



CHEA Workshop on Accreditation and Student Learning Outcomes

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Background on the Issue: What's Pushing This Issue?

- Increased Emphasis from DOE
- Escalating Stakeholder Interest (Citizens, Employers, Students)
- New Kinds of Institutions and Programs





The Challenge to Accrediting Bodies: What is Needed?

- Coherent and Understandable Way to Explain Our Position(s)
- A Language to Communicate About the Issue Inside the Community
- Common Resources for Agencies and Institutions





A Taxonomy of Terms Commonly Used in Connection with the “Assessment” of Student Learning Outcomes

Units of Analysis	Ways of Looking at Performance	Ways of Looking at Outcomes	Ways to Review Performance
Institution	Efficiency Productivity Effectiveness	Behaviors <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employment• Further Education• Career Mobility• Income	Evaluation
Program	Output Productivity	Satisfaction	Measurement Indicator
Student	Outcome	Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge• Skill• Ability• Attitude/Disposition Attainment Development	Assessment Evidence of Achievement <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Examinations• Performances• Student Work





Exercise 1: Types of Evidence

- Rate Each Example of Evidence in Terms of its Appropriateness to Demonstrating the Quality of Student Learning Outcomes
- Comment Briefly Why You Rated the Item as You Did
- Review Your Ratings/Comments with Your Group





Sources of Evidence: Direct Assessment

- “Capstone” Performances
- Professional/Clinical Performance
- Third-Party Testing (e.g., Licensure)
- Faculty-Designed Examinations





Sources of Evidence: Indirect Assessment

- Portfolios and Work Samples
- Follow-Up of Graduates
- Employer Ratings of Performance
- Self-Reported Growth by Graduates





Four Principles for Judging Evidence

- *Comprehensiveness*: Submitted evidence should cover knowledge and skills taught throughout course or program
- *Multiple Judgments*: Submitted evidence should involve more than one source or involve multiple judgments of student performance
- *Multiple Dimensions*: Submitted evidence should provide information on multiple dimensions of student performance—i.e., they should yield more than single summative grade
- *Directness*: Submitted evidence should involve at least one type based on direct observation or demonstration of student capacities—i.e., they should involve more than simply a self-report





General Characteristics of Good Evidence

- Relevant
- Verifiable
- Representative
- Cumulative
- Actionable





Dimensions of Policy Choice

- *Prescription of Outcomes*: The extent to which an accreditor specifies particular learning outcomes
- *Unit of Analysis*: The extent to which an accreditor is concerned about either individual student attainment or overall program effectiveness
- *Focus of Review*: The extent to which an accreditor examines direct evidence of student achievement or the adequacy of the processes used to assure particular levels of student attainment





