This glossary contains terms and names that you may encounter during the UEP. Most entries are defined based on their use in the UEP. All definitions from Sweeny, 1994 unless otherwise cited.

A

Administrative Outcomes
Operational and specific statements derived from a unit's core functions that describe the desired quality of key services within an administrative unit and define exactly what the services should promote (modified from Selim et al., 2005, p. 19).

Aggregated Scores
The combined scores for a population of students, often expressed as an average. Aggregating scores requires that all the scores be based on the same or equivalent assessments administered in uniform ways.

Alignment
The process of assuring that learning outcomes, local curriculum and instruction and the system of assessment all support and match each other.

Analytic Scoring
The use of specific criteria or features to evaluate and assign points to each essential part of a product or performance. Analytic scoring is diagnostic, allowing planning for specific remediation. (See Holistic Scoring for the alternative approach.)

Annotated Rubric
The notes from an assessment development group, often after a field test and initial scoring, which explain the meaning of criteria or distinctions between the criteria on a rubric.

Annotation is an important tool to increase scoring reliability and to train others to score consistently.

Anchors
Actual samples of student work, which illustrate the essential characteristics of work typical for each scoring level on a scoring rubric. Anchors can also be captured on video or audio tapes of performances or may be video or photographic images of a larger product. The top anchor is often called an "exemplar" as it represents exemplary work.

Assessment
A systematic and ongoing process of gathering and interpreting information to discover if programs/services are meeting intended outcomes/objectives and then using the information to enhance the programs/services (adapted from Virginia Commonwealth University, 2002 & Marchese, 1987).

Authentic
A characteristic of assessments that have a high degree of similarity to tasks performed in the real world. The more authentic the assessment, the less inference required to predict student success after graduation.

B

Benchmark
A standard by which something can be measured or judged (Lexico Publishing Group, n. d.).

C

Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
The regional accrediting body of higher education institutions in the

Southern States (AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, TX and VA).

Complex-Generated Response
An assessment that asks a student to perform or produce in order to demonstrate knowledge and skills. Such assessments will not have one right answer, but instead will result in student work, which is across a range of quality. The assessment requires that the student engage in a task of multiple parts or steps. Scoring of the assessment involves teacher judgment based on stated criteria for performance. See Performance-Based Assessment.

Comprehensive
All dimensions of a learning goal with regard to scope, content, specificity, skills, and types of thinking required are addressed.

Consultative
Conducted in a manner that solicits input from various groups, but does not require actual participation in decision-making.

Core Functions
The major responsibilities of the unit stated in a few succinct statements (also know as Primary Functions).

Competency
See Student Competency

Core Requirement
With regard to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, a basic qualification that an institution must meet to be accredited with the Commission on Colleges.

Course Mapping
See Curriculum Mapping

Complex-Generated – Direct Assessment

Course-Level Assessment
Assessment to determine the extent to which a specific course is achieving its learning goals. (For comparison, see Program Assessment and Institutional Assessment.)

Criterion-Referenced Test
A measurement of achievement of specific criteria stated as levels of mastery. The focus is performance of an individual as measured against a standard or criteria rather than against performance of others who take the same test. See Standardized, Norm-referenced Tests.

Curriculum Mapping
A matrix showing the coverage of each program learning outcome in each course. It may also indicate the level of emphasis of each outcome in each course (from Bridgewater State College, n. d. as Course Mapping).

Cut Score
The number of points needed which represents the criteria for successful completion of an assessment task, such as eight out of 10, or the percent that must be attained to be determined as successful in performing an assessment task (e.g., 80%). Cut score also refers to the critical point for dividing scores into two groups in reference to some criterion. It is possible to set multiple cut scores from differing criterion (e.g., meets, does not meet and exceeds).

D

Direct Assessment
Method of gauging student achievement of learning outcomes through evaluation of student work

products (Bridgewater State College, n. d.). For comparison, see Indirect Assessment.

Direct Measure of Learning Outcome
Students demonstrate an expected learning outcome (California Polytechnic State University, n. d.).

Disaggregated Group
Any group of students within a population from which a group score is computed as a group separate from the total assessed population.

Documentation
Written descriptions, reports or summaries of the steps taken and the rationale for those actions.

E

Exemplar
Actual samples of student work that illustrate the essential characteristics of work typical of exemplary student work at the top scoring level on a scoring rubric. Several exemplars are desirable to promote creativity so that students see multiple products/performances are possible.

