

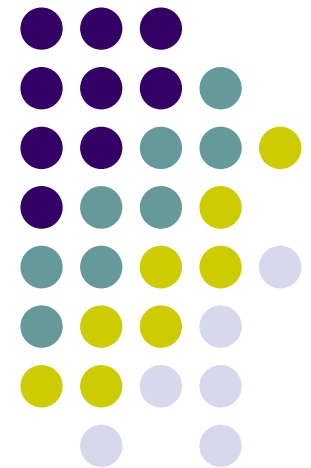
San Juan, Puerto Rico

August 2008

Understanding and Using Assessment Results

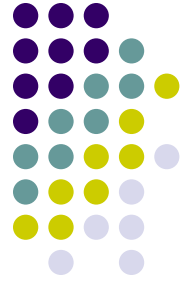
Linda Suskie, Vice President
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Traducido par Ray Petty y Grace Nazario
Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Ponce

1. What is Assessment of Student Learning?

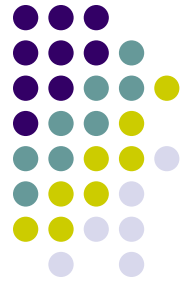


- Deciding what we want our students to learn
- Making sure they learn it!

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

Student Learning Assessment as a Four-Step Cycle

El avalúo del aprendizaje estudiantil
como un ciclo de cuatro pasos

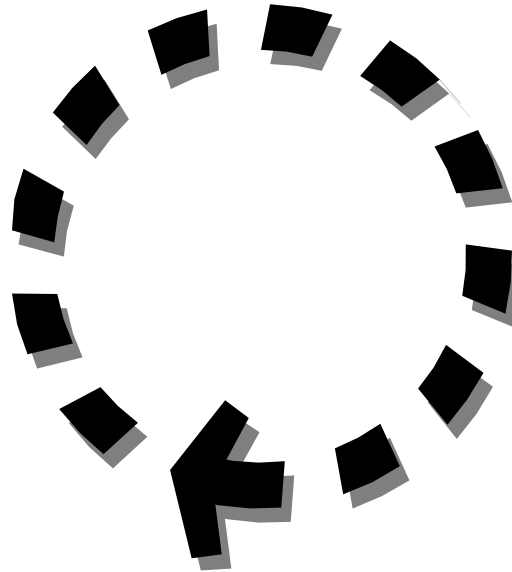


1. Learning Goals –
metas de aprendizaje

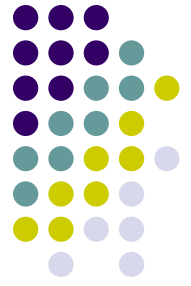
2. Learning
Opportunities –
oportunidades para
aprendizaje

