Assessment of Learning: A Program-Level View

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Land Acknowledgement and Introductions

We would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is located in the unceded territory of the Syilx Okanagan Peoples.
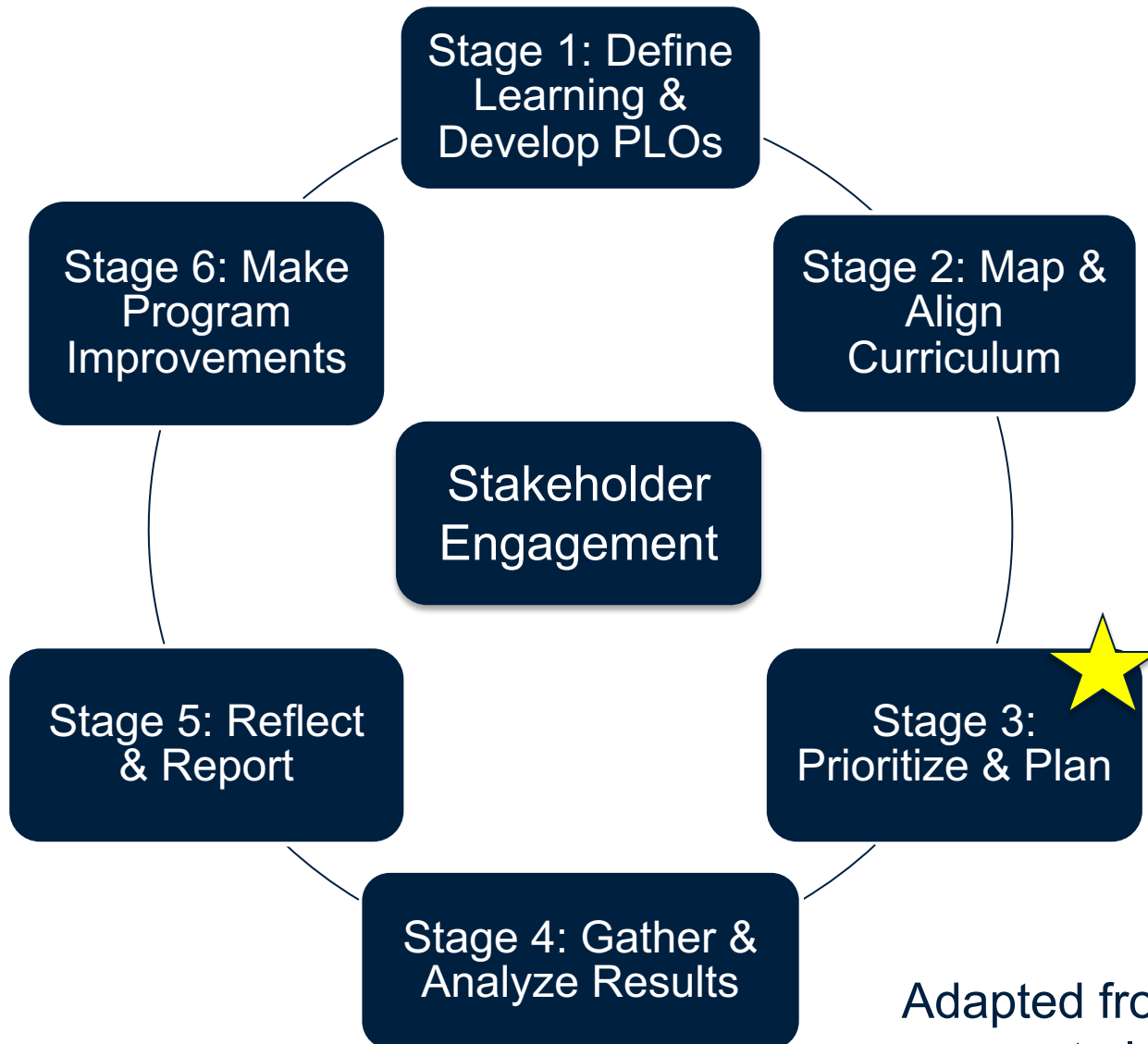
Workshop Learning Outcomes

As a result of taking part in this professional development activity, participants will be able to:

- Explain in their own words what the assessment of learning outcomes entails at the program level
- Identify existing and potentially new tools for direct and indirect assessment of learning
- Create an assessment to-do list based on their goals and effective & equitable practices
- Draft an assessment plan based on the academic cycle

Assessment Plan Cycle

Stage 1: Define Learning & Develop PLOs

Stage 2: Map & Align Curriculum

Stage 3: Prioritize & Plan

Stage 4: Gather & Analyze Results

Stage 5: Reflect & Report

Stage 6: Make Program Improvements

Stakeholder Engagement

Adapted from Goff et.al., 2015)

Assessment vs. Evaluation

process aimed at improving programs

reviewing accomplishments for recognition and reward

Assessment is a vehicle for improvement and not an end in itself.

