

**Weimar  
University**

**Student Learning Outcomes  
Assessment Handbook**

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## I. Introduction and Context

### A. How did we get here? History of Assessment at Weimar University

The realization of our need to develop and codify an Assessment System for Weimar University evolved when the institution began to pursue accreditation in 2016. As we more completely articulated our Weimar University Vision, Mission, Direction, and Values, we codified our purpose, plans, and assessment practices described in this document. The Weimar University Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Handbook is an organic document that continues to grow with feedback (via meta-assessment) just as our programs and activities (courses, etc.) will change and adjust based on our reflection during Program Assessment and Comprehensive Program Review (CPR), with stakeholder feedback, and other possible unforeseen factors.

The source of this realization was three-fold:

### B. Alignment of Mission and Practice

As we reflected upon our Weimar University Vision, Mission, and Direction,<sup>1</sup> it became increasingly apparent that assessment could be integral to achieving our desired results. Not only would assessment help us to “remain focused” and “avoid costly mistakes” (Allen, 2006, p. 121), but it could also be an accountability tool to foster enhanced educational and institutional effectiveness because of the comprehensive and iterative nature of assessment (Suskie, 2009, p. 15).

#### 1. *Desire for Accreditation*

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Assessment-related themes comprise approximately one-third to one-half of the Criteria for Review (CFRs) in the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) self-study (WSCUC, Standards of Accreditation) and institutional report. Regional accreditors reported that deficiencies in student learning outcomes assessment processes were the “most common” or “number one” shortcoming in institutional evaluations (Provezis, 2010; Denecke, Ken & Wiener, 2011, p. 17).

However, to reap the greatest benefit from assessment, it is important not to perform it merely for reasons of compliance with regional accreditors. Rather, the compliance portion of the assessment “should remain secondary to the instructional and diagnostic aspects” (Huba & Freed, 2000, p. 96). Indeed, many have articulated that when assessment “spins on its orbit,”

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<sup>1</sup> Since each field of study tends to use assessment terms a bit differently, and different institutions use the terms in different ways, the key assessment terms used within this document are underlined and more fully described for the reader **Appendix A: Glossary of Terms**.

not intersecting with other campus goals and is done only as a means of mere compliance, it fails to solicit the desired effect (Banta, Jones, and Black, 2009; Walvoord, 2004, p. 5).

Clearly, the improvement and accountability components of assessment will necessarily remain in tension because both components are important—we need to improve what we do, but we also are accountable to students, to the public, to donors, and in the Christian faith-based institution—to God (Huba & Freed, 2000, p. 68).

## **2. Biblical Best-Practice**

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Lastly, biblical and prophetic fidelity are important in our assessment endeavor. We are admonished by the apostle Paul to “examine ourselves, to see whether we are in the faith” (2 Corinthians 13:5). The same apostle further cautioned believers to do everything “heartily, as to the Lord and not to men” (Colossians 3:24) and not with “eye service” (Colossians 3:22). Moreover, in the classic Seventh-day Adventist book, *Education*, the need for the assessment process is clearly articulated at the classroom level:

Every teacher should see to it that his work tends to definite results.

Before attempting to teach a subject, he should have a distinct plan in mind and should know just what he desires to accomplish. (White, 1952/1903, p. 233)

The above statement clearly foreshadows the current assessment landscape described by Suskie many decades later:

Wherever student learning and development are supposed to happen, there should be goals for that learning and assessments to see how well students are achieving those goals. (2009, p. 9)

Consequently, in a faith-based institution, best assessment practices should occur because faculty and administration operate in the “improvement paradigm,” where the intent is to use assessment results to enhance teaching and learning, and not from an “accountability paradigm,” where assessment is performed merely to be compliant with regional accreditors (Ewell, 2009, p. 9). Toward this end, Lee and Stronks rightly argue that if anyone in higher education ought to be “motivated to change to improve, it is us” when speaking about the faith-based institution of higher learning (1994, p. 5).

During our work in this area, some have voiced concern that accreditation could interfere with the mission or philosophy of our faith-based institution. However, as the accreditation process currently functions, accreditation is largely centered on *how effectively* each institution

fulfills its mission (ACE National Task Force for Institutional Accreditation, 2013, p. 12, emphasis added) without prescribing the definite means to accomplish these goals.

In light of the above concern, perhaps a series of more profitable questions posed by Barker and Pinner (Lee & Stronks, 1994, p. 18-19) are appropriate.

- As a faith-based institution, how can we effectively enter into the process?
- What can be measured?
- How should it be measured?
- How should these measurements be interpreted?
- How should that information be applied to the curriculum and instruction?

Furthermore, as we have undertaken the process of systematic student learning outcomes assessment over the past few years, we have been led to more clearly articulate and refine the Weimar University Student Learning Outcomes (hereafter, ISLOs), Program Student Learning Outcomes (hereafter, PSLOs), and rubrics that define the desired values, skills, and abilities of the Weimar University graduate.

PSLOs and rubrics developed for assessing these outcomes are contained within each Program Syllabus. Institutional Student Learning Outcomes and the associated rubrics developed to assess these outcomes are contained within the Weimar Institutional Syllabus.

### **C. What is Student Learning Outcomes Assessment?**

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment provides an ongoing, systematic, and iterative process for gathering, analyzing, and using information from measured student learning outcomes (hereafter, SLOs) to improve student learning—in short, “informed action...enhances student learning” (Walvoord, 2010, p. 27). Toward this end, faculty define SLOs, collect information, analyze, and apply that information to enhance student learning by making substantive changes to methods and curriculum where necessary. At Weimar University, the assessment provides an opportunity for faculty, staff, students, and administration to participate in a self-evaluation of educational effectiveness at the Activity Level (classroom, mission trips, TCI projects, etc.), Program Level (Business Administration, Christian Education, General Education, Interdisciplinary Studies, Nursing, Music, Natural Science, and Religion), and Institutional Level (Allen, 2004, pp. 4-5; Allen, 2006, p. 1; Driscoll & Wood, 2007, p. 34; Maki, 2004, p. 15).

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment effectively asks and provides answers to the following questions:

- What should students learn?
- How will we evaluate learning?

- What have students learned?
- Were our methods, practices, processes, and curriculum effective?
- How can we do this (methods, practices, and processes) better?

While we are very interested in connecting and deepening our understanding of student learning through up-to-date research and theory, we hold the educational writings of Ellen G. White in high esteem. She opened her classic on Christian education (White, 1952/1903) with a paragraph that extols three important educational principles: holistic, life-long, and service learning.

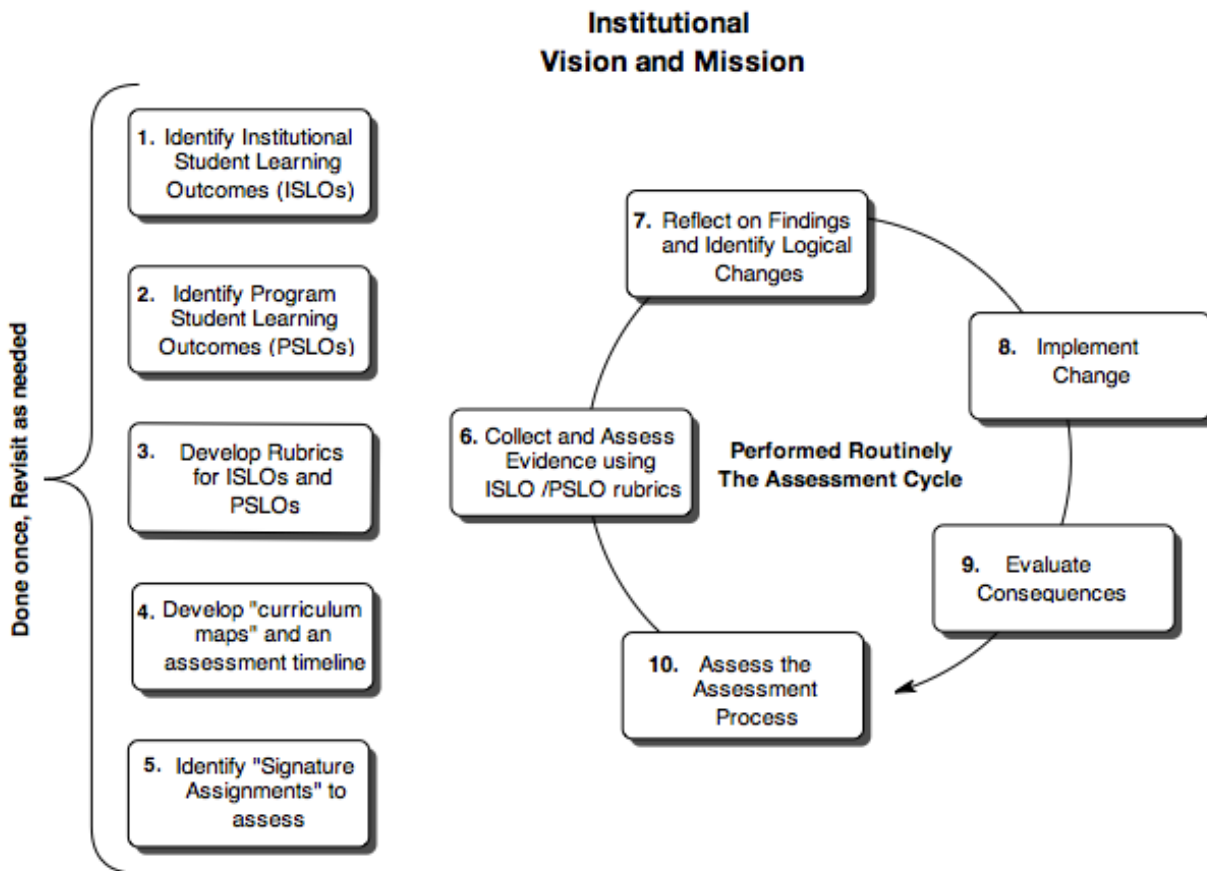
Our ideas of education take too narrow and too low a range. There is need of a broader scope, a higher aim. True education means more than the pursual of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come. (p. 13)

#### **D. Why is Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Important?**

Many Weimar faculty have an academic and/or industrial research background, propelled and empowered by their curiosity. In the current context, our faculty are similarly curious about what and how students learn. The ability of our students to apply, retain, analyze, evaluate, synthesize knowledge, and grow socially and spiritually is the basis for our institutional commitment to assessment (Driscoll & Wood, 2007, p. 133; Maki, 2004, p. 2). As such, we envision our assessment process as not merely an ornamental addition to the organization but an integral and functional instrument for teaching and learning that further facilitates the improvement of our instructional methods, curriculum, and practices (Banta, 2002, pp. 13-16, 256).

