UNIVERSITY of OTAGO
Te Whare Wānanga o Otāgo
NEW ZEALAND

Otago Medical School
Te Kura Hauora o Ōtākou

DYK 23

Do you know...
about constructive alignment?

Constructive alignment is based on the premise that the learner constructs their own meaning through relevant learning opportunities and assessment events. The key to constructive alignment is the intentional connection between intended learning outcomes, teaching and learning opportunities, and assessment (Biggs & Tang, 2011).

"*Learning takes place through the active behaviour of the student: it is what he (sic) does that he learns, not what the teacher does.*" (Tyler, 1949 as cited by Biggs & Tang, 2011).

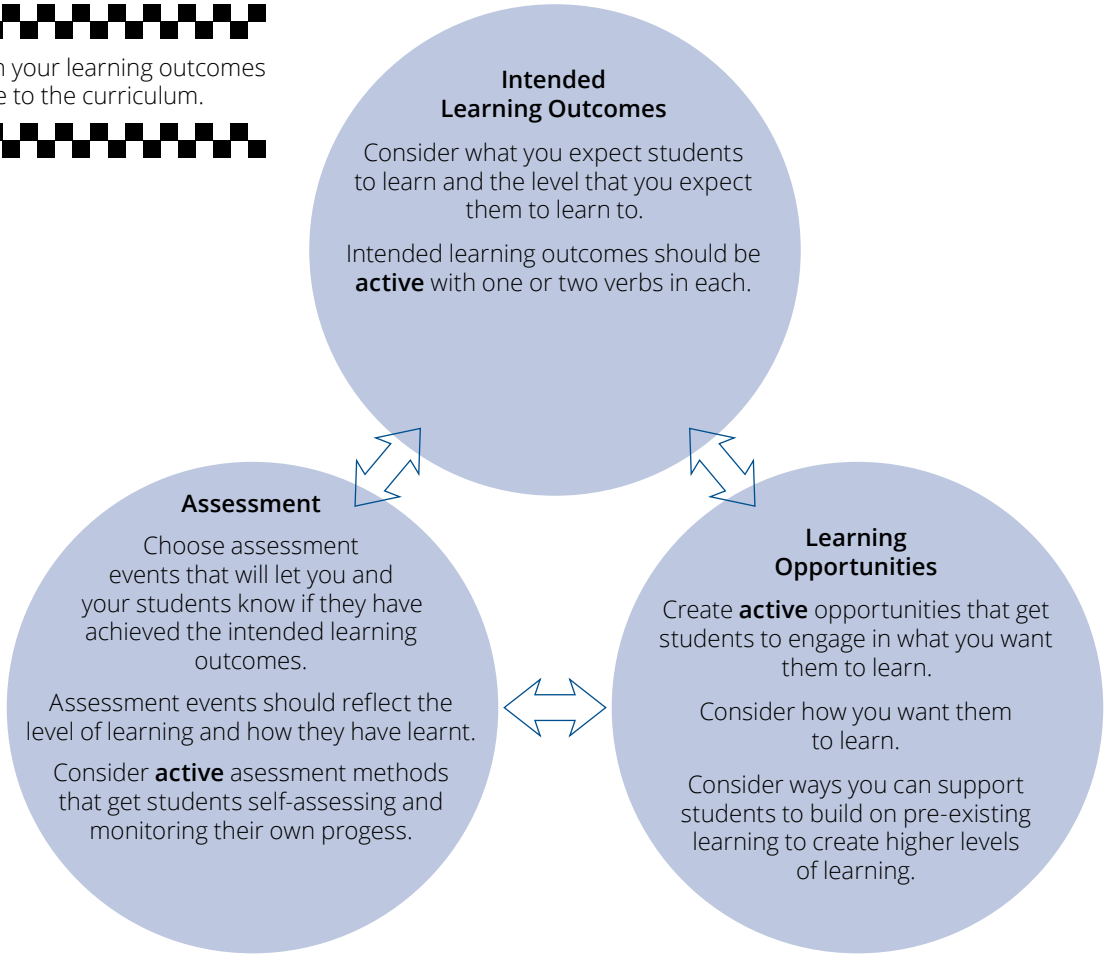
In 1949, Ralph Tyler ask four questions that underly the essential ideas in constructive alignment:

- What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?
- What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?
- How can these educational experiences be effectively organised?
- How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?

