JANUARY TIP OF THE MONTH

A test blueprint is essentially a list of learning outcomes that students are to demonstrate on a given test. Test blueprints are especially important for:

1. ensuring that tests focus on learning outcomes that are most important to an instructor;
2. ensuring that tests give appropriate emphasis to thinking skills; and
3. providing evidence of student achievement of major learning outcomes (Suskie, p. 202-203).

Here is a test blueprint used by members of the Math Department (thanks to Dick Davis of South Campus for sharing…)

INTERMEDIATE ALGEBRA TEST BLUEPRINT - UNIT IV

Unit IV Learning Outcomes & Distribution of Points on the 50-point Test

- □ Factor polynomial expressions used in several problems (this skill is required throughout the unit)*****
- □ Solve quadratic equations in one variable using factoring, the square root method, completing the square, and using the quadratic formula (21 points)
- □ Determine the nature of the roots using the discriminant (2 points)

□ Apply the root test (6 points)

□ Solve rational and radical equations in one variable that lead to a quadratic equation (11 points)

□ Solve higher degree equations in one variable using factoring (10 points)

***** For the first learning outcome, there are no specific questions on the exam; however, there are several other problems that require factoring to complete them.

CHALLENGE: Since the semester is just starting, think about writing a test blueprint BEFORE an exam (refer to Suskie for more guidance or contact your faculty liaison).

Suskie, Linda. *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide.* Bolton, Massachusetts: Anker Publishing, 2004.