Embedded Assessment Methods
A method in which evidence of student learning outcomes for the program is obtained from assignments in particular courses in the curriculum (Bridgewater State College, n. d.).

Expectation
An estimate of the percent of students who will meet the defined standard for a learning outcome.

Direct Measure - Generalizable

F

Feasibility/Reasonableness
A characteristic of scoring criteria ensuring that the judging of student work is appropriate for the conditions within which the task was completed.

Formative Assessment
The assessment of student achievement at different stages of a course or at different stages of a student's academic career. The focus of formative assessment is on the documentation of student development over time. It can also be used to engage students in a process of reflection on their education (modified from Bridgewater State College, n. d. & California Polytechnic State University, n. d.). For comparison, see Summative Assessment.

Forced-Choice Assessment
Testing where responses to an item, questions or prompts are placed against a set answer key. Scoring does not require judgment on the part of the scorer because there is one right answer to the item. Multiple choice, true/false, cloze, and matching are examples of forced choice/short answer assessments.

G

Generalizable
The results of an assessment are generalizable when the score on one assessment can accurately predict a student score on a different assessment covering the same knowledge or skill. Generalizability across time is promoted by ensuring that assessments focus on general level concepts or strategies, not on

facts, topics, or skills, which are found only at one level or in one class.

Goals
The general aims or purposes of a program and its curriculum. Effective goals are broadly stated, meaningful, achievable and assessable. Goals provide a framework for determining the more specific educational objectives of a program, and should be consistent with program and institutional mission.

H

Holistic Scoring
Scoring based upon an overall impression (as opposed to traditional test scoring, which totals specific errors and subtracts points based on them). In holistic scoring, the rater matches his or her overall impression to the point scale to see how the portfolio, product or performance should be scored. Raters usually are directed to pay attention to particular aspects of a performance in assigning the overall score.

I

Indicator
A statistic that reveals information about the performance of a program or a student. For a statistic to be an educational indicator there must be a standard against which it can be judged. Educational indicators must meet certain substantive and technical standards that define the kind of information they should provide and the features they should measure. The primary educational indicator is student performance; other secondary indicators include attendance, graduation, mobility, and dropout rates.

Indirect assessment
Assessment that deduces student achievement of learning outcomes through students' reported perception of their own learning. May also be the opinions or thoughts of others about student knowledge, skills, attitudes, learning experiences, and perceptions. Examples of indirect measures include student surveys about instruction; focus groups; alumni surveys; employer surveys (modified from Community College of Aurora, n. d., California Polytechnic State University, n. d., & Bridgewater State College, n. d.0). For comparison, see Direct Assessment.

Indirect Measure of Learning Outcome
Students or others report their perception of how well a given learning outcome has been achieved (California Polytechnic State University, n. d.).

Institutional Assessment
Assessment to determine the extent to which a college or university is achieving its mission. (For comparison, see Course-level Assessment and Program Assessment.)

Institutional Effectiveness – A continuous set of the processes of planning, assessment and review aimed at ongoing improvement (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 2004).

Item
An individual question or exercise in a test.

J

K

L

M

Map
A chart that summarizes the major elements of a system and shows the relationships between the parts of a system.

Measurement
The process of gathering information, in assessment of student learning, about student characteristics. Educators use a wide variety of methods such as paper and pencil tests, performance assessments, direct observation, and personal communications with students. See Evaluation.

Methods of Assessment
Tests and procedures used to measure student performance in meeting the standards for a learning outcome. These assessments must relate to a learning outcome, identify a particular kind of evidence to be evaluated, define exercises that elicit that evidence and describe systematic scoring procedures. Methods of assessment are classified as either forced choice/short answer or complex generated (performance-based) response.

Mission Statement
Define the purpose or broader goal for being in existence (Wikipedia, n. d.).

N

Non-discrimination
Evidence that differences of race or ethnicity, gender, or disability do not bias results of assessment instruments or procedures.

Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE)
Standard scores with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of approximately 21. The use of a NCE is an attempt to make different assessments comparable.

O

Objective
Precise statement that specifies the performance or behavior a student is to demonstrate relative to a knowledge or skill. Objectives typically relate to lessons or units, not "big ideas" such as described by an outcome.

Observer Effect
The degree to which, the presence of an observer influences the outcome (California Polytechnic State University, n. d.).

