College of Micronesia-FSM
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Making Student Learning Assessment Useful and Worthwhile

Linda Suskie

Assessment & Accreditation Consultant

E-mail: Linda@LindaSuskie.com
Website: http://LindaSuskie.com

What is Assessment?

- Deciding what we want our students to learn
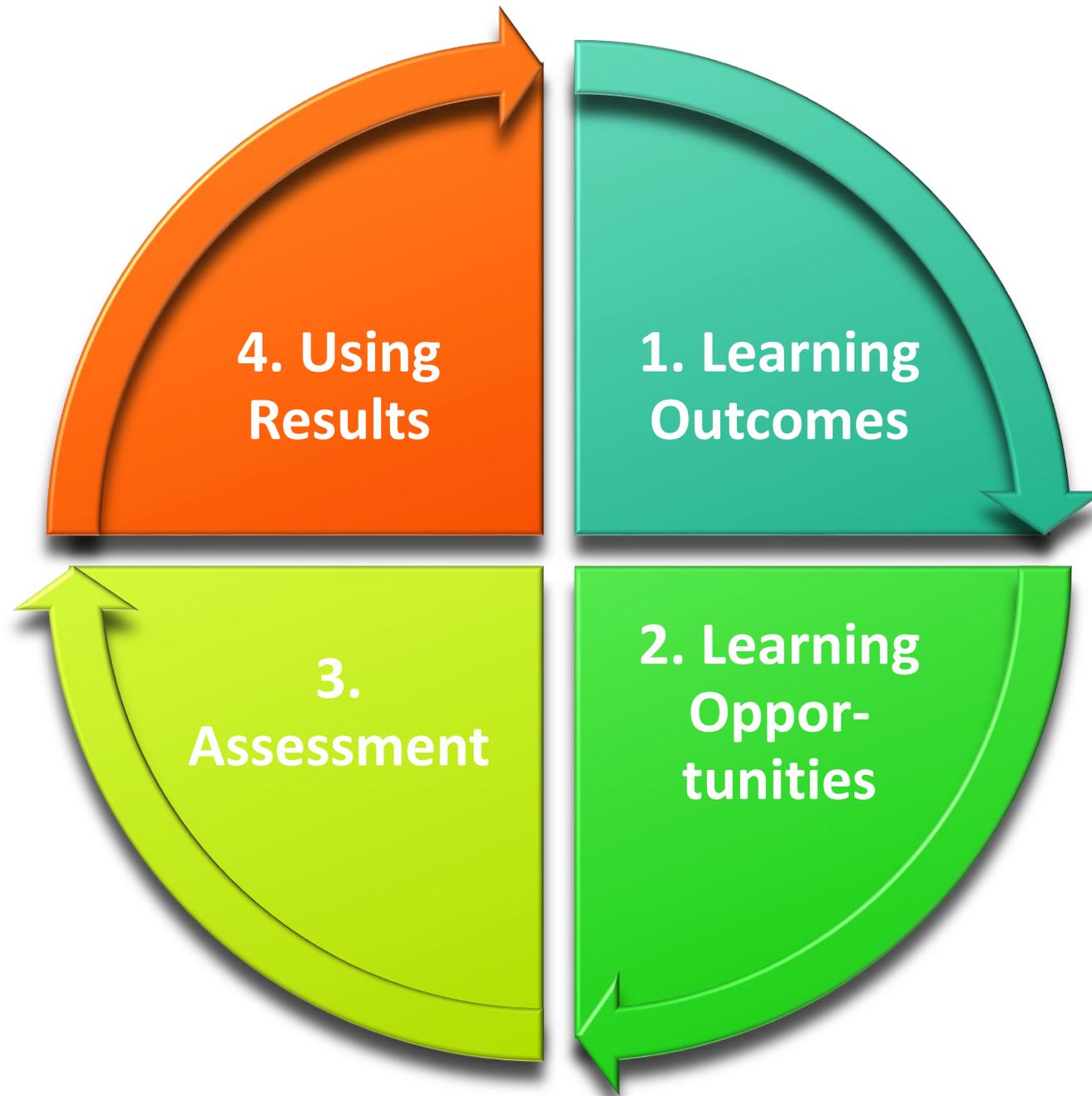
- Making sure they learn it!

--Jane Wolfson, Director, Environmental Science & Studies Program, Towson University

What is Teaching?

- Deciding what we want our students to learn

- Making sure they learn it!

--Jane Wolfson, Director, Environmental Science & Studies Program, Towson University

Student-Level Assessment

- Assess *individual students* on *course-level goals*

- Tests & assignments, summarized into a grade
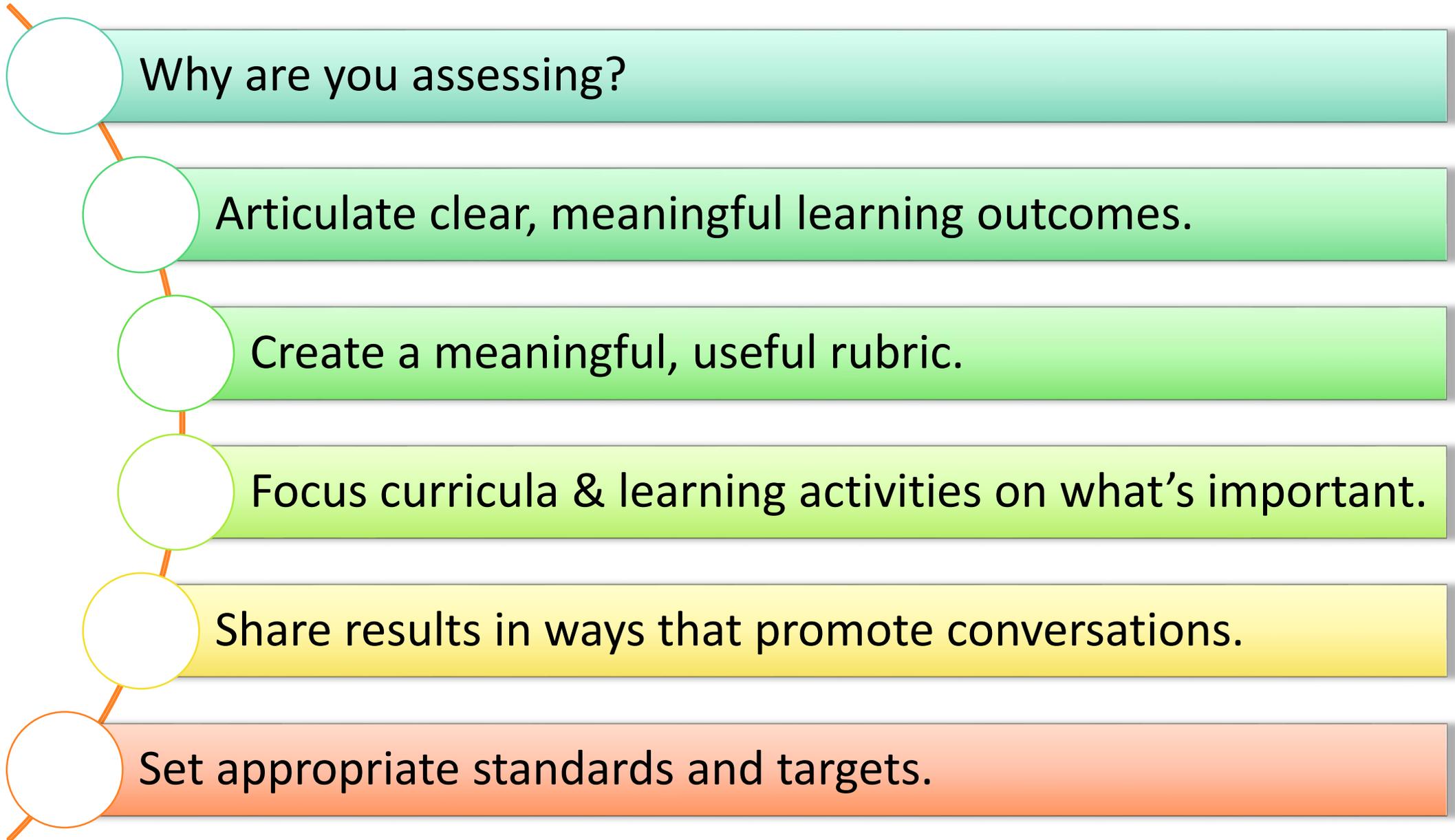
- Generally in isolation

