

# Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes: What's the Difference?

The Division of Student Life  
Assessment, Improvement,  
& Research



# Assessment, Improvement, & Research (AIR)



## AIR Mission

The mission of Student Life Assessment, Improvement, & Research (AIR) is to lead outcomes-based assessment in the co-curricular setting, support evidence-based decision-making, and promote a culture focused on the continuous improvement of programs and services.

# Learning Outcomes

As a result of this workshop, participants will be able to...

- Differentiate between goals, objectives, and outcomes
- Explain why identifying goals/outcomes is the first step in the assessment process
- Write measurable and specific learning outcomes

# ACPA/NASPA Professional Competency

## Assessment, Evaluation, and Research (AER)

Design program and learning outcomes that are appropriately clear, specific, and measurable, that are informed by theoretical frameworks and that align with organizational outcomes, goals, and values.

Explain to students and colleagues the relationship of AER processes to learning outcomes and goals.



# Assessment

“any effort to gather, analyze, and interpret evidence that describes institutional, departmental, divisional, or agency effectiveness (Upcraft & Schuh, 1996, p. 18).”

In practice, assessment is **making decisions** based on [systematically collected] **evidence** vs. instinct or tradition.

# Assessment Cycle



**What is the program/service trying  
to accomplish?**



# Identify Goals/Outcomes

- **Mission:** Statement of purpose
- **Goals:** Broad, general statements about what the program intends to accomplish
- **Objectives:** A specific result the instructor/staff member is trying to achieve within a timeframe
- **Outcomes:** Detailed, measurable statements that outline the end results of the program for the participant
- There should be a connection between the mission, goals, objectives and outcomes.

*What is the  
program/service  
trying to  
accomplish?*



# Outcomes versus Objectives

- **Objectives** are instructor focused
  - The workshop will increase participant understanding of the assessment cycle.
- **Outcomes** are learner focused
  - Students will be able to summarize the four steps of the assessment cycle



*What is the  
program/service  
trying to  
accomplish?*

# Metric

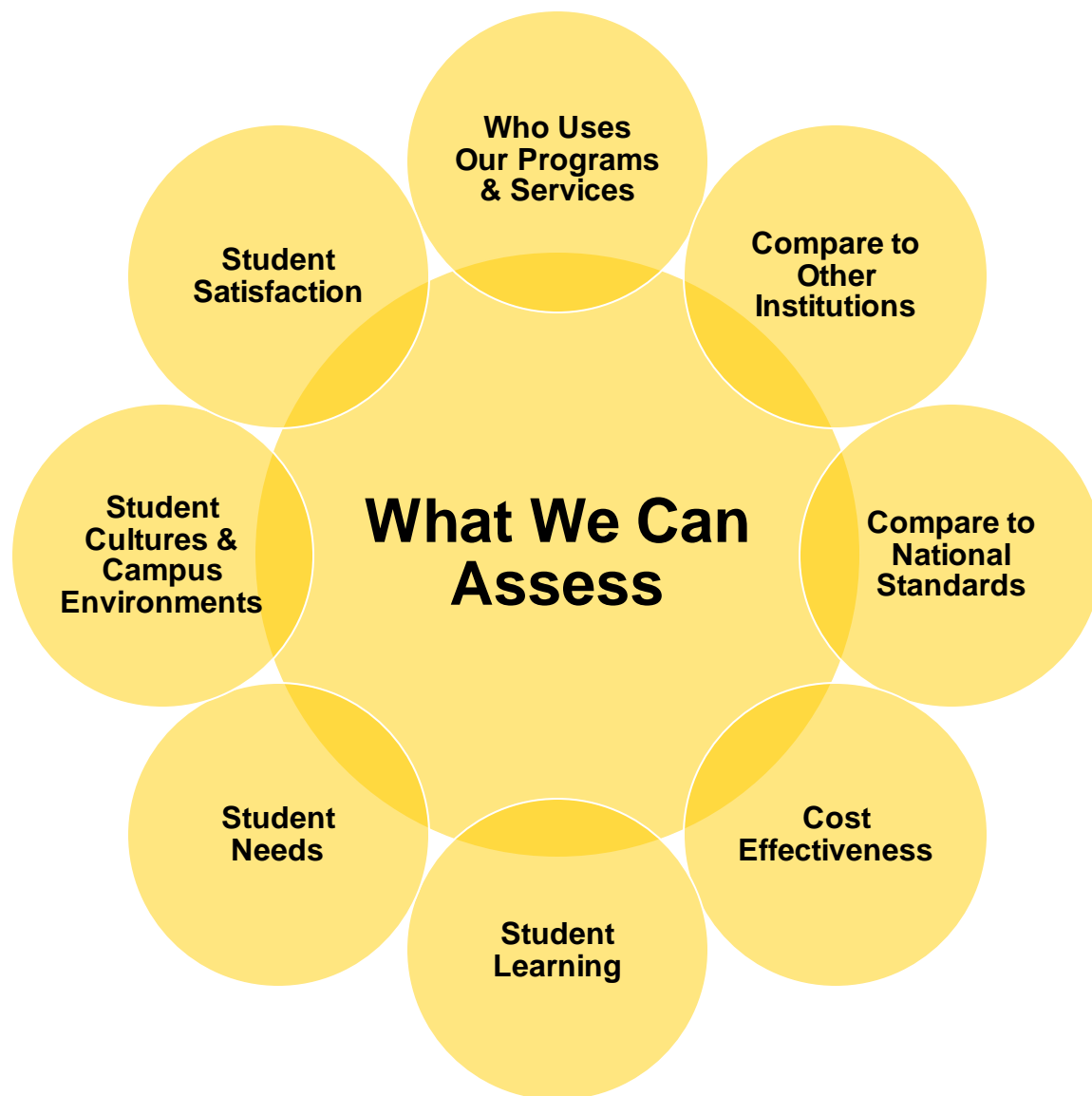
*“Standards of measurement by which efficiency, performance, progress, or quality of a plan, process, or product can be assessed.”* (Business Dictionary)

