



Title: Our journey towards constructive alignment and the development of externally benchmarked assessment criteria

Aim 1: Outline what constructive alignment is and the placement of assessment within a constructively aligned curriculum

Aim 2: Reflect on the International Education Institute's journey towards constructive alignment and development of externally benchmarked assessment criteria

Aim 3: Discuss the relationship between innovation and change, and explore the reasons why implementing change can be so challenging

What is Constructive Alignment?

What is Constructivism?

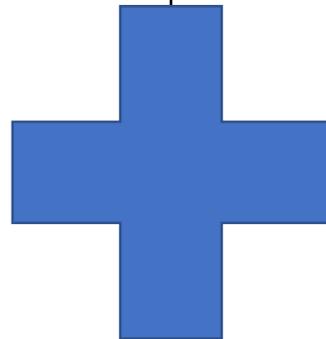
1. Knowledge **cannot** be 'transmitted'
2. Learner **actively constructs knowledge**
3. Each learner has a unique **schema**
4. Knowledge construction embedded in **human interaction** therefore it is **culturally, socially, and linguistically mediated**

Biggs, 1996

What is Instructional Design?

1. A **systematic** and **reflective** approach to curriculum design.
2. A number of different frameworks – e.g. ADDIE - (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation), Action Mapping etc.

Smith & Ragan, 2004



The Intended Learning Outcomes of the Curriculum

The outcomes are formulated first. From these the assessment criteria are developed.

The Assessment Regime

Once an appropriate assessment regime has been designed, activities are organised that will teach the student how to meet the assessment criteria (and, hence, the outcomes).

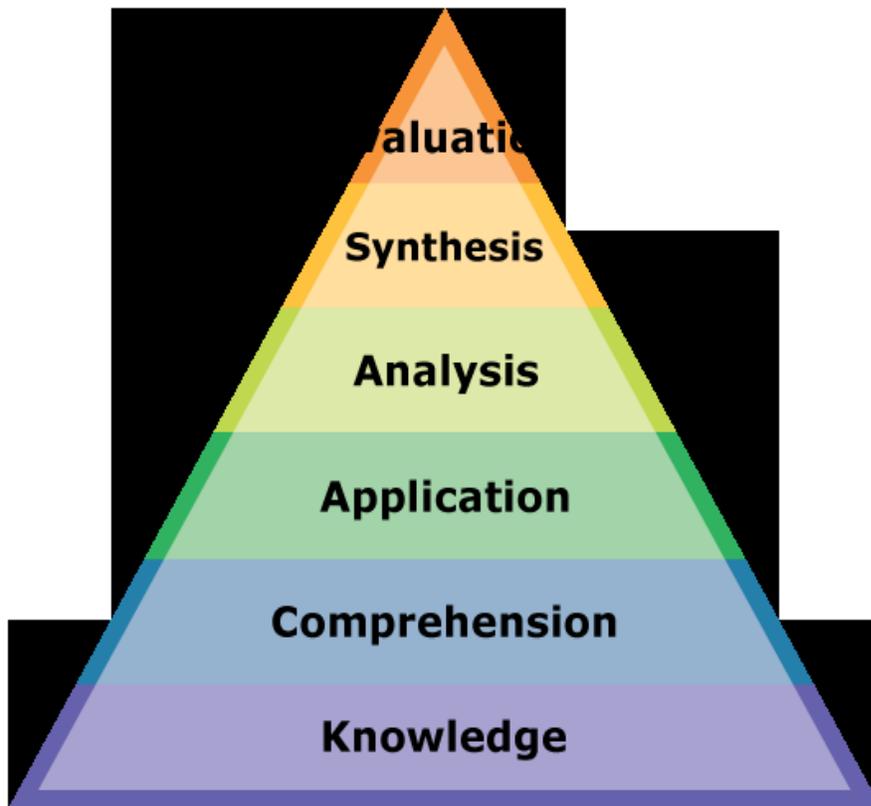
Teaching and Learning Activities

What the teacher does and what the students do are aimed at achieving the outcomes by meeting the assessment criteria. This takes advantage of the known tendency of students to learn what they think will be assessed - and is called backwash (Biggs 2003:140).