Class-Level Assessment

- Assess *students as a whole* on *course-level goals*

- Tests and assignments
  - *Item scores aggregated across students*

- In isolation

Course-Level Assessment

- Assess *students as a whole* on *course-level goals*

- Tests and assignments
  - *Scored with a common scoring key or rubric*
  - *Aggregated across sections*
  - *Examined holistically for pervasive concerns*

- Collaboratively

Program-Level and Gen Ed Assessment

- Assess *students as a whole* on *program or gen ed goals*

- Key "capstone" assignments
  - *"Embedded" in "capstone" courses and other key courses*
  - *Scored with a common rubric*
- Field experience supervisor evaluations
- Portfolios
- Published tests

- Collaboratively

- Why are you assessing?
- Articulate clear, meaningful learning outcomes.
- Create a meaningful, useful rubric.
- Focus curricula & learning activities on what's important.
- Share results in ways that promote conversations.
- Set appropriate standards and targets.
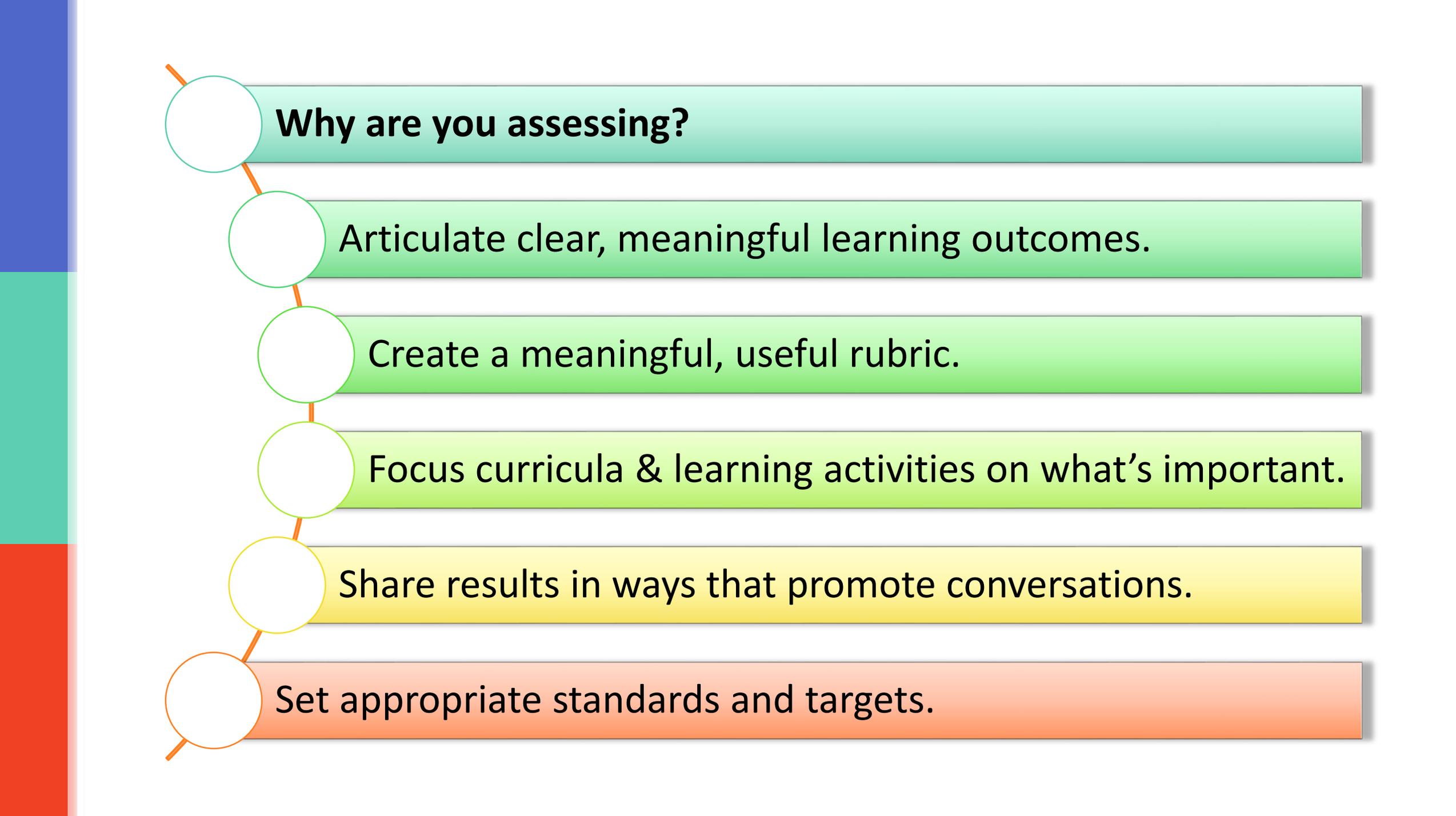
Why are you assessing?

