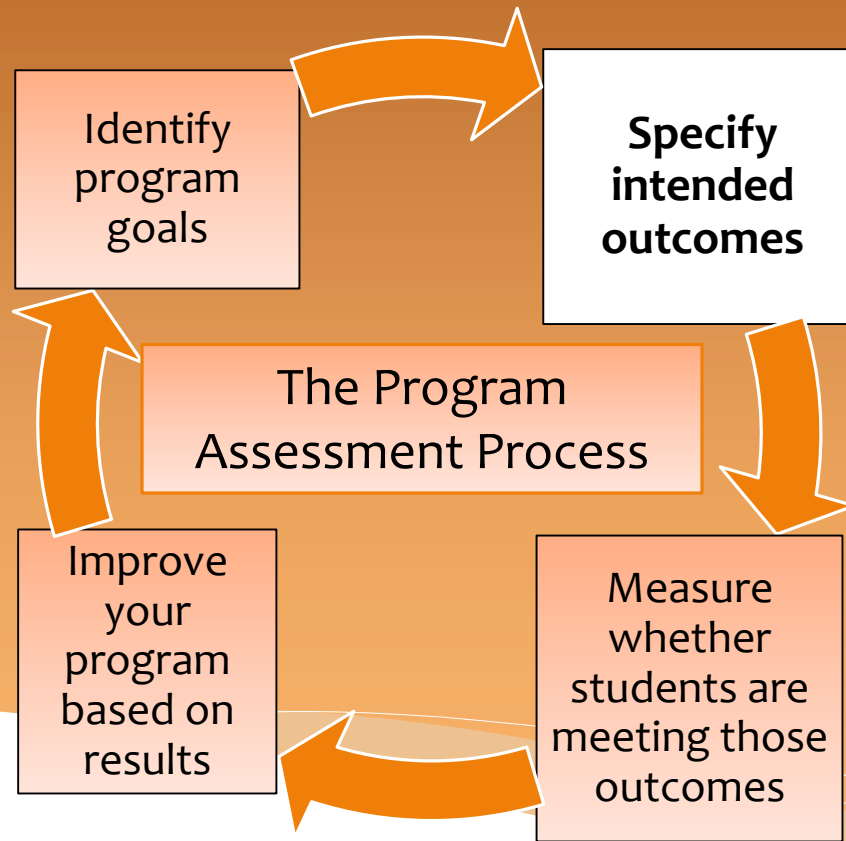


Program Assessment: Writing Learning Outcomes



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

Learning Outcomes

- * Statements of the intended results of the program
 - * Specific, measurable statements of what graduating students *should know, be able to do, believe, or value*
 - * Derived from the mission statement
 - * Focused on the results of student learning, not on the learning process or on teaching
- * At least one assessment (i.e., a source of evidence or data) is needed per learning outcome; two or three is better.

Learning Outcomes: Usefulness

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

Learning Outcomes Example: Geneva College Psychology

- * Students should be able to **recognize** and **articulate** the foundational assumptions, central ideas, and dominant criticisms of the psychoanalytic, Gestalt, behaviorist, humanistic, and cognitive approaches to psychology.

(Note the use of action verbs, which usually correspond to overt behavior that can be measured.)

Learning Outcomes Example: U Wyoming Statistics

- * [Students will] **Demonstrate** understanding of basic concepts of probability and statistics embedded in their courses.
- * [Students will] **Demonstrate** ability to **write** reports of the results of statistical analyses giving summaries and conclusions using nontechnical language.

Learning Outcomes Example: LMU Theatre Arts

Students will...

- * **Integrate** effective use of body and voice in communication in a theatrical space
- * [**Value ...**] Theatre as a live, human, creative, and spiritual experience, which has the power to transform and educate as well as entertain an audience

Learning Outcomes Example: Arkansas State U: Housing

- * **Provide** safe facilities
- * **Provide** living & learning opportunities beyond the classroom
- * **Develop** community

Learning Outcomes: Guiding Questions

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

- * What kinds of information does an ideal graduate/client from your program *know*?
- * What can *s/he do*?
- * What does *s/he value or care about*?
- * What kinds of job skills does *s/he* take into the workforce and the community?

(Choose a few of your answers for your first round of learning outcomes and add others later.)

Learning Outcomes: Pitfalls to Avoid

- * Combining two or more ideas into one outcome
- * Describing an outcome that is not measurable
 - * Too vague
 - * Too broad or inclusive
- * Writing for a specialist audience rather than a general audience
- * Titling the outcome without defining it *in layman's terms* in the description box

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 focus on 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, programs can easily determine whether the program addresses all learning outcomes in a balanced way, or whether there are gaps or an overemphasis in any particular learning outcome.

Curriculum Map Example: WSU MA in Language Learning

Number	LO1: Analysis of SLA Research and Pedagogy	LO2: Application to Evaluation of Pedagogical Materials
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

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](#) and in [Compliance Assist](#).)

Local Resources for Program Assessment

- * Cathy Barrette, WSU Director of Assessment

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- * WSU Assessment website (temporary url)

<http://undergrad.wayne.edu/assessment.php>

- * OTL staff, workshops and website:

<http://otl.wayne.edu/>

Want More Information?

- * Additional presentations explain how to:
 - * Conceptualize the overall program assessment process
 - * Write mission statements
 - * Choose assessments
 - * Understand and use results from the assessments
 - * Use Compliance Assist to record your work
- * Each part has examples and pitfalls to avoid as well!