These ideas have remained integral to, and often form the basis around, the development of constructive alignment as a teaching and learning approach that can be used at the session, course, or programme level.

Principles of constructive alignment

Start with your learning outcomes that relate to the curriculum.



Constructive alignment can help you determine the appropriate level of learning

Identify the level of learning that you expect of learners. Learning taxonomies can help determine the appropriate level of learning. These levels can be built into intended learning outcomes and help create assessment criteria or rubrics.

Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning and the Structure of Observed Learning Outcomes (SOLO) Taxonomy are two taxonomies that may help you determine the level of learning.

Bloom's and SOLO Taxonomies

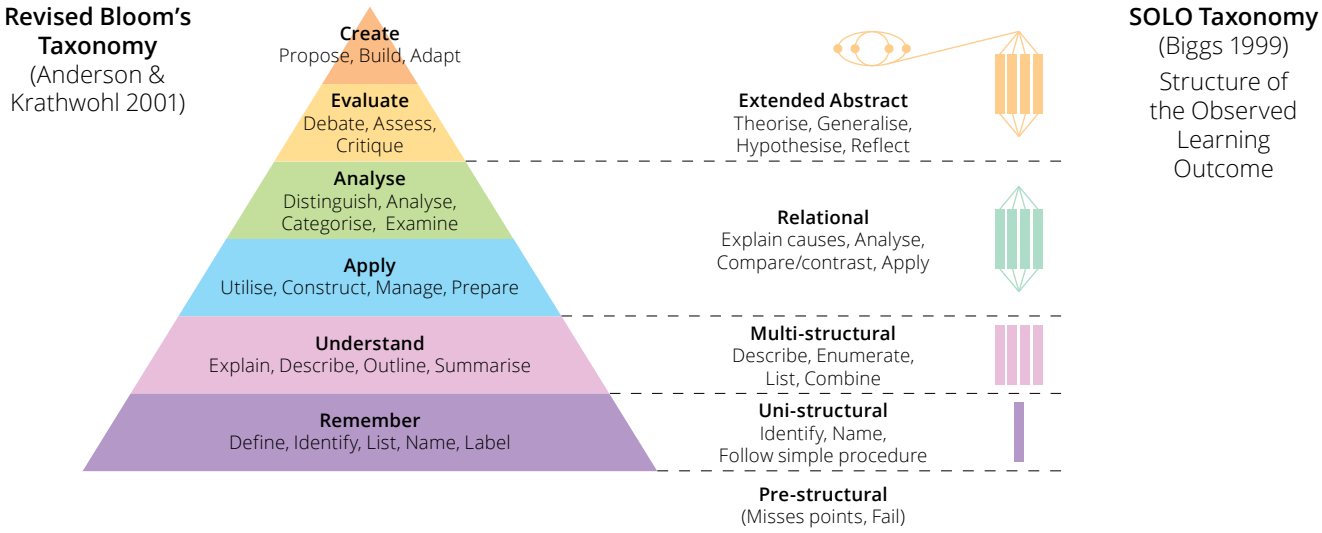


Figure taken from: https://educarepk.com/solo-taxonomy-versus-blooms-taxonomy.html

Constructive alignment can enhance your teaching practice to support learning

Constructively aligned teaching will be more effective because there is consistency between intended learning outcomes, learning opportunities, and assessment events.

Makes learning relevant	Teaching and learning is based on the intended curriculum, so teachers and learners have a shared or common understanding of the expected learning.
Optimises learning	Learners are placed in a web of consistency between learning intentions, learning opportunities and assessment, keeping learners and teachers focused.
Involves learners	Learning opportunities that require active involvement allow learners to construct their own knowledge, supporting deeper learning. Assessment methods that encourage learners to monitor their own progress and self-assess support them to develop initiative and self-regulation.

FURTHER READING

Boulton-Lewis, G. M. (1995). The SOLO Taxonomy as a Means of Shaping and Assessing Learning in Higher Education. Higher Education Research & Development, 14(2), 143–154. https://doi.org/10.1080/0729436950140201

Biggs, J. B., & Tang, C. (2011). Teaching for quality learning at university (4th ed.). Open University Press. https://otago.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/64OTAGO_INST/n8g283/alma99225476201891

Krathwohl, D. R. (2002). A revision of bloom's taxonomy: An overview. Theory into Practice, 41(4), 212. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4104_2

For further information and assistance, contact your local education adviser:
otago.ac.nz/medicine/staff/support

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Do you know...

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