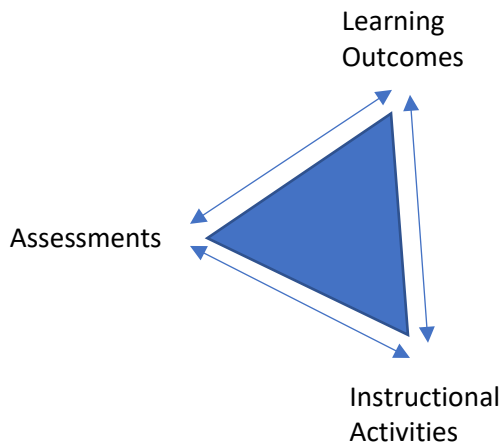


Why should assessments, learning outcomes, and instructional strategies be aligned?

Assessments should reveal how well students have learned what we want them to learn while instruction ensures that they learn it. For this to occur, assessments, learning outcomes, and instructional strategies need to be closely aligned so that they reinforce one another.



To ensure that these three components of your course are aligned, ask yourself the following questions:

- **Learning Outcomes:** What do I want students to know how to do when they leave this course?
- **Assessments:** What kinds of tasks will reveal whether students have achieved the learning outcomes I have identified?
- **Instructional Strategies:** What kinds of activities in and out of class will reinforce my learning outcomes and prepare students for assessments?

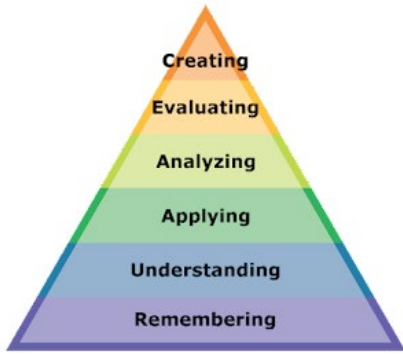
What if the components of a course are misaligned?

If assessments are misaligned with the learning outcomes or instructional strategies, it can undermine both student motivation and learning. Consider these two scenarios:

Your outcome is for students to learn to *apply analytical skills*, but your assessment measures only *factual recall*. Consequently, students hone their analytical skills and are frustrated that the exam does not measure what they learned.

Your assessment measures students' ability to *compare and critique* the arguments of different authors, but your instructional strategies focuses entirely on *summarizing* the arguments of different authors. Consequently, students do not learn or practice the skills of comparison and evaluation that will be assessed.

What do well-aligned assessments look like?



Source: Learn NC, "Bloom's Taxonomy," used under a Creative Commons license.

- Creating-Use information to create something**
- Evaluating: Examine information and make judgments**
- Analyzing: Take a part the known and identify relationships**
- Applying: Use information in a new situation**
- Understanding: Grasp meaning of instructional materials**
- Remembering: Recall specific facts**

Level:	Verb	Examples of Appropriate Assessments
Remembering: can the student recall or remember the information?	Recall Recognize Identify	Objective test items such as fill-in-the-blank, matching, labeling, or multiple-choice questions that require students to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recall or recognize terms, facts, and concepts
Understanding: can the student explain ideas or concepts?	Interpret Exemplify Classify Summarize Infer Compare Explain	Activities such as papers, exams, problem sets, class discussions, or concept maps that require students to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • summarize readings, films, or speeches • compare and contrast two or more theories, events, or processes • classify or categorize cases, elements, or events using established criteria • paraphrase documents or speeches • find or identify examples or illustrations of a concept or principle
Applying: can the student use the information in a new way?	Apply Execute Implement	Activities such as problem sets, performances, labs, prototyping, or simulations that require students to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use procedures to solve or complete familiar or unfamiliar tasks • determine which procedure(s) are most appropriate for a given task
Analyzing: can the student distinguish between the different parts?	Analyze Differentiate Organize Attribute	Activities such as case studies, critiques, labs, papers, projects, debates, or concept maps that require students to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discriminate or select relevant and irrelevant parts • determine how elements function together • determine bias, values, or underlying intent in presented material
Evaluating: can the student justify a stand or decision?	Evaluate Check Critique Assess	Activities such as journals, diaries, critiques, problem sets, product reviews, or studies that require students to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • test, monitor, judge, or critique readings, performances, or products against established criteria or standards
Creating: can the student create new product or point of view?	Create Generate Plan Produce Design	Activities such as research projects, musical compositions, performances, essays, business plans, website designs, or set designs that require students to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make, build, design or generate something new

References:

Carnegie Mellon University. (2021). *Align Assessments, Objectives, Instructional Strategies - Eberly Center - Carnegie Mellon University*. Eberly Center. <https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/basics/alignment.html>



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