Example: 90% of students will be able to communicate effectively in a written format.



*What is the program/service trying to accomplish?*

# What can we assess?



# Outcomes-Based Assessment (Bresciani et al., 2004, p.10)

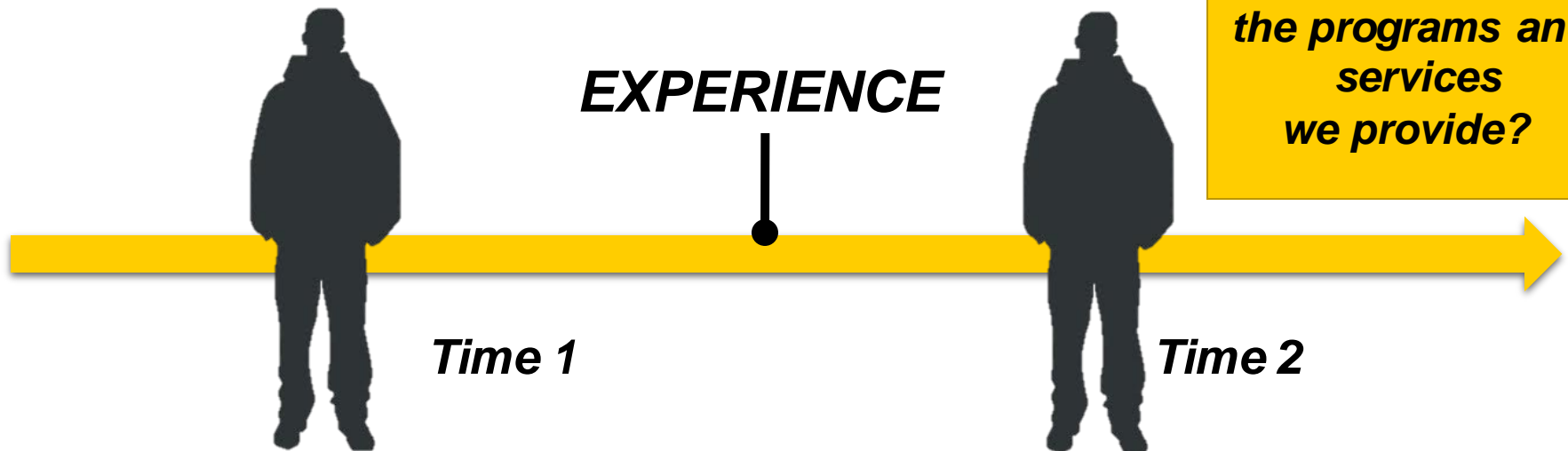
- What is my program/service supposed to accomplish?
- What do I want students to be able to do and/or know as a result of this program/service?
- How well are we doing it?
- How do we know?
- How do we use the information to improve or celebrate success?
- Do the improvements we make work?