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Mission

- The College of Micronesia-FSM is a learner-centered institution of higher education that is committed to the success of the Federated States of Micronesia by providing academic and career & technical educational programs characterized by continuous improvement and best practices.

What helps students learn and succeed?

- Students are **actively engaged** in their learning.
- Faculty and students **share responsibility** for their learning.

A learning-centered college
 actively fosters these practices.

A Learning-Centered College
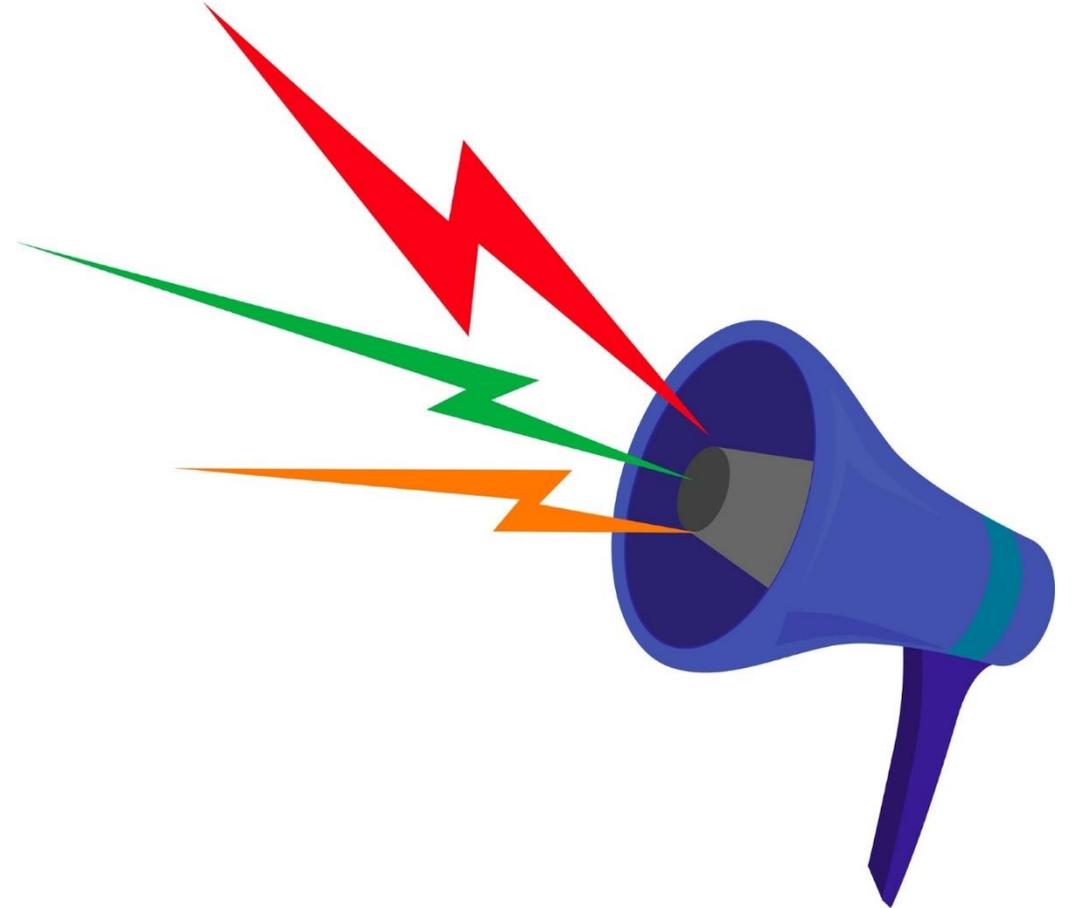## Routinely Uses Evidence

- The college **understands its students and what they most need** in order to learn.

- **Good quality, useful evidence is collected** regarding student learning.

- **Evidence is used to understand and improve student learning**.

Why Are We Assessing?

Tell the World How Good We Are

…and what we're doing
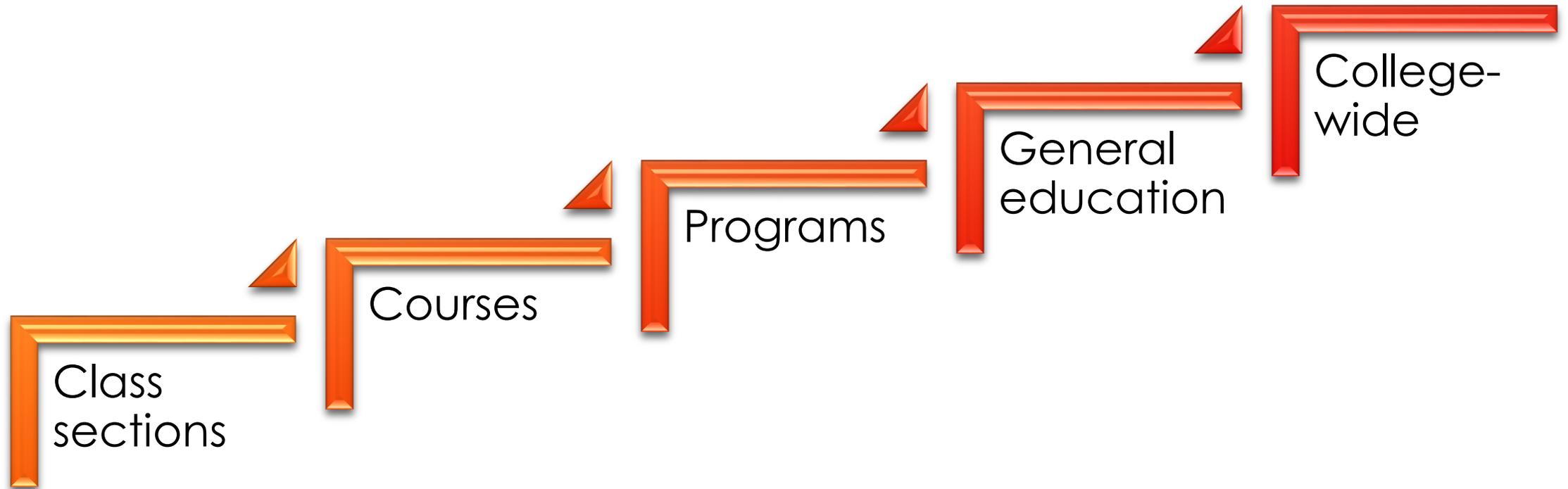to get even better

Stewardship

- Improve things that aren't working well

- Use limited resources effectively

Give Students the Best Possible Education

Class sections

Courses

Programs

General education

College-wide

Keep Our Promises

Why Are You Here?

- What do you need to learn today?

- Why?

- What do you want to be prepared to do when you get back to your office?

- How do you want to use what you'll learn when you get back to your office?

