



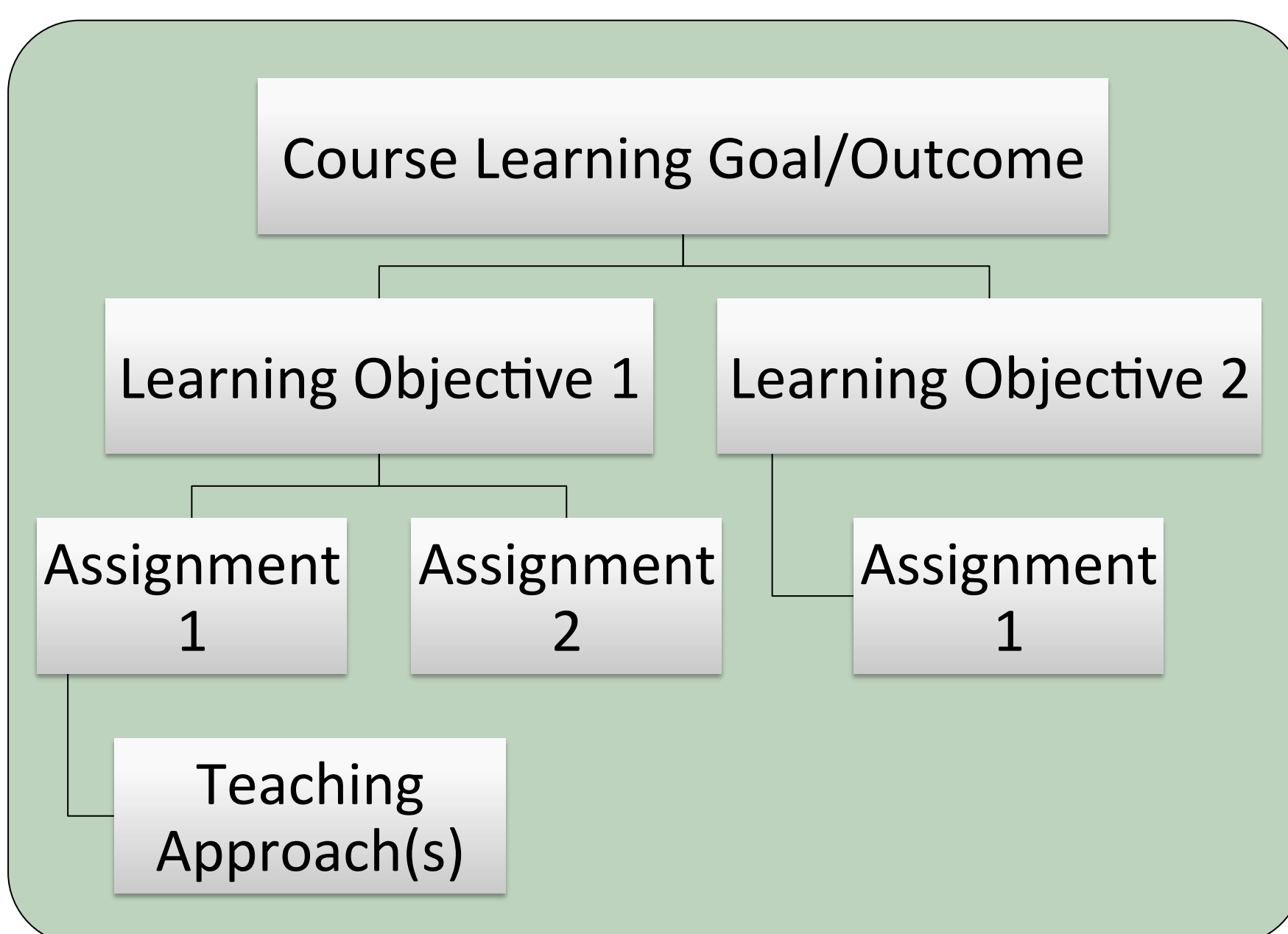
# Using Constructive Alignment for Teaching Efficiency and to Achieve Concrete Learning Gains

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## Background

Constructive alignment is a proven course development approach. It involves mapping specific learning objectives, to assessment/evaluation strategies, and ultimately to specialized teaching approach(es). This approach results in a cohesive course where students will have suitable opportunities to demonstrate subject mastery.



