ENCS 393 / AA
Social and Ethical Dimensions of Information and Communication Technologies

Summer 2020

Instructor: Kari Zacharias

Zoom Lectures: Mondays and Wednesdays, 14:45-16:00ish

30 seconds to draw…

technology

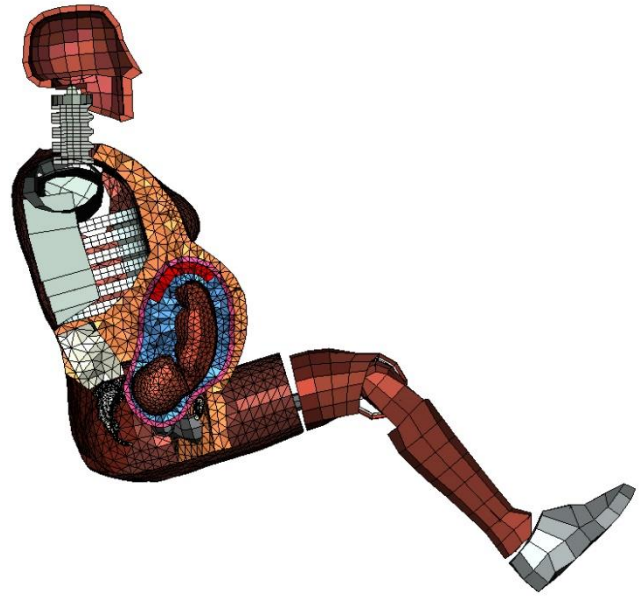
30 seconds to draw…

computer science

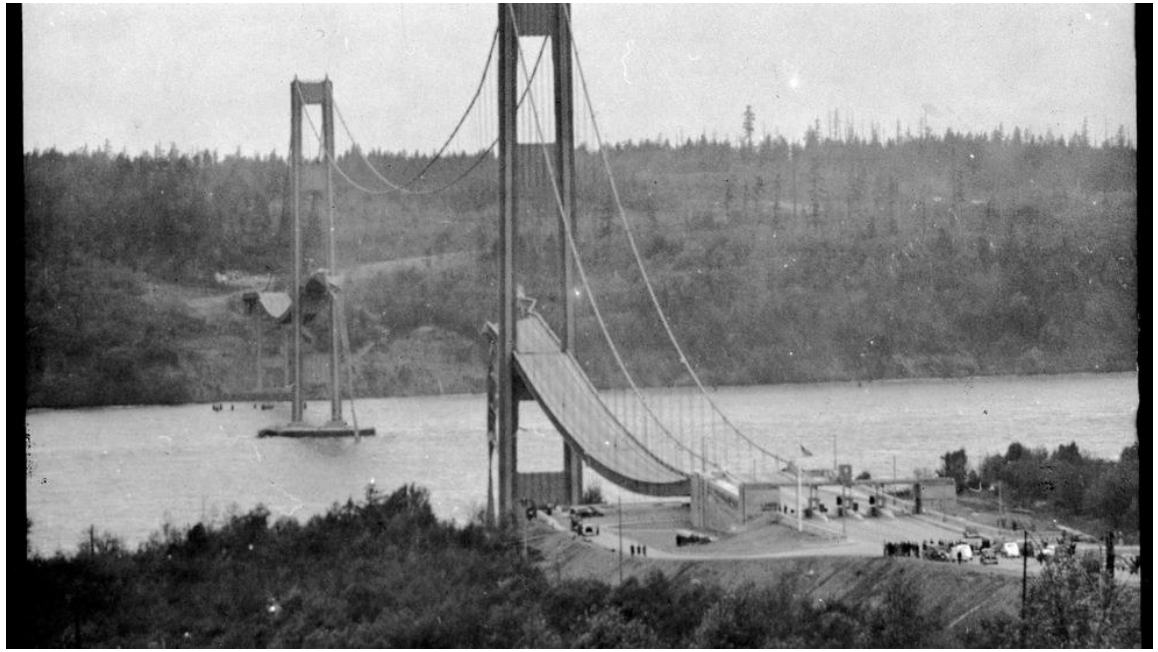
What are our *dominant images* of technology and computer science?

What do these dominant images leave out?

What is technology? How does it change and develop? Does it control us? How are technologies social, cultural, and political?



As computer scientists, engineers, or IT professionals, what role do we play in the technology-society relationship? What are our responsibilities? How does the culture of computing relate to the tools and software that it produces?



