Assessment 101:
Creating a Culture of Assessment

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Defining "Culture of Assessment"

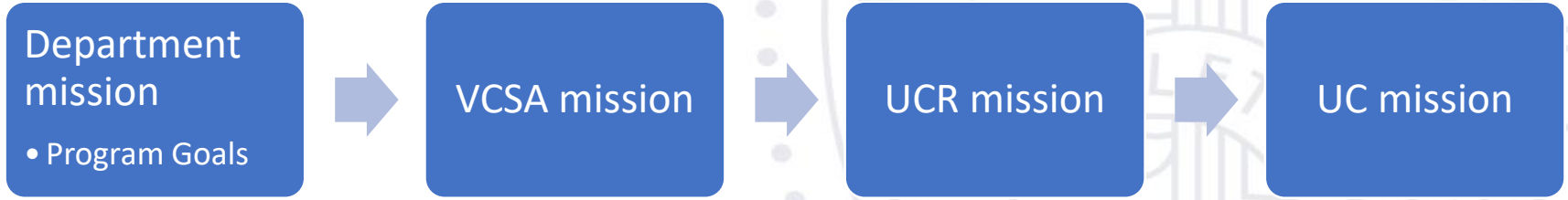
- **Assessment:** "Any effort to gather, analyze, & interpret evidence which describes institutional, departmental, divisional, or agency effectiveness." (Upcraft & Shah, 1996, p.18)

- **Culture of evidence:** "A commitment among student affairs professionals to use hard data to show how the programs they offer, the processes they implement, and the services they provide are effective and contribute significantly to an institution's ability to reach its stated goals and fulfill its mission." (Culp & Dungy, 2012, p.5)

Mission Statements & Assessment Goals

- **Mission statement:** Clearly states why student affairs exists, what it does, and how it helps the institution fulfill its mission
  - Does your department have a mission statement?

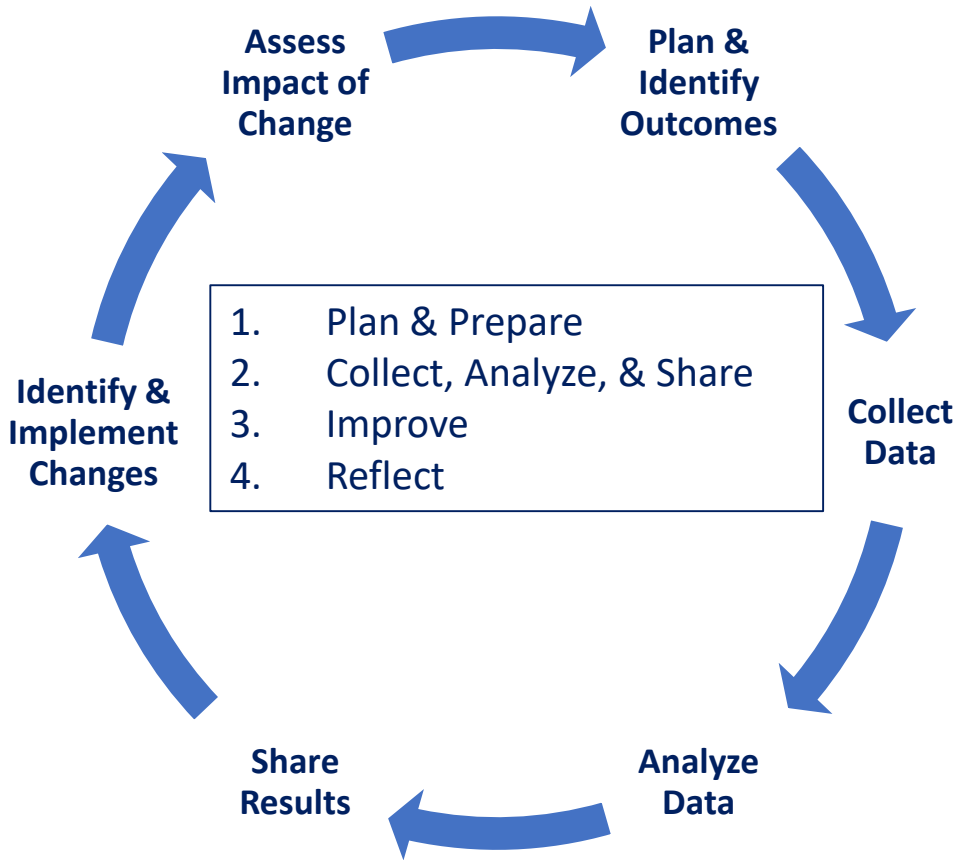
- Program goals should align with department's mission
- Assessments should provide support for whether programs fulfill mission



