

# Assessment 101: Purposes, Levels, Terms, Processes

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“Just the other day, a friend of mine... was railing against her university’s imposition of a requirement that every faculty member provide ‘learning outcomes’ for their courses. It was the end of the semester, and she’d worked hard to provide a meaningful class for her students, and it felt cynical to then tack on a bunch of meaningless outcomes. Who hasn’t felt anger at this increasingly frequent, seemingly cynical tendency of institutions to reduce the complexity of learning to a metric, productivity and outcomes?”

~ Cathy N. Davidson, *Inside Higher Ed*, Aug 28, 2017

“ And what then of those possibly unmeasurable learning goals? Those transformations, the sources of subsequent life revelations? If our resources of time and energy are spent on measurable goals and student achievements, what happens to the ineffable outcomes? And most significantly, what are we telling the public that higher education achieves? This content, those skills. Period.”

~ *Raymond J. Shaw, The Chronicle of Higher Education, July 27, 2017*

An answer:

A student noted on a course evaluation that “until her professor had included learning outcomes on a syllabus, she had no idea why she was taking a given class or why her university thought this course (but not some other) should be required... She compared college to a child asking ‘Why?’ and the parent responding, ‘Because I told you so.’”

*~ Cathy N. Davidson, Inside Higher Ed, Aug 28, 2017*

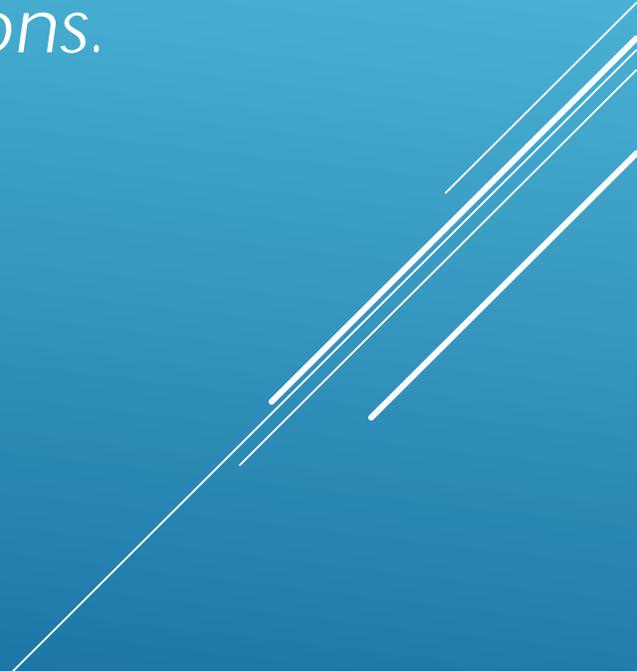


**Are you feeling stressed about assessment?**

You already do assessment, even if you think you don't.

*Teaching the second time, and conversations.*

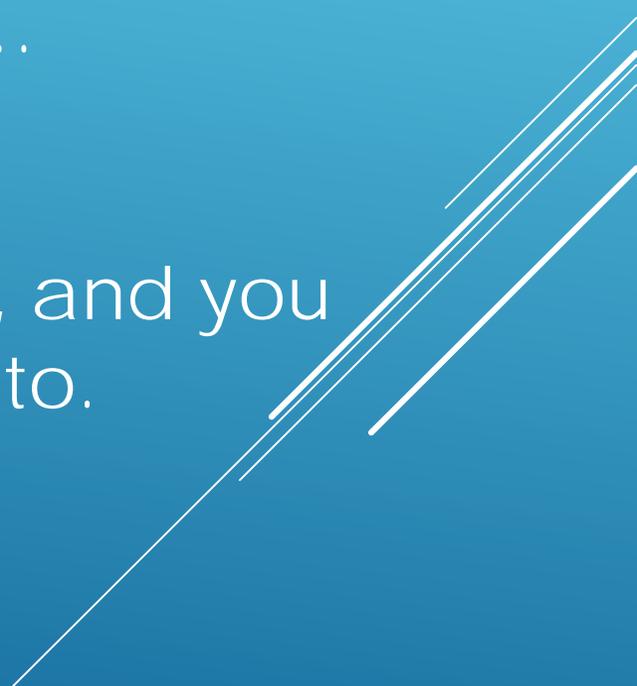
Take what you do and make it systematic.

