

TEACHING AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES: THE FIRST STEP IN ASSESSMENT PROGRAMS

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ABSTRACT

Currently traditional institutions of higher learning are facing more robust competition from alternative educational programs and non-traditional institutions offering certificates and degrees. In addition to this competition the programs offered by the traditional institutions of higher learning are being called into question by graduates; the parents of graduates and the potential employers of these graduates. Parents and graduates are questioning the cost/benefit of a college degree and employers are discounting the relevance of a GPA as an attribute for entry level positions. The authors briefly discuss the introduction of the Collegiate Learning Assessment Test (CLA+). The test is designed to be administered to graduating seniors and the test results will serve as evidence that a graduate possesses the skills considered to be essential by potential employers. The authors point out that the CLA+ is a summative assessment measure. They contend that assessment programs must also include formative assessment measures. The authors propose that assessment programs should be a continuing component of each and every class within each and every degree program offered by the traditional institutions of higher learning. Formative assessment efforts must begin at the level of the individual class and must be linked to statements of both teaching and learning objectives relevant to the course content. From an analysis of syllabi that were used in an introductory Marketing course, the authors have chosen to illustrate unsuitable teaching and learning objectives. The authors point out the necessity of informing faculty members about the elements of effective and measurable teaching and learning objectives. The authors then present a series of teaching and learning objectives derived from their experience in revising an important introductory or portal course. Finally, the authors contend that the structure and language of the teaching and learning objectives presented in the article can be generalized to programs and courses in a variety of academic disciplines and offer some suggestions for the conduct of assurance of learning (assessment) efforts.

INTERNAL PRESSURE FOR ASSESSMENT (ASSURANCE OF LEARNING)

Assessment, or better defined as Assurance of Learning Programs, were initially conceived and implemented by institutions of higher learning as a means of empirically illustrating that they were achieving the goals and objectives they had set for their programs. Earlier on, one could say that the impetus for these programs was internally generated. Somewhat later in time, accrediting agencies began to demand that institutions seeking initial accreditation or reaccreditation produce a systematic body of findings that clearly demonstrated the linkages between students' learning or performance outcomes and the goals and objectives the institution had formulated and made public.

EXTERNAL PRESSURE FOR ASSESSMENT (ASSURANCE OF LEARNING)

More recently institutions of higher learning have had to contend with additional external pressures stemming from a number of sources. Because they recognize the importance of the goals and objectives that many institutions of higher learning have designated as critical, government agencies that offer grants and current or potential corporate and individual donors who provide funds for the introduction of new and the maintenance of existing specific or general programs are insisting that institutions requesting such funding present evidence of assessment outcomes that indicate the goals and objectives made explicit in their mission statements are being met.

Institutions of higher learning have also experienced an increasing level of dissatisfaction expressed by graduates who find themselves deeply in debt (Salas & Loren 2014) and experiencing limited career opportunities because of a slow growth recessive economy. These graduates are experiencing a kind of cognitive dissonance (Festinger 1957) or buyer remorse and are evaluating the cost/benefit ratio of some college degree programs as negative. (The Week 2014) As one might expect, these graduates are joined in their dissatisfaction by parents who have had to absorb the ever increasing costs of tuition, fees and other expenses.

Additional competitive pressure comes from the growing popularity of what are known as Massive Open Online Courses or MOOC being offered by some very prestigious institutions of higher learning. Currently MOOCs are offered online and have essentially open enrollment with no limits on the number of individuals who can participate in all or parts of the courses offered. Also to be considered is the growing importance of "for profit" institutions that promote the more focused on line or in resi-

dence campus programs that they offer as having a direct connection with career employment opportunities. (Bady 2013; Savage 2013)

Traditionally considered as feeder schools for universities and colleges, the two year junior colleges, whose programs are funded by government at various levels, have been advised to adopt a near a near trade school mission and to offer more in the way of employment oriented programs. (Cancino 2013). Robert B. Reich has recently called for schools within the USA to adopt Germany's two year programs in manufacturing technologies.. These programs, beginning in the last year of high school and extending at least one year beyond, have successfully created employment opportunities for those students who are not interested in traditional college and university programs. These programs are reported as having a role in strengthening the German economy. (Reich 2013). This call for such programs was echoed in a longer article originally appearing in the *Washington Post* and reprinted in the *Chicago Tribune* (Schneider 2014).

