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Identifying Appropriate Evidence of Mastery

Mya Rome; Instructor; School of Child and Family Sciences; The University of Southern Mississippi [00:00:15]

When it comes to aligning our course outcomes with our specific assignments, we try to make sure that we are achieving what we intended to achieve from the outset. So if my students need to be able to apply a specific skill set, I need to be able to measure that within the assignment and make sure we're achieving that objective.

Kenjuana McCray, EdD; Lead Program Coordinator; Arts & Humanities Program; Fayetteville Technical Community College [00:00:34] Making sure that you, your assignments align with your module outcomes and your course outcomes, that also speaks to you as an instructor or professor, because that means that you took time to actually prepare for, and prepare and plan for the outcome that you wanted that student to be able to achieve.

Mwauna Maxwell; 2020-22 Faculty Fellow for the Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning; Faculty; Department of Psychology; Dallas College [00:00:51] When I first take a look at the learning outcomes for a course, I think about, what are those verbs, what are those, those action items that we really need to, that we focus on and that we want students to be able to do in the end? So whether that's to describe something, to identify something, to analyze, to apply something. And so if I focus on those verbs, then I know what it is that I want them to produce in the end, because whatever they produce in the end needs to answer those questions.

Jeff Suarez-Grant; Senior Instructional Designer; Center for Effective Teaching and Learning; California State University, Los Angeles [00:01:24] An example of a misalignment would be if your outcome says "students will discuss," and there's no discussion anywhere in the course, then that's that's problematic.

Naat Jairam; Instructional Designer; Center for Effective Teaching and Learning; California State University, Los Angeles [00:01:35] If you have an assignment or assessment that is a multiple-choice quiz and you're having students select the right answer, but you have an outcome that says "explain," then it's hard to explain with a multiple-choice quiz. Typically, it's writing. So maybe that quiz should have an essay attached to it, an essay question or two, then you can say "students explain in this quiz" and "explain" is in the course outcome and then you can align it that way.

Jeff Suarez-Grant [00:02:13] Depending on the outcome, if it's something complex, there might be multiple ways for students to demonstrate their mastery of that learning of that outcome. And an effective practice is to actually give students some choices. Does it always have to be a paper? Can it be a project? Can it be making a video, a website, a poster? A presentation and a paper, both can be equally robust. They also kind of activate or get students to practice different skills, but are still related to the central learning outcome, right? So if it's "analyze" something, in their paper they can do that analysis. If they're doing a presentation, they can talk about the analysis that they performed. They're just kind of performing or showing it to an audience as opposed to writing it and then giving it to somebody to read. So when you're at that point of determining what the signature assignments are, think about, like what else can I do? And do I actually feel comfortable giving my students a choice?

Mwauna Maxwell [00:03:13] In the last couple of years, I have thought about how to, how to introduce different ways of demonstrating learning. So I start out in thinking about what methods or tools will give me the desired outcome that I want from the students? And then from there I give them the choices. With my creative visual narrative assignment, the purpose of this assignment was to help students to think about what they've learned in psychology and tell the story of that in a visual way. So I was trying to dig into the creativity of the students to see what they might arrive at by giving them these options. So I had a visual component of that assignment. They can choose PowerPoint. They could choose imagery that they find from the internet. They can choose photography their own, perhaps photography. Then on the other side, the second part of that assignment would be to, to write a narrative or speak it. It could be an audio recording to explain why it is that they chose this particular art piece or these images. They then take that topic and think about what it is that they, how it is that they would tell the story



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of that topic in a visual way. And I think it gives them power and it gives them, give them agency in being able to decide, how do I want to demonstrate my learning for this particular, for this particular outcome?

Sadie; Student; Dallas College [00:04:59] She made sure that we were able to succeed by integrating all these different options. Her giving us the options of audio, visual, it not only allowed me personally to think harder about which one, which option I wanted to do, but I also came to think that I could possibly be versatile. And I wanted to do all of the options.

Mwauna Maxwell [00:05:25] And we always want to analyze the results in the end. If there is a gap in their understanding, then that's an indicator that perhaps the alignment needs to be looked at. And I think that going through an analysis process of looking at that assignment and again pulling those out comes back in and saying, is what I'm asking the student to produce, is that thing really connected with the outcomes? Is that really what's going to show me or demonstrate that that student knows how to describe, understand, analyze? And if it doesn't, then that's where we need to make the change in the instructions of the assignment and the design of the assignment. Sometimes it's easy for us to walk away thinking that it's the students who don't get it. And we give this assignment and then we say, ah, the student, the students aren't getting it. But when we really deeply analyze the assignments, which is what we should be doing, we begin to understand that many times it's the way, it's the design of that assignment that leads the student either closer to that outcome or further away. So we have a great deal of power in how these assignments will actually materialize in the end.