Aim 1: Outline what constructive alignment is and the placement of assessment within a constructively aligned curriculum

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

What do you want students to be able to do by the end of the course?



Appraise, ascertain, argue, assess, attach, choose, compare, conclude, contrast, convince, criticise, decide, defend, discriminate, explain, evaluate, grade, interpret, judge, justify, measure, predict, rate, recommend, relate, resolve, revise, score, summarise, support, validate, value.

Argue, arrange, assemble, categorise, collect, combine, compile, compose, construct, create, design, develop, devise, establish, explain, formulate, generalise, generate, integrate, invent, make, manage, modify, organise, originate, plan, prepare, propose, rearrange, reconstruct, relate, reorganise, revise, rewrite, set up, summarise.

Analyse, appraise, arrange, break down, calculate, categorise, classify, compare, connect, contrast, criticise, debate, deduce, determine, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, divide, examine, experiment, identify, illustrate, infer, inspect, investigate, order, outline, point out, question, relate, separate, sub-divide, test.

Apply, assess, calculate, change, choose, complete, compute, construct, demonstrate, develop, discover, dramatize, employ, examine, experiment, find, illustrate, interpret, manipulate, modify, operate, organise, practice, predict, prepare, produce, relate, schedule, select, show, sketch, solve, transfer, use.

Associate, change, clarify, classify, contrast, convert, decode, describe, differentiate, discriminate, discuss, distinguish, estimate, explain, express, extend, generalise, identify, illustrate, indicate, infer, interpret, locate, paraphrase, predict, recognise, report, restate, rewrite, review, select, solve.

Arrange, collect, define, describe, duplicate, enumerate, examine, find, identify, label, list, memorise, name, order, outline, present, quote, recall, recognise, recollect, record, recount, relate, repeat, reproduce, show, state, tabulate, tell.

Our Project

Aim 2: Reflect on the International Education Institute's journey towards constructive alignment and development of externally benchmarked assessment criteria

Goal 1: to apply the principles of constructive alignment to redesigning the curricula of our foundation programmes

Goal 2: to develop assessments and assessment documentation that were reflective of the ILOs which were benchmarked to relevant external reference documents

Our Project

Context: 6 programmes, 12 modules, 14 people

Time Commitment: 2 academic years

Outcomes:

- Student facing documentation explicitly linking ILOs and assessment
- Test Specifications
- Task Sheets devolved from the Test Specifications
- Assessment Criteria

The 'Final' Product 1: ILOs and Assessment Types

Intended Module Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Deliver prepared well-structured presentations, with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail (CEFR B2);
2. Give clear descriptions, express viewpoints and develop arguments, without much conspicuous searching for words, using some complex sentence forms (CEFR B2);
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the body of knowledge, and a range of facts, theories and ideas that constitutes a chosen field (SCQF 6);
4. Obtain, organise and use factual, theoretical and/or hypothetical information in problem solving, making predictions, hypothesising, and drawing conclusions (SCQF 6).

Summative Assessments

Assessment Type	Assessment Details	Weighting	When	Outcomes Assessed
Group Presentation	Coursework	25%	Week	1, 2, 3, 4
Podcast	Coursework	25%	Week	2, 4
Group Film	Coursework	50%	Week	2, 3, 4

The 'Final' Product 2: Assessment Specifications

Overview

- Type of Assessment:
- ILOs to be Assessed:
- Description of Task:

Prompt attributes

- Topic/Field
- Question Types: rhetorical functions and cognitive skills (e.g. describing/explaining/arguing/comparing and contrasting/evaluating etc.)
- Parameters (timings for spoken work/word limits for written work)
- Use of Sources (what will be provided by the teachers in the reading list? How much additional research/inclusion of further sources are we expecting?)