THE ENTITLEMENT PERCEPTION PARADOX

Student perception of entitlement creates another problem in institutions of higher learning. The rationale for the perception of entitlement seems linked to the ever increasing costs of tuition and related expenses. Students are reported to have adopted a point of view in which they define themselves as "customers" and as such should dictate the outcomes of the educational transactions in to which they enter. (Schaffer, Barta & Stogsdill 2013) On the other hand, in the authors' experience, faculty members may vary in their expression of opinions regarding entitlement, but most business school faculty members, implicitly or explicitly, regard students not as customers but as the products that the institution produces. .

Where there is an absence of statements of specific learning (performance) objectives, students may tend to construct their own rubrics of fairness and their own perceptions of reality. For example, every faculty member has heard a student complain about a final grade and claim to deserve a higher grade because they studied hard; they were really motivated; they need to keep their GPA up; they attended most of the classes; they offered comments during discussion and so on and so on. Where there are defined and implemented objectives regarding the level of performance students are expected to demonstrate, the differences between what the students consider adequate performance and the levels of performance outlined in the course learning objectives may operate to eliminate or, at the least, lessen the entitlement frame of mind.

As mentioned above, students believe that accumulating a high GPA constitutes empirical evidence that they possess the abilities and skills required for entry into their chosen career fields. Some faculty members share that belief and will inflate grades because they think this will satisfy the graduates and provide them with a competitive advantage in what has recently become a climate marked by greater difficulty in the competition for employment opportunities. The motivation for such grade inflation may, in some instances, be engendered by political correctness or more simply and genuinely by a desire to be of assistance. In either case, or whatever else the motivation for grade inflation may be, the result seems to be the introduction of a paradoxical unintended consequence.

At one time potential employers might have shared a belief in the reverence for and the relevance of the GPA. A significant number of potential employers have, however, reported the experience of finding that students with high GPAs—even those from prestigious institutions of higher learning -cannot demonstrate an acceptable level of proficiency in what the employers recognize as skills such as basic mastery of content; a facility with quantitative methods; critical interpretive thinking and proficiency in both oral and written communications. (Belkin 2013)

Writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, Belkin (2013) also pointed out that a number of corporations have used assessment instruments of their own origination as a means of assuring that applicants are capable of, for example, writing well and making a rational argument. He quoted a senior vice president of a major corporation as saying that these abilities are often lacking even for students whose transcripts show a record of with high grades from prestigious schools. Belkin (2013) also reported that students who had no immediate intention to enter graduate programs had completed the GRE or GMAT and presented the resulting test scores to potential employers as evidence that they possessed critical skills and abilities discussed above.

THE COLLEGIATE LEARNING ASSESSMENT (CLA+) TEST

As discussed above there have been reports that potential employers of college graduates have begun to devalue the worth of some college degrees and to express skepticism about the credibility GPA's offered by applicants seeking employment.

In response to the skepticism surrounding the GPA as credible evidence of learning, there is a movement toward using a standardized post-graduation examination. Just as the SAT is used to establish that an applicant has the skills necessary for admission to a college or univer-

sity, the proposed standardized test is designed to provide evidence that graduates have achieved a level of mastery of the knowledge and skills frequently specified in institutional statements of assessment objectives and, just as importantly, considered as requisite entry level skills by potential employers.

The post-graduation test is called the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA+) Developed by The Council for Aid to Education. The test has been used by 700 schools as a means of assessing how well the students at various levels are mastering requisite content and skills that are the objectives of higher education. (Klein, Benjamin, Shavelson & Bolus 2007; Chun 2010 Hosch 2012)

The purpose of the CLA + is to provide a student who successfully completes the test with a benchmarked report. The report can be considered evidence that the student who has taken and passed the test possesses a satisfactory measure of important skills such as mastery of content, ability in written communication and the capability for critical thinking. If not all, then certainly the great majority of institutions of higher learning, list the development of the aforementioned skills as desirable outcomes of the educational programs that they offer. And as noted above, these are the skills of particular interest to potential employers

Current plans for the Spring of 2014 call for seniors at 200 cooperating colleges to take the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA +) test. The test results will serve to supplement the GPA and other experiential evidence that applicants for employment submit as a components of their resumes.

FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT MEASURES

Assuming that the CLA+ test proves to be accepted and effective raises the question of whether institutions of higher learning will decide to adopt the test as a requirement to be completed by graduating students and the resulting score incorporated into the students' transcripts. A second question deals with whether the schools that adopt the CLA+ would, as a result of such adoption, consider abandoning their own internal assessment efforts and programs. This would mean that the institutions might very well come to rely exclusively on the CLA + and so, in a sense, outsource the work involved in providing evidence of the assurance of learning to an outside agency.

With regard to the issue of outsourcing, it is hard to imagine that a standardized test would be accepted as a sort of a universal one size fits all measure considered to be applicable to all college or university programs. In an effort to achieve a closer fit between the content of the CLA +

and the content of their programs, institutions of higher learning might propose a supplement to the CLA+ that entails the development of additional or alternative items to those in the standardized test. The objective of such additions, deletions and alterations of test items would be justified by an argument that these changes yielded information that is more focused and more relevant to the specific programs offered by the institution.

The problem with revising a standardized test by the addition, deletion or alteration of test items is that it violates the central norms of psychometric testing. If the original test is in any way revised, then the important attributes of its reported reliability and validity which traditionally insure the credibility of the results yielded by the test can no longer be applied. Whenever a standardized test is revised the reliability and the validity measures of the revision must be recomputed. (Campbell & Stanley 1966; Kassirjian 1971)

It seems very likely that the CLA+ will prove to be an innovative and welcome addition as a supplement to assessment programs that are conducted within institutions of higher education. Individual class assessment measures administered over a program of study could be considered as formative measures. The results derived from administration of the CLA+ could, on the other hand, very well be considered to represent a summative measurement of assurance of learning. Considered together the formative and the summative measurements should supplement one another. (Centra 1987) The combination of the two measurements should provide stronger supporting results. The results could then be presented as evidence of an active and sustained program for the assessment of student learning. Further the results would support the institution's mission and its vision of the knowledge and skill levels that its graduates should possess. References to the importance of the relationship between a mission statement, the goals and objectives an institution derives from it and the eventual outcomes achieved are ubiquitous. For example, even in a recent novel by Lee Child the central character says "That's no kind of mission planning." A mission needs an achievable objective." (Child 2013 p.317). A view of the necessary features of a well stated objective is provided in Doran's (1981) classic article on the subject.

OBJECTIVES

Faculty members need to be aware of those teaching and learning objectives that are of primary importance to supporting the mission of the institution that the faculty members represent. It should be noted that in examining the publications distributed to constituents by institution of higher learning one finds statements which incorporate a multiplicity of objectives. The University states its

overall objectives, colleges within the university have their objectives, departments within the colleges have their objectives; programs within the departments have theirs and individual faculty member have their objectives. University objectives frequently deal with fund raising efforts; enrollment programs; issues of diversity in the student population and faculty mix; remodeling the physical plant programs and so on. College, departmental and individual course objectives should deal with the teaching intentions of the faculty members and the objectives that specify the learning (performance) outcomes expected of students.

IMPLEMENTATION OF FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT PROGRAMS

The formative–summative delineation of assessment outcomes mentioned above assumes that institutions of higher learning have implemented an active and sustained program for the assessment of student learning. That is not always the case.

Some years ago our college assessment committee had its members contact approximately 50 colleges that the committee considered similar to our own and to inquire about the details of the assessment programs currently in place at these schools. Our intention was to establish some benchmarks against which we would compare our own program plans. The senior author was a member of the committee. Of the schools we contacted fewer than 10% of could honestly report anything that resembled a systematic program for assessment.