3. Assessment - avalúo

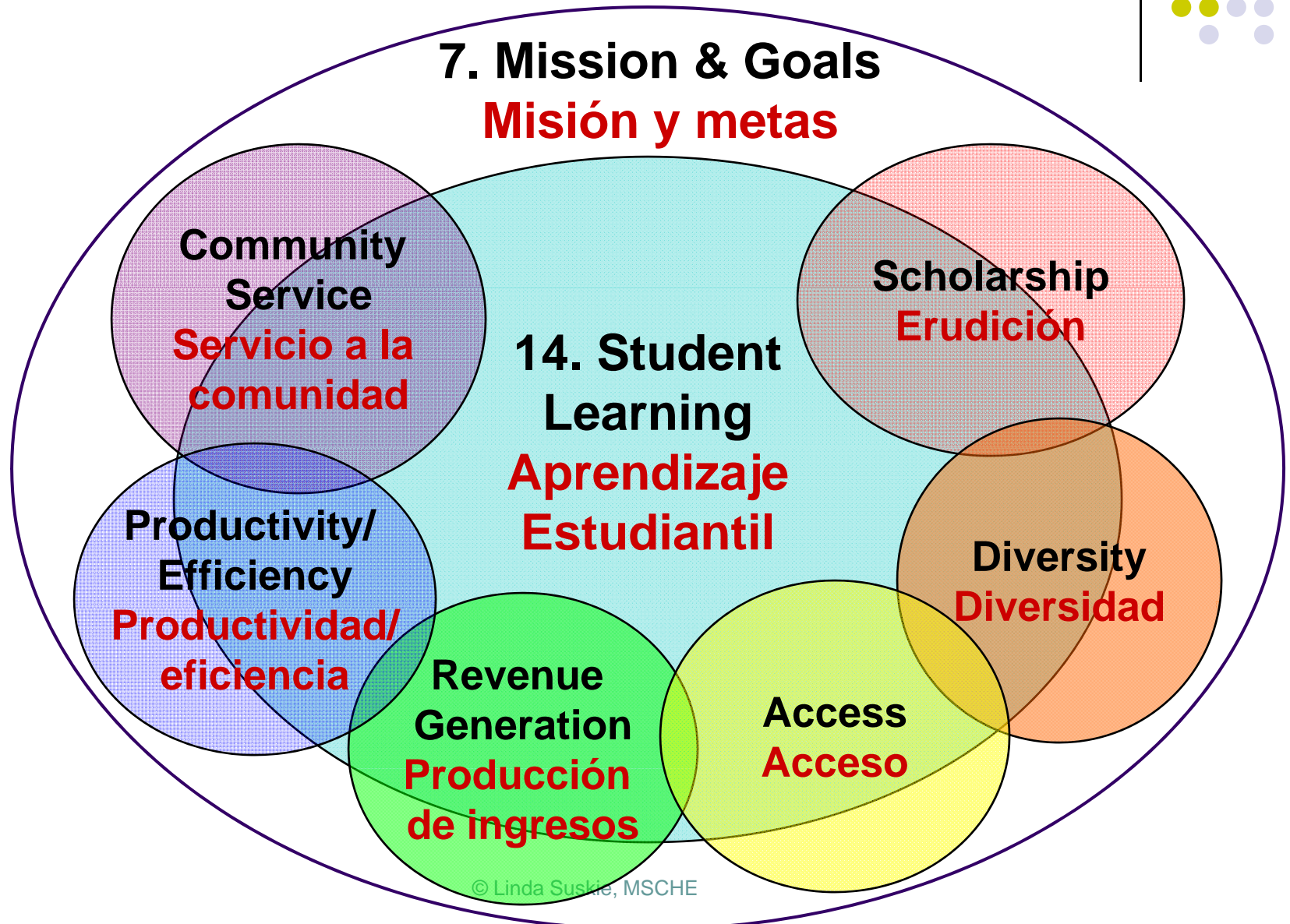
4. Using
Results –
aplicando
resultados

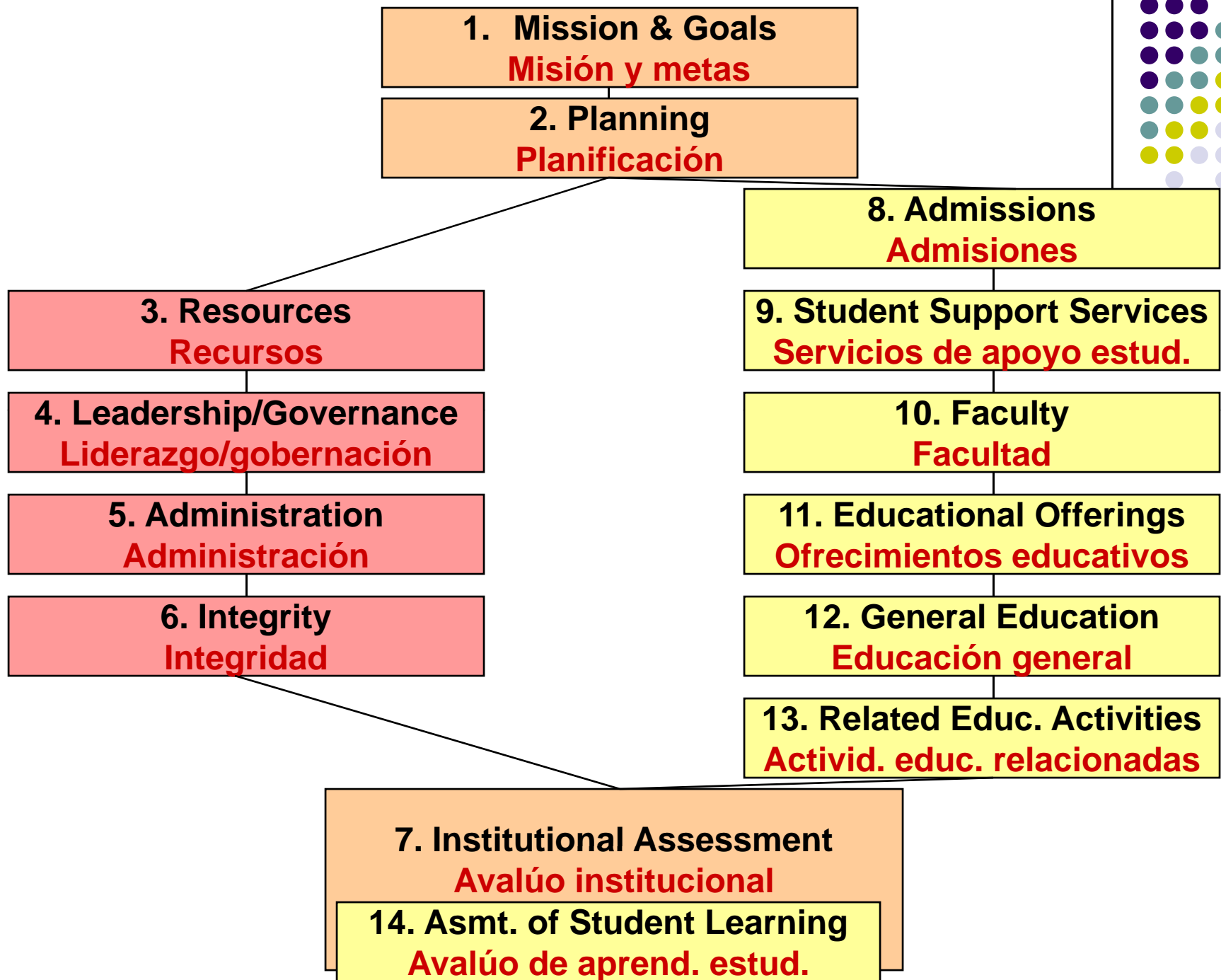


What is Institutional Effectiveness? ¿Qué es la efectividad institucional?

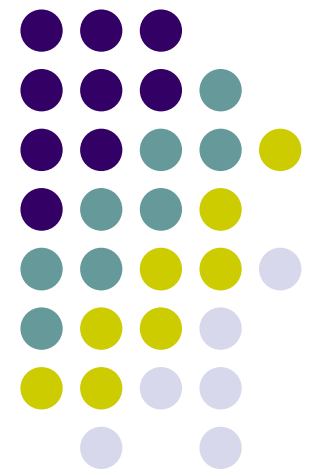
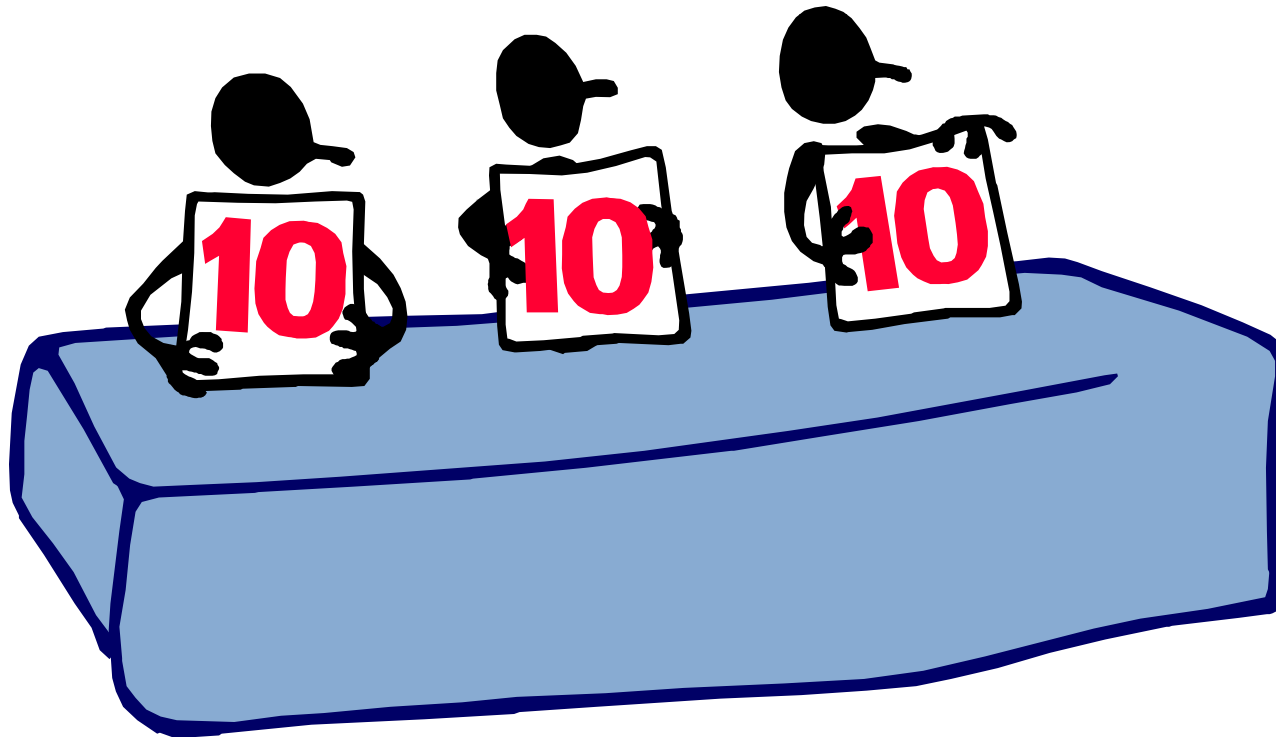