Over several years, faculty, staff, students, and administration have come to view assessment as a means to achieve the Weimar University Mission, Vision, and Values reflected in our multi-level SLOs (ISLOs, PSLOs, and ASLOs). Within the context of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment, the Weimar degree is not merely a collection of disconnected courses or activities (Suskie, 2009, p. 4). Rather, the degree is an integrated experience involving required courses, required experiences, and required competencies to realize the development of mental, physical, spiritual, and social faculties. Toward this end, the required





*Figure 1. Steps in the development of the Weimar University Assessment Plan*

courses, experiences, and competencies, together with frequent feedback, practice, and opportunities to use what has been learned (Huba & Freed, 2000, p. 45; Joint Task Force on Student Learning, 1998, p. 3) are intended to provide a quality degree and graduates that reflect the Mission, Vision, and Values of Weimar University.

## II. Weimar University Student Learning Assessment System

The following broad steps were taken in developing the Weimar University Assessment Plan. **Figure 1** also provides a graphical illustration of this process.

1. Identify ISLOs<sup>2</sup> conceptualized in terms of the unique Weimar University (WU) Vision and Mission,<sup>2</sup> using backward design;
2. Identify PSLOs<sup>2</sup> for each of the WU Programs conceptualized in terms of the ISLOs—General Education (GE), Business Administration (BBA), Interdisciplinary Studies (BA), Music (BM), Natural Science (BS), Nursing (AS/BS), Religion (BA), and Christian Education (BA). In later

<sup>2</sup> A description of the process for the development of the Weimar University *Vision, Mission, Direction*, and Institutional and Program Student Learning Outcomes is described in a document prepared for the Assessment Leadership Academy VI, Harris, C. R. *Development of an Assessment Plan At Weimar Institute: A Faith-Based Institution of Higher Learning*, 2015, which is available on request, [charris@weimar.edu](mailto:charris@weimar.edu).

years, we have also developed SLOs for our MA programs in Biblical Mission and Wellness (MA) and Counseling Psychology and Wellness (MA).

3. Develop rubrics (tools) that describe the expected levels of proficiency for all WU graduates and graduates of each of the specific WU Programs;
4. Develop an assessment timeline and curriculum maps to describe “when,” “how often,” and “where” the assessment artifacts will be collected and assessed for the various ISLOs and PSLOs and determine who will need access to the assessment evidence;
5. Identify specific signature assignments within WU activities (specific courses, experiences, and/or competencies) that will be assessed using the ISLO and PSLO rubrics;
6. Collect and assess the evidence using the ISLO/PSLO rubrics;
7. Reflect (on current and past assessment results and changes) and identify (current) logical changes;
8. Implement change;
9. Evaluate consequences of change (i.e. “close the loop”); and,
10. Assess the assessment process (meta-assessment).

Steps 1-5 are done once and revisited as appropriate, whereas Steps 6-10 are performed routinely as part of the assessment cycle. In a typical scenario, each SLO (PSLO or ISLO) is assessed once within a 5-6 year time period, culminating in the sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) year with Comprehensive Program Review (CPR), which reports on all SLOs.

## **A. Levels of Assessment at Weimar University**

We have designed our Student Learning Assessment System to assess the Activity, Program, and Institutional levels (**Figure 2**). Each level has its SLOs: the ISLOs, PSLOs, and ASLOs (described above).<sup>3</sup>

### **1. The Institutional Level**

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Institutional Level assessment envelopes the entire campus—including all baccalaureate and master degree programs, the general education program, and student services. It also includes other campus entities pertaining to the academic and experiential learning of undergraduate students attending Weimar University, such as experiences in the NEWSTART™ Lifestyle Center,<sup>4</sup> Weimar Bakery, and/or Weimar Farms. The ISLOs provide commonality within all baccalaureate degrees and describe the specific values, skills, and knowledge each student graduating from our institution is expected to possess.

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<sup>3</sup> For readability, the levels are collectively referred to as API levels (Activity, Program and Institution Levels) in this document, and the generic term SLO is used to refer to a student learning outcome across more than one of the API levels.

<sup>4</sup> NEWSTART™ is a comprehensive lifestyle program located on the University property, cf. <http://www.newstart.org>

## ***Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs)***

The ISLOs (Table 1) were developed using a “backward design” (Wiggins & McTieghe, pp. 13-33) where we “began,” as Covey suggests, “with the end in mind” (Covey, 2013, pp. 104-107). ISLOs were developed *after* the Institutional *Mission*, *Vision*, and *Direction* were codified—a description of this process is available (Harris, 2015). The ISLOs describe what is expected of each baccalaureate and master's graduate of the University. The ISLOs are presented here and are more thoroughly defined in the Institutional Syllabus.

<b>Weimar University Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs)‡</b>	
<i>Students follow Jesus as....</i>	
<b>1. Spiritual Leaders</b>	<i>Students follow Jesus Christ's example of faith-filled leadership, by rendering love-motivated church ministry that magnifies the universal principles of the biblical Ten Commandments in speech and action.</i>
<b>2. Health Evangelists</b>	<i>Students practice and promote physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual healing by leading in collaborative, community-based programming among diverse people groups domestically or internationally.</i>
<b>3. Critical Thinkers</b>	<i>Students investigate a controversy, problem or question related to their major field where diverse perspectives are assembled, analyzed and used to draw an informed conclusion that considers the influence of context, possible sources of bias and a priori assumptions.</i>
<b>4. Integrative Learners</b>	<i>Students develop a biblical worldview perspective as they effectively identify and integrate one or more of the key examples, facts, theories or concepts of their major field as they relate to Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy.</i>
<b>5. Effective Communicators</b>	<i>Students communicate the key (threshold) concepts of their field in both written and oral forms.</i>
<b>6. Quantitative Reasoners</b>	<i>Students solve quantitative problems and clearly communicate their findings by interpreting and representing quantitative information in two or more forms (e.g., symbolical, graphical, numerical, etc.).</i>
<b>7. Principled Workers</b>	<i>Students display a professional commitment to strong moral principles “on the job” and in practical learning experiences by consistently producing quality work, and exercising self-discipline, self-control and diligence.</i>

‡ Revised Spring-Summer 2016

## ***2. The Program Level***

The Program Level includes degree programs offered at Weimar University and the General Education program. The PSLOs describe the specific values, skills, and knowledge that each student who completes a Program is expected to possess.

## ***Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)***

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PSLOs are based on the ISLOs. However, they have been adapted to meet each specific program's needs and may include one program-specific SLO. A thorough description of the PSLOs for each program at Weimar University is available in the [Program Syllabus](#), or equivalent, for each program.

### ***3. The Activity Level***

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The [Activity Level](#), as defined herein, is a broad term that includes the typical activities available to and/or required for each student. Typical Activities include classes or courses, work education, extra- and co-curricular activities, community outreach, evangelism, mission opportunities, and community involvement (cf. Total Community Involvement, TCI). The ASLOs describe the specific values, skills, and knowledge that each student who completes a specific Activity is expected to possess.

### ***Activity Student Learning Outcomes (ASLOs)***

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ASLOs are developed by each activity (i.e. course) instructor. Each program must have a [curriculum map](#) that describes how each ASLO relates to the PSLOs and ISLOs, which are [aligned](#) with the Institutional [Mission](#), [Vision](#), and [Values](#).

## **B. Teaching, Learning, and Assessment**

### ***1. Formative and Summative Assessment***

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One responsibility for the Weimar instructor is providing formative and summative learning assessments at the [Activity level](#).

[Formative assessment](#) “informs” the student of the quality of their learning. It is periodically performed to assess student growth, implement corrective changes, enhance student awareness of the expected SLOs, and promote a culture of lifelong learning (Banta, 2002, p. 231). Formative assessment performed at the classroom (or activity) level gives students multiple opportunities to practice new learnings and make mistakes without the risk of substantial penalty (Nilson, 2010, pp. 273-280). In addition to giving the instructor the ability to self-evaluate his or her efforts, formative assessment affords the instructor a window into student thinking, provides insight into the progress of student learning, and helps to identify misconceptions that need further clarification.

By contrast, [summative assessment](#) *follows* teaching and learning and is the final step in evaluating a given activity, skill, or knowledge-based concept. Thus, students may be awarded “points” for completing each step in the learning process through formative assessment, but

high-stakes “grading” and assessment of their skill, activity, or ability occurs when they complete a summative assignment or task (Driscoll & Swarup, 2007, pp. 86-87; Nilson, 2010, pp. 281-294). Typical summative assignments may include final research papers or reports, media presentations, oral presentations, final exams based on program content, and other “high stakes” assignments.

Each student should have multiple opportunities to develop and achieve the essential learning outcomes throughout their educational experience at Weimar University. However, the full responsibility for meeting an important institutional or program SLO should not be placed on a single experience, activity, or faculty member.