# Student Learning Outcomes

Goals that describe “the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits of mind that students take with them from a learning experience”

(Suskie, 2009, p. 75)

*What  
should students  
be able to do as  
a result of  
the programs and  
services  
we provide?*



# What do we mean by *learning*?

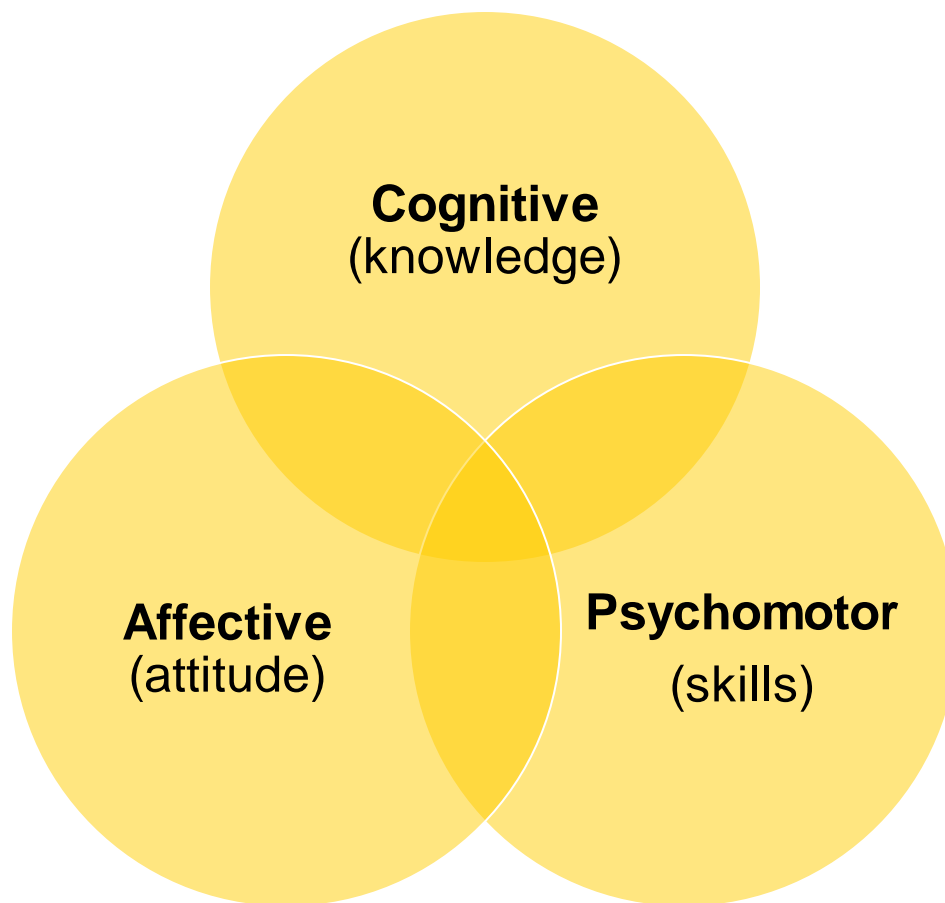
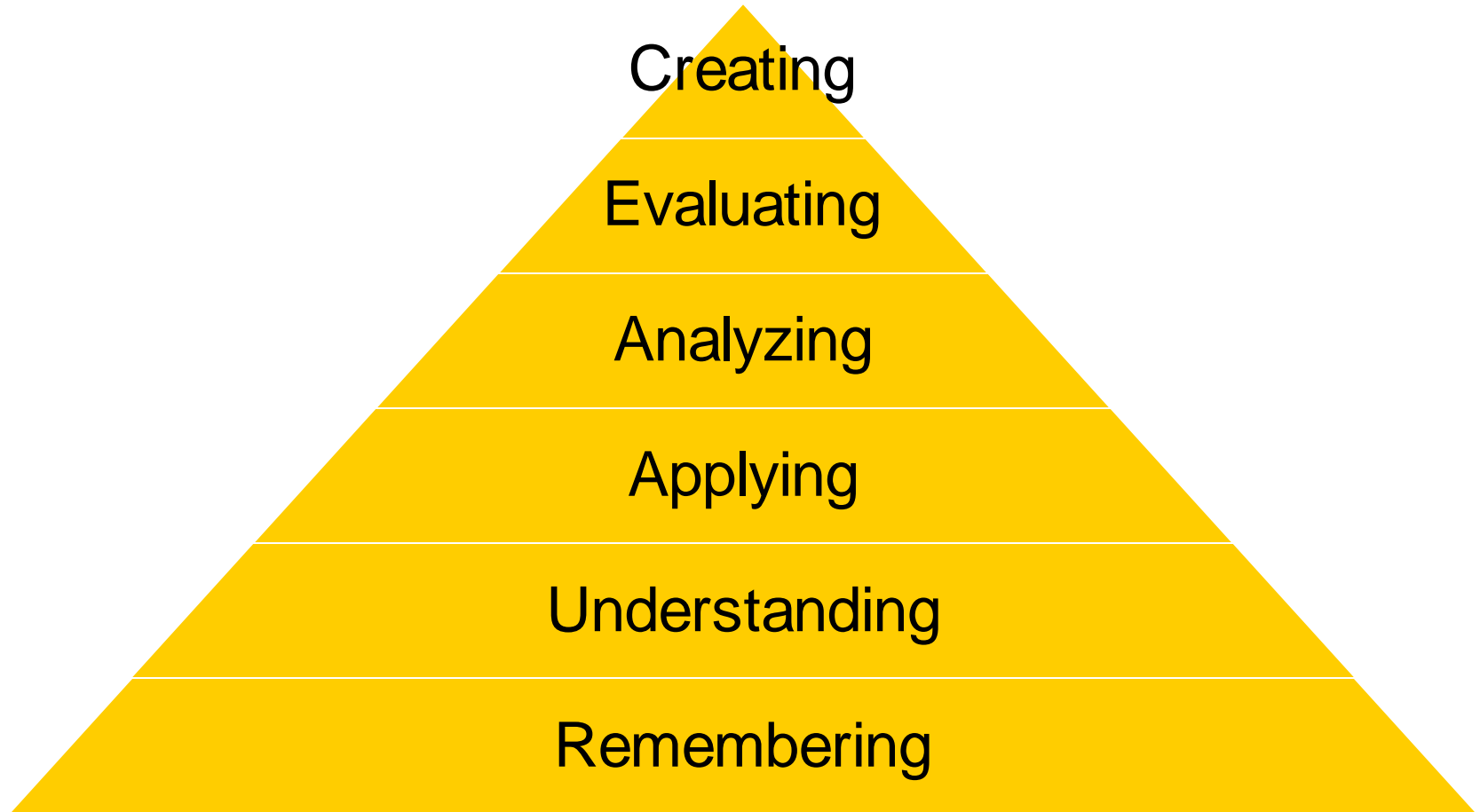
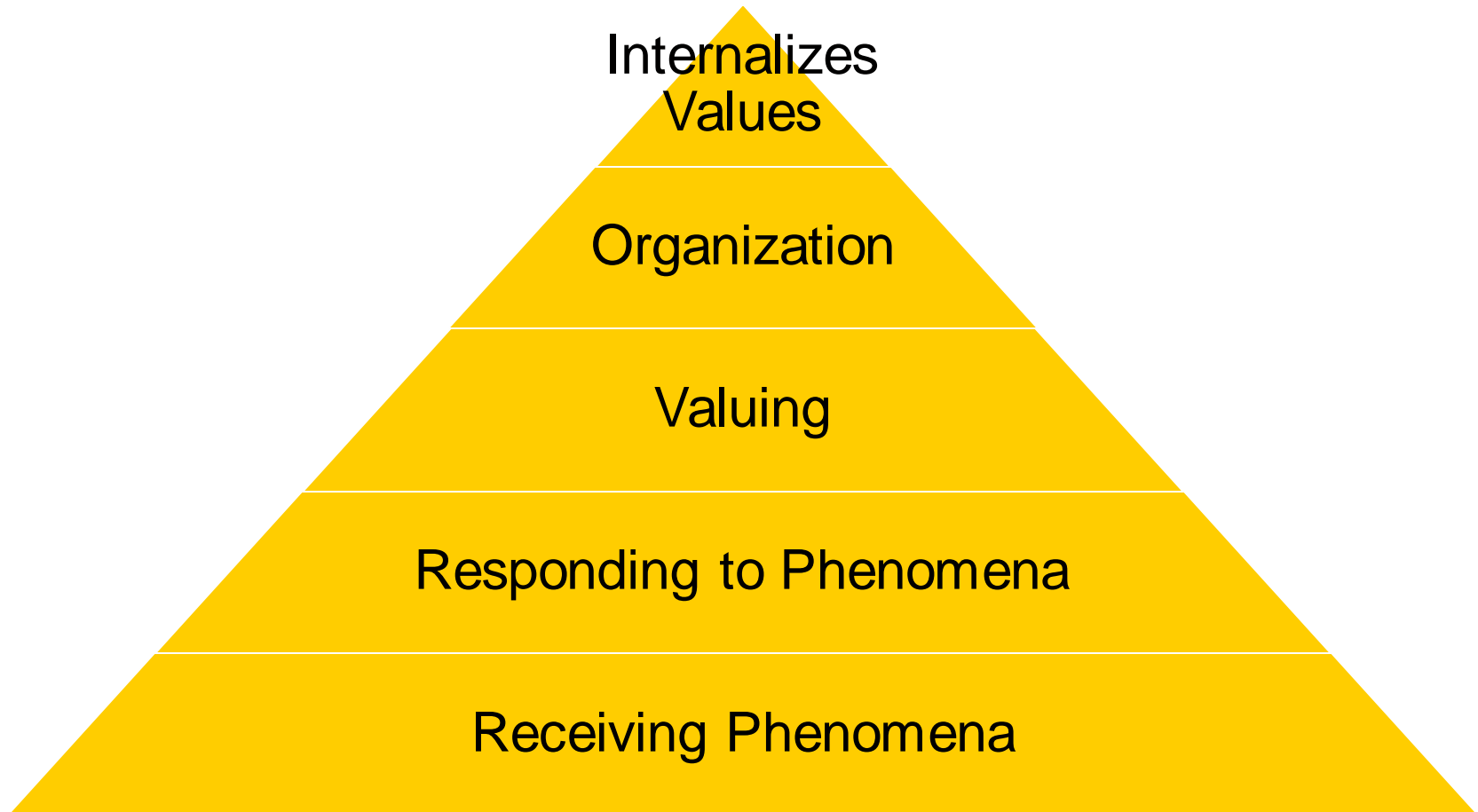