Syllabus and Course Policies

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Kari Zacharias (she/her)
EMAIL: kari.zacharias@concordia.ca
ZOOM OFFICE HOURS: Immediately after course lectures and by appointment.
Please email me to arrange a time outside of scheduled lecture hours.

Learning Objectives

This course will help you develop skills in reading, writing, critical thinking, and qualitative analysis. By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Describe social and historical contexts of information technologies and the field of computer science.
2. Recognize, analyze, and evaluate the roles that information technologies play in important contemporary issues.
3. Critically analyze specific information and communication technologies with respect to their social, ethical, and cultural aspects.
4. Communicate original thoughts persuasively in clear analytical writing and through discussions.

How Will the Course Work?

The university will remain closed throughout Summer 2020. In light of this, ENCS 393 and all other summer courses will be taught as emergency remote courses. This section of ENCS 393 has been adjusted in several ways to accommodate the shift to remote teaching.

Zoom Lectures

Course lectures will be held via Zoom, beginning every Monday and Wednesday at 14:45. Links to the live Zoom classrooms will be available on the course Moodle site, and all lectures will be recorded and made available on Moodle as well. I will also post my lecture slides each week. It is not mandatory to attend the lectures live; however, attending them or watching the recordings each week is strongly recommended.

Use of Moodle

The course Moodle page will be an important hub for information and resources. On Moodle you will find the assigned readings for each week, lecture slides, links to live Zoom classrooms and recorded lectures, submission links for reflection essays and mini-assignments, and important messages and updates from me (posted as announcements). Please check the Moodle page regularly and make sure that you are receiving and reading all posted announcements.

Assignment Structure and Grade Distribution

The types of assignments and the grade distribution have been modified as compared to the face-to-face version of this course. Please review the assignment structure that is described in this document: do not assume that this course will work the same way as its previous versions have!

Readings

All readings will be available on the course Moodle page. You should complete all readings ***before*** the class session for which they are assigned, and come to our virtual classroom prepared to think about them and ask questions.

Assignment Submissions and Late Assignments

Submit all assignments by the dates and times listed on the course schedule and on Moodle. I will penalize late assignments at the rate of 1/3 of a letter grade per day, for up to one week. For example, an "A" paper that was handed in three days late will receive a final grade of "B" (A [original grade] -> A- -> B+ -> B). For assignments handed in more than one week late, I will reduce the grade by 50%. If extenuating circumstances prevent you from submitting an assignment on time, please contact me ***before*** the deadline to discuss (or, in case of emergency, as soon as possible after the deadline has passed).

Academic Code of Conduct

I expect that the work you complete for this course will be your own. Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Any written assignment that borrows from other sources without giving proper credit, or that is plagiarized in whole or in part from another source (including other student's work), is grounds for an "F" on the assignment or, depending on the severity of the infraction, for a failing grade in the course.

Grade Disputes and Review Requests

Everyone makes mistakes sometimes, including your professors and TAs. I will review and/or re-grade assignments under limited circumstances. However, I will not entertain requests submitted without justification, and I do not offer bonus points, extra-credit assignments, or end-of-semester grade bump-ups. You must submit any re-grading requests to me ***in writing (i.e. by email)***, and you must ***describe in detail*** why you believe the original grade is incorrect, making reference to the assignment rubric and the grader's comments where applicable. I will always review the entire assignment for which you request a re-grade. You must submit a request for re-grading ***within two weeks*** of receiving your grade for an assignment.

Accessibility and Support

I am committed to creating a learning environment that meets the needs of Concordia's diverse student body. If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning in this course, especially considering the remote nature of the class, please feel welcome to discuss your concerns with me.

Access Centre for Students with Disabilities: http://www.concordia.ca/students/accessibility.html

Learning Support: https://www.concordia.ca/students/success/learning-support.html