7. Mission & Goals Misión y metas

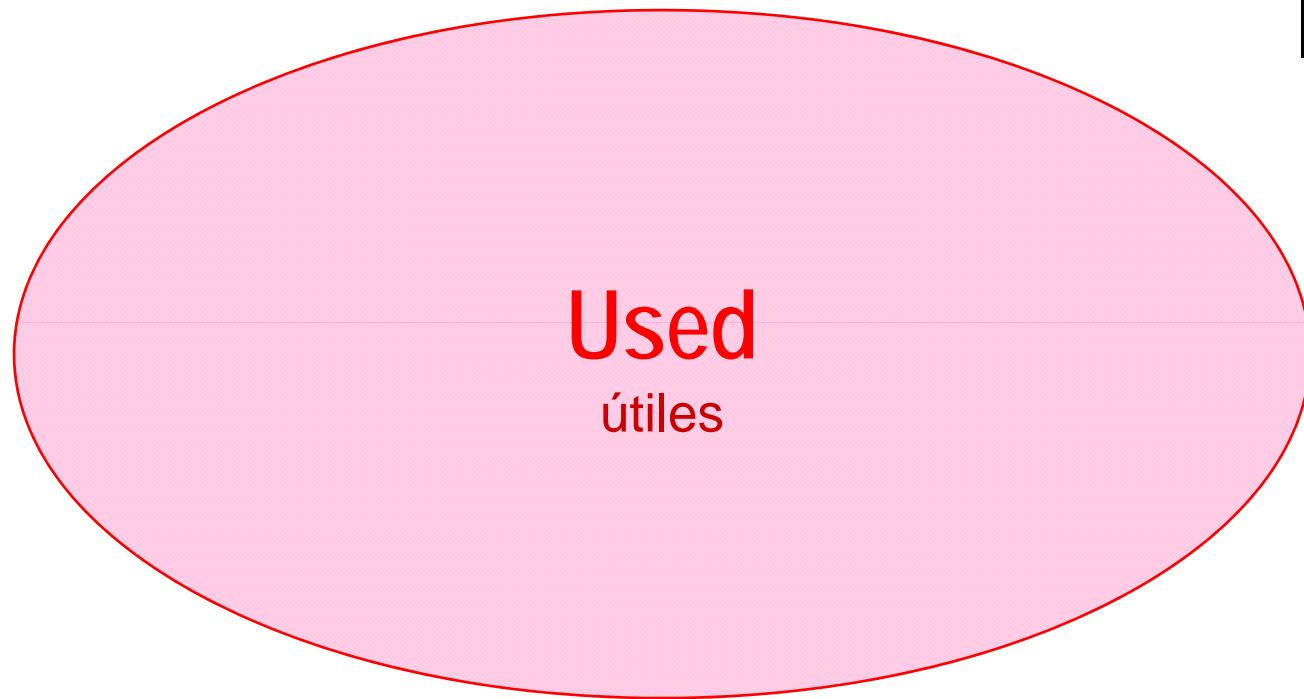




2. What is “Good” Assessment? ¿Qué es un avalúo “bueno”?

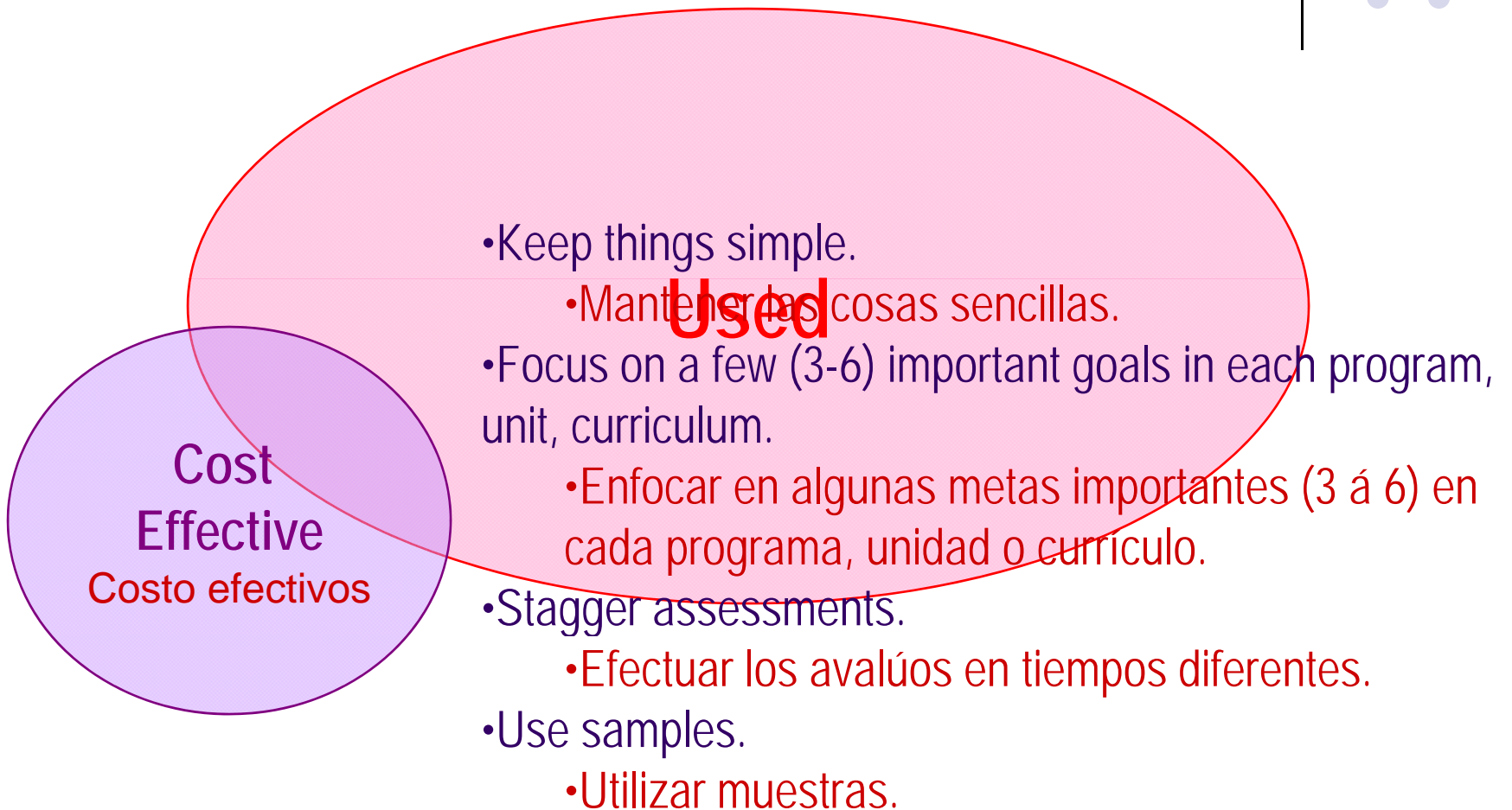
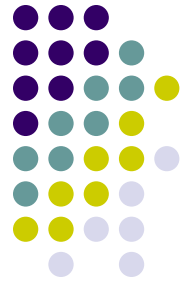


