

# Putting Learning Reconsidered Into Practice: Developing and Assessing Student Learning Outcomes

---

Learning Reconsidered Institute  
St. Louis, MO  
June 6, 2007

Richard P. Keeling, MD  
Ric Underhile, PhD



# Learning, assessment, and the changing mandate of Student Affairs

---

- Responding to a revised, broader understanding of learning that integrates development
- Mapping and supporting learning inside and outside classrooms
- Engagement of students in active, transformative learning
- Leadership in making the whole campus a learning community and in enhancing student experience and student success
- Identifying and ameliorating barriers to learning
- Developing, implementing, and assessing student learning outcomes



# What are learning outcomes?

---

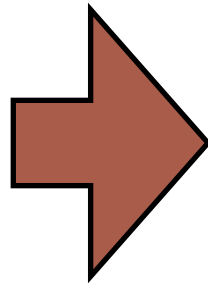
- **Learning outcomes** define the goals of learning experiences (activities, courses, majors, curricula, engagement with post-secondary education)
- What any student should be able to **do, know, or value** as a result of engaging in that learning experience
- Not the same as **satisfaction** with education, professors, facilities, activities, or experiences; not the same as **outputs**, such as grades, GPA, retention rate, graduation rate
- Outcomes define **impact** -- how the student has changed.
- **The achievement of learning outcomes (student success) measures institutional effectiveness.**

# Outcomes-based thinking shifts and shares our attention

---

## Process

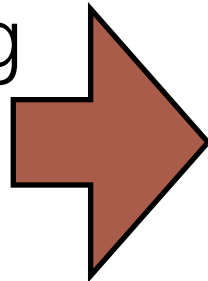
Planning activities and things to “do”



## Outcome

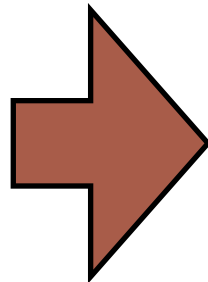
How the student will change as a result of what we do

“What are we going to do?”



“How will students be different; how will they learn, change, grow?”

Counting and asking

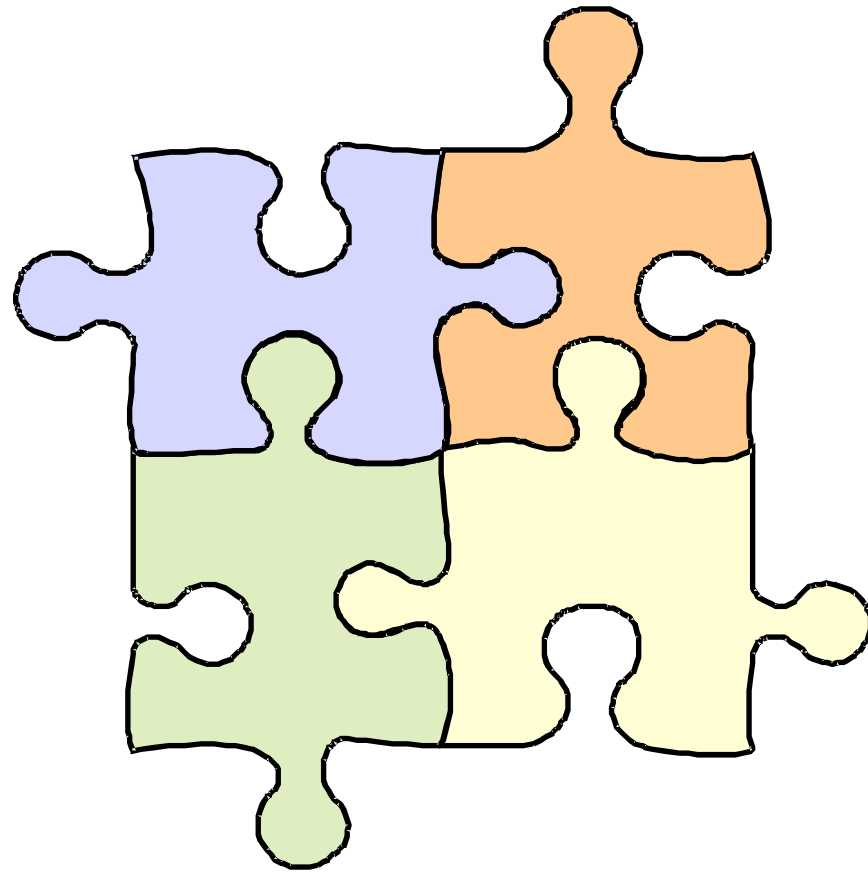


Documenting change; showing results

# Learning how to develop and assess student learning outcomes

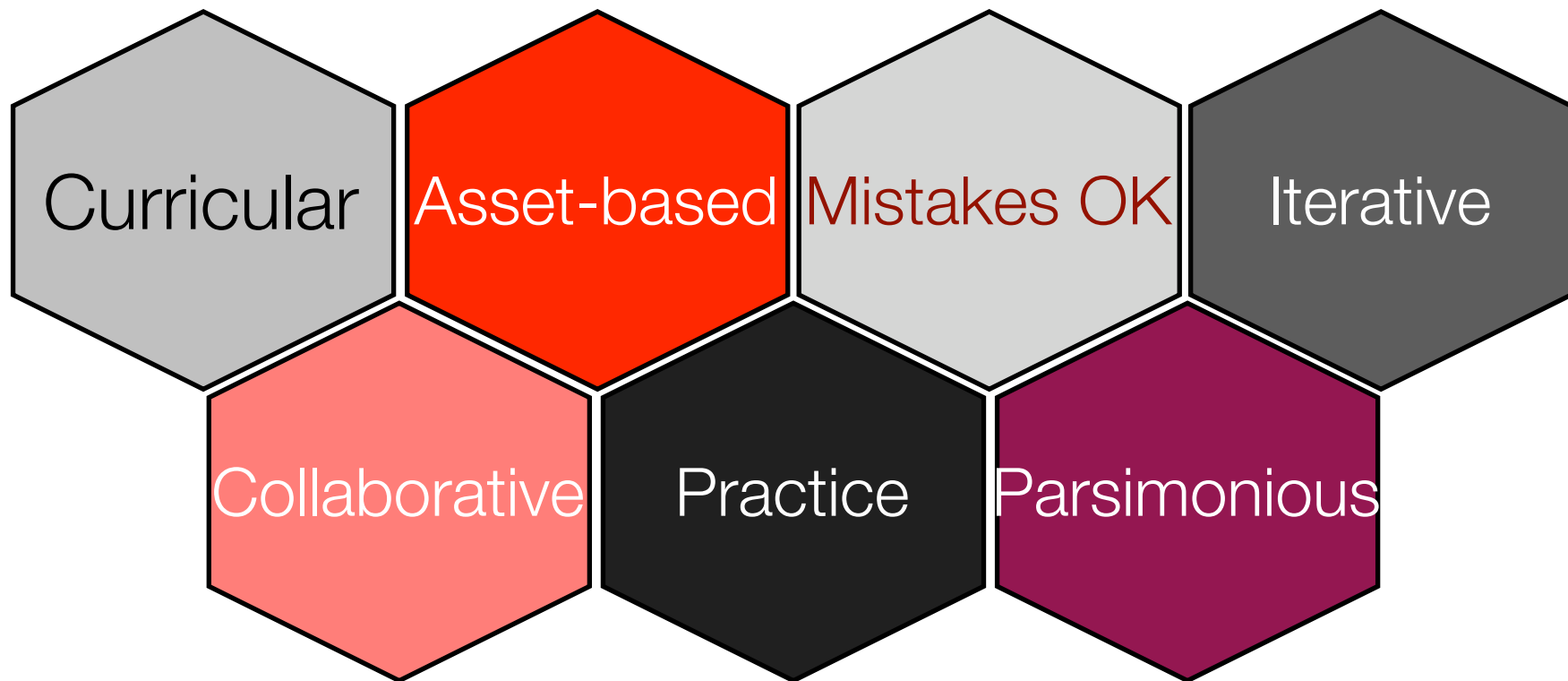
---

- New language and concepts
- Collaborative work process
- Comfort with critique, data, and feedback
- Reframing of assessment thinking from process and procedural metrics
- Realignment of concepts from assessing *students* to assessing *institutional effectiveness*
- Departure from *testing* paradigm
- Cross-fertilization