## **2. Student Learning Outcomes**

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Student learning outcomes should target higher cognition (thinking) levels, such as *application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation*. These levels are referred to in Bloom’s Taxonomy (Bloom, 1984), which uses active verbs that describe how students can demonstrate their learning. It is generally preferred to avoid words and phrases such as *understand, know, demonstrate an understanding of, and demonstrate a knowledge of* when writing SLOs. Rather, use active verbs that *actually* describe how students can demonstrate their learning. When SLOs reflect the desired learning regarding higher-order thinking skills, students are encouraged to achieve “deep learning,” and faculty avoid “covering” information with expectations of only superficial or surface learning. Moreover, students can remember more, focus on applying learning, and can (better) transfer new learning to new situations (Driscoll & Wood, 2007, p. 13; Halpern & Hakel, 2003, p. 41).

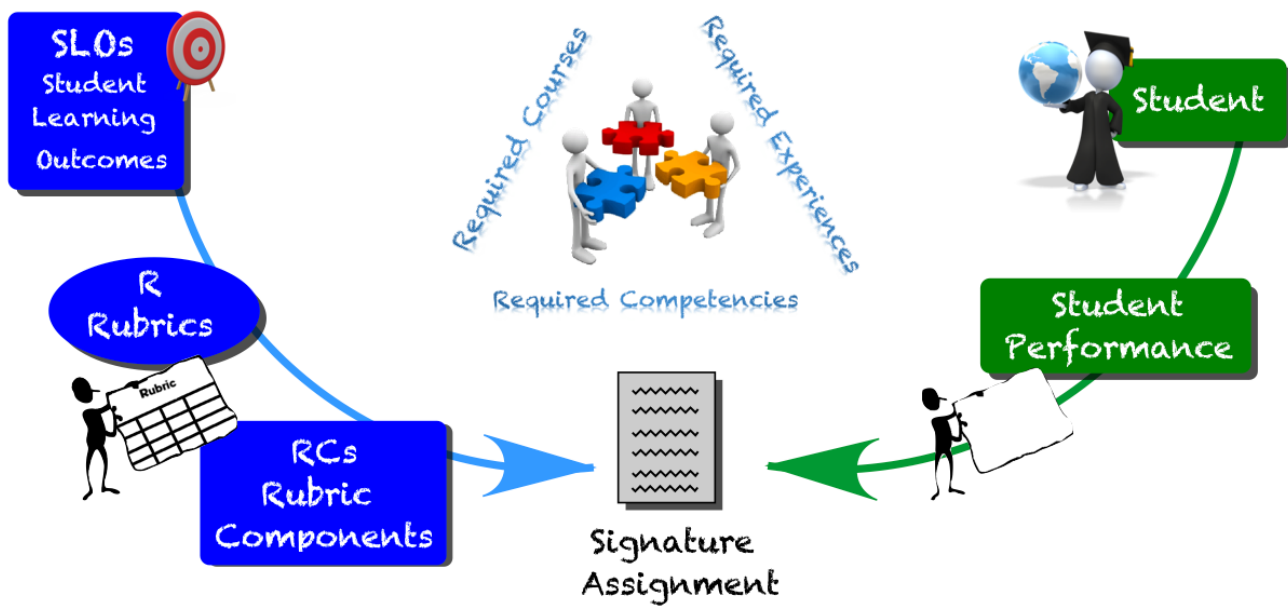
Student learning outcomes should be observable, assessable, measurable, achievable, relevant, and meaningful to the learners (Nilson, 2010, p. 30).

One common error to avoid: Student learning outcomes do not describe the *learning process (pedagogy)* but rather the *product* of the learning process, i.e. the *outcome*.

Appendix C contains several examples of SLOs and helps distinguish the learning process from the *product of learning*. Several helpful documents were also prepared by Dr. Amy Driscoll and Dr. Mary Allen regarding the development of course or activity student learning outcomes. Faculty may find these resources helpful when preparing SLOs at the course (activity) level. Another useful tool written from a faith-based perspective is *Assessment in Christian Higher Education: Rhetoric and Reality* (Lee & Stronks, 1994) and *Faith-Based Education that Constructs* (Lee, 2010).

### 3. Rubrics & Rubric Components (RCs)

Weimar University SLOs (**Figure 2**) are operationalized into concrete terms and objective performable expectations through rubrics, which are based on the *American Association of Colleges and Universities* (AAC&U) VALUE (Valid Assessment of Learning In Undergraduate Education) rubrics. The individual rubric components (RCs) (horizontal rows, taken together) provide a full, objective description of the desired student ability (SLO). The performance levels used by the University include emerging, developing, proficient, and exemplary. Our direct assessment tool for many signature assignments or performances is the rubric. We have used rubrics to operationalize our ISLOs and PSLOs into concrete terms and objective performable expectations.



**Figure 2. Overview of Assessment Terms**

Rubrics are preferred in this case because they allow for directly assessing students' work or performance. Secondly, rubrics best allow faculty to prepare meaningful course-embedded performance assessments, which we prefer over add-on assessments or standardized exams outside the regular WU curriculum.

#### 4. Curriculum Design & Pedagogy

Student Learning Outcomes should guide the curriculum design, assessment, and grading process. Each learning task should support students in achieving the desired SLOs at the appropriate API level (Driscoll & Wood, 2007, pp. 68, 154).<sup>5</sup>

Curriculum, as we generally refer to it, is “what we teach”—the learning activities, resources, and assignments (specific readings, class activities, practical- and/or activity-based learnings, content, experiences, assignments, and assessments) that are designed to help develop the SLOs.

Pedagogy, by contrast, refers to “how we teach.” A careful examination of SLOs will assist in selecting the creative pedagogy (teaching and learning activities) to support students in achieving the desired learning outcomes. In 2006, Derek Bok reported that the “residue of knowledge and the habits of mind students take away from college are likely to be determined less by which courses they take than by how they are taught and how well they are taught” (p. 49, emphasis in original). This thought begs the question: “Are our current curricula and methods well suited to the educational goals that we are pursuing?” This is a question that should be considered by each Weimar University faculty, staff, and instructor involved in student teaching and learning.

**Appendix B** contains a document, “Blooming Pedagogy,” prepared by Dr. Amy Driscoll, that will likely help choose appropriate learning activities.

Program Level Curriculum Alignment Map				Activity Level Curriculum Alignment Map			
	PSLO #1	PSLO #2	PSLO #3		ASLO #1	ASLO #2	ASLO #3
Course #1	I	I, D		Assignment #1	I	I	I
Course #2			I, D	Assignment #2	D, A	D, A	D
Course #3	D, A		D, A	Assignment #3	M, A	M, A	M, A

Institutional Level Curriculum Alignment Map							
	ISLO #1	ISLO #2	ISLO #3	ISLO #4	ISLO #5	ISLO #6	ISLO #7
Major PSLO #1	D, M, A						
Major PSLO #2		D, M, A			D, M, A		
Major PSLO #3			D, M, A			D, M, A	
GE PSLO #2		I					
GE PSLO #4		I, D, A		I, D, A			
SS PSLO #2							D, M, A

**Figure 4. Curriculum Alignment Maps**

<sup>5</sup> It is possible that an assignment may not directly relate to the intended ASLOs, but ideally all assignments should “map” to a specific course SLO—otherwise the activity is likely “busy work” and will provide a distraction from the expected course or activity learning expectations. Please plan assignments with these thoughts in mind.

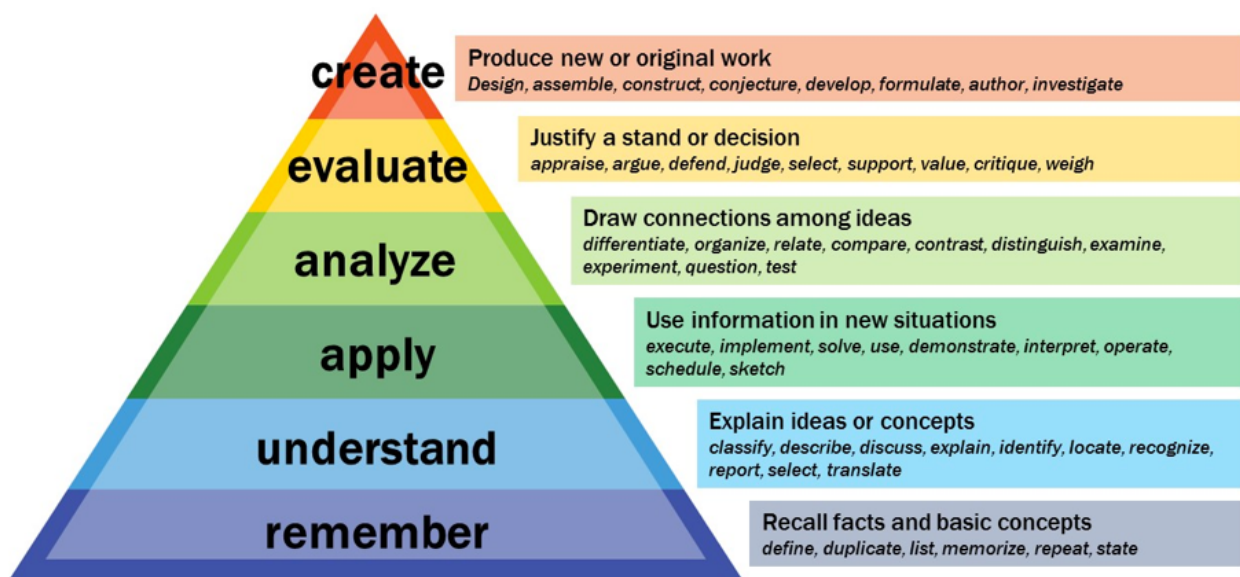
## 5. Curriculum Alignment & Curriculum Maps

To help ensure a successful relationship between what faculty expect students to learn (SLOs) and what students can actually “do” upon completion of their course of study we seek alignment (Allen, 2004, pp. 39-53, 157).