Benefits of Building a Culture of Assessment

- Creates an environment within student affairs that is data-driven and outcomes-oriented
- Emphasizes learning as part of student affairs' commitment to student development and success
- Provides evidence for grant funding, research, & conferences
- Creates opportunities for partnerships across campus
- Demonstrates Student Affairs' value to the campus, systemwide, and nationally
- **Provides support for your departments and programs**

Assessment Cycle



The Assessment Process: Six Important Questions

1. Why are we doing this assessment?
2. What will we assess?
3. How will we assess?
4. Who will assess?
5. How will the results be analyzed?
6. How will the results be communicated and to whom?

(Upcraft & Shah, 1996, p.25)

CAS Professional Standards for Higher Education

- CAS = Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education
- Professional standards for >40 areas in student support services
- CAS Self-Assessment Guides (SAGs)
- Promotes standardized assessment methods to evaluate student development, programs, and services

Student Learning Outcomes

- **Learning outcome:** The intellectual or cognitive learning that you want to occur, not emotional or affective measurements.

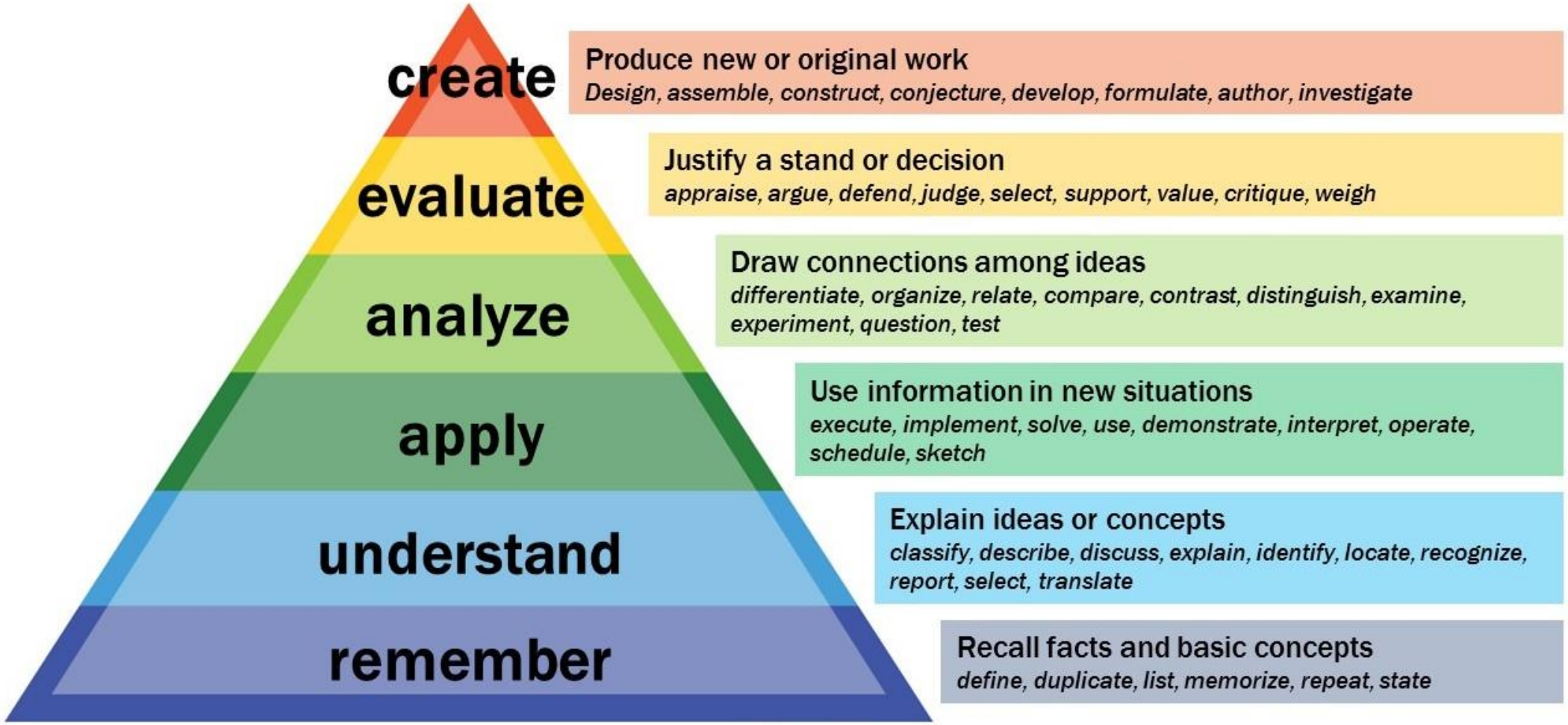
- **ABCD Method:**
  - **A**udience – who performs the behavior & when
  - **B**ehavior – observable / measurable action
  - **C**ondition – situation under which the behavior is performed
  - **D**egree of measurement – evaluates mastery of behavior

