Glossary.

Assessment: “An ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves making expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance. When it is embedded effectively within larger institutional systems, assessment can help [educators] focus attention, examine assumptions, and create a shared academic culture dedicated to assuring and improving the quality of higher education” ¹

Dynamic: The assumption that change is ongoing; attending to development while discovering what does and does not work.²

Formative assessment: The process of examining programs or services for the purpose of making improvements, as different from summative assessment for the purpose of making high-stakes decisions regarding the overall worth of a service or program.

Outcomes: The specific knowledge, skills, or developmental attributes that students actually develop through their college experience.³

Qualitative: Difference in kind (quality) rather than in amount.³

Quantitative: Difference in amount (quantity) rather than in kind.³

³ Source is James Madison University’s online Dictionary of Student Outcome Assessment, http://people.jmu.edu/yangsx/.