Response Attributes

- Description of the type of response students are expected to perform (what are we looking for?)
- Example of strong student response (general description of attached sample)
- Format – details of the formatting expected
- Criteria on which they will be assessed (a copy of the marking criteria should also be attached to this document)

Practical Considerations

- Input/Scaffolding (class hours)
- Draft schedule for input (scheme of work)
- Penalties

What does this assessment test?	<i>(please insert the relevant ILOs here)</i>
How will I be assessed?	<i>(Please direct students to the appendices of this document where they will find the marking criteria)</i>
What % of my mark for this module is this assessment worth?	<i>(please provide the percentage weighting of this assessment)</i>
Is there a specific question I must answer?	<i>(please provide the question you want students to address here. If students must form their own questions/remit, please state this here)</i>
What do I have to do?	<i>(please write a short description of the assessment here)</i>
Who will I work with?	<i>(please state whether this is individual, pair or group work)</i>
What are the specific requirements for this task?	<p><i>(Please write this section in measurable bullet points).</i></p> <p><i>e.g.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Answer the question directly/Have a clearly stated research question</i> • <i>Write no more than 1000 words, and no less than 800</i> • <i>Identify problems and potential solutions. Say which solution you think is best and why</i> • <i>Include between a minimum of 3 peer viewed English language sources</i>
What format should I present my work in?	<p><i>(Please include the following):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Font size</i> • <i>Line spacing</i> • <i>Headings and page numbers</i> • <i>Cover page</i> • <i>Referencing style</i>
Where can I find an example of what I must do?	<i>(please include information about when students will be shown examples of previous foundation students' work/where they can access this. NB permission from the student(s) whose work you want to show must be sought in writing before you can use it).</i>
What deadlines must I meet?	<i>(please include information about all relevant deadlines associated with this assessment).</i>

The 'Final' Product 3: Assessment Task Sheets for Students

The 'Final' Product 4: Assessment Criteria

Semester 1 – Essay Criteria

Weight	Criterion	Distinction: 20 – 17 CEFR = High C1	High Merit: 16 – 14 CEFR = Low C1	Low Merit: 13 – 11 CEFR = High B2	Pass: 10 – 7 CEFR = Low B2	Fail: 6 – 0 CEFR = High B1
Content 50%	Task Achievement SCQF – p. 8; 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All task requirements adequately addressed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All task requirements addressed although some more fully than others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most task requirements addressed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some task requirements are addressed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A limited understanding of the task requirements is demonstrated.
	Use of Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citation is accurate with occasional formatting slips. The student's ideas and opinions are effectively positioned in relation to those in the sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citation is accurate with occasional errors. The student's ideas and opinions often effectively positioned in relation to those in the sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citations contain consistent minor errors. The student's ideas and opinions are sometimes effectively positioned in relation to those in the sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citations contain a number of different major errors and/or omissions. The student's opinions and ideas are indistinguishable from the source material. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Material from sources is not acknowledged in line with Good Academic Practice.
	Structure CEFR – p. 142 IELTS Published Criteria Band 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produces well-organised, coherent text, using a variety of organisational patterns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organises text in logical paragraphs and progression of ideas is evident throughout. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organises text in logical paragraphs, but there may be some breaks in progression of ideas between sections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organises text in logical paragraphs although internal logic varies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organises text in paragraphs, but these often lack a central theme or internal logic.
Language Skills 50%	Language CEFR – p. 132 & 134; CEFR p. 131 & 133 IELTS Published Criteria Band 7; CEFR – p. 142 IELTS Published Criteria Band 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently uses a broad range of cohesive devices appropriately. Demonstrates command of a broad lexical repertoire including subject specific vocabulary. Inappropriacies are difficult to detect. Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical control across a broad range of structures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses a range of cohesive devices appropriately, but with occasional slips. Appropriately uses a range of subject specific vocabulary, with occasional minor inappropriacies. Demonstrates grammatical control across a broad range of structures with occasional slips. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses a range of cohesive devices, but still with some noticeable inappropriacy. Uses common subject specific vocabulary though some lexical gaps surface. Some inappropriacies evident but do not hinder communication. Range is broad enough to produce some error free sentences, however, systematic errors are evident. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses simple cohesive devices, but there may be some noticeable errors. Uses common subject specific vocabulary, but noticeable repetition occurs due to a lack of range. Inappropriacies evident but rarely hinder communication. Has a command of simple language structures but repetition occurs due to a lack of <u>range</u>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses a limited number of cohesive devices with noticeable errors. Uses vocabulary related to concrete topics but lacks vocabulary for abstract concepts. Noticeable inappropriacies occur when expressing more complex thoughts. Has a command of simple language structures and basic grammatical forms. Errors are noticeable.