A curriculum map that displays the expected SLOs as they align with the required assignments or activities is prepared to ensure this alignment at each assessment level. A curriculum alignment map (matrix/table) provides a graphical portrayal of the alignment between student learning outcomes (SLOs) and the curriculum (Allen, 2004, p. 42-43). The curriculum map allows faculty and staff to ensure alignment of Institution, Program, and Activity (i.e. course) SLOs with the curriculum by quickly revealing unnecessary redundancies, inconsistencies, and other weaknesses or gaps. Curriculum maps for a program have the general format shown in **Figure 4**.

At the Institutional level, activities from the major, general education, and student services programs are aligned with specific ISLOs. At the Program level, required program activities are aligned with the PSLOs and corresponding ISLOs. At the Activity level, specific learning tasks within the activity (or “course”) are aligned with specific ASLOs, PSLOs, and/or ISLOs.

Instructors at Weimar University use the levels “introduced” (I), “developed” (D), “mastered” (M), and “assessed” (A) (Allen, 2004, pp. 43-46, 154-159; Suskie, 2009, p. 150). These terms help describe the level of student learning that the activity or program expects students to develop at various places in the curriculum and whether the activity will be assessed.



**Figure 5. Blooms Taxonomy: Cognitive Domain**



## 6. Blooms Taxonomy

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Bloom's Taxonomy (**Figure 5**) describes and categorizes the *Cognitive Domain* of learning, which includes knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis.

- *Knowledge* is the lowest level of learning and merely requires students to *remember* previously learned material.
- *Comprehension* asks students to *understand* the meaning of information and interpret ideas.
- *Application* asks learners to *apply* information and previously learned knowledge in new and concrete situations.
- *Analysis* requires students to *analyze*—to organize, clarify, conclude, or make references.
- *Evaluation* requires students to make a judgment based on knowledge.
- *Synthesis* requires students to combine elements (to *create*) and parts to form a whole or something not seen before.

**Appendix C** contains a document prepared by Dr. Amy Driscoll that describes the Cognitive Domain terms in greater detail.

Bloom's model also has the *Affective Domain*, which is largely concerned with feelings, beliefs, or emotions. The affective domain is divided as follows:

- *Receiving* is the lowest level, which includes an awareness or willingness to receive (i.e. sense, experience, attend).
- *Responding* refers to the learners' active attention and motivation to learn (conform, allow, cooperate, feel, pursue).
- *Valuing* refers to the learner's beliefs and attitudes of worth, such as an acceptance, preference, or commitment to a value (believe, seek, justify, search).
- *Organization* refers to the learner's internalization of values and beliefs, which results in an organization according to priority (examine, clarify, create, integrate).
- *Characterization* refers to a more complete internalization or philosophy about life. Here, the learner practices and acts on their values or beliefs (internalize, conclude, resolve, judge).

Fink has also identified learning outcomes beyond the cognitive domain (Fink, 2003, pp. 28-29, 58). Fink's levels include:

- *Foundational knowledge*, which includes remembering and understanding;
- *Application*, which includes creative problem-solving using a combination of critical, practical, and creative thinking;
- *Integration*, which includes making connections among ideas, disciplines, and people;
- *Human dimensions*, which include leadership, interpersonal skills, mentoring, and improved emotional intelligence;
- *Caring*, which includes curiosity and the joy of learning; and,
- *Learning how to learn* includes becoming better learners and engaging in self-directed learning.

In a study by Hart Research Associates (2006), executives placed the greatest emphasis on teamwork, critical and analytical thinking skills, and communication skills, showing that

application of knowledge and social skills are as highly important (if not more important) as the cognitive domain to today's employers.

## **7. Classroom Methods**

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Weimar University strives to balance student learning by blending the theoretical and practical. In many educational environments, "education has had to do chiefly with the memory" (White, 1952/1903, p. 230). Students are instructed to "know" information without the concomitant development of the higher-order cognitive abilities to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate what they "know." In her seminal book on education, Ellen White writes that too often:

Students have spent their time in laboriously crowding the mind with knowledge, very little of which could be utilized. The mind thus burdened with that which it cannot digest and assimilate is weakened; it becomes incapable of vigorous, self-reliant effort, and is content to depend on the judgment and perception of others. (White, 1952/1903, p. 230)

Modern research substantiates this claim. As expected, "students who have a greater command of the knowledge of their discipline can reason and communicate more effectively" (Resnick & Resnick, 1992, pp. 37-75; Hubba & Freed, 2000, p. 42). However, it has also been reported that when learning happens in "isolation" through separate "courses" and "outside the real-world context," students can learn "facts, theories or individual tasks;" however, without the "opportunity to use the knowledge or skills to achieve a goal, it is recalled only in the context in which it was learned" (Bransford & Vye, 1989, pp. 173-205; Huba & Freed, 2000, p. 44). Consequently, students are not challenged to develop life or critical-thinking skills or engage in "deep learning."

To respond to this challenge, instructors at Weimar University are encouraged to provide more active learning within the classroom. In course delivery, we encourage faculty to use active, problem-based, collaborative, community, and cooperative learning as well as frequent formative assessment and self-directed student learning (Allen, 2004, pp. 155-156). That is, we understand that a variety of methods helps to reach and expand the student's engagement, and consequently, "the greatest care should be taken in the education of youth to so vary the manner of instruction as to call forth the high and noble powers of the mind" (White, 1923, p. 15).

Appropriate learning modalities include activity-based and/or experiential learning, recitation, directed discussion, writing and speaking exercises, interactive lectures, practical internships, group learning, student-peer teaching, just-in-time teaching, case studies, and problem- or project-based learning (Nilson, 2010, p. 113-191). However, in all cases, allowing

the SLOs to designate the appropriate instructional methods for student learning is appropriate.

Faculty are also encouraged to use different teaching styles to provide for a variety of learning styles—some students are comfortable with abstract concepts, inductive reasoning, and intuitive problem solving, while other students may favor active experimentation, practical application, and reflective observation (Driscoll & Swarup, 2007, pp. 77-79, 82-83; Nilson, 2010, pp. 229-237). Moreover, Weimar faculty need not rely only on traditional forms of assessment evidence (e.g. tests, quizzes, papers). Other, possibly more authentic assignments include written accounts or reflective summaries, portfolios, rubrics, multimedia presentations, display boards, and interviews (Allen, 2004, pp. 99-102, 127-129).

### **a) Activity-Based Learning**

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Activity-based-experiential learning involves student performance in the kind of work that has “utilitarian, or personal value apart from documenting the competence of the learner” and the kind of work that “real people” do in “real situations...where their actions will have significant consequences” (Newman & Archbald, 1992, pp. 74-75; Tagg, 2003, pp. 157-158).

In his 2003 book, *The Learning Paradigm College*, John Tagg maintains that knowledge is important but “trivialized” if it is merely testable but not usable. He further states that student learning and performance should be authentic because authentic tasks integrate knowing and doing. Moreover, authentic tasks are open to “intrinsic student motivation and offer deep learning,” whereas inauthentic tasks, unless seen as a preparation for subsequent authentic tasks, are not (pp. 158, 161-162).

Indeed, relevant learning takes place as students perform “authentic tasks.” Such activities should involve “legitimate, bona-fide course content,” where content functions as the means and ends of the instruction (Weimer, 2002, pp. 51-53).

Toward this end, ISLOs #1 (Spiritual Leaders) and ISLO #2 (Comprehensive Health Evangelists) are based on active learning, and ISLO #7 (Principled Workers), is based on work learning, which is described below.

### **b) Work Learning**

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In the foundational book *Education*, Ellen G. White notes that every student should be:

....taught the necessity and the power of application. Upon this, far more than upon genius or talent, does success depend. Without application, the most brilliant talents avail little, while with rightly directed effort persons of

very ordinary natural abilities have accomplished wonders. (1952/1903, p. 232).

As a faith-based institution with deep connections to the Seventh-day Adventist church, Weimar University has an active Work Education program. It places significant emphasis on the development of a strong work ethic. Indeed, in the ancient “schools of the prophets,” students:

....sustained themselves by their own labor in tilling the soil or in some mechanical employment. In Israel this was not thought strange or degrading; indeed, it was regarded a crime to allow children to grow up in ignorance of useful labor. By the command of God every child was taught some trade, even though he was to be educated for holy office. (White, 1958/1890, p. 593).

A recent Business Roundtable survey of employers performed in 2009 found that the most serious gaps between job performance and skill sets were with *soft skills*, which included strong work ethic, personal accountability for work, punctuality, time management, professionalism, adaptability, and self-motivation (Kent, 2016). Others have noted that a person’s level of success is often determined not by IQ but by the extent to which they are intrinsically motivated to achieve and persevere despite what appears to be insurmountable obstacles or adversities (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 235-236; Markman, Baron, & Balkin, 2005; Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007).

Dundes and Marx reported that students who worked 10-19 hours per week had a higher GPA than those who worked fewer than 10 or more than 19 hours (2006-2007, p. 107). The authors also noted that while doing practical, worthwhile work, students learn to perform self-correcting evaluations and accept constructive evaluations from their peers and/or work supervisors.

To develop this character trait and to help defray the cost of their education, students perform necessary, useful operations on the Weimar University campus in the administrative offices, cafeteria, Weimar Academy, Weimar Inn, faculty/staff tutors or lab assistants, campus grounds, Weimar Farms, the NEWSTART™ Lifestyle Center and/or the Weimar Family Clinic.

### **c) *Learner-Centered Environment***

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Being learner-centered focuses attention squarely on what the students are doing, what and how the students are learning, and how their learning positions him or her for future learning. In this educational environment, content is still a focal point but not the sole focal

point (Weimer, 2002, p. 50). Faculty no longer do all of the evaluating; rather, students learn to self-assess and to constructively evaluate peers such that the faculty role is that of “designer” and facilitator of the learning environment *instead of* “the sage on the stage” (Weimer, 2002, p. xix).

In the learner-centered scenario, effective teaching is measured by engaging students in their learning and helping them master learning objectives. The effective learner-centered instructor and the Program Director and Assessment Director will also use student assessment to improve courses and overall institutional effectiveness (Allen, 2004, pp. 155-156).