# Learning to develop, implement, and assess student learning outcomes

---



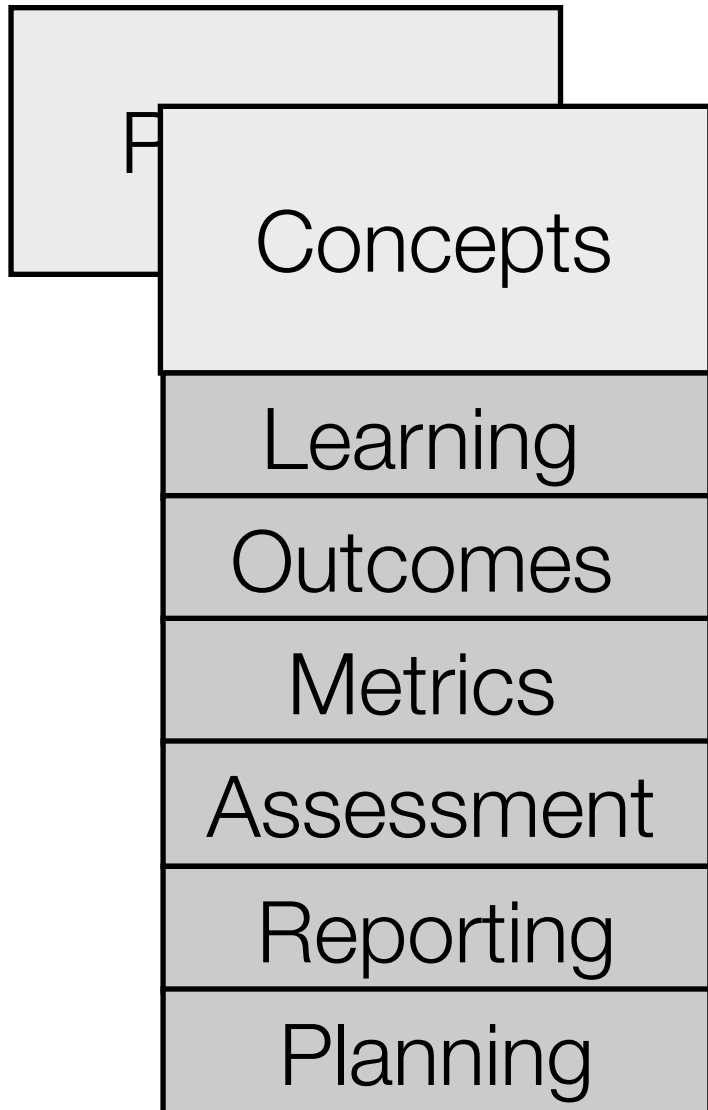
# Capacity-building: content

---

Purposes

# Capacity-building: content

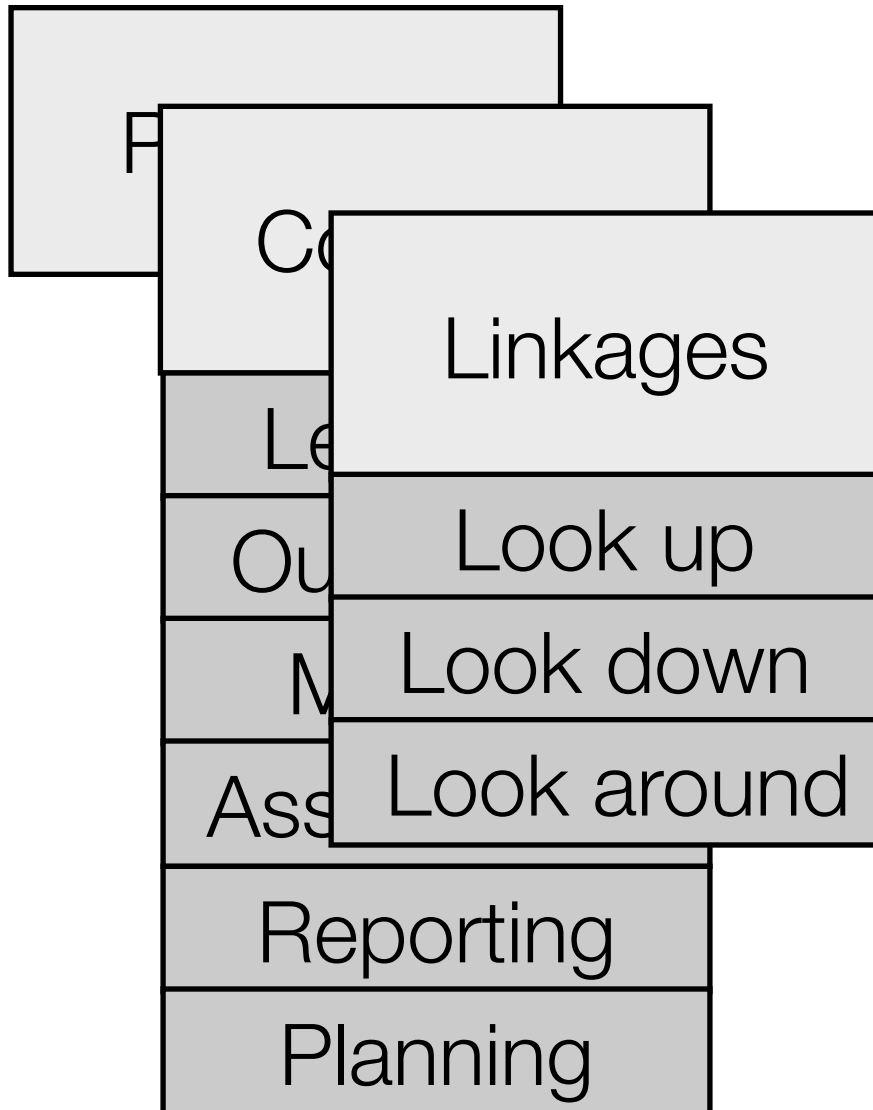
---





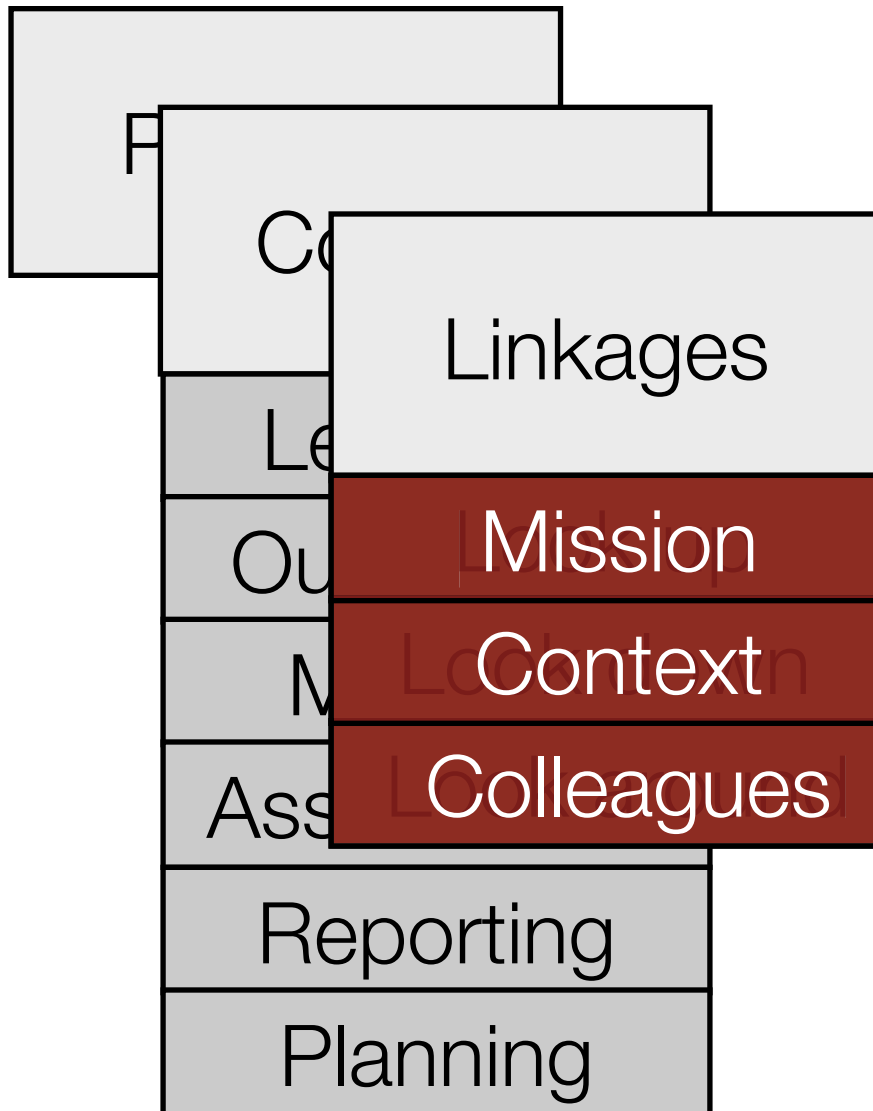