Assignments and Grade Breakdown

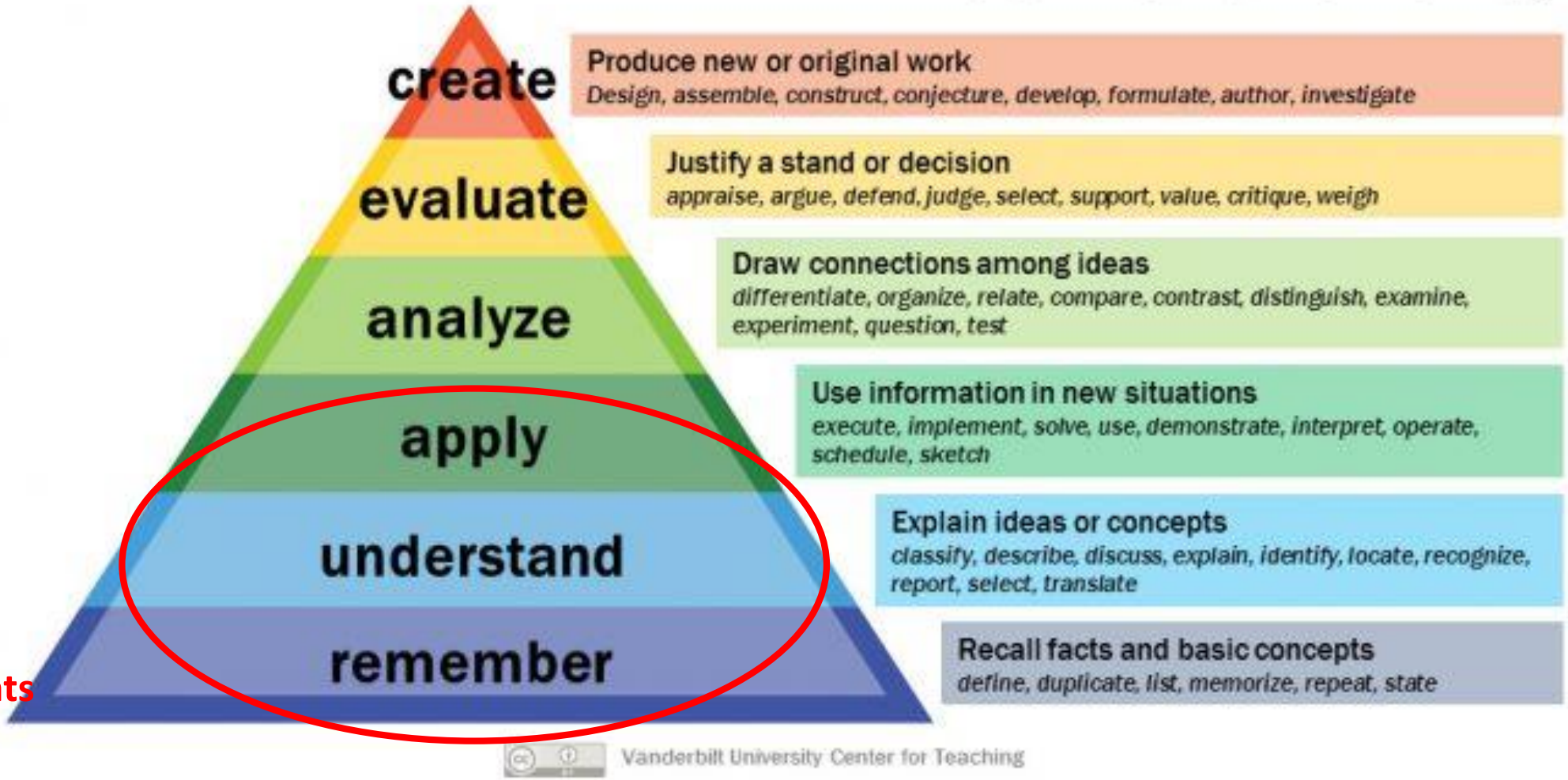
Mini-Assignments (20% of your grade: 10% for completion + 10% for the quality of 2 random assignments)

Reflection Essays (30% of your grade: 3 essays @ 10% each)

Quiz (30% of your grade)

Final Project (20% of your grade)