Table adapted from QA/QI guidance from the Stanford University Human Research Protection Program

# Bloom's Taxonomy - Cognitive

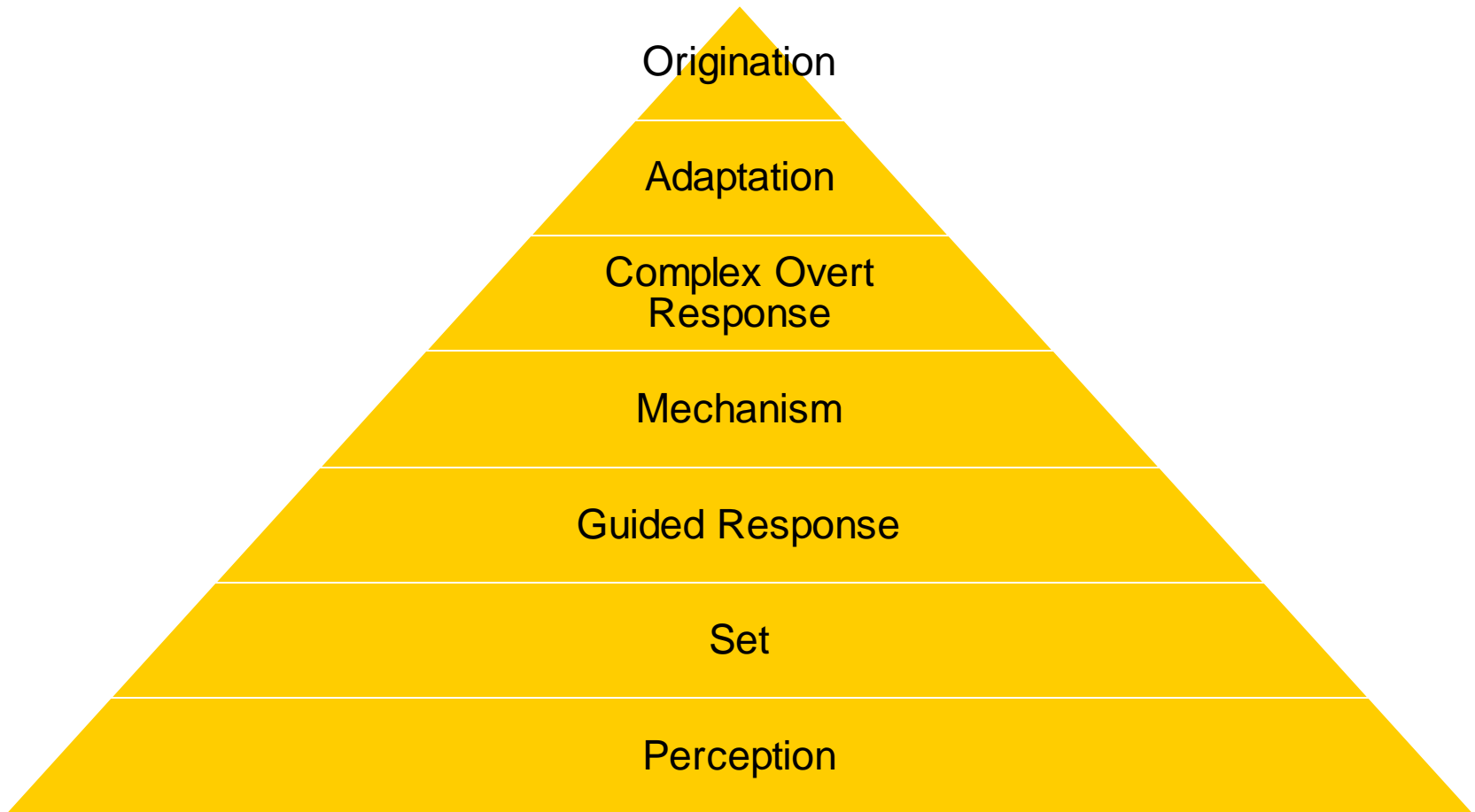


# Bloom's Taxonomy - Affective





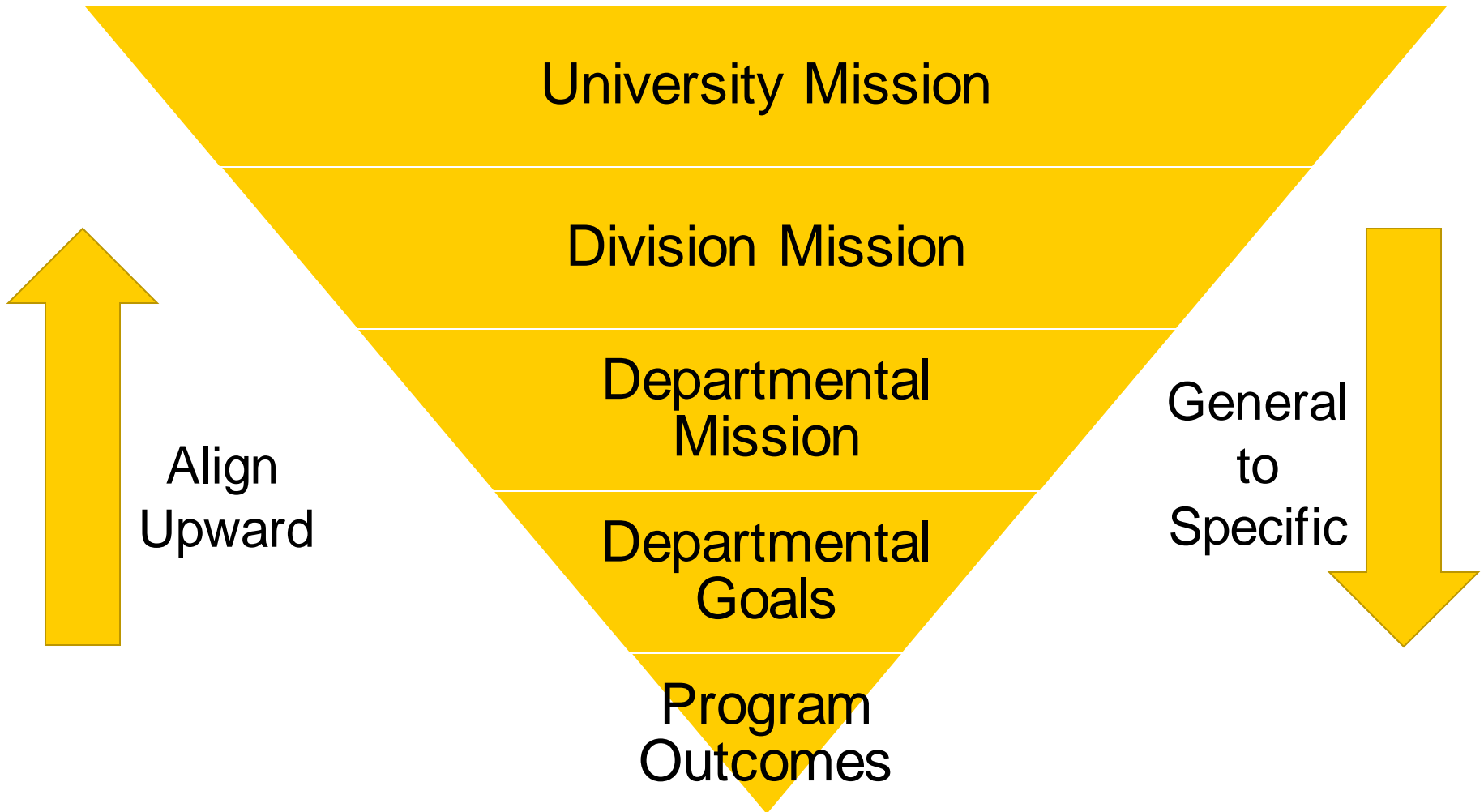
# Bloom's Taxonomy - Psychomotor



# Prioritizing SLOs

- Determine which SLOs are *nice* and which SLOs are *needed*