# Capacity-building: content

---



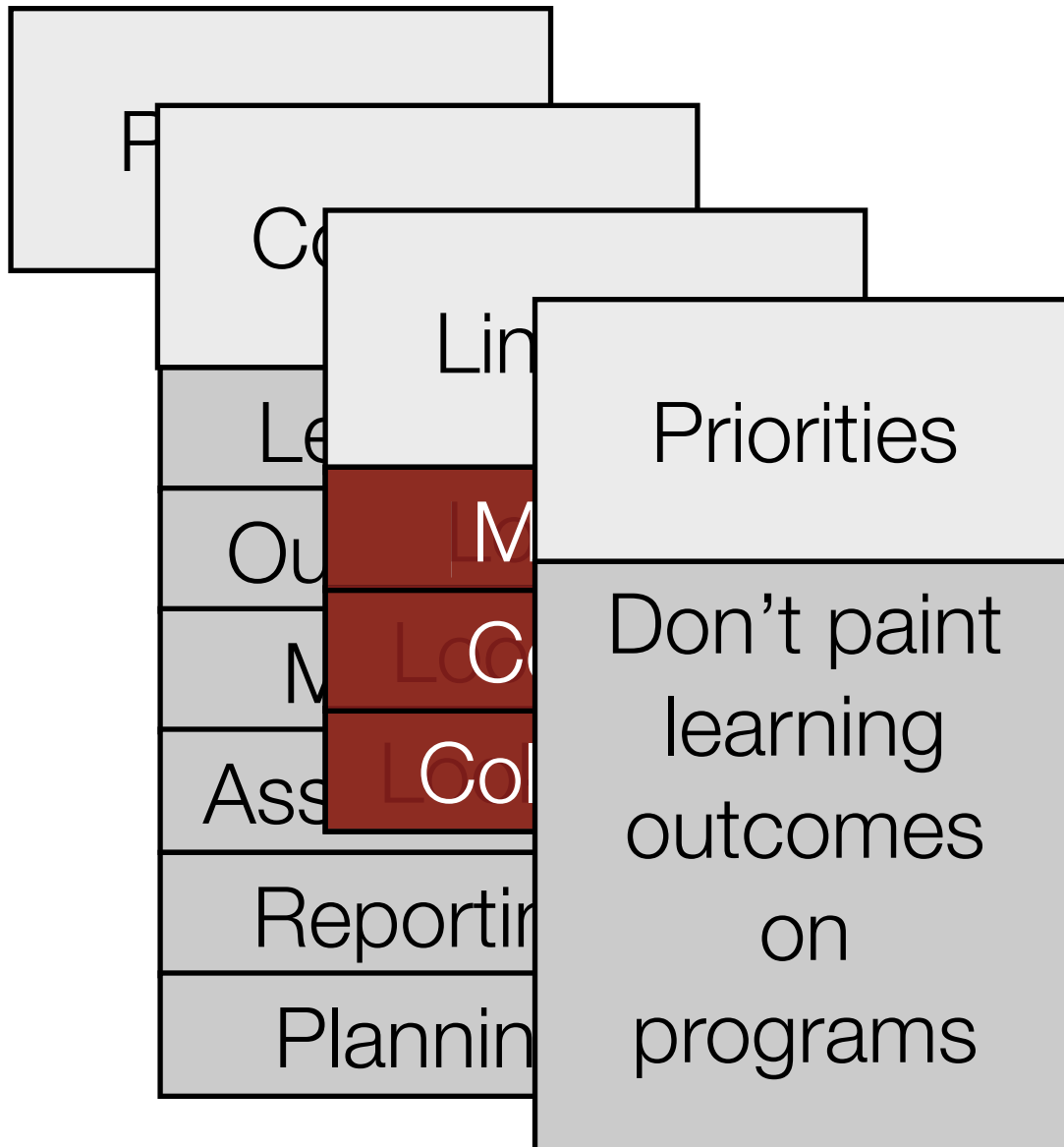
# Capacity-building: content

---



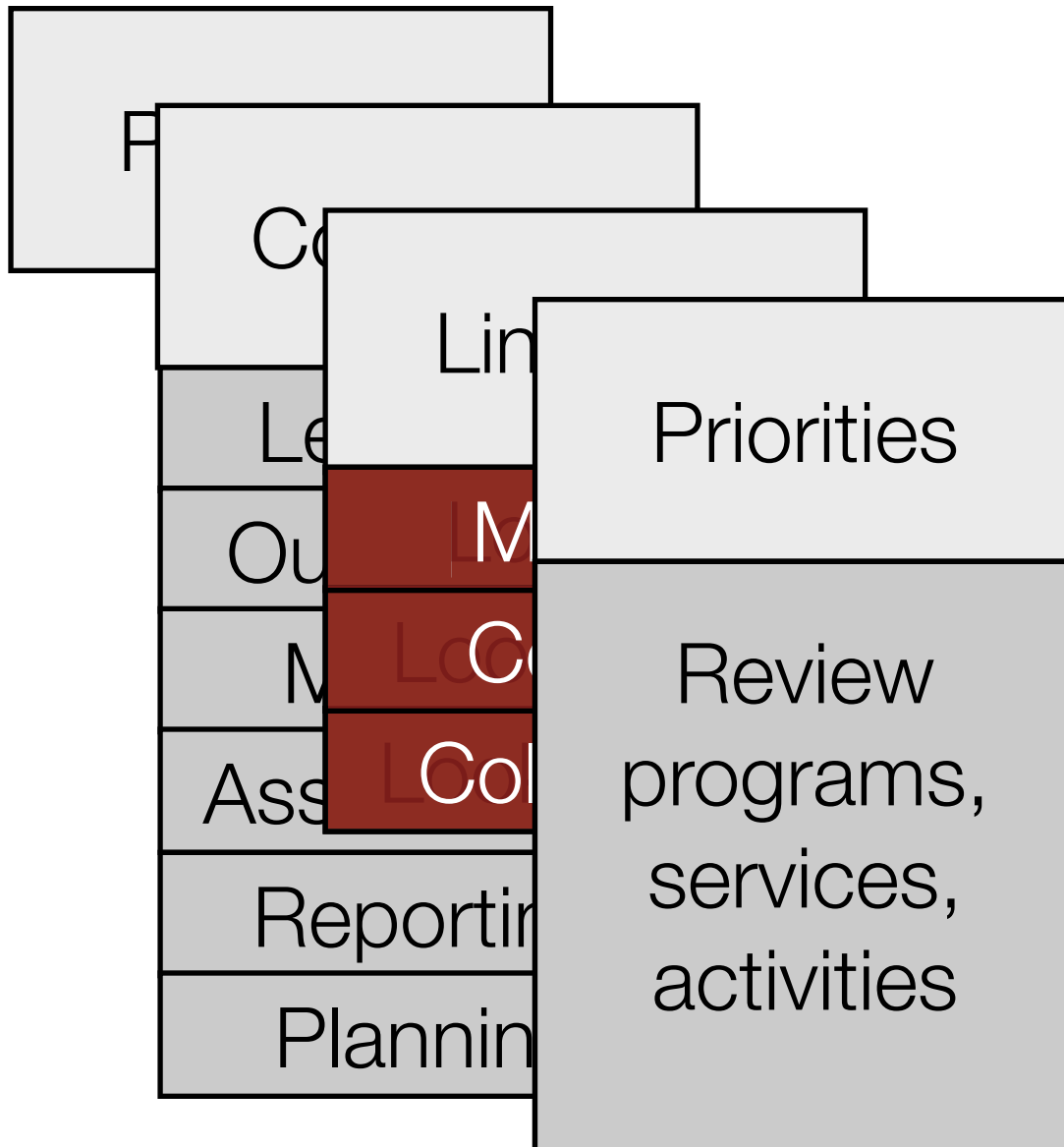
# Capacity-building: content

---



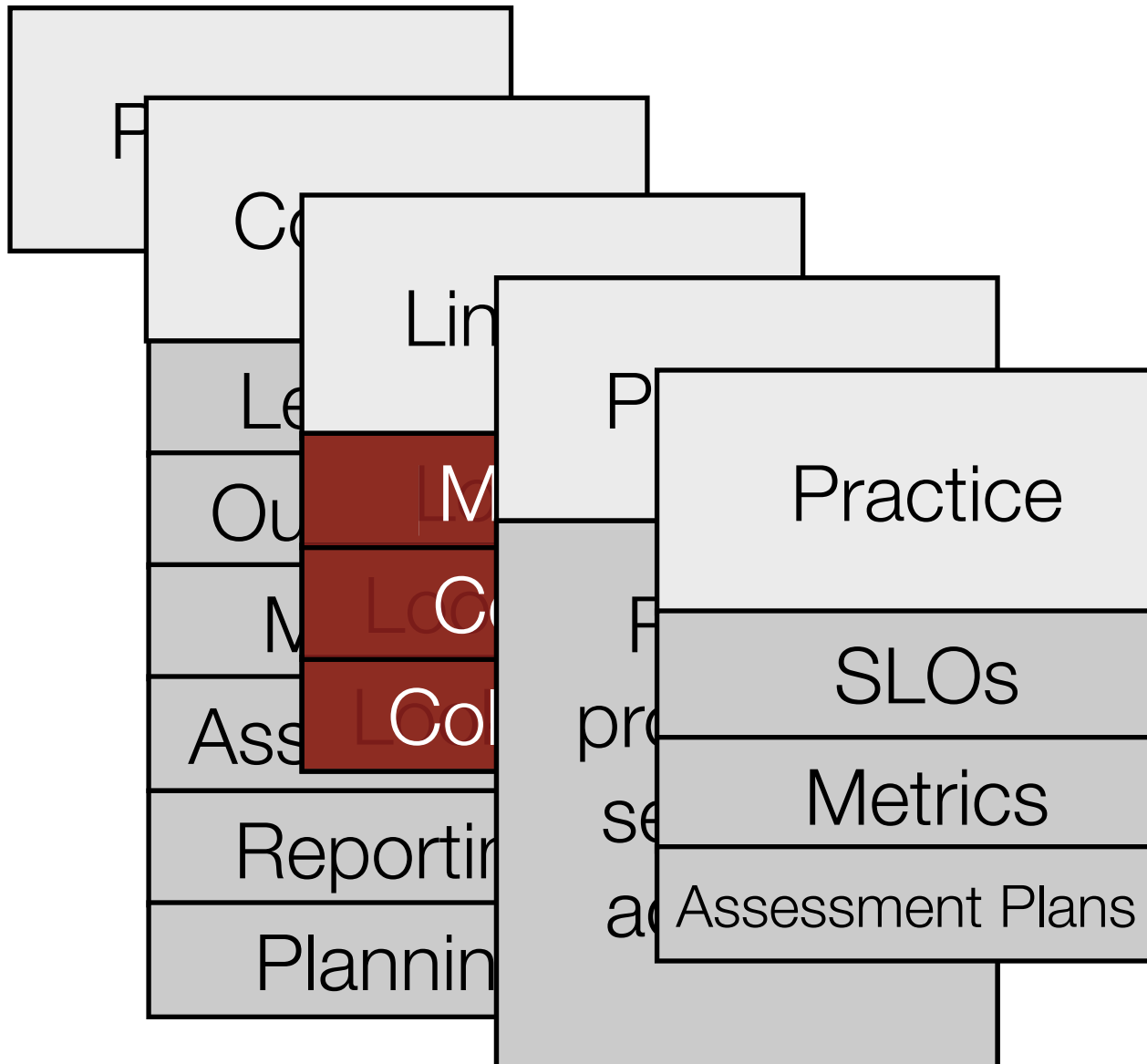
# Capacity-building: content

---