Bloom's Taxonomy



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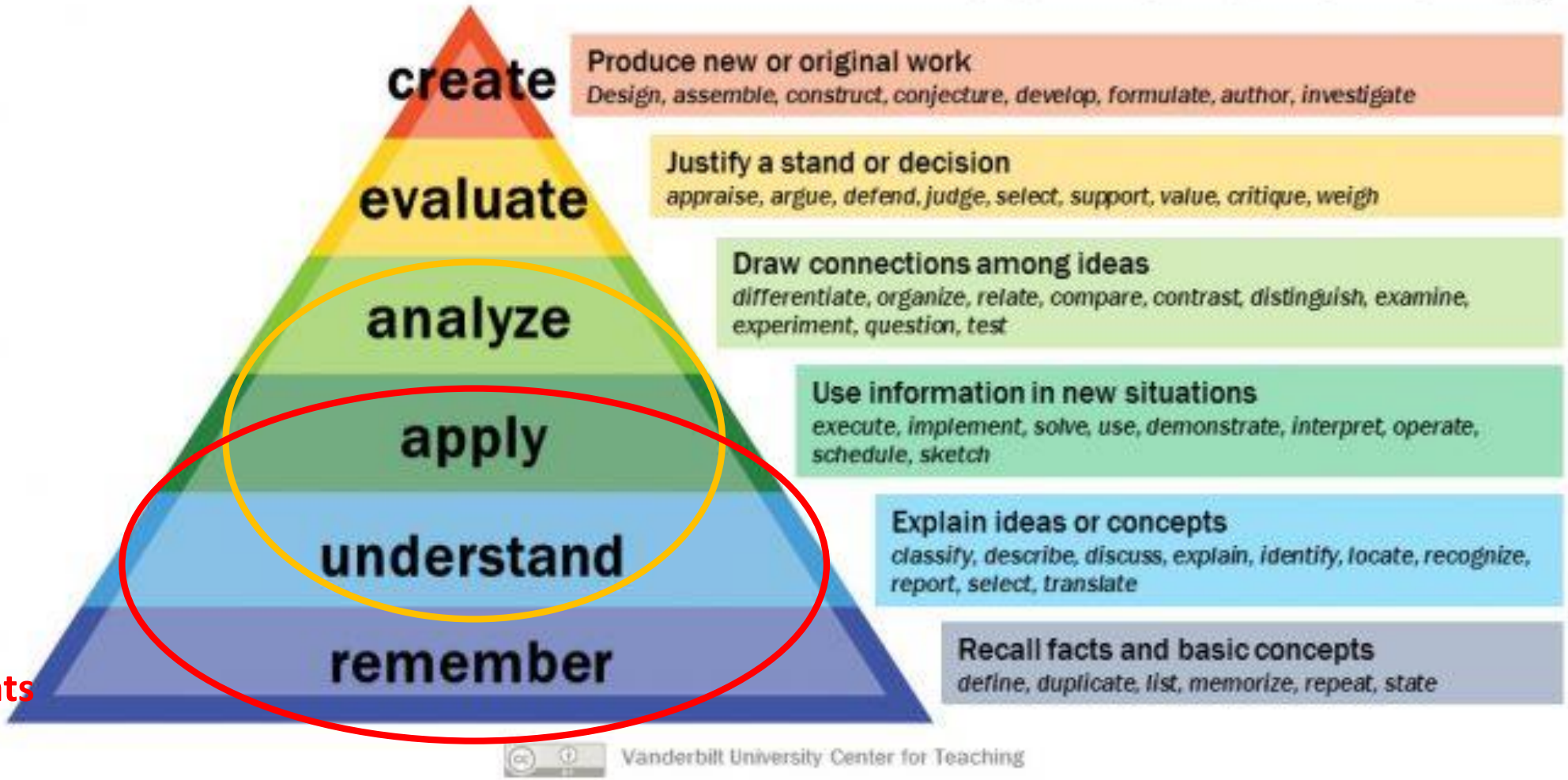
Mini-Assignments