Each of the representatives our members contacted agreed that assessment was considered important by their institutions. Many of them reported that, with regard to assessment, they were planning to create a program or they were thinking about planning a program or they were planning to think about planning a program.

It seemed to us that these intentions to get started on a formal program of assessment had all the weight of the great majority of New Year resolutions. This and other experiences and discussions within our own college and with other schools confirmed the proposition that everyone believes assessment is important. The people we'd spoken to reported that they and their faculty colleagues were favorable toward the concept of assessment and the importance of an assessment program: they seemed to object only to its implementation.

ASSESSMENT: A STARTING POINT

There is an often cited quotation attributed to the Chinese philosopher Lao-tsu that reads: "A journey of a thou-

sand miles begins with a single step". There are questions about whether Lao-tsu ever really existed but there are no questions about the veracity of the quotation. The important issue really is whether the first step is in the right direction: forward as opposed to oblique or sideways or in a circle. The figurative first step is the foundation of the journey. The literal first step is the foundation of all plans, programs and strategies. These first steps are the objectives that the plans, programs or strategies are expected to achieve. In this brief paper we discuss the importance of first steps in the creation and implementation of assessment programs. The senior author and colleagues have elsewhere made the case that assessment activities should be an integral part of each course in a university or college degree program (O'Keefe, Hamer & Kemp (2012, 2013)

In the papers cited above the authors expressed the view that assessment, beginning at first as a series of formative measures, could, over time, evolve into a summative program. At the time these papers were submitted for publication work on the CLU+ was underway and this work was cited in the reference lists but, as far as the authors knew, the test was not yet ready to be administered to graduating students at all institutions of higher learning. The authors (O'Keefe, Hamer & Kemp 2013) illustrated how the measurement outcomes relevant to the learning objectives formulated for an introductory class were related to the learning objectives stated by our university.

The authors advanced the premise that there should be a demonstrable relationship between the teaching and learning objectives prescribed for a given class. Measurements that exhibited acceptable levels of competence in meeting the learning objectives of individual courses should be reported. Because the course learning objectives were aligned with the overall educational objectives stated in the institution's mission statement, the alignment should allow measurements that would provide evidence for the assurance of learning. The authors O'Keefe, Hamer & Kemp (2012, 2013) also took issue with the frequently expressed viewpoint that, in and of themselves, final course grades and the final GPA provided a sufficient measure of assessment. As we noted earlier a significant number of potential employers have also actively disputed this viewpoint.

The starting point—the first step—in building a credible program for the assessment and assurance of student learning requires that each and every course in each and every program offered by each and every department within a college include in the course syllabi a listing of both the teaching and the learning objectives agreed to be relevant to that course. That demand sounds both obvious and easy. In the section to follow we document that, in the process of revising an introductory course, it was neither

obvious nor was it easy for faculty members to formulate sound teaching and learning objectives.

The process of revising our introductory or portal course (Berry, Cook, Hill & Stevens, 2013) involved the program of sequential activities that are outlined in Table 1. (O'Keefe & Lopez 2013) Our department offers between eight or nine sections of our introductory course in each of three academic terms and an additional four to six sec-

TABLE 1
STEPS IN FORMING COURSE TEACHING AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. The committee members collected a representative sample consisting of 13 syllabi that had been used for the 301 course.
2. The syllabi were deconstructed into sections dealing with: Textbooks; Teaching and Learning Objectives; Content; Examinations & Projects.
3. A content analysis was performed in the interests of listing similarities in the Teaching and Learning objectives listed in the syllabi.
4. The completed list was distributed to instructors scheduled to teach the course over the coming year. The instructors were asked to delete inappropriate objectives.
5. Based on the outcome of the first evaluation round, a second list was assembled and forwarded to faculty who were asked to accept or reject the inclusion of the objectives in the course syllabus.
6. The results of the vote were distributed to the faculty members scheduled to teach the revised course.
7. The chair contacted the faculty members to inform them that no objectives related to oral and written communication had been included in the list so far compiled. The chair reminded the faculty that improvement in communication skills was a University objective.
8. The chair communicated with the faculty members and pointed out similarities and differences and drew attention to the significance of differences between Teaching and Learning objectives.
9. The chair submitted final lists of Teaching and Learning objectives to be considered for inclusion in the common course syllabus.
10. The faculty members endorsed the lists of Teaching and Learning objectives compiled by the committee members.