Five Dimensions of Good Assessment

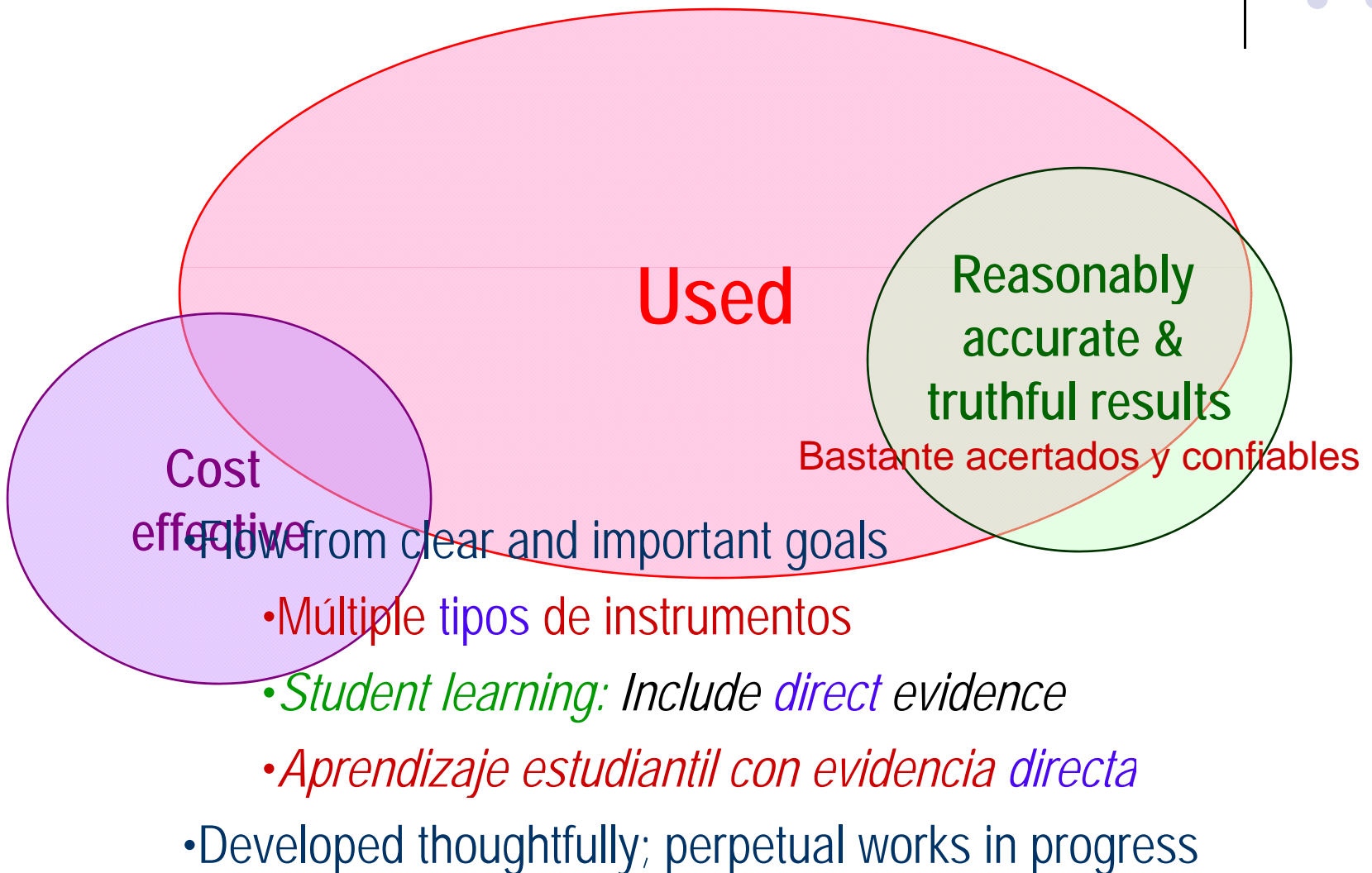
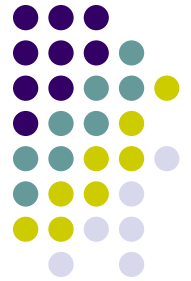


- Focus on clear and important goals
- Results communicated widely and transparently