Good Learning Goals State **Outcomes**

- What students should be able to do **AFTER** they pass a course or graduate

- *Analyze, troubleshoot, & implement solutions in the field.*

- *Integrate other industries into program for supplementation of skills.*

Good Learning Goals are **Clear**

- Students understand them.
- Colleagues understand them.
- No fuzzy terms!

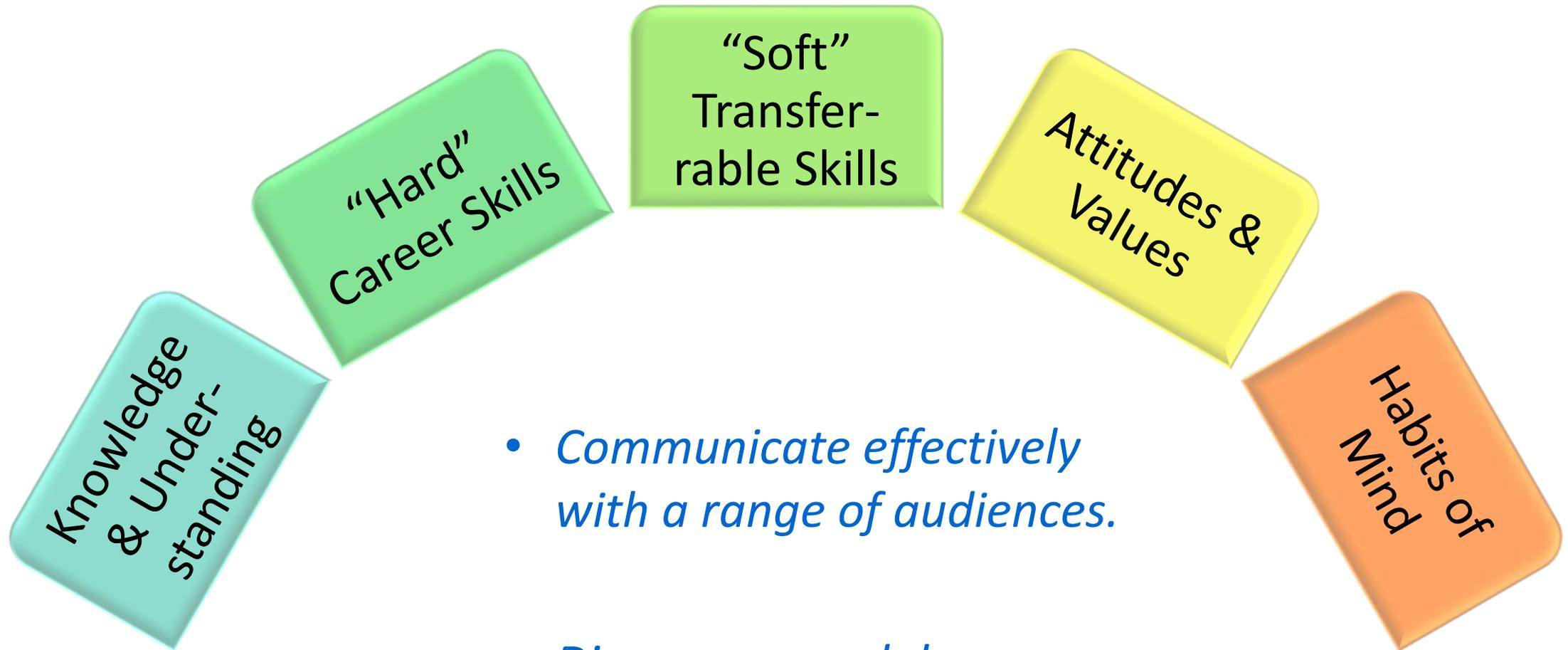- *Demonstrate basic & intermediate arc welding techniques.*

- *Differentiate successful workplace skills in individual & collaborative contexts.*
- *Demonstrate skill in payroll operations.*

Good Learning Goals are **Observable**

- Action words
- If you can see it, you can assess it.

- *Identify and analyze ethical issues in business.*

- *Understand typical technical drawings.*

Good Learning Goals Focus on **Skills**

"Hard" Career Skills

"Soft" Transfer-rable Skills

Attitudes & Values

Knowledge & Under-standing

Habits of Mind

- *Communicate effectively with a range of audiences.*

- *Discuss proper lab procedures.*

Good Learning Goals are **Relevant**

- Meet **important** student & employer needs 5-10 years from now
  - *Teamwork and collaboration skills*
  - *Articulating ideas clearly and effectively*
  - *Real-world problem solving*
  - *Evaluating information and conclusions*
  - *Flexibility and adaptability to change*
  - *Creativity and innovation*
  - *Working with people from diverse cultural backgrounds*
  - *Ethical judgment*
  - *Understanding numbers and statistics*

Good Learning Goals are **Rigorous** Yet **Realistic**

- *Demonstrate safe work habits that reflect concern & care for self, others, & the environment.*