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# Assessment 101: Outline

<b>Purposes:</b>	Enhancing student learning
<b>Levels:</b>	Course, Program, Institution
<b>Terms:</b>	Every activity has its vocabulary...
<b>Processes:</b>	Standard practices

Remember, you are also starting something new, and you can ease into it and still achieve what you need to.

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# Questions

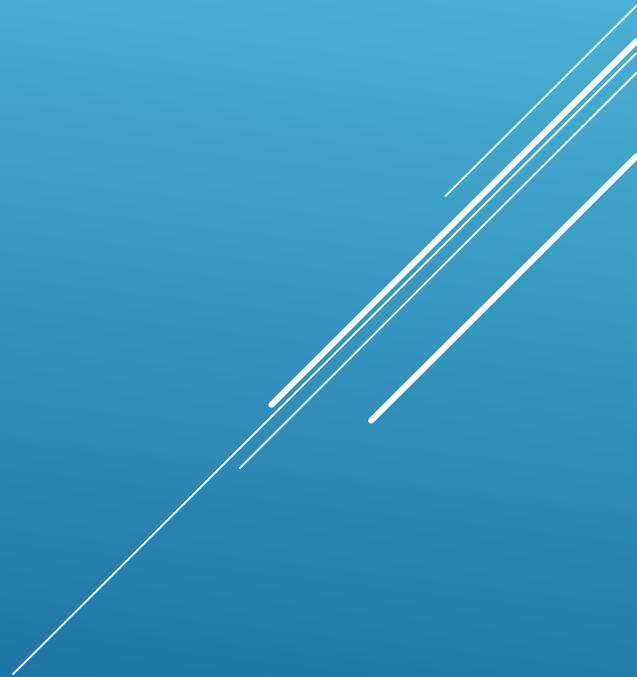
Please ask questions whenever you want!

*sometimes I may bracket your questions...  
Assessment 201...*

I may ask you questions from time to time if  
you are looking perplexed, etc.

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# Assessment 101: Purposes



# Assessment 101: Purposes

“NEASC is coming! NEASC is coming!”

*To improve student learning and outcomes!*

- “How do I know how well my students are achieving the learning goals I have set up for them in my course?”
  - “How do I know if the majors in my program are graduating with the skills, knowledge, and perspectives that I want them to acquire?”
    - “How do I know if students are achieving the learning goals of the institution?”

# Assessment 101: Purposes

*To improve student learning and outcomes!*

Assessment activity demonstrates accountability (for accreditation) but it's because of what that activity achieves:

Assessment is about teaching and learning, about ensuring that students are learning what we want them to learn.

That the institution's purposes are being met at the highest level.