Assessment is the process of…

multiple & diverse sources of info

what students know & can do

result of educational experiences

improve subsequent learning

(Huba & Freed, 2000, p. 7 in Bresciani Ludvik, 2019)

Outcomes-Based Assessment

Diagnostics for optimal performance and guide to advancing all students' learning and development

Image: Jeep dashboard with indicators lit up; source: https:www.motortrend.com

"Outcomes-based assessment is like the diagnostics that the mechanic runs. In essence, we needed more data than the dashboard indicators could provide in order to make decisions about how to get that Jeep to perform at its most optimal levels." (Bresciani Ludvik, 2019)
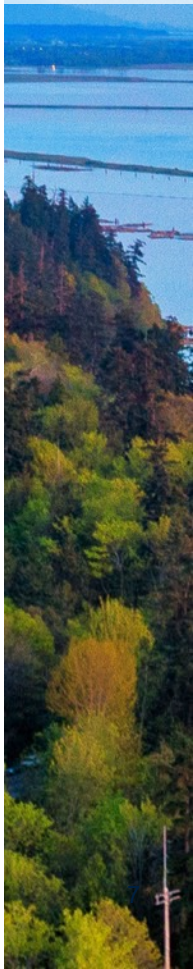
Effective Outcomes Assessment

- Recognizes assessment as essential to learning and as everyone's responsibility
- Is faculty-designed with student input
- Involves & provides accountability to stakeholders
- Has a written plan with clear purposes
- Is ongoing, not episodic
- Based on clear, explicitly stated program outcomes
- Uses multiple measures to maximize reliability and validity
- Produces evidence of learning and program effectiveness
- Uses data to continuously to improve programs
- Incorporates ongoing evaluation and improvement of the assessment process itself
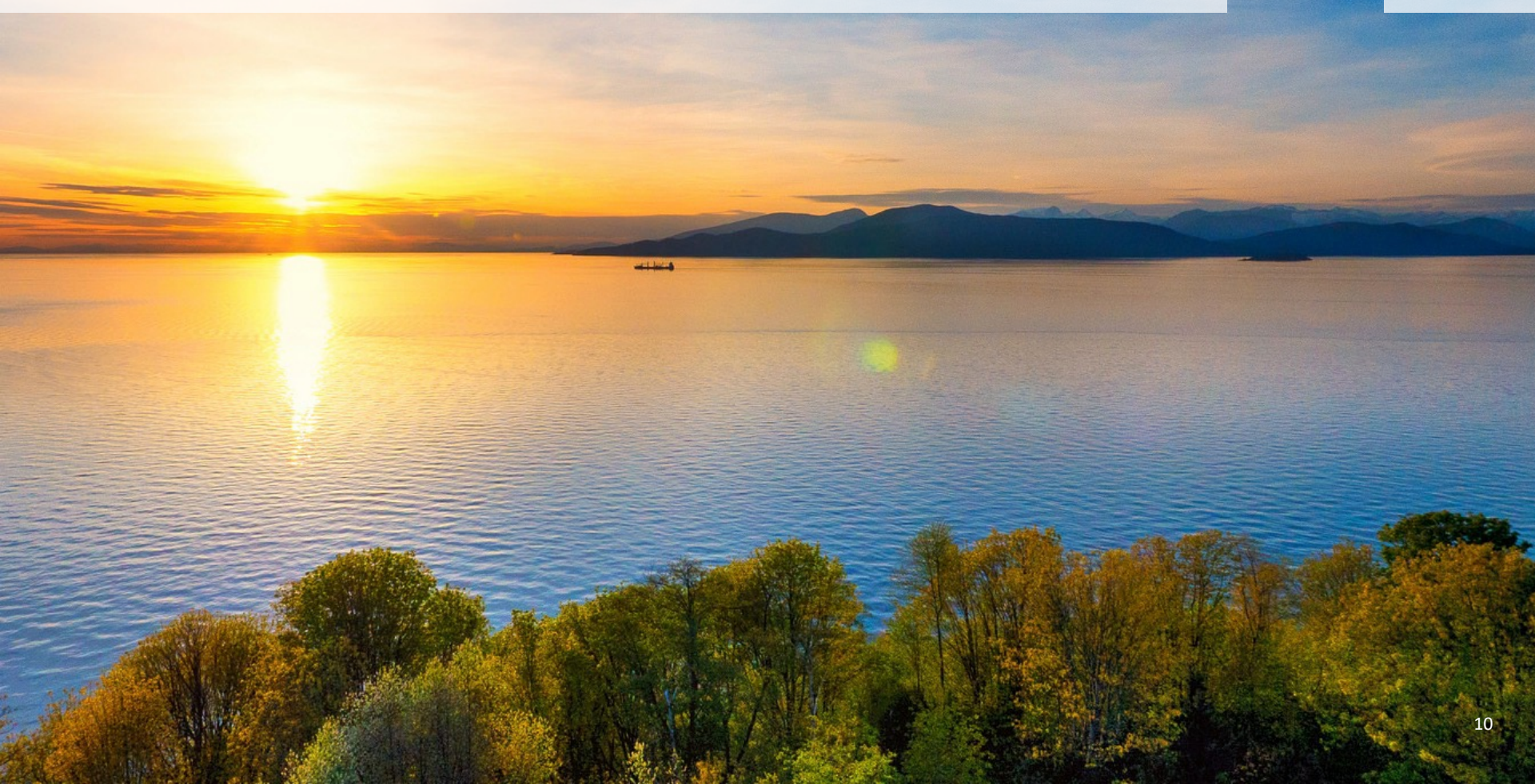
Benefits of PLO Assessment