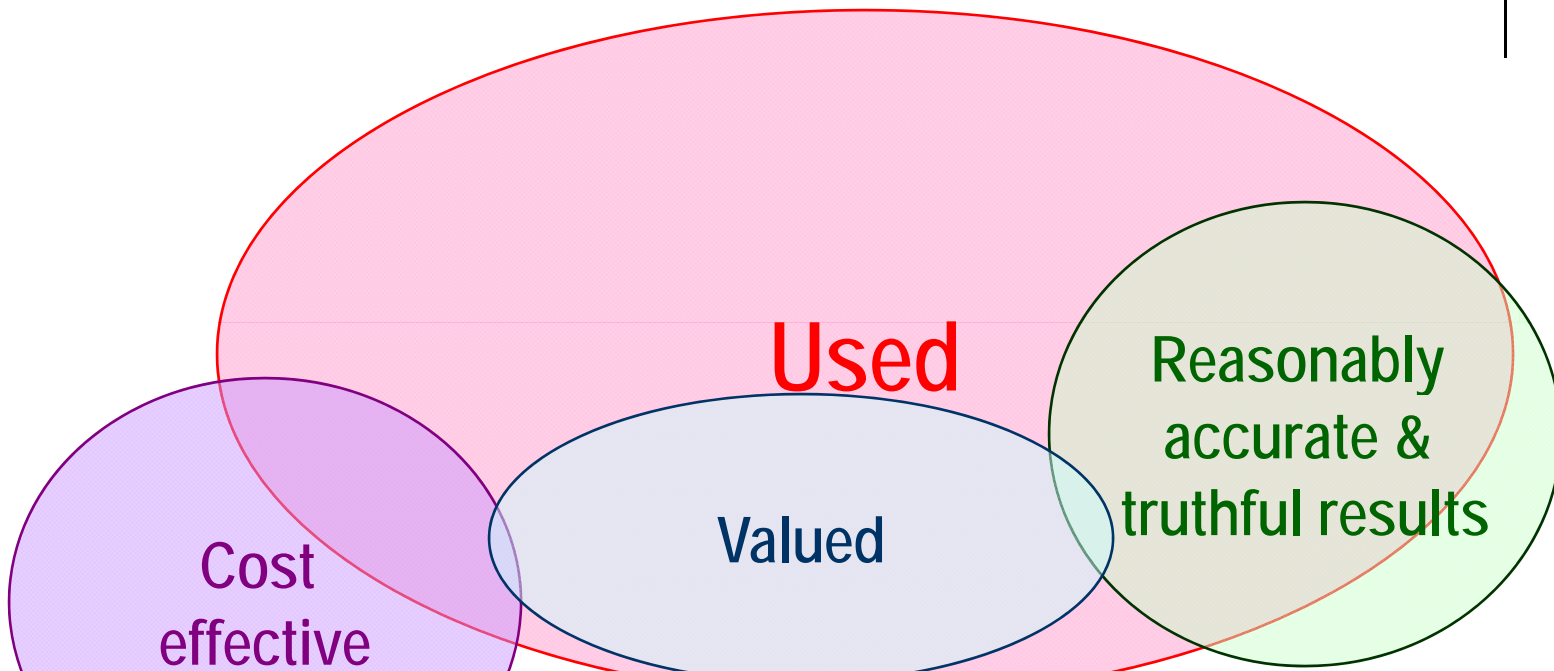
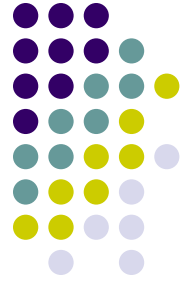
Five Dimensions of Good Assessment