Example of constructive alignment mapping

## HORT 481: Advanced Garden Composition

Capstone design course

Evaluation and assessment includes:

- 5 design projects
- Written assignments
  - Reflective writing after each design
  - 3 Design critiques (written)
  - Design Portfolio (written)
- Oral assignments
  - Client Presentation
  - 3 Camera Challenges (oral)
  - Design Point of View (written and oral).

## Learning Objectives

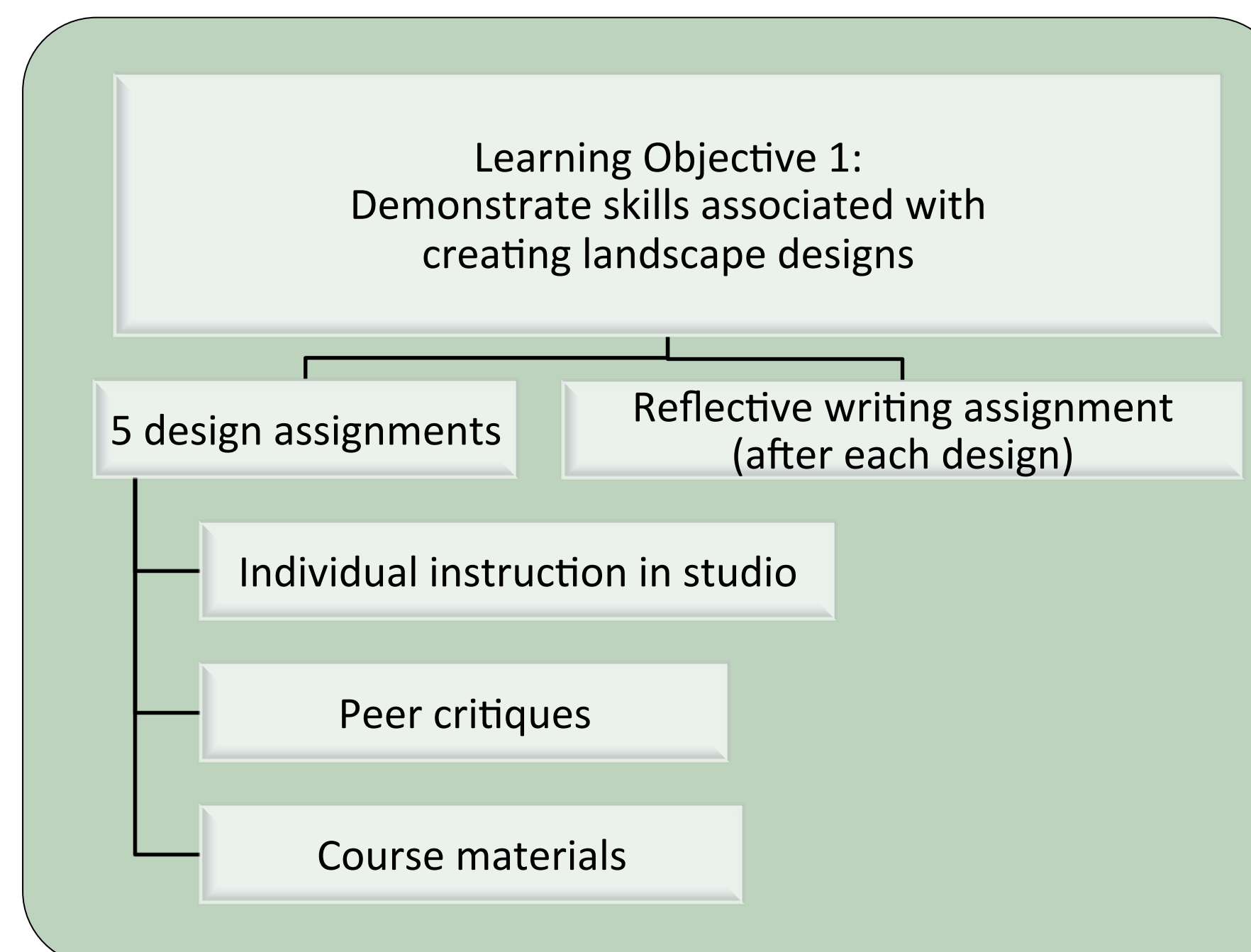
1. Demonstrate skills associated with creating landscape designs.
2. Accurately measure a landscape site and document field information.
3. Demonstrate proficiency in computer-aided design.
4. Practice and refine written and oral communication of design concepts.

