

MatchMaking



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Improving the alignment between assessment methods and stated learning outcomes (in Education, Humanities, Law and Theology)

The work begins

One means of achieving alignment is by using the outcomes to develop assessment criteria.

With the help of colleagues in each School of my Faculty I gathered documents relating outcomes and assessment in four clusters of topics (25 topics in all).

I then examined all the material for evidence of alignment between outcomes and assessment criteria.

The picture emerges

The outcomes

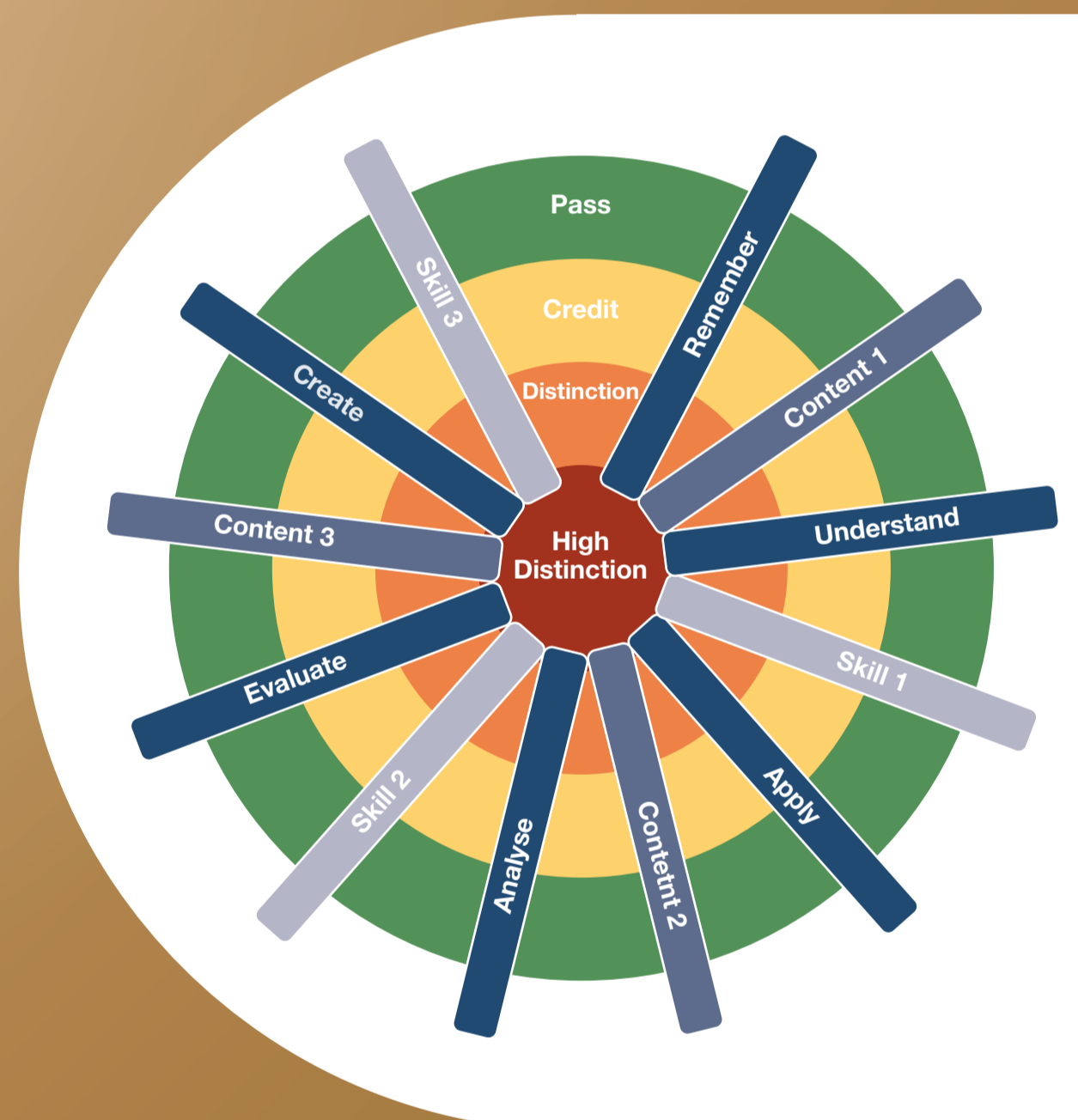
- Tended to be clustered on the lowest two levels of Bloom's taxonomy

The assessment criteria

- Not always made explicit to students, rarely for all items of assessment
- Sometimes very broad, perhaps too broad to be meaningful to students

The relationship between outcomes and criteria

- Outcomes usually framed around content; criteria usually skills-oriented
- Some criteria relate to activities rather than outcomes
- Some topics use generic lists for assessment criteria
eg Flinders' statements on final grades (Pass, Credit etc)



Questions for the next stage

On expected learning outcomes: Presuming it is desirable to use the full range of Bloom's taxonomy, what are the implications for alignment?

On assessment criteria: In order to achieve better alignment, is it more realistic to alter the outcomes or the criteria? Can assessment criteria be articulated so as to link to content as well as skills or activities? Or should outcomes be re-framed to reflect what we are looking for when we mark students' work?

Beyond assessment criteria: Is the content of assessment tasks aligned to the content-oriented statements in the learning outcomes? How can alignment of outcomes and assessment be reconciled with the availability of graded passes?