# Assessment 101: Purposes

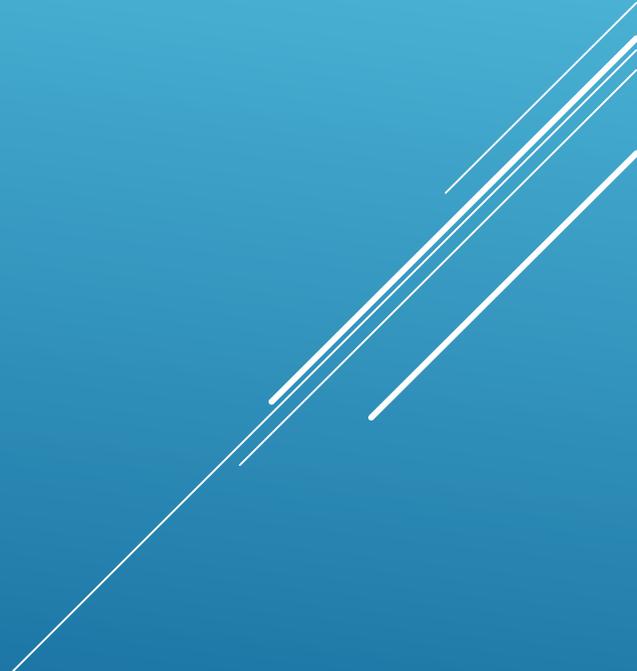
Sidebar: Institutional Purposes

Getting jobs, ensuring students complete their programs...

*How do you know what to do to improve those?*

Activities geared toward these can be assessed as well, but...

# Assessment 101: Levels



# Assessment 101: Levels

NEASC notes that assessment of student learning takes place at three levels:

1. Course
2. Program
3. Institution

Ideally, these aren't really distinctive and disconnected from each other...

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# Assessment 101: Levels...

Institutional Goals for student learning should be reflected in the goals of academic programs, which should be reflected in the goals of individual courses

Graduates of our College will be critical thinkers...

(Institution)

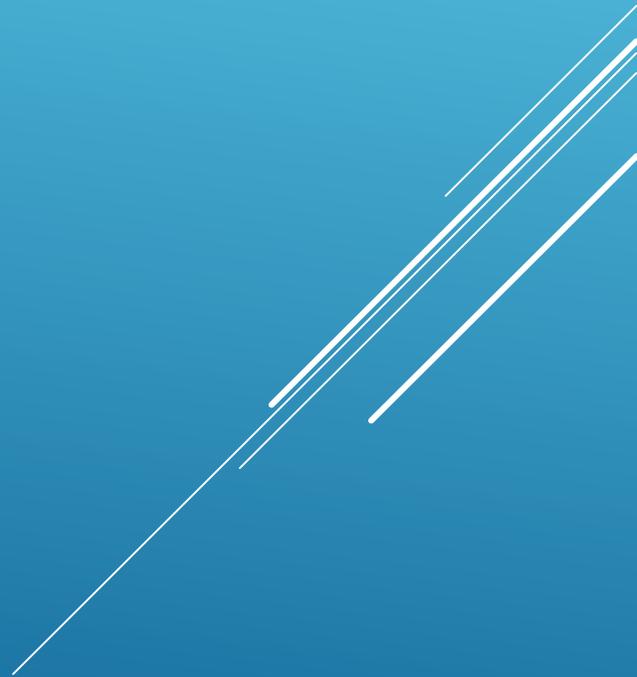
... Psychology majors will think critically about the human condition...

(Program)

... by the end of the semester, students in Psych Stats will use statistical methods to critically evaluate claims about the human condition.

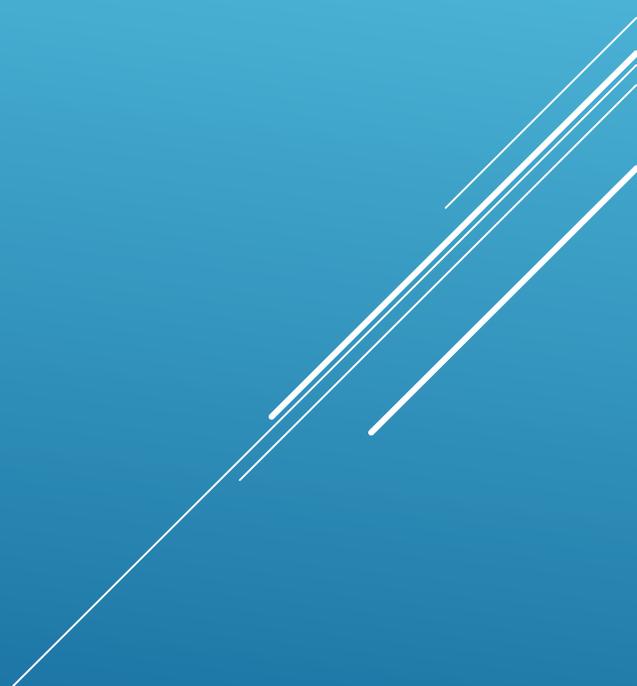
(Course)