Toward this end, Weimar University encourages faculty to focus on what students learn, to clearly articulate SLOs, identify meaningful connections within and among the required API level SLOs to make learning coherent and meaningful, and to consider how students learn based on actual, credible evidence (Allen, 2004, p. 3; Driscoll & Wood, 2007, pp. 154-156; Nilson, 2010, p. 274). Moreover, we encourage increased faculty focus on depth of processing and mastery of critical thinking skills over breadth of “coverage” (Allen, 2004, pp. 154-156; Driscoll & Swarup, 2007, pp. 3, 115).

#### **4. Signature Assignments (Artifacts)**

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Signature assignments (artifacts) are generated and assessed within courses (embedded assessment) or other activities. Signature assignments that are embedded within the course are preferred since they inherently have built-in reliability since students also receive a “grade” for these performances, whereas with “add-on assessments,” students may not perform as well as they are able due to the lack of consequences of poor performance (Suskie, 2009, p. 27-28). Additionally, signature assignments should be *meaningful* to the student, *manageable*, and *appropriate* to the SLO(s) goal. This is important because the goal of assessment is to give faculty enough evidence to make reasonable judgments about the effectiveness of their courses or programs and have information to guide decision-making (Baker, Carter, Lerick, & King, 2011).

Finally, Suskie (2009, p. 87) argues that faculty should not attempt to assess everything they want students to learn. Rather, it is “better to do a few assessments well than many poorly.” The course assessments should also provide a means for students to get instructor feedback (formative assessment) and not just evaluation (grading, summative assessment) (Suskie, 2009, p. 23-27). Signature assignments are also best done when students are required to demonstrate their skills rather than relate what they have learned through traditional tests. Performance assessments are of high value because students learn while

working on the assessment. Examples of performance assessment may include writing assignments, projects, portfolios, and lab assignments that may include “real world” examples that require students to solve “messy problems.”

## **5. Lifelong Learning**

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We desire the student growth and the development of lifelong, autonomous, self-regulated learners so that students will graduate from Weimar University “knowing just as much about learning content as they know about content itself” (Weimer, 2002, p. 49). Students are encouraged to be active and motivated participants in their educational process by becoming familiar with the expected SLOs, understanding the benefits that SLOs bring to their learning, identifying their own educational needs, collaborating with other students and faculty to sharpen their critical learning skills and developing the practice of lifelong learning (Driscoll & Swarup, 2007, p. 151).

In today’s economy, learning is a lifelong occupation. In her book *Learner-Centered Teaching*, Weimer states that “so much knowledge exists now” and “knowledge continues to grow explosively” such that it is nearly impossible to teach students everything they need to know about anything. Consequently, students must become lifelong learners and develop an increased “love for learning” and the ability to continue learning after their formal education ends (Weimer, 2002, p. 49).

## **III. Roles in Student Learning Outcomes Assessment**

### **A. Faculty**

Weimar University Faculty responsibilities in Teaching, Learning, and Assessment include the following:

- Determine the curriculum, subject matter, methods of instruction, and other academic standards and processes insofar as they agree with the Bible, Spirit of Prophecy, and general operating guidelines of the University.
- Prepare syllabi using the appropriate template for all courses.
- Develop student learning outcomes that map to specific PSLOs or ISLOs and assess student performance.
- Analyze assessment results, propose activity or program changes in conjunction with the Program Chair, and implement proposed changes.
- Assist the Program Chair in end-of-semester Program Assessment and the multi-year CPR.

## **B. Department / Program Heads**

### **1. Director of Assessment & Institutional Research (DAIR)**

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The Directors of Assessment and Institutional Research responsibility in Teaching, Learning, and Assessment include the following:

- Coordinates and supports overall assessment efforts together with the Department Chairs Committee.
- Provides methodological and technical support to Program Chairs and Faculty throughout the assessment process.
- Oversees and facilitates faculty and staff in their Program Assessment and multi-year CPR effort.
- Reviews end-of-semester Program Assessment documents and CPR reports and makes suggestions for improvement.
- Solicit feedback from students, faculty, staff, board of trustees, alumni, and other key stakeholders regarding SLOs and assessment results.
- Provide a Data Packet to the Program Chair for a multi-year Comprehensive Program Assessment.

### **2. Program Chairs**

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The Program Chair's responsibilities in Teaching, Learning, and Assessment include the following:

- Manage the assessment process within their program
- Submit Program Assessment Reports that provide evidence of student learning, faculty findings, and decisions regarding the learning results by the due date.
- Collect and review assessment data for General Education student learning outcomes.
- Lead out in CPR as outlined in the *Comprehensive Program Review Handbook*.

## **C. Standing Committees**

### **1. Educational Policy Committee (EPC)**

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The Educational Policy Committee's responsibilities in Teaching, Learning, and Assessment include the following:

- Review and recommend changes in educational policies relative to academic issues in all programs.
- Collect and review course syllabi and review for student learning outcomes, SLOs, written in proper form and related back to Program and Institutional SLOs.

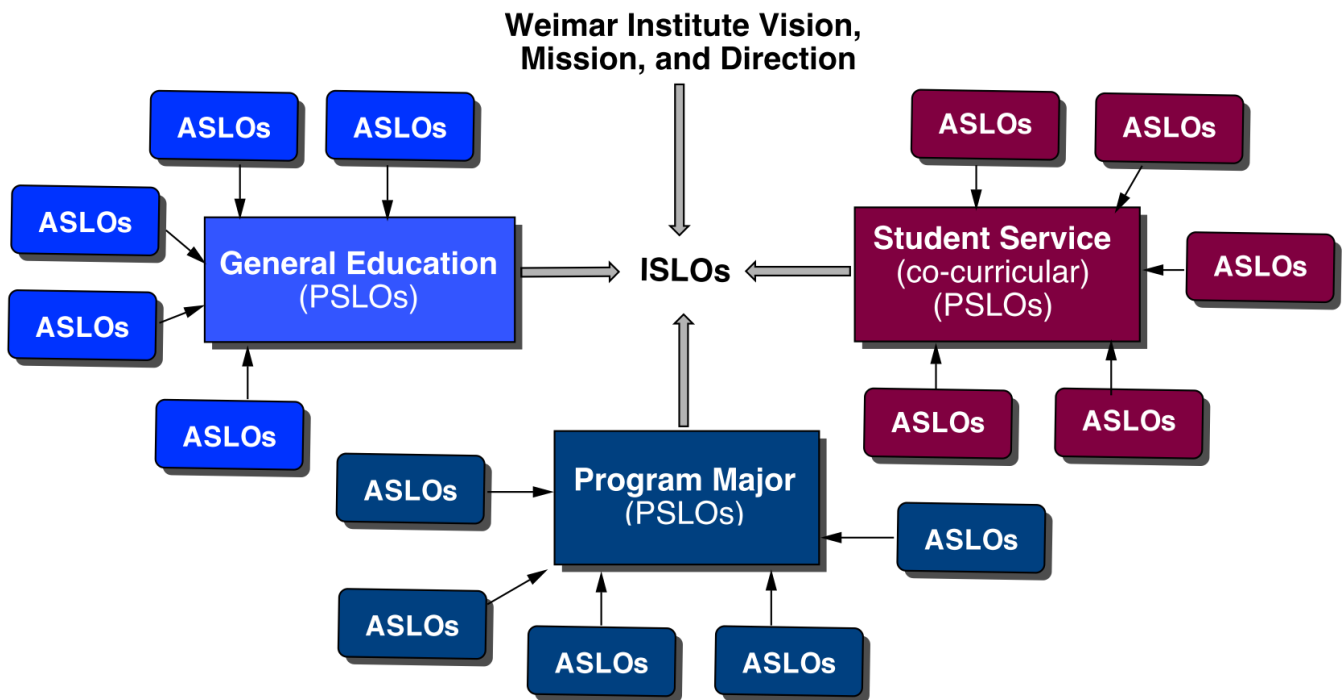


Figure 6. Relationship Between Weimar University Vision, Mission, Direction, Values, ISLOs, PSLOs and ASLOs

#### IV. Assessment System Planning at Weimar University

Over the course of several years, we have developed a comprehensive, faculty-driven, continuous cycle of assessment that provides a mechanism for Weimar faculty to guide and refine the ongoing assessment process by systematically fine-tuning the SLOs, rubrics, curricula, and pedagogies in conjunction with the Weimar University Vision, Mission, and Values (Allen, 2004, pp. 13-15).

The Weimar University Student Learning Assessment System is based on and designed to evaluate the Activity, Program, and Institutional levels, each with its own student learning outcomes. As illustrated in Figure 6, the Mission and Values are encompassed by the ISLOs (institute), which inform the PSLOs (program), which in turn inform the (courses) ASLOs.

##### A. Student Learning Outcomes

The assessment tool for each Student Learning Outcome is an Activity, Program, or Institutional rubric (assessment tool) used to assess key Signature Assignments (artifact). The ISLO (analytic) rubrics were prepared by the (then) Director of Assessment in conjunction with the (then) Educational Effectiveness Committee and then submitted to the Academic Affairs Council and Weimar University Board of Trustees for further input and subsequent modification.



Rubrics, based on the Institutional Student Learning Outcomes Rubrics, are used to assess many assessment artifacts. The rubric components more clearly define the scope of the individual SLOs and allow for disaggregation of assessment results.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) include the desired knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors of the Weimar students after completing an Activity, completing a Program, or graduating from Weimar University (Suskie, 2009, p. 117). In other words, student learning outcomes identify “what students should be able to demonstrate, represent, or produce based on their learning experiences” (Maki, 2004, p. 60) and/or “what students should know, understand, and be able to do with their knowledge” (Huba & Freed, 2000, pp. 9-10)—notice that SLOs define the destination and not the process to get there (Nilson, 2010, p. 129).