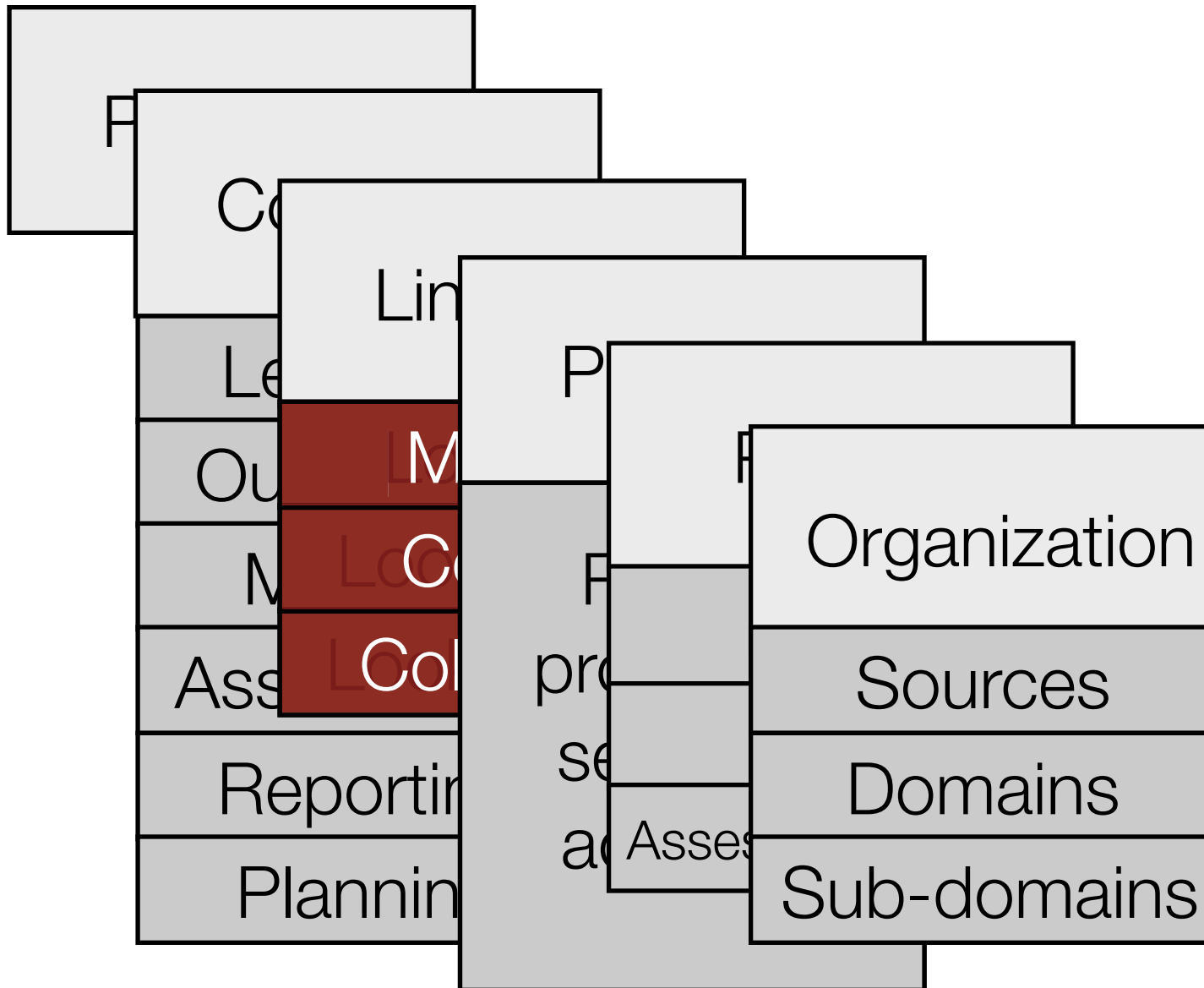
# Capacity-building: content

---



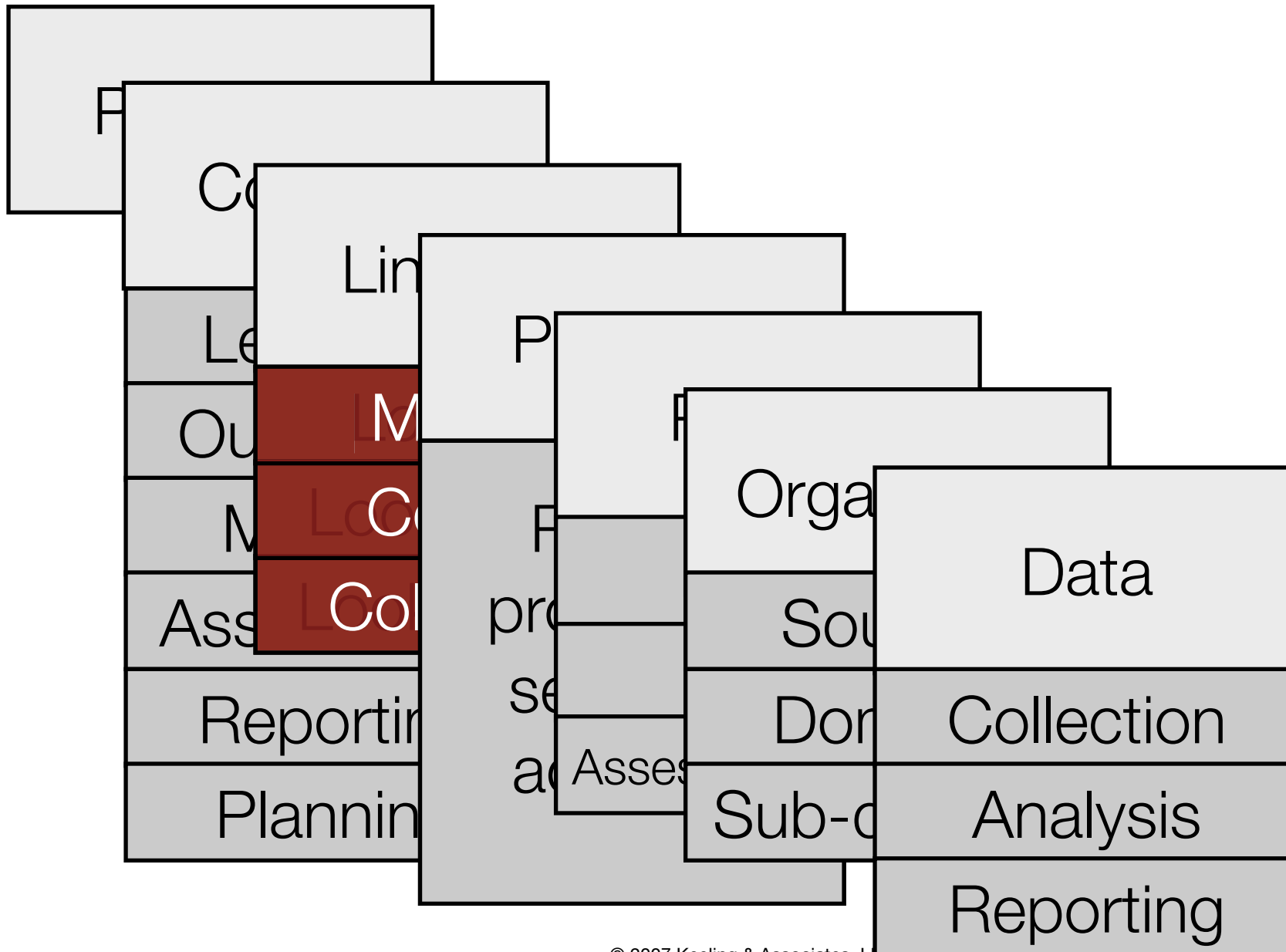
# Capacity-building: content

---

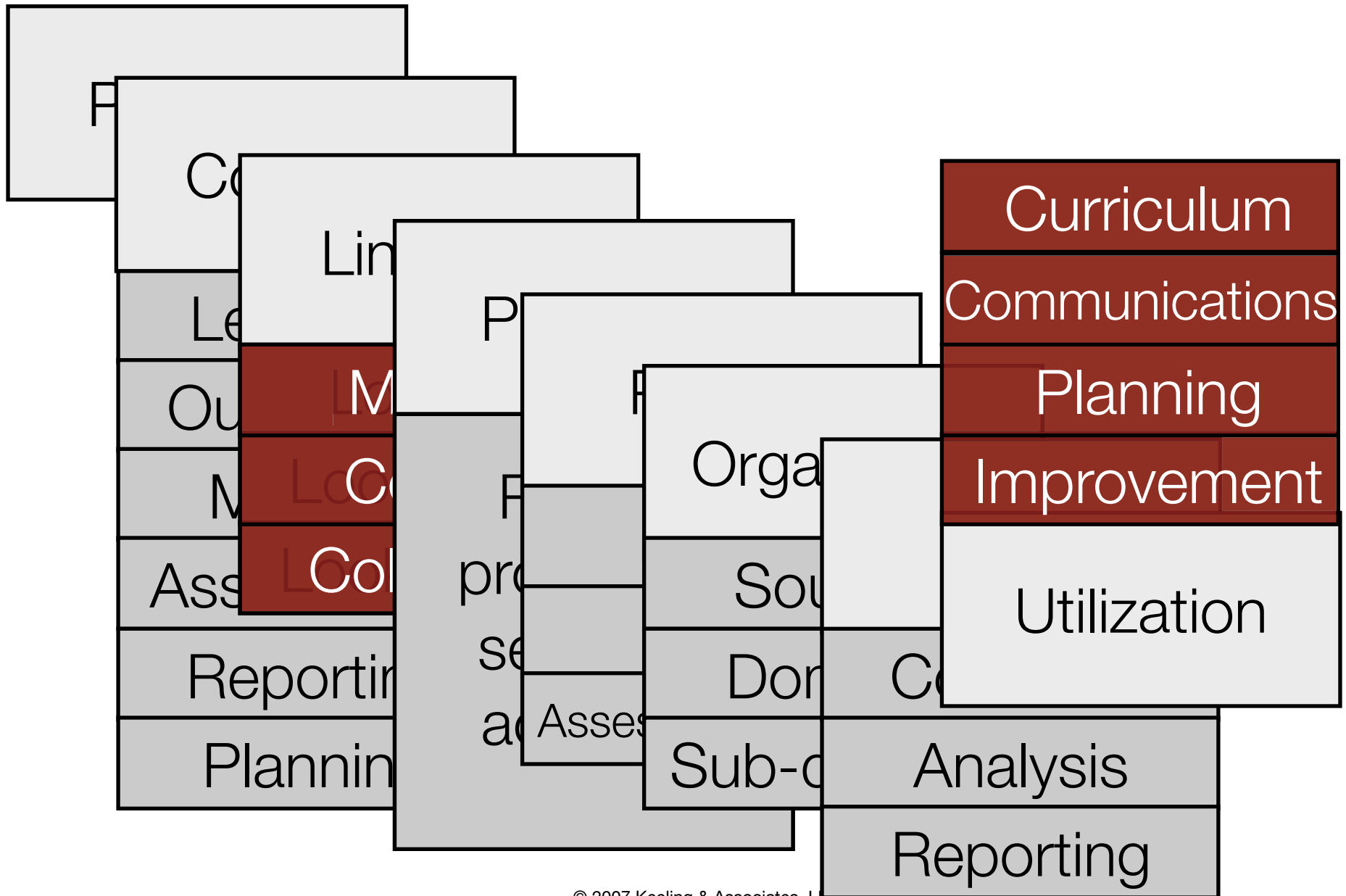


# Capacity-building: content

---



# Capacity-building: content





# Capacity-building: process

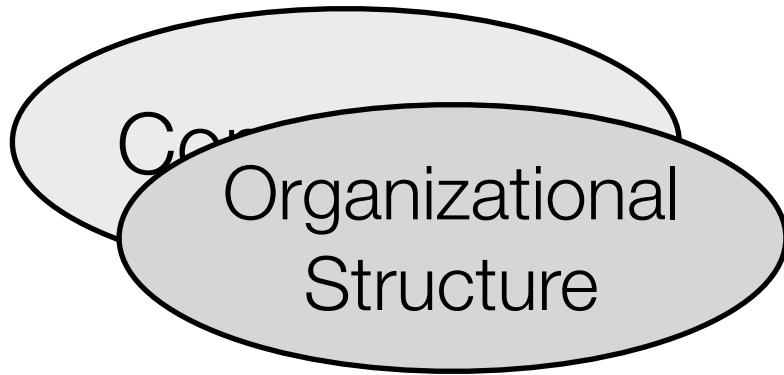
