Aloha, everyone, my name is Yao Hill and I have been working in the Assessment Office for about 4 years. The assessment that I am talking about today is program learning outcomes assessment. And you are right; this workshop is not specifically for the Assessment Coordinators or department chairs. It is designed for individual instructional faculty/staff, especially new faculty. I have years of experience working closely with faculty members on program assessment. My experience convinced me that the thought-processes and the tools used in program learning assessment are very useful and powerful for individual course instructors to reflect and refine their courses to contribute to the program curriculum quality and coherence.

(Now can I please have you introduce yourself. Your name, the department that you are from, and why you are interested in attending this workshop.)

It is possible that you will end up with more questions than answers after this workshop. If after this workshop you want to continue the reflection and inquiry process, you can sign up to join a follow-up support group. I will pass the pink sign-up sheet around.
Faculty members are experienced and experts in using classroom assessment. Before I start today’s topic, I want to point out that classroom assessment is related to program learning assessment but its uses and purposes are different. We often use it for quizzes, papers, exams, and presentations to check student progress and achievement in our courses and use those results to modify our courses. However, today we will not be covering classroom assessment techniques.
Session outcomes

Reflect and investigate how your courses contribute to the program’s quality and coherence using program learning assessment tools & processes:

- Student learning outcomes
- Curriculum map
- Signature assignment
- Rubric

The primary outcome of this session is for you to be able to reflect on how your course contributes to program quality & coherence. How does your course fit in the big picture of program using the program learning assessment tools and processes? I will focus on four tools/processes today: student learning outcomes, the curriculum map, the signature assignment, and the rubric.

Throughout the workshop, you will learn the ways to collaborate with your colleagues in the inquiry process, articulate your inquiry process toward teaching excellence in your dossier, and ways to explore scholarship in teaching and learning through assessment.
Activity:

Identify program learning assessment tools/processes in the sample narrative designed for inclusion in a tenure promotion dossier.

5 min activity:
- First, read the sample narrative designed to be included in one’s tenure promotion dossier. Identify the assessment tools and processes that this faculty used in his/her reflective teaching practice, without me telling you what these tools/processes mean. You can underline keywords or use markers to highlight.
- Participants contribute and call out answers.
- Can you describe your holistic impression of this colleague? How does this narrative make you feel about this colleague?
Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) Assessment

An on-going process designed to monitor and improve student learning. Faculty: a) develop explicit statements of what students should learn (i.e., student learning outcomes); b) verify that the program is designed to foster this learning (alignment); c) collect data/evidence that indicate student attainment (assessment results); d) use these data to improve student learning (close the loop). (Allen, M., 2008)

Seeing how a colleague can use program learning assessment to engage in reflective teaching, let me start with defining program learning outcomes. In this definition of program learning outcome assessment, we can see that the ultimate purpose is to improve student learning. The action toward the improvement is informed by making our expectations clear through student learning outcome statements, aligning learning opportunities with the outcomes, collecting the evaluating learning evidence, and using the data.
This diagram reflects the typical steps that a program would go through in program learning outcome assessment. The process provides the logic and the language to talk about how a program is accountable for its educational quality. The cycle starts with the program faculty articulating expectations of student learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that they expect of a graduating senior; examining whether there are sufficient learning opportunities for students to meet faculty expectations; collecting & evaluating evidence of student learning, and interpreting and using the results.
Student learning outcomes is the first powerful reflection tool that I want to introduce.
Student learning outcomes (SLOs)

knowledge  skills/ability  values

Knowledge: major theories, fundamental knowledge like basic elements of a cell’s structure, chemical composition of common matter, etc.

The skills and ability such as technical skills, designing and carrying out research, oral communication, etc.

The values: adhering to safety standards, community engagement
Example program SLOs:
Students are able to

*Identify research questions* on a contemporary issue in communication, and *perform a critical, written analysis of the relevant literature.*

--Communication MA

This is the student learning outcome from the Communication MA program.