1) Ensure that students **learn the most important** skills, ideas, attitudes, and values of the discipline or profession.
2) Document **evidence of students' learning** based on the actual outcomes they have achieved.
3) Ensure that **expectations are communicated** clearly to and understood by students.
4) Allow you to **improve the effectiveness** of your program based on actual student achievement.
5) Showcase the **quality of your program**; make your graduates appealing to employers and your program attractive to prospective students and donors.
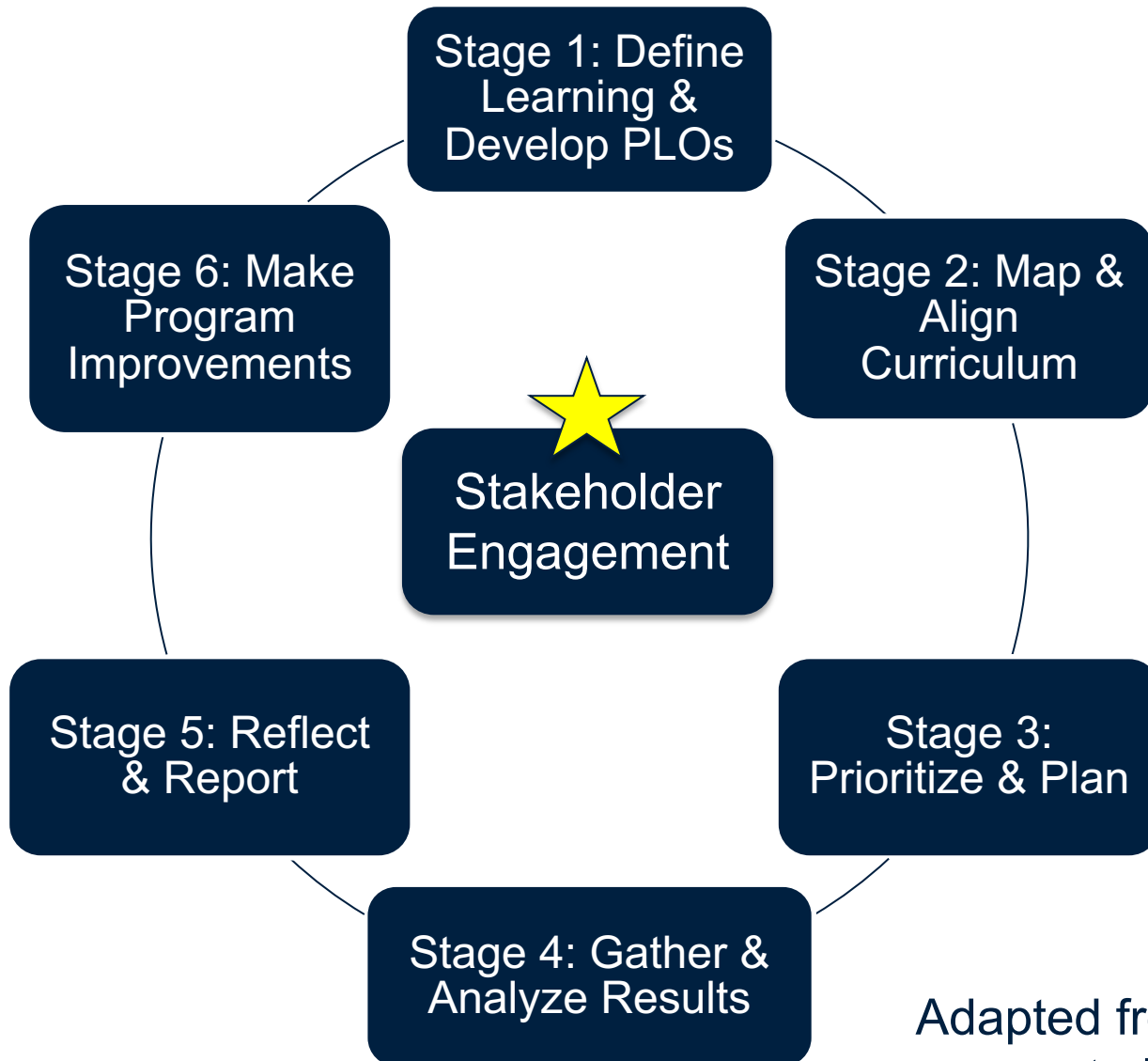6) Emphasize current **institutional priorities** for teaching & learning.

(HEQCO, 2015)

What are your program's priority goals for learning outcomes assessment?