Bloom's Taxonomy



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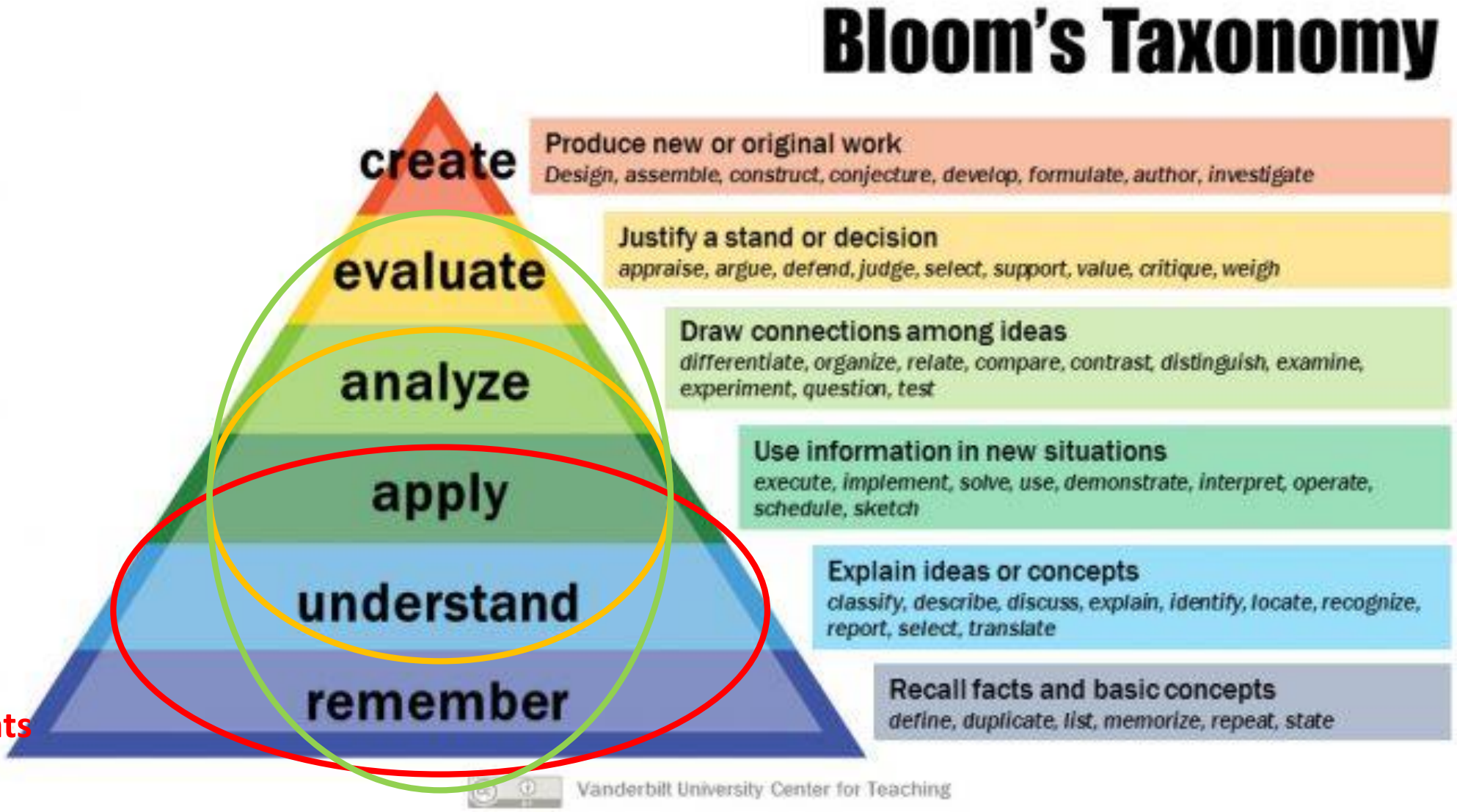
Reflection Essays