Example program SLOs

*Demonstrate mastery* of the methodology and *techniques* specific to the field of study. *Analyze and interpret* research data.

--Communication MA

This is the student learning outcome from the Communication MA program.
Why SLOs

In a sense, SLOs communicate with the public and the potential employers of what the degree is about. The example program SLOs from the Communication MA degree tells us that the program really focuses on students’ research ability and this may distinguish this program from other programs that focus on more vocational skills. It communicates to the students what they should be aspired to achieve and helps students connect their educational experiences in the program—make sense of course requirements.
When my colleague Monica and I went to individual programs to help them develop program learning outcomes, it was wonderful to see how faculty collaboratively express their expectations. In this process, through explanation & negotiation, faculty begin to find themselves on the same page of what they want their students to be. It reflects a collective vision of their graduating students’ knowledge, skills, and ability.
Reflect how your course contributes to the meaning of a UH Mānoa degree

Moving a little beyond the program level, we can also think how our course contributes to student’s achievement toward Institutional Learning Objectives. How many of you are aware that UH Mānoa has a set of Learning Objectives for undergraduate students and another set of institutional learning outcomes for the graduate programs?
For many instructional faculties, knowing their program learning outcomes are very illuminative allows them to rethink their own course(s). Profound changes can happen just by aligning one’s own course with the program outcomes. I once taught Language Testing in Second Language Studies and I can demonstrate how the alignment process can help instructors like me to refine courses.
In my course, I had a course SLO that students will be able to conduct item analysis. My task for students is to calculate item statistics such as item difficulty in Excel and report the results in word. It involves the skill of using Excel but it doesn’t necessarily address critical thinking. To make my course more aligned with critical thinking, I could rephrase my course outcome this way: Evaluate... through...analysis. Now I make it clear that students have to make a judgement of the quality and usefulness of test items. To me, that is clearly aligned with critical thinking.
Address program SLOs not emphasized before

Program SLO 4: Critically evaluate and make use of research...
Program SLO 5: Develop and apply sound framework in assessment

New Course SLO
Diagnose test items & improve a test based on item analysis results.

When I looked at other program student learning outcomes in the Second Language Studies, I found that there is quite some emphasis on application. Particularly, PLO5 speaks to apply framework in assessment and my course is the only course that deals with assessment. This makes me feel a great responsibility to make sure that application happens in my course. After this consideration, I further modified my SLO to “Diagnose test items & improve a test based on item analysis results.”
In seeing whether students have achieved the learning outcomes, I realized my previous assignment in which students do calculations in Excel was not good enough. So, I had to modify the assignments to make it better aligned with the new SLO.
Scaffold learning experience

- Revise instructions
- Tips sheet
- Annotated sample reports
- Rubrics

The first time I gave out the assignment without detailed instructions, the assignments turned back to me varied in quality. Each time that I taught the course, I identified where students struggled and designed scaffolding activities/materials to help students turn in high quality assignments.

Reflective process can help one:

- make the alignment clear
- address additional program SLOs not emphasized before
- design assignments/tasks that are aligned with the SLOs
- provide necessary scaffolding learning experience
Your turn:
Check the SLO questions that you are interested in exploring.

Where to find program SLOs

- Departmental Website
- Assessment Office Website:
In program assessment, the curriculum map is another powerful tool that can engage thoughtful reflection on program coherence. The map makes the learning opportunities very clear under each program SLO.

Imagine that I am the student in this course. Which outcome would I likely fall short of in achievement when I graduate?
Ethical Reasoning! It only appeared in the capstone course, and capstone is a place for students to organize, synthesize, and reflect to achieve a higher level of learning. It is not a good place to introduce a new SLO. Clearly there is a gap in the curriculum. As individual instructors, we can think about how to fill that gap through assignments and activities. We can also think about how to collaborate with colleagues to collaboratively design learning activities to help fulfill the gap.
Now, let’s take a look at SLO 2: Critical thinking. Every course claims to address this SLO. How can we make sure that we are not overlapping with each other and we don’t create a big jump in student learning experience from one course to another, so that there can be an implicit gap in the curriculum?
Look at the curriculum from another angle. We are expecting students to gain a high level of complex skills upon program completion.