- Your program or service works *in connection* with others in the department – it does not need to do it all
- Aim for 3-5 SLOs per program or service

# Connecting outcomes to the Big Picture



# Connecting outcomes to the Big Picture

**“To educate students for success and fulfillment in a diverse world...”**

**“To support student success...through educationally purposeful activities”**

**“Student Engagement & Campus Programs provides diverse social and educational programs...”**

**“Students participating in Dance Marathon will be able to define philanthropy.”**

**Align  
Upward**

**General  
to  
Specific**

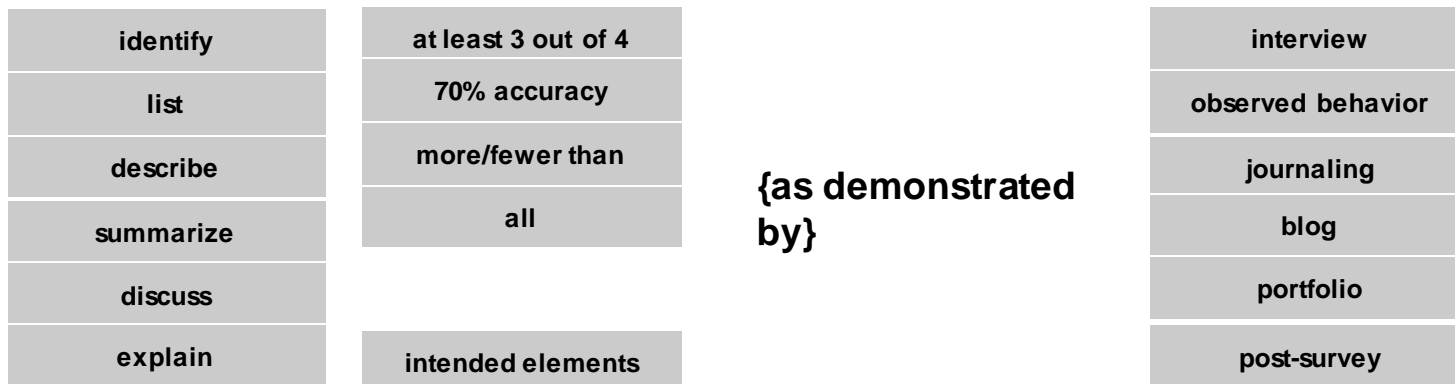
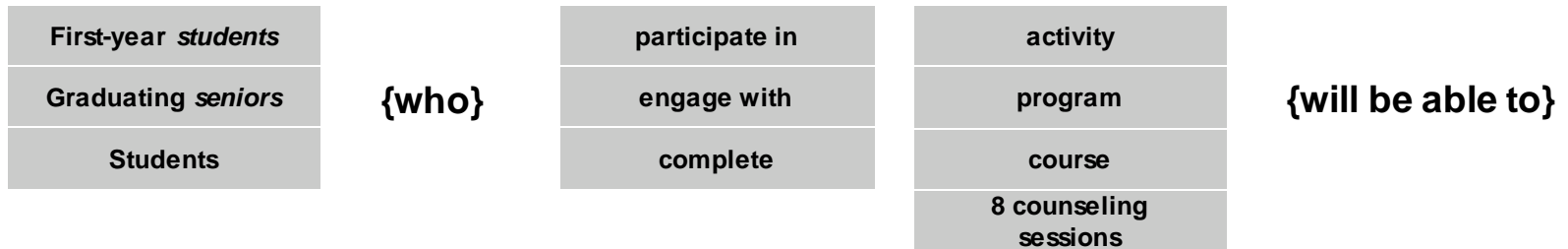
# Exercise

What are the mission, goals, objectives of your department/program/service?