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Student Engagement

*Engaging students "conveys the important message that assessment is something the college does **with students**, as opposed to doing assessment to students, and it reminds them that when they are asked to complete a survey, their perceptions and their voices matter."*

(Jankowski & D'Souza, 2022, p. 93)

Planning for Assessment

1. Develop an assessment plan:

   - Establish shared definitions, variables

   - Embed equity in the process, foster mentality

   - Use mapped program to identify priorities

2. Align assessment tools with learning outcomes

   - Take inventory of existing assessment

   - Choose new assessments to add/create

3. Create a cyclical timeline for continuous improvement

   - Identify points for gathering data

   - Identify points for stakeholder engagement

   - Tie in activities related to unit review

# What can you do now to plan and prioritize?

Direct vs. Indirect Assessment

Direct-what student demonstrates regarding skill or knowledge attainment

Indirect-what student or other source perceives regarding degree of skill or knowledge attainment

Figure 8: The different assessment approaches being used at the institution level in Canadian colleges. Percentage of Canadian colleges that use the assessment method
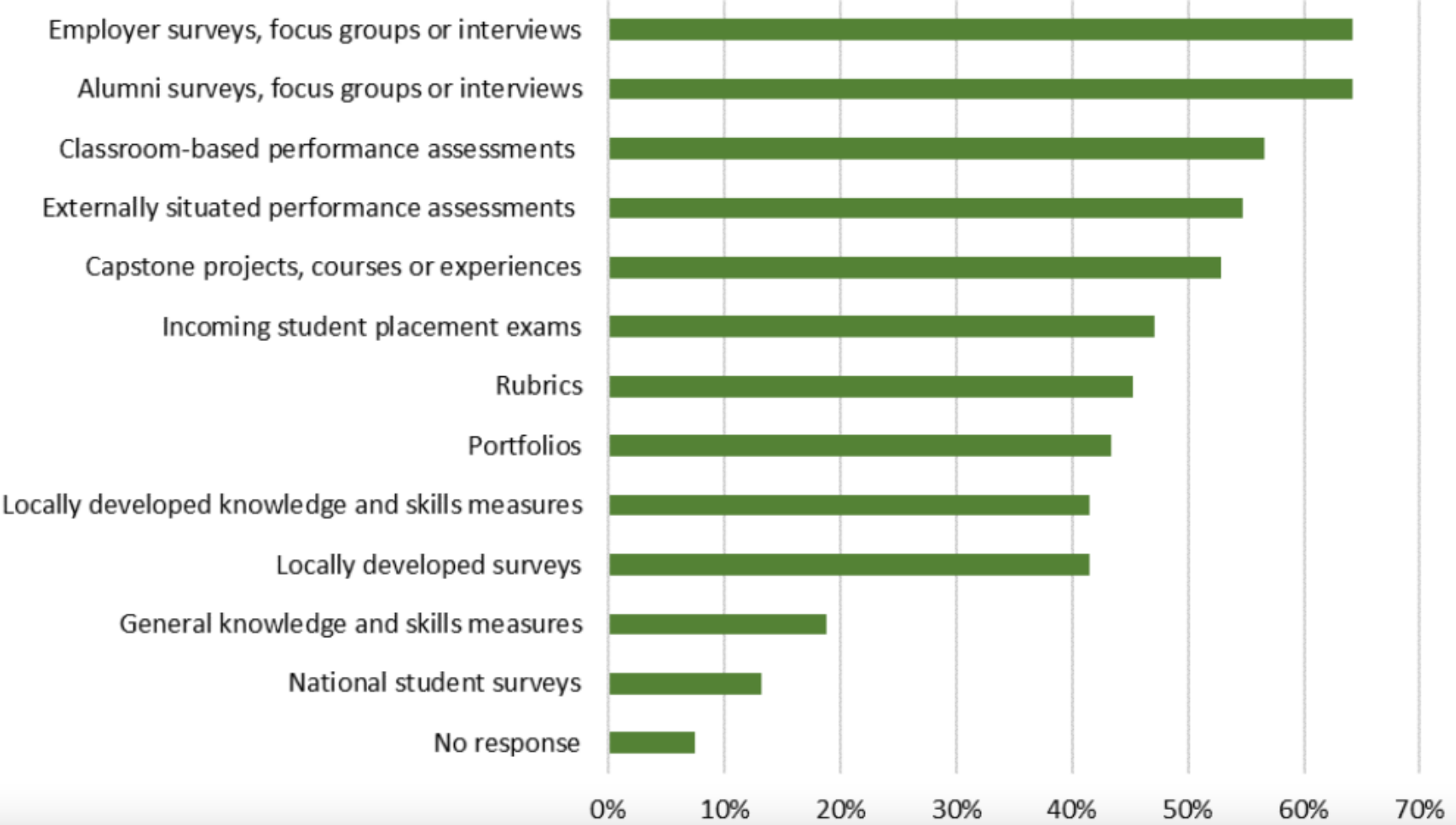
Types of Direct Assessment

Performance Assessment

- Pre/Post concept/skills tests
- Exhibits
- Demonstrations
- Simulations
- Essay exam

