Backwards Design: Beginning with the end in mind

University of Alberta Libraries Workshop

Carla L. Peck

Centre for Teaching and Learning

carla.peck@ualberta.ca

Agenda

O What is "Backwards Design"?
- O Why should I use it?
- O What is the process?

O Putting the "work" in "workshop":
- O Identifying goals
- O Writing clear and specific learning objectives
- O Determining acceptable evidence of learning
- O Designing effective learning activities

What is Backwards Design?

O Think-Pair-Share:

   O **Think** individually for 1 minute (make some notes if you like)

   O **Pair**-up and **share**/discuss your understanding of Backwards Design

   O **Share** with whole group

Jay McTighe explains...

O As you listen to Jay McTighe explain "Backwards Design", **add** to the definition you discussed with your partner.

O "What is Understanding by Design? Author Jay McTighe Explains." *Youtube*, uploaded by Hawker Brownlow Education, 7 July 2013. https://youtu.be/d8F1SnWalfE

O What did you **add** to expand your understanding of "Backwards Design"?

Backwards Design

O A framework for planning

O Prioritizes big ideas and learning goals, not content "coverage." Makes purpose clear.

O Helps instructors identify what really matters – what are the "big ideas" you want students to know, remember, and be able to do 5 years from now?

O Assessment is foregrounded (not an after-thought)

O Helps instructors design learning experiences that will help students achieve goals

When to use it?

You can use a backward design approach for aligning and designing instruction for:

- O One-Shot Lesson/Session
- O Series of Related Classes
- O Online Library Course

in Alignment

out of Alignment

The 3 Steps of Backwards Design:

O Identify desired goals & student learning objectives

O Determine acceptable evidence of student learning

O Design learning activities to support student learning
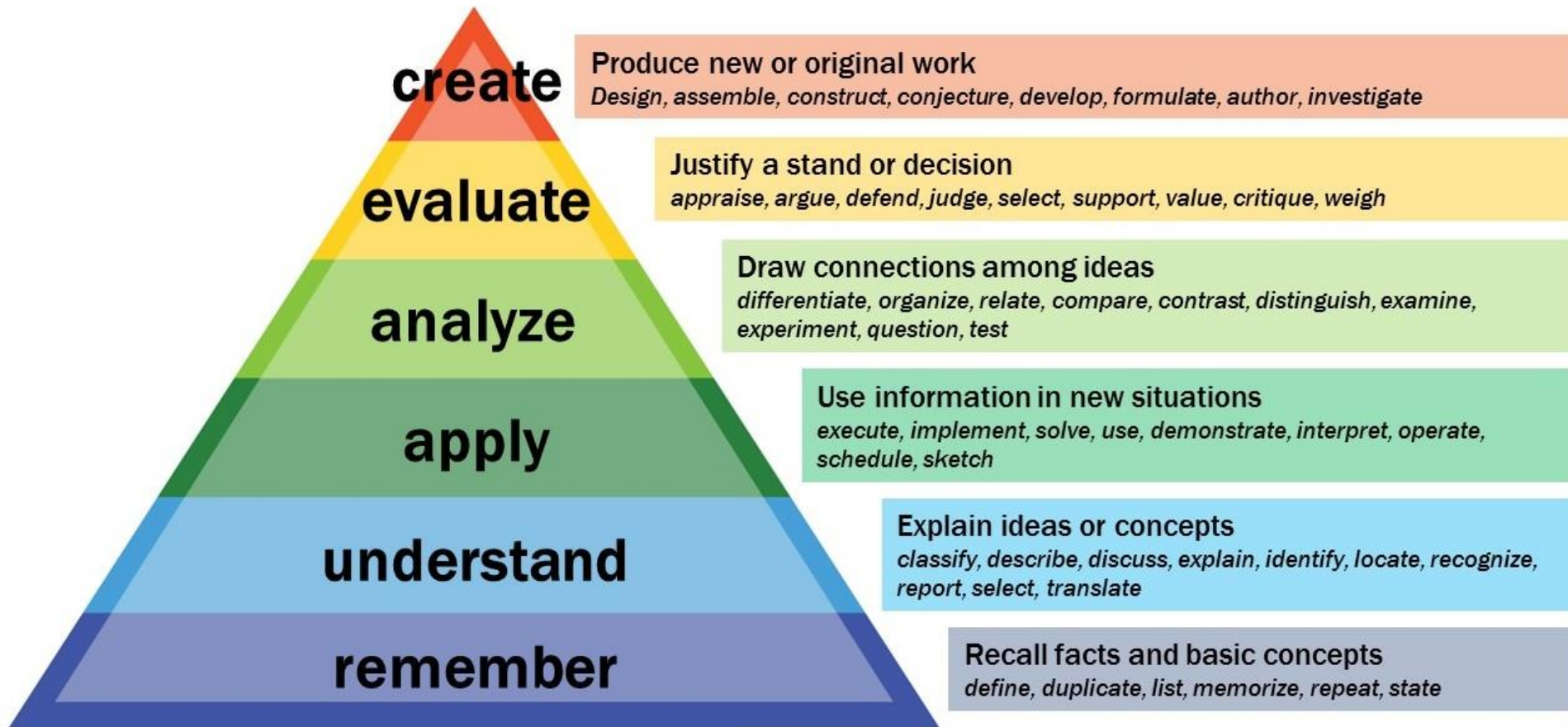
Step 1: Identify Desired Goals

