

Creating an Assessment Blueprint

Purpose:

For this activity, you are asked to consider the outcomes and grading weight given to a summative assessment in one of your courses. Naming the outcomes targeted by the assessment and mapping out the point values given to each outcome will help ensure that the assignment is fulfilling its intended purposes *and* that you are communicating to students the assignment’s importance for learning. Research demonstrates that communicating the importance of an assignment to students, how it will help their learning in the course and the skills and concepts that they’ll continue using years later, increases student performance.

This activity is one that you can continue to use in your teaching as you create new assignments and reconsider the value of existing ones.

Task:

- 1) Begin by choosing a major summative assessment to focus on. To make the activity the most meaningful, you might choose the assignment that has the largest impact on students’ grades.
- 2) Then, list in the Learning Outcomes column the different course learning outcomes that the assignment is intended to assess. In the Cognitive Domain column, list the Cognitive Domain that aligns with the outcomes, based on the Aligning Assignments Handout.
- 3) For the Intended Significance column, rate how important each outcome is intended to be for the assignment. Is the outcome intended to have Major significance? Some significance? Minor significance/
- 4) For the Actual Significance column, based on the number of points, questions, or attention given to the outcomes in the assignment description, rate what could be considered the “actual significance” of the outcome. Major significance? Some significance? Minor significance?
- 5) Once you’ve completed the chart, consider your responses to the reflection questions at the bottom, and type in your thoughts.

Course:

Assignment Name:

Learning Outcome	Cognitive Domain	Intended Significance (Major, Some, Minor)	Assessment Type	# of Qs (if applicable)	Actual Significance (Major, Some, Minor)

*Feel free to add additional rows, if needed, by clicking “Tab” from the last cell in the chart.

Adapted from The Association of College and University Educators (ACUE)

Reflection Questions

- 1) After completing the chart, what are your first impressions about how well the Intended Significance and Perceived Significance columns align?
- 2) Research demonstrates that communicating the importance of an assignment to students and its purpose(s) increases student performance. What opportunities are there in the course to share the elements of this Assessment Blueprint?

Example:

Learning Outcome	Cognitive Domain	Intended Significance (Major, Some, Minor)	Assessment Type	# of Qs (if applicable)	Actual Significance (Major, Some, Minor)
Compose expository essays ranging in length from 500 to 1000 words	Create	Major	Research Essay		Some (13% of grade)
Develop a piece of writing around a central, controlling idea	Create	Major	Research Essay		Some (13% of grade)
Structure essays with introductions, bodies, and conclusions	Apply	Major	Research Essay		Major (20% of grade)
Locate information on topics using basic electronic and print research tools	Apply	Minor	Research Essay		Minor (6% of Grade)
Include researched information in essays using MLA guidelines	Analyze & Apply	Some	Research Essay		Major (46% of Grade)