

Co-creating a module of study for a community of higher-level students

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Outline

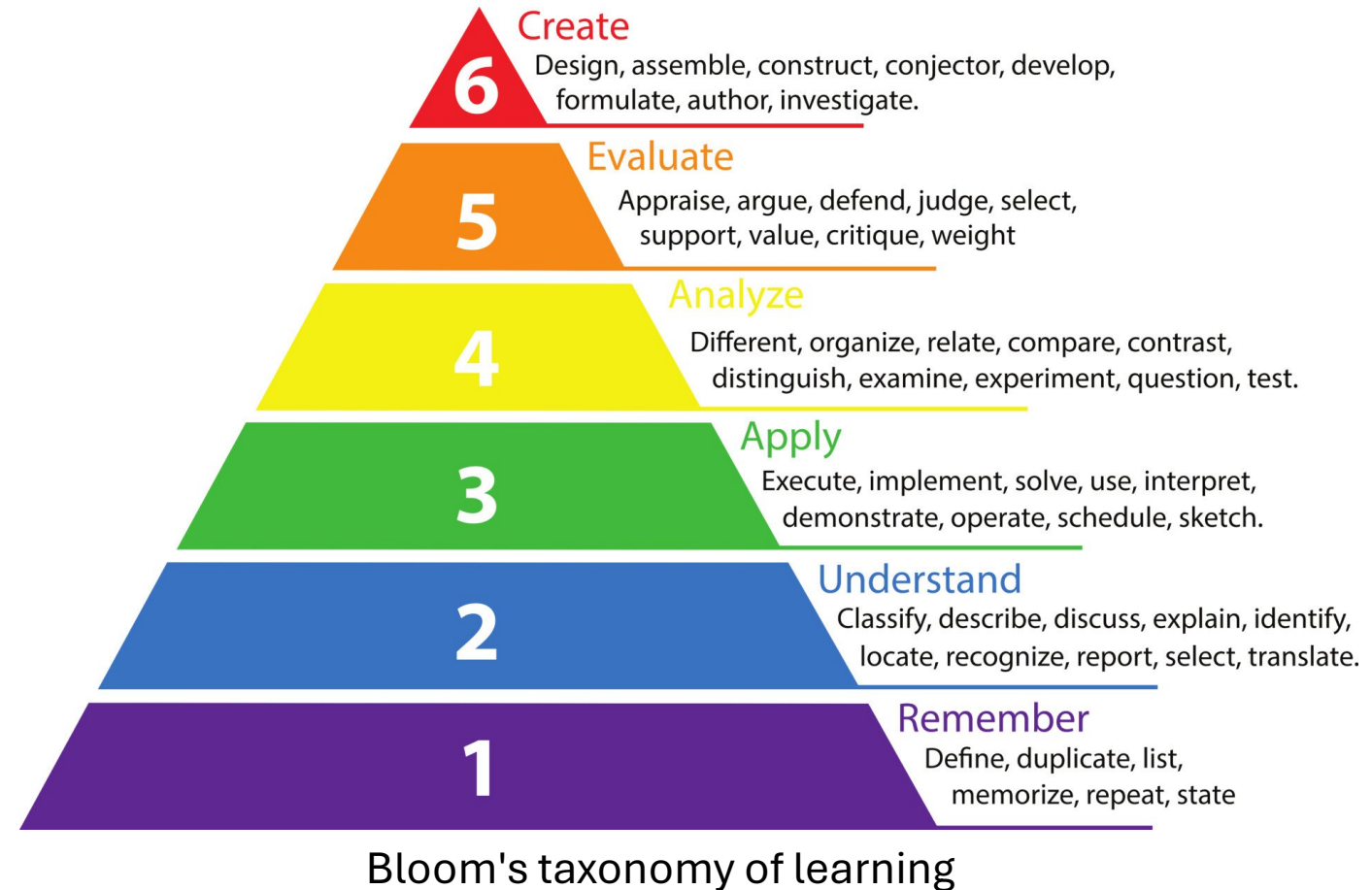
1. Context – who we are
2. Context – higher level learners
3. Changes in the module
4. Researching the changes – tutor and student feedback
5. What next
6. Workshop scenarios

Context – who are we, what is the module?