Capstone Assessment

- Thesis
- Poster
- Performance
- Design
- Collaborative grant proposal

LMS data (Canvas)

- Predictive assessment
- Diagnostic assessment

Student (e-)Portfolios*

- students select examples of their work and enter them into a collection device
- include personal reflections (why items selected, what they demonstrate)
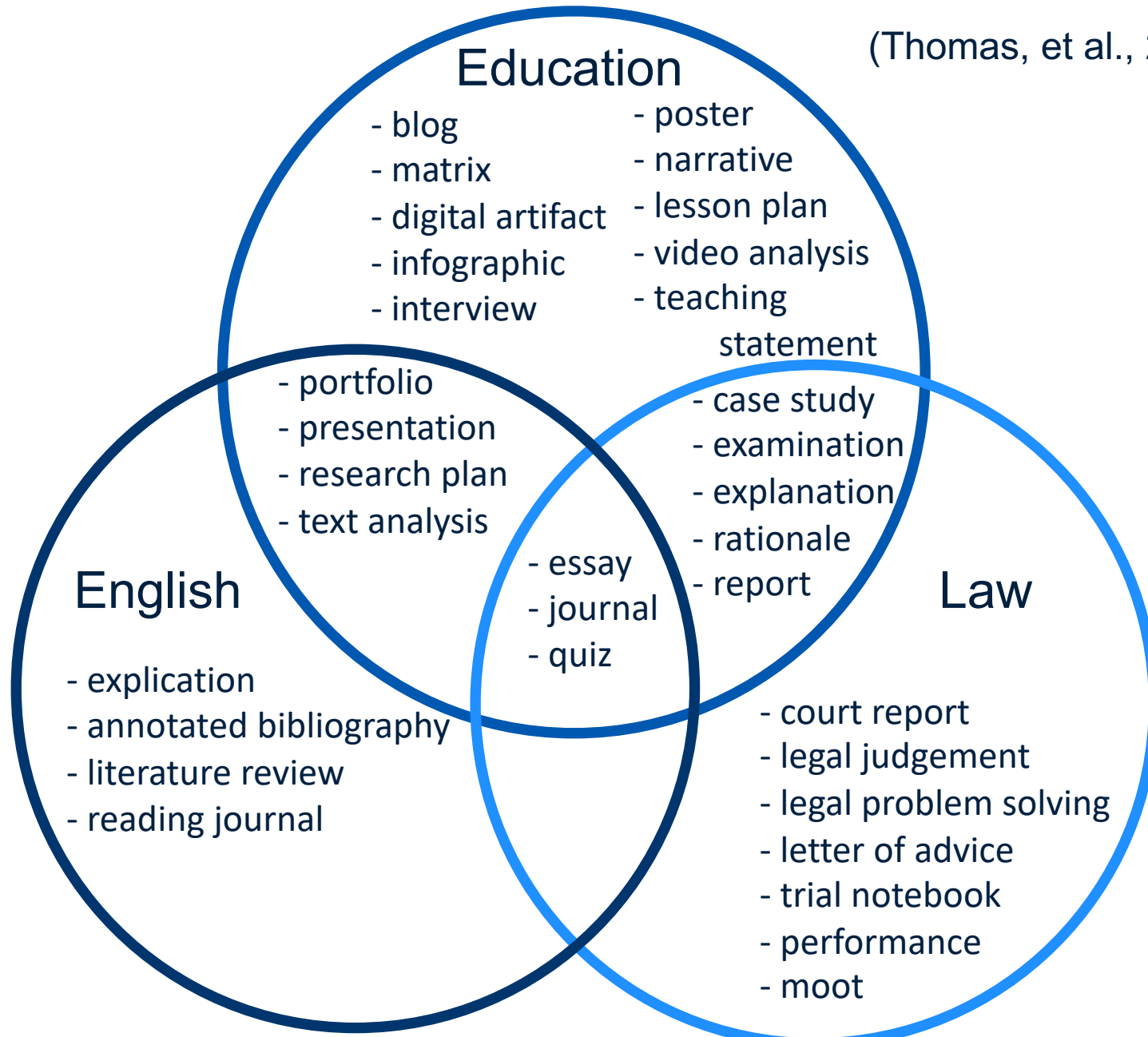- faculty/evaluators review portfolios for evidence of achievement on PLOs

Course-based Assessment

- artifacts, grades, assignment rubrics, checklists and observation to assess discipline-specific skills
- both summative and formative assessments for insight into skill levels and to guide lesson content

Assessments across Three Degrees

(Thomas, et al., 2019)

Education

- blog
- matrix
- digital artifact
- infographic
- interview
- poster
- narrative
- lesson plan
- video analysis
- teaching statement

- portfolio
- presentation
- research plan
- text analysis

- case study
- examination
- explanation
- rationale
- report

- essay
- journal
- quiz

English

- explication
- annotated bibliography
- literature review
- reading journal

Law

- court report
- legal judgement
- legal problem solving
- letter of advice
- trial notebook
- performance
- moot

Types of Indirect Assessment

Course & Program-level Surveys

- Mid-point survey

- Observations

- Student Experience of Instruction (SEOI)

- Program-specific; can also adapt:

    - AAC&U VALUE Rubrics

    - Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TILT) in Higher Education

Stories (counter-stories) & narratives

- Interviews, focus groups (multi-stakeholder)

- Collaborative video projects

Institutional data

- Enrollment demographic data

- UBC Undergraduate Experience Survey (2021, 2022); NSSE (2023)

- UBC Teaching Practices Survey (2008, 2014, 2018, 2023)

- Survey of alumni

How to Choose?