Let’s say that you are teaching a course right in the middle of the curriculum, it can be a 200- or 300-level course. In your course, you require students to have gained certain foundational knowledge or skills to be successful in your course. Foreign language courses are clear examples that illustrate this. Instructors of Chinese 201 clearly expect students in the class to already be able to know how to introduce themselves, describe simple daily activities, follow simple directions, and make simple requests. Whereas Chinese 301 instructors expect students to be able to describe themselves and events in coherent paragraphs, not just discrete, unconnected simple sentences. In almost every discipline, if we teach middle or upper level courses, we have assumptions of students’ prior knowledge or skills in the discipline.

Imagine that you are teaching one of the 200- or 300-level courses, or if you are teaching a graduate class. Imagine that you are teaching a course beyond the introduction course. Did you talk to instructors teaching the lower level courses and ask them what you should expect students to know or be able to do before entering your class? Have you made your assumption of prior knowledge clear to your students? Did you investigate what prior knowledge or skills the students brought in? Did you try to provide support for students to make up the knowledge/skills that were needed before entering the class? For example, asking them to review certain topics before coming into the class or having a review class?
Your course

Prior course

Subsequent course

Major theories
Research writing
Critical thinking

Expectations
On the other hand, the knowledge and skill that students build in your class contribute to their success in an upper level class. Students continue to mature intellectually and professionally. Did you talk to faculty teaching upper level courses what they expect out of the students entering their class? What a wonderful opportunity to work collaboratively on certain assignments that carry certain continuity or builds on each other.

And if you are teaching the upper level courses, especially the capstone course, or the last course that senior students take to graduate, you understand that your students’ success not only says something about your course, but beyond your course. If we want our students to be a contributing member to society, what are employers’ expectations that we should meet? How about the community expectations?
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Reflective process can help one:

- identify curriculum gap and collaborate with colleagues to fill it.
- collaboratively design learning tasks/activities to scaffold learning throughout the curriculum
- collegially communicate one’s expectations of students’ prior knowledge/skills.
- find out colleagues’ expectations of student knowledge/skills existing in one’s course

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Your turn:

Select the Curriculum Map questions that you are interested in exploring
Discussion Task:
Pick one SLO/CM inquiry question & share your thoughts with your colleagues

Curriculum map
A generic task, problem, case, or project that can be tailored or contextualized in different disciplines or course contexts.

(Driscoll, 2016, p. 11).

We have 44 sections of English 100. Shouldn’t there be comparable learning experiences across all sections? Even though it is unrealistic to expect students to have mature writing skills exiting Eng. 100, they should gain some fundamental writing skills such as proofreading strategies, a clear introduction and central idea, support arguments with illustrations, elaborations, examples, evidence, and so on.
Say you are teaching graduate level courses and in your program there is only one research method course being required. Should students have comparable opportunity to practice using those methods? If one course is giving out a multiple choice exam, and another asks students to conduct research and write up the research report, the students in the latter class may gain more solid learning experience, and retain the skill better.
We have a lot of General Education requirements. How are we making sure that our Gen Ed requirements are helping students achieve what we want them to gain? How can we promote cross discipline conversations about oral communication? What are the essential skills that we all want our students to be able to demonstrate? How do we development signature assignments to allow students to demonstrate those skills?
Signature assignments should be developed first based on the student learning outcomes that we want to target. Then we can think about bare bone tasks. For example, maybe all Eng 100 courses can require students to write a 500-800 word essay that has a clear introduction of the topic, content development supported by examples/evidence from at least 3 sources, and a clear conclusion. The essay will go through at least one revision. When we are thinking of the tasks, we may start to think about what criteria we can use to evaluate student success on the task. Developing evaluation criteria can go hand-in-hand with task development.
Reflective process can help one:

