

Ingredients for Effective Course Design

Jan 2022



澳門大學
UNIVERSIDADE DE MACAU
UNIVERSITY OF MACAU

Outline

- A Context on Quality Assurance
- Ingredients in our Course Syllabus
- Aligning Assessment with ILOs
- Q&A



‘What is important in knowledge is not quantity,
but quality. It is important to know what is
significant, what is less so, and what is trivial.’

(Tolstoy, 331)

QUALITY



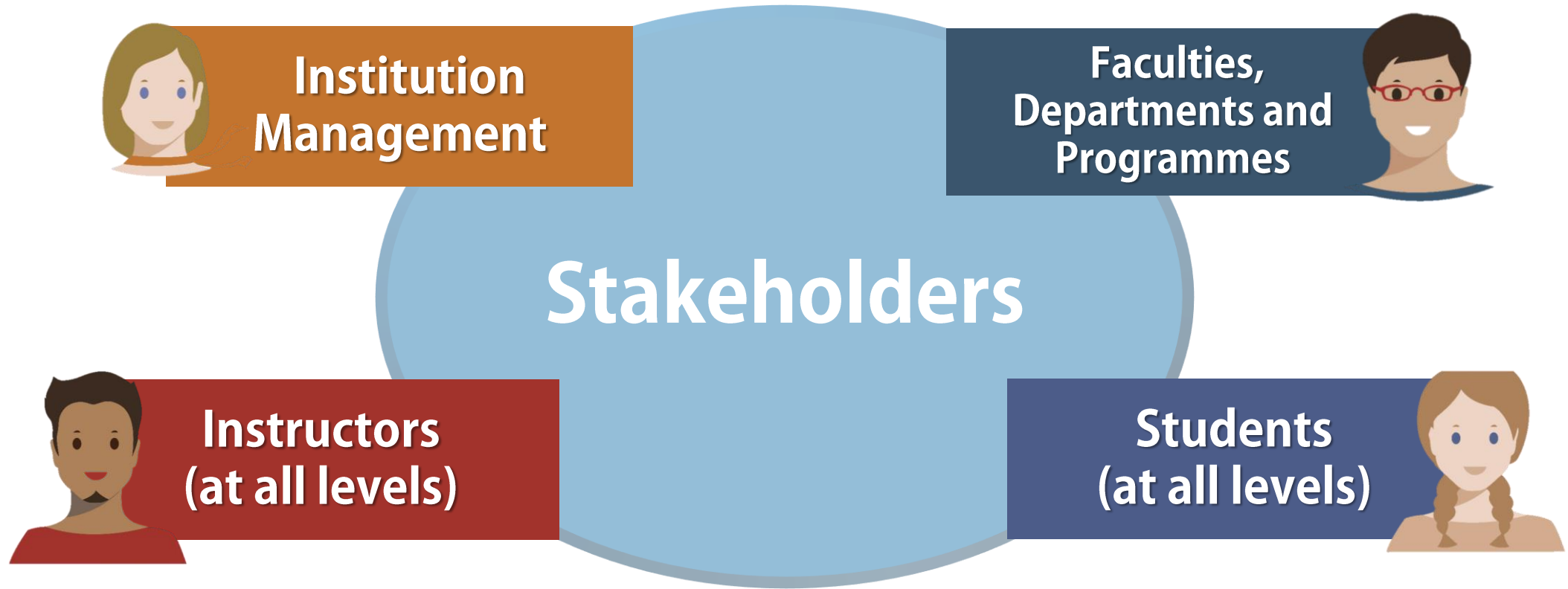
What is quality assurance?

- Diverse definitions of quality assurance in HE
- To date, there is no agreement on a definition of quality in the context of HE.
- Some construct a broader definition that centre-stages one central goal/ outcome.
- Some identify specific indicators of desired inputs and outputs.

(cont'd) What is **quality assurance**?

- Four broad conceptualisations of quality in HE identified by Schindler et al. (2015, p.8): purposeful, transformative, exceptional, accountable.
- ‘[T]he perception of quality assurance is very multi-dimensional and contextual and a gap exists in the view between professionals in quality assurance and academic staff and students.’ (Smidt, 2015, p. 626)
- No one common and universally applicable (to different stakeholders) set of indicators has been established.

In addition to stakeholders outside of the institution...



Learners are co-creators or co-producers of the teaching and learning process. Learners and instructors are partners who share the process and the products.