Context – AECT & higher-level learners

- ~70 nationalities → huge variety of cultural and educational backgrounds
- Need to acclimatise to new academic environment (Bhowmik & Kim, 2018; Yung & Fong, 2019)
- Need for focused input, e.g., academic writing (Klimova, 2015)
- Engaging learners to apply higher order thinking skills (Bloom, 1956)
- Huge diversity in cohort (Bhowmik & Kim, 2018) → need to address intercultural differences



Changes in student body in AECT, as well as external factors

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Student Success (65+)		94% (module median 73)	90% (module median 73)	90% (module median 72)	99% (module median 79)	99% (module median 79)
Student satisfaction			75%	86%	76%	76%
Number of students on the course	52 students, 3 classes	59 students,	238 students, 15 classes	264 students, 20 classes	343 students, 21 classes	393 students, 25 classes.
Changes in IELTS on entry		7.5 overall with no individual skill below 7	7.5 overall with no individual skill below 6.5	7.0 overall with no individual skill below 6.5	7.0 overall with 6.5 in three of four skills	

Variations of student views, needs, and backgrounds in AECT

IB/'western' educational backgrounds vs US/'testing' style backgrounds

STEM pathways vs the Business/Culture pathways (vs ESAP and EAP which are already split).

Range of IELTS levels on AECT from subscores of 6.5-9.0

IELTS scores \neq academic ability

AECT held in less 'esteem' by some, even if enjoyed – prefer more time with OM classes

'Neutral' vs 'strong' positive student feedback – how to influence this?

Why did we decide changes were needed?

Decrease in Student Satisfaction & Feedback on the module

Need to address varied needs – developing academic literacy, providing discipline specific support, move for more student-centred approaches

Tutor feedback from 23/24

Student feedback from 23/24 (meeting with AECT student reps)

How we did the research

Personal research conducted up to and during 24/25 academic year, including:

- success and satisfaction data
- attainment reports
- student body data
- module demands information
- pulse survey feedback
- focus groups
- module team meetings and communication
- liaison with fellow ELTs, SLTs, and OM leads (general communication, meetings, away days, etc.)
- field testing

Something went wrong...

Reload

AECT – a story of conflicting desires and needs

- Spiky profiles – difficult to identify what students could do ahead of time
- Some wanted more writing, others more critical speaking
- Scaffolding appreciated and more desired BUT more ownership wanted
- Support with assessment BUT less assessment-focused
- Need to balance same core skills but differing discipline demands

Something went wrong...



Changes made for 24-25 a summary - 1

- Block-based structure for scheme of work

Block 1 – Core content – general academic skills review

Block 2 – Focus on Writing and Applying to Summative Written Assessment (targeted)

Block 3 – Interdisciplinary Pathway Support

Block 4 – Critical Engagement and Discussion

Block 5 - Preparing for Final Assessments

- Integrating portfolio-style tasks into assessment
- Updated combined speaking and listening test
- 'Aligned but different' approach to formative and summative written assessments

Changes made for 24-25 a summary - 2

- Integration of wider range of multi-modal activities into live lessons
- Inclusion of mini-projects
- Deeper integration of ethical understanding and use of AI
- Simplifying and reducing VLE experience where appropriate

Student feedback from 24-25 questionnaires and focus groups; trends

Module Structure

Assessment

Supporting Criticality

KEATS (VLE) materials

Class Materials

Classroom Engagement Methods

Support for Further Study/ Interdisciplinarity

Cross-Cultural Communication

What next?

- Our research:
 - Student end of year survey
 - Tutor survey
- Wider developments
 - Splitting AECT into two modules
 - Divorce from English Language Requirement
 - Transforming Assessment at King's

Workshop questions – what, how, when, why?

Imagine you are faced with the following situations. In table groups, discuss the approaches/strategies/tools you would use to address and improve these.

We'll then discuss these as a room – and hopefully all come away with tips that we can all use!

- Giulia studies Global Politics and Abdul is doing Engineering: How would you design assessments that accommodate the needs of these different students?
- Dealing with 'apathetic' higher level learners: How would you maintain motivation of more able learners while helping those with weaker academic skills?
- Growing a module: How would you work with a large tutor team teaching groups across different pathways?
- Measuring the work: How would you continue this research?

Any questions?



Reference list

- Bhowmik, S. K., & Kim, M. (2018). Preparing diverse learners for university: A strategy for teaching EAP students. *Tesol Journal*, 9(3), 498-524.
- Bloom, B. S. (1956). Engelhart, MD, Furst, EJ, Hill, WH and Krathwohl, DR, "Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. *Handbook I: The Cognitive Domain*.
- Klimova, B. F. (2015). Designing an EAP course. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 191, 634-638.
- Yung, K. W. H., & Fong, N. (2019). Learning EAP at university: Perceptions of high-achieving first-year ESL undergraduates. *ELT Journal*, 73(3), 306-315.