• decide on SLOs to target in key assignments
• identify common essential elements of key assignments in the sections of the same course/similar courses
• select key criteria to evaluate student work

Your turn:
Select the questions that you are interested in exploring
Once a signature assignment is developed, it can serve both as learning opportunities and as learning evidence. Using signature assignments can make assessment efficient and promote faculty conversation and collaboration.
Once you have collaborated with your colleagues either in your department or faculty teaching the same Gen Ed designated courses to design a signature assignment, you will need to think about how to evaluate students work. Very often, we ask students to do complex performance tasks that involves students integrating knowledge and skills at multiple dimensions. We need an evaluation tool that can capture that complexity. A rubric is a commonly used evaluation tool.
Rubric

A rubric is an assessment tool often shaped like a matrix, which describes levels of achievement in a specific area of performance, understanding, or behavior.

Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education: Critical Thinking Rubric
Example of using a rubric for reflective teaching

Rubric Categories
1. Grammar
2. Word choice
3. Typos
4. Content organization

Program Outcome:
Apply critical thinking and rhetorical skills to produce coherent written works

Need to also evaluate critical thinking

What you see are rubric criteria for a writing task in a foreign language course. What is missing?

Collaboratively decide on the criteria, performance description, & definition of satisfactory performance

The best way to develop a rubric is to ask your colleagues what they think is important. Ask them to give examples and provide descriptions.
Mānoa uses VALUE rubrics
Reflective process can help one:

- align the rubric with program SLOs
- collaboratively decide what is important to evaluate with colleagues
- collaboratively define satisfactory performance
- collaboratively evaluate and refine the rubric

Your turn:
Select the questions that you are interested in exploring
Results from student performance on a well-designed assignment and rubric is likely to generate meaningful discussion about program curriculum quality and promote the use of the results.

Discussion Task:
Pick one signature assignment/rubric inquiry question and share your thoughts with your colleagues.
Scholarship Opportunities

Example of results and samples of use of results. We see more and more professional organizations value scholarship of teaching and learning. They are supporting this more and more. You can look into your professional organization conferences to publish on teaching and learning in addition to your subject area.

DQP Assignment Library

The purpose of this website is to provide a searchable online library of ePortfolio and course assignments in a wide variety of academic disciplines that link to one or more proficiencies in the Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP).

The National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) has been working with groups of faculty from various institutions to refine and strengthen assignment alignment to specific proficiencies. The assignments and conversations here are works in progress, generously shared by faculty members from a wide range of fields and institutional types committed to advancing and documenting student learning. To learn more about the assignment library initiative click here.

This library allows you to:
- Browse assignments
- Review and adapt an assignment to fit your needs
- Submit an assignment to the library
- Categorize resources
- Comment on and ask questions about assignments
- Find a resource tailored to your needs.
Assignment Design for Powerful Learning in Oral Communication

Facilitators:
Vye Hill
Assessment Office
Jennifer Matsui
Dept. of Communicology
Jenifer Winter
Dept. of Communication
Hokuia Aileru
General Education Office

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Disciplinary Conferences
Assessment & SoTL Conferences

Local
- Hawaii Educational Research Association Annual Conference (HERA) (Jan/Feb)
- Pacific Association for Institutional Research (PacAIR)
- Hawaii-Pacific Evaluation Association (HPEA)

National
- IUPUI Assessment Institute
- Annual Scholarship on Teacher and Learning Conference List

Thank you!