Outcome
An end result; a consequence (Lexico Publishing Group, n. d.). See Administrative Outcome and/or Student Learning Outcome.

Overall Performance Level
A combination of the cut-scores or proficiency levels of the various assessments used to determine whether students do not meet, meet, or exceed the standard set for a whole learning outcome. Different assessments may be given greater weight when determining an overall performance level. See Weighting.

P

Performance-Based Assessments
A methodology requiring reasoning about recurring issues, problems and concepts that apply in both academic and practical situations. Students

actively engage in generating complex responses requiring integration of knowledge and strategies, not just use of isolated facts and skills. See Complex Generated Response.

Pilot
A large-scale administration of an assessment, usually with several classes of students if not all students in a program. The purpose of the pilot is to detect any flaws in the assessment before the assessment is considered "done" and is fully implemented. See Field Test for contrast.

Portfolio
A purposeful collection of artifacts that demonstrate a student's development or achievement. Using portfolios as an improvement assessment tool requires the ability to score both individual works and the whole portfolio against a standard for each modified form (Sweeny, 1994 & Bridgewater State College, n. d.).

Primary Functions
See Core Functions.

Proficiency Level
The equivalent of a cut score (on a forced-choice assessment) but for a performance/complex assessment. The proficiency level for a performance assessment is set by determining the required performance criteria (such as the required level on a rubric) for a specific grade level. Such a proficiency level could be achievement of all the criteria required for a scoring level, or it could be a set number of points achieved by combining scores for each feature on the rubric.

Program Assessment
Assessment to determine the extent to which students in a departmental program can demonstrate the learning outcomes for the program. For comparison, see Course-level Assessment and Institutional Assessment.

Program Review
The process of evaluating the quality and effectiveness of a program (University of Texas at Arlington, 1998).

Prompt
In a narrow sense, a prompt is a statement to which a student responds in an assessment, often a reading passage, picture, chart or other form of information. In the fullest sense, a prompt is the directions that ask the student to undertake a task. Prompts should include the context of the situation, the problem to be solved, the role the student takes, and the audience for the product or performance.

Q

R

Rationale
Written statements providing the reasons for steps taken and choices made.

Raw Score
The number of items that are answered correctly out of the total possible.

Reliability
Consistency or stability of assessment results. Of particular importance for performance assessment is inter-rater reliability. It

is the estimate of the consistency of the ratings assigned by two or more raters because they agree on the criteria used to evaluate the performance.

Representativeness
A factor of performance tasks and of scoring criteria ensuring that the task and criteria focus on the significant elements, concepts and strategies in the outcome(s) assessed.

Rubric
A set of criteria specifying the characteristics of a learning outcome and the levels of achievement in each characteristic (Bridgewater State College, n. d.).

S

Score
The result obtained by a student on an assessment, expressed as a number. Each score is recorded as a positive number, with a larger numerical value implying a better result.

Scoring Rubric
A set of related scoring scales used for judging student work and awarding points to reflect the evaluation of the work.

Scoring Scale
Assessment criteria formatted as levels of quality ranging from poorest to best, used to judge student work on a single feature such as "clarity of main idea." Scales may combine several traits within a feature. Scoring levels on the scale are assigned points, each level specifying the characteristics of the quality of content or skills needed to attain the points.

Self-Assessment
Students reflect about their own abilities and performance, related to specified content and skills and related to their effectiveness as learners, using specific performance criteria, assessment standards, and personal goal setting. The intent is to teach students to monitor their own learning continuously.

Self-Efficacy
Students' judgment of their own capabilities for a specific learning outcome (Bridgewater State College, n. d.).

Standard for a Learning Outcome
The qualitative and quantitative assessment criteria by which it is decided if students have attained a specified level of performance related to an outcome. The parts of a standard include: a) the learning outcome, (b) the assessment tasks which will measure student learning relative to the learning outcome, (c) the cut-score or proficiency level required to "pass" the assessment and (d) the overall level of performance needed to combine assessments and indicate whether a student has mastered the whole outcome.

Standardized, Norm-Referenced Test
A form of assessment in which a student is compared to other students. Results have been normed against a specific population (usual nationally). Standardization (uniformity) is obtained by administering the test to a given population under controlled conditions and then calculating means, standard deviations, standardized scores, and percentiles. Equivalent scores are then produced for comparisons of an

individual score to the norm group's performance.

Standard Score
A score that is expressed as a deviation from a population mean.