# Format of SLOs

- SWiBAT: Students will be able to \_\_\_\_\_.
- Examples:
  - Students who work as intramural officials will be able to demonstrate appropriate conflict resolution skills in an emotional environment (Recreational Services)
  - Students who participate in an educational program will be able to identify two strategies for promoting health (Student Wellness)

# Format of SLOs



# Desired characteristics of SLOs

- Align with department, division, and institution goals
- Describe a behavior that is:
  - meaningful,
  - specific,
  - measurable, and
  - Attainable
- Describe a single behavior
- Describe knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits of mind (i.e., learning)



# Exercise

- Determine **three** outcomes that are essential - What really *has* to happen for you to know that program or service (training, etc.) did its job?
- How does this outcome **fit** within the mission and goals of your department, division, etc.?

# Criteria

- Example learning outcome: *Students will be able to demonstrate excellent oral communication when presenting their agendas to the student senate*
- Example criteria:
  - Speaks in a clear voice
  - Uses culturally appropriate eye contact
  - Is dressed appropriately
  - Maintains appropriate posture
  - Is well organized
  - Uses appropriate and meaningful visual aids

***Criteria help us know when a learning outcome has been met by describing what meeting that outcome entails or looks like.***

# Exercise

- What does meeting the outcome look like or entail?
- Using the outcome you created in the last exercise list **two** criteria for that outcome.

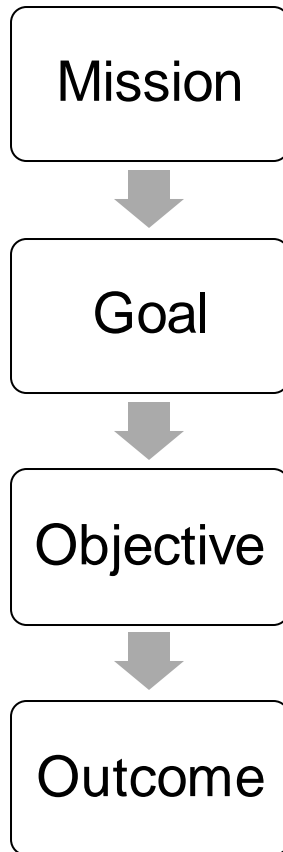
# Common “trip ups”

- Using “action words” that are hard to measure (appreciate, be aware of, understand)
- Multiple outcomes in one
- SLOs that aren’t really about learning

# Fix these SLOs with a group

- Students will be able to...
  - ...appreciate the benefits of exercise
  - ...understand exercise is a stress reduction tool
  - ... think of at least 3 benefits of exercise
- Students will be able to...
  - ...access resources at The University of Iowa
  - ...develop and apply effective problem-solving skills that would enable one to adequately navigate through the proper resources within the university
  - ...connect with their peers

# AIR Example



To lead outcomes-based assessment in the co-curricular setting, support evidence-based decision-making, and promote a culture focused on the continuous improvement of programs and services.



Make assessment as accessible as possible for student affairs practitioners.



The workshop will increase participant understanding of goals, objectives, and learning outcomes.



Write measurable and specific learning outcomes.

# For New Programs

- Begin with the end in mind: **What is your goal?**
- What should a student know or be able to do to respond to that goal? (**Outcomes**)
- Next, what content will support these outcomes? (**Content**)
- After that, what methods will effectively deliver this content? (**Methods**)
- Finally, how will we know if students have achieved the outcomes? (**Assessment**)

## 3:2:1 Activity

Take a moment to write down:

3 Things you learned

2 Questions you have

1 Takeaway



**Questions?**

# What's Next

## Assessment Development Series Workshop #3

Surveys, Focus Groups, and Interviews, Which One is Better?: How to Select an Assessment Method

As a result of this workshop participants will be able to...

- Differentiate between direct and indirect measures of learning
- Identify the pros and cons of different types of assessment methods
- Select an assessment method to utilize based on their needs

*Which  
assessment  
method will best  
fit my needs and  
available  
resources?*

# Feedback

## AIR Survey

- Please take a moment to complete a short survey about this workshop that will be sent out from a member of our office later today. The PowerPoint slides will be attached.

## Learning & Development Survey

- As our course is registered through Employee Self Service, UI Learning and Development will send a survey request to your inbox. Please disregard – we will not use this data.

# Resources

## Assessment, Improvement, & Research

- The University of Iowa
- 231 Iowa Memorial Union
- 319-335-3557