Five Dimensions of Good Assessment

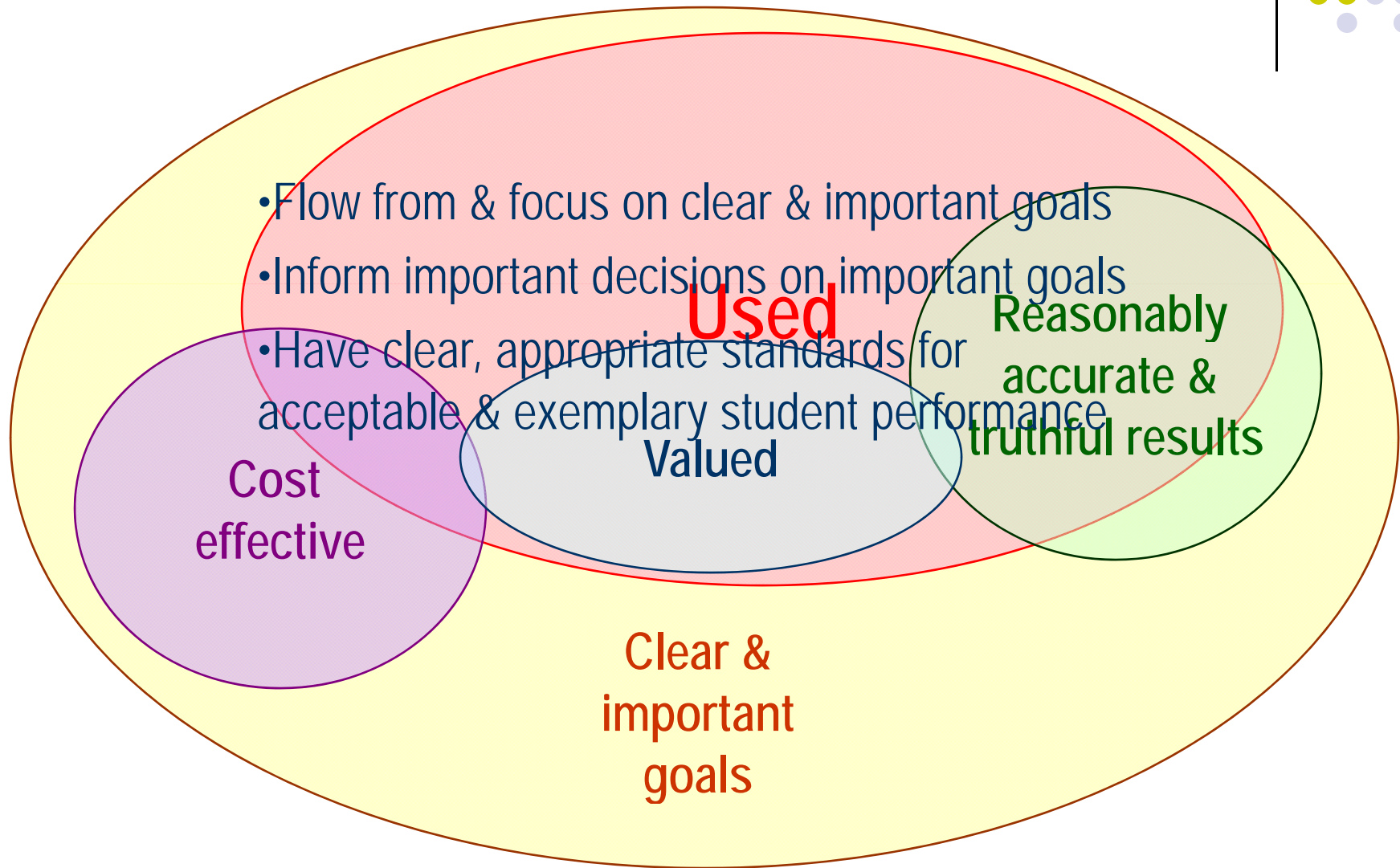


Five Dimensions of Good Assessment

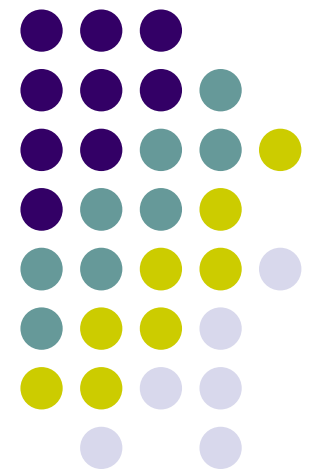


- Results inform important decisions on important goals
- Ongoing, not once-and-done
 - **Continuo, no de golpe**
- Overall guidance & coordination
 - **Orientación y coordinación total**

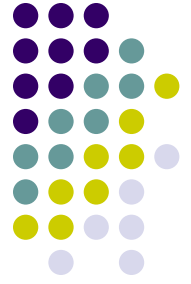
Five Dimensions of Good Assessment



3. Setting Benchmarks or Standards: How Good is Good Enough?



Michael earned 55 points on the midterm.



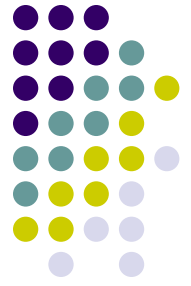
- Did he do well on the midterm?

To decide if Michael “did well,” we must compare his 55 against something else.



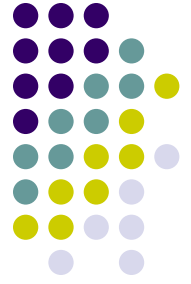
- *Benchmark*
- *Standard*
- *Target*
- *Frame of reference*
- *Lens*
- *Criterion*
- *“Brightline”*
- The “something else” depends on what we want the test to tell us.

Suppose 35 is passing
and 80 is a perfect score.



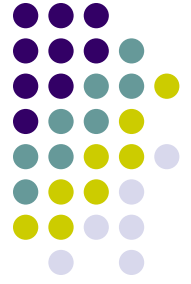
- **Local standards**
 - *aka competency-based*
 - *aka criterion-referenced*
- Question answered:
 - **Are our students meeting our standards?**
- Challenge:
 - *Establishing sound performance standards*

Suppose 35 is passing
and 80 is a perfect score
on a published exam.



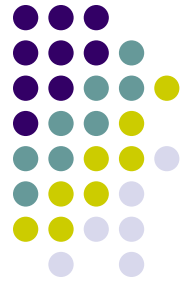
- External standards
 - *aka competency-based*
 - *aka criterion-referenced*
- Question answered:
 - Are our students meeting external standards?
- Challenge:
 - *Do the standards match what we think is important?*

Suppose the class average is 65.



- **Peer** benchmark
- *aka norm-referenced*
- Question answered:
 - **How do our students compare to peers?**
- Challenge:
 - *Identifying appropriate peers & collecting info from them*

Suppose Michael scored 25 a year ago.



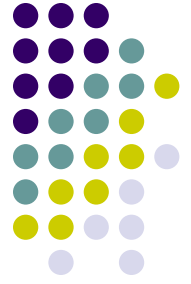
- **Value-added** benchmark
 - *aka growth, change, pre-post*
- Question answered:
 - **Are our students improving?**
- Challenges:
 - *Transfers in or out*
 - *Motivating students on pre-test*
 - *Is growth due to us?*
 - *Imprecise assessments mask growth*
 - *Is this question relevant?*

Suppose class average is 65 now
and 40 three years ago.



- **Historical trends** benchmark
 - *aka improvement*
 - *aka (incorrectly) longitudinal*
- Questions answered:
 - **Are our teaching & curricula improving?**
 - **Are we getting better?**
- Challenge:
 - *Using the same assessment*

Suppose Michael scored
a 65 for knowledge and
a 45 for real-world applications.



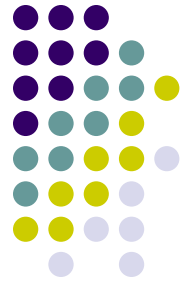
- **Strengths and weaknesses** benchmark
- Question answered:
 - **What are our students' relative strengths and areas for improvement?**
- Challenge:
 - *Getting “sub-scores” that are truly comparable*

Suppose Michael's 55 cost \$400
and Melissa's 55 cost \$300.



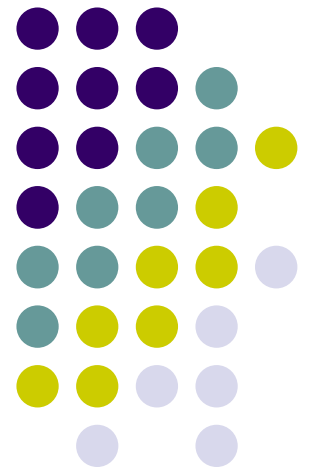
- **Productivity** benchmark
- Question answered:
 - **Are we getting the most for our investment?**
- Challenge:
 - *Calculating cost and benefit accurately*
 - *Keeping the focus on effectiveness as well as efficiency*

Which benchmark or standard should you use?

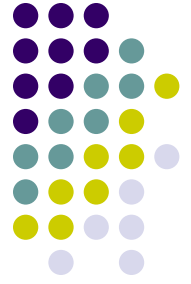


- Each has advantages and disadvantages.
- Each gives a somewhat incomplete picture.
- **Multiple perspectives** give the most balanced picture of student learning.

4. Sharing Assessment Results

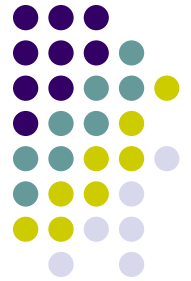


Why are you assessing your program or curriculum?



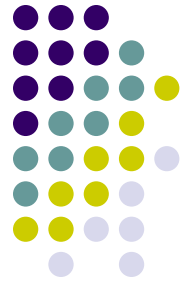
- Validate it to others (accountability)
- **Improve it**
- Make sure it isn't slipping

Keep assessment summaries
useful to you and your colleagues.



- Who on campus needs to see the results?
- Why? What decisions will they make?
- What do they need to see to make those decisions?