---



Commitment

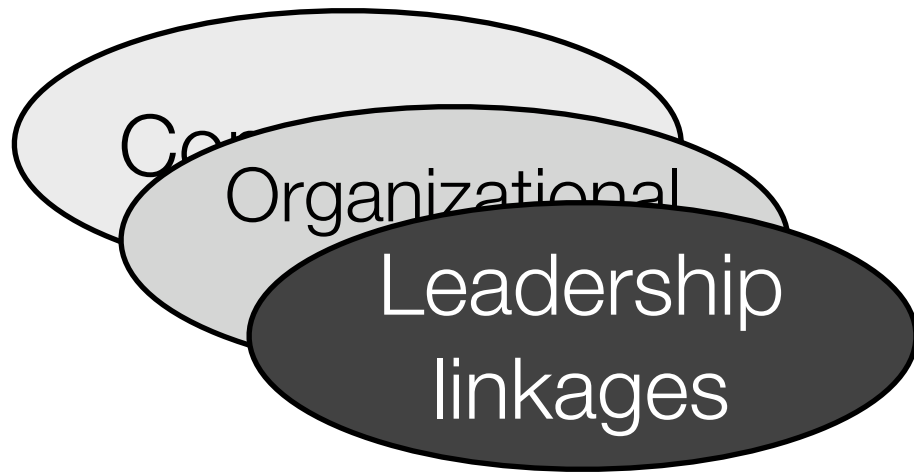
# Capacity-building: process

---



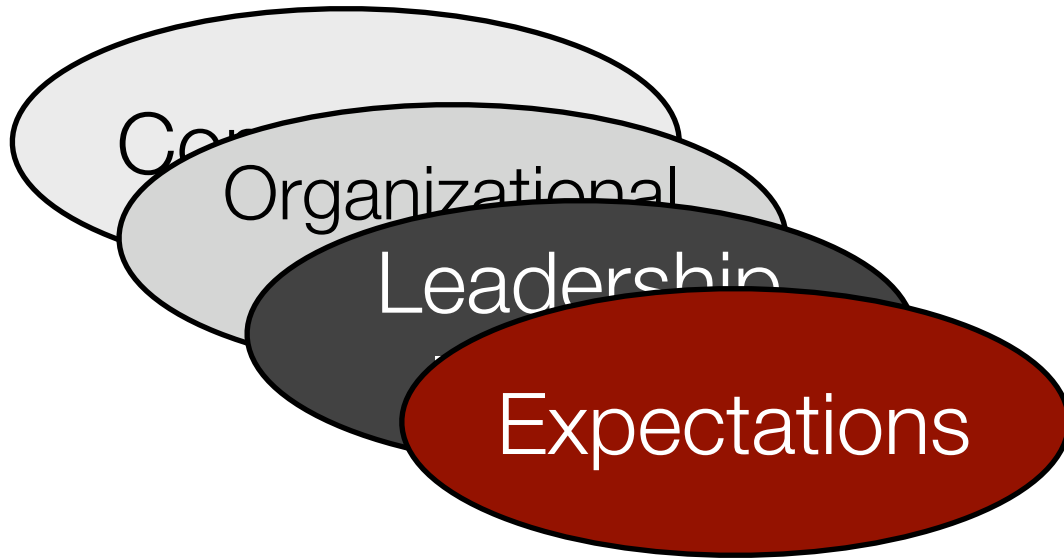
# Capacity-building: process

---



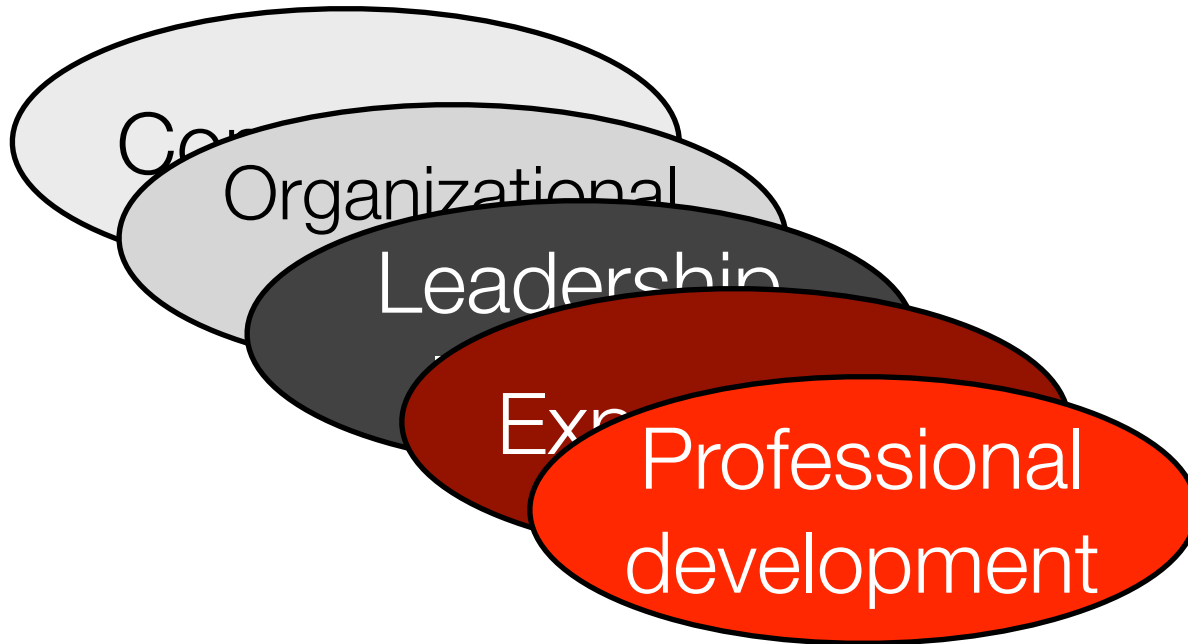
# Capacity-building: process

---