- *Analyze, interpret, & conduct research in [the discipline].*

Good Learning Goals are
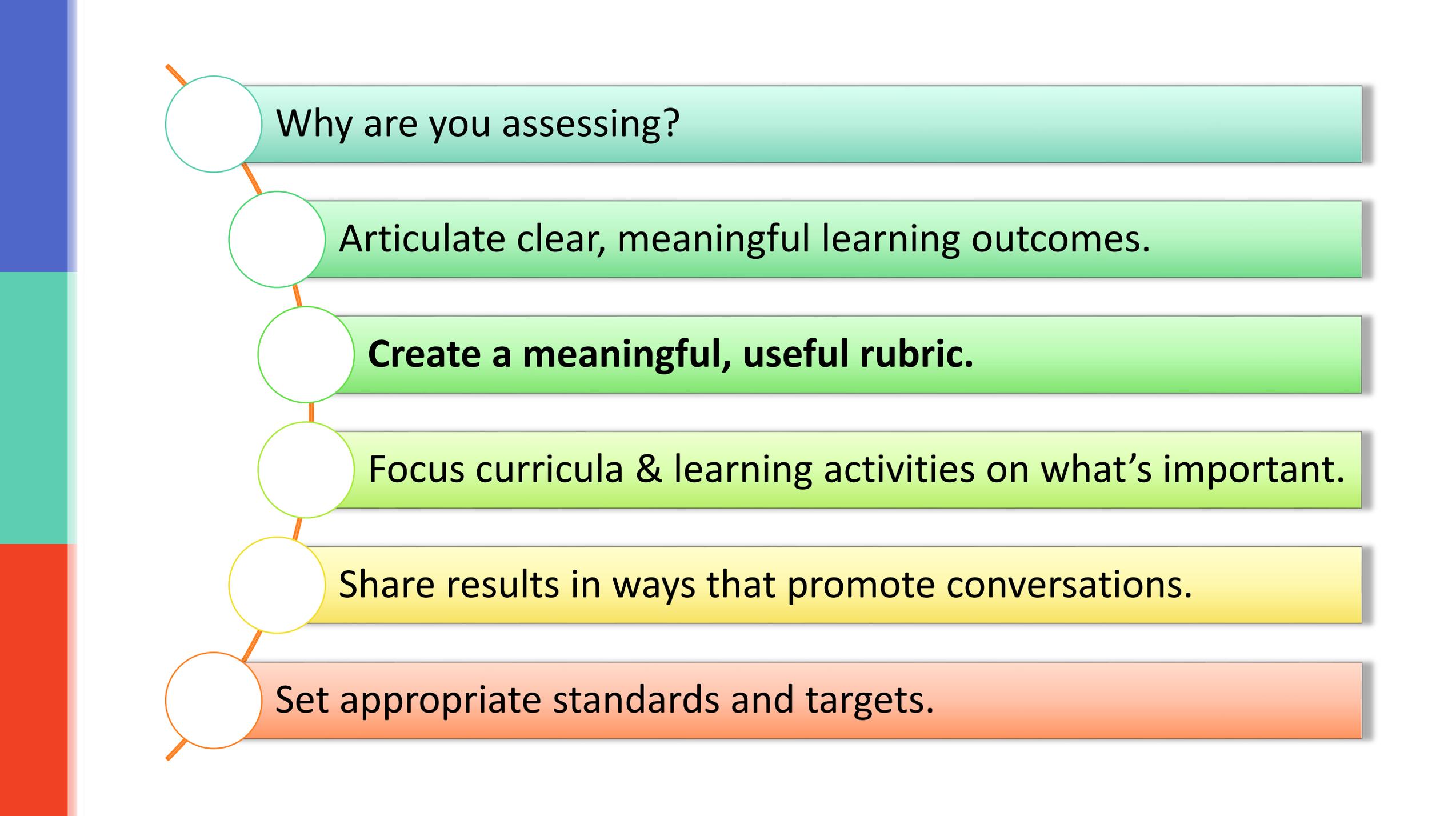## Neither Too Broad nor Too Specific

- *Produce 2-dimensional drawings using traditional visualization techniques.*

- *Identify key provisions of the Bill of Rights & the U.S. Constitution.*

- *Develop & communicate critical thinking skills.*
- *Understand, integrate, & utilize knowledge in the professional environment.*

Time to Talk!
Professionalism

- Try restating this as an institutional learning goal (applicable to all students and all disciplines) that meets the criteria of well-stated learning outcomes.
  - *Stated as outcome*
  - *Clear to colleagues and students*
  - *Observable.*
  - *Focuses on skills and not just knowledge*
  - *Relevant*
  - *Rigorous yet realistic*
  - *Neither too broad nor too specific*

Why are you assessing?

Articulate clear, meaningful learning outcomes.

Create a meaningful, useful rubric.

Focus curricula & learning activities on what's important.

Share results in ways that promote conversations.

Set appropriate standards and targets.

What is a Rubric?

A Guide for Evaluating Student Work			
Checklist	Rating scale	Analytic or descriptive rubric	Structured observation guide

What is a Valid Rubric?

- What is validity?
  - *The degree to which evidence and theory support the interpretation of results that are part of the proposed uses of the assessment*

- A rubric's validity depends on
  - *how it is used.*
  - *the validity of the entire assessment process.*

What is a Valid Rubric Assessment Process?

- Useful results
  - *Consequential validity*
- Clear
- Fair
- Consistent/reliable
- Appropriate range of outcome levels
  - *Lowest level = floor = unacceptably poor*
  - *Highest level = ceiling = achievable by some*
- Generalizable

How Will You Use the Results?
Broad or Narrow Impact?

- Task-specific rubrics
- Primary trait scoring guides/primary trait analysis
  - *Used to assess a family of tasks*
  - *Assumes essential traits vary by assignment*
- General rubrics
  - *Traits independent of topic, purpose, audience*
- Developmental rubrics
  - *General rubrics whose performance levels cover a wide span of performance*

Which are likely most useful?

- Task-specific rubrics

- Primary trait scoring guides/primary trait analysis

- General rubrics

- Developmental rubrics

Which are likely most useful?

- Task-specific rubrics

- **Primary trait scoring guides/primary trait analysis**

- **General rubrics**

- Developmental rubrics

Creating a Great Analytic Rubric

Explicate the assignment's learning outcomes into essential traits.

- Characteristics of the ***learning outcomes***, not the assignment
- ***Essential***
  - *Aim for a rubric that fits on **one piece of paper.***
- Include ineffable as well as concrete traits of your learning outcomes
  - *Effort*
  - *Overall impact*
- Don't include extraneous traits unrelated to learning outcomes
  - *Consider **professionalism** as a learning outcome*

Time to Talk!

- Micronesian Migration paper

- *What are the 3 most important learning outcomes being assessed?*

Identify & label the performance levels (columns).
How many performance levels should a rubric have?

- At least 3 levels
  - *Inadequate or unsatisfactory performance*
  - *Adequate, satisfactory, or proficient performance*
    - Meets the standard
    - Earns a passing grade
  - *Exemplary performance*
    - Exceeds proficiency

How many levels are optimal?

- Can you distinguish clearly among performance levels?

- Mandating the same number of levels for all criteria threatens the rubric's validity.

- No more than 5 levels

Trait	Inadequate (Failing)		Minimally Satisfactory (Passing)		Exemplary

Define the minimally adequate level.

- Passing work (C? C-? D?)
- You would not be embarrassed that this student passed the course or graduated.
- The student is doing well enough to succeed in later studies or career.
- Almost all (passing) students should reach this level (or better).

Time to Talk!

- VALUE Problem Solving Rubric

- For each trait, circle the box that you think represents minimally satisfactory (passing) performance for a student earning an associate degree at COM-FSM (in any program or discipline).

Create descriptions of every trait at every level.
*Use terms that **beginning students** understand.*

–Susan Brookhart

Brief

Simple

Clear

Jargon-free

Specify observable behaviors.

- Minimize subjective, evaluative, value-based terms.
  - *Appropriate*
  - *Adequate*
  - *Poor*
  - *Limited*
  - *Proficient*
  - *Above average*
- Give students concrete ways to improve their shortcomings
        - *Sally Andrade*

Examples of Continuums for Rubric Performance Levels

- Number of components of the trait that have been mastered

- Number of sequential steps of the trait that have been taken

- Strength of the work on this trait

- Thoroughness of the work on this trait

- Complexity of the work on this trait

- How well the work on this trait meets established standards or requirements within this context

Time to Talk!

