***Measuring Learning at Varying Levels of Assessment***

This learning unit explores how to schedule student assessments so that they progressively build toward higher levels of understanding during a course's run.  At the end of this unit, faculty will be able to:

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| **Objectives** | 1. Explain different taxonomies of student understanding, such as Bloom's or Webb's.
2. Assess the level at which current student assignments and assessments are measuring student achievement.
3. Redesign a course assignment to require higher levels of student understanding.
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| **Assessments** | Mastery level- post-teaching reflection  |

**Resources**

***What does ‘level of learning’ really mean?***

The resources provided in this learning unit illustrate Bloom’s taxonomy and [Webb’s levels](https://www.edutopia.org/blog/webbs-depth-knowledge-increase-rigor-gerald-aungst) of competency. These organizational tools help faculty visualize the extent to which students can *use course related information on their own.* As you review each resource you may notice that the amount of understanding required of students to be successful on a given assessment increases.

* [This article](https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/teaching-professor-blog/are-we-clear-tips-for-crafting-better-explanations/) provides a framework for fitting our discussions to that of the level of our learners

***Can you give me an example of assessing at different levels of learning?***

Review the following three writing prompts, and imagine what is required of a student to be successful:

* *List* the 10 amendments that make up the Bill of Rights.
* *Illustrate* the 10 amendments that make up the Bill of Rights.
* *Rewrite* the amendments that make up the Bill of Rights.

The first prompt, *list,* operates at a low level of understanding (remembering). Students could satisfy our request by parroting the amendments, even if they didn’t understand what these rights provide us.

The second prompt, *illustrate,* operates a medium level of understanding (applying). Students could satisfy these requests by remembering the list and applying what they mean in their illustrations. Here they have to be able to apply meaning in order to illustrate.

The third prompt, *rewrite,* operates a high level of understanding (creating). Here students would have to remember the amendments, be able to apply their original purpose, and analyze their historical context in order to create or invent a modern day list of equivalent rights.

* More details on [Bloom’s Taxonomy](https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/)
* This article walks through [how to construct an assessment](https://www.thoughtco.com/constructing-a-blooms-taxonomy-assessment-7670) using Bloom’s taxonomy

***Any advice for applying this concept to my class assessments?***

Start by identifying the purpose of your course and the course level you are teaching. It might very well be appropriate for a 100 level introductory course to focus on lower levels of learning, as students might need to gather understanding of key terms in order to apply them later in the curriculum. On the other hand, a 400 level course that occurs right before graduation would want to focus on student evaluation of known content and creation of solutions to problems practitioners face-after all, they will be the next generation of practitioners in this professional field!

A second thing to consider is the timing of the assessment. Even in a 100 level course, if we are at the last week of class, we would hope to see growth in student learning over time and as such may work to progressively move up the levels of learning required to be successful in our course as we move from the first to the final class session. One thing to consider is the **verbs** we use in our assignment prompts. Thinking back to our ‘Bill of Rights’ example discussed above- the only word that has changed in the three hypothetical assignments is the verb used to introduce the assignment. When all else fails consider the verbs provided on the *Bloom’s Taxonomy* resource included in this module.

***How should I approach increasing the levels of assessment in my classes?***

For this module we encourage faculty to take a look at an upcoming class agenda, and try to convert a previously used activity or assessment into one that requires students to operate at a higher level of understanding as outlined above.

If you would like to discuss this topic, or to forward your planned activity or assessment to the CTE for feedback please feel free to send us an email at facultydevelopment@wilmu.edu.

***How do I earn credit for this learning unit on my Pathway to Instructional Excellence?***

Our levels of assessment module is designated as a CTE (Center for Teaching Excellence) Mastery Level Elective. At this level, the CTE is looking to see faculty reflection on your usage of this particular instructional technique recently in the classroom. Of particular interest is how usage of this teaching skill contributed to student learning. Please address the following in your reflection:

* First-identify the action taken. Discuss the previous teaching experience that led to your decision to try this new instructional technique, assessment method, or approach to communication in the classroom. Discuss how what you learned in this unit was applied in the classroom.
* Second-reflect on the new teaching experience and its outcome. What did you observe from students? Did student understanding of learning outcomes or your expectations improve? Did the experience contribute to more engaging class sessions or student motivation? Did the experience provide students with more practical application of course learning content? Please note, whether the answers are yes or no to these questions, we can learn and grow as faculty members-so please be as honest as possible in your reflection.
* Finally-please provide a follow-up on this reflection. What might you do moving forward to help to continue to improve student learning outcomes? How might this activity be refined to anticipate learner needs? How might communication of your expectations been improved moved forward? Etc.

**CTE-Pathways to Instructional Excellence-Mastery Level Evaluation**

Faculty reflections will be reviewed during reading week of each block and will be assessed as either “Complete” or “Incomplete.” Complete reflections:

* Analyze why the instructional update would be predicted to help facilitate student learning
* Demonstrate understanding of learner-centered instruction through reflection of the student experience
* Assess how this technique can be used in the future to improve student learning

Faculty members whose reflections are rated “Complete” will earn a *Mastery Level* certificate for this learning unit. Reflections rated as incomplete will be provided feedback by members of the CTE and faculty will be provided the opportunity to consult with the CTE prior to resubmission. Submissions will be reviewed during reading week each block.