A complex issue:

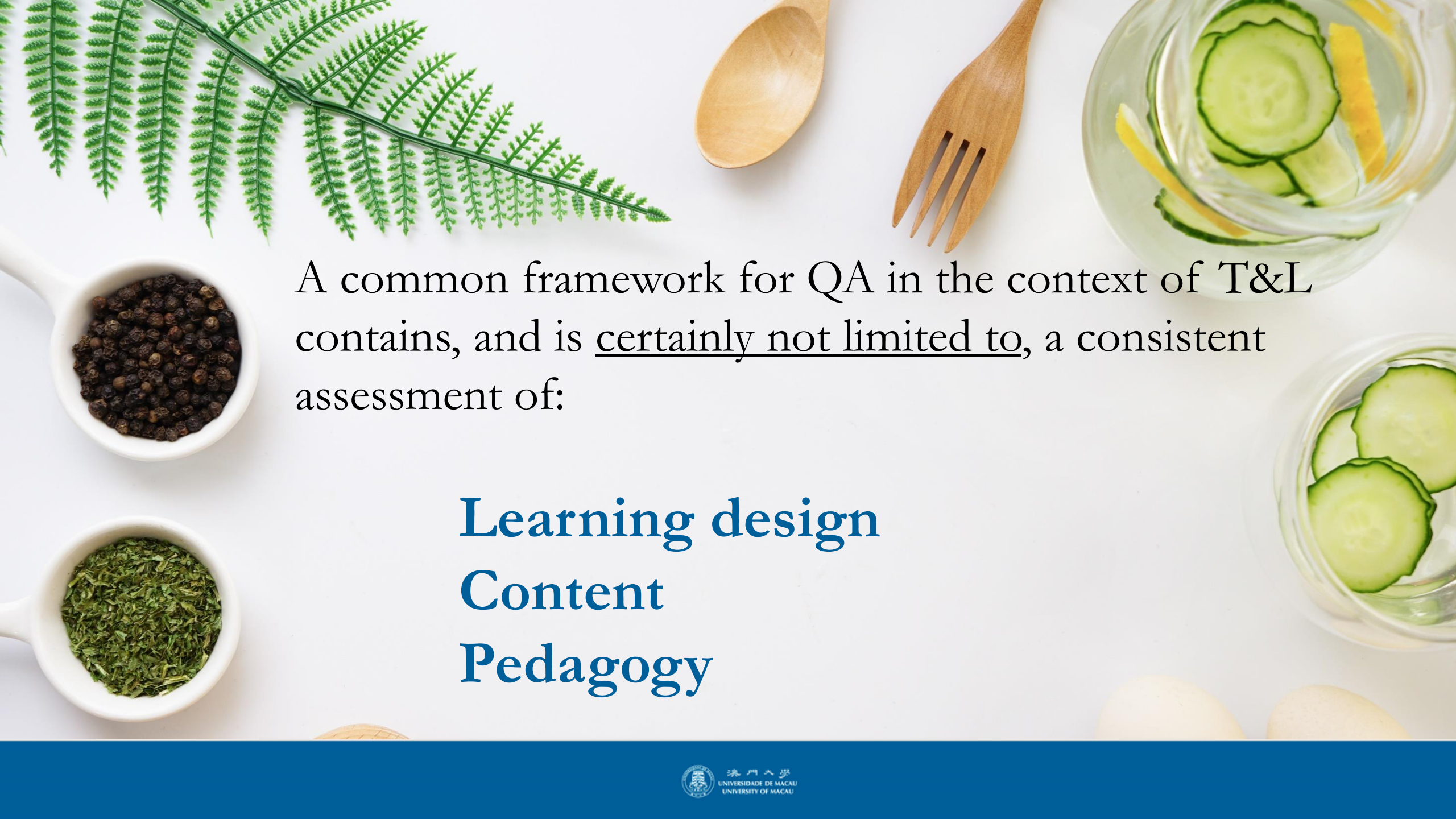
While QA can be a driver for HE institutions to achieve excellence in teaching and learning, it is in general a great challenge for institutions to ensure that the quality of educational programmes meets BOTH local and international standards.

(OECD & World Bank, 2007)



Reasons behind a growing demand for quality assurance:

- Increased mobility of students and faculty members
- Increased types and modes of programmes
- Increased inter-disciplinarity
- Increased demand for diverse talents for developing, changing, new industries
- Increased number of higher education (HE) institutions globally
- Increased internationalisation in HE, which results in ‘a growing demand for accountability and transparency... [which has] in turn led to a need to develop a quality culture, while addressing the challenges of globalized higher education’ (Smidt, 2015, p. 626).



