

Assessing Alignment



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To be valid, assessment must be aligned to topic or course aims and objectives. But how do we know when assessment and aims/objectives are aligned? This early-stage project begins to formulate an answer to that question.

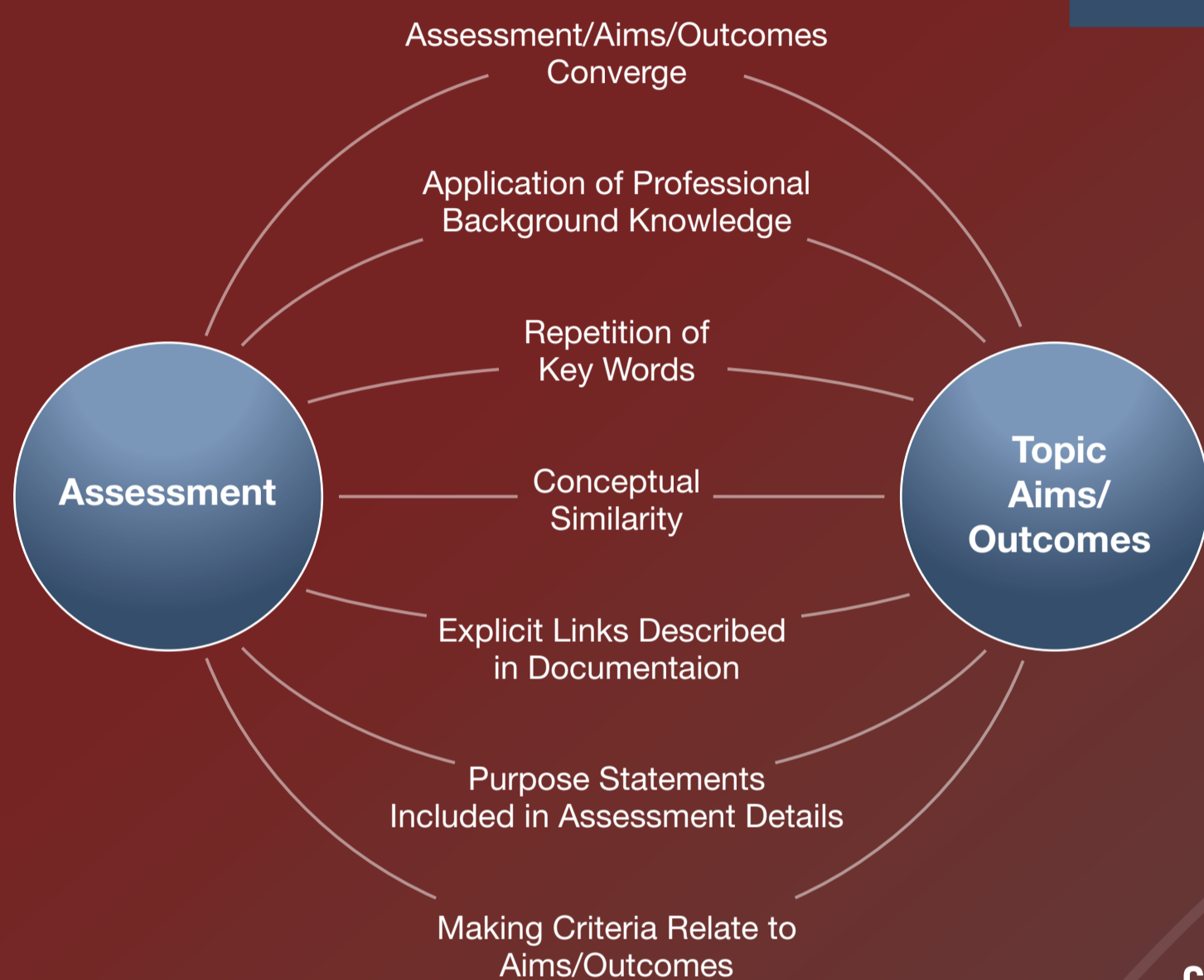
Aim

This small project is part of a larger project underway at Flinders University to evaluate the alignment between assessment methods and topic aims and objectives.

Before carrying out the actual evaluation, it is necessary to define alignment. What does it mean to say that alignment is present or absent? How would we recognise (mis)alignment?

The essential outcome of this preparatory project was to begin identifying a set of characteristics that are present when alignment between assessment and aims/objectives occurs.

These characteristics would become the basis of a tool that could be used by multiple analysts in assessing alignment across a large number of topics.



Method

In the absence of any established set of characteristics for evaluating alignment, we decided on an inductive approach. A group of four academics independently and intuitively assessed the alignment of two topics from two different courses in the Faculty of Health Science.

Following each intuitive assessment, each academic reflected on the process they had just experienced and articulated what they were thinking during the evaluation. The characteristics that were described were mind mapped during the sharing of experiences as a way of collating and summarising a consensus set of characteristics.

Tentative Conclusion

The mind map was then transformed into the diagram [top left] which shows a number of the most significant characteristics of alignment. These characteristics will be transformed into a checklist which will be trialled as an evaluation tool to test the alignment between assessment methods and topic/course aims and objectives.

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