What decisions might your assessment help with?



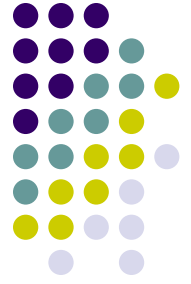
- **Learning goals**
 - *Are our learning goals sufficiently clear and focused?*
- **Curriculum**
 - *What is the value of service learning?*
 - *Should our courses have more uniformity across sections?*
- **Teaching methods**
 - *Is online instruction as effective as traditional instruction?*
 - *Is collaborative learning more effective than traditional lectures?*
 - *Are we developing a community of scholars?*
- **Assessments**
 - *Have our assessments been useful?*
- **Resource allocations**
 - *Where should we commit our resources first?*

Keep assessment summaries short and simple.

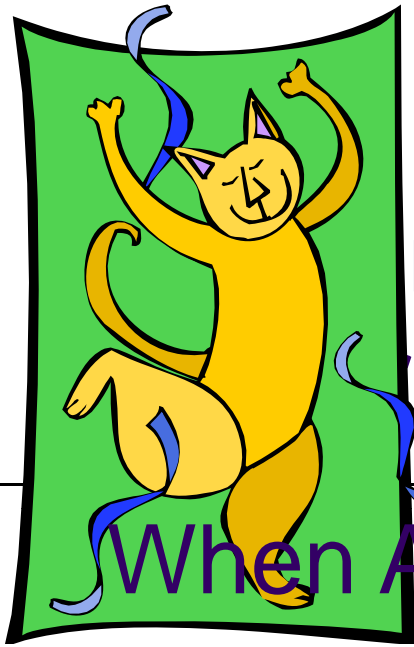


- Fast and easy to read and understand
 - Use short, simple charts, graphs, and lists.
 - *Use PowerPoint presentations.*
 - *Avoid narrative text.*
 - First aggregate (sum up) data, then drill down into details as needed.
 - Round results.
 - Sort results from highest to lowest.
 - Percentages may be more meaningful than averages.
 - *Avoid complex statistics.*
 - As you collect results over time, show trends.

Tell a story.



- Key questions to address:
 - *What have you learned* about your students' learning?
 - *What are you going to do* about what you have learned?
 - *When, where, and how* are you going to do it?
 - Doug Eder
- Focus on “big news.”
 - *Have a statistician identify meaningful vs. insignificant differences.*
- Find someone skilled at finding the stories in reams of data.



ng Assent Results
ove Teaching & Learning

When Assessment Results
Are Good



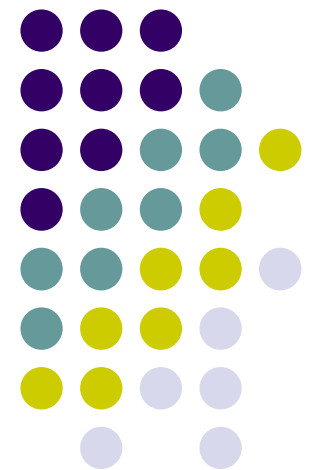
Celebrate!

Publicize!

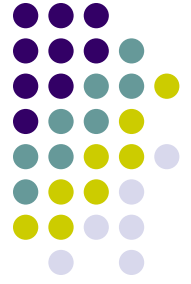


When assessment results are disappointing...

- Goals
- Curriculum
- Pedagogy
- Assessments

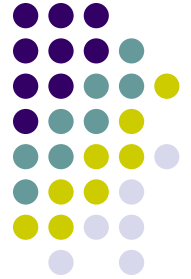


Look at your learning goals.



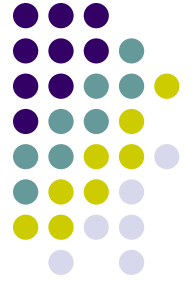
- Are your goals inappropriate or overly ambitious?
- Do your goals need to be clarified?
- Do you have too many goals?

Look at your curriculum.



- Including placement and developmental education.
- Does the curriculum adequately address each learning goal?

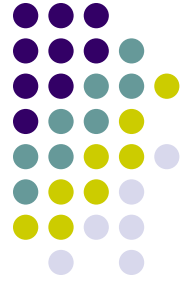




Look at your teaching methods.

- How do student learn best?





Look at your assessments.

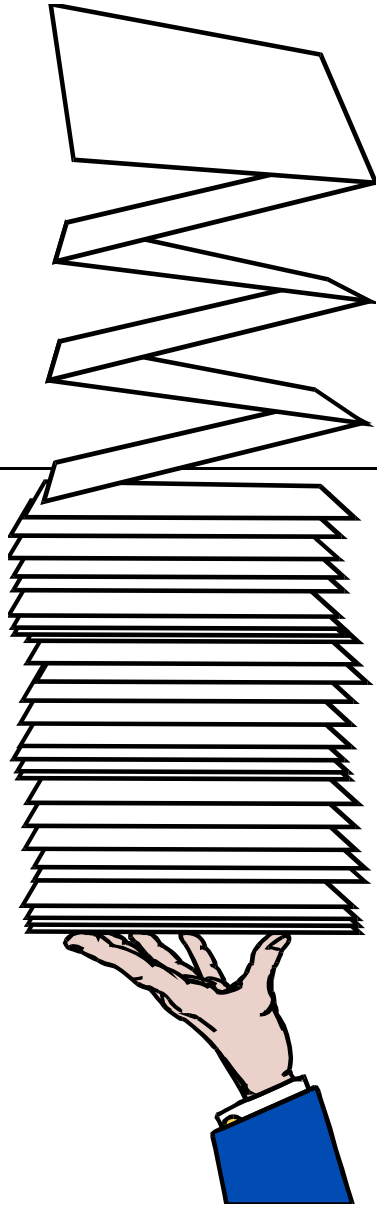
- Are they poorly written and misinterpreted?
- Do they match your key learning goals?
- Are they too difficult for most responsible students?

Isn't poor performance the student's fault?

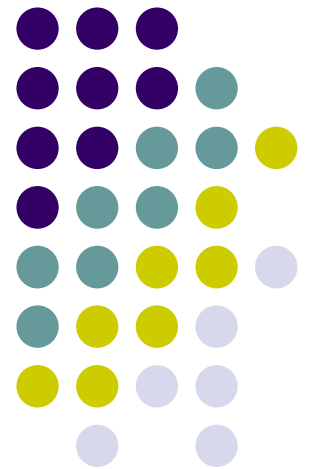


- Sometimes, but usually a minority
- Suskie's "50% rule"



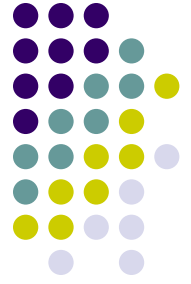


6. Telling Your Story to Middle States



What should institutions document?