Stepping Stones for Change

1. Writing Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

- ★ a) Provide training for the teaching team on:
 - i. The Scottish Qualification Framework (SCQF) levels and descriptors
 - ii. The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) levels and descriptors
 - iii. What outcomes based curricula are
 - iv. How to write ILOs (training to include the following):
 - Cognitive skills
 - Biggs' SOLO Taxonomy
 - Bloom's Taxonomy (and revised taxonomy)
 - Making ILOs clear and measurable
- ★ b) Research target situations (i.e. first year modules that IFP students feed into) to gather information that will feed into a review of our outcomes, assessments, syllabus design and learning activities.
 - i. Write up research and produce a report containing recommendations
- ★ c) Rewrite programme intended learning outcomes (ILOs) so that they are aligned with appropriate Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and Scottish Qualification Framework (SCQF) level descriptors.

Aim 3: Discuss the relationship between innovation and change, and explore the reasons why implementing change can be so challenging

Stepping Stones for Change

1. **Aligning Assessment with ILOs**
 - a) Research the amount and type of assessment carried out across and within IFP programmes
 - b) Present findings to the team in order to begin to reflect on and discuss:
 - i. the similarities and differences in practice across similar assessment types
 - ii. the number of assessments happening within each programme
 - c) Create an assessment working group tasked with:
 - i. Reviewing ILOs across programmes in order to determine what elements need to be included within criteria documents
 - ii. Drafting criterion referenced criteria for assessment within foundation programmes benchmarked to the CEFR and the SCQF. Criteria needed:
 - Integrated skills exam criteria
 - Essay assessment criteria
 - Presentation assessment criteria
 - Seminar assessment criteria
 - Film assessment criteria
 - iii. Drawing up test specifications for each common assessment run on foundation programmes. To do this the group must:
 - Draw up a test specification template
 - Send draft template out for comment to teaching staff
 - Review new ILOs and draw up test specifications aligned with these ILOs for:
 - Integrated skills exam
 - Essay assessments
 - Presentation assessments
 - Seminar assessments
 - Film assessments
 - Send draft specifications out for comment and subsequently redraft.
 - Draw up a student task sheet template to be used across the programmes
 - Send draft template out for comment to teaching staff
 - d) Arrange for the new criteria to be piloted
 - e) Incorporate feedback from piloters into the criteria
 - f) Carry out training for all markers using the new criteria
 - g) Carry out action research to review the reliability of the marking tool and the markers

Stepping Stones for Change

2. Embedding our new approaches



- a) Ensure that for each module a written record of the following exists:
 - i. ILOs (with reference to CEFR and SSQF)
 - ii. Assessment information stating when assessments will take place, their weighting, and which ILOs they are assessing
 - iii. Assessment specifications
 - iv. Assessment task sheets that clearly communicate task expectations to students
 - v. A syllabus
 - vi. A scheme of work for the semester including teaching objectives
 - vii. Suggested materials for each lesson and the location these materials can be found
 - viii. Information for students about the teaching approaches used on their course of study

The Challenge of Achieving Change

1. You've got to respect the commitment - time, resources, effort
2. Working through others and with others takes time and consideration
3. It can be difficult to get all to 'buy in' and understanding the reasons why you're carrying out the project in the first place
4. It can be pressurised and 'emotional'!
5. The project will never really 'end'

Change Strategies - Comments about the project

1. Senior administrative support
2. Collaborative leadership
3. Robust design, realistic and flexible vision for the future
4. Staff development
5. Visible actions that are impactful and which build momentum

(Kezar and Eckel, 2002)

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