tions over two Summer school periods. A number of these course sections are assigned to adjunct faculty. We began by collecting copies of syllabi used by faculty over the most recent two year period. The syllabi were deconstructed and, for purposes of comparison, divided into content areas. We compared the texts that were assigned; the organization of the course; the additional reading materials; the projects assigned and the teaching and learning objectives listed in each syllabus. In deconstructing the syllabi that were in use we expected to allow that there would be variations attributable to what could be interpreted as academic freedom. The comparative results of our deconstruction efforts yielded a state of affairs that seemed well beyond what we understood to be academic freedom and tended to be closer to academic anarchy.

An introductory or portal course sets the direction for the remainder of the students' programs of study. The topics and applications presented in the introductory courses must be relevant for those students who intend to major in the field of study represented by the course as well as for those students for whom the course serves as a requirement for the completion of their degree program. That perspective demands an effort toward assuring an agreed upon degree of standardization of the content offered in all sections of a portal course such as Marketing 301 and the portal courses offered by each of the departments within the college. Because of variations in the experiences and preferences of the instructors assigned to teach a portal course, complete uniformity of all aspects of the course is simply not possible. The tradition of academic freedom supports these essentially minor variations in the flow and coverage of topics within the course.

Similarities in the majority of the key components of the introductory course, however, are possible and worth pursuing. Our efforts to revise our introductory course resulted in the adoption of a uniform text; agreement on the essential and discretionary topics to be covered and agreement on the structure and substance of assigned written reports. These results were achieved because, before anything else, we arrived at standardized sets of teaching and learning activities.

This first step involved a thorough examination and content analysis and evaluation of the teaching and learning objectives incorporated into existing course syllabi.

The teaching and learning objectives seen in Table 2A and 2B were taken from the syllabi we had collected and deconstructed. These were presented to a group of seven experienced full time faculty members for evaluation. The authorship of these objectives was kept anonymous. We asked the faculty members to vote on whether an objective should be given further consideration. Tables 2A and

2B exhibit a number of the objectives that were immediately rejected and the rationale behind their rejection.

The problem with almost all of the statements presented in Tables 2A and 2B is that, rather than statements of measurable teaching and learning objectives, they are little more than statements of intentions. They are well meaning statements but as objectives they are meaningless. To be considered as valid, teaching objectives should

TABLE 2A SOME EXAMPLES OF UNSUITABLE TEACHING (T) OBJECTIVES (FROM A COLLECTION OF MARKETING 301 SYLLABI)	
1.	Knowledge of how marketing operates in the individual organization.
2.	The ability to apply your knowledge of marketing operations in both the domestic and the international market environment.
3.	An insight into how marketing can help you personally.
4.	You will understand the role of marketing within society and within an economic system.
5.	Enjoy learning how to develop skills in researching about organizations and their industries.*
6.	Learn how to present oral and written marketing materials.
7.	Learn basic marketing strategies including SWOT analysis.

TABLE 2B SOME EXAMPLES OF UNSUITABLE LEARNING (L) OBJECTIVES (FROM A COLLECTION OF MARKETING 301 SYLLABI)	
1.	Develop effective oral and written communication skills.
2.	Develop team skills in solving business problems.
3.	Students will develop an understanding of the fundamental upstream and downstream issues that confront firms along the value chain.
4.	Have fun while developing an understanding of the fundamental concepts in Marketing.*
5.	Find out how organizations analyze marketing strategies and competitor analysis.
6.	Learn how to present oral and written marketing materials.
7.	Apply the basic elements of marketing strategy to business challenges and exploit the relationship between these elements.

