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Implementation Video

Narrator [00:00:00] Identifying the types of assessments aligned to your learning outcomes.

Lauren Brickman; Adjunct Lecturer; Queensborough Community College [00:00:05] Today, I'm going to use a subset of learning outcomes taken from my undergraduate course in music education to model a two-step process you can use to identify the types of assessments that are aligned with your course outcomes.

[00:00:20] The four course outcomes for music education I will work with to illustrate this process are: One, students will be able to define the steps required for curriculum development by using the Understanding by Design framework, or UBD. Two, students will be able to compare traditional and contemporary teaching philosophies. Three, students will be able to develop their own teaching philosophy. Four, students will be able to design a music curriculum they can defend using their teaching philosophy.

[00:01:00] I will start by identifying the types of assessment aligned to learning outcome number one. Because different types of assessment are more effective for measuring different levels of thinking, it is helpful to start this process by first identifying the level of thinking or cognition required by the learning outcome. This can be accomplished using a chart adapted from Linda Nilsson that organizes the action verbs found in most learning outcomes with the levels of thinking or cognition as defined in Bloom's Taxonomy, recently updated by Anderson and Krathwohl.

[00:01:40] The first thing I want to do is identify the action verb in my learning outcome. This is the word that describes what I'm asking students to do like illustrate, model, or produce. In this case, the action verb in this first learning outcome is "define," which is listed in the cognitive level Remember. Now that I've identified the cognitive level of the learning outcome, the next step in this process is to determine the types of assessment that are best aligned to the cognitive level Remember. Once again, I have a chart I can refer to in this case, a chart developed by Carnegie Mellon University's Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence and Educational Innovation, which categorizes the types of assessments that are aligned to each of Bloom's levels of cognition. You can see the types of assessment aligned to the cognitive level Remember include fill-in-the-blank and multiple-choice items. This means that to measure student learning of my first learning outcome, an assessment made up of multiple-choice and or fill-in-the-blank questions would be well-aligned.

[00:02:53] Now I will try the same two-step process for identifying the type of assessments aligned with learning outcome number two. Students will compare traditional and contemporary teaching philosophies. Step one requires that I determine the level of cognition using chart 1.1. And in this case, the action verb "compare" appears in both the Understand and Analyze cognitive levels. This example helps to demonstrate that this process can be iterative. How do I choose the types of assessment most appropriate for this learning outcome when the action verb falls under multiple cognitive levels? This information causes me to think more deeply about the underlying purpose for learning outcome number two. I want students to have a solid understanding of how traditional teaching philosophies differ from contemporary philosophies so they can use this information to inform the development of their own teaching philosophy required by the third learning outcome for the course. Since my goal is for students to develop a deep understanding of these two types of teaching philosophies, learning outcome number two is best aligned with Bloom's level understand. I will use this cognitive level to complete the second step of identifying the assessment types aligned to my outcome. This means that an assessment requiring students to compare these two theories, whether orally, in writing, or even in concept map, is aligned with the learning outcome number two.

[00:04:37] I'll now look at one more of my learning outcomes that adds another level of complexity. Learning outcome number four, students will design a music curriculum they can defend using their teaching philosophy. In this case, there is more than one action verb. The action verb "design" is listed in the cognitive level Create and the



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action verb "defend" can be found in the cognitive level Evaluate. One option in this case is to simplify the learning outcome. If a single verb is well aligned with what I want students to do, I can simplify without losing any intended learning. Here, I don't want to simplify my learning outcome because I want my students to do both "design" and "defend." So I will need to ensure my assessment addresses both parts of the learning outcome. Assessments aligned with Create include research projects and business plans. This is aligned with the part of the assignment requiring students to create a curriculum. For the second half of the outcome aligned to Evaluate the aligned assessments include requiring judgment thorough critique, and this is exactly what I'm asking students to do when they defend their curriculum, using their teaching philosophy. Within this single assignment, they will meet both parts of my outcome.

[00:05:59] By identifying the cognitive level of my learning outcomes, I can determine the kinds of assessments that are aligned to them. This not only helps me plan a system of evaluation, but it also serves as a way for me to reflect on whether the outcomes are communicating to students the learning I intend and how I will assess that learning.