Assessment Field Notes

Resource for Teaching

Plan: Align Program-level Outcomes & Opportunities

Alignment describes the intentional interrelatedness of course, program, general education, and institutional learning outcomes. At the program level, alignment represents the ideal cohesive relationship between curriculum and outcomes, which provides appropriately sequenced opportunities for students to develop mastery.

When the Learning Outcome (LO) is:		Coursework reflects:
introduced (I),	students are introduced to what they will be expected to know and be able to do as a result of the course / program	basic ability to remember and understand
practiced (P),	students have opportunities to consolidate their learning through practice in varying contexts	developing ability to apply and /or analyze
demonstrated (D),	students are expected to demonstrate mastery of the Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)	an advanced ability to evaluate and /or create

Determining the degree of alignment is particularly important, especially as program curricula evolve through the addition or deletion of courses. The analytic process during which faculty examine the alignment between program learning outcomes and curricula is usually called **curriculum mapping.**

A CURRICULUM MATRIX

- Provides a starting point for communication about where learning does and should occur in the curriculum.
- Identifies courses useful for embedded assessment.
- Highlights sequential nature of learning; facilitates increasing sophistication and ability to apply knowledge, skills, and/or dispositions over time.
- Ensures that students have equitable opportunities to achieve the program's intended outcomes.
- Provides a visual representation of key courses within a program during which program learning outcomes PLOs are introduced (I), practiced (P), or demonstrated (D).

Sample curriculum matrix

	Course #	1	2A	8	10	50	97	102	135	152	188	197
Learning Outcome (LO)	Demonstrate understanding of fundamental theories and skills	I		P		P		P			D	
	Apply Concepts and skills to solve challenging problems		I		P		P					D
	Collect, analyze, and interpret data			I		P			P		D	
	Organize and present information in multiple forms		I	P			P			P		D
	Work collaboratively to solve complex problems	I			P			P			D	