# Assessment 101: Terminology

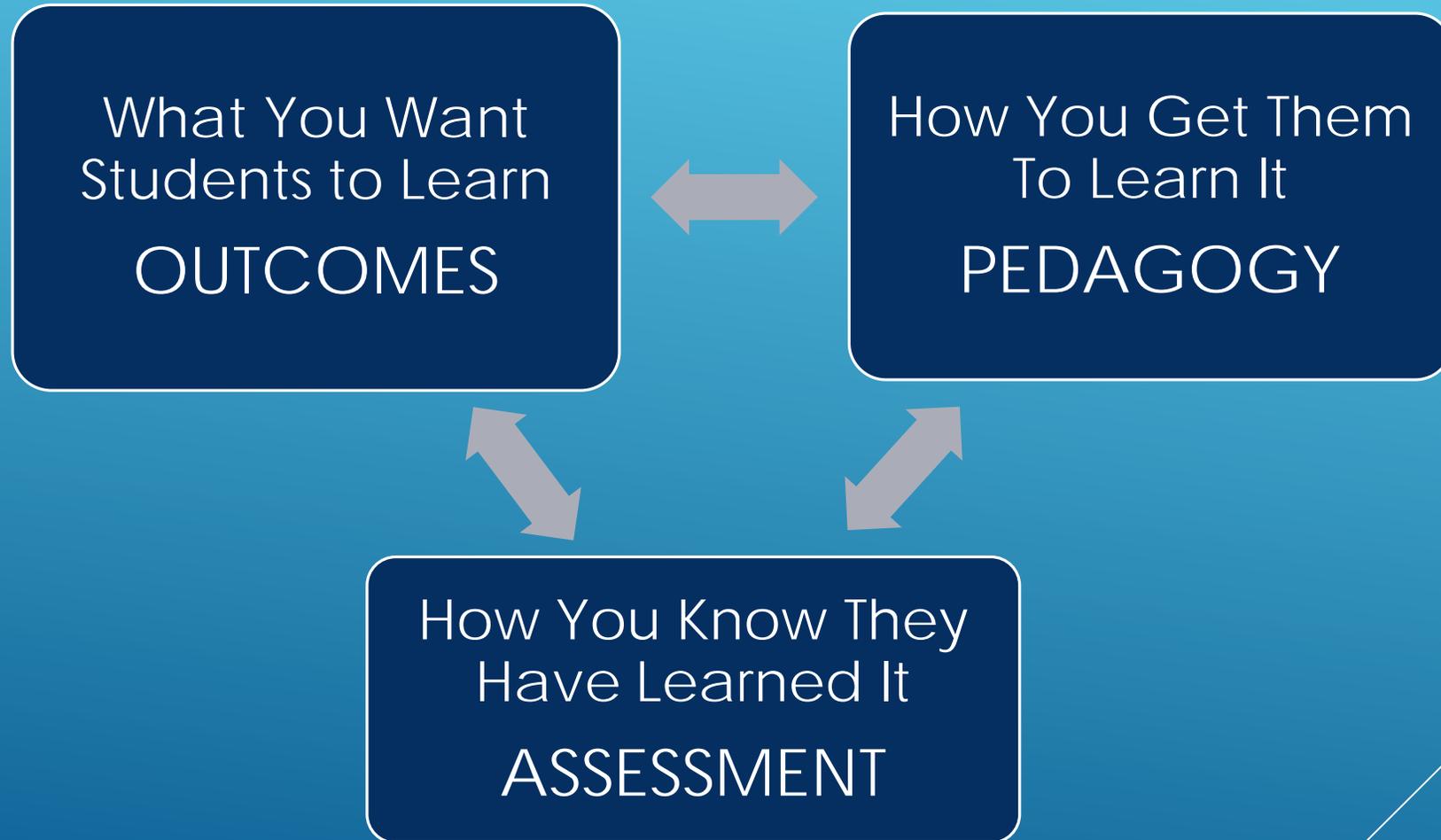


# Assessment 101: Terminology

Terms you'll encounter:

- Learning Outcomes (etc.)
  - Measurable Learning Goals
  - Assessment
  - Closing the Loop
  - The Assessment Cycle
  - Curriculum Map
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# Assessment 101: Terminology



# Assessment 101: Terminology

## ▶ Teaching Goals

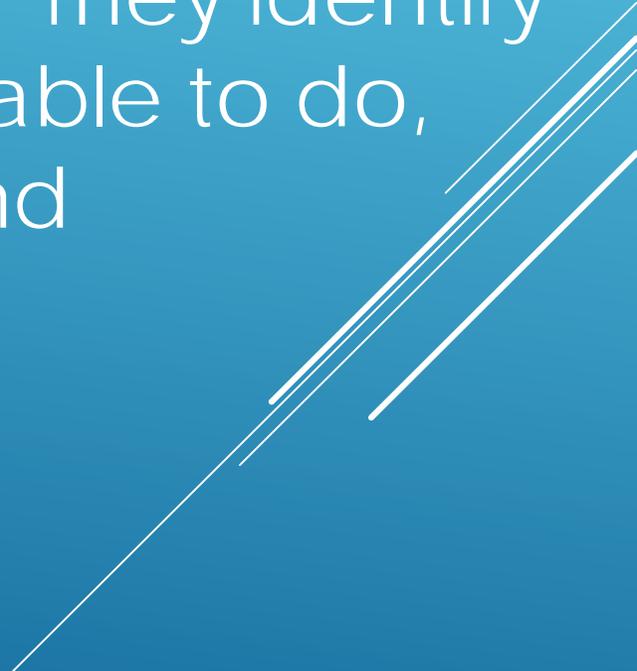
*The educational objectives in the undergraduate program in the Department of Chemical Engineering are to:*

- *educate students in chemical engineering fundamentals and practice;*
- *train students in chemical process design and integration;*

## ▶ Learning Outcomes

# Assessment 101: Terminology

*Learning Outcomes* describe the specific and measurable learning that students should achieve by the end of an activity, course, or program. They identify what students will know, what they will be able to do, and what they value (**knowledge, skills, and dispositions**).

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# Assessment 101: Terminology

Learning *Goals*

Learning *Objectives*

Learning *Outcomes*

... Specialists discriminate these terms (from broad to specific) and for good reasons. But ultimately:

*What do you want students to learn,  
and how will you know?*

# Assessment 101: Terminology

Note how these go from really broad to specific.  
We could call them different things, but...

Graduates of our College will be critical thinkers...

(Institution)

... Psychology majors will think critically about the human condition...

(Program)

... by the end of the semester, students in Psych Stats will use statistical methods to critically evaluate claims about the human condition.

(Course)

*What do you want students to learn,  
and how will you know?*

# Assessment 101: Terminology

The Right Verbs...

Measurable Learning Goals/ Outcomes

Appreciate vs. Demonstrate

*What do you want students to learn,  
and how will you know?*

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# Assessment 101: Terminology: Assessment