- Example: *After attending a sexual assault program, the learner (A) will be given a worksheet of 50 multiple-choice questions (C) and will select the correct answers (B) for at least 85% of the problems (D)*

(Knirk & Gustafson, 1986)

Can be used to write specific learning outcomes

Bloom's Taxonomy



Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching (2015). Bloom's Taxonomy.

Student Development Outcomes

- Assess affective dimensions or attitudes and values (not cognitive abilities); and consider growth in ethical, spiritual, emotional, and social responsibility dimensions

- Example:
  - *Students participating in the Highlander Service Clean and Green event will show evidence of increased civic responsibility as measured by increased civic responsibility correlation on the pretest/posttest.*

(Culp & Dungy, 2012, p.68)

Program Outcomes

- Describe what you want your program to accomplish
- Measure whether a specific program achieved what it was supposed to achieve when it was designed
- Assess the effectiveness of what you want to accomplish in your program

- Example:
  - *The Career Center Diversity Program will advise undeclared students of all racial groups represented in the undeclared student population.*

Quantitative vs. Qualitative Research

Quantitative Research:

- Uncovers measurable data to formulate theories and facts and uncover patterns
- Data can be measured accurately
- Considered to be objective
- Data collection methods are highly structured
- The sample population is large

Qualitative Research:

- Helps to understand the underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations
- Data can be observed, but not measured
- Considered to be subjective
- Data collection methods are semi-structured or unstructured
- The sample population is small

Quantitative vs. Qualitative Methods

Quantitative Methods:

- Surveys (rating scales)
- Student records (Banner)
- Observations (Tracking)
- Experiments
- Institutional Research data
- Analytical Rubrics

Qualitative Methods:

- Surveys (open-ended)
- Focus groups
- Interviews
- Observations
- Holistic Rubrics

Exercise: SLOs

- Identify 1-2 of your best programs or services
  1. What is the goal/purpose of this program?
  2. How does this program relate to your department's mission statement?
  3. How do you assess whether this program is effective?
  4. Write 1 student learning outcome using the ABCD method:
     - **A**udience
     - **B**ehavior
     - **C**ondition
     - **D**egree of measurement

     - **As a result of (condition), (audience) will (know/be/be able to) (Bloom's taxonomy verb) (behavior).**

Next steps…

1. Send your department's mission statement to hayden.harris@ucr.edu by **8/14**
2. Take Culture of Assessment Pre-Survey
3. Cluster meetings

- Remember: Assessment is an on-going process

- Our goal is to improve the programs and services for students and ultimately aid in student development, learning, & success. By incorporating assessment into our everyday activities, we can reach that goal and slowly build a culture of assessment.

Thank you! ☺

References

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