A common framework for QA in the context of T&L contains, and is certainly not limited to, a consistent assessment of:

Learning design
Content
Pedagogy

Based on my 13-year experience at UM as a teacher and an administrator, my observation is that we hope to graduate students who:

- can solve problems;
- have effective communication skills;
- are committed to continuous learning;
- can work independently and interactively;
- are fluent in new technological developments;
- have transferable skills;
- are creative;
- are flexible...



Outcome-based Education (OBE)

OBE is a flexible, empowerment-oriented approach to learning.

OBE emphasises setting clear standards for observable, measurable outcomes.

Under OBE, students demonstrate that

- they know abc
- they are able to do xyz

Measurable, observable

‘Students can run 50 metres in less than one minute’; rather than ‘Students enjoy physical education class.’

A range of skills and knowledge

From mere recitation of fact (‘Students will be able to name four tragedies written by William Shakespeare’) to complex, integrated analysis and interpretation (‘Student will be able to discuss the dramaturgical functions of music in *The Tempest* in a 2500-word essay’).



Our Course Outline

- Course Code
- Course Title
- Course Description (including Aims, Objectives)
- Intended Learning Outcomes
- Syllabus
- Assessment
- Lecturer Information

What do I want my students to know or be able to do?
An example from my course on ‘The English Renaissance’:

Intended Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Paraphrase early modern English verse lines;
2. Describe mainstream theatrical conventions of the English Renaissance theatre;
3. Explain how language, genre and performance contribute to the meanings of a play;
4. Formulate an analytical interpretation of the two selected plays with reference to relevant historical and critical issues discussed in the course;
5. Work with team members and put together a substantial performance of selected scenes in the BBT.

What are Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)?

Statements of what learners are expected to be able to do upon completion of a course or a programme

Note: ILOs are expressed from the learners' perspective, rather than from the instructor's perspective



Objectives VS Outcomes

Think: who will be performing the activities and delivering corresponding results?

‘As a rule of thumb, course/programme objectives describe what an instructor or a programme aims to do, whereas course/programme learning outcomes describe, using specific, observable and measurable terms, what a student is able to do upon completing a course/programme.’

[‘Keep a Course on Track with Quality ILOs: FAQs’](#)

An ILO contains:

- A **verb** denoting a level of understanding [Verbs to avoid: ‘understand’, ‘appreciate’, ‘know about’]
- **Content or topic** to which the verb applies
- A **context** (which may be necessary)

For example:

- *Explain* abc theory and *apply* to an xyz problem.

Steps in designing ILOs for a course

1

Knowledge

Decide what kind of knowledge is to be taught (content, practice, creation etc.)

2

Topics

Select the topics to be taught

3

Expectation

Decide the levels of understanding or performance the learners are expected to achieve for the different topics. [intuitive: how to verbalise so]