- Aquaculture Presentations rubric

- Criterion 2: Organization and Concept Realized

- Try to restate the performance level descriptions so students will see concrete ways to improve their presentation's organization and realization of concept.
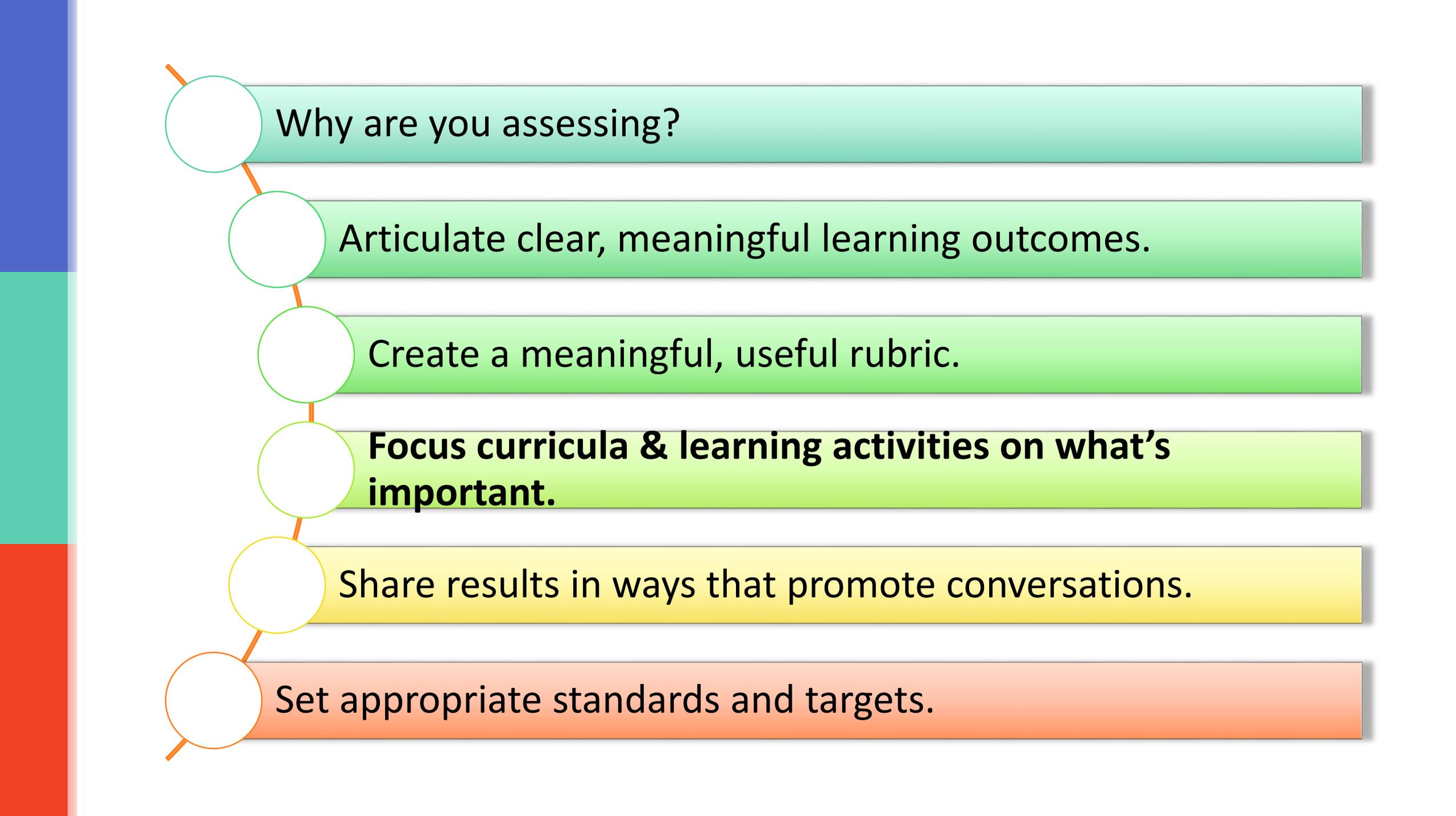
  - *Use terms the students will understand!*

LUNCH!

Complete "Strategies That Help Students Learn" Exercises

How Are You Doing?

- Rubric performance level descriptions

- Strategies that help college students learn

- Anything else?

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Course Curriculum Mapping

This is what you'll learn to do.	This is what you'll do to learn it.	This is how you'll show me that you've learned it.
1.		
2.		
3.		

This is what you'll learn to do.	And this will help you learn how to…	This is what you'll do to learn it.	This is how you'll show me that you've learned it.
1.	*[Program/ gen ed goal]*		
2.			
3.			

Intro to Psychology Assignment:
Presentations on signs of mental disorders in fictional characters

- **Learning outcomes**
  - *Analyze and interpret relevant information*
  - *Generate well-reasoned conclusions*

- **Grading Criteria**
  - *30% Visuals: PowerPoint, handouts, movie clip, etc.*
  - *30% Information: statistics, data, etc.*
  - *30% Overall presentation: smoothness, knowledge of character/topic*
  - *10% Attendance at all presentations*

Great learning activities have 3 **transparent** traits that **connect** to each other.

- Mary-Ann Winkelmes

1. Purpose

- Explain what you want students to learn through the assignment and **why**.
  - *Learning goals/outcomes*

2. Task

- Designed to help students achieve the assignment's key learning outcomes.
- Guide students with a written "prompt."
- Aim students in the right direction without giving anything away.
  - *What should the completed assignment look like?*
  - *What resources can they use?*
- Break large assignments into pieces.