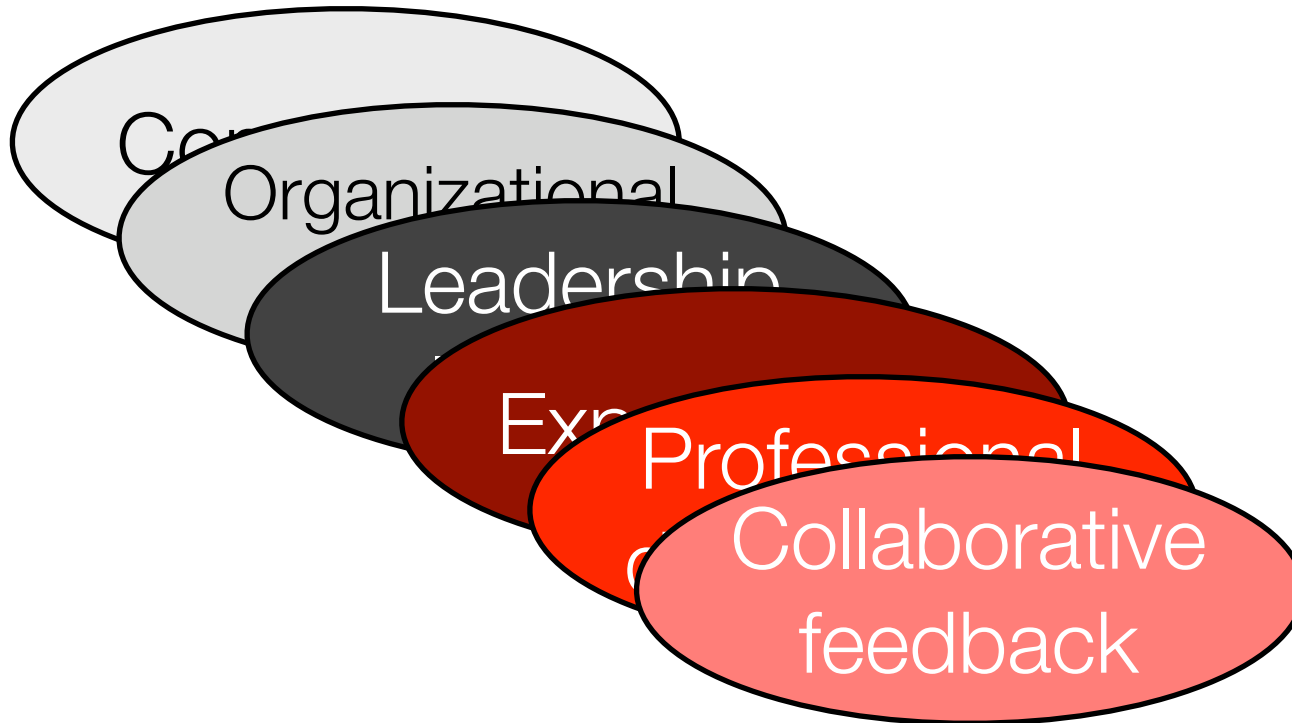
# Capacity-building: process

---



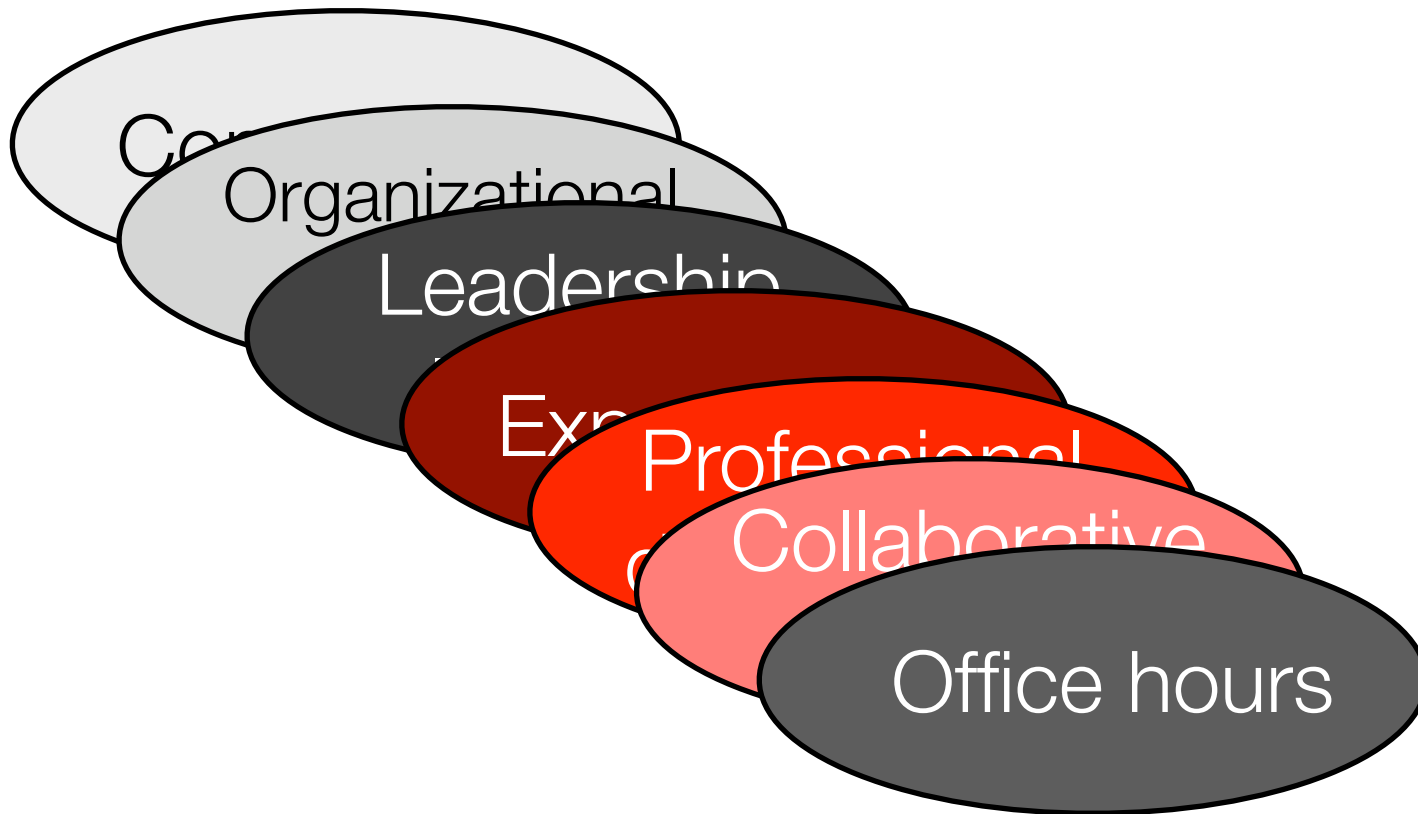
# Capacity-building: process

---



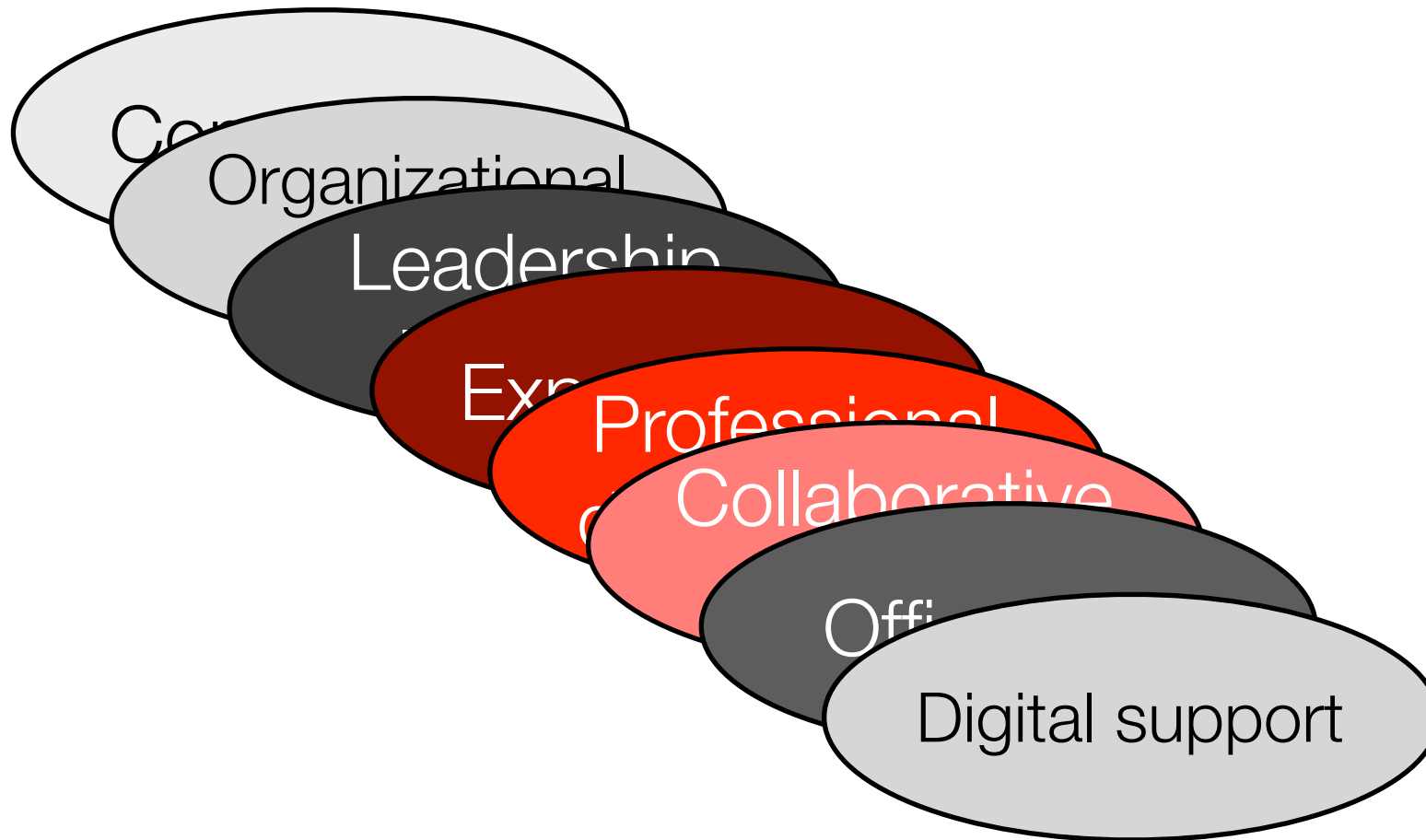
# Capacity-building: process

---



# Capacity-building: process

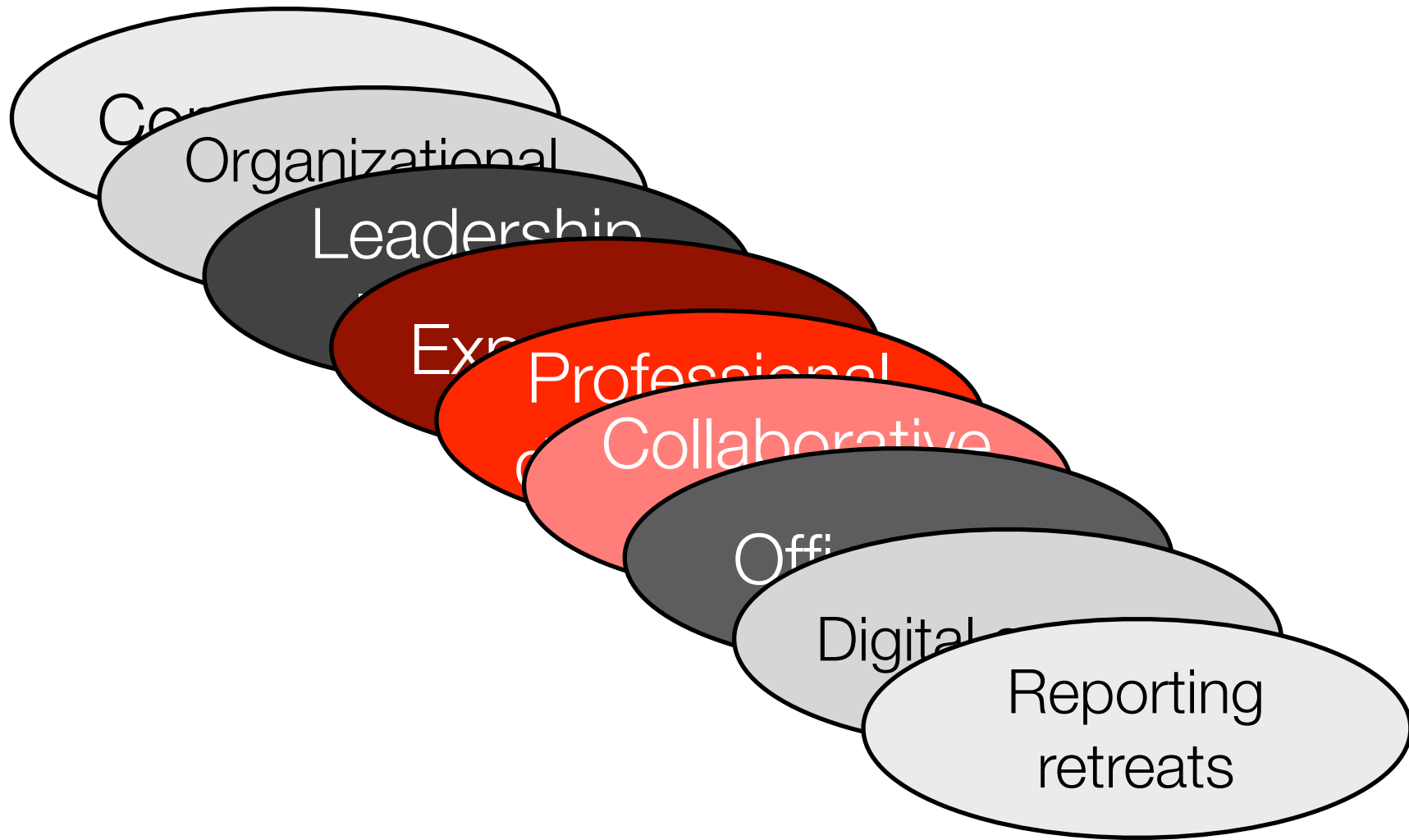