When choosing/developing assessment methods, consider whether they:

- answer questions that are important to you

- are already being used/championed

- are manageable, given available resources

- are both direct/indirect; quantitative/qualitative

- provide useful results that highlight achievements and identify areas requiring attention.

Adapted from OAPA Handbook PROGRAM-Based Review and Assessment, UMass Amherst

# What direct & indirect assessments would be most useful for your program?
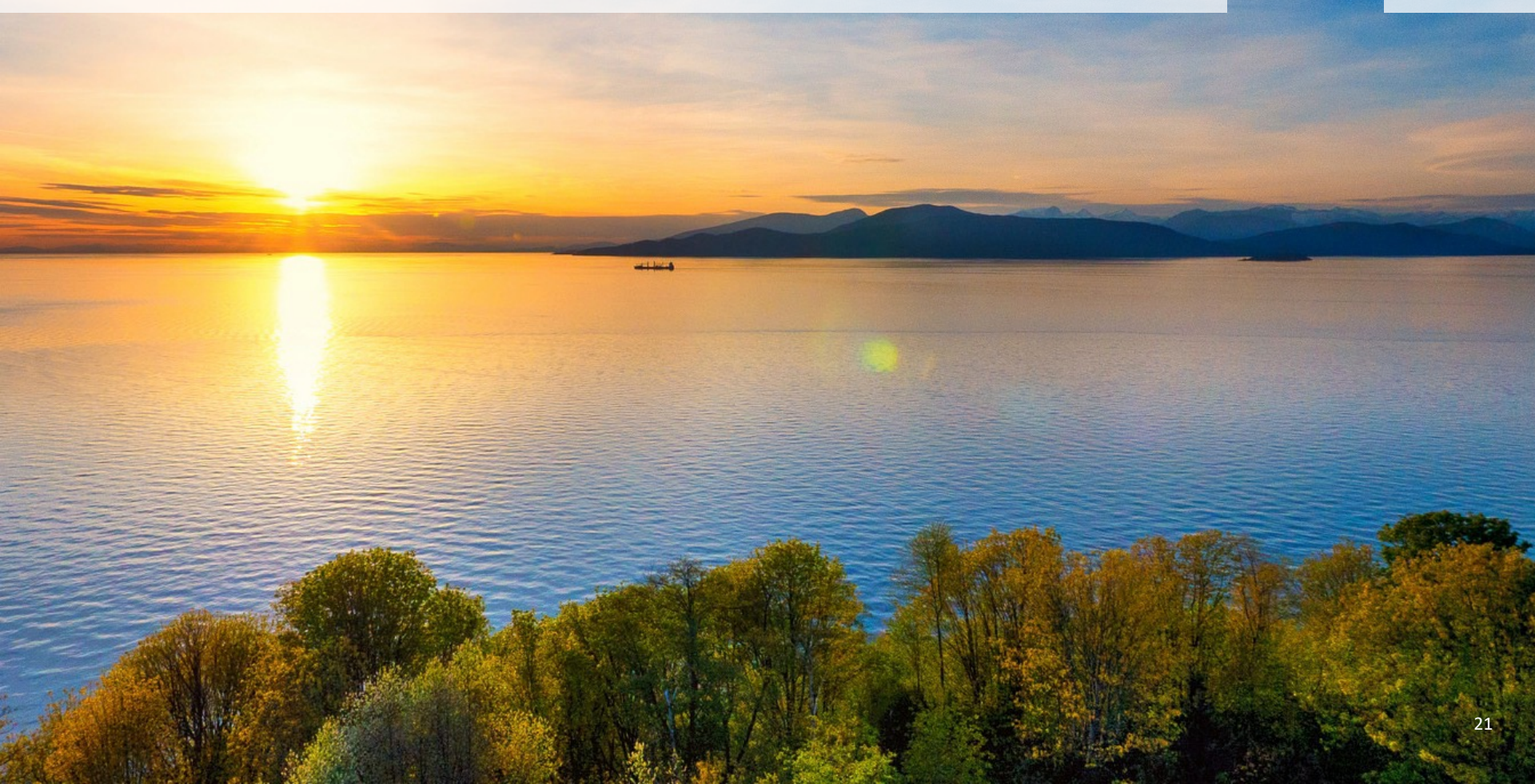
Equity-Centered Assessment

To be effective, efforts to increase equity in higher education must be sustained across all stages of the assessment cycle: establishment of learning outcomes, development of measures, analysis of findings, and improvements to learning