## My Take on the Changes

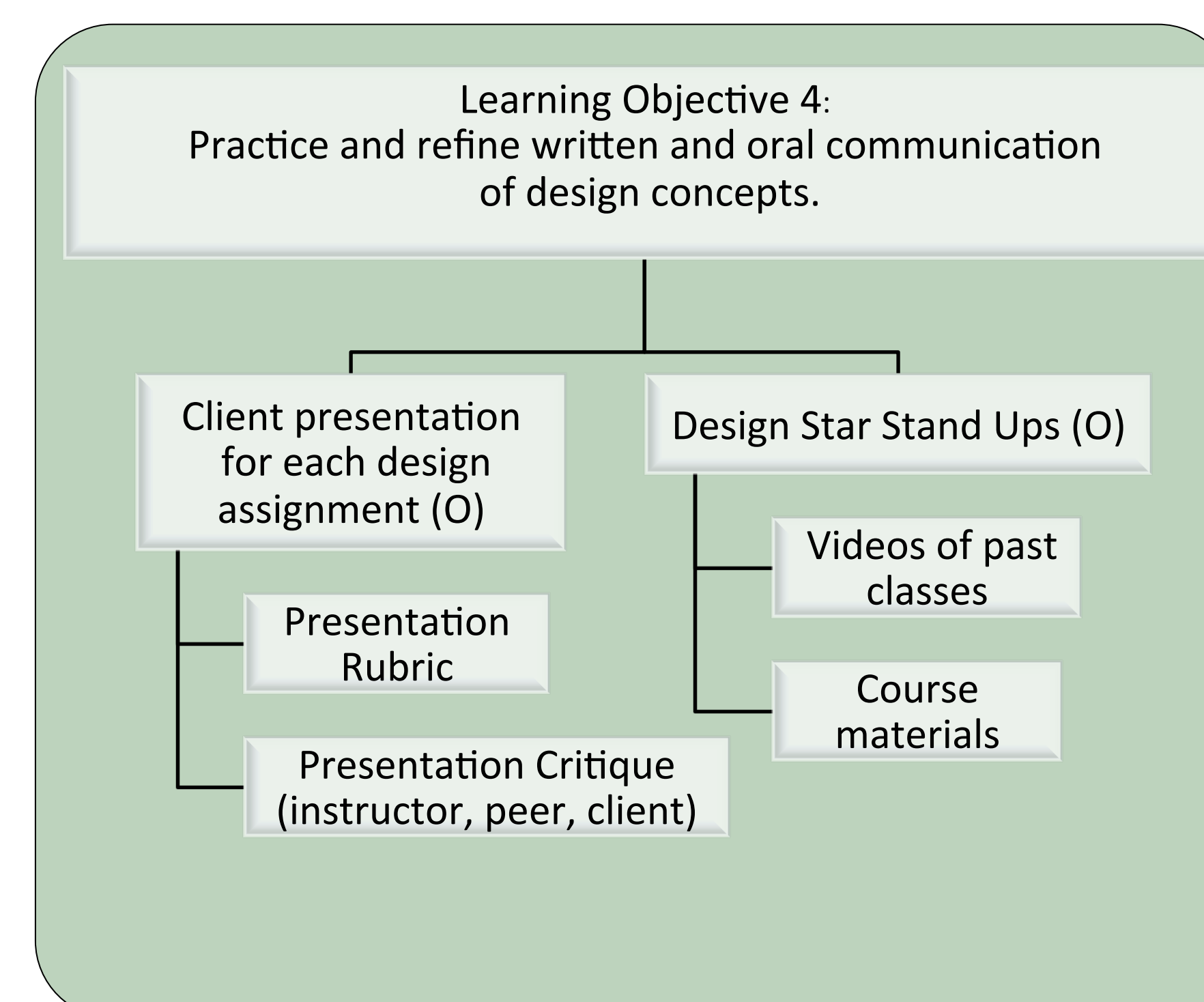
- Assignments more focused, and relate to each other better
- Fewer assignments to grade; I can provide more substantive and valuable feedback to students
- Clear scaffold of assignments across the semester
- There has been a more incremental and obvious improvement of student work over the course of the semester

## What the Students are Saying

- “Assignments had real-world application”
- “I liked working with real clients”
- “Writing about different landscapes helped me think about my designs differently”
- “I didn’t like the Design Star stand ups at first but know why you made us do them”
- “I’ve tried new graphic techniques (w/ varying levels of success) which is what I wanted to do. Even though I didn’t love the way each design worked out. I think I learned something from each one of them.”



HORT 481 Learning Objective 1 alignment map



HORT 481 Learning Objective 4 alignment map



Sample of student's final design project (Eric Golay)