**Andrews University**

**Assessment Terminology**

***What is the difference between goals and learning outcomes?***

Goals are general statements of program intent that support the mission. Goals are broad statements of intent, such as “The SPLAD department will prepare competent entry level practitioners, who are known for their compassionate care.”  Goals further describe the mission statement, and create a bridge to the specific student learning outcomes.

Learning outcomes are specific statements of what students will know and/or be able to do.  At the program level, they should focus on the key competencies/skills that graduates should possess.  For example, a program level outcome might be “Graduates of the Speech-Language Pathology program will be able to develop a therapy/care plan for clients with speech/language abnormalities.”

At the course level, learning outcomes are much more specific.  They break the required knowledge and skills down into smaller tasks.  Outcomes within individual courses in the program might include things like the following.  (Levels of learning from Bloom’s taxonomy are provided in parentheses)

1. Describe the developmental pathways behind common speech/language abnormalities of children (knowledge, comprehension)
2. Assess speech/language abnormalities in children (analysis)
3. Distinguish between therapies for various speech/language abnormalities in children (analysis, evaluation)
4. Create an appropriate care plan for speech/language abnormalities in children (synthesis)

***What is the difference between a learning outcome and an objective?***

In many settings, outcomes and objectives are used interchangeably. At Andrews University, we have tried to be consistent in our terminology. Learning outcomes are specific statements that articulate the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and abilities students should gain through engagement in the academic program or learning experience. Objectives have a broader scope, and may include learning outcomes, as well as administrative outcomes, such as program effectiveness, productivity, and quality of services. Other words may also be used to represent learning outcomes, particularly in externally accredited programs, such as performance standards, criteria, and competencies.

***What are measures?***

Measures for student learning outcomes are the means to determine that the student has indeed learned.  These can be direct measures of students’ knowledge, beliefs and skills, such as tests, projects, papers, and presentations, or indirect measures, such as surveys, interviews, etc. For example, in the program level outcome in the second paragraph, the summative measure might be an internship, during which students would be required to complete multiple client assessments and determine appropriate therapies.  The clinical instructor would receive a grading rubric so that they could score the student’s work on this outcome (and others).

Formative measures should take place at various times in a variety of courses, so that students have multiple opportunities to practice the desired behaviors or skills, and receive feedback on their progress. In addition, it is often helpful for faculty to decide on a common measure, used mid-way through a program, to check student progress.  This allows program faculty and students to address any insufficiencies before students enter their final year or participate in an internship.

Measures for objectives on program effectiveness might include numbers of new enrollments, retention and graduation rates, student satisfaction, and job placement.

**Resources**

For more information on assessment of student learning, see the following resources.

* <https://www.andrews.edu/services/effectiveness/assessment/resources/>
* Suskie, L. (2009). Assessing student learning (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
* Angelo, T.A., Cross, P. (1993). Classroom assessment techniques: A handbook for college teachers (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
* Walvoord, B. E. (2004). Assessment clear and simple: A practical guide for

institutions, departments, and general education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.