(Maki, 2010, in Singer-Freeman, Bastone, & Montenegro, 2022)

Equity in the Assessment Process
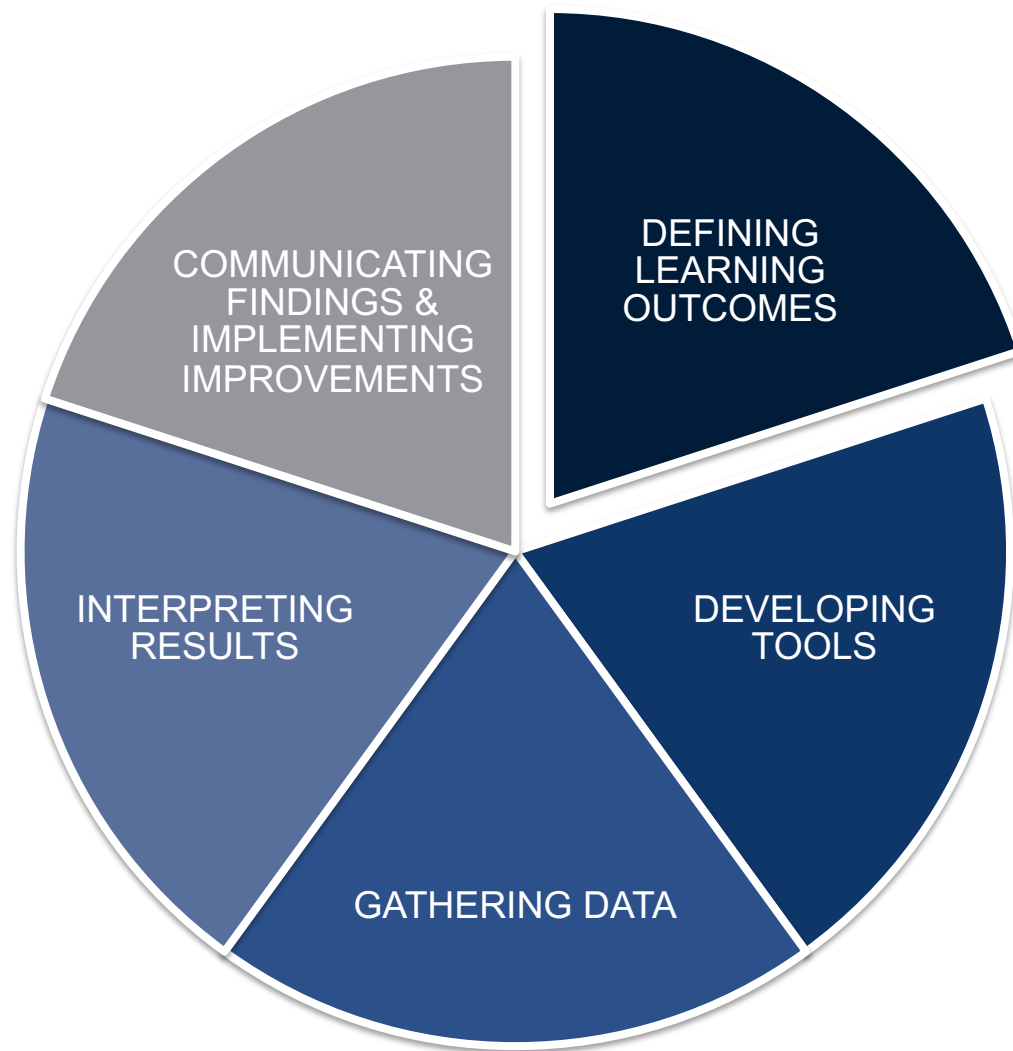
Assessment Plan Template

Sketch out an assessment timeline across four academic years for each program learning outcome (PLO) or PLO category. The goal is that each academic year all PLOs will be accounted for in one of **four phases**:

1) **Develop and test tools**

2) **Assess PLOs and triangulate & analyze data**

3) **Interpret results w/ stakeholders & tell story**
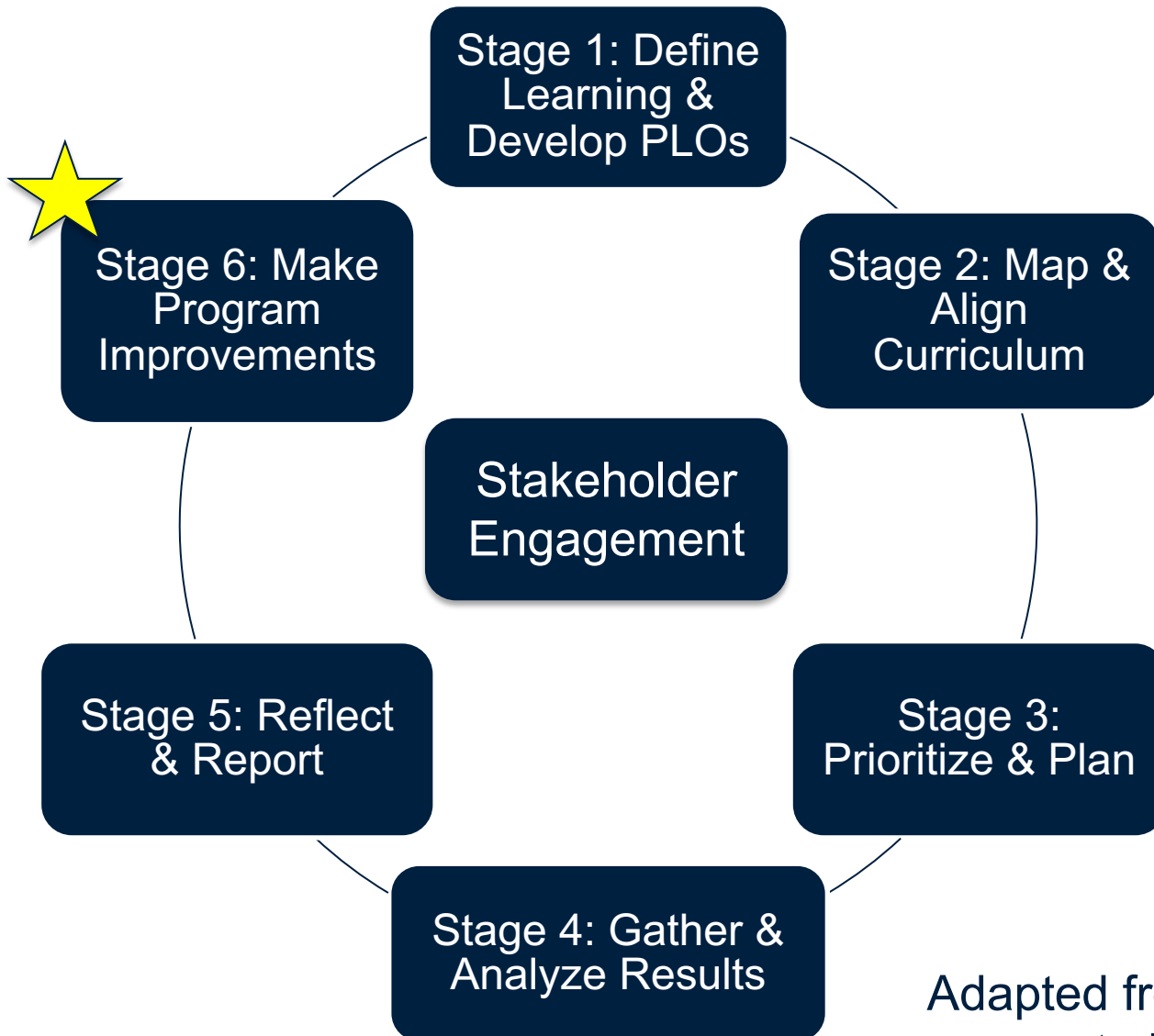
4) **Implement recommendations for improvement**

Assessment Plan Template

Academic Year	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
DEVELOP TOOLS	PLO Category 1 or PLOs 1-3	PLO Category 2 or PLOs 4-5	PLO Category 3 or PLOs 6-8	PLO Category 4 or PLOs 9-10
ASSESS PLO	PLO Category 4 or PLOs 9-10	PLO Category 1 or PLOs 1-3	PLO Category 2 or PLOs 4-5	PLO Category 3 or PLOs 6-8
INTERPRET RESULTS	PLO Category 3 or PLOs 6-8	PLO Category 4 or PLOs 9-10	PLO Category 1 or PLOs 1-3	PLO Category 2 or PLOs 4-5
IMPLEMENT CHANGES	PLO Category 2 or PLOs 4-5	PLO Category 3 or PLOs 6-8	PLO Category 4 or PLOs 9-10	PLO Category 1 or PLOs 1-3

What will go into your assessment plan?

Next Steps

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Stakeholder Engagement

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AAC&U VALUE rubrics

VALUE: **Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education**
Proficiency levels: Benchmark (1), Milestones (2, 3), Capstone (4)

- Civic Engagement
- Creative Thinking
- Critical Thinking
- Ethical Reasoning
- Global Learning
- Information Literacy
- Inquiry & Analysis
- Integrative Learning
- Intercultural Knowledge & Competence

- Foundation & Skills for Life-long Learning
- Oral Communication
- Problem Solving
- Quantitative Literacy
- Reading
- Teamwork
- Written Communication

TILT Higher Ed surveys

Metacognitive behaviours for students to apply consciously:

- separate and examine the pieces of an idea, experience, or theory
- connect information from a variety of sources
- apply concepts to practical problems or in new situations
- consider the ethical implications of your actions
- improve your ability to learn effectively on your own
- analyze and interpret data
- choose methods appropriate to solving a problem
- consider opinions or points of view different from your own
- evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of ideas
- judge the reliability of information from various sources
- recognize when you need help with your academic work
- collaborate effectively with others
- ask instructors about how coursework/activities benefit your learning

(https://tilthighered.com/tiltsurveyquestions)