From Principles to Practice

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Goals for Session

- To have enough of an initial understanding of Alverno’s educational program to start a meaningful conversation about general education and critical thinking.

- To explore implications of principles for design of practice: a developmental curriculum, teaching, learning, and assessment.
In 1970, one of the questions the President asked each department to address:

- What are you teaching that is so important that students cannot afford to pass up courses in your department?

Which led to questions like:

- How do you want your students to be able to think as a result of studying your discipline?
- What do you want your students to be able to do as a result of studying your discipline?
PRINCIPLE

Education **GOES BEYOND** knowing to being able to **DO WHAT ONE KNOWS**
PRACTICE

- **Performance** in the context of content
In 1973, new curriculum initiated based on eight institutional abilities or outcomes

- Graduation requirements based on demonstration of outcomes rather than distribution requirements.
PRINCIPLE

Educators are RESPONSIBLE for making learning more available by ARTICULATING OUTCOMES and making them PUBLIC.
PRACTICE

- Effective Communication
- Analysis
- Problem Solving
- Valuing in Decision Making
- Social Interaction
- Developing a Global Perspective
- Effective Citizenship
- Aesthetic Engagement
PRACTICE

General Education: Situate the Outcomes

Gen Ed outcomes should...

- Be grounded in the principles of disciplines and the General Education program (e.g., AAC&U report)
- Extend and reflect the principles of your Gen Ed program
- Be relevant to institutional mission and living a life after graduation
PRACTICE
General Education: Situate the Outcomes

Gen Ed outcomes should…

- Reflect some shared, concrete definition of what the outcomes mean
- Be defined and articulated in developmental ways
- Be cumulative (e.g. developed across the Gen Ed program)
- Be performative in nature; observable
Defining General Education Outcomes: Know Your Principles

- What are some core principles of your Gen Ed program? For example…

- General Education is the core of an undergraduate education. It is general in that it provides students with a comprehensive educational experience and prepares them for study within their major. General Education teaches students to think critically and communicate effectively; it provides an introduction to the methodologies and practices of the academic disciplines; it promotes intellectual curiosity and a love of learning.
PRACTICE

- Include course outcomes, related program outcomes, and related Abilities/Levels in syllabi (See example of a syllabus from general education course)
- Make outcomes available to constituents and stakeholders
Abilities that

- Involve the whole person
- Are teachable
- Can be assessed
- Transfer across settings
- Are continually re-evaluated and re-defined
PRINCIPLE

Abilities need to be defined in a way that our teaching of them can be DEVELOPMENTAL
The Impact Tape

- As you watch the Impact Tape, how have students changed?
- Students are being assessed for communication ability. What other abilities are also demonstrated?
PRACTICE

Analysis

- Level 1 – Make accurate observations
- Level 2 – Draw reasonable inferences
- Level 3 – Use concepts & frameworks and perceive and make relationships
- Level 4 – Analyze structure and organization
- Level 5 – Choose and use frameworks
- Level 6 – Independently employ frameworks to analyze increasingly complex phenomena
PRACTICE

□ Self Assessment and Feedback
Designing for learning involves integrating abilities with disciplines and across disciplines.
PRACTICE

- Coherent curricular design
- Fusion of content and abilities
PRACTICE

Examples from Outcomes for Chemistry

1. Communicates effectively, using language, concepts, and models of chemistry

2. Uses methodology of chemistry to define and solve problems individually and collaboratively
PRACTICE

Examples of Outcomes for Business and Management

1. uses discipline models and theories to analyze interdependence among systems, organizations, individuals, and events (Systems Thinking and Analysis)
2. applies business and management principles to develop and deliver quality products or services (Enterprising and Problem Solving)
3. uses team and organizational skills to work effectively with diverse individuals, teams, and organizational units to meet stakeholder and organizational goals (Interacting and Leading)
PRINCIPLE

Abilities must be carefully **IDENTIFIED** and **COMPAARED** to what **CONTEMPORARY LIFE** requires
PRACTICE

- Ability departments
- Scheduled Institutes
- Ongoing revisions of outcomes
PRINCIPLE

INTEGRAL

to LEARNING is ASSESSMENT
Student Assessment-as-Learning

Institutional and Program Assessment
Student Assessment-as-Learning

A process in operation at Alverno College, integral to learning, that involves observation and judgment of each student’s performance on the basis of explicit criteria, with self assessment and resulting feedback to the student.

It serves to confirm student achievement and provide feedback to the student for the improvement of learning and to the instructor for the improvement of teaching.
Student Assessment-as-Learning

Essential to learning and assessment are:

- Public, Expected Outcomes/Criteria
- Performance
- Feedback
- Self Assessment
General Education Rubrics

- Should address CORE skills
- When appropriate, use across courses and over time (e.g., writing and speaking rubrics)
- Can legitimately combine subjective and objective measures

as . sess (ə ses’) v.t.

[late ME <ML <L assess (us) ptp. of assidere (ad + sedere)]

to sit down beside
Institutional and Program Assessment

Processes that yield patterns of student and alumna learning, development, and performance on a range of educational outcomes. They provide meaningful feedback to faculty, staff, and various publics for improvement, shared learning, and demonstrated effectiveness.

These processes ensure comparisons to standards (faculty, disciplinary, professional, accrediting, certifying), and enable evidence-based judgments of how students and alumnae benefit from the curriculum and college culture.
PRINCIPLE

The effectiveness of assessment for everyone involved depends on the existence of a total dynamic system that contributes to the coherence and continuous improvement of the curriculum.
PRACTICE

- Matrix structure
- Discipline departments
- Office of Research and Evaluation
Benefits of Using Outcomes

- Provide direction & continuity for learning (e.g., course planning, feedback)
- Provide departments with standards to judge university level learning
- Assure accountability by making teaching/learning public and explicit
Benefits of Using Outcomes (cont’d)

- Help students transfer learning because learning experiences are embedded in multiple performance contexts
- Foster cross-discipline communication: create a community of faculty with common goals
Potential Challenges

- Faculty obliged to make explicit meaning of the disciplines (e.g., central concepts, tools of inquiry, values)
- Communication across faculty may be seen as a burden
- Conceptualization takes time
- New faculty roles call for additional development of expertise
- Need to develop new structures & culture