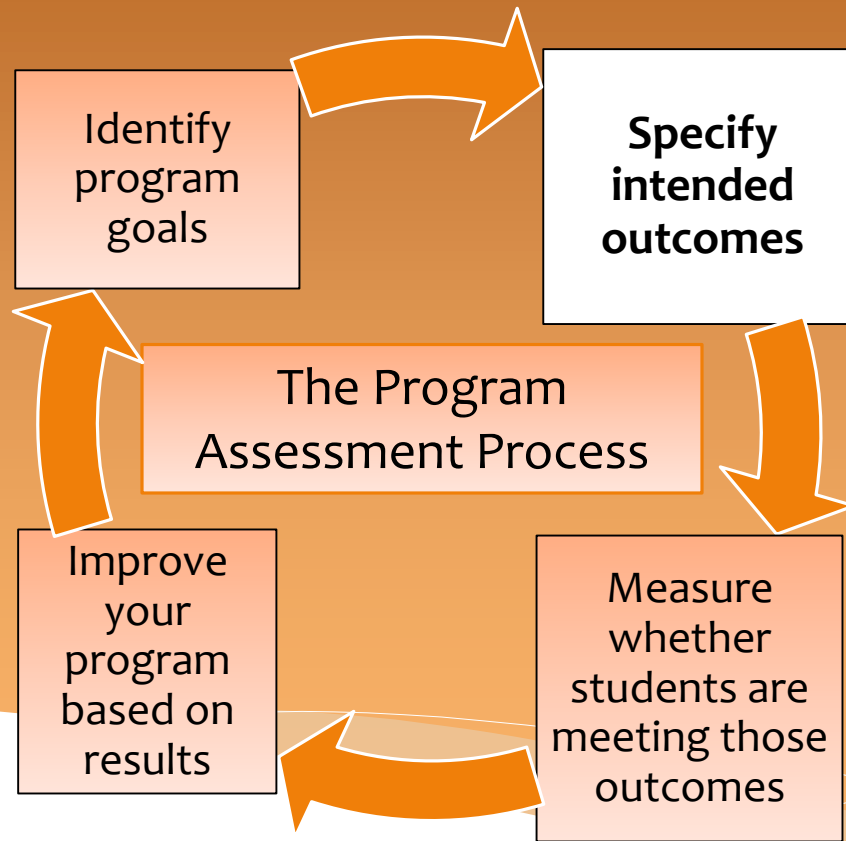


# Program Assessment: Writing Learning Outcomes



**Cathy Barrette, Director of Assessment  
Wayne State University**

# Learning Outcomes

- \* Learning outcomes are statements of the intended results of the program
  - \* Specific, measurable statements of what graduating students *should know, be able to do, or value*
  - \* Derived from the mission statement
  - \* Focused on the results of student learning, not on the learning process or on teaching
- \* Student services programs may have program outcomes that describe operational performance instead.

# Learning Outcomes: Usefulness

- \* Explicitly stating learning outcomes enables faculty and staff to:
  - \* Clearly express the benefits of the program to stakeholders in concrete terms
  - \* Inform students about what they will learn
  - \* Attract students to your program
  - \* More effectively request donations, funding, resources

# Learning Outcome Level

- \* Programs' learning outcomes should reflect a cognitive level appropriate for the degree.
- \* For example, the expectations in a graduate program should be higher than in an undergraduate program in the same field.
- \* Bloom's Taxonomy is a useful tool for scaling learning outcomes by cognitive difficulty.

# Bloom's Taxonomy

**Create**

**Produce new or original work**

design, assessment construct, formulate, investigate

**Evaluate**

**Justify a stand or decision**

appraise, argue, defend, critique, judge, select, support

**Analyze**

**Draw connections among ideas**

differentiate, organize, relate, compare, contrast, test

**Apply**

**Use information in new situations**

execute, implement, solve, use, interpret, operate, sketch

**Understand**

**Explain ideas or concepts**

classify, explain, describe, identify, locate, select, translate

**Remember**

**Recall facts and basic concepts**

define, duplicate, list, repeat, state

# Example: MA in History

- \* MA students will [**locate**] relevant primary and secondary sources.
- \* MA Students will [**analyze**] relevant primary and secondary sources.
- \* MA Students will [**analyze**] current historiographical debates in a chosen field of history.
- \* MA Students will [**articulate a historical argument**], using evidence based in primary and secondary sources.

# Example: BS in Nursing

- \* Student **[integrates]** knowledge of health promotion, health restoration and supportive measures in management of nursing care of individuals, families and communities in diverse populations.
- \* Student systematically **[evaluates]** the processes and outcomes of healthcare using established criteria.
- \* Student **[utilizes]** innovations and technology in planning, delivering, and evaluating nursing care and nursing care outcomes.

# Relating Program and Course Learning Outcomes

Course-level learning outcomes should contribute to/align with program-level learning outcomes:

## **Program Learning Outcomes: Doctor of Physical Therapy**

Students provide interventions to achieve patient goals.

## **Contributing Course Learning Outcomes**

**PT 5100:** Students recall appropriate exercise intervention.

**PT 6100/7320:** Students implement an exercise program for a patient who has a neurologic or orthopedic injury.

**PT 8800/8820:** Students select an exercise intervention for an actual patient.



# Examples:

## Student Services Learning Outcomes

- \* Dean of Students Office, Student Community Service
  - \* Students will identify opportunities to become involved in community service activities.
- \* Counseling and Psychological Services:
  - \* Clients will demonstrate motivation for self-improvement and personal responsibility.