4

Agreement

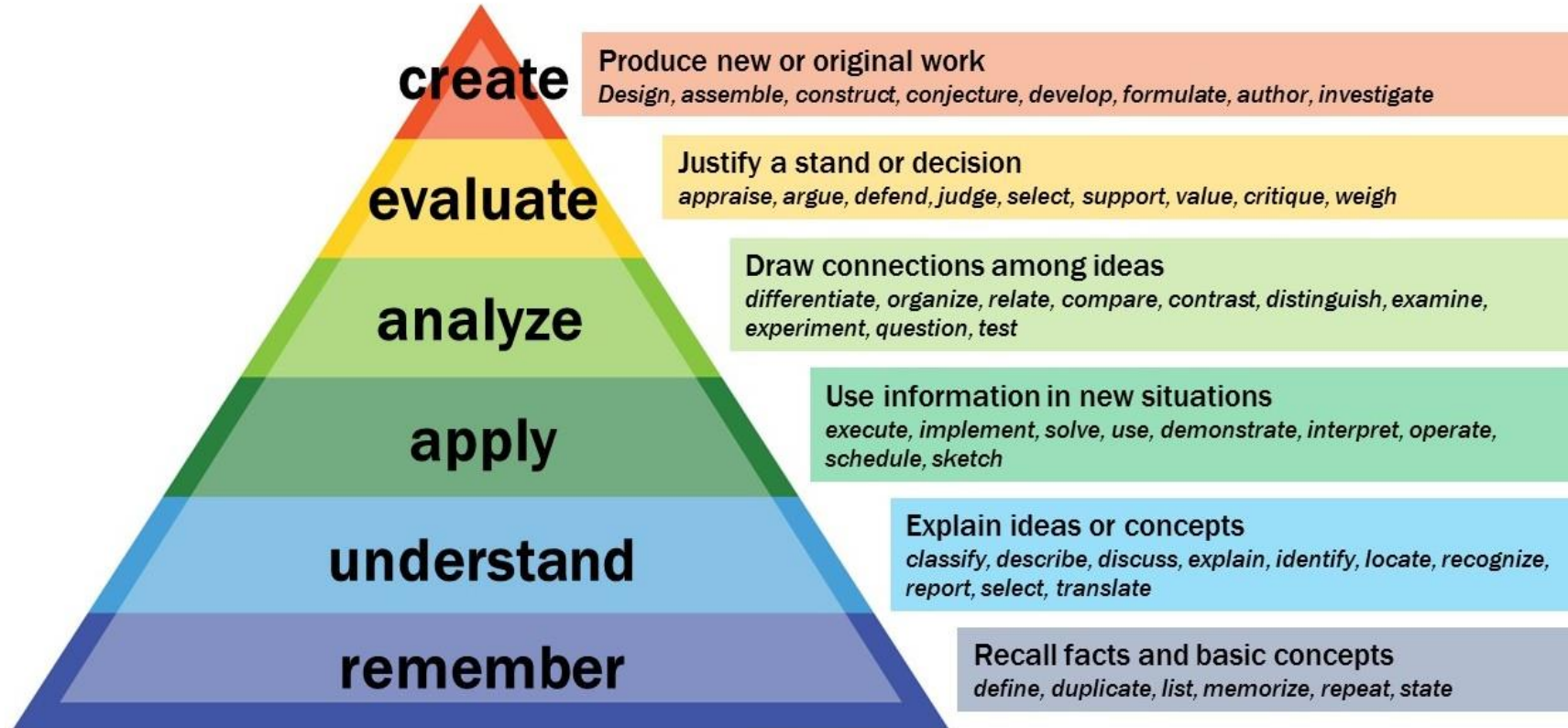
If needed, ensure a clear understanding and agreement of the ILOs within the team of instructors (and other relevant parties, such as external reviewers, for accreditation perhaps?).

5

Communicate

Communicate the ILOs to learners

Bloom's Taxonomy



<https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/>

Lower
Order
Thinking
Skills

Higher
Order
Thinking
Skills



<https://cilearn.csuci.edu/courses/4060/pages/why-create>

LOTS and HOTS in ‘The English Renaissance’

Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

- **paraphrase** early modern English verse lines; (LOTS)
- **describe** mainstream conventions of the English Renaissance theatre; (LOTS)
- **explain** how language, genre and performance contribute to the meanings of a play; (LOTS)
- **formulate** analytical reading interpretation of the two selected plays with reference to relevant historical and critical issues discussed in the course; (HOTS)
- **stage** a substantial performance of selected scenes in the BBT. (HOTS)

Aligning assessment with ILOs

- Assessments should reveal how well learners have learnt what instructors expect them to learn, while instruction, and the design thereof, ensures that they learn it.
- For this to occur, assessments, ILOs and instructional strategies need to be closely aligned so that they reinforce one another.
- The best way to do this is to summon, actualise and activate the verbs and/or learning contexts stated in the ILOs.
- Help our learners understand why they learn what they learn and do what they do. [objectives, syllabus, ILOs, assignments]



Following the success of my offerings of undergraduate courses ‘Shakespeare’, ‘The English Renaissance’ and ‘Creative Writing’ in previous years, I would like to seek approval for no-exam for this year’s ‘The English Renaissance’, an advanced-level literature course designed to offer students an opportunity to broaden their understanding of early modern culture. The focus of this course in this semester lies on close critical reading of Francis Beaumont’s *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, an early modern parody of contemporary practices and conventions of the theatre, and John Ford’s *Tis Pity She’s a Whore*, a domestic tragedy which explores various theatrical shocks. In order to facilitate teaching and learning of these two highly complex plays, the instructor plans to conduct about half of the class meetings in the Black Box Theatre, which well complements Learning Outcomes #1, #2 and #3 (please see course outline for desired ILOs). There will not be a final examination of this course. Of the final grade of this course, 40% comes from group performance (ILOs #2, #3 and #5), 20% from a short essay (ILOs #1, #3 and #4), 20% from mid-term quiz (ILOs #1, #2 and #3) and 20% from discussion forum (ILOs #1 and #3). Such design would allow the instructor to make a more holistic assessment of student progress and achievement in this theatre-centred course.