Some pertinent questions to ask when considering student learning outcomes are: “How would students show us that they had achieved the desired outcomes?” or “What evidence could students provide to demonstrate their mastery of an outcome?” (Driscoll & Wood, 2007, pp. 68, 120).

Learning outcomes are generally stated as: “When students finish our Program, they will....” or “When students finish this Activity, they will....”.

## **B. The Institutional, Program, and Activity Syllabus**

At Weimar University, the faculty has long recognized the course syllabus's value in helping to clarify the purpose, outcomes, methods, and assessments of each course. To carry this well-known theme further, we have chosen to use the same term—the syllabus—to describe the document that gives an overview of our programs and the institution. Thus, we have course syllabi, program syllabi, and an Institutional syllabus.

Each of the syllabi (Activity, Program, and Institution) provides an introduction and describes the purpose of the specific Activity, Program, or Institution. While implementation of this is somewhat different at each level, Activity Syllabi should follow the template syllabus provided by the Educational Policy Committee (EPC) that includes information about the instructor, course number, contact information, office hours, any teaching assistants, required meeting times, required reading materials, grading scale, teaching methods, course content, all assignments (including specific Signature Assignments), ALSOs and a curriculum map indicating how these map to the Program and Institutional SLOs (Nilson, 2010, pp. 33-42). The syllabi should also indicate how each SLO will be assessed (Driscoll & Wood, 2007, pp. 135, 139).

## C. Assessment Process Weimar University

### 1. Activity (Course) Level Assessment

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Assessment at the Activity Level is rather informal. Frequently, faculty are asked to fill out a Google Docs questionnaire with the following questions:

- Course Name
- Course Acronym
- What went well in your course this semester?
- What challenges did you have this semester?
- List suggested ideas that might be included next time the course is taught.
- Semester, Year

### 2. Program Level Assessment

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Program assessment for many programs occurs over two to three days at the end of the fall semester. All program faculty meet in the morning of the first day to discuss the semester, the PSLOs/ISLO to be assessed, and any other assessment-related items. In the afternoon and the following day, faculty break into groups based on the Program to complete the *Program Assessment Report Template* for the required PSLO as determined by the *Program Assessment Timeline*.

To provide accountability and to ensure that the “loop is closed” from the previous review period, faculty are first required to examine the previous program review report and discuss advances made toward the previously proposed changes and if needed, make further corrective adjustments.

The specific Signature Assignments to be assessed for each PSLO are documented in the Program Curriculum Map. The signature assignments are assessed using the appropriate PSLO rubric (assessment tool). On days 1 and 2, faculty meet to assess the specific Signature Assignments (assessment artifact) using the PSLO rubric, examine the results, and then discuss and propose necessary changes to program curricula, course sequencing, course prerequisites, or any necessary program adjustments.

Ideally, Signature Assignments are assessed by more than one program faculty member or instructor. In larger programs, faculty will frequently meet together during day 2 (or earlier) to assess signature assignments in a group where at least two assessors assess each document. However, before beginning the actual assessment, faculty should discuss the assessment tool (rubric) to ensure that a common meaning is held by all so that acceptable levels of inter-rater reliability will be obtained. Typically, the most rapid means to complete this process is to assess each document twice using two different assessors and then take the average of the two assessment scores for each rubric component, assuming adequate inter-

rater reliability. The results should be recorded in an Excel or Numbers file and stored electronically within the appropriate Dropbox folder. Each file should contain the program, the PSLO number, the semester, and the year. For example: NS PSLO #2 Fall 2016.

Once the assessments and the Program Assessment Report are completed, the report is reviewed during a Department Chairs meeting, where the Directors of Assessment and Institutional Research are guests. Following the program chair's feedback and the requested changes, the document is re-submitted and archived in the appropriate Dropbox folder (or WEAVE) for the next review period and future reference. Copies of the Program Assessment Report are shared with all full-time, part-time, and adjunct Program faculty or instructors.

While the Program Chair is responsible for completing the Program Assessment document, he or she may delegate this responsibility to another faculty member. All program faculty are expected to be involved in this program assessment effort.

### **3. *Assessment System Timeline***

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Appendix C's assessment system timeline gives an overview of the *Program Assessment* and CPR schedule for all programs.

### **4. *Comprehensive Program / Institutional Review (CPR / CIR)***

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CPR is performed in each program on a 6-year cycle (CPR in the 6th year), based on the assessment system timeline, and after all PSLOs for the given program have been assessed. Each PSLO should be assessed at least once during the CPR cycle.

### ***What is the difference between CPR and Program Assessment?***

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In Scripture, individuals are counseled to examine themselves to assess whether they “be in the faith” (2 Corinthians 13:5). Likewise, God’s people, in both the Old and New Testaments, were assessed by Himself. In the Old Testament, this happened within the sanctuary system wherein those who had broken God’s law were instructed to daily bring a sacrifice (which itself had to be assessed) to the sanctuary. This “daily” service, performed each morning and evening, symbolized the nation’s daily consecration and dependence upon Christ. The death of the sacrifice graphically displayed the fact that sin leads to death (Romans 6:23), yet it also displayed that provision and mercy had been provided.

At year’s end, the entire community underwent an examination called the Day of Atonement; once complete, the community celebrated during the Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:29-43). In the New Testament, the Church, the body of Christ, is also assessed. In Revelation 2-3, deficiencies were clearly pointed out, as were the necessary remedies.

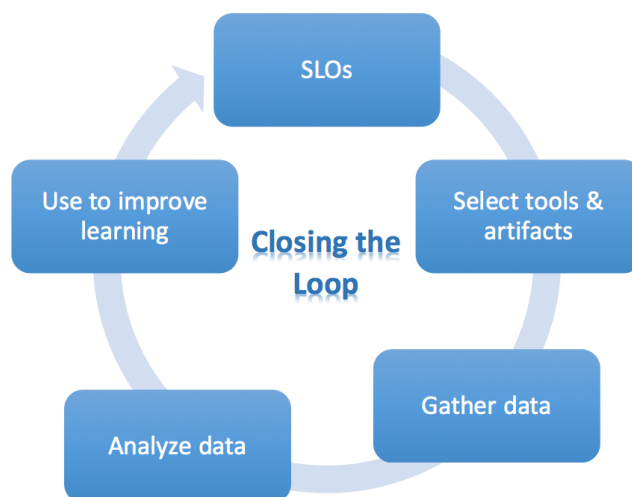
The assessment process at Weimar University includes an annual Program Assessment, which analyzes learning outcomes for one PSLO at the end of each semester. This assessment, which occurs in a frequent cycle at the close of each year, is similar to the “daily” service in the Old Testament. However, once all of the Program Assessments are complete, CPR is initiated, which looks not only at program assessment results since the previous review but also at program faculty, program resources, program sustainability, and other program metrics. Program Assessment and CPR call for systematic examination and assessment based on the Program’s learning outcomes and the founding documents, the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy.

### **5. Closing the Loop**

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The assessment loop is closed when assessment results are used to improve learning (**Figure 7**). When completing the Program Assessment or CPR template, faculty are asked to consider their recommendations from the most recent Program Assessment or CPR. Faculty/ staff refer to previous recommendations and discuss their progress and the outcomes in addressing the proposed changes.

Common areas of change include 1) changes to program policies, practices, or procedures; 2) changes to program curriculum to add additional courses/experiences or course sequencing; and 3) other new strategies, either in or out of the classroom, to increase learning. To ensure accountability regarding proposed changes, they are documented in each program assessment document and re-visited in the next review cycle and subsequent cycles as needed.



**Figure 7. Closing the Assessment Loop**

## **D. Meta Assessment**

At the end of each review cycle, a meta-assessment is performed on the assessment process.

### **1. Meta-Assessment in Program Assessment**

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During the Program Assessment Process, faculty and staff are asked to evaluate the Program Assessment Process with the following questions included in the Program Assessment Template.

2. In what ways is this process effective in making effective educational decisions?
3. In what ways should the process change?
4. What changes must be made to incorporate students into the Program Assessment process meaningfully?

Another component of meta-assessment is feedback provided by the Directors of Assessment and Institutional Research to faculty and staff about their Program Assessment process and report.

### **2. Meta-Assessment in Comprehensive Program Review (CPR)**

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During CPR, faculty and staff are prompted to respond to several questions related to their program's use of assessment results. These questions are included below:

1. How does your program routinely utilize its annual learning results for program planning and/or program improvement?
2. Analyze your program's effectiveness at utilizing student, alumni, and supervisor feedback in the assessment process. How well does the program solicit and respond to feedback and communicate the results of the program review to its stakeholders, especially its current students?
3. In what ways have your program improvements impacted student learning? Document and provide an example(s) of how your program has used your assessment findings to impact program decisions and make program improvements, i.e. "closed the loop."
4. From your answers above, what did you learn? What changes do you want to improve your student learning assessment program?

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## VI. Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

Key terms in this document are defined and clarified for the reader in written and/or graphical form as currently used to communicate to Weimar University faculty, staff, students, and administration Student Learning Outcomes Assessment.

### ***Activity Level***

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Activities refer to all courses, Total Community Involvement (TCI), mission trips, required experiences, and required competencies.

### ***Activity Student Learning Outcomes (ASLOs)***

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The educational programs at Weimar University are delivered through “Activities,” which may include 1) required courses, 2) required experiences, or 3) required competencies. Thus, Activity Student Learning Outcomes (ASLOs) describe the expected outcomes for traditional academic courses and other required experiences that may be assessed outside the traditional classroom.

### ***Alignment***

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Alignment is the degree of congruence between and among the institutional *Vision, Mission, Values*, ISLOs, PSLOs, and ASLOs.

### ***Assessment***

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See *Student Learning Outcomes Assessment*

### ***Assessment Cycle***

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The assessment cycle occurs over one year, coinciding with the academic year. PSLOs and assessment tools that will be assessed during each assessment cycle are identified in the program or course syllabi; data is collected by the end of the fall semester; results are analyzed preferably during the winter break and/or early spring.