# Examples: Student Services Operational Outcomes

- \* Testing, Evaluation & Research Services:
  - \* Students will increase their participation in SET.
- \* Ombud's Office
  - \* The Ombud's Office provides relevant information and/or referral to all who contact it.

# Learning Outcomes: Guiding Questions

To help you identify your program's learning outcomes, consider the following questions:

- \* What can ideal graduates/clients from your program do with what they learned?
- \* What do they *value* or *care about*?
- \* What kinds of job skills do they take into the workforce and the community?

Your answers can form the basis of your program's learning outcomes.

# Learning Outcomes: Pitfalls to Avoid

- \* Combining two or more behaviors into one outcome
- \* Describing an outcome that is not measurable
  - \* Too vague
  - \* Too broad or inclusive
- \* Focusing on the process of learning rather than its outcomes
- \* Writing for a specialist audience rather than a general audience

# Curriculum Map

## (for academic programs only)

- \* A curriculum map identifies the relationship between courses students take and the program's learning outcomes
- \* The level of development of each outcome can also be specified by indicating whether each outcome is:
  - \* I- Introduced
  - \* D-Developed/Practiced/Reviewed
  - \* M-Mastery demonstrated

# Curriculum Map Usefulness

- \* By explicitly identifying which learning outcomes are addressed in each course and at what developmental level, programs can easily determine whether:
  - \* the program addresses all learning outcomes in a balanced way
  - \* there are gaps or an overemphasis in any particular learning outcome
  - \* students have progressively more challenging opportunities to build their skills and knowledge to a mastery level.

# Curriculum Map Example: MA in Language Learning

<b>Number</b>	<b>LO1: Analysis of SLA Research and Pedagogy</b>	<b>LO2: Application to Evaluation of Pedagogical Materials</b>
LGL 5750	I	-
LGL 5850/7850	I	I, D
LGL 5860/7860	D	I, D
LGL 5830/7830	D	D
LGL 5820/7820	D	D
LGL 5810/7810	D	D
LGL 7999	M	M

Organized by program learning outcome, course, and development, not by course learning outcomes or by time/semester in the program

# Curriculum Map: Guiding Questions

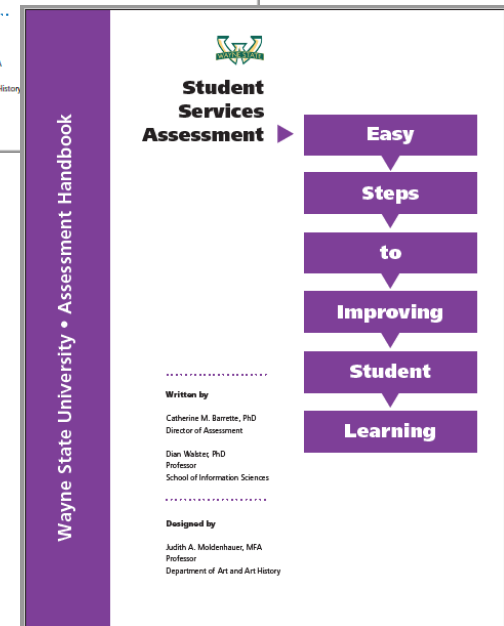
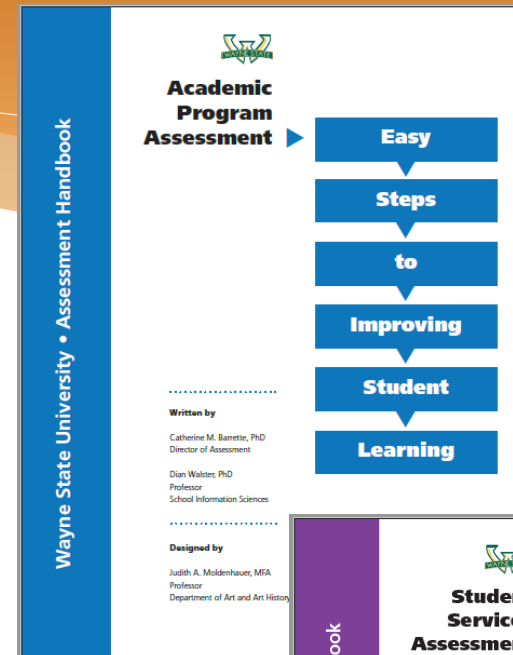
- \* Which course(s) contribute to each learning outcome?
- \* To what degree?
  - \* I- Introduced
  - \* D-Developed/Practiced/Reviewed
  - \* M-Mastery demonstrated

(A template for creating a curriculum map is available on the [WSU Assessment website](#).)



# Want More Information?

- \* Additional presentations and the assessment handbooks explain how to:
  - \* Write mission statements
  - \* Write learning outcomes and curriculum maps
  - \* Choose assessments
  - \* Understand and use results
  - \* Use Planning to record your work
- \* Each part has examples and pitfalls to avoid as well!



# Local Resources for Program Assessment

- \* Cathy Barrette, WSU Director of Assessment  
[c.barrette@wayne.edu](mailto:c.barrette@wayne.edu)  
(313)577-1615
- \* [WSU Assessment website](#)
- \* [Office for Teaching and Learning](#) staff, workshops and website