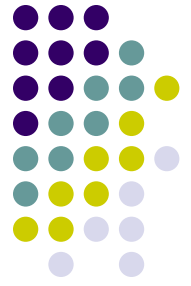
¿Qué deben documentar las instituciones?



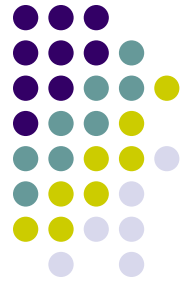
- Clear statements of goals - **Metas claras**
- Organized, sustained assessment process (“assessment plan”)
Proceso de avalúo organizado y sostenido (“plan de avalúo”)
 - *Principals, guidelines, support* - **Principios, guías, apoyo**
 - *What assessments are already underway* - **Cuáles avalúos están en proceso**
 - *What assessments are planned, when, & how* - **Cuáles avalúos son planificados, cuando, cómo**
- Assessment results documenting progress toward accomplishing goals - **Documentando el progreso de los resultados de avalúo para lograr las metas**
- How results have been used for improvement - **Cómo los resultados han sido utilizados para el mejoramiento**

How might institutions document this?

¿Cómo las instituciones pudieran documentar esto?



- Need not be a fancy bound document! **No tiene que ser un documento de lujo ni encuadernado**
- An overview in the report **Una resumen en el documento**
- A chart or “roadmap” for assessment documentation **Una guía o “mapa” para documentar el avaluó**
 - *Where are you with each institutional goal, academic program, and Gen Ed requirement? ¿En qué etapa se encuentra con cada meta institucional, programa académica y requisito de educación general?*



- Assessment documentation for each institutional goal, program, and Gen Ed requirement

Documentación de los avalúos para cada meta institucional, programa académica y requisito de educación general

- *For large/complex institutions, a **representative** sample*

*Para instituciones grandes/complejos, una muestra **representativo***

- *In the report, an appendix, online, or burned onto a CD*

Dentro de documento, en un apéndice, o grabado en un CD

Questions that a reviewer might ask

Preguntas que un lector pudiera presentar

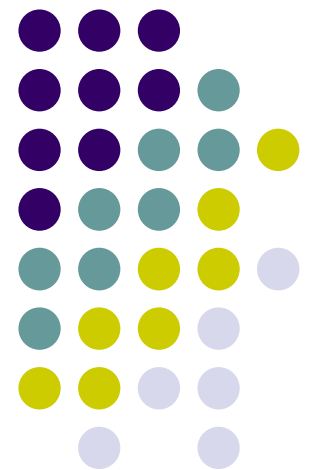
Are the right things happening?

¿Están ocurriendo las cosas correctas?

Does the report focus on past and present, not
just future?

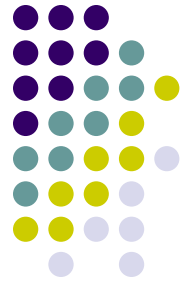
Are the characteristics of “good” assessment
being met?

¿Están logrando las características de un
“buen”avaluó?



Do institutional leaders support and value a culture of assessment?

¿Apoyan y valorizan los líderes institucionales una cultura de avalúo?



- Is there adequate **support** for assessment?

¿Hay **apoyo** adecuado para el avalúo?

- Overall guidance & coordination

Orientación y coordinación total

- Are assessment **efforts** recognized & valued?

Los esfuerzos de avalúo, ¿son reconocidos y valorados?

- Are efforts to **improve teaching** recognized & valued?

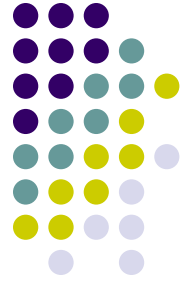
Los esfuerzos de mejorar la enseñanza, ¿son reconocidos y valorados?

How much has been implemented, and have appropriate assessment processes been planned to plug holes?

¿Qué cantidad ha sido implementada y si los procesos de avalúo apropiados han sido planificados para responder a deficiencias?



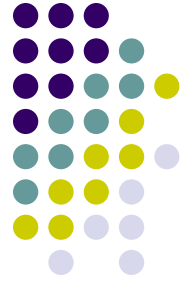
- Are timelines appropriate? ¿Es el calendario apropiado?
- Are the plans feasible? ¿Son factibles los planes?
 - Simple - sencillo
 - Practical - práctico
 - Detailed - detallado
 - Ownership - comprometido



What do assessment results tell us?

¿Qué nos comunican los resultado de los
avalúos?

- Do results demonstrate...
Demuestran los resultados...
 - Achievement of **mission and goals**?
¿Logro de la misión y las metas?
 - Sufficient **academic rigor**?
¿Rigor académico suficiente?



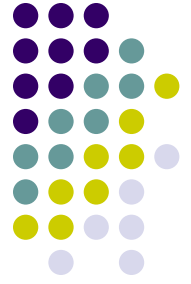
Have assessment results been used?

¿Los resultados de los avalúos han sido utilizados?

- Have they been appropriately **shared & discussed**?
¿Fueron **compartidos y discutidos** apropiadamente?

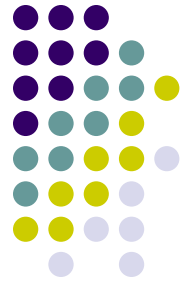
Have assessment results been used?

¿Los resultados de los avalúos han sido utilizados?



- Have they led to appropriate decisions?
¿Conducirían hacia las decisiones apropiadas?
 - *Curricula and pedagogy – currículó y pedagogía*
 - *Programs and services – programas y servicios*
 - *Resource allocation – presupuesto y recursos*
 - *Institutional goals and plans – metas y planes institucionales*

Where do we see the institution going with assessment? ¿Donde veremos la institución en el futuro con relación a avalúo?



- Good assessments are organized, systematized, and sustained. **Un buen avalúo es organizado, sistemático, y sostenido.**
- Does the institution have sufficient **engagement & momentum** on its own? **¿Tiene suficiente compromiso y velocidad propia?**
- Will momentum slow after this review? **¿Si esta velocidad disminuirá después de este repaso?**
- Are there any **significant gaps** in assessment processes? **¿Hay lagunas significativas en el proceso de avalúo?**
- What Commission action will most help the institution keep moving? **¿Cuál acción de la Comisión sería más beneficiosa para ayudar a la institución a moverse en el proceso?**