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Q & A
Assessment Office Website

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<tr>
<th>Title &amp; Description</th>
<th>Materials</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Poster Exhibit 2016: Assessment for Curricular Improvement</strong></td>
<td>a) Flier</td>
<td>04/2016</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b) Posters and photos</td>
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<td>c) Event Evaluation Report</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Assignment Design for Powerful Learning</strong></td>
<td>a) PowerPoint slides and handouts</td>
<td>03/2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>(a joint workshop with the Center for Teaching Excellence)</td>
<td>b) Workshop Evaluation Report</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Assignment Design Charrette</strong> by Natasha Jankowski and David Marshall**</td>
<td>a) PowerPoint slides and handouts</td>
<td>01/2016</td>
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<td>b) Workshop Evaluation Report</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Facilitating Use of Program Assessment Results for Program Improvement</strong></td>
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<td>b) Workshop Evaluation Report</td>
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Articulating Reflective Teaching Using Program Learning Assessment Tools and Processes – An Example

Activity Instruction: The following narrative represents the sample language that one can use to articulate one’s reflective teaching practices using the tools and processes of program learning outcomes assessment. Skim the narrative to get a general understanding of this faculty’s reflective journey to refine his course and build collaboration with colleagues. Then scan the narrative to identify program learning assessment tools/processes.

My approach of teaching the course Research Ethics totally transformed after I learned in a department curriculum mapping meeting that this course is the only course in the BS program that substantially address the ethics related program student learning outcome (SLO), which is: Students will function professionally and ethically when conducting research. Since this is a senior level course, students’ performance in this course no long just represents their achievement in my course but also as a graduating senior from this degree program. With this realization, I asked myself several questions: (1) Are my expectations of the students the same as the program expectations? What does “function ethically” entail to other faculty and to the program as a whole? (2) If another faculty teaches this course, would students learn the same or differently? What should be the essential learning experience and what kind of evidence can show that students have achieved the program expectations? (3) Is this one course enough? Where else can this be addressed in our program curriculum? Who else might be interested in including ethical deliberation in their courses? How can I collaborate with them?

In the process seeking the answers to these questions, I joined the Curriculum Committee, collected input from faculty colleagues, and revised my course SLOs to explicitly reflect program expectations on “function ethically.” For example, SLO1: students will be able to follow IRB process when conducting their research; SLO2: students will be able to do perform ethical deliberation in every step of the research process that reflects ethical standards of the field; and so on. Working with colleagues, I led and coordinated the development of the rubrics to assess the outcomes achievement. I provided students both the SLOs and the rubrics right at the beginning of the course so that students clearly know the program expectations and the path to progress toward mastery. In addition, with committees’ feedback, I revised my course final assignment to make it a signature assignment, so that instructors other than me can use it as the culminating evidence of student ability for both the course and program assessment purpose. To help students achieve higher level of mastery, I designed many scaffolding activities throughout the semester. For example, ... Furthermore, I approached two faculty members teaching lower level courses and used my expertise in ethics to help them develop classroom activities and assignments related to ethical deliberation.

Working collaboratively with faculty beyond the boundary of the classroom helped me to make transformative improvement of the course. Students came more prepared after going through the learning experience in the lower level classes. The activities and assignments made more sense for them because of the expectations are clear and aligned with program expectations. As a result, 80% of the students performed satisfactory on the final culminating assignment after the course transformation compared to 60% before. More importantly, I believe that I significantly contributed to the curriculum coherence and quality in building students ethical reasoning ability and ethical conduct in research. My teaching and assessment work positively impacted my class, the Ethical Research course in general, and the program.

(Disclaimer: This is constructed sample language designed for inclusion in a faculty’s dossier. Individual faculty members should check with their own department personnel evaluation criteria to see whether narrative like this would be pertinent/appropriate.)
Sample Inquiry Questions when Using Assessment for Reflective Teaching

As individual instructional faculty, we can use the tools and processes in program learning outcome assessment to help us reflect on the design of our course so that we can better contribute to program quality and coherence. The following are some sample reflection questions to guide us in this inquiry process, either to reaffirm our pedagogical practice or to refine it. Check the questions that you plan to use in your own inquiry process.