Mini-Assignments

Quiz

Reflection
Essays

Mini-
Assignments

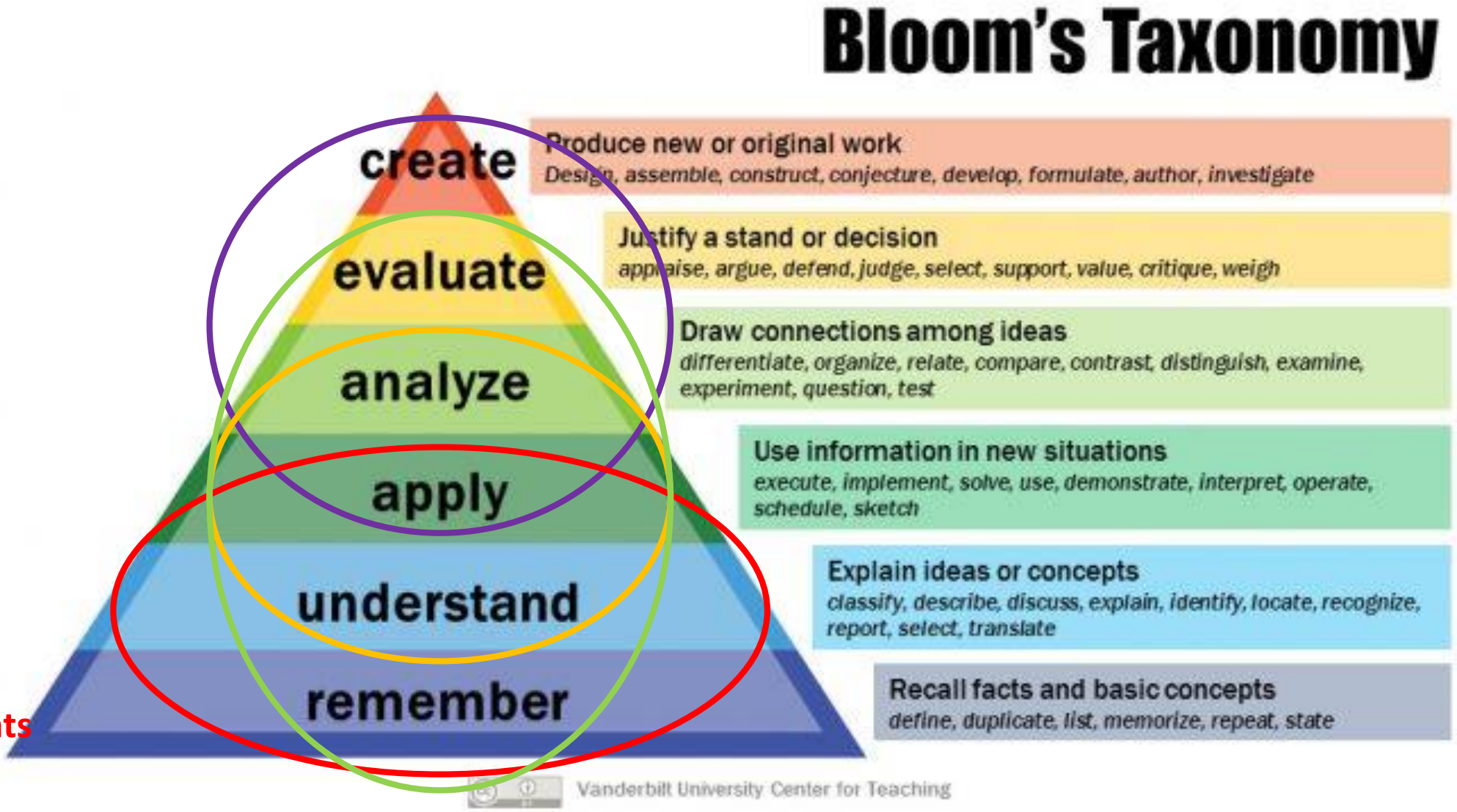


Project

Quiz

Reflection
Essays

Mini-
Assignments



Reading Critically: Context Matters!

- Who?
- What?
- When?
- Where?

WHO is the author? Who are they writing about (subjects)? Who are they writing for (audience)?

WHAT is the subject matter? What is the genre? What style is it written in?

WHEN was it written? When do the events or the story take place? What historical context is important?

WHERE was it written? Where do the events/story take place? What local or national contexts are important?

Reading Critically: Context Matters!

- **Who** (…is the author? …are the subjects? …is the audience?)
- **What** (…is the subject? …is the genre? …is the style?)
- **When** (…was it written? …do the events take place?)
- **Where** (…was it written? …do the events take place?)

Reading Critically: Content Matters, Too!

- **What is the author trying to communicate?**
- How?
- Why?
- So what?

Every text has an *argument* of some kind. On a first read, try to figure out what the author is trying to convince you of.

Then, think about *how* and *why* they build that argument, and why the argument matters (or not).

First: identify the author’s main argument and try to phrase it in your own words, as simply as you can.

Second: ask some critical questions…

HOW is the writing structured? How does the author try to persuade you of their argument?

WHY do you think the author wrote it? Why did they make the choices they made? Why is their argument important?

SO WHAT? How does this connect to the rest of the world? How do you connect with it? What is the impact of the writing? Is it effective? Why or why not?

Reading Critically: Content Matters, Too!

- **What main point is the author trying to communicate?** (Write down their argument as simply as you can.)
- **How** (…is the writing/argument structured? …does the author try to persuade you?)
- **Why** (…do you think the author wrote this? …did they make the choices they made?)
- **So what?** (Connection? Impact? Effectiveness? Critique?)

Reading Hints for Next Week

Paul Nightingale, "What is Technology? Six Definitions and Two Pathologies"

- This text is long and complex. Don't worry if you struggle to understand it (this is probably the most challenging text we will read during the entire semester).

- Identify the "six definitions" and the "two pathologies." How are they different from one another?

- Why does Nightingale give us so many different definitions of technology?