### ***Assessment System Timeline***

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The assessment system timeline outlines the program’s plans that identify when and how often Program Assessment and CPR will occur at the Program Level and which PSLOs will be assessed.

### ***Backwards Design***

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Weimar University’s SLOs were developed using a backward design process, which is a method of designing educational curricula by setting goals before choosing instructional methods and forms of assessment. The ISLOs were developed based on the Weimar University *Vision* and *Mission*, from which the PSLOs were derived. The ASLOs from each program’s courses are based on the Program’s SLOs.

## ***Closing the Loop***

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Assessment aims to improve the learning institution through data gathering and analysis, decision-making, and implementation. Assessment does not fulfill its mission unless all components of the assessment process are utilized in making data-driven improvements.

## ***Comprehensive Program Review (CPR)***

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Comprehensive Program Review (CPR) is a process where the program undergoes a more thorough process to evaluate the program's strengths, weaknesses, and future goals. CPR is performed once the program has undergone assessment of all of its PLSOs and generally occurs on a 5-6 year cycle.

## ***Course Embedded Assessment***

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Embedded assessments are performed within the student's regular undergraduate curriculum. Embedded assessments are derived from signature assignments that are preferred since they are somewhat "high-stakes" and have a degree of built-in reliability since students also receive a "grade" for these performances (Suskie, 2009, p. 27-28).

## ***Curriculum Alignment***

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Curriculum alignment refers to a program of study purposefully designed to ensure the development of the desired student learning outcomes. An "aligned" curriculum will eliminate gaps and unnecessary redundancies in the required activities. Moreover, the curriculum is aligned across General Education, Major Program, and co-curricular requirements.

## ***Direction***

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The Weimar University Direction statement clarifies our *Vision* further by describing "how" we intend to accomplish our *Vision* (To Heal a Hurting World).

## ***Institutional Level***

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The Institutional Level envelopes the entire campus. This includes all baccalaureate degree programs, general education programs, and student services. It also includes various other campus entities as they pertain to the academic and experiential learning of undergraduate students attending the Weimar University, such as experiences in the NEWSTART™ Lifestyle Center,<sup>6</sup> Weimar Bakery, the Weimart, and/or Weimar Farms, etc.

## ***Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs)***

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SLOs are expected for all Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Bachelor of Science (BS) and Master's (MA) graduates from the university.

## ***Institutional Syllabus***

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<sup>6</sup> NEWSTART™ is a comprehensive lifestyle program located on the Institute's property, cf. <http://www.newstart.org>

The Institutional Syllabus describes the *Vision, Mission, and Direction* of the University. Additionally, it describes the student learning outcomes at the Institutional level and contains rubrics from which the program-level rubrics are derived. The Institutional Syllabus also contains a curriculum map that indicates how the Weimar University degree provides sufficient opportunity for the successful graduate to gain the desired skills, abilities and values outlined in the ISLOs and their rubrics.

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### **Map (Mapping)**

Refers to the “mapping” of SLOs at the various API (Activity, Program, Institutional) levels where specific ASLOs (or curriculum) at the course level “map” to a specific PSLO or ISLO outcome. Ideally, all curriculum activities will “map” to one or more specific SLOs.

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### **Meta-Assessment**

Meta-assessment is the evaluation of the assessment process. The meta-assessment also provides feedback to faculty and staff on their assessment reports, provided by the Directors of Assessment and Institutional Research.

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### **Mission**

The Weimar University *Mission* clarifies our *Vision* (To Heal a Hurting World) by articulating “what we do” (in measurable terms) to realize our *Vision*.

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### **Performance Criteria**

Performance criteria indicate what specific characteristics the student should be able to demonstrate to achieve the learning outcomes. Each ISLO and PSLO rubric has performance levels: emerging, developing, proficient, and exemplary. The Institutional, Program, or Activity syllabus defines the Performance Criterion for a specific SLO.

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### **Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)**

PSLOs are the expected learning for each student graduating from a particular program.

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### **Program Level**

The Program Level includes degree programs offered at Weimar University and the General Education program and Student Services (co-curricular) program. The PSLOs describe the specific values, skills, and knowledge that each student who completes a Program is expected to possess.

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### **Program Syllabus**

The Program Syllabus describes the *Vision, Mission, and Direction* of the Program as it relates to the Institutional *Vision, Mission, and Direction*. It also describes the student learning outcomes at the Program level and contains rubrics used as direct assessment tools to assess the PSLOs. The Program Syllabus also contains a curriculum map that indicates how the program majors are given

sufficient opportunity to gain the desired skills, abilities and values outlined in the PSLOs and their rubrics.

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### **Rubric (R)/Rubric Component (RC)**

Weimar University SLOs are operationalized into concrete terms and objective performable expectations through rubrics based on the *American Association of Colleges and Universities* (AAC&U) VALUE (Valid Assessment of Learning In Undergraduate Education) rubrics. The individual rubric components (RCs) (horizontal rows, taken together) provide a full, objective description of the desired student ability (SLO).

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### **Signature Assignment**

Signature assignments are performance tasks that are embedded directly into the typical Weimar University curriculum or co-curriculum; that is, they are not “add-on” or “one-off” assessments added in addition or unrelated to the regular curriculum or co-curriculum (Benjamin *et al.*, 2012).

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### **Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)**

SLOs describe the desired outcomes of the students in broad terms and may be used at the Activity (ASLOs), Program (PSLOs), or Institutional (ISLOs) level. In general, student learning outcomes (SLOs) describe “who” our graduates will be in a measurable way. That is, they describe what they should be able to “demonstrate, represent, or produce based on their learning experiences” (Maki, 2004, p. 60) and “what students should know, understand, and be able to do with their knowledge” (Huba & Freed, 2000, pp. 9-10). SLOs also describe the student’s desired knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors *after* they complete a specific course of study (Suskie, 2009, p. 117). This approach represents a shift from merely identifying what faculty will “cover” and what the institution will “do” for the student (*i.e.* the process or means of learning) to what the student will be able to “do” (*i.e.* the destination or goal of the process) as a consequence of the instruction or learning experience (Diamond, 2008, pp. 150-151; Nilson, 2010, p. 129; Hutchings, 2010).

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### **Student Learning Outcomes Assessment**

Assessment is a systematic process that identifies key student learning outcomes, assembles evidence (artifacts) that document student learning, and uses findings to improve student learning in an iterative, ongoing cycle—often referred to as the “Cycle of Assessment” (Denecke, Ken & Weiner, 2011; Allen, 2006, p. 1; Walvoord, 2010, p. 27).

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### **Vision**

The Weimar Institutional *Vision* describes, broadly, the “reason” or “why” for the University’s existence: “To Heal a Hurting World.”

## VII. Appendix B: Blooms Taxonomy (Amy Driscoll)

# “BLOOMING PEDAGOGY”

## A RESOURCE FOR ALIGNING PEDAGOGY WITH BLOOM’S LEVELS OF COGNITION

***Dr. Amy Driscoll September 2011***

These resource handouts are designed to assist faculty in their course design process. Typically, pedagogical decisions follow the processes of developing student learning outcomes, determining what evidence will demonstrate achievement of those learning outcomes, and articulating the curriculum to be addressed in the teaching/learning process.

A careful examination and analysis of student learning outcomes will assist in selecting or creating pedagogy (teaching and learning activities) to support students in their achievement of the learning outcomes.

These resource handouts are designed as an ongoing collection of ideas and activities to enhance courses and to especially align pedagogy with the cognitive level of student learning outcomes. Faculty are urged to seek colleagues who teach to similar levels of cognition and share pedagogies. Faculty collaboration will enhance the richness of pedagogical strategies and their greater effectiveness in supporting students to achieve specified learning outcomes.

### **Contents:**

1. Bloom’ Taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain—definitions and descriptions
2. Bloom’s Taxonomy with appropriate verbs to use in student learning outcomes for each level of the Cognitive Domain.
3. Individual levels of the Taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain with appropriate questions, tasks, and pedagogy strategies.

### **Sources for “Blooming Pedagogies”**

- Ash, S. (2009). Generating, deepening learning: The power of critical reflection in applied learning. *Journal of Applied Learning in Higher Education*, 1, 25-48.
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- Bloom, B., Englehart, M., Furst, E., Hill, W., & Krathwohl, D. (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals, Handbook I, Cognitive domain*. New York: McKay.
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## VIII. Appendix C: Bloom's Taxonomy for the Cognitive Domain

1. **Knowledge:** the lowest level asks your learners to remember previously learned material or to make a factual observation. When you want learners to tell you when, how many, who, or where they use knowledge.
2. **Comprehension:** asks your learners to grasp the meaning of information, to interpret ideas, and to predict knowledge. Learners are asked to translate knowledge into their own words.
  - When asked *why, to explain, or to summarize*, they use Comprehension.
3. **Application:** asks your learners to use previously learned knowledge in new and concrete situations, to use information, and to do something with knowledge.
4. **Analysis:** requires your learners to break something into its constituent parts. The analysis process helps learners understand “big ideas” and the relationship of parts.
  - When asked *to organize, clarify, conclude, or make references*, they are doing Analysis.
5. **Evaluation:** requires a judgment. Your learners must give defensible opinions with criteria for their judgment.
  - When asked to judge the accuracy of information, to judge the logic of information, to make an argument, or to use selected criteria, they are doing an Evaluation.
6. **Synthesis (Create):** assembling elements and parts to form a whole. It involves the combining of elements in such a way as to create a pattern or structure not clearly seen before (Bloom, 1956)

*Note:* The most recent work with Bloom's taxonomy has proposed that *Evaluation* and *Synthesis* are of equal difficulty level.

