.

Key Assignments – Can also be called a *Signature Assignment*. This is an assignment that represents the best work from a course or a program of study. Generally, an anchor paper or project embedded within course work or a capstone project for a program of study. This assignment is identified to be a good example of best work to demonstrate the identified outcomes for that course or program.

Knowledge – A body of facts and information. Not directly observable. Measurable when aligned to skills.

Mean - Average

Median- Middle value of the list of numbers.

Mode- The value in a set of numbers that occurs most often.

Objective – Specific, measurable steps taken to achieving a goal. Concrete. Also includes the steps that can be taken to meet the goal. Learning outcomes and objectives can sometimes be used interchangeably. Precise and tangible.

Outcome – The statement describing the knowledge, skills and dispositions students should be able to demonstrate at the end of their academic program. Learning Outcomes and Objectives can sometimes be used interchangeably.

Performance Assessment – Students demonstrate how well they have mastered an outcome by doing an activity, essay, project etc.

Portfolio – A compilation of student work. The work can be grouped by outcomes, program of study, or course requirements like writing intensive.

Proficient (3) – The student is performing as they are expected to do. Sufficiently meeting all of the criteria as established by the assignment.

Program Goal – State what the collective area wishes to achieve. Generally used to refer to content specific areas but can refer to other groupings. These can be general education goals or content-specific goals.

Program Level Assessment – Outcomes or goals as they relate to an area of study. Usually relates to demonstrating proficiency for a major. Can also relate to similar core outcomes that are grouped.

Program specific – The courses that are required by a major of program of study.

Qualitative Assessment – Results are verbal descriptions and not numerical scores.

Qualitative Evidence - Verbal summary of findings.

Quantitative Assessment – Assessment results reported with a number that indicates proficiency.

Quantitative Evidence – Scores that indicate proficiency.

Rubric – A device that classifies requirements or behaviors into categories that are steps along a continuum. A tool used to give students guidance on requirements and feedback for improvement.
Rubric Criteria – The components that are used to classify student work into categories.

Scaffolding – Organizing a course or curriculum to gradually build knowledge and skills.

Scoring Rubrics – Describe the components of the assignment and the expectations.

Showcase Portfolio – A collection or demonstration of best work. Usually at the end of a program of study or in a capstone. =

Skills – Ability to apply knowledge. Observable and measurable. Demonstration of developing expertise.

SMART Goals – Specific; **M**easurable; **A**ttainable; **R**elevant; **T**ime-Bound

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) – Describes the expected learning and behavior that a student will be able to demonstrate. SLOs are specific and written in measurable terms. By achieving an SLO, a student is demonstrating a component of proficiency for a program or general education goal.

Summative Assessment – A final measure of ability at the end of a unit, program of study, or course. An overall assessment. Occurs when an assessor evaluates a final product. Emphasis is aimed at gathering evidence of learning that occurred over time and intended to demonstrate mastery.

Surface Learning – Based upon memorization of facts and figures with little understanding of the material.

Triangulation – Multiple evidence that demonstrate a conclusion.

Validity – How well a device is measuring what is supposed to assess. Can multiple individuals use this to make similar conclusions?

Value-added Assessment – Student learning is determined by how much students have gained through participation in a particular program or activity.

Sources

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