---





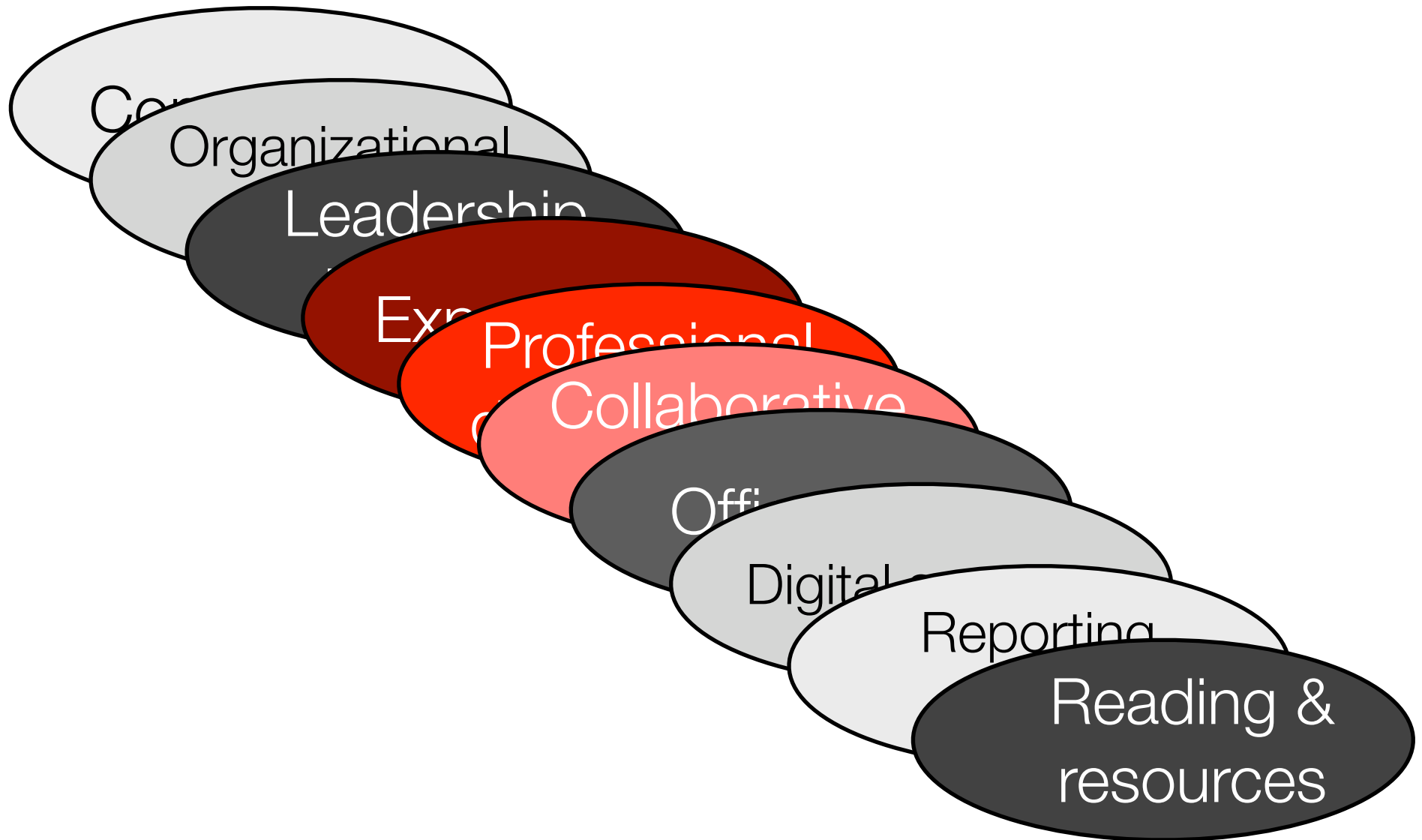
# Capacity-building: process

---



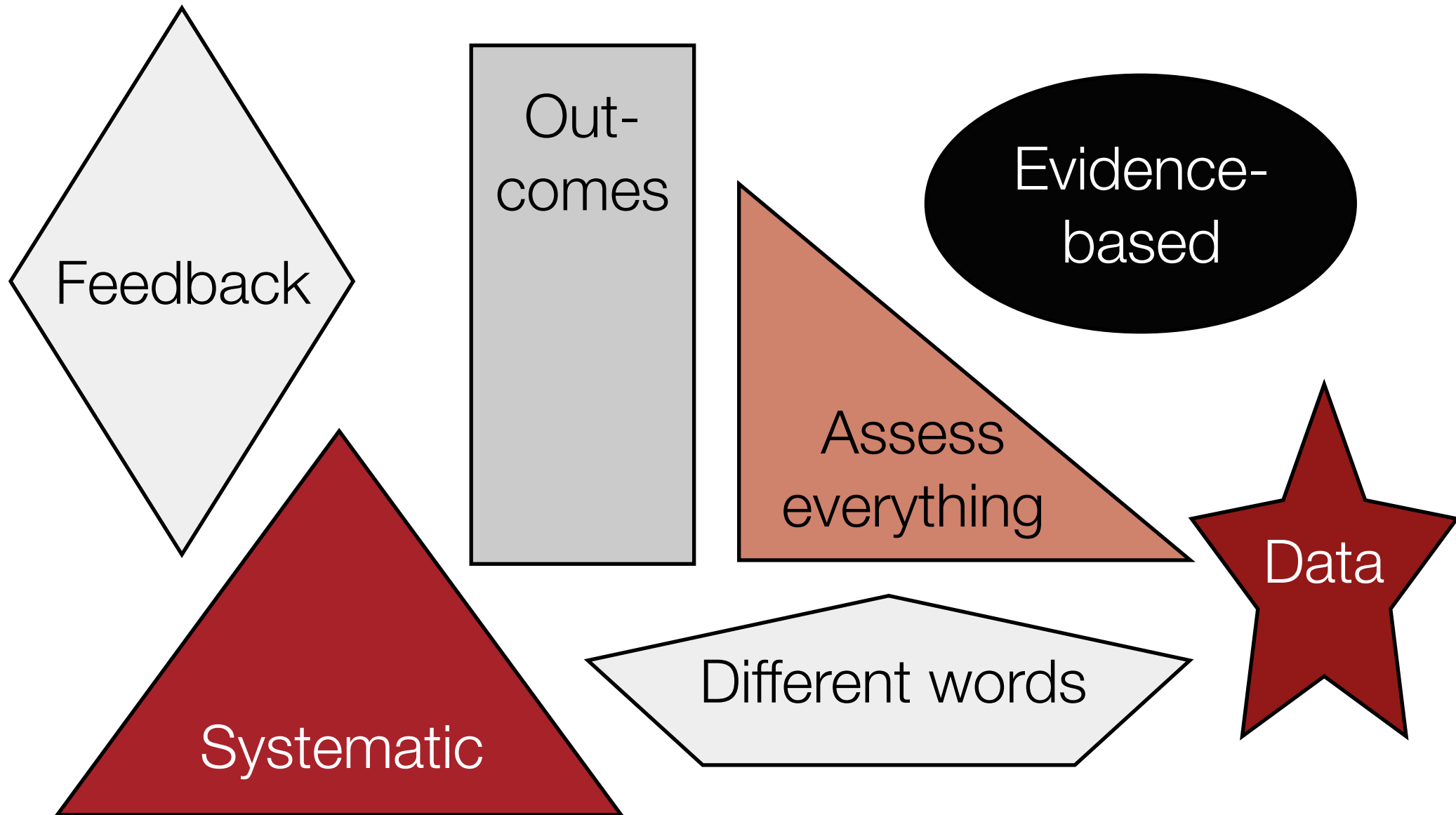
# Capacity-building: process

---



Culture change: language, mind-set, internal relationships, transparency, approach, style

