

## Foundational Assessment Vocabulary<sup>1</sup>

- **Assessment (of student learning)** – gathering information about student learning and/or the learning experience in order to improve student learning

*Examples:*

- **Evaluation** – making judgments about the quality of student learning on the basis of assessment evidence

*Examples:*

- **Learning Outcome (L.O.)** – description of  
*Learning expectations:* what we expect students to know, do, and be when they leave a course, program or institution.  
 ➤ L.O.s “convey to the learner exactly what is to be accomplished,” “identify specifically what should be learned.” (AALL, 1994)

*Learning results:* The knowledge, abilities, and/or attitudes students demonstrably possess at the conclusion of a learning experience.

- **Evidence** – student work that demonstrates what students have learned/are able to do and/or information describing the learning environment or student perceptions of their learning.

*Direct evidence of student learning* – products produced by students for the purposes of learning and to demonstrate learning (e.g. papers, projects, presentations, posters, tests, theses, dissertations, etc.).

*Indirect evidence of student learning* – Proxy indicators of learning Students’ perceptions of their learning - e.g. interviews, reflective writings, self-evaluations.

*Descriptions of the learning environment* – e.g. numbers of papers assigned, student perceptions of effective teaching strategies, etc.

- **Authentic Assessment** – assignments/assessments designed to replicate “real world” activities via relevant and meaningful questions, tasks, problems, and projects. Often they are powerful forms of learning, as well as productive sources of insight into student ability.

*Examples:*

- **Triangulation** – using data from different sources to answer a question about student learning.

*Examples:*

- **Criteria** – qualities we look for in student work

*Examples:*

- **Standards** – describe levels of quality/performance/achievement in student work

*Examples:*

- **Rubric** – a tool that integrates criteria and standards to support student learning and faculty assessment of student work by communicating the qualities expected in students’ work if they have met the learning outcome.
- **Alignment** – connections among components of a learning experience (e.g. curriculum, pedagogy, etc.) that support student achievement of an intended learning outcome.
- **Benchmark** – a standard of performance against which assessment results can be judged

*Examples:*

- **“Closing the loop”** – the intentional process of responding to assessment results by implementing changes intended to improve student learning, or concluding change is unnecessary.

*Examples:*

### **More Vocabulary: Some Assessment Choices**

- **Value-added vs Absolute Learning Outcomes**

*Value-added outcomes* propose to measure growth in student learning.

E.g. Student composition skills will improve as a result of Writing 1.

*Absolute learning outcomes* establish an expectation for student performance at the completion of a course or a degree program.

E.g. Students will use composition skills to communicate with varied audiences.

- **Summative vs Formative Assessment**

*Formative assessment* occurs during the learning experience, providing feedback to students and the teacher about student learning progress in relation to intended learning. It contributes to the “formation” of student learning along a learning path.

*Summative assessment* occurs at the conclusion of a learning experience (e.g. a course, a program), summarizing student knowledge or abilities to that point. It provides information to affirm student achievement and/or to inform subsequent offerings of that course or program.

<sup>1</sup>Source: **WASC Educational Programs: Assessment Cycle & Vocabulary** by Laura Martin and Sharlene Sayegh