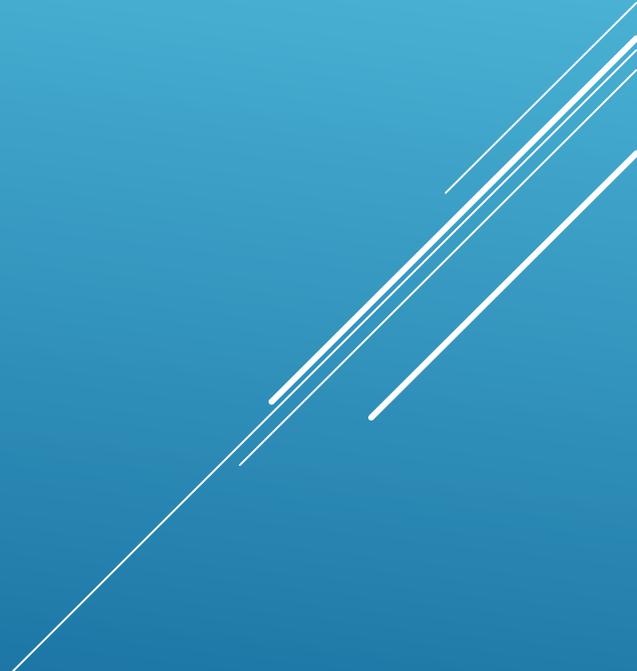
“the systematic collection of information about student learning, using the time, knowledge, expertise, and resources available, in order to inform decisions about how to improve learning.”

*Assessment Clear and Simple: A Practical Guide for Institutions, Departments and General Education* by Barbara E. Walvoord (John Wiley & Sons, 2004, pp. 2-3.)

# Assessment 101: Terminology

## Closing the Loop

Taking the evidence gathered, and changing:

- pedagogy
  - requirements
  - course sequencing, or
  - even the measurement!
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# Assessment 101: Terminology

## The Assessment Cycle



# Assessment 101: Terminology

**Curriculum Map:** Critical for effectively closing the loop –

Where are things taught in the curriculum so that we can change how they are taught, or how often, or...

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# Assessment 101: Terminology: Curriculum Map

## Core Curriculum learning goal:

*At the completion of the core, students will be able to:*

*Articulate thoughts in English in a coherent, unified, well-structured manner.*

Step 1: What courses teach this skill? [in or out of "core" courses]

Step 2: ... at what level?

Introduce, Reinforce, Master [plus Assessment points]

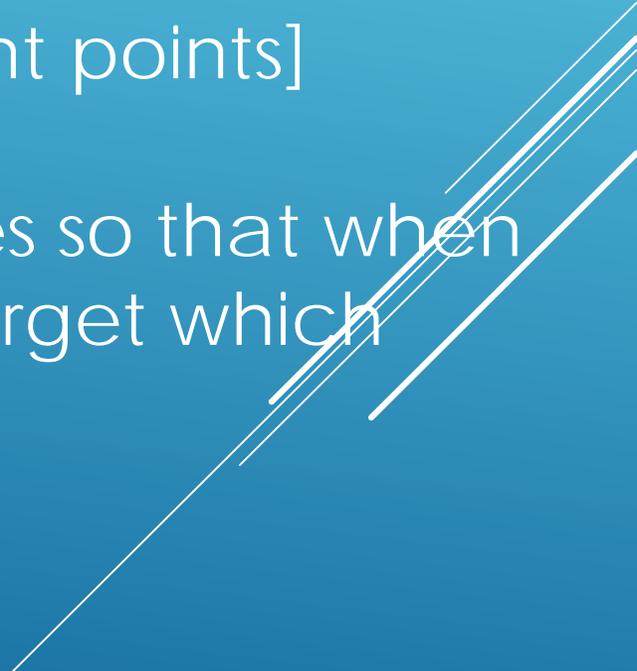
# Assessment 101: Terminology: Curriculum Map

Step 1: What courses teach this skill? [in or out of “core” courses]

Step 2: ... at what level?

Introduce, Reinforce, Master [plus Assessment points]

A curriculum map is a grid of courses by outcomes so that when you've assessed a program outcome, you can target which courses to focus on for enhancing the outcome.