3. Grading Criteria
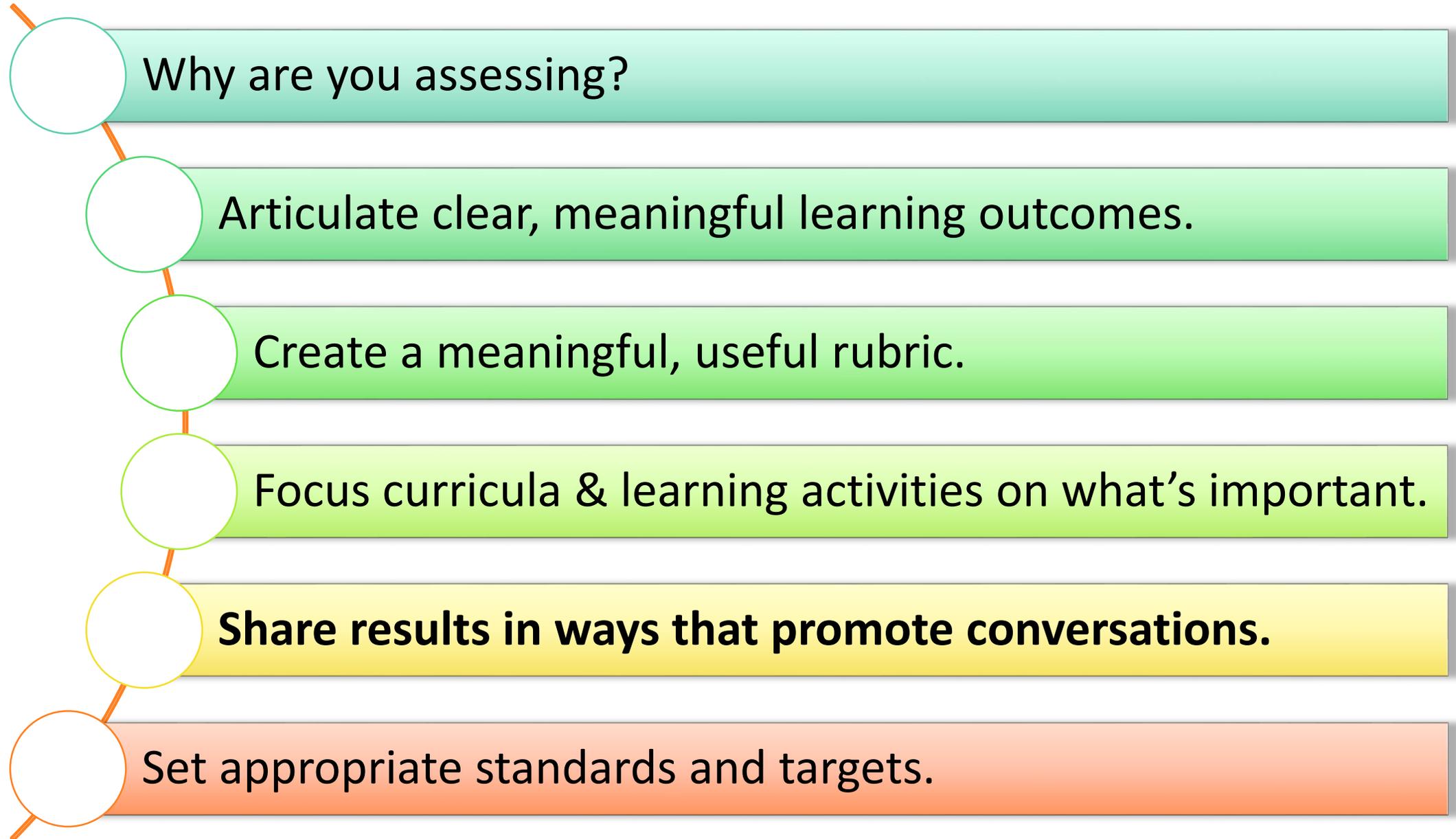
- Give students the rubric.

Transparency

- Spend more time giving the assignment and guiding it

- And less time grading it.

  - *Barbara Walvoord & Virginia Anderson*

Time to Talk!
Business Plan Presentation

- Fill in the middle box:

This is what you'll learn to do.	This is how you'll learn how to do this.	This is how you'll show me that you've learned it.
Present a business plan to potential investors, orally and visually, that convinces them to invest in it.		Present a business plan to the class.

Useful assessment findings "pop."

- Data are not information.
- Simple, user-friendly reports are more likely to be used than long, obtuse ones.

Averages have little meaning. Look at percentages.

Thesis	2.5
Organization	2.7
Intro/conclusion	2.7
Body paragraphs	2.6
Mechanics	3.0
Source material	2.5

Averages have little meaning.
Look at percentages.

	4 Exceeds	3 Meets	2 Approaches	1 Doesn't meet	0 Doesn't attempt
Thesis	25%	35%	17%	13%	9%
Organization	26%	32%	24%	16%	1%
Intro/conclusion	27%	37%	22%	12%	2%
Body paragraphs	22%	34%	23%	19%	1%
Mechanics	41%	33%	16%	8%	1%
Source material	21%	29%	27%	19%	4%

Sort results from highest to lowest

	Meets or Exceeds	4 Exceeds	3 Meets	2 Approaches	1 Doesn't meet	0 Doesn't attempt
Mechanics	74%	41%	33%	16%	8%	1%
Thesis	70%	25%	35%	17%	13%	9%
Intro/conclusion	64%	27%	37%	22%	12%	2%
Organization	58%	26%	32%	24%	16%	1%
Body paragraphs	56%	22%	34%	23%	19%	1%
Source material	50%	21%	29%	27%	19%	4%

Present Results Visually

- Minimal text
- Bulleted lists
- Rounded numbers
- Charts
- Graphs

Time to Talk!