O Identify desired goals & student learning objectives:

   O What **goals** does the curriculum (e.g., ACRL framework) identify?

   O What will the students be able to do in terms of knowledge, skills and dispositions as a result of this lesson, unit, or workshop? (**objectives**)

What's the difference between a "goal" and an "objective"?

O A **goal** is a broad statement about the desired result for a lesson, unit or workshop:

  O My goal is for my students to be more accepting of diversity.

O An **objective** is a more specific statement that describes student learning:

  O *Students will be able to* compare cultural practices to identify similarities and differences with their own

  O *Students will be able to* argue how having many cultures in a community enriches their lives

- *O* Objectives **must be measurable.**

- *O* **Objectives usually start with an "action verb";** that explicitly describes what students will do. Do not use **vague words** like "understand" and "know." These are hard to "see" or measure.

- *O* **Objectives are a single sentence statement.** Start off with: At the end of this course, students will be able to: .....

- *O* **Objectives should focus on what the STUDENT WILL DO,** not what the instructor does.

- *O* Objectives should focus on **different levels of learning** .

Bloom's Taxonomy

create
Produce new or original work
Design, assemble, construct, conjecture, develop, formulate, author, investigate

evaluate
Justify a stand or decision
appraise, argue, defend, judge, select, support, value, critique, weigh

analyze
Draw connections among ideas
differentiate, organize, relate, compare, contrast, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test

apply
Use information in new situations
execute, implement, solve, use, demonstrate, interpret, operate, schedule, sketch

understand
Explain ideas or concepts
classify, describe, discuss, explain, identify, locate, recognize, report, select, translate

remember
Recall facts and basic concepts
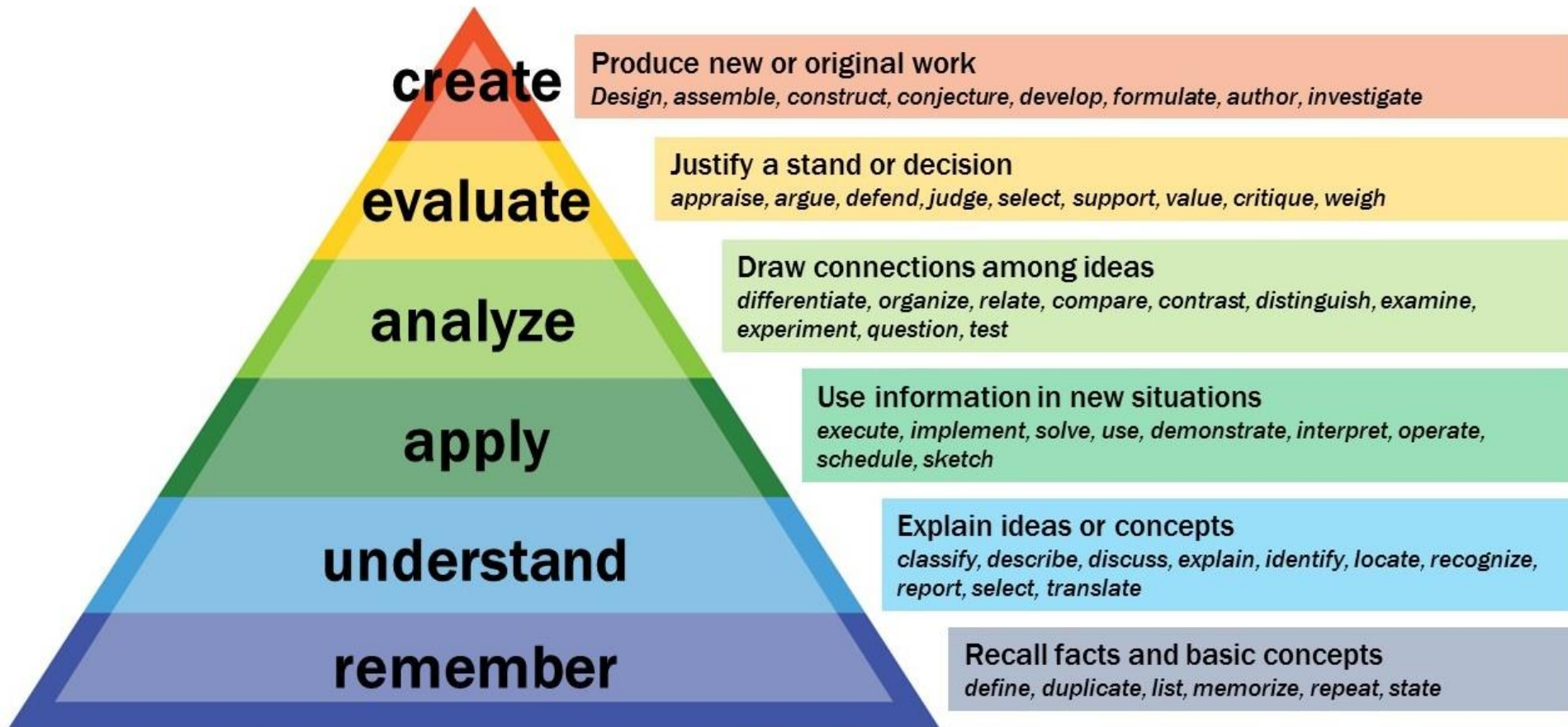*define, duplicate, list, memorize, repeat, state*