Strategic Planning – The process of developing strategies to reach a defined objective (Wikipedia, n. d.).

Student Competency
Statement of broad knowledge, skills, attitudes, or behaviors that program majors should be able to demonstrate upon completion of the degree program.

Student Learning Outcomes
Operational statements of demonstrable knowledge or skill that students will possess upon completion of a program or course. For UEP purposes, these statements may be the student program competencies or more specific statements derived from the student program competencies.

Sufficiency
A judgment on whether an assessment task is comprehensive enough to produce a sample of student work broad enough in depth relative to a body of knowledge or skill to be considered an adequate measure of whether the student has attained the knowledge or achieved the skill. For forced choice assessments, the number of items used to decide this is the crucial issue for sufficiency.

Summative Assessment
The assessment of student achievement at the end-point of their education or at the end of a course. The focus of summative assessment is on the documentation of student achievement by the end of a course or program. It does not reveal the pathway of development to achieve that endpoint, but rather provides an evaluative summary (Bridgewater State College, n. d.). For comparison, see Formative Assessment.

T

Task
A goal-directed assessment activity or project, which prescribes that the student use their background knowledge and skill in a somewhat long-term process to solve complex problems or answer a multi-faceted question.

Triangulation
Involves the collection of data via multiple methods in order to determine if the results show a consistent outcome (California Polytechnic State University, n. d.).

U

Utility
A characteristic of scoring criteria that ensures the criteria are diagnostic and can communicate information about performance quality with clear implications for improvement.

V

Validity
The degree to which an assessment measures (a) what is intended, as opposed to (b) what is not intended, or (c) what is unsystematic or unstable, thus producing accurate, meaningful, and useful measures of the skills and knowledge it was designed to assess. The primary issue

is content validity, which is whether an assessment and instructional program align (match) (Bridgewater State College, n. d. & Sweeny, 1994).

Validation
The process of developing, field testing, refining, piloting and refining assessment items, tasks, scoring tools, directions, etc. to increase validity, reliability, fairness and instructional usefulness.

W

Weighting
A method to combine the results of two or more assessments used in calculating the percent who meet the standard for a learning outcome. If some assessments are deemed more important due to the amount of time for completion or the number of items included in the assessment, etc. the cut-scores on those assessments may be given greater consideration or weight in determining the overall performance level.

X

Y

Z

References

Bridgewater State College (n. d.). *Assessment Guidebook Glossary of Terms*. Retrieved from http://www.bridgew.edu/AssessmentGuidebook/glossary.cfm.

California Polytechnic State University (n. d.). *Assessment Glossary* [Electronic Version]. Retrieved March 15, 2006 from http://www.academicprograms.calpoly.edu/assessment/assessplanguide.htm

Community College of Aurora (n. d.). *Direct vs. Indirect Assessment Measures.* Retrieved March 16, 2006 from http://www.ccaurora.edu/assessment/DirectVIndirect.htm.

Lexico Publishing Group (n. d.). *Dictionary.com* [Electronic Version]. RetrievedMarch 15, 2006 from http://dictionary.reference.com/.

Marchese, T. J. (1987) Third Down, Ten Years to Go. *American Association of Higher Education Bulletin*, 40, 3-8.

Selim, B. R., J. Pet-Armacost, A. Alber, and P. S. Krist (2005). *The Administrative Unit Assessment Handbook: Guidelines for Planning and Implementing.* Retrieved March 13, 2006 from http://iaaweb.ucf.edu/oeas/adm_assess_handbook.pdf.

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (2004). *Principles of Accreditation:Foundations for Quality Enhancement* (1st ed.). Decatur, GA.

Sweeny, B. (1994). *Glossary of Assessment Terms.* Retrieved March 15, 2006 from

http://www.teachermentors.com/RSOD%20Site/PerfAssmt/glossary.html.

University of Texas at Arlington (1998) *Academic Program Review Policy.* RetrievedMarch 13, 2006 from http://www.uta.edu/senate/documents/acad%20prog%20rev.html.

Virginia Commonwealth University (2002). *WEAVE A Quality Enhancement Guide for Academic Programs and Administrative and Educational Support Units.* Retrieved March 13, 2006 from http://www.vcu.edu/quality/pdfs/WEAVEManual2002.pdf.

Wikipedia (n. d.). *Wikipedia Online Encyclopedia* [Electronic Version]. Retrieved March 15, 2006 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page.