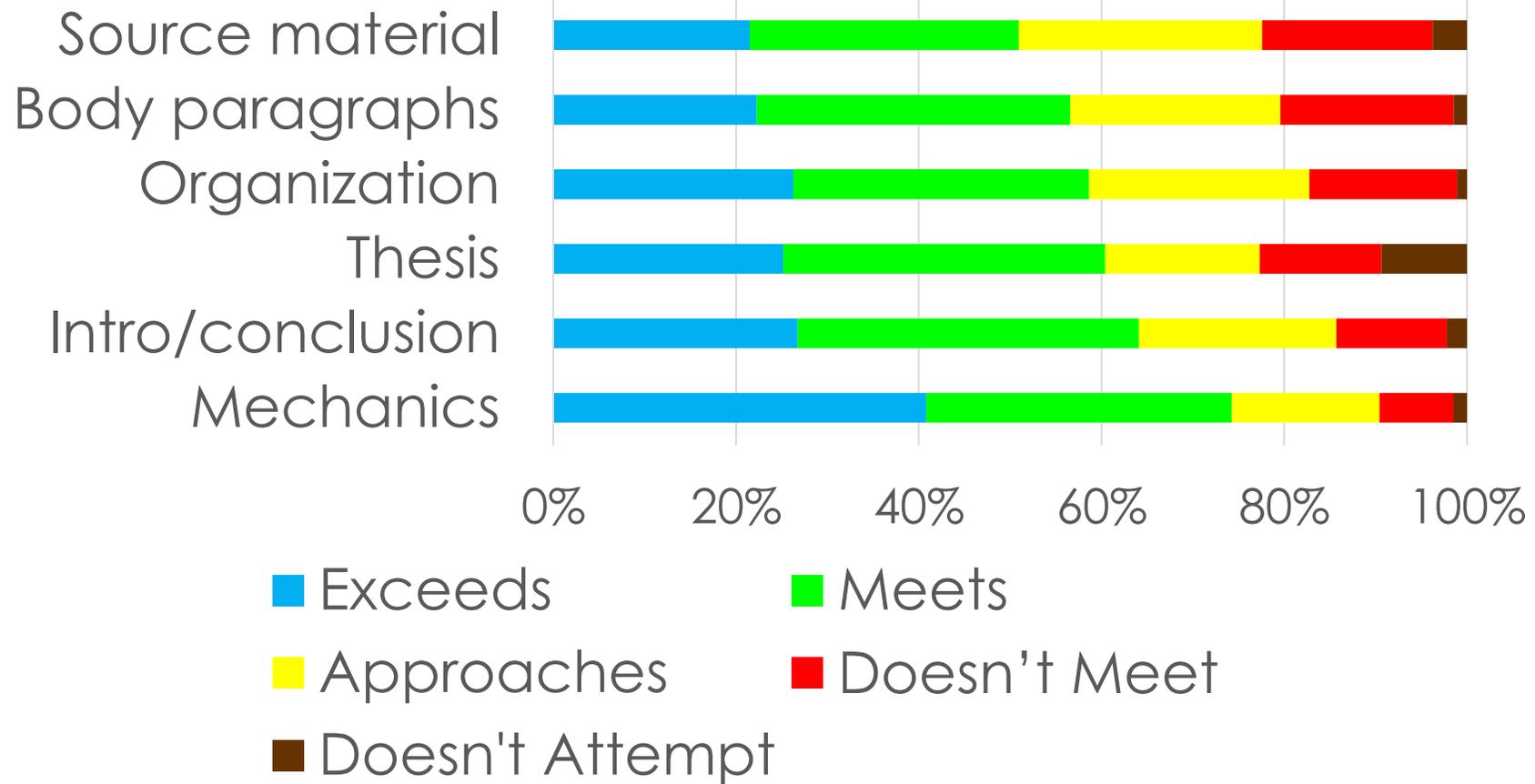- "Interpreting Assessment Results" exercise
  - *Items 1 and 2 ONLY*
  - *Items 3 and 4*

What is a standard?

- The minimum level students need in order to succeed in the:
  - *next course.*
  - *workplace.*
  - *next degree program.*
- Passing work (C? C-? D?)
- The level that would not embarrass you
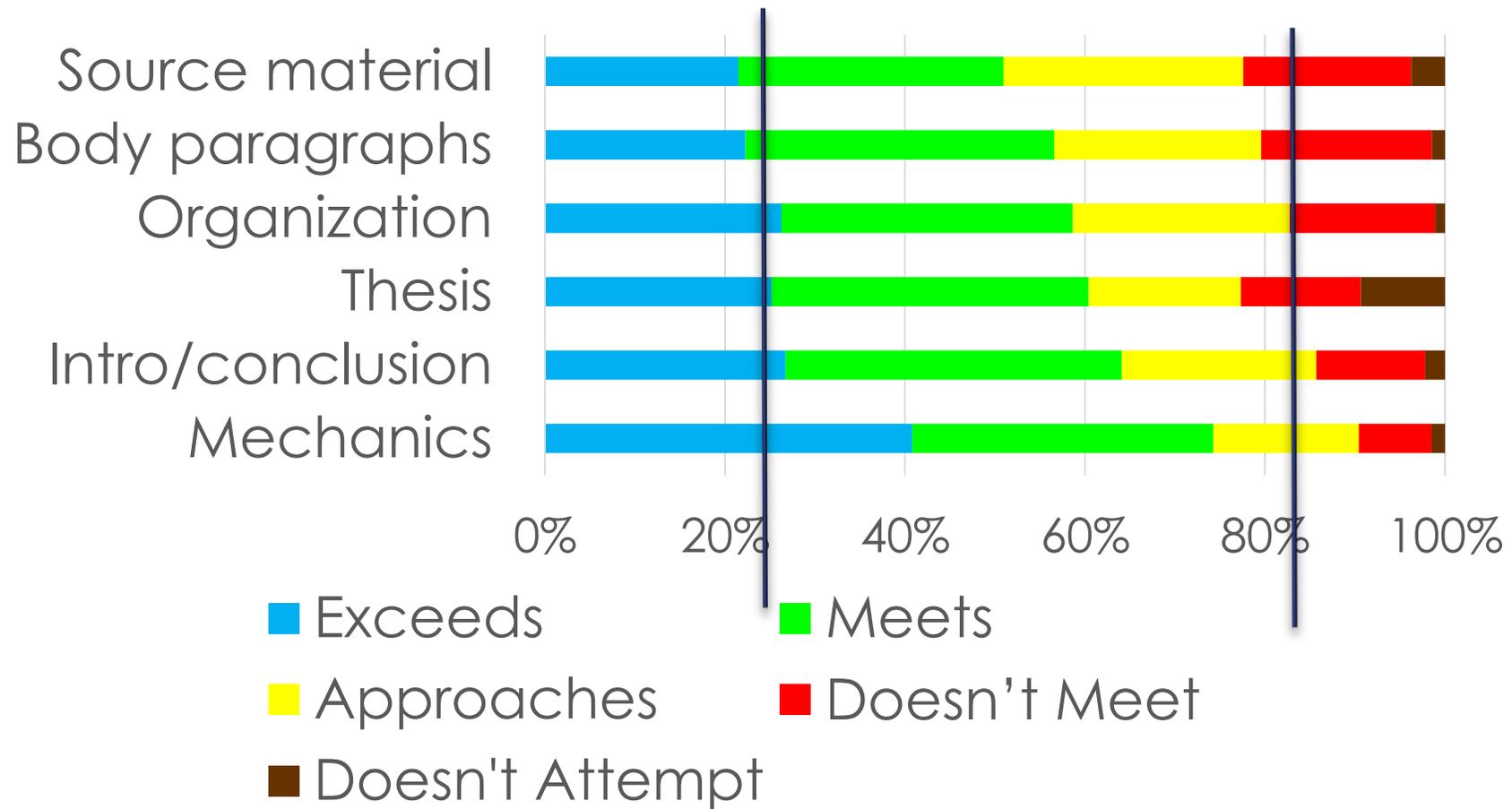- Defined clearly and defensibly.

What is a target?

- The proportion of students you want to meet your minimally adequate standard
  - *If essential for health & safety, 100%*
  - *If essential for subsequent success, close to 100%*
  - *If not essential… why is it a key outcome?*
- Would you be happy if all your students were minimally adequate…but none were exemplary?
  - *Consider an additional target for outstanding or exceptional performance.*

Possible targets for a first-semester course

- Mechanics: 85% meet or exceed expectations
- Other traits: 85% approach, meet, or exceed expectations
- 25% exceed expectations

Time to Reflect!