What do I want my students to know or be able to do?
An example from my course on ‘The English Renaissance’:

Intended Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Paraphrase early modern English verse lines;
2. Describe mainstream theatrical conventions of the English Renaissance theatre;
3. Explain how language, genre and performance contribute to the meanings of a play;
4. Formulate an analytical interpretation of the two selected plays with reference to relevant historical and critical issues discussed in the course;
5. Work with team members and put together a substantial performance of selected scenes in the BBT.

Common ILOs	Suggested LAs/TAs
Recall, Describe	MCQ, test, oral presentation, essay question
Explain	Essay question, test, oral examination/presentation
Integrate	Project
Analyse	Case study
Apply	Project, case study, experiment
Solve	Project, case study, experiment
Design, Create	Project, experiment
Reflect	Portfolio, self-evaluation



Selected Bibliography

- Barnett, R. (1992). *Improving higher education: Total quality care*. Bristol, PA: SRHE and Open University Press.
- Benson, Spencer A. (2016) 'Five Things to Consider in Making Student Group Work More Effective and Fun' in T&L Blog, Centre for Teaching and Learning Enhancement, University of Macau. <https://ctle.umac.mo/2016/03/15/five-things-to-consider-in-making-student-group-work-more-effective-and-fun/>
- Harvey, L. (2014). Quality. In *Analytic quality glossary*. Retrieved from <http://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/glossary/quality.htm>
- Harvey, L. & Green, D. (1993). Defining quality. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*. 18(1). p. 9.
- Karaim, R. (2011). Expanding higher education. *CQ Global Researcher*. 5(22). pp. 525–572.
- Lomas, L. (2003). 'Embedding quality: The challenges for higher education.' Paper presented at the European Conference on Educational Research, University of Hamburg.
- Lundberg, C. A. & Schreiner, L. A. (2004). Quality and frequency of faculty-student interaction as predictors of learning: An analysis by student race/ethnicity. *Journal of College Student Development*. 45(5). pp. 549–565. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/csd.2004.0061>
- Seyfried, M & Pohlenz, P. (2018). Assessing quality assurance in higher education: quality managers' perceptions of effectiveness. *European Journal of Higher Education*. 8(3). pp. 258-271, DOI: 10.1080/21568235.2018.1474777
- OECD & World Bank. (2007). *Cross-border tertiary education: A way towards capacity development*.
- O'Flaherty, J., Phillips, C., Karanicolas, S., Snelling, C., & Winning, T. (2015). 'The use of flipped classrooms in higher education: A scoping review', *The Internet and Higher Education*, 25: 85–95.
- Ryan, T. (2015). Quality assurance in higher education: A review of literature. *Higher Learning Research Communications*, 5(4). DOI:10.18870/hlrc.v5i4.257
- Schindler, L., Puls-Elvidge, S., Welzant, H., & Crawford, L. (2015). Definitions of quality in higher education: A synthesis of the literature. *Higher Learning Research Communications*. 5(3). pp. 3-13. <http://dx.doi.org/10.18870/hlrc.v5i3.244>
- Smidt, H. (2015). European quality assurance—A European higher education area success story [overview paper]. In A. Curaj, L. Matei, R. Pricopie, J. Salmi, & P. Scott (Eds.), *The European higher education area: Between critical reflections and future policies* (pp. 625-637). London, UK: Springer Open. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-20877-0_40
- Tolstoy, L. (1997) [1910]. *A calendar of wisdom: Daily thoughts to nourish the soul*. Edited by P. Sekirin. New York: Charles Scribner.
- Vincent, T. (1987). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Wong, K. K. (2022). Keep a course on track with quality ILOs: FAQs. CTLE. Retrieved January 17, 2022, from <https://ctle.um.edu.mo/2022/01/17/keep-a-course-on-track-with-quality-ilos-faqs/>
- Wilger, A. (1997). *Quality assurance in higher education: A literature review*. Stanford, CA: National Center for Postsecondary Improvement.
- Wong, Katrine K. (2022) '...



謝謝
Obrigada
Thank you 😊

請多多指教 歡迎隨時聯絡

kwong@um.edu.mo

WeChat ID: **kw30201**

Subscribe to our WeChat: **澳大CTLE**