Goals & Outcomes from the ACRL Framework

O GOAL: "Learners who are developing their information literate abilities:

   O give credit to the original ideas of others through proper attribution and citation" (ACRL, 2015, p. 6)

O OBJECTIVE: Students will be able to:

   O **Explain** the importance of giving credit to the original ideas of others

   O **Implement/use** an appropriate citation style in their writing

Your turn!

O Identify desired goals & student learning outcomes using the ACRL Framework

O TIP: Begin with one goal that is relevant to a recent or upcoming workshop/lesson

O Work in pairs and get ready to share

Bloom's Taxonomy

create — Produce new or original work
Design, assemble, construct, conjecture, develop, formulate, author, investigate

evaluate — Justify a stand or decision
appraise, argue, defend, judge, select, support, value, critique, weigh

analyze — Draw connections among ideas
differentiate, organize, relate, compare, contrast, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test

apply — Use information in new situations
execute, implement, solve, use, demonstrate, interpret, operate, schedule, sketch

understand — Explain ideas or concepts
classify, describe, discuss, explain, identify, locate, recognize, report, select, translate

remember — Recall facts and basic concepts
define, duplicate, list, memorize, repeat, state

Step 2: Determine Acceptable Evidence of Student Learning

O How will you recognize when students have achieved the learning objective?

  O What will you look for in student work?

    O Formal assignments

    O In-class work

O What evidence will they be able to provide to you?

  O What kind of product will they submit?

  O What specific skills, knowledge, and/or dispositions should be in the product?

Returning to our examples:

O Students will be able to explain the importance of giving credit to the original ideas of others
  - O Could student provide reasons for giving credit to the original ideas of others?

O Students will be able to implement/use an appropriate citation style in their writing
  - O Did student select the appropriate citation style for their field?
  - O Did student use the conventions of the citation style correctly?

Your turn!

O Identify what would be acceptable evidence of learning for your learning objective from Step 1.

O TIP: Try restating your learning objective as a question (or break it into several questions).

O Identify how you will assess it (observation, assignment that students submit, in-class group work, etc.)

O Work in pairs and get ready to share

Step 3: Plan Learning Experiences

O Now that you know what you want students to achieve AND you know what success will look like, it's time to plan for a successful outcome.

O What teaching and learning strategies are going to help students achieve the goals and objectives you've set for them?

O Ensure your learning experiences align with your goals and objectives.

Your turn!

O Identify several teaching/learning experiences that will help students:

   O Achieve the objective you created in Step 1

   O Produce the desired evidence of their learning

O Try to think of a variety of learning experiences that could achieve the same objective (mix things up a bit!)

   O For example, instead of a lecture, what active learning strategies might you use?

Backwards Design: Begin with the end in mind

O Identify desired goals & student learning objectives

O Determine acceptable evidence of student learning

O Design learning activities to support student learning

Questions/Comments

Next workshop: More effective "One-shot" sessions

Backwards Design: Beginning with the end in mind

University of Alberta Libraries Workshop

Carla L. Peck

Centre for Teaching and Learning

carla.peck@ualberta.ca