### Bloom's Cognitive Domain and Learner Outcome Descriptions

**Knowledge** defines, repeats, lists, names, labels, asks, observes, memorizes, records, recalls, listens, identifies, matches, recites, selects, draws, cites, recognizes, indicates, enumerates, reproduces

**Comprehension** restates, describes, explains, tell, identifies, discusses, recognizes, reviews, expresses, locates, reports, estimates, distinguishes, paraphrases, documents, defends, generalizes, summarizes, discusses, classifies, converts, traces

**Application** changes, computes, demonstrates, shows, operates, uses, solves, sequences, tests, classifies, translates, employs, constructs, dramatizes, illustrates, draws, interprets, manipulates, writes, applies

**Analysis** dissects, distinguishes, differentiates, calculates, tests, contrasts, debates, solves, surveys, appraises, experiments, diagrams, inventories, relates, maps, categorizes, subdivides, defends, analyzes, categorizes, illustrates, prioritizes

**Evaluation** compares, concludes, contrasts, criticizes, justifies, supports, states, appraises, discriminates, recommends, rates, decides, selects, assesses

**Synthesis** creates, composes, proposes, formulates, sets up, assembles, constructs, manages, invents, produces, hypothesizes, plans, designs, speculates, prepares, organizes, facilitates, negotiates, structures, substitutes

## “BLOOMING PEDAGOGY”

### Teaching and Learning Activities to Promote Bloom’s Levels of Cognitive Processes

#### 1. **Knowledge Domain: Involves memory, factual information, and simple observations**

##### A. **QUESTIONS and TASKS:**

- Name the five parts of...
- What is the major issue facing...?
- Define the terms...
- Label the kinds of....
- Listen to the following poem/story/case/description and identify the ....
- Record the activities of the....

##### B. **TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES:**

- Background Knowledge Probe using key terms, short answer questions, events, concepts, etc. (before teaching new content)
- Knowledge surveys
- Significant points cards
- Groups of students gather to create a composite of their knowledge (pre/post)
- Matching games
- Developing lists from memory (individual and group)
- Labeling diagrams
- Developing timelines
- Watch video and record what happened
- Crosswords
- Brainstorm previous learning about a subject (individual or group)
- Fill in the blanks activities
- Define terms in learning outcomes
- Practice with true/false items, matching items, and fill in the blank items on tests
- Display a collection of artifacts related to course content—have students describe, explain, and connect to course content
- Collection of quotes, photos, statistical data, specimens, or students’ own artifacts

#### 2. **Comprehension Domain: Involves a higher level of understanding than memory, requires learners to make connections, make meaning, and to translate:**

##### A. **QUESTIONS AND TASKS:**

- What will happen if...?
- How does the process of....work?
- Help us to understand the words of... Describe the concept in your own words...

- Why is this happening?
- Why do we need ....?

## **B. TEACHING AND ACTIVITIES:**

- Watch Film or video and predict ending
- Have students work in pairs and practice active listening to both academic content and personal content
- Read and restate exercises
- Look at scenarios, case studies, and examples to distinguish between them
- Peer work in explaining concepts, examples, ideas
- Map work – locating, identifying
- Estimation exercises
- Recording experiences, events
- Summarize a person, event, argument, decision
- Summarize book chapters, articles, paragraphs, and presentations
- Have students summarize mini-lectures every 3 minutes
- Using different images of an event for discussion of viewpoints, compare and contrast
- Display photos of disease symptoms and ask for description, explanation of focused reading or lecture notes with varied frameworks
- Cards with quotes are distributed and students respond to their quotes
- Student exhibits/posters/display of study focus
- Team Jeopardy game

***Application Domain: Using information and skills in situational contexts (real or simulated):***

## **A. QUESTIONS AND TASKS**

- Answer the following questions...
- Fill in the steps of the process of...
- Change the ending of a historical event and describe the results How does the concept of ....relate to your life?
- Show us how to...
- In what situations can you use...?
- What are some situations in your life when you can use...?

## **B. TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

- Modeling and demonstrations
- Projects and constructions
- Problem-based scenarios, case studies
- Role play or simulations
- Mosaics, murals
- Illustrations of ideas with visual representations
- Service or community-based learning
- Teach peer, family member, friends how to do a task
- Write the steps of ...
- Sort photos into sequence



- Design a rubric

***Analysis Domain: Take knowledge apart and make connections***

**A. TASKS AND QUESTIONS**

- Describe how each of these are connected...
- What are all the components of the process of...
- Assemble the steps of the recipe in order

**B. TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

- Analysis of case studies
- Problem solving that involves analyzing the problem, solutions, etc.
- Task analysis of a skill, concept, or situation
- Order steps of a process
- Develop a set of varied solutions and analyze each for effectiveness
- Design rubrics with rating scales
- Read news articles, video and analyze for different perspectives
- Classification of items, specimens, or cards with information on them – sorted into categories—analyze for differences or similarities
- Frames – students receive a set of sentence stems that can shape a short essay with no content specified
- Conduct “fishbowl” discussions
- Belief or Doubt – analyze text for author’s perspective and values, for viewpoints and objections (or use 2 articles)
- Students take opposing sides (opinions) in an argument in the discipline and research to support their opinions
- Controversy projects
- Split room debate
- Student groups divide into roles and specific tasks for reading text, for listening to a speech, for watching a video, or listening to a lecture (roles include proponent, critic, example-giver, summarizer, questioner or others)
- Students or groups create graphics or webs to represent relationships between concepts and content (series of events chain; spider map; network tree; or student designed map)

***Evaluation Domain: Expects learners to make decisions and judgments, and to develop opinions.***

**A. QUESTIONS AND TASKS**

- Which is the better choice...?
- Rate the following...
- After watching the three performances, select the top... Take a stand on the current issue of...
- If you had 20 seconds to decide, what would you do...Why? What information do you need to help you decide about... What argument will compel you to decide...

**B. TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

- Use rubrics designed in class to evaluate/critique the work of a peer, an anonymous paper, or...
- Peers critique displays, posters, exhibits using a rubric
- Students critique their own entries in portfolios explaining their choices
- Critique the decisions of a historical figure, current leader, prominent scientist, artist, engineer, etc.
- Evaluate a scientific process, architectural blueprint, medical diagnosis, ethical decision, project, etc.
- Compare authors, cultures, historical eras, places, etc.
- Write a letter to the editor taking a stand on a current community issue and support ideas

***Synthesis Domain: Beyond summaries and paraphrases to the creation of something new.***

**A. QUESTIONS AND TASKS**

- How would you describe this? Why?
- If this was your story, how would you end it? Why?
- Use your own words to complete this poem
- Select three words of the author and provide your substitute

**B. TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

- Create an altered version of a story, history, musical composition, or a work of art
- Write letters from an important or famous person to another who holds a different perspective
- Create a dialogue between 2 people who want to achieve the same end with different approaches
- Role play an alternative version of an event, a debate, etc.
- Role play a scenario with multiple stakeholders represented in the drama (switch roles after a time and re-enact the drama)
- Create posters/exhibits/displays to represent a new understanding of concepts
- Have students reteach a lesson
- Students create commercials, websites, power point presentations to convince or sell others on an idea
- Using a common set of materials, have students invent and describe purposes for their inventions
- Develop rhymes to communicate an elaborate idea
- Synectics – analogies
- Reflective writing – “Articulated Learning” (using stems—I learned that...I learned

## IX. Appendix D: Program Assessment / Program Review Timeline

	2022-2023 (due Fall 2023)	2023-2024 (due Fall 2024)	2024-2025 (due Fall 2025)	2025-2026 (due Fall 2026)	2026-2027 (due Fall 2027)	2027-2028 (due Fall 2028)	2028-2029 (due Fall 2029)
General Education (Core)	Critical Thinkers #2	Quantitative Learners #6	Int. Learners; Eff. Comm.; Info. Lit. #3, 4, 5	Int. Learners; Eff. Comm.; Info. Lit. #3, 4, 5	Int. Learners; Eff. Comm.; Info. Lit. #3, 4, 5	CPR	—
Natural Science (BS)	CPR (In progress)	—	Truth-Centered Scientist #1	Health Evangelists #2	Critical Thinkers #3	Effective Comm. #4	Sci Problem Solvers #5
Religion (BA)	Eff. Comm. #5	Biblical Scholars #6	—	CPR	Spiritual Leaders #1	Health Evangelists #2	Disc. Reader Crit. Thinkers #3, #4
Christian Inter. (BA) Programs	Integrative Learners #3	Effective Comm. #4	Quantitative Thinkers #5	CPR	—	#1 – Inter. Leaders	#2 – Crit. Thinkers
Christian Education (BA)	Integrative Learners #3	Effective Comm. #4	Quantitative Reasoners #5	CPR	—	Spiritual Leaders #1	Health Evangelists #2
Bus. Admin (BBA)	—	—	Eth. Bus. Professionals #1	Critical Thinkers #2	Effective Comm. #3	Proficient Admin, #4	CPR
Bachelor of Music (BM)	—	—	PSLO #1 Leaders	PSLO #2 Evangelists	PSLO #3 Crit. Thinkers	PLSO #4 Int. Learners	PSLO #5 Eff. Comm.
Nursing (AS/BS)	CPR* (Completed)	Spiritual Leaders #1	Health Evangelists #2	Eff. Comm. #5 Crit. Think. #3	Integrative Learners #4	Quantitative Reasoners #6	Principled Workers #7
CPW (MA)	—	Truth-Centered Learners #1	Critical Thinkers #2	Integrative Learners #3	Effective Comm. #4	Quantitative Learners #5	CPR
BMW (MA)	Spiritual Leaders #1	Health Evangelists #2	Disc. Reader Crit. Thinkers #3, #4	Eff. Comm. #5	Biblical Scholars #6	CPR	—

— = no formal assessment was performed; CPR = Comprehensive Program Review; GE = General Education; CE = Christian Education, BA; NS = Natural Science, BS; Rel = Religion, BA; IL = Information Literacy; SS = Student Services; NU = Nursing, AS; SSS = Student Satisfaction Survey is performed each spring semester when the NSSE is not given; \* special accreditation (BRN, ACEN)