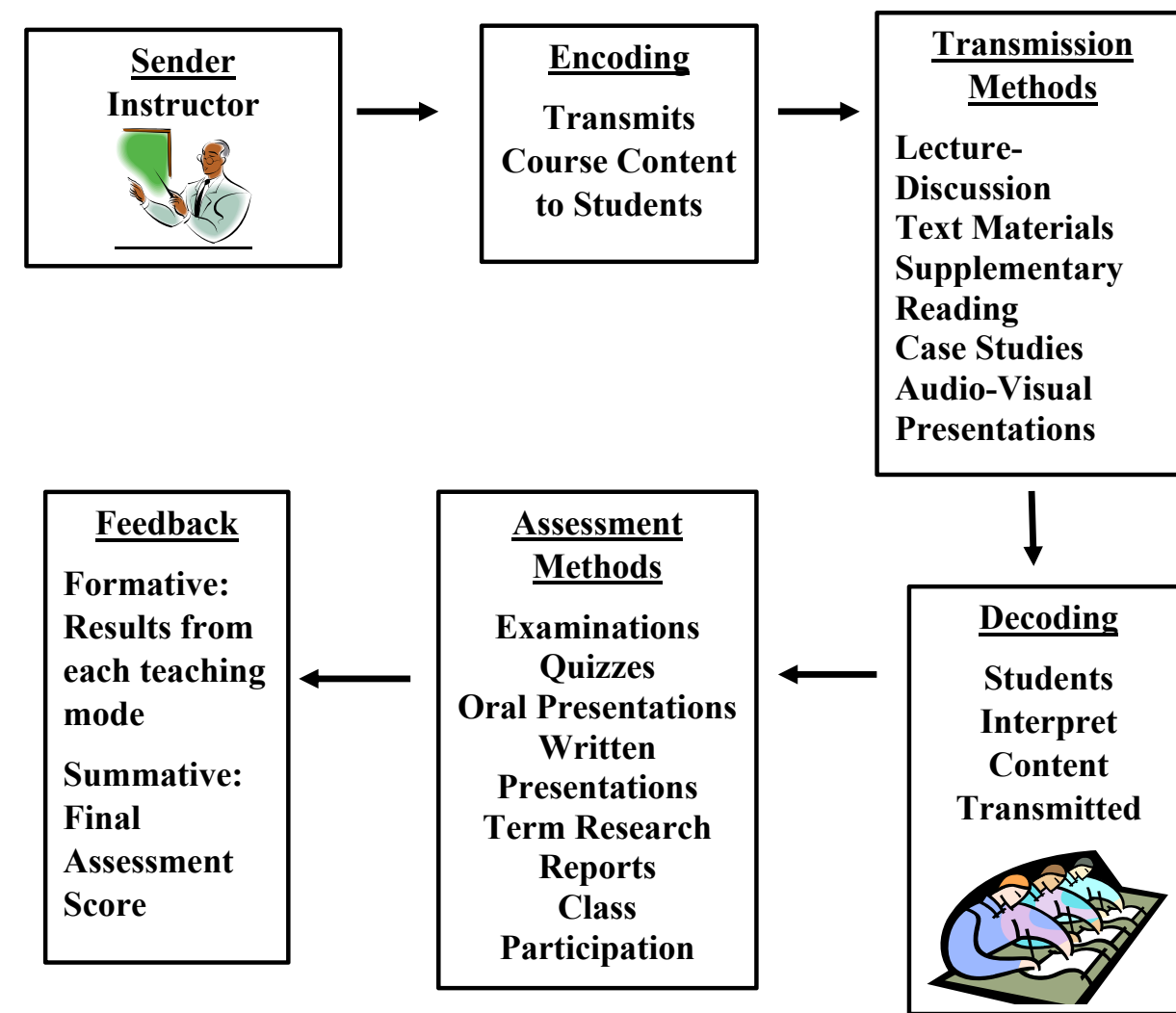
be broad statements of what the instructor intends to accomplish and include the means by which he or she is to pursue that accomplishment. A valid learning objective is built around the methods and the actions involved in collecting and analyzing act tangible evidence of students' performance that verify the instructors' stated intentions. The actions discussed here are illustrated in the classic traditional model of communication which is presented as Figure 1.

THE TRADITIONAL COMMUNICATION MODEL: TEACHING AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES.