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Courses:						
1. Articulate thoughts in English in a coherent...						
2. Demonstrate a mastery of fundamental skills...						
3. Draw logical conclusions from qualitative and...						
4. Access, process, and assess information ...						
5. Demonstrate the relationship of one's self...						
6. Demonstrate an understanding of the ...						

# Assessment 101: Process



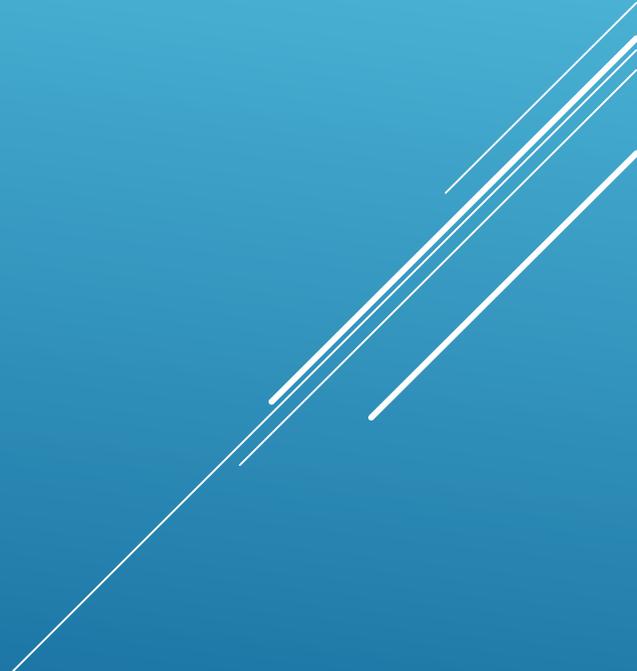
# Assessment 101: Process

...using the time, knowledge, expertise, and resources available...

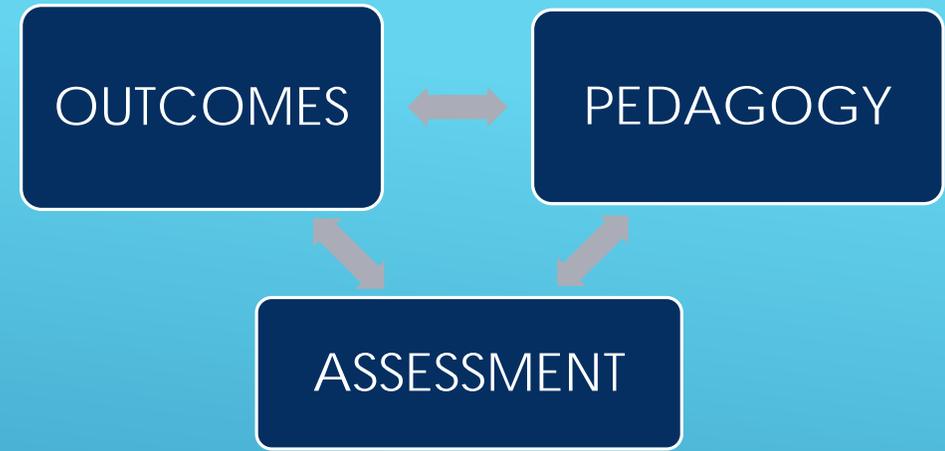
- **Time** – Try not to be too elaborate or time-consuming (sufficing)
- **Knowledge** – What goals are best measured? Which ones matter the most? Which are likely problematic or exceptional? What do the data mean?
- **Expertise** – Discipline-specific, authentic
- **Resources** – How well does the institution support this faculty work?

# Assessment 101: Process

Given those considerations, choose a method for identifying how well students achieve learning goals:

- Embedded assessment
  - Artifact assessment
  - Portfolio assessment
  - Standardized test assessment
  - Indirect assessment
  - Other indicators
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# Assessment 101: Process



Process: Closing the loop –

- What? Using the evidence to make change
- Why? Improve student learning → change pedagogy
- Who? Faculty, with administrative support, because it's about changing academic programs or pedagogy