Three Dimensions of Policy Change

Complete
Institutional
Discretion

**Prescription
of Outcomes**

Outcomes
Dictated by
Accreditor

Competency
Attainment for
Individuals

**Unit of
Analysis**

Overall Program/
Institutional
Effectiveness

Processes
for Quality
Assurance

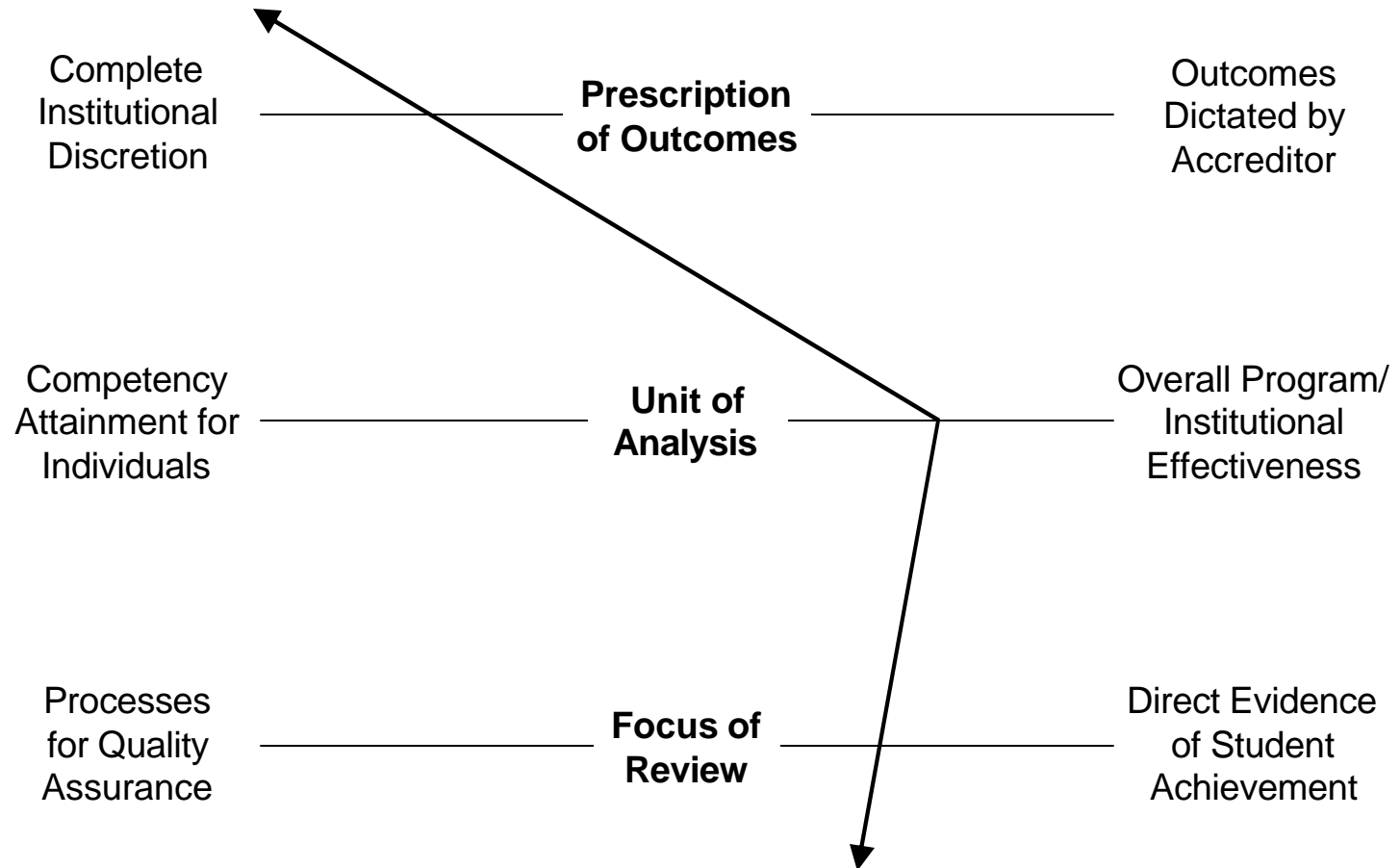
**Focus of
Review**