**Student learning outcomes**

**Definition**: Statements of what students should know, be able to do, and value upon course completion/graduation.


Select a question(s) that you want to investigate:

- How can I make the alignment clearer between my course SLOs and program SLOs \([\text{Align} = \text{substantially and explicitly address that program SLO in my course.}]\)?

- Which program SLOs that I do not currently emphasize might I address in my course? Are any applicable/relevant?

- How can I better align assignments/tests/activities with the targeted SLOs.

- How can I scaffold the students' learning experiences to support outcome achievement?

- How can I communicate to students the ways that my course contributes to program learning outcomes achievement?

- How can I publicize and recruit students into my course by telling them the importance of my course in program learning outcome achievement?

**Curriculum Map**

**Definition**: Matrix that shows the alignment between learning opportunities and program SLOs

Select a question(s) that you want to investigate:

- What learning gaps exist in our program, if any? How can I collaborate with colleagues to fill it?

- How can I collaborate with colleagues to (re)design tasks/activities to scaffold progressive learning throughout the curriculum?

- How can I collegially approach colleagues who teach pre-requisite courses to communicate my expectations of students’ prior knowledge/skills when they enter my course?

- How can I ask colleagues what they expect of students who complete my course?

- How can I refine my course so that my students are better prepared for subsequent courses? (alternatives: future professional tasks, community/civic engagement, graduate school)
☐ How might I explain to students my assumptions of their prior knowledge/skills?
☐ What questions/activities can I use to help students connect their prior learning to my course?
☐ What questions/activities can I use to prepare students for subsequent courses? (alternatives: future professional tasks, community/civic engagement, graduate school)

**Signature Assignment**

**Definition:** A generic task, problem, case, or project that can be tailored or contextualized in different disciplines or course contexts (Driscoll, 2016, p. 11).

**Select a question(s) that you want to investigate:**

☐ What course/program SLOs should I target in my key assignments?
☐ What are the essential components of my assignment that every instructor teaching this course should keep?
☐ What are the key evaluation criteria that I should apply to this assignment?
☐ How can I collaborate with faculty teaching the same course to develop a signature assignment?
☐ How can I collaborate with faculty who target the same program SLOs to identify the key skills that we want students to demonstrate in the assignment?
☐ What are possible fears/worries that I should be aware of when approaching colleagues to ask about their assignments?
☐ I want to know what assignments other faculty teaching the same Gen Ed designated courses are using. How do I go about it?

**Rubrics**

**Definition:** A rubric is an evaluation tool often shaped like a matrix that describes levels of achievement in a specific area of performance, understanding, or behavior.

**Resources:**
- VALUE rubrics: [https://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics](https://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics)

**Select a question(s) that you want to investigate:**

☐ Is the rubric aligned with the target program SLO(s)?
☐ Are the evaluation criteria that are important to me also important to my colleagues?
☐ How can I collaborate with colleagues to select or modify a rubric that we will all use?
☐ Are my colleagues and I interpreting the evaluation criteria the same way?
☐ Do my colleagues and I have the same or different definition of satisfactory performance?
☐ How can I scaffold learning to help students reach a high level of achievement as described in the rubric?

**Write down your thoughts/planned actions:**
Scholarship in Scholarship of Teaching and Learning using Assessment
Sample Resource List:

DQP Assignment Library: http://www.assignmentlibrary.org/

Description: Provides searchable collegiate-level course assignment. Can submit assignments, which will be peer reviewed.


Description: Signup for workshops offered this semester and search for all past workshop materials.

Assessment and SoTL Conferences

Local
Hawaii Educational Research Association Annual Conference (HERA) (Jan/Feb)

Pacific Association for Institutional Research (PacAIR)

Hawai‘i-Pacific Evaluation Association (HPEA)

National
IUPUI Assessment Institute

Annual Scholarship on Teacher and Learning Conference List