---



Culture change: language, mind-set, internal relationships, transparency, approach, style

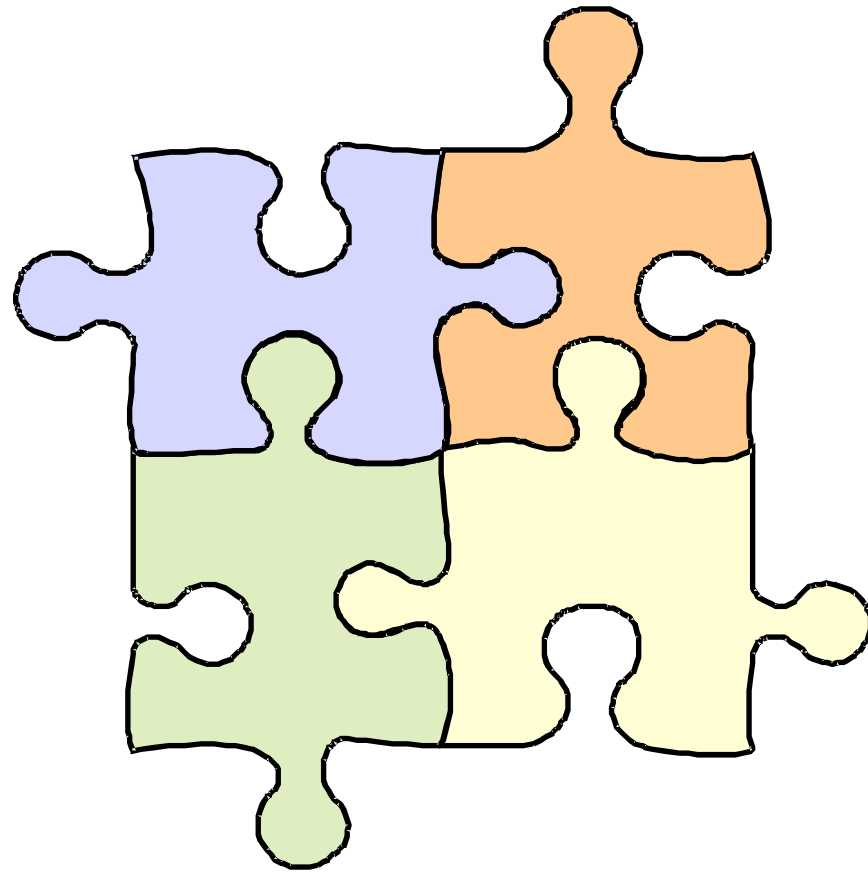
---



# Building staff capacity at Georgia State

---

- New language and concepts
- Common format
- Consistent structure
- Skill-building with repetition
- Stretch and support
- Continuous feedback
- Cross-fertilization



What do educators find difficult about writing student learning outcomes?

# What are learning outcomes?

---

- **Learning outcomes** define the goals of learning experiences (activities, courses, majors, curricula, engagement with post-secondary education)
- What any student should be able to **do, know, or value** as a result of engaging in that learning experience
- Not the same as **satisfaction** with education, professors, facilities, activities, or experiences; not the same as **outputs**, such as grades, GPA, retention rate, graduation rate
- Outcomes define **impact** -- how the student has changed.
- **The achievement of learning outcomes (student success) measures institutional effectiveness.**

# Learning outcomes have context

---

- Look up: institutional mission, vision, values
- Look down: where are you, why are you there, who are you serving, what are they here for
- Look around: see how your work “fits”



# Learning outcomes have multiple levels

---

- Institutional, or university: overall learning goals for the entire university experience [cognitive maturity, empowered citizenship, global competency...]
- Divisional: learning goals derived from the Student Affairs curriculum [integrated identity, personal maturity, mature relationships, humanitarianism...]
- Departmental: learning goals for specific groups of programs, services, or activities [knowledge of another culture's language and customs...]
- Program: learning goal of a specific program or activity [ability to identify cultural etiquette in a particular situation]

# Institutional-level outcomes from *Learning Reconsidered*

---

- Cognitive complexity
- Knowledge acquisition, integration, and application
- Humanitarianism
- Civic engagement
- Inter- and intra-personal competence
- Practical competence
- Persistence and academic achievement

# Guidelines for departmental learning outcomes

---

- Very specific
- Practical
- Measurable
- Meaningful
- Consistent
- Sensible
- Credible

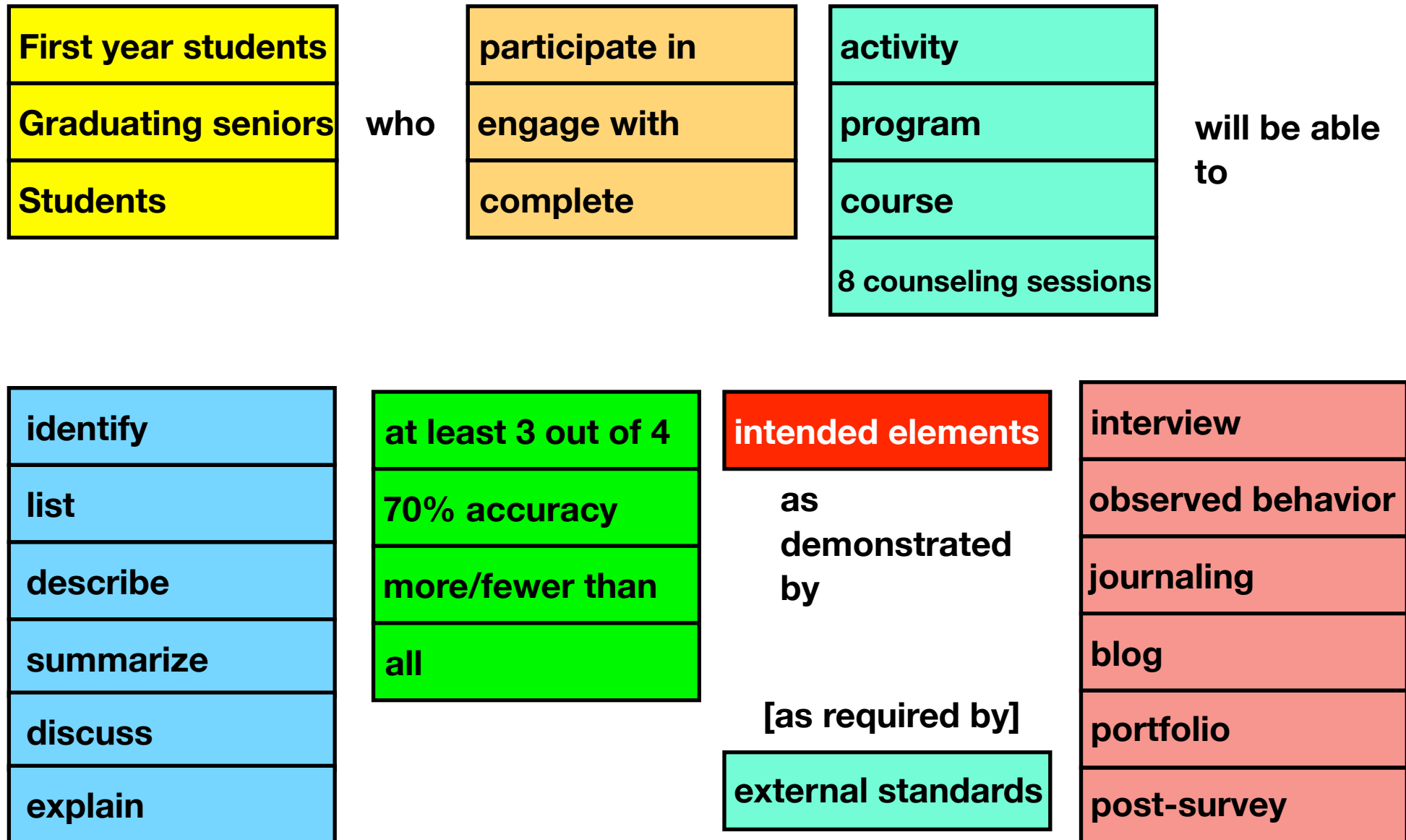
What would make a student learning outcome impractical?

# Assessment planning

---

- Determine with as much precision and accuracy as possible exactly what is being assessed
- What group of students?
- What new capacity is sought?
- How will achievement of that capacity be demonstrated?
- What range of achievement satisfies the desired outcome?
- What external requirements, guidelines, or standards apply?

# Format for writing a student learning outcome



Practice!

# Beyond the basics

---

- **Embed theory** in student learning outcomes
- **Steering cognitive complexity** to fit particular groups of students
- **Curricular approach** with student learning outcomes assigned differently for each year of matriculation
- Sophisticated approaches to **reducing assessment burden**
- **Horizontally integrated learning outcomes** help link programs, services, and activities