Direct Evidence
of Student
Achievement



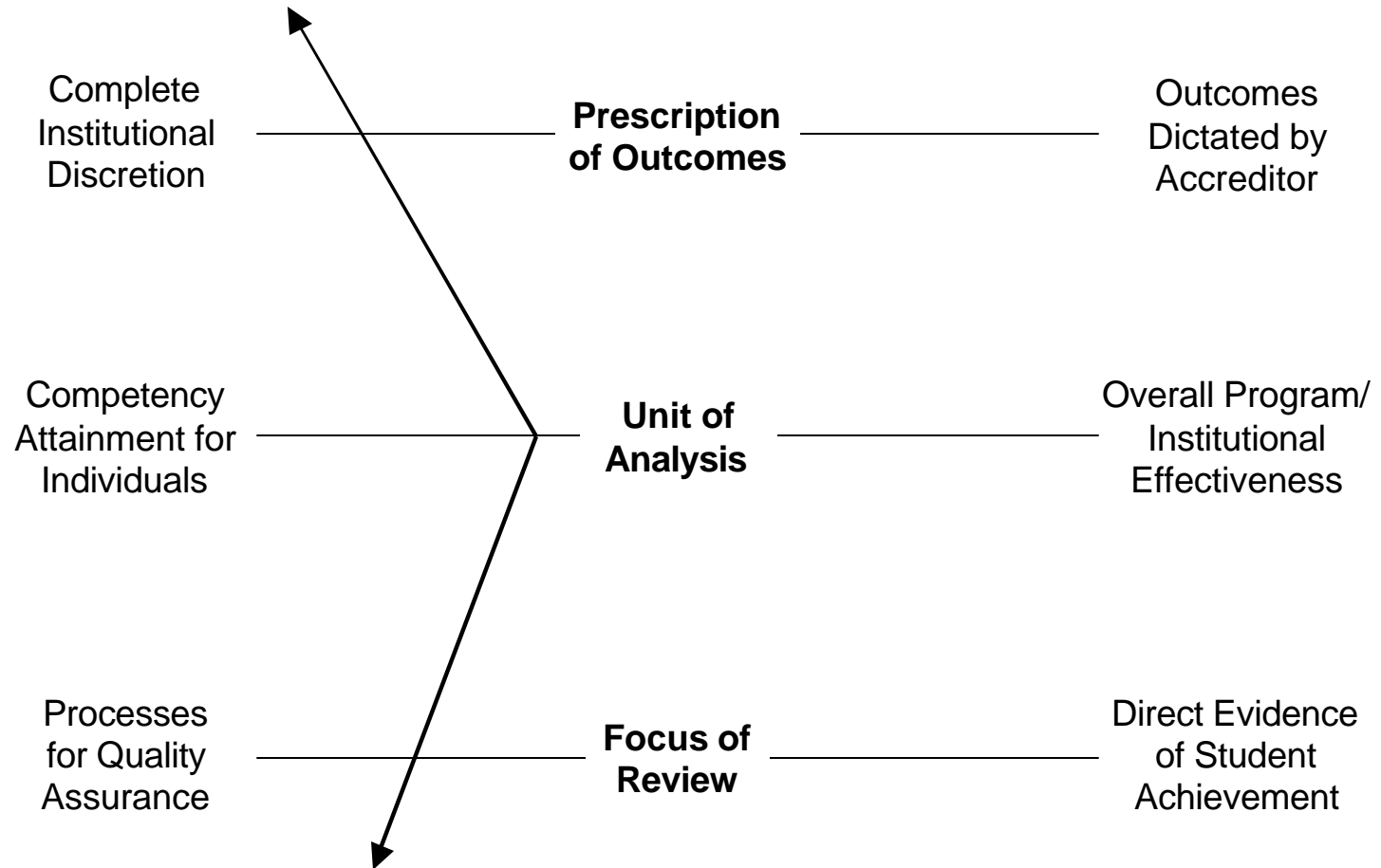


Program Assessment



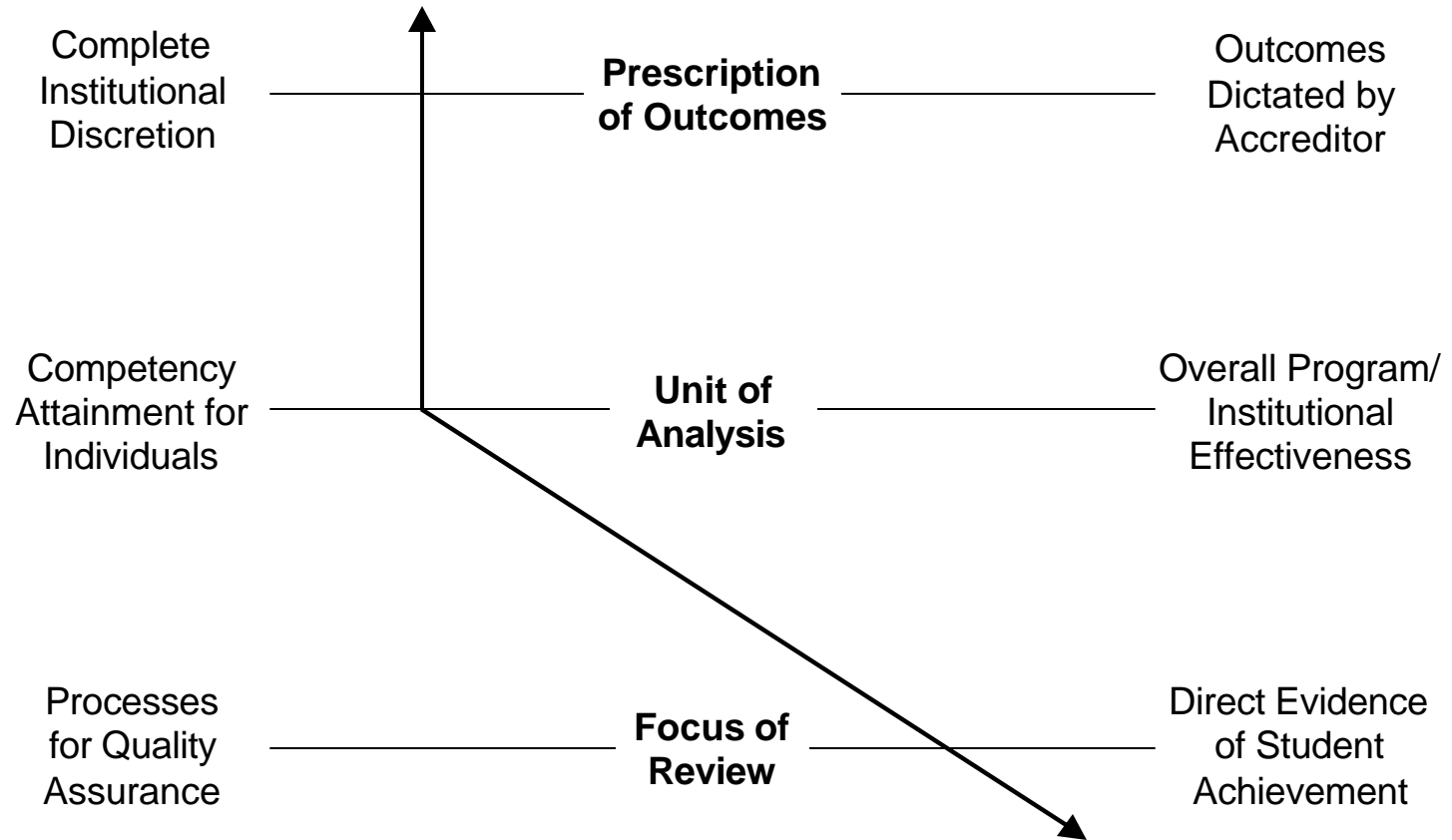


Academic Audit



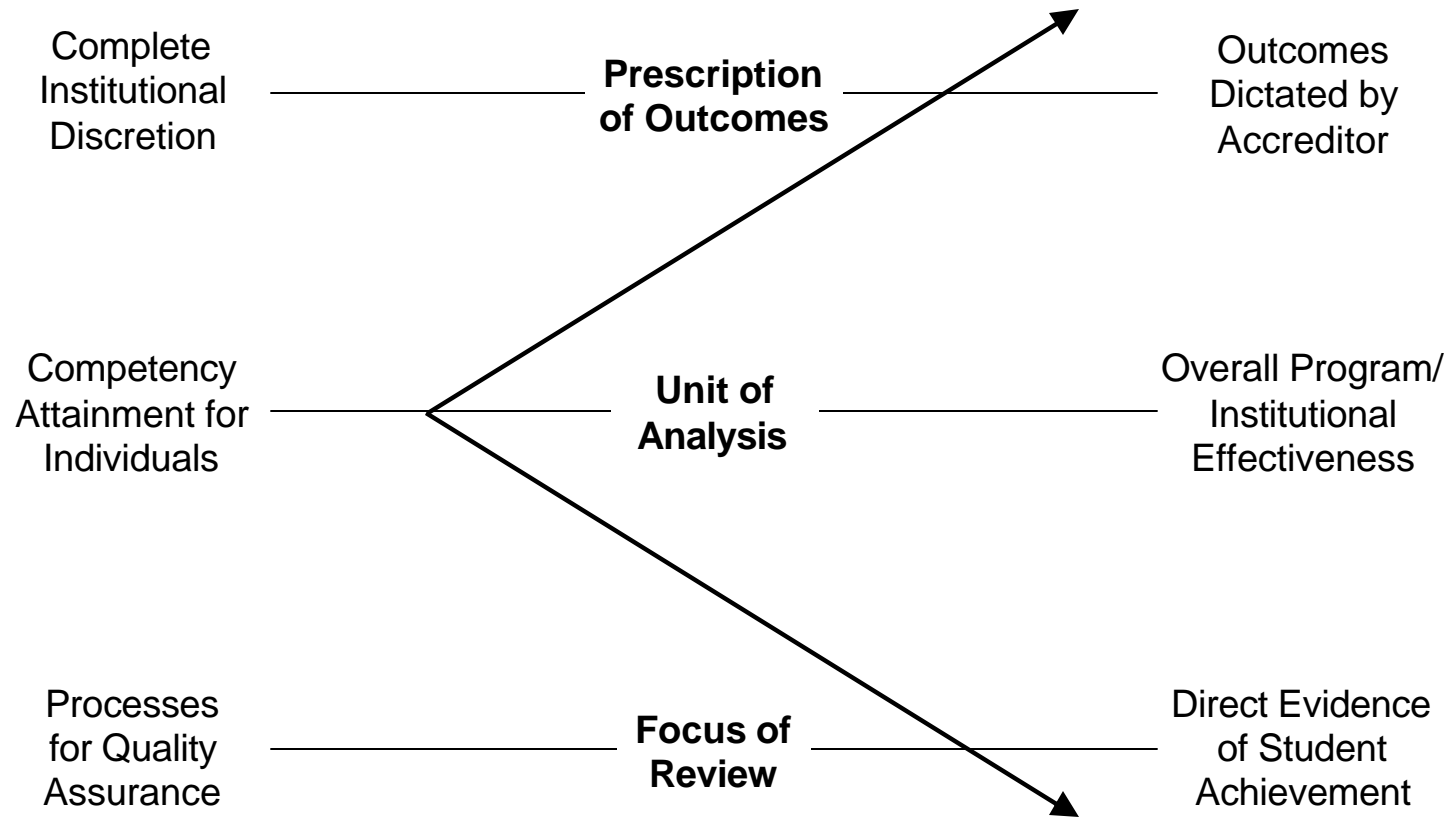


Auditing Academic Standards





Third-Party Certification





Exercise 2: Policy Choices

- Sketch Your Organization's Current "Policy Profile" Regarding Student Learning Outcomes Now and in Five Years
- What are the Implications of These Choices?
- Review Your Answers with Your Group





Some Enduring Issues

- What is Acceptable Evidence of Student Learning?
- Should Accreditors Assess Student Growth or Only Outcomes Attained?
- What Relative Weight Should an Accreditor Place on Outcomes?
- How Much Should Accreditors Look at the Use of Results for Improvement?
- How Much Should Accreditors Emphasize Faculty Involvement?





Next Steps

- What Might Promote a More Proactive Collective Position for Accreditors on this Issue?
- What Resources Need to be Developed (and for whom)?
- What Can CHEA do to Help?