Figure 1 represents the traditional phases of the communication model as presented in introductory marketing texts, for example, (Boone& Kurtz, 2012 and Kotler

and Armstrong 2013). In the framework of the model the sender (the instructor) encodes the message to be delivered to the receiver (the student). Encoding means simply organizing the course materials in a form that the instructor assumes the students can understand. The instructor must choose a medium to use in presenting the materials. The objectives we list in Tables 3A and 3B of this report make specific reference to a number of presentation media. Note that the teaching objectives in Table 3A specify a variety of media choices: lecture discussion sessions supplemented by text materials; readings; case studies; video and other audio visual presentation materials. The students are expected to encode the information presented via these media sources and to provide feedback that validates that the information has been understood. As shown in Table 3B the feedback takes the form of the

**FIGURE 1
A COMMUNICATIONS MODEL RELEVANT TO ASSESSMENT**



**TABLE 3A
TEACHING OBJECTIVES
PRESENTED IN THE REVISED SYLLABUS**

By employing lecture-discussion sessions; text materials; readings; video and other audio visual presentation materials presented to students, instructors teaching Marketing 301 will direct students toward:

1. Developing an understanding of the fundamental concepts involved in marketing planning and programs.
2. Developing an understanding of the vital role of marketing planning and programs within a firm.
3. Developing an understanding of the relationships between marketing and other functional areas of business.
4. Developing skills in scanning the external environment and appraising internal perspectives for measuring the strengths and weaknesses of a business from a marketing viewpoint.
5. Developing skills in the analysis of competition in the planning and analysis of marketing strategy.
6. Developing an understanding of the informational and analytic sources of information necessary to the preparation of marketing plans.
7. Developing an understanding of the critical role of oral and written communication skills in business practices.

seven learning objectives. We considered that outcome as a tribute to George Miller's (1956) classic article about the magical number seven.

Figure 2 shows the generalized assessment validation model. The mission of the college or university suggests the measurable objectives. The objectives dictate the methods needed to provide evidence that validates a predetermined range of results that are considered to be evidence of assurance of learning. The institution's mission statement expresses its superordinate goals. From these goals instructors derive the overall teaching and learning objectives for the classes they are assigned to teach. Validating the achievement of the learning objectives requires that these objectives are operationally defined that is, they lend themselves to acceptable measurement methods. The outcome of these measurements must provide documentation that the stated assessment (assurance of learning) objectives have been met. As the model points out, its major elements are symmetrical and mutually supportive. The learning objectives stated for each individual class are derived from the goals explicitly declared in the institution's mission statement.

**TABLE 3B
LEARNING OBJECTIVES
PRESENTED IN THE REVISED SYLLABUS**

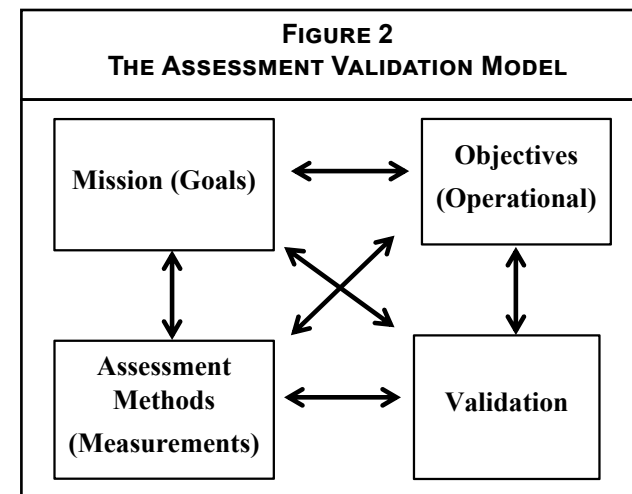
As measured by examinations; quizzes; oral and written environmental scanning and planning assignments; reports and class participation, students completing Marketing 301 are expected to:

1. Demonstrate the ability to recognize and to recall basic marketing terms and concepts.
2. Demonstrate familiarity with the basic elements of marketing plans and marketing strategies.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the controllable and the uncontrollable variables relevant to the success or failure of marketing programs, strategies and tactics.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the role of competitive advantage in the formulation of marketing plans, strategies and programs.
5. Demonstrate the ability to bridge concepts discussed in text materials and these same concepts appearing in both academic and practitioner publications and in the popular press.
6. Demonstrate the ability to locate and integrate informational and analytic sources of information.
7. Demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills in articulating business reports.

student's performance on examinations; quizzes; oral and written assignments; reports and class participation. These measures are the operational definition of assessment or assurance of learning

Table 3A includes the seven teaching and Table 3B the seven learning objectives that the members of our course revision team agreed would be presented in the syllabi for each section of the revised introductory course. The point to note is that, as presented, the teaching and learning objectives make a distinction between what is expected of the instructor and what is expected of each student. The instructor, via the array of course materials that are assigned and presented using several media, directs the students to the key points of the class and the students, via a variety of related performance measures, demonstrate mastery of those key points.

It should be noted that the statement of each teaching objective begins with the key word "direct" and each learning (performance) objective begins with the key word "demonstrate". There are seven teaching objectives and



The objectives are consistent with the mission statement; the measures used to establish assurance of learning are consistent with the objectives. An outcome that provides acceptable evidence of the assurance of learning validates the objectives stated for the class and those stated by the institution's mission.(O'Keefe, Hamer & Kemp 2012;2013).

In the approach discussed in this paper our objectives deal with three primary elements. We set out to assure that via a testing protocol common to and consistently measured within all sections of the introductory course we could show assurance of *Mastery of Content*. Further, as shown in Table 4, we set out to assure that within all sections there would be common assignments that would allow us to demonstrate assurance of both *Critical Thinking* and *Improvement in Communication Skills*. These objectives are important components our own and of any number of mission statements put forward by institutions of higher learning. Beyond that, as discussed earlier in this paper, these objectives are relevant to the skills that employers evaluate as requirements for career entry and development.

In summary we suggest that, within all academic disciplines, instructors assigned to teach a given class, cooperate by coming to conclusions regarding the common objectives they will work to accomplish and the methods they will use in pursuit of those objectives. And once the teaching objectives are set the instructors must agree on common methods for measuring student performance. The outcomes of these performance measures can then be considered as evidence of assurance of learning. In what follows we add some additional suggestions formulated during the course revision process discussed in this paper.

**TABLE 4
FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING
COURSE AND ASSESSMENT IMPLEMENTATION**

The following points were communicated to faculty members scheduled to teach the revised 301 course.

1. We will be using a customized text.
2. The syllabus must contain the seven teaching objective and seven learning objectives agreed upon by the committee.
3. The choice of content to be presented is not completely discretionary.
4. Concepts agreed by the committee to be "essential" must be included.
5. The arrangement of the chapters to be presented is left to the individual faculty members.
6. Common test questions incorporated as a series of SRAIs (quizzes) will assure coverage of essential topics and will provide an empirical base for an assessment report. Students must submit an individually prepared Environmental Scan report.
7. Students will submit an individually prepared Environmental Scan report.
8. Student groups must submit a Marketing Plan reports
9. Outlines for both the written reports must be included in the course syllabus.
10. Implementation will commence in the Autumn Quarter of 2013/14.

Other Suggestions:

The institution should make assessment as important an activity as recruiting and development.

The institution must create an organizational and administrative function that oversees assessment programs.

In cooperation with its program and departmental administrators the institution must assure that formative assessment measures are a component of each course.

Departmental and program administrators must assure that, especially for their introductory and portal courses, all instructors agree on both the teaching and learning objectives and on the methods to be used to document assurance of learning.

The Institution should study the outcome of admin-

istrations of the CLA+ examination.

Each department or program should decide on a method for a summative assessment to assure that students preparing to graduate can demonstrate mastery of content. Students who successfully demonstrate a level of knowledge of content and skills prescribed by the departmental or program faculty, should be presented with a certificate documenting that achievement.

Finally, the department and program administrators should require that students maintain an E portfolio of coursework assignments and projects that, along with the certificate mentioned above, can be presented to potential employers as an experiential supplement to their transcripts and resumes.

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